

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF

# POETRY

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Margaret Ferguson  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Tim Kendall  
UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Mary Jo Salter  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



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Will turn to those who would be free  
Ashamed of such base company.

## LXXXIX

360 And that slaughter to the Nation  
Shall steam up like inspiration,  
Eloquent, oracular;  
A volcano heard afar.

## XC

365 And these words shall then become  
Like oppression's thundered doom  
Ringing through each heart and brain,  
Heard again—again—again—

## XCI

Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number—  
370 Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you—  
Ye are many—they are few."

1819

1832

Ode to the West Wind<sup>8</sup>

## I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

5 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

10 Her clarion<sup>9</sup> o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

8. This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains

[Shelley's note]. Florence was the home of Dante, the fourteenth-century poet whose masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*, originated *terza rima*, the verse form of Shelley's poem (see Glossary).

9. Trumpet call.

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

## 2

15 Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,  
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels<sup>1</sup> of rain and lightning: there are spread  
 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,  
 20 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad,<sup>2</sup> even from the dim verge  
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
 25 Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,  
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors,<sup>o</sup> from whose solid atmosphere  
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

*clouds*

## 3

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
 30 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,<sup>3</sup>  
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

35 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou  
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
 40 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
 And tremble and despoil<sup>o</sup> themselves: oh, hear!<sup>4</sup>

*ravage*

1. In Greek derivation, messengers or divine messengers.

2. Frenzied dancer, worshipper of Dionysus (Greek god of wine and fertility).

3. Near Naples, Italy. Pumice is a porous volcanic

rock.

4. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea . . . sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons [Shelley's note].

4

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;  
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
 45 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even  
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,  
 50 As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed  
 Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
 Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!  
 55 A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

5

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
 What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

60 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
 65 And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
 70 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

1819

1820

## To a Skylark

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!  
 Bird thou never wert,  
 That from Heaven, or near it,  
 Pourest thy full heart  
 5 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.