Alone

by Edgar Allen Poe

From childhood's hour I have not been  
As others were; I have not seen  
As others saw; I could not bring  
My passions from a common spring.  
From the same source I have not taken  
My sorrow; I could not awaken  
My heart to joy at the same tone;  
And all I loved, I loved alone.  
Then- in my childhood, in the dawn  
Of a most stormy life- was drawn  
From every depth of good and ill  
The mystery which binds me still:  
From the torrent, or the fountain,  
From the red cliff of the mountain,  
From the sun that round me rolled  
In its autumn tint of gold,  
From the lightning in the sky  
As it passed me flying by,  
From the thunder and the storm,  
And the cloud that took the form  
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)  
Of a demon in my view.

Bluebird

By Charles Bukowski

there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too tough for him,  
I say, stay in there, I'm not going  
to let anybody see  
you.  
there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I pour whiskey on him and inhale  
cigarette smoke  
and the whores and the bartenders  
and the grocery clerks  
never know that  
he's  
in there.  
  
there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too tough for him,  
I say,  
stay down, do you want to mess  
me up?  
you want to screw up the  
works?  
you want to blow my book sales in  
Europe?  
there's a bluebird in my heart that  
wants to get out  
but I'm too clever, I only let him out  
at night sometimes  
when everybody's asleep.  
I say, I know that you're there,  
so don't be  
sad.  
then I put him back,  
but he's singing a little  
in there, I haven't quite let him  
die  
and we sleep together like  
that  
with our  
secret pact  
and it's nice enough to  
make a man  
weep, but I don't  
weep, do  
you?

A Poison Tree

by William Blake

I was angry with my friend:  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.  
  
And I watered it in fears,  
Night and morning with my tears;  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.  
  
And it grew both day and night,  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine.  
And he knew that it was mine,  
  
And into my garden stole  
When the night had veiled the pole;  
In the morning glad I see  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Inferno (excerpt)

by Dante Alighieri

Now the woeful notes begin to make themselves heard; now am I  
come where much lamentation smites me. I had come into a place  
mute of all light, that bellows as the sea does in a tempest, if  
it be combated by opposing winds. The infernal hurricane that  
never rests carries along the spirits in its rapine; whirling and  
smiting it molests them. When they arrive before its rushing  
blast, here are shrieks, and bewailing, and lamenting; here they  
blaspheme the power divine. I understood that to such torment are  
condemned the carnal sinners who subject reason to appetite. And  
as their wings bear along the starlings in the cold season in a  
troop large and full, so that blast the evil spirits; hither,  
thither, down, up it carries them; no hope ever comforts them,  
not of repose, but even of less pain.  
  
And as the cranes go singing their lays, making in air a long  
line of themselves, so saw I come, uttering wails, shades borne  
along by the aforesaid strife. Wherefore I said, "Master, who are  
those folk whom the black air so castigates?"

Vocabulary:

Lamentation – the act of expressing grief

Smite – to strike or hit hard, injure or slay

Tempest – a violent commotion, disturbance, or storm

Rapine – to plunder or steal violently

Blaspheme – to speak evil of (especially referring to God)

Carnal – characterized by the flesh of the body

Castigate – to punish in order to correct

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,   
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.