

A Nature Poem for Every Day of the Year

Edited by Jane McMorland Hunter



JANUARY

Chill Airs and Wintry Winds

9 JANUARY

The Fallow Deer at the Lonely House

One without looks in to-night
Through the curtain-chink
From the sheet of glistening white;
One without looks in to-night
As we sit and think
By the fender-brink.

We do not discern those eyes
Watching in the snow;
Lit by lamps of rosy dyes
We do not discern those eyes
Wondering, aglow
Four-footed, tiptoe.

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

10 JANUARY

The Sky is low – the Clouds are mean

The Sky is low – the Clouds are mean.
A Travelling Flake of Snow
Across a Barn or through a Rut
Debates if it will go –

A Narrow Wind complains all Day
How some one treated him
Nature, like Us, is sometimes caught
Without her Diadem.

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

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JANUARY

The Stars were Sparkling Clear

Flower in the Crannied Wall

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower – but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

You Spotted Snakes with Double Tongue

FROM A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, ACT II, SCENE II

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong;
Come not near our Fairy Queen.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh
So good night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence;
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail do no offence.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby!
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh
So good night, with lullaby.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

November

FROM THE EARTHLY PARADISE

Are thine eyes weary? is thy heart too sick
 To struggle any more with doubt and thought,
 Whose formless veil draws darkening now and thick
 Across thee, e'en as smoke-tinged mist-wreaths brought
 Down a fair dale to make it blind and nought?
 Art thou so weary that no world there seems
 Beyond these four walls, hung with pain and dreams?

Look out upon the real world, where the moon,
 Half-way 'twixt root and crown of these high trees,
 Turns the dead midnight into dreamy noon,
 Silent and full of wonders, for the breeze
 Died at the sunset, and no images,
 No hopes of day, are left in sky or earth –
 Is it not fair, and of most wondrous worth?

Yea, I have looked, and seen November there;
 The changeless seal of change it seemed to be,
 Fair death of things that, living once, were fair;
 Bright sign of loneliness too great for me,
 Strange image of the dread eternity,
 In whose void patience how can these have part,
 These outstretched feverish hands, this restless heart?

William Morris (1834–1896)

Stars

Alone in the night
 On a dark hill
 With pines around me
 Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars
 Over my head
 White and topaz
 And misty red;

Myriads with beating
 Hearts of fire
 That aeons
 Cannot vex or tire;

Up the dome of heaven
 Like a great hill
 I watch them marching
 Stately and still.

And I know that I
 Am honored to be
 Witness
 Of so much majesty.

Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)