

## The Praise of Spring



Gonzalo de Berceo  
(1180-1246)

I, Gonzalo de Berceo, in the gentle summertime,  
Wending upon a pilgrimage, came to a meadow's side;  
All green was it and beautiful, with flowers far and wide,—  
A pleasant spot, I ween, wherein the traveler might abide.

Flowers with the sweetest odors filled all the sunny air,  
And not alone refreshed the sense, but stole the mind from care;  
On every side a fountain gushed, whose waters pure and fair,  
Ice-cold beneath the summer sun, but warm in winter were.

There on the thick and shadowy trees, amid the foliage green,  
Were the fig and the pomegranate, the pear and apple seen;  
And other fruits of various kinds, the tufted leaves between,  
None were unpleasant to the taste and none decayed, I ween.

The verdure of the meadow green, the odor of the flowers  
The grateful shadows of the trees, tempered with fragrant showers,  
Refreshed me in the burning heat of the sultry noontide hours;  
Oh, one might live upon the balm and fragrance of those bowers!

Ne'er had I found on earth a spot that had such power to please,  
Such shadows from the summer sun, such odors on the breeze;  
I threw my mantle on the ground, that I might rest at ease,  
And stretched upon the greensward lay in the shadow of the trees.

There soft reclining in the shade, all cares beside me flung,  
I heard the soft and mellow notes that through the woodland rung;  
Ear never listened to a strain, for instrument or tongue,  
So mellow and harmonious as the songs above me sung.

—H. W. Longfellow (translator)

## Anonymous Romance

Lord Arnaldos



The strangest of adventures  
That happen by the sea,  
Befell to Lord Arnaldos  
On the Evening of Saint John;  
For he was out a-hunting—  
A huntsman bold was he!—  
When he beheld a little ship  
And close to land was she.  
Her cords were all of silver,  
Her sails of cramasy;  
And he who sailed the little ship  
Was singing at the helm;  
The waves stood still to hear him,  
The wind was soft and low;  
The fish who dwell in darkness  
Ascended through the sea, And all the  
birds in heaven Flew down to his  
mast-tree. Then spake the Lord  
Arnaldos,— (Well shall you hear his  
words!)— “Tell me, for God's sake,  
sailor, What song may that song be?”  
The sailor spake in answer, And  
answer thus made he: “I only tell the  
song to those

Who sail away with me.”

—James Elroy Flecker (translator)

## Tomorrow

Lope Félix de Vega Carpio  
(1562-1635)

Lord, what am I, that with unceasing care  
Thou did'st seek after me, that Thou did'st wait  
Wet with unhealthy dews before my gate,  
And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?  
Oh, strange delusion, that I did not greet  
Thy blest approach, and oh, to heaven how lost  
If my ingratitude's unkindly frost  
Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon Thy feet.

How oft my guardian angel gently cried,  
“Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see  
How He persists to knock and wait for thee!”  
And oh, how often to that Voice of sorrow,  
“Tomorrow we will open,” I replied,  
And when the morrow came I answered still “Tomorrow.”



—H. W. Longfellow (translator).

## From "Life is a Dream"

Pedro Calderón de la Barca  
(1600-1681)



We live, while we see the sun,  
Where life and dreams are as one;  
And living has taught me this,  
Man dreams the life that is his,  
Until his living is done.  
The king dreams he is king, and he lives  
In the deceit of a king,  
Commanding and governing;  
And all the praise he receives  
Is written in wind, and leaves  
A little dust on the way  
When death ends all with a breath.  
Where then is the gain of a throne,  
That shall perish and not be known  
In the other dream that is death?  
Dreams the rich man of riches and fears,  
The fears that his riches breed;  
The poor man dreams of his need,  
And all his sorrows and tears;  
Dreams he that prospers with years,  
Dreams he that feigns and foregoes,

Dreams he that rails on his foes;  
And in all the world, I see,  
Man dreams whatever he be,  
And his own dream no man knows.  
And I too dream and behold,  
I dream I am bound with chains,  
And I dreamed that these present pains  
Were fortunate ways of old.  
What is life? a tale that is told;  
What is life? a frenzy extreme,  
A shadow of things that seem;  
And the greatest good is but small,  
That all life is a dream to all,  
And that dreams themselves are a dream.

—Arthur Symons (translator)



### Lines Written in Her Breviary

Saint Teresa  
(1515-1582)

Let nothing disturb thee,  
Nothing affright thee  
All things are passing;  
God never changeth;  
Patient endurance  
Attaineth to all things;  
Who God possesseth  
In nothing is wanting;  
Alone God sufficeth.

—H. W. Longfellow (translator).