

The Darkling Thrush – Thomas Hardy

Adapted and arranged by Graham Pratt

Upon the ancient coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weak'ning eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's cold corpse,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his sad remorse.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit over the earth
Seemed empty of desire.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In one full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited ;
An aged thrush, so frail and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for caroling
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.