

## *Address to an Old Wooden Gate*

Battered by time and weather, scarcely fit  
For firewood; there's not a single bit  
Of paint to hide those wrinkles, and such scringes  
Break hoarsely on the silence – rusty hinges:  
A barbed wire clasp around one withered arm  
Replaces the old latch, with evil charm.  
That poplar tree you hang upon is rotten,  
And all its early loveliness forgotten.  
This gap ere long must find another sentry  
If the cows are not to roam the open country.  
They'll laugh at you, Old Wooden Gate, they'll push  
Your limbs asunder, soon, into the slush.  
Then I will lean upon your top no more  
To muse, and dream of pebbles on a shore,  
Or watch the fairy-columned turf-smoke rise  
From white-washed cottage chimneys heaven-wise.  
Here have I kept fair tryst, and kept it true,  
When we were lovers all, and you were new;  
And many a time I've seen the laughing-eyed  
Schoolchildren, on your trusty back astride.  
But Time's long silver hand has touched our brows,  
And I'm the scorned of women – you of cows.  
How can I love the iron gates which guard  
The fields of wealthy farmers? They are hard,  
Unlovely things, a-swing on concrete piers –  
Their finger-tips are pointed like old spears.  
But you and I are kindred, Ruined Gate,  
For both of us have met the self-same fate.

## *Thank You, Thank You*

... Particularly if yourself  
Have been left as they call it on the shelf,  
All God's chillun got wings,  
So the black Alabaman sings.

Down Grafton Street on Saturdays  
Don't grieve like Marcus Aurelius  
Who said that though he grew old and grey  
The people on the Appian Way  
Were always the same pleasant age,  
Twenty-four on average.

I can never help reflecting  
On coming back in another century  
From now and feeling comfortable  
At a buzzing coffee table,  
Students in 2056  
With all the old eternal tricks.



The thing that I most glory in  
Is this exciting, unvarying  
Quality that withal  
Is completely original.

For what it teaches is just this:  
We are not alone in our loneliness;  
Others have been here and known  
Griefs we thought our special own,  
Problems that we could not solve,  
Lovers that we could not have,  
Pleasures that we missed by inches.  
Come I'm beginning to get pretentious,  
Beginning to message forth instead  
Of expressing how glad  
I am to have lived to feel the radiance  
Of a holy hearing audience  
And delivered God's commands  
Into those caressing hands,  
My personality that's to say  
All that is mine exclusively.  
What wisdom's ours if such there be  
Is a flavour of personality.  
I thank you and I say how proud  
That I have been by fate allowed  
To stand here having the joyful chance  
To claim my inheritance,  
For most have died the day before  
The opening of that holy door.