



*Rocky Mountain Classical  
Christian Schools Speech Meet  
Official Selections*

## RMCCS speech and Bible selection requirements

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### *Bible Selections*

Students may choose a Bible passage of a suitable length according to the guidelines below. It is the responsibility of the student to **print off a copy** of the Bible passage in the **English Standard Version (ESV)** to turn in to their teacher.

### *Speech*

Speech Meet selections have been expanded for **grades 2-10** to include a variety of speeches. A list of approved speeches is found below. You may also, of course, request an outside speech. It is up to you, the student, to choose an excerpt of the speech that is long enough for your grade level. Once you have chosen an excerpt, it is your responsibility to **print off** that excerpt to turn in to your teacher.

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### Requirement and Guidelines

Grade	Minimum Word Count of Speech Excerpt	Minimum Verse Count for Bible Passages	Minimum Lines for Poetry Selections
1st	<i>No speech selections for first grade</i>	5-10 verses	10-20 lines
2nd	100 or more	8-15 verses	15-25 lines
3rd	100 or more	10-15 verses	15-25 lines
4th	200 or more	12-18 verses	20-30 lines
5th	350 or more	14-20 verses	25-35 lines
6th	350 or more	16-22 verses	30-40 lines
7th	450 or more	18-24 verses	35-45 lines
8th	450 or more	20-26 verses	40-50 lines
9th-12th	550 or more	22-28 verses	45-55 lines

## Speech possibilities

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### Political Speeches

Alexander the Great's victory speech, found [here](#)

Pericles' Funeral Oration from Thucydides, found [here](#)

Demosthenes - The Third Philippic, found [here](#)

Queen Elizabeth I, The Spanish Armada speech, found [here](#)

Winston Churchill, We Shall Fight on the Beaches, found [here](#)

William Wilberforce, Abolition Speech

### American

Live your Life, Chief Tecumseh

Citizenship in the Republic, Teddy Roosevelt (Man in the Arena), found [here](#)

Reagan's Farewell Address to the American People

John F Kennedy, Inaugural Address

Martin Luther King Jr., I Have a Dream

Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address

Washington's Farewell Address 1796, found [here](#)

Patrick Henry, Give me Liberty or Give me Death

Theodore Roosevelt, Strength and Decency

### Shakespeare:

*Hamlet*, "To be or not to be"

*Macbeth*, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow"

*Julius Caesar*, Marc Antony's speech "Friends, Romans, Countrymen"

*As You Like It*, Jaques, "The Seven Ages of Man"

### Epics:

- Homer's *Iliad*, Book I, lines 1-50
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI, lines 462-520
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI, lines 556-600
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XVIII, lines 91-150
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXII, lines 157-199
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXII, lines 270-320
- Homer's *Iliad*, Book XXIV, lines 893-944
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XIII, lines 324-373
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XIV, lines 1-53
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XXIV, lines 1-48
- Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XXIV, lines 241-293
- *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, lines 1-75

# Rocky Mountain Classical Christian Schools Speech Meet Official Selections

## Eighth Grade

### **Eighth Grade: Poetry**

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## Eighth Grade: Poetry

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## Birches

*Robert Frost*

When I see birches bend to left and right  
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.  
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them  
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
After a rain. They click upon themselves  
As the breeze rises, and turn many-coloured  
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells  
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust  
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,  
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed  
So low for long, they never right themselves:  
You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground,  
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair  
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.  
But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm,  
I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
As he went out and in to fetch the cows--  
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,  
Whose only play was what he found himself,  
Summer or winter, and could play alone.  
One by one he subdued his father's trees  
By riding them down over and over again  
Until he took the stiffness out of them,  
And not one but hung limp, not one was left  
For him to conquer. He learned all there was  
To learn about not launching out too soon  
And so not carrying the tree away  
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise  
To the top branches, climbing carefully  
With the same pains you use to fill a cup

Up to the brim, and even above the brim.  
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,  
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.  
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.  
And so I dream of going back to be.  
It's when I'm weary of considerations,  
And life is too much like a pathless wood  
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs  
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping  
From a twig's having lashed across it open.  
I'd like to get away from earth awhile  
And then come back to it and begin over.  
May no fate willfully misunderstand me  
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away  
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:  
I don't know where it's likely to go better.  
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree  
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk  
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,  
But dipped its top and set me down again.  
That would be good both going and coming back.  
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

## The Creation

*James Weldon Johnson*

And God stepped out on space,  
And He looked around and said,  
"I'm lonely --  
I'll make me a world."

And far as the eye of God could see  
Darkness covered everything,  
Blacker than a hundred midnights  
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,  
And the light broke,  
And the darkness rolled up on one side,  
And the light stood shining on the other,  
And God said, "That's good!"

Then God reached out and took the light in  
His hands,  
And God rolled the light around in His hands  
Until He made the sun;  
And He set that sun a-blazing in the  
heavens.  
And the light that was left from making the  
sun  
God gathered it up in a shining ball  
And flung it against the darkness,  
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.  
Then down between  
The darkness and the light  
He hurled the world;  
And God said, "That's good!"

Then God himself stepped down --  
And the sun was on His right hand,  
And the moon was on His left;  
The stars were clustered about His head,  
And the earth was under His feet.

And God walked, and where He trod  
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out  
And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw  
That the earth was hot and barren.  
So God stepped over to the edge of the  
world  
And He spat out the seven seas;  
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings  
flashed;  
He clapped His hands, and the thunders  
rolled;  
And the waters above the earth came down,  
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,  
And the little red flowers blossomed,  
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,  
And the oak spread out his arms,  
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of  
the ground,  
And the rivers ran down to the sea;  
And God smiled again,  
And the rainbow appeared,  
And curled itself around His shoulder.

Then God raised His arm and He waved His  
hand  
Over the sea and over the land,  
And He said, "Bring forth! Bring forth!"  
And quicker than God could drop His hand.  
Fishes and fowls  
And beasts and birds  
Swam the rivers and the seas,  
Roamed the forests and the woods,  
And split the air with their wings.



And God said, "That's good!"

Then God walked around,  
And God looked around  
On all that He had made.  
He looked at His sun,  
And He looked at His moon,  
And He looked at His little stars;  
He looked on His world  
With all its living things,  
And God said, "I'm lonely still."

Then God sat down  
On the side of a hill where He could think;  
By a deep, wide river He sat down;  
With His head in His hands,  
God thought and thought,  
Till He thought, "I'll make me a man!"

Up from the bed of the river  
God scooped the clay;  
And by the bank of the river  
He kneeled Him down;  
And there the great God Almighty  
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,  
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of  
the night,  
Who rounded the earth in the middle of His  
hand;  
This Great God,  
Like a mammy bending over her baby,  
Kneeled down in the dust  
Toiling over a lump of clay  
Till He shaped it in His own image;  
  
Then into it He blew the breath of life,  
And man became a living soul.  
Amen. Amen.

The Highwayman (could divide into two parts)

*Alfred Noyes*

PART ONE

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
And the highwayman came riding—  
Riding—riding—  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,  
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin.  
They fitted with never a wrinkle. His boots were up to the thigh.  
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,  
His pistol butts a-twinkle,  
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.  
He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred.  
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked  
Where Tim the ostler listened. His face was white and peaked.  
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,  
But he loved the landlord's daughter,  
The landlord's red-lipped daughter.  
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

“One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,  
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;  
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,  
Then look for me by moonlight,  
Watch for me by moonlight,  
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.”

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,  
But she loosened her hair in the casement. His face burnt like a brand  
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;  
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,  
(O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)  
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

## PART TWO

He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at noon;  
And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the moon,  
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,  
A red-coat troop came marching—  
Marching—marching—  
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord. They drank his ale instead.  
But they gagged his daughter, and bound her, to the foot of her narrow bed.  
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!  
There was death at every window;  
And hell at one dark window;  
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that he would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.  
They had bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath her breast!  
“Now, keep good watch!” and they kissed her. She heard the doomed man say—  
Look for me by moonlight;  
Watch for me by moonlight;  
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!  
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!  
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years  
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,  
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,  
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it. She strove no more for the rest.  
Up, she stood up to attention, with the muzzle beneath her breast.  
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;  
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;

Blank and bare in the moonlight;  
And the blood of her veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horsehoofs ringing clear;  
Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?  
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,  
The highwayman came riding—  
Riding—riding—  
The red coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! Tlot-tlot, in the echoing night!  
Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a light.  
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,  
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,  
Her musket shattered the moonlight,  
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

He turned. He spurred to the west; he did not know who stood  
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own blood!  
Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face grew grey to hear  
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,  
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high.  
Blood red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;  
When they shot him down on the highway,  
Down like a dog on the highway,  
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

. . .

*And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,  
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,  
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
A highwayman comes riding—  
Riding—riding—*

*A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.  
Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard.  
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred.*

*He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*

## The Destruction of Sennacherib

*George Gordon, Lord Byron*

The Assyrians came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
and the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee,  
Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.  
For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!  
And there lay the steed with his nostrils all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.  
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
And lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.  
And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

# Kubla Khan

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round;  
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Emfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momently was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momently the sacred river.  
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;  
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war!  
The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.  
It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid  
And on her dulcimer she played,  
Singing of Mount Abora.  
Could I revive within me  
Her symphony and song,  
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
That with music loud and long,  
I would build that dome in air,  
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.



The Lady of Shalott (could divide into two parts)

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

Part I

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro' the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot;  
The yellow-leaved waterlily  
The green-sheathed daffodilly  
Tremble in the water chilly  
    Round about Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens shiver.  
The sunbeam showers break and quiver  
In the stream that runneth ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle imbowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,  
The reaper, reaping late and early,  
Hears her ever chanting cheerly,  
Like an angel, singing clearly,  
    O'er the stream of Camelot.  
Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,  
Beneath the moon, the reaper weary  
Listening whispers, ' 'Tis the fairy,  
    Lady of Shalott.'

The little isle is all inrail'd  
With a rose-fence, and overtrail'd  
With roses: by the marge unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken sail'd,  
    Skimming down to Camelot.  
A pearl garland winds her head:

She leaneth on a velvet bed,  
Full royally apparelled,  
The Lady of Shalott.

## Part II

No time hath she to sport and play:  
A charmed web she weaves away.  
A curse is on her, if she stay  
Her weaving, either night or day,  
To look down to Camelot.  
She knows not what the curse may be;  
Therefore she weaveth steadily,  
Therefore no other care hath she,  
The Lady of Shalott.

She lives with little joy or fear.  
Over the water, running near,  
The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.  
Before her hangs a mirror clear,  
Reflecting tower'd Camelot.  
And as the mazy web she whirls,  
She sees the surly village churls,  
And the red cloaks of market girls  
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
An abbot on an ambling pad,  
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,  
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:  
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
The knights come riding two and two:  
She hath no loyal knight and true,  
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often thro' the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights  
And music, came from Camelot:  
Or when the moon was overhead

Came two young lovers lately wed;  
'I am half sick of shadows,' said  
The Lady of Shalott.

### Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
And flam'd upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down from Camelot:  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down from Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over green Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down from Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river

He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra:'  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom  
She made three paces thro' the room  
She saw the water-flower bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

#### Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot;  
Outside the isle a shallow boat  
Beneath a willow lay afloat,  
Below the carven stern she wrote,  
The Lady of Shalott.

A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight,  
All raimented in snowy white  
That loosely flew (her zone in sight  
Clasp'd with one blinding diamond bright)  
Her wide eyes fix'd on Camelot,  
Though the squally east-wind keenly  
Blew, with folded arms serenely  
By the water stood the queenly  
Lady of Shalott.

With a steady stony glance—  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Beholding all his own mischance,  
Mute, with a glassy countenance—  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
It was the closing of the day:

She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

As when to sailors while they roam,  
By creeks and outfalls far from home,  
Rising and dropping with the foam,  
From dying swans wild warblings come,  
Blown shoreward; so to Camelot  
Still as the boathead wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her chanting her deathsong,  
The Lady of Shalott.

A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,  
She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
And her smooth face sharpen'd slowly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot:  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden wall and gallery,  
A pale, pale corpse she floated by,  
Deadcold, between the houses high,  
Dead into tower'd Camelot.  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
To the planked wharfage came:  
Below the stern they read her name,  
The Lady of Shalott.

They cross'd themselves, their stars they blest,  
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest.  
There lay a parchment on her breast,  
That puzzled more than all the rest,  
The wellfed wits at Camelot.  
'The web was woven curiously,  
The charm is broken utterly,

Draw near and fear not,—this is I,  
The Lady of Shalott.'

## Mending Wall

*Robert Frost*

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbour know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more:  
There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down."  
I could say "Elves" to him,

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
He said it for himself. I see him there  
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.  
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
He will not go behind his father's saying,  
And he likes having thought of it so well  
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."



## Salvator Mundi: Via Crucis

*Denise Levertov*

Maybe He looked indeed  
much as Rembrandt envisioned Him  
in those small heads that seem in fact  
portraits of more than a model.  
A dark, still young, very intelligent face,  
A soul-mirror gaze of deep understanding, unjudging,  
That face in extremis, would have clenched its teeth  
in a grimace not shown in even the great crucifixions.  
The burden of humanness (I begin to see) exacted from Him  
that He taste also the humiliation of dread,  
cold sweat of wanting to let the whole thing go,  
like any mortal hero out of his depth,  
like anyone who has taken a step too far  
and wants himself back.  
The painters, even the greatest, don't show how,  
in the midnight Garden,  
or staggering uphill under the weight of the Cross,  
He went through with even the human longing  
to simply cease, to not be.  
Not torture of body,  
not the hideous betrayals humans commit  
not the faithless weakness of friends, and surely  
not the anticipation of death (not then, in agony's grip)  
Was Incarnation's heaviest weight,  
but this sickened desire to renege,  
to step back from what He, Who was God,  
had promised Himself, and had entered  
time and flesh to enact.  
Sublime acceptance, to be absolute, had to have welled  
up from those depths where purpose drifted  
for mortal moments.

## Ulysses

*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when  
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades  
For ever and forever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains: but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

    This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—  
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
Of common duties, decent not to fail  
In offices of tenderness, and pay  
Meet adoration to my household gods,  
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:  
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,  
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—  
That ever with a frolic welcome took  
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep  
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.  
Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

## When the Frost Is on the Punkin

*James Whitcomb Riley*

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,  
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,  
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,  
As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmosphere  
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here—  
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;  
But the air's so appetisin'; and the landscape through the haze  
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days  
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty rustle of the tossels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;  
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still  
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill;  
The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover over-head!—  
O, it sets my heart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

Then your apples all is gathered, and the ones a feller keeps  
Is poured around the cellar-floor in red and yeller heaps;  
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is through  
With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr sauce and sausage, too! ...  
I don't know how to tell it—but if such a thing could be  
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on me—  
I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!