

# THE CTHULHU PRAYER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## The First H.P. Lovecraft Friends' Group Xenophobe Picnic on October 13

OCTOBER 13, 2002 — The local "Friends of Lovecraft," also known as the Cthulhu Prayer Society, gathered on October 13 at The Poet's Press new headquarters at 66 Hope Street in Providence, with food and drink, maps and compasses, for a rain-or-shone picnic and a recreation of H.P. Lovecraft's 1920s and 1930s jaunts to "Quisnicket Park," now Rhode Island's Lincoln Woods.

The quest for Quisnicket fulfilled a long-time desire on the part of many of us who have read H.P. Lovecraft's letters, in which he rhapsodizes over the woods and one spot in particular that he felt was better than any landscape painting. See the featured article in this newsletter for quotes from the Old Gent's letters.

At the sparsely-attended September meeting at Union Station Brewery, an elect few of the Friends group heard Thomas Jones recount his recent trip to Peru, where he tramped the ruins of Macchu Picchu and purchased several idols of uncanny obscenity. Highlights included anecdotes about Cuczo, the old Indian capital, speculation on the use of grandmothers' saliva to make the beverage chicha, and a film screening of *Secret of the Incas* with Charlton Heston and Yma Sumac. Several Sumacophobes fled the room before Yma, an authentic Inca singer, performed her famous ritual song.

Programs earlier in the year included our tour of Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, a program about Medusa and Gorgons, a viewing of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, and a musical presentation on the Devil in song and opera. We also had a Walpurgis Night party on May Eve, and two ceremonies at H.P. Lovecraft's grave, honoring his birthday and death anniversary. So it's been a busy year!

Anyone with an interest in H.P. Lovecraft, the spectral side of New England, or just the strange and the wonderful, is welcome to join us for future excursions. To be added to our e-mail list, send a message to [brett@thepoetspress.org](mailto:brett@thepoetspress.org) or write to us at the address below to receive an issue of the newsletter by mail.



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## Lovecraft's Secret Park: We Search for Horror Haunts in Lincoln Woods

by BRETT RUTHERFORD

H.P. Lovecraft — Outdoorsman? Unnatural as this sounds, Rhode Island's greatest horror writer spent as many days as he could in warm weather in the great outdoors. Although we associate him with attics and gables, church belfries and abandoned tombs, Lovecraft was actually a great hiker with a deep appreciation of landscape, light, and the changes of the seasons.

During his childhood on Angell Street, young Howard lived in a fashionable part of town that was so newly gentrified that farms and woods were only blocks away, including a great swath of wooded riverbank along the Seekonk. What is the well-manicured Blackstone Park today along River Road (the road that follows the Seekonk below Swan Point Cemetery and the grounds of Butler Hospital) was probably a denser woods haunted by neighborhood children, an enchanted and mysterious place at dusk, and strange enough in the dark to fill any boy with nightmare fantasies.

Once HPL was grown, he never gave up this close-by woody haunt, but he found another, vaster in scope and with a rugged, rocky aspect and a fine pond — a park now called Lincoln Woods. Today we will have an H.P. Lovecraft Xenophobe Picnic at Lincoln Woods — Xenophobe because we will eat only American food and, preferably, things made from the native produce of His Majesty's Providence Plantations. Expect pumpkin pie, baked apples, and Hal Hamilton's infamous FrankenBeans.

After we have all shared the Anglo-Saxon food we have brought, we will take time to meander in the early autumn woods. Despite the ravages of time, we expect to see portions of the woods very much as Lovecraft saw them, and we might be surprised by the sudden appearance of a woodland faun, or perhaps, darting amidst the trees, a wood nymph. There is also rumored to be the ruin of a house from around 1640 somewhere at the edge of the park.

We will use a topographic map and compass to try to find one or two spots that Lovecraft meticulously described in his letters. Here are the pertinent passages:

On October 14, 1919, Lovecraft wrote to his correspondent, Reinhardt Kleiner:

"I celebrated Columbus Day by one of my cherished solitary rambles through the agrestic recesses of Quisnicket Park. The day was as delightful as October can produce, and I had the most congenial of companions — a pocket telescope, and a century-old copy of Thomson's *Seasons* — which Alfredus [Alfred Galpin] despises so bitterly. As is my custom, I read those parts which possessed a particular bearing on the season — including

the episode of Lavinia, where Mr. Pope inserted several lines of his own when criticising Thomson's rough MS."

Lovecraft here is referring to English poet James Thomson (1700-1748), "the first and most popular nature poet" of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and also author of the words for "Rule, Britannia.". His cycle, *The Seasons*, was published in separate parts, with *Winter* appearing in 1726, *Summer* in 1727, *Spring* in 1728, and *Autumn* in the first appearance of the complete cycle in 1730. Like Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* in the next century, *The Seasons* grew over the years as the poet revised and expanded it, until it finally reach epic length – 5,542 lines. According to *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, "The Seasons" was reprinted 50 times by 1800 and it was still being read "well into the Romantic period."

*The Seasons* was also well-known throughout Europe, and in Vienna, Baron Gottfried von Swieten translated parts of the work into German, forming a libretto for Franz Joseph Haydn's famous oratorio, *The Seasons*. So if you have heard the Haydn work, you have encountered some of the pastoral verse that Lovecraft was reading as he rambled through Lincoln Woods.

For those interested in recreating this 18<sup>th</sup> century atmosphere of nature and reading, we have included some rare excerpts from Thomson's long-out-of-print epic in this newsletter. We found "Winter" readily available on the Internet, but the autumnal passages required a trip to the Providence Athenaeum, where a delicately crumbling copy was found on the shelf. We will read some of the autumn passages aloud in the woods, which is sure to guarantee the hasty departure of locals.

Lovecraft continues, "The time was late afternoon, and it was delightful to penetrate the primeval country after leaving behind the alienised suburbs where reigns Hebrew, Italian and French-Canadian squalor. As I mounted the slope which leads to the most delightful portion of the forest, the sun was cut off from me, and was visible shining on the plains and villages below in such a manner that the scene suggested a beautiful picture rather than an actual landscape. As I bade farewell to the meadows at set of sun, I regretted the absence of my camera; for truly, few sights are more lovely than that of the harvest fields by twilight, walls, hedges, stubble, sheaves and all, blending into a delicious whole. Verily, I cannot comprehend the psychology of a town poet who can fail to succumb to the spell!"

Lovecraft's sojourn in New York, and the frenzy of writing activity that followed his return to Providence, left him little opportunity to visit his old woodland haunts for a while. But in October 1928, he wrote to August Derleth from Lincoln Woods: "Once again I am penning my day's correspondence in my beloved woodlands. ... If you want to know what beauty is — sheer abstract loveliness raised to the nth power — just ramble through a rural New England landscape in October."

On October 21, 1929, Lovecraft wrote to August Derleth from Lincoln Woods: "At this moment I am...in the midst of the glowing, first-hand autumnal beauty of the finest landscape vista in New England! I am seated on a hillside — on the browning turf beside a road which spirals down before me to an eastward valley with a blue, glimmering mere at its bottom. The descent is undulant and variegated, with picturesque granite outcroppings, gay-foliaged trees, and rambling, old-fashioned stone walls here and there. On my right is the edge of a forested ravine with a brook at the bottom whose placid coursing I can just hear. In that ravine — now out of sight, but to be visited by me later in the afternoon — are



#### Is this the edition of "The Seasons" Owned by Lovecraft?

Here is a bookseller's description of a likely candidate:

Thomson, James. **"The Seasons. Containing Spring. Summer. Autumn. Winter. With the Life of the Author by Dr. Samuel Johnson"** Wrentham; Nathaniel Heaton: 1800. An early American printing of one of the most popular poem cycles by this noted, and noteworthy, English poet / playwright. James Thomson (1700-1748) had a life which exhibited, the to 'nth degree, the ups and downs to which poets' and playwrights' lives may be subject. By turns popular and ignored, amply sponsored and penniless, he saw 'Liberty', an epic poem he worked on for two years, scorned by the press and public. He was also the subject of just the second ban issued under the 1740s licensing act for plays.

After each nadir he would return to favor, however, and it was during one of these periods that he took a cold while traveling from London to Kew by boat, and died at the age of 48. The "Seasons", first published as four separate poems over a short period in the 1720s, brought Thomson to his first fame and semi-fortune... Samuel Johnson's life of Thomason, which prefaces this edition, gives many more interesting details of his life and work.

Hardcover. 4.25"x6.75", xv + 168 pages; bound in period speckled, polished calf, with gilt spine rules and a red leather label; there is a chip in the spine and label at the corner, but else the covers exhibit only minor wear; several period ink ownership inscriptions; a little internal spotting and soil. [02903] \$75.00

the picturesque ivied ruins of an ancient mill which I knew in youth ...whilst peeping through the gnarled trees are the time-stained gables of two venerable farmhouses — the Richard Comstock House, built in 1670 and the Benjamin Arnold house, built in 1732... Truly I do not know of any landscape on earth which more appeals to me than this..."

In 1933, Lovecraft wrote to Clark Ashton Smith: "This afternoon I am north of the town — in the Quinsnickett or Lincoln Woods region which I have haunted all my life. I am seated at the bend of a road, looking off across the descending countryside toward Scott's Pond and the distant village of Saylesville beyond — a vista so idyllic that I cannot resist trying to convey an idea of it on this sheet. Whenever I see a landscape like this — whose beauty can't possibly be captured in words — I could kick myself or the Fates for my inability to draw and paint. Today [October 22] is one of the last days I'll be able to do any reading or writing outdoors; for the temperature is falling and I can't steer my finger-muscles when it's much under 70 degrees."

In 1934, Lovecraft wrote to F. Lee Baldwin, "...I get out to the country as often as I can. Almost every warm summer after-



James Thomson, almost unknown today, virtually invented the genre of "nature poetry" with the publication of "The Seasons."

noon I take my work or reading in a bag & set out for the wooded riverbank [i.e. the park along the Seekonk] or the fields and woods north of Providence, spending the time till dusk in one or more favorite rustic spots." In October, he writes to Elizabeth Toldridge that the last warm day he was able to go to Lincoln Woods was Sept 26<sup>th</sup>.

In 1935, Lovecraft was caught in a downpour. He wrote to young Robert Barlow: "Raindrops...but the sky shews a light rim near the horizon which impels me to take a chance and stay...for a moment. No — too much sprinkling. Have moved down into the piny valley toward the east. Am on a great rock beneath thick evergreen shade. Now let it rain (up to a certain limit) and be damn'd. This section of the wood is really primeval. Indians and 17<sup>th</sup> century colonists have seen these giant firs. There are houses as old as 1670 or 1687 within a mile of here. Rain increases — but what the hell? Insect life is manifest ... Started pouring — with thunder and lightning — and my pine shelter proved inadequate. Have now sought a summer house near the road — where I'd ave gone before if I had been wise. As it is, I'm quite a bit irrigated — though I have on a seedy grey suit (1925) which needed pressing anyhow, so lamentations are limited. Also my straw hat is a primal relique warped from prior inundations. Seems to be getting lighter now, so that I may get back to town without further damage..."

The next year, cold weather persisted through the end of June, but HPL took a visitor to Lincoln Woods on July 18 or 19. In Lovecraft's last, unfinished letter of March 1937, he tells James Morton, "As for outings — of course I kept in the open most of the time until the hellish chill of autumn finally began to shut down. Even after that I managed to take occasional trips to the woods and fields throughout October and just over the line into November."

#### With Map and Compass

Will we find the exact spot that Lovecraft so admired? Park personnel, when we asked them about Quinsnickett and the view toward Saylesville, conjectured that the growth of trees in the intervening decades may have changed the vista beyond recognition. (The park was expanded over the years with additional land grants and donations.) Using the U.S. Geological Survey map and a compass, we shall start around campsite 39 or 40 and try to locate HPL's favorite spot. Watch this newsletter for the results!

## 2002 LOVECRAFT FRIENDS EVENTS

Here it is, with all meetings except those starred with double asterisks commencing at 11:30 am at the Union Station Brewery.

### \*\*SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13th

H.P.Lovecraft Xenophobe Picnic

Meeting place/raindate site: 66 Hope Street #2, Providence RI 401-861-3272

Departing at Noon Sharp for Picnic at Campsite 39 or 40 in Lincoln Woods, Rhode Island.

### \*\*THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31.

Samhain (Halloween). A grand celebration, place to be announced. RSVP.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15th.

Decorating the Baba Yaga tree at Rutherford's place.

Bring mystery presents to be unwrapped on Russian Christmas, January 6th 2003

That's it for the year. Your ideas and suggestions will be welcome.

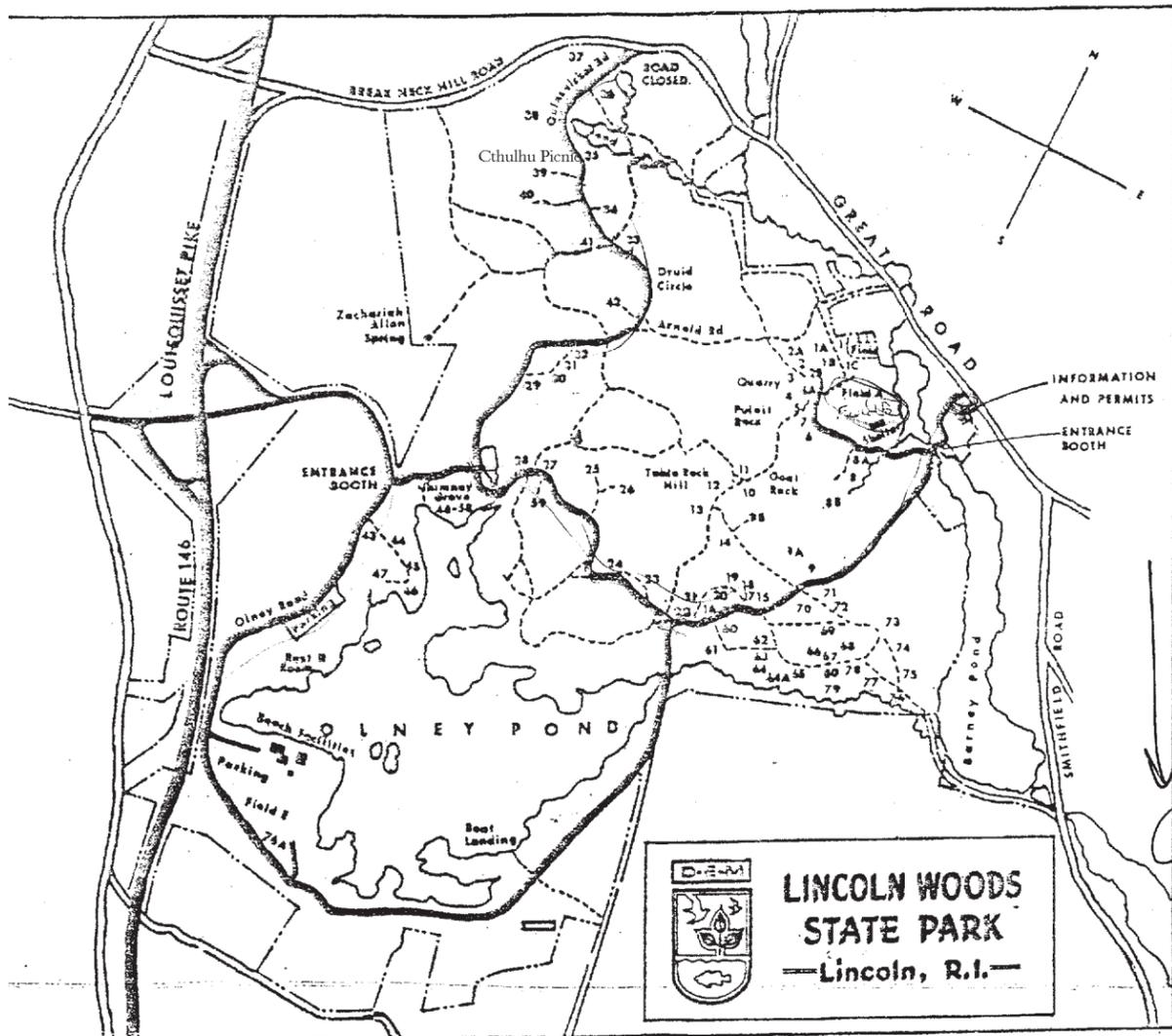
Among the "unscheduled" events will be viewings of DVDs and videos, including a double feature of "Dead Alive" and "Meet the Feebles" by Peter Jackson (director of "Lord of the Rings"), and other surprises.

An outdoor reading of Algernon Blackwood's "The Willows" is also planned in Roger Williams Park -- as a picnic under weeping willow trees.

## LINCOLN WOODS MAPS



# LINCOLN WOODS MAPS



# WINTER. A POEM.

By JAMES THOMSON,  
A.M.

— *Rapidus Sol*

*Nondum Hyemem contingit Equis.  
Jam præterit æstas.*

VIRG.

— *Glacialis Hyems canos hirsuta  
Capillos.*

OVID.

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TO

The RIGHT HONOURABLE  
Sir SPENCER  
COMPTON.

SIR,

The Author of the following P O E M begs Leave to inscribe this his first Performance to your Name, and Patronage. Unknown Himself, and only introduced by the *Muse*, He yet ventures to approach You, with a modest Cheerfulness: For, whoever attempts to excel in any Generous Art, tho' he comes alone, and unregarded by the World, may hope for your Notice, and Esteem. Happy! if I can, in any Degree, merit this Good Fortune: as every Ornament, and Grace of polite Learning is yours, your single Approbation will be my Fame.

I D A R E not indulge my Heart, by dwelling on your *Public* Character; on that exalted Honour, and Integrity which distinguish You, in that *August Assembly*, where You preside; that unshaken Loyalty to your *Sovereign*, that disinterested Concern for his *People*, which shine out, united, in all your Behaviour, and finish the *Patriot*. I am conscious of my Want of Strength, and Skill for so delicate an Undertaking: And yet, as the Shepherd, in his Cottage, may feel and acknowledge the Influence of the Sun with as lively a Gratitude, as the Great Man, in his Palace, *even I* may be allowed to publish my *Sense* of those Blessings, which from so many powerful Vertues, are derived to the Nation they adorn.

I conclude with saying, that your fine Discernment and Humanity, in your *Private* Capacity, are so conspicuous, that, if this Address is not received with some Indulgence, it will be a severe Conviction, that what I have written has not the least Share of Merit.

I am,  
With the profoundest Respect,  
SIR,

Your most devoted,  
and most faithful,  
Humble Servant,

James Thomson.

SEE! W I N T E R comes, to rule the varied Year,  
Sullen, and sad; with all his rising Train,  
Vapours, and Clouds, and Storms: Be these my  
Theme,  
These, that exalt the Soul to solemn Thought,  
And heavenly musing. Welcome kindred Gloom!  
Wish'd, wint'ry, Horrors, hail!—With frequent  
Foot,  
Pleas'd, have I, in my cheerful Morn of Life,  
When, nurs'd by careless *Solitude*, I liv'd,  
And sung of Nature with unceasing Joy,  
Pleas'd, have I wander'd thro' your rough Domains;

Trod the pure, virgin, Snows, my self as pure:  
Heard the Winds roar, and the big Torrent burst:  
Or seen the deep, fermenting, Tempest brew'd,  
In the red, evening, Sky.— Thus pass'd the Time,  
Till, thro' the opening, Chambers of the South,  
Look'd out the joyous *Spring*, look'd out, and smil'd.

T H E E too, Inspirer of the toiling Swain!  
Fair A U T U M N, yellow rob'd!  
I'll sing of thee,

Of thy last, temper'd, Days, and sunny Calms;  
When all the golden *Hours* are on the Wing,  
Attending thy Retreat, and round thy Wain,  
Slow-rolling, onward to the Southern Sky.

B E H O L D! the well-pos'd *Hornet*, hovering,  
hangs,  
With quivering Pinions, in the genial Blaze;  
Flies off, in airy Circles: then returns,  
And hums, and dances to the beating Ray.  
Nor shall the Man, that, musing, walks alone,  
And, heedless, strays within his radiant Lists,  
Go unchastis'd away.— Sometimes, a Fleece  
Of Clouds, wide-scattering, with a lucid Veil,  
Soft, shadow o'er th'unruffled Face of Heaven;  
And, thro' their dewy Sluices, shed the Sun,  
With temper'd Influence down. Then is the Time,  
For those, whom *Wisdom*, and whom *Nature* charm,  
To steal themselves from the degenerate Croud,  
And soar above this *little* Scene of Things:  
To tread low-thoughted *Vice* beneath their Feet:  
To lay their Passions in a gentle Calm,  
And woo lone *Quiet*, in her silent *Walks*.

N O W, solitary, and in pensive Guise,  
Oft, let me wander o'er the russet Mead,  
Or thro' the pining Grove;  
where scarce is heard

One dying Strain, to cheer the *Woodman's* Toil:  
Sad *Philomel*, perchance, pours forth her Plaint,  
Far, thro' the withering Copse.

Mean while, the Leaves,  
That, late, the Forest clad with lively Green,  
Nipt by the drizzly Night, and Sallow-hu'd,  
Fall, wavering thro' the Air; or shower amain,  
Urg'd by the Breeze, that sobs amid the Boughs.  
Then list'ning *Hares* forsake the rustling Woods,  
And, starting at the frequent Noise, escape  
To the rough Stubble, and the rushy Fen.  
Then *Woodcocks*, o'er the fluctuating Main,  
That glimmers to the Glimpses of the Moon,  
Stretch their long Voyage to the woodland Glade:  
Where, wheeling with uncertain Flight, they mock  
The nimble *Fowler's* Aim.— Now *Nature* droops;  
Languish the living Herbs, with pale Decay:  
And all the *various* Family of Flowers  
Their sunny Robes resign. The falling Fruits,  
Thro' the still Night, forsake the Parent-Bough,  
That, in the first, grey, Glances of the Dawn,  
Looks wild, and wonders at the wintry Waste.

T H E Year, yet pleasing, but declining fast,  
Soft, o'er the secret Soul, in gentle Gales,  
A Philosophic Melancholly breathes,  
And bears the swelling Thought aloft to Heaven.  
Then forming Fancy rouses to conceive,  
What never mingled with the Vulgar's Dream:  
Then wake the tender *Pang*, the pitying *Tear*,  
The *Sigh* for suffering Worth, the *Wish* prefer'd  
For Humankind, the *Joy* to see them bless'd,  
And all the *Social Off-spring* of the Heart!  
O H! Bear me then to high, embowering, Shades,  
To twilight Groves, and visionary Vales;  
To weeping Grottos, and to hoary Caves;  
Where Angel-Forms are seen, and Voices heard,  
Sigh'd in low Whispers, that abstract the Soul,  
From outward Sense, far into Worlds remote.

N O W, when the Western Sun  
withdraws the Day,  
And humid *Evening*, gliding o'er the Sky,  
In her chill Progress, checks the straggling Beams,  
And robs them of their gather'd, vapoury, Prey,  
Where Marshes stagnate, and where Rivers wind,

Cluster the rolling *Fogs*, and swim along  
The dusky-mantled Lawn: then slow descend,  
Once more to mingle with their *Watry Friends*.  
The vivid Stars shine out, in radiant Files,  
And boundless *Ether* glows, till the fair Moon  
Shows her broad Visage, in the crimson'd East;  
Now, stooping, seems to kiss the passing Cloud:  
Now, o'er the pure *Cerulean*, rides sublime.  
Wide the pale Deluge floats, with silver Waves,  
O'er the sky'd Mountain, to the low-laid Vale;  
From the white Rocks, with dim Reflexion, gleams,  
And faintly glitters thro' the waving Shades.

A L L Night, abundant Dews, unnoted, fall;  
And, at Return of Morning, silver o'er  
The Face of Mother-Earth; from every Branch  
Depending, tremble the translucent Gems,  
And, quivering, seem to fall away, yet cling,  
And sparkle in the Sun, whose rising Eye,  
With Fogs bedim'd, portends a beautiful Day.  
N O W, giddy Youth, who headlong Passions fire,  
Rouse the wild Game, and stain the guiltless Grove,  
With Violence, and Death; yet call it Sport,  
To scatter Ruin thro' the Realms of *Love*,  
And *Peace*, that thinks no Ill: But These, the *Muse*,  
Whose Charity, unlimited, extends  
As wide as *Nature* works, disdains to sing,  
Returning to her nobler Theme in view —

F O R, see! where *Winter* comes, himself,  
confest,  
Striding the gloomy Blast. First Rains obscure  
Drive thro' the mingling Skies, with Tempest foul;  
Beat on the Mountain's Brow, and shake the Woods,  
That, sounding, wave below.

The dreary Plain  
Lies overwhelm'd, and lost. The bellying Clouds  
Combine, and deepening into Night, shut up  
The Day's fair Face. The Wanderers of Heaven,  
Each to his Home, retire; save those that love  
To take their Pastime in the troubled Air,  
And, skimming, stutter round the dimply Flood.  
The Cattle, from th'untasted Fields, return,  
And ask, with Meaning low, their wonted Stalls;  
Or ruminant in the contiguous Shade:  
Thither, the household, feathery, People croud,  
The crested Cock, with all his female Train,  
Pensive, and wet. Mean while, the Cottage-Swain  
Hangs o'er the enlivening Blaze, and, taleful, there,  
Recounts his simple Frolic: Much he talks,  
And much he laughs, nor reck  
the Storm that blows  
Without, and rattles on his humble Roof.

A T last, the muddy Deluge pours along,  
Resistless, roaring; dreadful down it comes  
From the chapt Mountain,  
and the mossy Wild,  
Tumbling thro' Rocks abrupt, and sounding far:  
Then o'er the sanded Valley, floating, spreads,  
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again constrain'd,  
Betwixt two meeting Hills, it bursts a Way,  
Where Rocks, and Woods o'erhang  
the turbid Stream.  
There gathering triple Force, rapid, and deep,  
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders thro'.

N A T U R E! great Parent! whose directing  
Hand  
Rolls round the Seasons of the changeful Year,  
How mighty! how majestic are thy Works!  
With what a pleasing Dread they swell the Soul,  
That sees, atonish'd! and, astonish'd sings!  
You too, ye *Winds*! that now begin to blow,  
With boisterous Sweep, I raise my Voice to you.  
Where are your Stores, ye viewless *Beings*! say?  
Where your aerial Magazines reserv'd,  
Against the Day of Tempest perilous?  
In what untravel'd Country of the Air,  
Hush'd in still Silence, sleep you, when 'tis calm?

L A T E, in the louring Sky, red, fiery, Streaks,  
Begin to flush about; the reeling Clouds  
Stagger with dizzy Aim, as doubting yet  
Which Master to obey: while rising, slow,  
Sad, in the Leaden-colour'd East, the Moon  
Wears a [bleak] Circle round her sully'd Orb.  
Then issues forth the Storm, with loud Control,  
And the thin Fabrick of the pillar'd Air  
O'erturns, at once. Prone, on th'uncertain Main,  
Decends th' *Ethereal* Force, and plows its Waves,  
With dreadful [Rift]: from the mid-Deep, appears,  
Surge after Surge, the rising, wat'ry, War.  
Whitening, the angry Billows rowl immense,  
And roar their Terrors, thro' the shuddering Soul  
Of feeble Man, amidst their Fury caught,  
And, dash'd upon his Fate: Then, o'er the Cliff,  
Where dwells the *Sea-Mew*, unconfin'd, they fly,  
And, hurrying, swallow up the sterile Shore.

**T**HE Mountain growls; and all its sturdy *Sons*  
Stoop to the Bottom of the Rocks they shade:  
Lone, on its Midnight-Side, and all aghast,  
The dark, way-faring, *Stranger*, breathless, toils,  
And climbs against the Blast —  
Low, waves the rooted Forest, vex'd, and sheds  
What of its leafy Honours yet remains.  
Thus, struggling thro' the disipated Grove,  
The whirling Tempest raves along the Plain;  
And, on the Cottage thacht, or lordly Dome,  
Keen-fastening, shakes 'em to the solid Base.  
*Sleep*, frighted, flies; the hollow Chimney howls,  
The Windows rattle, and the Hinges creak.

**T**HEN, too, they say, thro' all  
the burthen'd Air,  
Long Groans are heard, shrill Sounds,  
and distant Sighs,  
That, murmur'd by the *Demon* of the Night,  
Warn the devoted *Wretch* of Woe, and Death!  
Wild Uproar lords it wide: the Clouds commixt,  
With Stars, swift-gliding, sweep along the Sky.  
All Nature reels.—But hark! the *Almighty* speaks:  
Instant, the chidden Storm begins to pant,  
And dies, at once, into a noiseless Calm.

**A**S yet, 'tis Midnight's Reign;  
the weary Clouds,  
Slow-meeting, mingle into solid Gloom;  
Now, while the drousy World lies lost in Sleep,  
Let me associate with the low-brow'd *Night*,  
And *Contemplation*, her sedate Compeer;  
Let me shake off th'intrusive Cares of Day,  
And lay the meddling Senses all aside.

**A**ND now, ye lying *Vanities* of Life!  
You ever-tempting, ever-cheating Train!  
Where are you now?  
and what is your Amount?  
Vexation, Disappointment, and Remorse.  
Sad, sickening, Thought! and yet, deluded Man,  
A Scene of wild, disjointed, Visions past,  
And broken Slumbers, rises, still resolv'd,  
With new-flush'd Hopes, to run your giddy Round.

**F**A T H E R of Light, and Life!  
Thou *Good Supreme!*  
O! teach me what is Good! teach me thy self!  
Save me from Folly, Vanity, and Vice,  
From every low Pursuit! and feed my Soul,  
With Knowledge, conscious Peace,  
and Vertue pure,  
Sacred, substantial, never-fading Bliss!

**L**O! from the livid East, or piercing North,  
Thick Clouds ascend, in whose  
capacious Womb,  
A vapoury Deluge lies, to Snow congeal'd:  
Heavy, they roll their fleecy World along;  
And the Sky saddens with th'impending Storm.  
Thro' the hush'd Air, the whitening  
Shower descends,  
At first, thin-wavering; till, at last, the Flakes  
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the Day,  
With a continual Flow. See! sudden, hoar'd,  
The Woods beneath the stainless Burden bow,  
Blackning, along the mazy Stream it melts;  
Earth's universal Face, deep-hid, and chill,  
Is all one, dazzling, Waste. The Labourer-Ox  
Stands cover'd o'er with Snow, and then demands  
The Fruit of all his Toil. The Fowls of Heaven,  
Tam'd by the cruel Season, croud around  
The winnowing Store, and claim the little Boon,  
That *Providence* allows. The foodless Wilds  
Pour forth their brown *Inhabitants*; the Hare,  
Tho' timorous of Heart, and hard beset  
By Death, in various Forms, dark Snares,  
and Dogs,  
And more un pitying Men, the Garden seeks,  
Urg'd on by *fearless* Want. The bleating Kind  
Eye the bleak Heavens, and next,  
the glistening Earth,  
With Looks of dumb Despair; then sad, dispers'd,  
Dig, for the wither'd Herb, thro' Heaps of Snow.

**N**O W, *Shepherds*, to your helpless  
Charge be kind;  
Baffle the raging Year, and fill their Penns  
With Food, at will: lodge them below the Blast,  
And wach them strict; for from the bellowing East,  
In this dire Season, oft the Whirlwind's Wing  
Sweeps up the Burthen of whole wintry Plains,  
In one fierce Blast, and o'er th' unhappy Flocks,  
Lodg'd in the Hollow of two neighbouring Hills,  
The billowy Tempest whelm; till, upwards urg'd,  
The Valley to a shining Mountain swells,  
That curls its Wreaths amid the freezing Sky.

**N**O W, all amid the Rigours of the Year,  
In the wild Depth of Winter, while without  
The ceaseless Winds blow keen,  
be my Retreat  
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, Scene;  
Where ruddy Fire, and beaming Tapers join  
To chase the cheerless Gloom: there let me sit,  
And hold high Converse with the mighty Dead,  
*Sages* of ancient Time, as Gods rever'd,  
As Gods beneficent, who blest Mankind,  
With Arts, and Arms, and humaniz'd a World.  
Rous'd at th' [inspiring] Thought — I throw aside  
The long-liv'd Volume, and, deep-musing, hail  
The sacred *Shades*, that, slowly-rising, pass  
Before my wondering Eyes — First, *Socrates*,  
Truth's early Champion, Martyr for his God:  
*Solon*, the next, who built his Commonweal,  
On Equity's firm Base: *Lycurgus*, then,  
Severely good, and him of rugged *Rome*,  
*Numa*, who soften'd her rapacious *Sons*.  
*Cimon* sweet-soul'd, and *Aristides* just.  
Unconquer'd *Cato*, virtuous in Extreme;  
With that attemper'd \* Heroe, mild, and firm,  
(\**Timoleon*)

Who wept her Brother, while the Tyrant bled.  
*Scipio*, the humane Warriour, gently brave,  
Fair Learning's Friend; who early  
sought the Shade,  
To dwell, with *Innocence*, and *Truth*, retir'd.  
And, equal to the best, the *Theban*, *He*  
Who, *single*, rais'd his Country into Fame.  
Thousands behind, the Boast of *Greece* and *Rome*,  
Whom *Vertue* owns, the Tribute of a Verse  
Demand, but who can count the Stars of Heaven?  
Who sing their Influence on this lower World?  
But see who yonder comes! nor comes alone,  
With *sober* State, and of *majestic* Mein,  
The Sister-Muses in his Train — 'Tis *He!*  
*Maro!* the best of Poets, and of Men!  
Great *Homer* too appears, of *daring* Wing!  
*Parent* of Song! and, *equal*, by his Side,  
The *British Muse*, join'd Hand in Hand, they walk,  
*Darkling*, nor miss their Way to Fame's Ascent.  
Society divine! Immortal Minds!  
Still visit thus my Nights, for you reserv'd,  
And mount my soaring Soul to Deeds like yours.  
*Silence!* thou lonely *Power!* the Door be thine:  
See, on the hallow'd Hour, that none intrude,  
Save *Lycidas*, the Friend, with Sense refin'd,  
Learning digested well, exalted Faith,  
Unstudy'd Wit, and Humour ever gay.

**C**L E A R Frost succeeds,  
and thro' the blew Serene,  
For Sight too fine, the Ætherial Nitre flies,  
To bake the Glebe, and bind the slip'ry Flood.  
This of the wintry Season is the Prime;  
Pure are the Days, and lustrous are the Nights,  
Brighten'd with starry Worlds, till then unseen.  
Mean while, the Orient, darkly red, breathes forth  
An Icy Gale, that, in its mid Career,  
Arrests the bickering Stream. The nightly Sky,  
And all her glowing Constellations pour  
Their rigid Influence down: It freezes on  
Till Morn, late-rising, o'er the drooping World,  
Lifts her pale Eye, enjoyous: then appears  
The various Labour of the silent Night,  
The pendant Isicle, the Frost-Work fair,  
Where thousand Figures rise, the crusted Snow,  
Tho' white, made whiter, by the fining North.  
On blithsome Frolics bent, the youthful Swains,  
While every Work of Man is laid at Rest,  
Rush o'er the watry Plains, and, shuddering, view  
The fearful Deeps below: or with the Gun,  
And faithful Spaniel, range the ravag'd Fields,  
And, adding to the Ruin of the Year,  
Distress the Feathery, or the Footed *Game*.

**B**U T hark! the nightly Winds, with hollow  
Voice,  
Blow, blustering, from the South—  
the Frost subdu'd,  
Gradual, resolves into a weeping Thaw.  
Spotted, the Mountains shine: loose Sleet descends,  
And floods the Country round: the Rivers swell,  
Impatient for the Day.— Those sullen Seas,  
That wash th'ungential Pole, will rest no more,  
Beneath the Shackles of the mighty North;  
But, rousing all their Waves, resistless heave,—  
And hark!—the length'ning Roar,  
continuous, runs  
Athwart the rifted Main; at once, it bursts,  
And piles a thousand Mountains to the Clouds!  
Ill fares the Bark, the Wretches' last Resort,  
That, last amid the floating Fragments, moors  
Beneath the Shelter of an Icy Isle;  
While Night o'erwhelms the Sea, and Horror looks  
More horrible. Can human Hearts endure  
Th'assembled *Mischiefs*, that besiege them round:  
Unlist'ning *Hunger*, fainting *Weariness*,

The *Roar* of Winds, and Waves, the *Crush* of Ice,  
Now, ceasing, now, renew'd, with louder Rage,  
And bellowing round the Main: Nations remote,  
Shook from their Midnight-Slumbers,  
deem they hear  
Portentous Thunder, in the troubled Sky.  
More to embroil the Deep, Leviathan,  
And his unwieldy Train, in horrid Sport,  
Tempest the loosen'd Brine; while, thro' the Gloom,  
Far, from the dire, unhospitable Shore,  
The Lyon's Rage, the World's sad Howl is heard,  
And all the fell Society of Night.  
Yet, *Providence*, that ever-waking *Eye*  
Looks down, with Pity, on the fruitless Toil  
Of Mortals, lost to Hope, and *Lights* them safe,  
Thro' all this dreary Labyrinth of Fate.  
'Tis done!— Dread W I N T E R  
has subdu'd the Year,  
And reigns, tremendous, o'er the desert Plains!  
How dead the Vegetable Kingdom lies!  
How dumb the Tuneful! *Horror* wide extends  
His solitary Empire.— Now, fond *Man!*  
Behold thy pictur'd Life: pass some few Years,  
Thy flow'ring S P R I N G, thy short-liv'd S U M  
M E R's Strength,  
Thy sober AUTUMN, fading [into] Age,  
And pale concluding, W I N T E R shuts thy Scene,

And shrouds *Thee* in the Grave—  
where now, are fled  
Those Dreams of Greatness? those unsolid Hopes  
Of Happiness? those Longings after Fame?  
Those restless Cares? those busy, bustling Days?  
Those Nights of secret Guilt?  
those veering Thoughts,  
Flutt'ring 'twixt Good, and Ill, that shar'd thy Life?  
All, now, are vanish'd! *Vertue*, sole, survives,  
Immortal, Mankind's never-failing Friend,  
His Guide to Happiness on high— and see!  
'Tis come, the Glorious *Morn!* the second Birth  
Of Heaven, and Earth!— awakening Nature heard  
Th'Almighty Trumpet's Voice, and starts to Life  
Renew'd, unfading. Now, th' Eternal *Scheme*,  
That Dark Perplexity, that Mystic Maze,  
Which Sight cou'd never trace, nor Heart conceive,  
To *Reason's* Eye, refin'd, clears up apace.  
Angels, and Men, astonish'd, pause— and dread  
To travel tho' the Depth of Providence,  
Untry'd. unbounded. Ye vain *Learned!* see,  
And, prostrate in the Dust, adore that *Power*,  
And *Goodness*, oft arraigned. See now the Cause,  
Why conscious *Worth*, oppress'd, in secret long  
Mourn'd, unregaded: Why the *Good Man's* Share,  
In Life, was Gall, and bitterness of Soul:  
Why the lone *Widow*, and her *Orphans*, pin'd  
In starving Solitude, while *Luxury*,  
In Palaces, lay prompting her low Thought,  
To form unreal Wants: why Heaven-born *Faith*,  
And *Charity*, prime Grace! wore the red Marks  
Of *Persecution's* Scourge: why licens'd *Pain*,  
That cruel *Spoiler*, that embosom' *Foe*,  
Imbitter'd all our Bliss. Ye Good *Ditrest!*  
Ye Noble *Few!* that, here, unbending, stand  
Beneath Life's Pressures— yet a little while,  
And all your Woes are past. *Time* swiftly fleets,  
And wish'd *Eternity*, approaching, brings  
Life undecaying, Love without Allay,  
Pure flowing Joy, and Happiness sincere.

*The E N D.*