

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry  
Every blackening Church appalls;  
And the hapless Soldier's sigh  
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most through midnight streets I hear  
How the youthful Harlot's curse  
Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,  
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

### William Wordsworth

*William Wordsworth (1770–1850) lived most of his life in the hills and dales of the English Lake District. His boyhood was rather poor and wild, and he says of himself at the time that he showed "a stiff, moody, and violent temper." A visit to France in 1790 filled him with enthusiastic sympathy for the revolution, but this ebbed away in a few years. His reputation as a poet grew with time, and he was mellowed by both pecuniary and critical recognition. Wordsworth settled at Grasmere, where he led a tranquil and fruitful life crowned by his appointment as poet laureate a few years before his death.*

#### "The Tables Turned" (1798)

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;  
Or surely you'll grow double:  
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;  
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,  
A freshening lustre mellow  
Through all the long green fields has spread,  
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life,  
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher:  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—

Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;  
Our meddling intellect  
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:  
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;  
Close up those barren leaves;  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives.

#### London, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;

Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

### Lord Byron

*George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron (1788–1824), appears as very much the type of volcanic romantic hero. The misery of lameness, a violent and capricious mother, and an extravagant youth (one of his escapades consisted of keeping a bear cub in his rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge) helped form the spirit of revolt which was his lifelong characteristic. The first two cantos of "Childe Harold," published in 1812, met with acclamation. In his own words, he awoke one morning and found himself famous. But, though lionized, his marital difficulties, his temper, and his refusal to conform kept him out of English society*

of more serious reading, but because the events of the revolution have accustomed us to value nothing but the knowledge of men and things: we find in German books, even on the most abstract subjects, that kind of interest which confers their value upon good novels, and which is excited by the knowledge which they teach us of our own hearts. The peculiar character of German literature, is to refer everything to an interior existence; and as that is the mystery of mysteries, it awakens an unbounded curiosity.

The new school maintains the same system in the fine arts as in literature, and affirms that Christianity is the source of all modern genius; the writers of this school also characterize, in a new manner, all that in Gothic architecture agrees with the religious sentiments of Christians. It does not follow however from this, that the moderns can and ought to construct Gothic churches; neither art nor nature admit of repetition; it is only of consequence to us, in the present silence of genius, to lay aside the contempt which has been thrown on all the conceptions of the middle ages; it certainly does not suit us to adopt them, but nothing is more injurious to the development of genius, than to consider as barbarous everything that is original.

### William Blake

*William Blake (1757–1827) was from the first a dreamer and a seer of visions. These he sought to reproduce in poems and plays of great simplicity and directness. His work, original and intense, was neglected and misunderstood by all but a few; but in the verses that follow, he reflects as well as anyone the anti-French, antirationalist reaction of the age.*

#### *"Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau" (1800–1810)*

Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau;  
Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain!  
You throw the sand against the wind,  
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a gem  
Reflected in the beams divine;  
Blown back they blind the mocking eye  
But still in Israel's path they shine.

The Atoms of Democritus  
And Newton's Particles of Light  
Are sands upon the Red Sea shore  
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

#### *"The Tiger" (1794)*

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,  
And watered heaven with their tears,  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

#### *"London" (1794)*

I wander through each chartered street,  
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear,  
In every voice, in every ban,  
The mind-forged manacles I hear.