

TO A SKYLARK.

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The skylark is a European bird, and is not found in America. It makes its nest on the ground but rises high in the air, sometimes beyond the point of vision, to sing. The Canadian Horned Lark, which is common in our fields in early spring, sometimes also sings high in the air above its nest.

12. *sunken sun.* The sun is still below the horizon.

15. *unbodied joy.* The lark is so high in the air that it no longer appears to him as a bird; but hearing its song he thinks of it only as an ethereal source of joy.

22-25. The rays of light from the morning star are so keen that even when it has almost vanished in the light of the clear dawn we feel that the star is there. So even after the bird has vanished from sight, we know from the "arrows" of song that it is there.

36-7. He represents the poet as absorbed in his own bright fancies, and in this way hidden from the rest of the world.

47. *a dell of dew.* A little dewy valley or hollow.

49. *aerial hue.* Literally, the colour of the air. The glowworm of Britain is said to emit a bluish light.

55. *heavy-winged thieves.* The winds made heavy by the perfume.

56. *vernal.* Belonging to the Spring.

57. *twinkling.* Sparkling with the rain upon it.

61. *sprite.* Spirit.

66. *Chorus hymeneal.* A marriage song. Hymen was the God of marriage.

77. *Languor.* A feeling of weakness or exhaustion.

80. *sad satiety.* Just as one may become satiated with an excess of sweet things, so the poet speaks of even Love, when enjoyed to the full, as bringing with it a feeling of sadness.

82-5. Death is always bringing sorrow into our lives, so that under its shadow we can never be quite happy. But perhaps the skylark knows more about what Death really is, and sees that it is a good thing.

91-5. But even if we had no sadness of any kind in our lives, we could not feel as keen a joy as the song of the skylark expresses.

103. *harmonious madness.* His rapture would find expression in an ecstasy of song.