

I WRITE NOT WHAT I WISH TO WRITE BUT RATHER WHAT I MUST

I write, not what I wish to write,
But rather what I must;
My many imperfections
You will pardon, friends, I trust.
I cannot write to order
By plan or measure given,
My dreams come rushing o'er me
As by a tempest driven.
You do not blame the tempest
Because perchance it screams—
And will you blame the dreamer
Because the dreamer dreams?
Vain might I seek for "lofty thoughts",
Vain seek the "noble soul"—
How can I offer what I lack?
How can I thoughts control?
Thoughts fantastic in their course
That, as they travel, gather force.

I am like a boy who shakes a tree
With many an apple fair to see—
The ripe fruit showers round his head,
He views his act with awe and dread;
And yet the deed no lesson taught,
The consequence is soon forgot;
Despite all punishment or pain,
He will shake that tree some day again.
So, gentle friends, it is with me—
I am about to shake the tree.
The fruit of this strange tree is verse,
And some is bad and some is worse.