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Preface

The standard text of *In Memoriam* is found in the Eversley Edition of Tennyson's *Works*. Comprising nine volumes published in 1907–8, the Eversley Edition was edited and annotated by the poet's son Hallam, Lord Tennyson, and includes annotations by Tennyson himself. Several major manuscripts of *In Memoriam* are available to scholars in the *Tennyson Notebook* of 1833, the J. M. Heath *Commonplace Book*, the Harvard Library notebooks, the Huntington Library collection, and the manuscript in the Usher Gallery at the Tennyson Centre in Lincoln. The most significant manuscript of the poem, however, which is owned by the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, still remains under partial interdict. Only recently has the Trinity Library permitted scholars to examine the manuscript in detail. Professor Christopher Ricks, the first modern editor of Tennyson to have access to the Trinity notebooks, made such use of them as he could in compiling his recent edition of Tennyson's *Works* (Longman/Norton Annotated English Poets, 1969). The Library's interdict against copying or quoting from them in perpetuity, however—which was imposed by Hallam Tennyson, following his father's wishes, many years ago—severely limits their present usefulness, and so the Eversley remains the most reliable text of *In Memoriam*.

With the exception of changing the section headings from Roman to Arabic numerals, I have allowed the Eversley text to stand. Contrary to some recent editorial practice, I have not, for instance, modernized Tennyson's spelling (e.g., "though" for "tho'"), nor have I supplied the *e* for the poet's apostrophe in such words as *heav'n*. I have tried to retain as nearly as possible the visual and aural qualities of the nineteenth-century text.

My notes, however, are aimed at the twentieth-century reader. For the most part they attempt to identify some of Tennyson's allusions or to supply biographical or historical information for the general modern reader. Occasionally I also supply short explications of some of the more obscure passages, but my intention is more to suggest than to prescribe. A few of my notes function essentially as cross-references. Lacking any but the loosest formal structure—the three Christmases (Sections 28, 78, 104) afford the keystones for what little there is—*In Memoriam* is nevertheless a skillfully unified poem. Its unity inheres, however, not in its architectonics but in a series of remarkably rich internal patterns of recurrent themes,

images, metaphors, and symbols which roll from lyric to lyric throughout the poem. It is of some importance, then, occasionally to commend such patterns to the reader's particular attention and to refer him to similar or contrasting passages in other sections of *In Memoriam* or, infrequently, in other Tennyson poems.

Some of the most interesting glosses on *In Memoriam* have been provided either by Tennyson himself or by his son—and editor—Hallam in the appendix to the Eversley Edition of the poem. Some of my notes are verbatim quotations from that source. I do not intend thereby to suggest that the annotations of either the poet or his son should necessarily be taken as the authoritative last word on certain passages of the poem; the reader must give such interpretations what weight he will in the light of his own knowledge and reading skills. My intention is only to make them readily available. Those notes from the Eversley in which Tennyson is speaking directly as annotator have been enclosed in quotation marks and followed by "—Tennyson." Those in which Hallam Tennyson is speaking as editor have been enclosed in quotation marks and followed by "—Hallam Tennyson." It is to be understood that the source of all such notes, unless otherwise indicated, is the Eversley Edition, and no further attribution is therefore given. Most of the critical essays in this volume carry with them their authors' original footnotes. In the rare instance where an additional note of my own seems required, it is followed by [*Editor*].

Selecting critical essays for a book such as this is a notably chancy undertaking. In the case of *In Memoriam* one's choice is made the more difficult by both the immense quantity of available criticism and the unusually high quality of the scholarly attention which the poem has attracted, particularly during the past two to three decades when important new assessments of all the major Victorian poets, including Tennyson, have burgeoned as never before. Any scholar familiar with the field could immediately suggest the names of distinguished modern critics—Hough, Rutland, Pitt, Shannon, Svaglic, Carr, to name but a few—whose contributions to *In Memoriam* scholarship might profitably have been included in these pages. But choose one must, and within prescribed limits of space. My choices, therefore, imply no claim to inclusiveness: the pieces I have selected comprise only a part of the best that has been said and thought on *In Memoriam*. An extensive critical bibliography, however, may help guide the interested reader to additional major critical assessments of the poem.

The purposes of the general reader seemed best served by arranging the critical essays under two general headings, "Backgrounds and Sources" and "Criticism." Though the distinction implied by such a division is necessarily imprecise, the essays in "Backgrounds and Sources" deal by and large with the subject of the poet in his poem. Their authors approach *In Memoriam* from the viewpoint of, broadly speaking, biographers and intellectual or literary historians. Thus they examine such matters as the origins of the poem, the events surrounding its composition and publication, its contemporary reception and influence, the chronology of its parts, and the biographical knowledge about Tennyson required for an informed reading of his poem. In this section too will be found Tennyson's own comments on *In Memoriam* as well as a modern scholarly examination of three important intellectual sources of the poem: the works of the pre-Darwinian scientists, Lyell, Herschel, and Chambers. My small essay "The Three Faces of *In Memoriam*" summarizes briefly the traditional critical approaches to the poem. In placing it at the beginning of this section, I hope that it may serve to alert the reader at the outset to the various subjects and critical assumptions he will encounter in all the rest of the subsequent essays.

Unlike those in "Backgrounds and Sources," the essays in the "Criticism" section are not only analytical but also, to one degree or another, judgmental. Beyond that, however, no single subject binds them together. The first three critics in this section tend to view *In Memoriam* in what may be called its public context: they analyze the uniquely Victorian matrix of the poem and examine its relationship to the intellectual currents of the mid-nineteenth century (Willey), or they deal with the perennial question of religious faith and doubt in *In Memoriam* (Eliot and Moore). Beginning with A. C. Bradley's well known essay, however, the critics become increasingly concerned with the private, even the belletristic, qualities of *In Memoriam*; they tend to assume that the poem is to be judged as poem, as a wrought verbal object, that is, susceptible to being analyzed and judged according to its own internal principles. Thus three critics examine, among other things, the structure of *In Memoriam* (Bradley, Baum, and Rosenberg)—and in the process come to some strikingly divergent conclusions. Another conceives of the poem as primarily embodying Tennyson's struggle toward the formulation of a satisfactory aesthetic creed (Johnson). Yet others analyze several unifying patterns of imagery inherent in the poem (Buckley), study the intricate relationships among the poem's themes and symbols (Ryals), and examine the significance of the language and tone of *In Memoriam* (Sinfield).

Most of my work in annotating and assembling materials for this volume was done during several long sojourns in New Hampshire, where I relied heavily on the excellent Victorian collection of the Dartmouth College Library. I am deeply indebted to the members of the staff, and especially to the College Librarian, Mr. Edward Connery Lathem, for their interest and assistance and for providing

me with the kinds of facilities and services which help transform scholarly labor into the genuine pleasure it ought always ideally to be. I am also grateful to Dr. Corinne Taylor for her help and to Washington State University for the financial grant-in-aid which made her services available to me. A knowledgeable Victorian scholar, Mrs. Taylor performed many of the bibliographical chores initially required to get this book under way.

ROBERT H. ROSS

The Text of In Memoriam

In Memoriam A.H.H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

[PROLOGUE]

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,[1]
    Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
    By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are those orbs of light and shade;[2]   5
    Thou madest Life in man and brute;
    Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
    Thou madest man, he knows not why,   10
    He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
    The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
    Our wills are ours, we know not how;   15
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;[3]
    They have their day and cease to be:
    They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.   20

We have but faith: we cannot know;
    For knowledge is of things we see;
    And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,   25
    But more of reverence in us dwell;
    That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,[4]

1. "This might be taken in a St. John sense"—Tennyson. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John i.4–5).
2. The moon and the planets, half lighted by the sun, half in shade.
3. I.e., our humanly conceived theological, metaphysical, and scientific systems, or modes of perceiving reality.
4. "Before": in past ages of faith, before modern science had created the gulf between intellectual "knowledge" on the one hand and instinctive "reverence" on the other (lines 25–26). The same theme recurs frequently among the Victorian poets. Cf. Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach, Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*.

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear: 30
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.[5]

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849[6]

1

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.[1]

But who shall so forecast the years 5
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?[2]

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss: 10
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

5. The light of modern scientific knowledge.
6. Arthur Henry Hallam died suddenly on September 15, 1833, in Vienna, while touring the Continent with his father. He was twenty-two years old. News of his death reached Tennyson on October 1, and before the year was out the poet had begun composing the series of lyric poems which, many years later, he would assemble and publish as *In Memoriam*. These "elegies," as Tennyson called them, were composed sporadically over a period of perhaps twelve years. "The sections were written at many different places," Tennyson explained, "and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many" (*Memoir*, I, 304). Having decided tentatively upon publication in 1849, Tennyson assembled and arranged the Elegies into a single long poem and composed his Prologue. In early 1850 he circulated among his friends a few copies of a privately printed early version of the poem called, significantly, *Fragments of an Elegy*. At his wife's suggestion the title was changed to *In Memoriam*, and the poem was published anonymously on June 1, 1850.
1. Lines 1–4: The allusion is to Goethe, according to Tennyson, but the specific reference is obscure.
2. "The good that grows for us out of grief"—Tennyson.

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,[3] 15
But all he was is overworn.'

3. Cf. Section 27, lines 13–16.

2

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again, 5
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.[1]

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale, 10
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:[2]

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood 15
And grow incorporate into thee.

1. Lines 1–8: The yew is pictured as growing in the churchyard, the clock as striking the hours from the church-tower.
2. Lines 9–12: The dark-green foliage of the English yew, an unusually long-lived tree, does not change color with the seasons.

3

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run; 5
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:[1]

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone, 10
A hollow echo of my own,—[2]
A hollow form with empty hands.'

1. An allusion to the then recently advanced nebular hypothesis, which conceived the sun as a dying star eventually to become an inert, burnt-out cinder. Cf. Sections 89, lines 47–48; and 118, lines 7–9.
2. Sorrow, personified, is speaking; phantom Nature's song merely echoes Sorrow's own despair.

And shall I take a thing so blind,[3]
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind? 15

3. Section 3 embodies the speaker's "first realization of blind sorrow,"—Tennyson. Also implicit in Sorrow's message is the doctrine of scientific determinism, which holds that the cosmos is a purposeless agglomeration of matter; that Nature, contrary to the Romantic view, is neither sentient nor benign (line 12); and that life is controlled by mechanical laws of necessity which preclude both free will in man and cosmic control by God. A crucial metaphysical and moral question in Victorian England, determinism, with its manifold implications for "the way of the soul," as the poet subtitled *In Memoriam*, also becomes a central issue throughout the poem.

4

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now, 5
That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years. 10
Break, thou deep vase of chillling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries, 15
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

5[1]

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain, 5
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds,[2] I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold: 10
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

1. This is the first of several sections on the theme of the adequacy—more properly, inadequacy—of poetry as a vehicle for conveying deeply felt human experience. Cf. Sections 8, 16, 20, 21, 23.
2. I.e., widow's weeds, garments worn as symbols of mourning.

6

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
That 'Loss is common to the race'—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make 5
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son; 10
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud 15
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;[1] 20

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove, 25
That sittest ranging[2] golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest; 30
And thinking 'this will please him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns 35
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse. 40

1. According to his son, Tennyson was writing a letter to Hallam at the hour of Hallam's death.
2. Arranging.

O what to her shall be the end?
　And what to me remains of good?
　To her, perpetual maidenhood,[3]
And unto me no second friend.

3. To the girl described in lines 25–40.

7

Dark house, by which once more I stand
　Here in the long unlovely street,[1]
　Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more— 5
　Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
　And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
　The noise of life begins again, 10
　And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

1. Hallam had lived in the house at 67 Wimpole Street, London. Cf. the speaker's second visit to Hallam's house in a changed mood, Section 119.

8

A happy lover who has come
　To look on her that loves him well,
　Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light 5
　Dies off at once from bower and hall,
　And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
　In which we two were wont to meet, 10
　The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
　In those deserted walks, may find
　A flower beat with rain and wind, 15
Which once she fostered up with care

So seems it in my deep regret,
　O my forsaken heart, with thee
　And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet. 20

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
　I go to plant it on his tomb,
　That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

9[1]

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore[2]
　Sailest the placid ocean-plains
　With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn 5
　In vain; a favourable speed
　Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
　Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,[3] bright 10
　As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
　Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
　Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now, 15
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
　Till all my widow'd race be run;
　Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me. 20

1. This poem, composed perhaps as early as two months after Hallam's death, was one of the first written of the elegies which now make up *In Memoriam*. Tennyson considered Sections 9–20 to be something of a unit because of their common subjects: Hallam's death, the return of the body to England, and the burial at Clevedon.
2. The ship returning Hallam's body sailed for England from Trieste.
3. The morning star. Cf. the Phosphor-Hesper linking in Section 121.

10

I hear the noise about thy keel;
　I hear the bell struck in the night:
　I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife, 5
　And travell'd men from foreign lands;
　And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
　This look of quiet flatters thus 10

Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains 15
The chalice of the grapes of God;[1]

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells. 20

1. Lines 12–16: Either the churchyard (lines 13–14) or the chancel (lines 15–16), being hallowed ground, would be preferable to the sea burial imagined in the following lines.

11

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 5
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:[1]

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 10
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all, 15
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 20

1. Lines 7–8: The dew-laden strands of cobweb ("gossamers") show green and gold as they reflect the morning sunlight.

12

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;[1]

1. Like many other images, that of the dove recurs later in the poem, where the effect is very different from the despair suggested in this stanza. Cf. Section 103.

Like her I go; I cannot stay; 5
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies, 10
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air: 15
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away. 20

13

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new, 5
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed, 10
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,[1]
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem, 15
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring. 20

1. "Time" and "many years" are in apposition.

14

If one should bring me this report,
That thou[1] hadst touch'd the land to-day,

1. "Thou": the ship.

And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe, 5
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;[2] 10
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state 15
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange. 20

2. "My father said, [Hallam] was as near perfection as mortal man could be" —Hallam Tennyson. In this line, as an occasional reader has observed, Tennyson unintentionally comes close to blasphemy.

15

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd, 5
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass 10
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe[1] 15
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

1. Cf. the "wild unrest" of this section with the "calm despair" of Section 11 (line 16). Both moods are alluded to again in stanza 1 of Section 16.

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire. 20

16[1]

What words are these have fall'n from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take 5
The touch of change in calm or storm;
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven? 10
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think 15
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan? 20

1. In this section, the I "questions himself about these alternations of 'calm despair' and 'wild unrest.' Do these changes only pass over the surface of the mind while in the depth still abides his unchanging sorrow? or has his reason been stunned by his grief?"—Hallam Tennyson.

17[1]

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move 5
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light, 10
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

1. This and Section 18 were among the first written poems of *In Memoriam*.

So may whatever tempest mars
  Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark; 15
  And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
  Such precious relics brought by thee;
  The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.[2] 20

2. Cf. the image of the grieving widower, Section 13, lines 1–8.

18

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
  Where he in English earth is laid,[1]
  And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth 5
  As if the quiet bones were blest
  Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head[2]
  That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep, 10
  And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
  I, falling on his faithful heart,
  Would breathing thro' his lips impart 15
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
  And slowly forms the firmer mind,
  Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again. 20

1. Hallam was buried in St. Andrew's Church at Clevedon on January 3, 1834. Tennyson did not actually visit Clevedon until many years later.
2. Tenants on the Clevedon estate bore Hallam's body to its grave.

19[1]

The Danube to the Severn gave[2]
  The darken'd heart that beat no more;
  They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

1. This poem was written at Tintern Abbey, which is on the Wye near Clevedon. Cf. "Tears, Idle Tears" from *The Princess*, which was composed at the same place.
2. Vienna, where Hallam died, is on the Danube, and Clevedon, where he was buried, is on the Severn.

There twice a day the Severn fills; 5
  The salt sea-water passes by,
  And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.[3]

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
  And hush'd my deepest grief of all, 10
  When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
  Is vocal in its wooded walls;
  My deeper anguish also falls, 15
And I can speak a little then.

3. Lines 5–8: "Taken from my own observation—the rapids of the Wye are stilled by the incoming sea"—Tennyson. The Wye, which joins the Severn just above Clevedon, is backed up by the tides for about half its course.

20

The lesser griefs that may be said,
  That breathe a thousand tender vows,
  Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is, 5
  And weep the fulness from the mind:
  'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
  That out of words a comfort win; 10
  But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
  Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
  And scarce endure to draw the breath, 15
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
  So much the vital spirits sink
  To see the vacant chair, and think,
'How good! how kind! and he is gone.' 20

21

I sing to him that rests below,
  And, since the grasses round me wave,

I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.[1]

The traveller hears me now and then, 5
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'[2]

Another answers, 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain 10
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng 15
The chairs and thrones of civil power?[3]

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms[4]
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'[5] 20

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay, 25
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

1. Lines 1–4: One of the poet's infrequent uses of the pastoral convention customarily adopted by elegists. Most of the great English elegies adhere more rigorously to the classical pastoral tradition than *In Memoriam* (e.g., Milton's *Lycidas,* Shelley's *Adonais,* Arnold's *Thyrsis*), a difference which is in part explained by the long time span over which the lyrics constituting *In Memoriam* were composed and the fact that Tennyson's initial conception of them was as independent, more or less self-contained poems (see note 6 to the Prologue). In this stanza Tennyson also assumes that Hallam was buried in the churchyard, whereas the body was actually entombed inside the church at Clevedon.
2. In stanzas 2–5 the poet considers the charges which may be brought against him and his poem by the average reader of his "mother age": excessive sentimentality (lines 7–8), love of praise (lines 9–12), and selfish, self-imposed isolation from the stirring events of his time (lines 13–20). Cf. Section 5.
3. Lines 15–16: Perhaps a reference to Chartism, a populist political movement, which, in 1838, presented to Parliament *The People's Charter* demanding legislation to remedy the economic plight and increase the political power of the English laborer.
4. Telescopes.
5. Lines 17–20: Generally, an allusion to the important astronomical discoveries of the age. Specifically, perhaps, a reference to the discovery of the planet Neptune; since the discovery occurred in 1846, the allusion suggests a relatively late date of composition for this section. One commentator claims that it was written "by 1845"; others suggest 1846—one even 1847—as a more likely date.

22

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way, 5
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,[1] 10
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold, 15
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me. 20

1. Lines 1–10: Tennyson first met Hallam in 1828. Their friendship lasted through four full years (line 3), and Hallam died in September 1833, on "the autumnal slope" of the fifth year (line 10).

23

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut
Or breaking into song by fits,[1]
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds, 5
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb; 10
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:[2]

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,

1. See note 6 to the Prologue.
2. Pan, the Greek god of forests, pastures, flocks, and shepherds, represents unrestrained nature.

And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought 15
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood; 20

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.[3]

3. Lines 21–24: *Argive*—Greek. *Arcady*—Arcadia, a rural region of Greece, conventionally the locus for pastoral poetry. The stanza as a whole is a rather inflated way of saying that Tennyson and Hallam read much Greek philosophy and poetry together.

24

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.[1]

If all was good and fair we met, 5
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great? 10
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star 15
We saw not, when we moved therein?[2]

1. Sun spots.
2. Cf. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, lines 189–92.

25

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move 5
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain 10
The lading[1] of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

26

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt[1] 5
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before) 10
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,[2]

i.e. God sd. see what Love becomes— indifference — & Life, nothing

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys, 15
To shroud me from my proper scorn.[3]

1. The heavy burden.
1. "The Eternal Now. I AM"—Tennyson. Thus, the eye of God.
2. I.e., that love will become indifference in the future. Some commentators suggest the insertion of "in" between "And" and "Love."
3. "Proper scorn": self-scorn.

27[1]

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes 5
His license[2] in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth 10
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.[3]

1. For those analysts who argue that *In Memoriam* is structurally divided into four parts (e.g., Bradley), this section is the concluding lyric of Part I. The affirmation of the final stanza suggests, they point out, that the speaker has been able at least to discern some meaning in his sorrow.
2. Lines 5–6: He who lives without self-restraint.
3. Undeserved rest, not earned by emotional commitment, struggle, or sorrow.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost 15
Than never to have loved at all.[4]

4. Lines 15–16: Cf. Section 1, lines 13–16; Section 85, lines 1–4.

28[1]

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,[2] 5
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,[3]
That now dilate, and now decrease, 10
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break 15
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.[4] 20

1. If, as many commentators hold, the structural divisions of the poem are marked by the three Christmases, then Part II begins with this section, which describes the first Christmas after Hallam's death (1833) and extends through Section 77. Being Christmas lyrics, Sections 28, 29, and 30 have a natural unity of their own.
2. The four villages around the poet's home at Somersby in Lincolnshire.
3. Sets of bells are pealed in varying sequences, or changes.
4. The church bells at Somersby were customarily rung on Christmas Eve.

29

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest 5
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font, 10
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;[1]

Old sisters of a day gone by,[2]
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due 15
Before their time? They too will die.

1. Lines 9–12: The speaker bids the members of his family go decorate the church for Christmas as was their custom, though because of his private grief he will not himself take part in the public ritual this year.
2. The "sisters" are the "Use and Wont" of line 11.

30

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.[1]

At our old pastimes in the hall 5
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.[2]

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land; 10
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him 15
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
And silence follow'd, and we wept. 20

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail 25
With gather'd power, yet the same,

1. Compare the adverb in this line with that applied to the second Christmas Eve (Section 78, line 4) and to the third (Section 105, line 4).
2. I.e., the shadow of Hallam.

Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night: 30
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

31

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,[1]
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?' 5
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound, 10
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.[2]

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd 15
The lips of that Evangelist.[3]

1. Lines 1–2: Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha, had died and had been buried in a cave for five days when Christ miraculously raised him from the dead. See John xi.32–44. Cf. Browning's very different treatment of the same miracle in *An Epistle Containing the Strange Medical Experiences of Karshish*.
2. A hill near Jerusalem.
3. St. John, whose gospel recounts the miracle.

32

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede 5
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete, 10
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.[1]

1. Lines 11–12: When Christ visited Lazarus's house after the miracle, in perfect love Mary anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. See John xii.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure, 15
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

33[1]

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays, 5
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good: 10
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,[2]
Thou fail not in a world of sin, 15
And ev'n for want of such a type.

1. With echoes of the Lazarus story still in mind, in this poem Tennyson imagines another brother and sister of his own Victorian age. The sister's faith, like Mary's, is intuitive, uncritical, even naive. The brother's is more intellectual and thoughtful because it has had to survive the assaults of modern rationalistic doubt and skepticism. The poet warns the brother against a too-prideful scoffing at his sister's simple faith. This section should be compared to Section 96, where, under somewhat similar circumstances, a different judgment on Tennyson's part is implied.
2. I.e., in holding an intellectual faith based on rationality and logic, not on mere intuitive apprehension.

34[1]

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,[2] 5
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

1. In this poem and those following, one arrives at an unequivocal statement of the central dilemma forced upon Tennyson by the fact of Hallam's death: if there is no personal immortality, then life for the speaker is devoid of any ultimate purpose or significance, and he would wish only to die. The question he must face, then—and the one with which he wrestles throughout much of the rest of the poem—is as simple as it is basic. In light of the various kinds of evidence both pro and con, can one achieve—and defend—a firm belief in the immortality of the soul?
2. The earth and sun.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose 10
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws 15
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

35

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,[1]
'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here, 5
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow 10
Draw down Aeonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;[2]

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore[3]
Will change my sweetness more and more, 15
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut, 20

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

1. I.e., the grave.
2. Lines 9–12: The image of erosion and sedimentation was derived from Tennyson's reading of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33). *Aeonian* (line 11): "The everlasting hills. The vastness of the Ages to come may seem to militate against that Love"—Tennyson.
3. The shore of the river Lethe, for the ancients the boundary of the underworld.

36

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers, 5
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.[1]

And so the Word had breath,[2] and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds 10
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave[3] 15
In roarings round the coral reef.

1. Lines 5–8: "For divine Wisdom had to deal with the limited powers of humanity, to which truth logically argued out would be ineffectual, whereas truth coming in the story of the Gospel can influence the poorest"—Tennyson.
2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John i.1–3, 14).
3. "By this is intended the Pacific Islanders, 'wild' having a sense of 'barbarian' in it"—Tennyson. Cf. *Locksley Hall*, lines 157–80.

37

Urania[1] speaks with darken'd brow:
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill, 5
On thy Parnassus[2] set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene[3] replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek: 10
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart, 15
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,

1. In Greek mythology the Muse of astronomy. Perhaps following the suggestion implied by her name (which, translated, means "the heavenly one"), Milton transformed her into the Muse of the loftiest poetry, that inspired by heaven. See *Paradise Lost* VII.1–20.
2. A Greek mountain sacred to the Muses.
3. The Muse of elegiac poetry (such as *In Memoriam*), hence "earthly" (line 13). The resolution of the conflict between the two Muses occurs in Section 103.

(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said), 20

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's field,[4]
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

4. "The province of Christianity"—Tennyson.

38

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season[1] gives, 5
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free, 10
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

1. "The blossoming season"—Tennyson. Cf. the tone of Section 83, another, subsequent spring song.

39[1]

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,[2]
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head, 5
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying lips? 10
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

1. Written in April 1868 and added to *In Memoriam* in 1870, this poem echoes the imagery and themes of Sections 2 and 3.

2. "The yew, when flowering, in a wind or if struck sends up its pollen like smoke"—Tennyson.

40

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise 5
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face, 10
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit 15
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee[1] is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven. 20

Hallam as a'd feminized

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,[2] 25
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low; 30
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

1. Hallam.
2. I.e., all they "would desire to be told"—Hallam Tennyson.

41

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange, 5
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with might 10

To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath, 15
The howlings from forgotten fields;[1]

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more, 20

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

1. Lines 13–16: "The eternal miseries of the Inferno"—Tennyson. Hallam Tennyson refers the reader specifically to the Trimmers in Dante's *Inferno*, those spirits who, never having made a commitment either to good or to evil while alive, are denied entrance either to heaven or to hell after death. They "lived without blame, and without praise. They are mixed with that caitiff choir of the angels, who were not rebellious, nor were faithful to God; but were for themselves. Heaven chased them forth to keep its beauty from impair; and deep Hell receives them not, for the wicked would have some glory over them" (*Inferno* III.35–42).

42

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still, 5
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps, 10
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

43

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom[1]
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour, 5
Bare of the body, might it last,

1. "In the passage between this life and the next"—Tennyson.

And silent traces of the past
Be all the colour of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls 10
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime[2] 15
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

2. "Dawn of the spiritual life hereafter"—Tennyson.

44[1]

How fares it with the happy dead?[2]
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.[3]

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint, 5
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs),[4] 10
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out 15
In that high place, and tell thee all.

1. For several possible readings of this section, one of the most obscure in the poem, see Bradley's *Commentary*, pp. 125–135. (See Bibliography at the end of this volume.)
2. Cf. the echo of Section 4, line 5.
3. "Closing of the skull after babyhood. The dead after this life may have no remembrance of life, like the living babe who forgets the time before the sutures of the skull are closed, yet the living babe grows in knowledge, and though the remembrance of his earliest days has vanished, yet with his increasing knowledge there comes a dreamy vision of what has been; it may be so with the dead; if so, resolve my doubts, etc."—Tennyson.
4. In classical myth drinking the waters of the river Lethe induced forgetfulness of all that had gone before.

45

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I:'

But as he grows he gathers much,
    And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'
    And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'   5

So rounds he to a separate mind
    From whence clear memory may begin,   10
    As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
    Which else were fruitless of their due,
    Had man to learn himself anew   15
Beyond the second birth of Death.[1]

1. The purpose of life, the speaker argues, is to establish an individual consciousness, or identity (line 9). Surely, then, the dead must retain some memory of their earthly life; otherwise, man would have to learn himself anew after death, thus rendering the purpose of living merely a waste of "blood and breath" (lines 13–16).

46

We ranging down this lower track,
    The path we came by, thorn and flower,
    Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last   5
    In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
    But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
    The fruitful hours of still increase;   10
    Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.[1]

O Love, thy province were not large,
    A bounded field, nor stretching far;
    Look also, Love, a brooding star,   15
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.[2]

1. Lines 5–12: After death the speaker will comprehend all time past, which will lead him to see that the five years' friendship with Hallam was the "richest field" in the landscape of his life.
2. "Memory fails here, but memory in the next life . . will see Love shine forth as if the Lord of the whole life (not merely of those five years of friendship),—the wider landscape aglow with the sunrise of 'that deep dawn behind the tomb' "—Hallam Tennyson.

47[1]

That each, who seems a separate whole,
    Should move his rounds, and fusing all

1. "The individuality lasts after death, and we are not utterly absorbed into the Godhead. If we are to be finally merged into the Universal Soul, Love asks to have at least one more parting before we lose ourselves"—Tennyson. Thus the speaker resists the notion of the total destruction of personality after death.

    The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet: 5
    Eternal form shall still divide
    The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
    Enjoying each the other's good: 10
    What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
    Before the spirits fade away,
    Some landing-place, to clasp and say,   15
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

48

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
    Were taken to be such as closed
    Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part[1] and prove;   5
    She takes, when harsher moods remit,
    What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
    But better serves a wholesome law,   10
    And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
    But rather loosens from the lip
    Short swallow-flights of song, that dip   15
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

1. To analyze.

49

From art, from nature, from the schools,[1]
    Let random influences glance,
    Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,   5
    The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
    The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

1. I.e., theological and philosophical systems.

And look thy look, and go thy way,[2]
But blame not thou the winds that make 10
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown 15
The bases of my life in tears.

2. The poet addresses an observer, such as the traveler in Section 21.

50[1]

Be near me when my light is low,[2]
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame 5
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring, 10
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life 15
The twilight of eternal day.

1. Tennyson suggested that Sections 50–58 formed a group. In them the speaker's doubts about immortality, springing primarily from his readings in geology, seem almost to overcome what frail trust he has so far been able to muster.
2. The poet addresses the spirit of Hallam.

51

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove, 5
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith? 10
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours, 15
To make allowance for us all.

52[1]

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,' 5
The Spirit of true love replied;
'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears? 10
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:[2]

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in, 15
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

1. The argument in this difficult section rests on the speaker's distinction between perfect, infinite love, which exists in the realm of the ideal, and the imperfect, finite love of our real, human world. Perfect love like Christ's, the speaker complains, cannot be sustained by imperfect human beings, because human love requires the physical presence of the loved one. Nevertheless, in spite of human imperfection and death, which physically sunders the beloved from the lover, the *spirit* of love endures; personified, it counsels the speaker to "abide" in the sure faith that the ideal of love survives all "human frailty" and finitude.
2. Lines 11–12: The years of Christ's life recorded in the Gospels.

53

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give, 5
That had the wild oat not been sown,
That soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth, 10
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be 15
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.[1]

1. Lines 5–16: "There is a passionate heat of nature in a rake sometimes. The nature that yields emotionally may turn out straighter than a prig's. Yet we must not be making excuses, but we must set before us a rule of good for young as for old"—Tennyson.

54[1]

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet; 5
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire 10
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,[2] 15
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry. 20

1. In Sections 54–56 the speaker's faith all but gives way in the face of the rational evidence against immortality implied, he believes, by the geological discoveries of his age. When he reconsiders the same kind of evidence later in the poem, however, his faith and trust have come to have more secure bases, and the implications that he subsequently draws from contemporary scientific thinking are quite different from those drawn here. Cf. especially Sections 118, 120.
2. Cf. the Epilogue, lines 141–44.

55

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?[1]

Are God and Nature then at strife,[2] 5
That Nature lends such evil dreams?

1. "The inner consciousness—the divine in man"—Tennyson.
2. I.e., does the evidence of nature not seem to deny the existence of immortality and to contradict the concept that love is the ultimate law of creation?

So careful of the type[3] she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere 10
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds[4]
She often brings but one to bear,[5]

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs 15
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.[6] 20

3. Species.
4. "'Fifty' should be 'myriad'"—Tennyson.
5. Lines 7–12: Tennyson here suggests the principle of natural selection long before Darwin made it a Victorian commonplace. Primarily because it implied that nature was indifferent to man, natural selection subsequently became, for many thoughtful Victorians, one of the most unsettling concepts in Darwin's theory of evolution as set forth in *The Origin of Species* (1859). Tennyson, according to his son, "was occasionally much troubled with the intellectual problem of the apparent profusion and waste of life and by the vast amount of sin and suffering throughout the world, for these semed to militate against the idea of the Omnipotent and All-loving Father" (*Memoir*, I, 313).
6. "My father means by 'the larger hope' that the whole human race would, through perhaps ages of suffering, be at length purified and saved . . ."—Hallam Tennyson.

56[1]

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.[2]

'Thou makest thine appeal to me: 5
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:[3]
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes, 10
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—

1. This section, which derives largely from Tennyson's reading of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830–33), marks the depth of the speaker's despair. It may be contrasted to the Prologue, wherein the poet's faith reaches its triumphant height, and to Section 118.
2. Lines 1–4. From the evidence of fossils found in quarried stone and cliffs cut away so that rock strata are exposed ("scarped"), we know that not only individuals but entire species have become extinct.
3. In Latin *spiritus* means "breath."

Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw 15
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills? 20

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,[4]
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.[5]

O life as futile, then, as frail![6] 25
O for thy voice to soothe and bless![7]
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

4. "The geologic monsters of early ages"—Tennyson. Particularly dinosaurs.
5. Lines 21–23: If the ultimate law of life is not love but ravine (lines 13–16), then the prehistoric monsters "red in tooth and claw" were at least more in harmony with the natural order than man, for they were incapable of deluding themselves with cruel hopes and dreams of immortality.
6. I.e., if man is no more than another species doomed to extinction (lines 19–20), then life is pointless.
7. The voice of Hallam.

57

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;[1] 5
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll 10
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,'[2] said, 15
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

1. Lines 1–5: Some commentators believe that these lines are addressed to Tennyson's sister Emily, who was Hallam's fiancée; others that they are addressed more generally to the poet's fellow mourners.
2. Latin: "hail!"

58[1]

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace 5
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse[2] answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear? 10
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

1. In Sections 57 and 58 perhaps something of a turning point in the poem has been reached. That the speaker is beginning to recover significantly from the bleak despair of the immediately preceding sections is suggested by Tennyson's own comparison of Section 58 to his *Ulysses*: "*Ulysses* was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feelings about the need for going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*"—Tennyson.
2. Urania. Cf. Section 37.

59[1]

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood, 5
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centered passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day; 10
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some 15
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

1. This poem, which was inserted in the fourth edition of *In Memoriam* in 1851, was designed to parallel Section 3. Sorrow is addressed in each poem. In Section 3, Sorrow declares the universe to be pointless and futile and thus strikes the prevailing tone for roughly the first half of the poem. Here, however, Sorrow is addressed more hopefully (in a marriage metaphor), which suggests the proper tone for the speaker's spiritual recovery in the second half of *In Memoriam*.

60[1]

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere, 5
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days, 10
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I! 15
How should he love a thing so low?'

1. Most analysts of the structure of *In Memoriam* group Sections 60–65 together because of their common theme.

61

If, in thy second state sublime,[1]
Thy ransom'd reason change replies[2]
With all the circle of the wise,[3]
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below, 5
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,[4]
Where thy first form was made a man; 10
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.[5]

1. I.e., in your afterlife.
2. "Ransom'd": regained by Christ's sacrifice of His life. "Change": exchange.
3. I.e., with wise men who have now, perhaps, been sainted.
4. I.e., to the now dimly discernible life of man on earth. Here, as in the two stanzas above, Dantean imagery is suggested.
5. Shakespeare also enshrined his love for a friend in poetry (i.e., in the Sonnets).

62

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;[1]

1. Lines 1–4: In view of the allusion to Shakespeare in the stanza above, cf. the echo of Sonnet 116, lines 13–14.

And thou, as one that once declined, 5
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies, 10
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

63

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these, 5
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound, 10
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.[1]

1. Lines 9–12: Metaphorically the speaker's orbit is that of the earth around the sun; Hallam's is the larger orbit of a far larger planet.

64[1]

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,[2] 10
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope, 15
The centre of a world's desire;

1. According to his son, Tennyson composed this poem while walking in the Strand and Fleet Street, London.
2. "Keys of office of State"—Tennyson.

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream, 20

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea 25
And reaps the labour of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
'Does my old friend remember me?'

65

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing, 5
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:[1]

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me, 10
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

1. Lines 7–8: Cf. Section 48, lines 15–16.

66

You thought my heart too far diseased;[1]
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost, 5
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free, 10
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

1. The poet is addressing a friend, perhaps one of the imagined speakers in Section 21. "Diseased": sunk in gloom.

He plays with threads,[2] he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die, 15
His night of loss is always there.

2. Makes cats'-cradles to amuse children.

67

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,[1]
There comes a glory on the walls;

Thy marble bright in dark appears, 5
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies; 10
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost 15
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.[2]

1. The Severn River at Clevedon.
2. "I myself did not see Clevedon till years after the burial of A. H. H. . . . and then in later editions of *In Memoriam* I altered the word 'chancel' . . . to 'dark church' "—Tennyson. "Tablet": Hallam's commemorative marker on the wall of the church above the vault.

68

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn, 5
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye, 10
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth 15
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

69

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
  That Nature's ancient power was lost:
  The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town, 5
  I found a wood with thorny boughs:
  I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
  From youth and babe and hoary hairs: 10
  They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:[1]

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
  I found an angel of the night;
  The voice was low, the look was bright; 15
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
  That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
  The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand. 20

1. Lines 9–12: Cf. Section 21, lines 5–20.

70

I cannot see the features right,
  When on the gloom I strive to paint
  The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought, 5
  A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
  A hand that points, and palled shapes[1]
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
  And shoals of pucker'd faces drive; 10
  Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
  I hear a wizard music roll,
  And thro' a lattice on the soul 15
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.[2]

1. Pale, as if shrouded.
2. Falling into that half-conscious state which precedes sleep, the speaker strives unsuccessfully to summon to memory the image of Hallam's face (lines 1–12). Only after full sleep has come and the conscious will has ceased to function, however, does the vision clearly emerge, unbidden, from the well of the unconscious (lines 12–16).

71[1]

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
  And madness, thou hast forged at last
  A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul? 5
  Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
  Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
  Of men and minds, the dust of change, 10
  The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
  The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
  The cataract flashing from the bridge, 15
The breaker breaking on the beach.

1. In this section the poet describes a dream which had its basis in a real event. In the summer of 1830 Hallam and Tennyson had traveled through the Pyrenees to Spain on an undergraduate political mission. Tennyson subsequently turned what he saw to good poetic use, as in the visual imagery of stanza 4 of this section. Much of the remarkable imagery of several other poems, among them *The Lotos-Eaters* and *Oenone*, also derived from Tennyson's recollections of that trip.

72

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,[1]
  And howlest, issuing out of night,
  With blasts that blow the poplar white,[2]
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun 5
  To pine in that reverse of doom,
  Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
  With thy quick tears that make the rose 10
  Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
  Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
  A chequer-work of beam and shade 15
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
  Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,

1. The first anniversary of Hallam's death, September 15, 1834.
2. I.e., the wind exposes the white undersides of the poplar leaves.

When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou, 20

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs.

And up thy vault with roaring sound 25
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

73

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw, 5
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:
I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds: 10
What frame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results 15
Of force that would have forged a name.

74

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold, 5
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,[1]
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid, 10
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

1. I.e., the wise men of the ages past.

75

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert 5
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days[1]
To raise a cry that lasts not long, 10
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done 15
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim. 20

1. The poet's characterization of his own age, which he considers hostile to poetry.

76

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;[1]

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro' 5
The secular abyss to come,[2]
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;[3]

And if the matin songs,[4] that woke
The darkness of our planet, last, 10
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these[5] have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain 15
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

1. Lines 1–4: "So distant in void space that all our firmament would appear to be a needle-point thence"—Tennyson. Cf. the cosmic perspective in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, lines 25–36.
2. "The ages upon ages to be"—Tennyson.
3. The yew lives to a great age.
4. "The great early poets"—Tennyson.
5. I.e., the oak and the yew.

77

What hope is here for modern rhyme
  To him, who turns a musing eye
  On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?[1]

These mortal lullabies of pain
  May bind a book, may line a box,
  May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
  And, passing, turn the page that tells   10
  A grief, then changed to something else
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
  Shall ring with music all the same;
  To breathe my loss is more than fame,   15
To utter love more sweet than praise.

1. Lines 1–4: As one casts the mind's eye backward, the perspective of time increasingly contracts the "songs, and deeds, and lives" of even the greatest poets of the past. What hope can there be, therefore, for "modern rhyme," specifically these poems?

78[1]

Again at Christmas did we weave
  The holly round the Christmas hearth;
  The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog[2] sparkled keen with frost,   5
  No wing of wind the region swept,
  But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
  Again our ancient games had place,   10
  The mimic picture's breathing grace,[3]
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.[4]

Who show'd a token of distress?
  No single tear, no mark of pain:
  O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?   15
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

1. This section, which describes the second Christmas after Hallam's death, is the initial lyric of Part III of the poem. Cf. Sections 28–30 (the first Christmas) for some indication of the spiritual progression which has occurred in Part II. Cf. also Section 105 (the third Christmas).
2. The Yule log.
3. Perhaps charades.
4. Blind man's bluff.

O last regret, regret can die!
  No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
  Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.   20

79[1]

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
  Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
  I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.[2]

But thou and I are one in kind,   5
  As moulded like in Nature's mint;
  And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
  Thro' all his eddying coves; the same   10
  All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
  One lesson from one book we learn'd,
  Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd   15
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
  But he[3] was rich where I was poor,
  And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.   20

1. In this section Tennyson addresses his brother Charles. In line 1 the poet quotes himself, Section 9, line 20.
2. In possession.
3. I.e., Hallam.

80

If any vague desire should rise,
  That holy Death ere Arthur died
  Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,   5
  The grief my loss in him had wrought,
  A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd[1] in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
  I hear the sentence that he speaks;   10

1. Held fast.

He bears the burthen of the weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave 15
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

81

Could I have said while he was here,[1]
'My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store: 5
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
'My sudden frost was sudden gain, 10
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat.'[2]

1. I.e., "I wish I could have said. . . ."
2. Lines 9–12: In the metaphor of grain ripened by an unexpected frost, the poet suggests a rudimentary acceptance of his friend's death and even takes some small measure of consolation in it.

82

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him, can fright my faith.[1]

Eternal process moving on, 5
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these[2] are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.[3]

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth: 10
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners[4] in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart 15
We cannot hear each other speak.

1. Lines 1–4: Cf. Section 73, lines 7–8.
2. The physical changes wrought by death.
3. Lines 5–8: The poet further develops the metaphor of Section 81. "Chrysalis": the hard case in which a butterfly is enclosed while it passes through its pupal stage. Thus the spirit, in evolving from lower to higher stages, sheds its body as the butterfly sheds its pupal case.
4. Is stored.

83

Dip down upon the northern shore,[1]
O sweet new-year delaying long;[2]
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,[3] 5
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's[4] darling blue, 10
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.[5]

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud 15
And flood a fresher throat with song.

1. England.
2. The poet is invoking spring. Cf. the first spring song, Section 38.
3. English winter days are more often than not abundantly "clouded."
4. A small spring flower.
5. Laburnum blossoms are brilliant yellow.

84

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good, 5
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on, 10
When thou should'st link thy life with one[1]
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,[2] 15
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire. 20

1. Tennyson's older sister Emily, to whom Hallam had been engaged.
2. Orange blossoms traditionally symbolize weddings, cypresses death.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills 25
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours 30
Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish misson richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought, 35
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee, 40

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant? 45
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content.

85[1]

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all[2]—

O true in word, and tried in deed, 5
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

1. Turning away from excessive manifestations of grief, the poet addresses this section to a new friend, Edmund Lushington, who married Tennyson's younger sister, Cecilia, on October 10, 1842. The marriage is celebrated in the Epilogue to *In Memoriam*. A few commentators have argued that Section 85 is the turning point of the poem.

2. Lines 3–4: Cf. Section 27, lines 15–16.

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd; 10
And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest, 15
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept. 20

The great Intelligences fair[3]
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes, 25
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.[4]

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth, 30
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form, 35
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands[5]
By which we dare to live or die. 40

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd 45
With gifts of grace, that might express

3. Angels.

4. I.e., the time yet to come.

5. "Yet I know that the knowledge that we have free will demands from us action"—Tennyson.

All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find 50
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life, 55
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men. 60

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is 65
Eternal, separate from fears:
The all-assuming[6] months and years
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks, 70
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb, 75
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come. 80

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

6. All-destroying.

And I, 'Can clouds of nature[7] stain 85
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
' 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this; 90
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'[8]

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play 95
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend; 100

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart 105
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place, 110
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one 115
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring. 120

7. Human nature.
8. Lines 89–92: "Think of me as having reached the final goal of bliss, and as triumphing in the 'one far-off divine event/To which the whole creation moves' "—Hallam Tennyson. Cf. the Epilogue, final stanza.

86[1]

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom[2]
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below 5
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood[3]
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath 10
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star[4] 15
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

1. This poem, one of the most notable nature lyrics of *In Memoriam*, was written at Barmouth in 1839. Cf. Sections 38, 83. Subsequently Tennyson told his son that it embodied "pre-eminently his sense of the joyous peace in Nature" (*Memoir*, I, 313).

2. A west wind, Tennyson noted; customarily the clearing wind after a rain.

3. The river wound between two craggy hills.

4. "Any rising star is here intended"—Tennyson.

87[1]

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes 5
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars 10
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past[2] 15
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

1. In this section the poet revisits in imagination Trinity College, Cambridge, where as undergraduates he and Hallam first met.

2. Trinity Avenue.

Another name was on the door:
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor; 20

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labour, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;[3]

When one would aim an arrow fair, 25
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear 30
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw 35
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.[4] 40

3. Lines 21–24: The "Apostles," or the Cambridge Conversazione Society, an undergraduate discussion group to which Hallam and Tennyson belonged.

4. Like Michelangelo, Hallam had "a broad bar of frontal bone over the eyes" —Tennyson.

88

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,[1]
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,[2]
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ 5
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings; 10
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

1. The nightingale.

2. Hedgerows of hawthorn.

89

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
    Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;[1]
    And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down, 5
    My Arthur found your shadows fair,
    And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
    He mixt in all our simple sports; 10
    They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.[2]

O joy to him in this retreat,
    Immantled in ambrosial dark,
    To drink the cooler air, and mark 15
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
    The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
    The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears! 20

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
    About him, heart and ear were fed
    To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets[3] on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon 25
    A guest, or happy sister, sung,
    Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
    Beyond the bounding hill to stray, 30
    And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
    Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
    Or touch'd the changes of the state, 35
Or threaded some Socratic dream;[4]

1. Lines 1–2: The poet is describing the lawn at Somersby checkered by sun and the shadows of elms.
2. Lines 11–12: After Cambridge Hallam had read law in the Inner Temple.
3. Dante and Petrarch, Hallam's favorites among the Italian poets.
4. One of the Platonic dialogues in which Socrates is the chief speaker.

But if I praised the busy town,
    He loved to rail against it still,
    For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down, 40

'And merge' he said 'in form and gloss
    The picturesque of man and man.'
    We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave; 45
    And last, returning from afar,
    Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,[5]

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
    We heard behind the woodbine veil 50
    The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

5. Lines 47–48: "Before Venus, the evening star, had dipped into the sunset. The planets, according to Laplace [*Mécanique Celeste*, 1799–1825], were evolved from the sun"—Tennyson. Thus the poet alludes again to the nebular hypothesis. Cf. Section 3, line 8.

90

He tasted love with half his mind,
    Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
    Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes 5
    Were closed with wail, resume their life,
    They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
    To pledge them with a kindly tear,
    To talk them o'er, to wish them here, 10
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
    Behold their brides in other hands;
    The hard heir strides about their lands, 15
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
    Not less the yet-loved sire would make
    Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace. 20

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

91

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;[1]

Come, wear the form by which I know 5
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;[2]
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet, 10
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form, 15
And like a finer light in light.

1. The kingfisher.
2. The poet addresses Hallam.

92[1]

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast 5
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year; 10
And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

1. Some authorities suggest that in this section Tennyson deals with the belief that communication between the living and the souls of the dead can be established by spiritualism. The poet rejects the notion, they point out, as but "the canker of the brain" (line 3). Other commentators disagree. Spiritualism, in the table-rapping sense, is nowhere suggested, they argue; the poet fears only that the vision of Hallam which he has asked for above (Section 91) may be self-induced, a psychic trick caused by his own memory "murmuring the past" (line 8). The belief in spiritualism, with its crude trappings of mediums, trances, and table-rapping, was not uncommon in Victorian England. Cf. Browning's emphatic rejection of the concept in *Mr. Sludge, The Medium.*

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events 15
As often rises ere they rise.[2]

93

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost, 5
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.[1]

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss 10
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame[2] 15
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

2. "The heavenly bodies are seen above the horizon, by refraction, before they actually rise"—Tennyson.

1. Lines 1–8: No spirit can be apprehended by the senses (Section 92); spirit can be perceived only spiritually. "This spiritual state is described in [94]"—Hallam Tennyson.
2. The human body.

94

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call 5
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair, 10
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates, 15
And hear the household jar within.

95[1]

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn 5
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:
The brook alone far-off was heard,[2]
And on the board the fluttering urn:[3]

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes 10
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;[4]

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees 15
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone, 20

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,[5]
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke 25
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back, 30
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

1. This section, in which the speaker's soul achieves the mystic communion with the soul of Hallam which had been anticipated in Sections 90–94, is one of the notable climaxes—most commentators say *the* climax—of the poem. Almost all the themes, symbols, and images of *In Memoriam* are focused in this section, and in embodying his mystical trance in verse Tennyson climbs to a poetic height only seldom reached.
2. "It was a marvelously still night, and I asked my brother Charles to listen to the brook, which we had never heard so far off before"—Tennyson.
3. A tea-urn.
4. Night-moths, sometimes called ermine moths.
5. The whole time of their friendship.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last 35
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is,[6] and caught
The deep pulsations of the world, 40

Aeonian music[7] measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.[8]

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame 45
In matter-moulded forms of speech,[9]
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease, 50
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore, 55
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said 60

6. "The Absolute Reality"—Hallam Tennyson. In the late 1870s Tennyson altered lines 36–39. From the first edition of *In Memoriam* (1850), and throughout numerous subsequent printings, they had read:

His living soul was flash'd on mine

And Mine in *his* was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, . . .
[*Italics added*]

The reasons for the revision are unclear: "The first reading, 'his living soul,' troubled me, as perhaps giving the wrong impression," Tennyson wrote enigmatically in the notes to the Eversley Edition. The effect of the alteration, however, is somewhat to depersonalize the experience and to make it more abstract. "With reference to the later reading, my father would say: 'Of course the greater Soul may include the less.' He preferred, however, for fear of giving a wrong impression, the vague and more abstract later reading; and his further comment was: 'I have often had the feeling of being whirled up and rapt into the Great Soul' "—Hallam Tennyson.
7. The "music" of the everlasting eons.
8. Lines 41–44: "The trance came to an end in a moment of critical doubt, but the doubt was dispelled by the glory of the dawn of the 'boundless day,' line 64"—Tennyson.
9. Lines 45–46: Ordinary language, because it is designed to express material experience, is incapable of carrying the burden of the meaning of this mystic, immaterial experience.

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

96

You[1] say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew[2] 5
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out. 10
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind 15
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone, 20

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinaï's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.[3]

1. A woman of simple faith, perhaps Emily Sellwood, Tennyson's future wife. Cf. the woman described in Section 33.
2. Identified by Tennyson as Hallam, though the description in the following lines also fits the poet as well.
3. Lines 21–24: The image and Biblical allusion make specific the generalized maxim expressed in lines 11–12. When God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai the Israelites below could neither see nor hear Him because He was hidden in "thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud" (Exodus xix.16–25). "The stronger faith of Moses—found in the darkness of the cloud through commune with the Power therein dwelling—is of a higher order than the creeds of those who walk by sight rather than by insight"—Hallam Tennyson.

97

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;[1]
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life— 5
I look'd on these and thought of thee[2]
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune, 10
Their meetings made December June
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest[3] that he loves her yet, 15
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart. 20

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before, 25
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings,
Of early faith and plighted vows; 30
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes, 35
'I cannot understand: I love.'

1. The poet personifies his love.
2. I.e., Hallam.
3. Proof.

98[1]

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath, 5
That City. All her splendour seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me: 10
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend 15
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr[2] at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:
And yet myself have heard him say, 20

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content, 25
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

1. In this poem Tennyson addresses his brother Charles, who journeyed up the Rhine on his wedding trip in 1836. Tennyson and Hallam had toured the Rhine Valley in 1832, and Hallam had died in Vienna in 1833. Here, as elsewhere, Tennyson's poetic purposes required him to take some liberties with chronology of both year and season. Since Charles's wedding trip took place in May 1836, fidelity to literal chronology would have required that Section 99 precede, not follow, this section. For 99 records the second anniversary of Hallam's death, or September 15, *1835*, almost a year earlier than the wedding trip. Moreover, although the wedding took place in May and the journey up the Rhine immediately thereafter, some of the details of Section 98 suggest that the time was mid- to late summer ("summer belts of wheat and vine," line 4). By making this section a summer poem, however, Tennyson preserves the integrity of the seasonal cycle upon which much of the structure of *In Memoriam* depends. The movement now is forward, from the summer of this section, through the autumn of 99, to the Third Christmas of 104–5, and to the paean to the new year in 106 with its affirmation and suggestion of fresh starts and new beginnings. The way of the soul is not necessarily the way of literal chronology.

2. "Snarl"—Tennyson.

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks 30
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

99

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,[1]
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red 5
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,[2] 10
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth, 15
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,[3]
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me. 20

1. September 15, 1835, the second anniversary of Hallam's death. Cf. Section 72, line 1ff. See also note 1, Section 98.

2. The coming of winter.

3. "The ends of the axis of the earth, which move so slowly that they seem not to move, but slumber"—Tennyson.

100[1]

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold, 5
Or low morass and whispering reed,

1. Sections 100–3 record the feelings engendered in the poet by the move of the Tennyson family from the familiar surroundings of Somersby, Lincolnshire, to High Beech, Epping Forest, not far north of London. The move occurred in 1837, two years after the second anniversary of Hallam's death, the subject of Section 99 immediately preceding. But, again, Tennyson's poetic purpose is served by a disregard of literal chronology. "A Farewell to Old Scenes," as one commentator calls them, Sections 100–3 serve not only as a closing to Part III of the poem but also as a poetically appropriate transition to the new affirmative tone of Part IV. See note 1, Section 98.

Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill, 10
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves, 15
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die. 20

101

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair, 5
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain, 10
At noon or when the lesser wain[1]
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake;[2]
Or into silver arrows break 15
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child; 20

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe,[3] or lops the glades;

1. The constellation of Ursa Minor, or the Little Dipper, which revolves around the North Star.
2. "Hern": heron. "Crake": corncake, a common European marsh bird.
3. Strictly, land attached to a parsonage; but here perhaps generally, a field.

And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

102

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home, 5
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love[1]
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song,[2] and heard 10
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers, 15
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way. 20

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

1. "First, the love of native place; second, this enhanced by the memory of A. H. H."—Tennyson.
2. Tennyson's early poetry.

103[1]

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

1. This section is an allegory, although it is also set in the framework of a literal event, namely, the Tennyson family's departure from Somersby. Emblematically, life is conceived as a voyage down a river to the sea, which represents eternity. Both structurally and esthetically this is one of the most significant sections of the poem. Being the final section of Part III, it is situated at a crucial position; it contains—in a sense, sums up—almost all the themes and symbols introduced in *In Memoriam*; it records the poet's release from most of the spiritually debilitating influences of his grief (the dream leaves him "content"—line 4); and in it Tennyson comes to an important conclusion regarding his role as nineteenth-century poet in general and elegist of Arthur Henry Hallam in particular. Tennyson himself took some pains to explain some of the more obscure symbols in this section (see following notes).

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
  And maidens with me:[2] distant hills
  From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.[3]

The hall with harp and carol rang.
  They sang of what is wise and good 10
  And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd,[4] to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
  The shape of him I loved, and love
  For ever: then flew in a dove 15
And brought a summons from the sea:[5]

And when they learnt that I must go
  They wept and wail'd, but led the way
  To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below; 20

And on by many a level mead,
  And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
  We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore 25
  And roll'd the floods in grander space,
  The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;[6]

And I myself, who sat apart
  And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb; 30
  I felt the thews of Anakim,[7]
The pulses of a Titan's[8] heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
  And one would chant the history
  Of that great race, which is to be. 35
And one the shaping of a star;[9]

2. "They are the Muses, poetry, arts—all that made life beautiful here, which we hope will pass with us beyond the grave"—Tennyson. The maidens also stand for Tennyson's aspirations for his own poetry.
3. Lines 6–8: "*Hidden summits*: the divine. *River*: life"—Tennyson. Cf. the garden and water imagery in *The Poet's Mind* (1830).
4. Hallam, who personified the three virtues extolled by the maidens above (lines 10–11).
5. "Eternity"—Tennyson. Cf. *Crossing the Bar.*
6. Lines 25–28ff: Tennyson describes the passage down the ever-broadening river as "the great progress of the age, as well as the opening of another world."
7. Biblical giants, sons of Anak. Cf. Numbers xiii.33; Deuteronomy ix.2.
8. The Titans were primeval giants of Greek mythology.
9. Lines 33–36: "The great hopes of humanity and science"—Tennyson. On "the great race that is to be" see the Epilogue, lines 128–44.

Until the forward-creeping tides
  Began to foam, and we to draw
  From deep to deep,[1] to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides. 40

The man we loved was there on deck,
  But thrice as large as man he bent
  To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind 45
  Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
  'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
  An answer from my lips, but he 50
  Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
And go with us:' they enter'd in.[2]

And while the wind began to sweep
  A music out of sheet and shroud,
  We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud 55
That landlike slept along the deep.

1. I.e., from the river to the sea, from this life to eternal life. Cf. *Crossing the Bar.*
2. Lines 41–52: In the dream Hallam bids the maidens board the ship and pass with the poet to the other world. Thus, as Tennyson wrote of this passage, poetry, the arts, "everything that made life beautiful here, we may hope may pass on with us beyond the grave." Thus, too, the passage suggests, the poet's elegy has found favor with the spirit of his dead friend, Hallam.

104

The time draws near the birth of Christ;[1]
  The moon is hid, the night is still;
  A single church below the hill[2]
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below, 5
  That wakens at this hour of rest
  A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
  In lands where not a memory strays, 10
  Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.[3]

1. The third Christmas after Hallam's death and thus, according to the fictive time established within *In Memoriam*, 1835. In literal, biographical time, however, the Christmas being described is that of 1837, for the setting of this lyric is High Beech. See note 1, Section 98. This section begins Part IV of *In Memoriam*. Cf. Sections 28, 30, 78.
2. Waltham Abbey Church, according to Tennyson.
3. "High Beech, Epping Forest"—Tennyson.

105

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's land
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.[1]

Our father's dust is left alone 5
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse[2]
The genial hour with mask and mime; 10
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved, 15
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more? 20

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.[3] 25
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.[4]

1. I.e., their new surroundings still seem foreign, unfamiliar. Cf. "sadly," Section 30, line 4; "calmly," Section 78, line 4.
2. "In the old sense—wrong"—Tennyson.
3. Lines 23–25: "The scintillating motion of the stars that rise"—Tennyson.
4. Lines 27–28: Cf. the Epilogue, lines 132–44.

106

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new, 5
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more; 10
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life, 15
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.[1] 20

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease; 25
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.[2]

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand; 30
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.[3]

1. A restatement of the poet's resolve to direct his art to nobler ends than merely purveying grief. Cf. the first note 1, Section 103; Prologue, lines 41–44.
2. Cf. Revelations xx.
3. A time in the future, Tennyson wrote, "when Christianity without bigotry will triumph [and] the controversies of creeds should have vanished" (*Memoir*, I, 326).

107

It is the day when he was born,[1]
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves 5
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs 10
Above the wood which grides[2] and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns[3]

1. February 1, 1838, which would have been Hallam's twenty-seventh birthday.
2. Grates.
3. Ice-encrusted branches.

Together, in the drifts that pass[4]
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine, 15
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by; 20

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

4. Fine snow squalls which fall into the sea. Perhaps, also, drifts of dark clouds.

108

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith, 5
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns? 10
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise, 15
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.[1]

1. Lines 15–16: As Tennyson originally wrote it, line 16 reads, "Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee." Upon reading the manuscript of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson's friend James Spedding advised the poet, "You might give the thought a turn of this kind: 'The wisdom that died with you is lost forever, but out of the loss itself some other wisdom may be gained.' "—Hallam Tennyson. Tennyson apparently agreed with Spedding's suggestion and changed his original line to the form which appears here, the major effect of which is to put more emphasis on the thought embodied in line 15. But never one to abandon an idea once conceived, Tennyson used precisely his original line in a subsequent section of the poem. See Section 113, lines 1–2.

109

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;[1]

1. Lines 1–2: I.e., the fountains of Hallam's talk never dried because they sprang from his inexhaustible genius within.

The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;[2]

Seraphic intellect and force 5
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom; 10
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat, 15
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face; 20

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.[3]

2. I.e., philosophy and literature.
3. Cf. the echo of Section 108, lines 15–16, and of the last line of the Prologue.

110

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:[1]
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung, 5
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent[2] at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school 10
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;

1. "Rathe": from Old English *hreath*, "early." Thus, both young and old men.
2. The liar or dissimulator.

And loved them more, that they were thine, 15
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will. 20

111

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,[1]
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil 5
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call, 10
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower 15
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain[2] fancy fleeting by,
Drew in[3] the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light; 20

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

1. The golden orb held by a king and symbolic of rule.
2. Churlish, ignoble.
3. Contracted.

112

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.[1]

1. Lines 1–4: "*High wisdom* is ironical. 'High wisdom' i.e., some hypothetical worldly-wise friend] has been twitting the poet that although he gazes with calm and indulgent eyes on unaccomplished greatness, yet he makes light of narrower natures more perfect in their own small way"—Hallam Tennyson. *Glorious insufficiencies*: "unaccomplished greatness such as Arthur Hallam's"—Tennyson. *Set Light by*: underestimate. The poet's answer to "high wisdom" is contained in stanzas 2–4.

But thou, that fillest all the room 5
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.[2]

For what wert thou?[3] some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch, 10
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd 15
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

2. "Those that have free will, but less intellect"—Tennyson.
3. I.e., Hallam, who, the poet claims in the following lines of this section and Section 113, had an intellect of such great potential as to be inestimable.

113

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee[1]
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen 5
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent, 10
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth 15
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings and with cries
And undulations to and fro. 20

1. Lines 1–2: Cf. the significant variation of Section 108, lines 15–16.

114[1]

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix

1. In this section Tennyson develops an important theme which he had already touched on several times in *In Memoriam* and which he also developed in other poems: the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. See especially the Prologue, stanzas 5, 6, and 7, and Sections 36 and 37. See also *Locksley Hall*, lines 134–44, and *The Ancient Sage*, lines 37–46.

With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars?[2] Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire: 5
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death. 10
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons?[3] Fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place; 15
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child: 20

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee, 25
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

2. The metaphor rests upon an allusion to the Pillars of Hercules, believed by the ancients to be the limits of the knowable world.
3. Lines 12–13ff: According to Greek myth, Pallas Athene sprang from the brain of Zeus, father of gods. By means of both metaphor and personification (Knowledge is consistently feminine, "she") throughout this section Tennyson elaborates the Pallas myth, but he does so only to make a crucial distinction. Whereas the Greek Pallas was the goddess of Wisdom, sprung from the brain of Zeus, our modern Athene is not the genuine goddess but rather "some *wild* Pallas," the goddess of Knowledge only, who has burst from "the brain of Demons" (lines 12–13). In Tennyson's view she is therefore "the second, not the first" (line 16); she must be guided, that is, by Wisdom, for our modern Pallas "is earthly of the mind," but Wisdom is "heavenly of the soul" (lines 21–22). Thus the poet again expresses all but directly one of his major fears for his age: with its unbounded humanistic faith in the primacy of knowledge, in its "onward race/For power" over matter (lines 14–15), and in its emphasis on man's rational faculties, it tends to minimize, if not exclude, the qualities of soul, heart, and intuition. Cf. the Prologue, lines 21–32.

115[1]

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick[2]

1. Another spring song, this section may be compared with Sections 38, 83, and 91.
2. Tangled, budding hedgerows.

About the flowering squares,[3] and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long, 5
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale, 10
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam,[4] and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky 15
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest. 20

3. Fields.
4. The sea.

116

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colours of the crescent prime?[1]

Not all: the songs, the stirring air, 5
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone; 10
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead;
Less yearning for the friendship fled, 15
Than some strong bond which is to be.

1. 'Growing spring"—Tennyson.

117

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue, 5

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.[1] 10

1. Lines 9–12: However his time on earth may be measured, by the hourglass, the sundial, clocks, or the movement of the stars, its only function will be to increase the speaker's joy in his ultimate heavenly reunion with Hallam. Cf. the previous description of that anticipated meeting, Section 47, lines 6–16.

118[1]

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant labouring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;[2]

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread 5

In tracts of fluent heat began,[3]
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,[4]
Till at the last arose the man; 10

1. In this section, thematically one of the most important in the poem, Tennyson returns to a subject he had dealt with earlier, notably in Sections 55 and 56: the implications of recent scientific discoveries for contemporary religious and moral creeds. Here he disavows the pessimistic conclusions he had reached in the earlier sections and concludes that the evidence upon which contemporary theories of geology and evolutionary development are based affords no cause for despair over the ultimate extinction of the human race (as he had concluded in Section 56). On the contrary, modern scientific discoveries themselves give some hope for believing in the reality of human progress. Sections 55 and 56 had been written under the influence largely of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, but Section 118 shows evidence of Tennyson's having read some of the more optimistic scientific works of his age as well, among them Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* and Herschel's *Discourses on Natural Philosophy*.
2. Two of the perishable organic ingredients of the human body.
3. Lines 7–9: The allusion is to the nebular hypothesis of Laplace, who in the *Mécanique Celeste* (1799–1825) theorized that our solar system has been formed from out of an original gaseous nebula, the matter in which, as it gradually cooled, compacted into an incandescent sun and the cooler planets that revolved around it.
4. I.e., storms which last through entire cosmic ages. Taken together, lines 10 and 11 are obscure. Presumably Tennyson alludes to those primeval geologic forces (metaphorically, "storms") which shaped the contours of the earth after it had been formed (e.g., the cooling of the crust and the consequent thrusting up of mountains in "seeming random" forms, or the violent action of earthquakes or volcanoes as described by Lyell). Whatever the specific allusion, clearly in lines 7–12 Tennyson is reflecting the theories of the creation and development of the earth and of man as many of the thoughtful scientists of his age (whom the poet identifies only as "they" in line 7) had come to see them: the earth was not necessarily God-created, they argued, but the passive result of natural cosmic forces (metaphorically, the "prey" of those forces); and man arose not through any act of special creation by a Deity but only when natural laws had created an environment propitious to his existence.

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,[5]
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time 15

Within himself, from more to more;[6]
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore, 20

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd[7] with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly 25
The reeling Faun,[8] the sensual feast;
Move upward,[9] working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.[1]

5. Lines 13–14: Presumably Tennyson is saying that the human race, once in existence, will progress to increasingly higher forms of being; but the precise meaning is obscure.
6. Lines 16–17: Man will progress, that is, *if* he understands the necessity for emulating in his moral universe the pattern of progressive development for which nature has furnished the archetypes in the physical universe. Cf. lines 25–28. "Type" (line 16) has the force of *represent, or emulate*.
7. Beaten into shapes.
8. A mythic creature—part man, part beast—who represents man's sensual, libidinous nature.
9. I.e., from the merely sensual to the moral planes of life.
1. "Ape": symbolic of the subhuman portions of man's phylogenetic inheritance. "Tiger": symbolic of man's amoral, natural cruelty, also a part of his racial inheritance. Both must be repressed ("die") if man is to progress morally and become "the herald of a higher race" (line 14).

119[1]

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see 5
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye; 10
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

1. In this section the speaker again stands before Hallam's house in Wimpole Street. Cf. Section 7.

120[1]

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries;[2] not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;[3]

Not only cunning casts in clay:[4] 5
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matter Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.[5]

Let him, the wiser man[6] who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape 10
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.[7]

1. This section continues Tennyson's attack on scientific materialism begun in Section 118. The spiritual and the material, he argues, function in different realms; the former does not grow out of the latter.
2. Soulless mechanisms controlled by electrical ("magnetic") forces. Contemporary biologists had recently theorized that impulses generated in the brain were translated into muscular action by means of minute electrical impulses traveling along the nerves.
3. "'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me?' (I Cor. xv.32)"—Tennyson.
4. I.e., bodies without souls.
5. I.e., "I would not need, or believe." But one critic paraphrases the sentence as "I would kill myself."
6. The man who heeds the materialistic scientist. The epithet "wiser" is therefore sarcastic.
7. Lines 9–12: "Spoken ironically against mere materialism, not against evolution"—Tennyson.

121[1]

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun[2]
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain, 5
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,[3]
By thee the world's great work is heard 10
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink, 15
And see'st the moving of the team.

1. Tennyson composed this section at Shiplake, where he and Emily Sellwood were married.
2. The evening star, which shines after sunset.
3. The morning star, which shines at dawn.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,[4]
Thou, like my present and my past,[5] 20
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

4. "The evening star is also the morning star, death and sorrow brighten into death and hope"—Tennyson. *Hesper* and *Phosphor* are two names for the same planet, Venus. At some periods of the year Venus rises as the morning star, at others as the evening star. The remarkable development of the patterns of imagery and metaphor in this section depend in part, too, upon the recognition that Venus, whether under the name *Phosphor* or *Hesper*, is the planet of love.
5. If Phosphor symbolizes the poet's past and Hesper his present, both are made one in love.

122[1]

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,[2]
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe, 5
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,[3] 10
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy, 15
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,[4]
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose. 20

1. What specific past event the poet may have had in mind by his references to "then," "again," and "once more" (lines 1, 4, 5) has caused critics to disagree sharply over the proper reading of this section. Perhaps the most likely reference is to the mystic trance Tennyson described in Section 95, when the poet felt "the living soul" of Hallam "flash'd" on his own.
2. "That of grief"—Tennyson.
3. Cf. Section 50, lines 1, 5, 9, 13.
4. Each dewdrop reflects a small rainbow.

123[1]

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!

1. In this section Tennyson again turns the findings of contemporary geology to poetic use. His imagination seizes upon the incessant processes of erosion of land masses by water, sedimentation, and uplifting of sea bottoms ("the interchange of sea and land," as Lyell calls it) as emblematic of the ceaseless change in the material world of becoming, which flows "from form to form, and nothing stands" (line 6). To this he contrasts the permanence of the spiritual world of being (stanza 3).

There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.[2]

The hills are shadows, and they flow 5
From form to form, and nothing stands:
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true; 10
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.[3]

124

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;[1]

I found Him not in world or sun, 5
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:[2]

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more' 10
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart 15
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'[3]

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamour[4] made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;[5] 20

2. "Balloonists say that even in a storm the middle sea is noiseless"—Tennyson.
3. Lines 11–12: Cf. Section 57, lines 15–16.
1. Lines 1–4: We sense the Eternal Spirit both inside us and outside, in moments of both doubt and faith. Line 4: Cf. the Prologue, line 24.
2. Lines 5–8: The speaker rejects the argument from design (i.e., that the existence of design in nature proves the existence of a Designer) as well as other rational arguments for the existence of God. Cf. Browning's attack on "natural theology" in *Caliban upon Setebos*.
3. Lines 13–16: A quintessential statement of Tennyson's belief that spiritual reality can be apprehended only through the heart, not through the reason.
4. I.e., the "clamour" of the emblems of materialism described in lines 10–12 above.
5. Lines 17–20: Cf. the image of the crying child in this passage and the very different use to which the poet puts the same image in Section 54, lines 17–20.

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

125

Whatever I have said or sung, 5
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes; 10
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he[1] felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong 15
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,[2]
And this electric force,[3] that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail. 20

1. I.e., Love.
2. Lines 13–14: The metaphor of death in these lines may be contrasted to that in *Crossing the Bar*.
3. Tennyson concedes to the neurologists of his age that nerve force is exerted by means of small electric currents. Such materialistic explanations, however, take into account neither man's soul nor the reality of love (as also argued in Section 124 above, lines 13–16).

126

Love is and was my Lord and King,[1]
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord, 5
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place, 10
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

1. The metaphor of love as king is anticipated in the previous section, line 12.

127

And all is well, tho' faith and form[1]
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread, 5
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.[2]

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, that lazar,[3] in his rags: 10
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky, 15
And the great Aeon[4] sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well. 20

1. Cf. Section 33, stanza 3. The "forms" are those religious creeds through which faith was formally expressed in past ages but which, in Tennyson's time, have been "sunder'd" from faith by the inroads of skepticism and determinism. Tennyson's reading of the ills of his age in this section and others is remarkably similar to the views habitually expressed by another social and political conservative, Thomas Carlyle (see the essay *Characteristics*).
2. Lines 6–8: Possibly an allusion to the three French revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1848, though there is evidence that this lyric was written some time before 1848.
3. A diseased person, usually a leper.
4. The vast period covered by modern history.

128

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood 5
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;[1]
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do 10
With old results that look like new;[2]
If this were all your mission here,

1. I.e., races now in power may degenerate.
2. With change, that is, but not progress.

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries, 15
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower; 20

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.[3]

3. Lines 22–24: Cf. the Epilogue, lines 141–44.

129

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine; 5
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood; 10
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.[1]

1. Lines 11–12: Tennyson's wife remarked that the "two faiths" of this section (faith in the individual immortality of Hallam and in the progress of the human race) "are in reality the same. The thought of [Hallam] as human and divine mingles with all great thoughts as to the destiny of the world (cf. [cxxx])" (Eversley, p. 264).

130

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess; 5
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now; 10
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice:
I prosper, circled with thy voice; 15
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

131[1]

O living will[2] that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,[3]
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust 5
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved 10
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

1. "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real: it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you; but you never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me"—Tennyson.
2. Human free will.
3. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians x.4).

[EPILOGUE][1]

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss 5
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house;[2] nor proved
Since that dark day[3] a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years:[4] they went and came, 10
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

1. Though perhaps written several years later, the Epilogue gives the impression of having been written on the wedding day of Edmund Lushington and Cecilia Tennyson, the poet's youngest sister, which was October 10, 1842. As Tennyson himself pointed out, *In Memoriam* "begins with a funeral and ends with a marriage—begins with death and ends with promise of a new life. . . ." In spite of the poet's defense of the Epilogue, however, some critics have argued that it has at best only minimal poetic merit and fails to harmonize with the high solemnity of the sections which have just preceded it.
2. Lines 6–7: The "he" is Hallam, and Tennyson's reference is to the engagement of Hallam to the eldest Tennyson sister, Emily, which was of course sundered by Hallam's death.
3. The day of Hallam's death.
4. I.e., 1833 to 1842.

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set, 15
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before; 20

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower, 25
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look 30
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.[5]
For thee she grew, for thee she grows 35
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower. 40

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee, 45
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,[6]
That shielded all her life from harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead; 50

5. Lines 33–34: I.e., Hallam foresaw when she was yet a child that Cecilia would grow into a beautiful woman.
6. Lines 45–46: Tennyson was eight years older than Cecilia.

Their pensive tablets round her head,[7]
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain 55
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names,[8] which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead 60

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours 65
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave. 70
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast, 75
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France. 80

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I 85
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.[9]

7. Lines 50–51: Cecilia stands before the church altar over the remains of those buried below the chancel and surrounded by memorial tablets to the dead.
8. In the parish register.
9. Lines 86–88. The "stiller guest" is the spirit of Hallam.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favour'd horses wait; 90
They rise,[1] but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass 95
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we came at fall of dew. 100

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire: 105
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale 110
All night the shining vapour sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread 115
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendour fall 120
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast conception
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase, 125
Result in man,[2] be born and think,

1. From the wedding feast.
2. Lines 123–26: A child will be conceived on their wedding night, and the embryo will repeat, throughout its prenatal period, all the evolutionary stages of the human race from the lowest animal phases to the highest human form.

And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command (130)
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed (135)
Of what in them is flower and fruit;[3]

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God, (140)

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.[4]

3. Lines 126–36: In this passage Tennyson again asserts his belief not only in human development but in the progress of the race to ever higher forms, and he anticipates some far-off time when man will in fact have evolved into a species "no longer half-akin to brute" (line 133). Here, as in the lines immediately above, the poet reflects the concepts put forward by Chambers in the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*.

4. Lines 143–44: Cf. Section 54, lines 14–15; Section 55, lines 9–28.

Backgrounds and Sources