

~~And you that ache so much to be sublime,
 And you that feed yourselves with your descent,
 What comes of all your visions and your fears?—
 Poets and kings are but the clerks of Time,
 Tying the same dull webs of discontent,
 Clipping the same sad alnage of the years.~~

Reuben Bright (1897)

Because he was a butcher and thereby
 Did earn an honest living (and did right),
 I would not have you think that Reuben Bright
 Was any more a brute than you or I;
 For when they told him that his wife must die,
 He stared at them, and shook with grief and fright,
 And cried like a great baby half that night,
 And made the women cry to see him cry.

And after she was dead, and he had paid
 The singers and the sexton and the rest,
 He packed a lot of things that she had made
 Most mournfully away in an old chest
 Of hers, and put some chopped-up cedar boughs
 In with them, and tore down the slaughter-house.

~~"Oh for a poet—for a beacon bright"~~

~~Oh for a poet—for a beacon bright
 To rift this changeless glimmer of dead gray;
 To spirit back the Muses, long astray,
 And flush Parnassus with a newer light;
 To put these little sonnet-men to flight
 Who fashion, in a shrewd, mechanic way,
 Songs without souls, that flicker for a day,
 To vanish in irrevocable night.~~

John Hollander, ed., American Poetry: The
 Nineteenth Century, vol. 2 (New
 York: Library of America, 1993)