

Brief though the term of our constricted stay,  
Nor strength, nor station may extend the chain;  
On retrospect, will saint or cynic say,  
Much of his past has not been spent in vain.

Thus transient is the tenure we possess,  
Of all that blesses or embitters life;  
Three score and ten the limit, often less,  
Determines this probationary strife.

We start to hear the doleful passing-bell;  
And pause to ask some traveller, Who is gone?  
Relieved to find 'tis not for him the knell  
Booms from the latticed tower; and hurries on.

Lessons thus thrilling, leave but little trace,  
Like keels in water, or as wings in air;  
The element resumes its wonted place;  
The throngs continue stirring, as they were.

Yet, who arraigns the wisdom in our lot?  
Who would live away, in a pseudo state?  
Once born, we live, we die, and are forgot;  
'Till "small and great" are summoned to their fate.

How seemly then, with perishable breath,  
To honour Him who deigned the vile to save;  
Whose merit has removed the sting of death;  
Who bore the palm in triumph from the grave.