

Travel Poems

Gwyneth

Postcards

At first I sent you a postcard
From every city I went to.
Grüsse aus Bath, aus Birmingham,
Aus Rotterdam, aus Tel Aviv.
Mit Liebe. Cards from you arrived
In English, with many commas.
Hope, you're fine and still alive,
Says one from Hong Kong. By that time
We weren't writing quite as often.

Now we're nearly nine years away
From the lake and the blue mountains,
And the room with the balcony,
But the heat and light of those days
Can reach this far from time to time.
Your latest was from Senegal,
Mine from Helsinki. I don't know
If we'll meet again. Be happy.
If you hear this, send a postcard.

<https://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php%3Fdate=2007%252F07%252F01.html>

Marion

There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

A Prayer for Travellers

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Anon.

On the World

The world's an inn; and I her guest.
I eat; I drink; I take my rest.
My hostess, nature, does deny me
Nothing, wherewith she can supply me;
Where, having stayed a while, I pay
Her lavish bills, and go my way.

Francis Quarles (1592–1644)

If Once You Have Slept on an Island

If once you have slept on an island
You'll never be quite the same;
You may look as you looked the day before
And go by the same old name,

You may bustle about in street and shop;
You may sit at home and sew,
But you'll see blue water and wheeling gulls
Wherever your feet may go.

You may chat with the neighbors of this and that
And close to your fire keep,
But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse bell
And tides beat through your sleep.

Oh, you won't know why, and you can't say how
Such change upon you came,
But – once you have slept on an island
You'll never be quite the same!

Rachel Field (1894–1942)

Eldorado

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old –
This knight so bold –

And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell, as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow –
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be –
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849)

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive (stamped on these lifeless things)
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)

A Strip of Blue

I do not own an inch of land,
But all I see is mine, –
The orchard and the mowing fields,
The lawns and gardens fine.
The winds my tax-collectors are,
They bring me tithes divine, –
Wild scents and subtle essences,
A tribute rare and free;
And, more magnificent than all,
My window keeps for me
A glimpse of blue immensity, –
A little strip of sea.

Richer am I than he who owns
Great fleets and argosies;
I have a share in every ship
Won by the inland breeze,
To loiter on yon airy road
Above the apple-trees,
I freight them with my untold dreams;
Each bears my own picked crew;
And nobler cargoes wait for them
Than ever India knew, –
My ships that sail into the East
Across that outlet blue.

Sometimes they seem like living shapes, –
The people of the sky, –
Guests in white raiment coming down
From heaven, which is close by;
I call them by familiar names,
As one by one draws nigh,
So white, so light, so spirit-like,
From violet mists they bloom!
The aching wastes of the unknown
Are half reclaimed from gloom,
Since on life's hospitable sea
All souls find sailing-room.

The ocean grows a weariness
With nothing else in sight;
Its east and west, its north and south,
Spread out from morn till night;
We miss the warm, caressing shore,
Its brooding shade and light.

Lucy Larcom (1824–1893)

O to sail

O to sail in a ship,
To leave this steady unendurable land,
To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets,
the sidewalks and the houses,
To leave you, O you solid motionless land, and
entering a ship,
To sail and sail and sail!

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

Midnight on the Great Western

In the third-class sat the journeying boy,
And the roof-lamp's oily flame
Played down on his listless form and face,
Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,
Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy
Had a ticket stuck; and a string
Around his neck bore the key of his box,
That twinkled gleams of the lamp's sad beams
Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy,
Towards a world unknown,
Who calmly, as if incurious quite
On all at stake, can undertake
This plunge alone?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,
Our rude realms far above,
Whence with spacious vision you mark and mete
This region of sin that you find you in
But are not of?

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

Freedom

Give me the long, straight road before me,
A clear, cold day with a nipping air,
Tall, bare trees to run on beside me,
A heart that is light and free from care.
Then let me go! – I care not whither
My feet may lead, for my spirit shall be
Free as the brook that flows to the river,
Free as the river that flows to the sea.

Olive Runner

[Poems for Travellers](#)

by [Gaby Morgan](#)

Sing me a Song of a Lad that is Gone

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port,
Eigg on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul;
Where is that glory now?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
Give me the lad that's gone!

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is gone.

Martina

Momentaufnahme: Paris
Mascha Kaléko

Da bist du also, Stadt der tausend Fabeln.
Am *Gare du Nord* taucht Filmkulisse auf.
Noch bin ich fremd und denke in Vokabeln.
Paris, sei gut zu mir und tu dich auf!

Nun, heimwärts, fällst du mir im Dämmer ein:
Die großen Kirchen, winzigen Spelunken,
Der erste Café-crème, am Zinq getrunken,
Das Seine-Ufer im Laternenschein.

Ihr kleinen Mädchen auf den Métro-Bänken,
Du Strohhut-Cavalier mit Vorkriegsbart.
Doch muss ich auch der Miss im Louvre denken:
<Oh, look this picture! Rembrandt? Very smart.>

Verschlafne Frühe in Montmartregassen,
Die Fensterkatze auf kariertem Bett,
Und morgentau berlaßner Bal musette
Mit welchem Strauß und leergetrunkenen Tassen...

Ich fand dich anders, als im Buch beschrieben.
Im Reiseführer fehlte das und dies.
Doch zu den Millionen, die dich lieben,
Zähl bitte auch M.K. Hinzu, Paris!

Philippa

Night Mail WH Auden

This is the night mail crossing the Border,
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily as she passes
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

Dawn freshens, Her climb is done.
Down towards Glasgow she descends,
Towards the steam tugs yelping down a glade of cranes
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces
Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.
All Scotland waits for her:
In dark glens, beside pale-green lochs
Men long for news.

Letters of thanks, letters from banks,
Letters of joy from girl and boy,
Receipted bills and invitations
To inspect new stock or to visit relations,
And applications for situations,
And timid lovers' declarations,
And gossip, gossip from all the nations,
News circumstantial, news financial,
Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,

Letters with faces scrawled on the margin,
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,
Letters to Scotland from the South of France,
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands
Written on paper of every hue,
The pink, the violet, the white and the blue,
The chatty, the catty, the boring, the adoring,
The cold and official and the heart's outpouring,
Clever, stupid, short and long,
The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep,
Dreaming of terrifying monsters
Or of friendly tea beside the band in Cranston's or Crawford's:

Asleep in working Glasgow, asleep in well-set Edinburgh,
Asleep in granite Aberdeen,
They continue their dreams,
But shall wake soon and hope for letters,
And none will hear the postman's knock
Without a quickening of the heart,
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?

Katrin

The road not taken by Robert Frost

This deep poem by the American poet Robert Frost (1874-1963) talks about how the choices we make, no matter how small they may seem, can impact and shape our lives.

This is one of the most famous poems in the world, where the speaker chooses to take the “road less travelled by”. He/she doesn’t choose the life most people choose and thanks to this, the speaker of this poem is often celebrated for their individualism.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Hans Christian Andersen (born in Odense and died in Copenhagen) said:

***“To move, to breathe, to fly, to float,
To gain all while you give,
To roam the roads of lands remote,
To travel is to live.”***

Judy

Auf dem Brocken von ?????

Heller wird es schon im Osten
Durch der Sonne kleines Glimmen,
Weit und breit die Bergesgipfel
In dem Nebelmeere schwimmen.

Hätt' ich Siebenmeilenstiefel,
Lief' ich mit der Hast des Windes
Über jene Bergesgipfel
Nach dem Haus des lieben Kindes.

Von dem Bettchen, wo sie schlummert,
Zög' ich leise die Gardinen,
Leise küßt' ich ihre Stirne,
Leise ihres Munds Rubinen.

Und noch leiser wollt' ich flüstern
In die kleinen Liljenohren:
„Denk im Traum, daß wir uns lieben,
Und daß wir uns nie verloren.“

Eva

Hermann Hesse: Stufen (aus Glasperlenspiel)

Wie jede Blüte welkt und jede Jugend
Dem Alter weicht, blüht jede Lebensstufe,
Blüht jede Weisheit auch und jede Tugend
Zu ihrer Zeit und darf nicht ewig dauern.
Es muss das Herz bei jedem Lebensrufe
Bereit zum Abschied sein und Neubeginne,
Um sich in Tapferkeit und ohne Trauern
In andre, neue Bindungen zu geben.
Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne,
Der uns beschützt und der uns hilft zu leben.

Wir wollen heiter Raum um Raum durchschreiten,
An keinem wie an einer Heimat hängen,
Der Weltgeist will nicht fesseln uns und engen,
Er will uns Stuf um Stufe heben, weiten.
Kaum sind wir heimisch einem Lebenskreise
Und traulich eingewohnt, so droht Erschlaffen,
Nur wer bereit zu Aufbruch ist und Reise,
Mag lähmender Gewöhnung sich entrafen.

Es wird vielleicht auch noch die Todesstunde
Uns neuen Räumen jung entgegenschicken,
Des Lebens Ruf an uns wird niemals enden ...
Wohlan denn, Herz, nimm Abschied und gesunde!

Steps?

*As every blossom fades
and all youth sinks into old age,
so every life's design, each flower of wisdom,
attains its prime and cannot last forever.
The heart must submit itself courageously
to life's call without a hint of grief,
A magic dwells in each beginning,
protecting us, telling us how to live.*

*High purposed we shall traverse realm on realm,
cleaving to none as to a home,
the world of spirit wishes not to fetter us
but raise us higher, step by step.
Scarce in some safe accustomed sphere of life
have we establish a house, then we grow lax;
only he who is ready to journey forth
can throw old habits off.*

*Maybe death's hour too will send us out new-born
towards undreamed-lands,
maybe life's call to us will never find an end
Courage my heart, take leave and fare thee well.*

Astrid

The Farmer and the Queen
Shel Silverstein

“She’s coming,” the farmer said to the owl.
“Oh, what shall I, what shall I do?
Shall I bow when she comes?
Shall I twiddle my thumbs?”
The owl asked, “Who?”
“The Queen, the Queen, the royal Queen,
She’ll pass the farm today.
Shall I salute?” he asked the horse.
The horse said, “Nay.”
“Shall I give her a gift?” he asked the wren.
“A lovely memento for her to keep?
An egg or a peach or an ear of corn?”
The wren said, “Cheap.”
“But should I curtsy or should I cheer?
Oh, here’s her carriage now.
What should I do?” he asked the dog.
The dog said, “Bow.”
And so he did, and so she passed,
Oh, tra lala lala,
“She smiled, she did!” he told the sheep.
The sheep said, “Bah.”