

WG *pot pourri*

Selected text excerpts

SOURCE KEY: (1) *The House with the Stained Glass Windows* (2) *Into the Fog* (3) *The Riddle of John Rowe* (4) *Without Motive* (5) *The Dangerous Pawn* (6) *The Giant's Chair* (7) *Keys of Chance* (8) *Strangers Meeting* (9) *No Exit* (10) *Night Journey, 1941* (11) *My Turn Next* (12) *The Merciless Ladies, 1944* (13) *The Forgotten Story* (14) *Ross Poldark* (15) *Demelza* (16) *Take My Life* (17) *Cordelia* (18) *Night Without Stars* (19) *Jeremy Poldark* (20) *Fortune is a Woman* (21) *Warleggan* (22) *The Little Walls* (23) *The Sleeping Partner* (24) *Greek Fire* (25) *The Tumbled House* (26) *Marnie* (27) *The Grove of Eagles* (28) *After the Act* (29) *Night Journey, 1966* (30) *The Walking Stick* (31) *Angell, Pearl and Little God* (32) *The Black Moon* (33) *Woman in the Mirror* (34) *The Four Swans* (35) *The Angry Tide* (36) *The Merciless Ladies, 1979* (37) *The Stranger from the Sea* (38) *The Miller's Dance* (39) *The Loving Cup* (40) *The Green Flash* (41) *Cameo* (42) *The Twisted Sword* (43) *Stephanie* (44) *Tremor* (45) *The Ugly Sister* (46) *Bella Poldark* (47) *Memoirs of a Private Man* (48) *Crystal Clear* (49) *The Cornish Farm* (50) *Cotty's Cove* (51) *At the Chalet Lartrec* (52) *Gibb* (53) *The Japanese Girl* (54) *But for the Grace of God* (55) *The Island* (56) *Meeting Demelza* (57) *Christmas at Nampara, 1820* (58) *Commonplace book*

I am nine years old, and I live in The Park three miles from the centre of the city. I have lived there all my life. My mother is a delicate woman with catarrh, a weak heart and a resolute will. My father is my mother's husband. He is a merchant, a small tubby vigorous man with a fair moustache, a bald head and keen twinkling eyes. They are both over forty when I am born and they have not much in common with my youth.⁵⁵

The sun had just set over the western ridge of the valley and the skyline was lit with a vivid orange glow ... High in the sky a ruffle of cloud was saffron and pink ... One of the calves was crying. A group of seagulls were winging their way slowly out to sea.¹⁴

The greatest thing is to have someone who loves you, and to love in return ... So long as life doesn't touch that, you are safe against the rest.¹⁴

No one never died for love. I have it on good authority. The poets make all this up so that it is pretty to cry over.³⁷

- Blemishes on the beauty of a person one loves are like grace notes adding something to a piece of music.
- What a pretty speech. I shall begin to think you're serious.
- Pretty speeches should always be taken serious.³²

A nice frame doesn't make a nice picture.¹⁵

There is all the difference between friendship and love. Friendship is almost a matter of choice. The other person is nice to you and you like him and you find you have the same tastes in common and you welcome his companionship and you become attached. It is half in the mind. It is *reasonable*. Almost everything about a friendship you can explain. Love is different. Love is something that grows in your heart and in your stomach – and lower down – and it is lucky if you even have *tastes* in common with the person, for it makes no manner of difference. If you love, then you're in deep water, struggling. Perhaps you don't even struggle – you just go under, *drown*. It is a terrible thing that women – and men – should be so helpless to guide their own fate!^{39 (abridged)}

Fate is the weak man's scapegoat. People can always be stronger than circumstances if they assert themselves.⁷

There are few things more irritating to the liar than to be disbelieved when he is speaking the truth.⁷

It was a brilliant day but with a fierce east wind which made one walk brisk in the sun and shiver out of it. A heavy swell had developed overnight and the rollers kept over-balancing and sending up siphons of spray as the wind caught the cracking tips. The sky was gun blue and the landscape without colour.³⁴

- [Parliamentary] seats must be free – free of patronage, free of influence from outside. That maybe is why franchise is becoming the word used in this respect [for voters] – for it means freedom. Neither the vote nor the seat must be up for sale.
- And annual parliaments and pensions at fifty and the rest of that rubbish?
- I see you're well read, my lord.
- It's a mistake not to know what the enemy thinks.³⁴

Life seemed to be teaching him that the satisfaction of most appetites carried [within] the seeds of frustration [and] that it was the common delusion of all men to imagine otherwise ... He wondered if in fact there was any true content[ment] in life, if all men were as troubled as he with a sense of disillusion.¹⁴

Fighting a woman you love isn't a gentler business than fighting your greatest enemy, because there are so many more weapons and they are all sharper. It's like playing with razors.²⁸

THE GIRL AND THE GATE

She came, she stood, with one knee bent,
Her hair in disarray.
His picture suffered detriment,
Himself he felt dismay.
"Copy the line," was his design,
"Before she slips away."

She moved, she turned with open eyes
And close beside him sat.
Their talk, it held no compromise,
She said: "Enough of that.
Suffer me not to hear such rot!"
And promptly left him flat.

He comes, he stands with empty hands
And gazes on the gate.
The spirit of her mood demands
Her body recreate.

.
Nothing to do but sit and moo
And hope she won't be late.⁶

They walked miles together, sometimes in the rain along the cliffs when the sky was hung with low clouds and the sea drab and sullen as any jilted lover, sometimes on the sand at the sea's edge, when the waves came lumbering in, sending up mists of iridescence from their broken heads.¹⁴

Tenderness is not like money: the more you give to one, the more you have for others; (and) love is not a possession to hoard. You give it away. It's a blessing and a balm. But neither is trust (and) neither is loyalty. Though only a part of love, they are a vital part, gathered, stored, built up over the years, like something growing *round* love, protecting it, warming it, adding another strength to it and another savour. Give *those* away and they are gone for ever.³⁴ (abridged)

[At Sawle pilchard harvest]: The water was beginning to bubble, as if in a giant saucepan; it boiled and frothed and eddied, and then suddenly broke and disappeared and became fish. It was the miracle of Galilee enacted over again in the pale light of a Cornish moon ... Sometimes the moonlight seemed to convert the fish into a heap of coins, and to Ross it looked like sixty or eighty dark-faced sub-human pygmies scooping at an inexhaustible bag of silver ... Time passed unnoticed while the moon on her downward path ... picked out a silver stitching on the water ... As it neared the (waves) it began to grow misshapen and discoloured like an over-ripe blood orange squeezed between sea and the sky. The silver sword across the sea became tarnished and shrank until it was gone and only the old moon remained, bloated and dark, sinking into the mists ... Moths fluttered away to the stars and the trees stood silent and black.¹⁴

The *whip* of rain on a window¹³; the *tread* of rain on a garden⁶; the *patter* of rain on leaves³⁴; the *tramp* of the sea⁵⁰; the *weight* of the waves³⁴; an ocean's *breath*³⁴; the *tlot tlot* of hooves on stone¹⁷; the *rough-rough* of silk on silk¹⁴; the *pink-pink* of a chaffinch¹⁴; a *whoof* of heat and smoke⁴⁶; the *whom* of a Ferrari⁴⁰; the *screech* of splitting wood¹⁹; the *jangle* of harness²¹; the *queer lap-dog bark* of a moorhen¹⁵; crickets *busy with their dry violin solos*³²; *chakking* jackdaws³⁸; *bickering* cicadas²⁸; a bramble *as thick as a ship's rope*³⁷; *feathers* of snow and *spiders' webs* of frost³²; a *vainglorious* enterprise³²; a *diadem* of lights³⁷; a *freckle* of powder on a cuff³⁴ or of rain on a screen⁴⁰ or of dandruff on a sweater³⁰ or of frost on a pavement³⁶ or of stars misted by high herringbone cloud²¹; an absent spouse *the rot in the deeps of the heart*³⁵; a *hatch* of lies²³; a *Cuh!* of disdain²; a *watch-spring*³³, *cauliflowers*³⁵ or *tendrils*⁴² of smoke; *commas* of candlegrease³⁹; a *mate-in-three-moves* suit⁵²; a *gust* of gnats³⁴; a *geometry* of bats *drawing eccentric triangles against the sky*³⁹; a *scribble* of lightning²²; a *pellucid* sunset³⁹; light *winnowed* by woods⁴²; a *sonority* of clergymen¹⁷; the *glitter* of fish scales¹⁸;

*a squint-eyed ... out-at-elbow attorney*²¹; *a twine-toed walk*³⁹; the *languour of death*²¹; the *black gape of corruption*²¹; the *rhetorics of dawn*²¹; the *plum purple of the night*³⁷; a swan's neck *like a question mark*³⁴

Power is not an endlessly divisible thing. Yet it must exist. Someone must possess it – and since man is not perfectable, it must at times be misused. Who is likely to misuse it more: the demagogue who finds it suddenly in his possession, like a man with a heady wine who has never tasted liquor before; or a man who by heredity has learned – and been taught – how to use it, a man who, having known liquor all his life, may taste the heady wine without becoming drunk upon it?³⁴

I have lived too long to believe that relationship or loyalty have any weight in the modern world ... Brother is against brother, friend against friend. It is little for the son of a slain man to become the ardent supporter of the murderer, for husbands and wives to bear witness that will see the other to the block. There are only two motives which reign undisputed, advancement and survival.²⁷

[A hobby painter]: Like Garbo, I only do one picture a year. This is it ... I only wish I had the courage of some of these professional chaps who draw a lettuce leaf, a table napkin, four grilled kidneys and a relief map of Scotland, and call it "Woman Bathing" ... Go to a Royal Academy full of such paintings and you might as well spend your time at home doing somebody's Prize Picture Puzzles.⁶

Life is like one of those hobby-horses you ride at a fair – round and round you go enjoying every moment and then the music stops. One of these days, one of these nights, the next breath will not come.^{35 (abridged)}

There is always love and hate between every man and woman ... and when the love is hot and stolen, it's the more passionate for that. And when betrayal follows, hate flourishes like tares in a cornfield ...²⁷

The sea was very calm today: a smoky grey with here and there patches of violet and living, moving green. The waves were shadows, snakes under a quilt, creeping in almost unseen until they emerged in milky ripples at the water's edge.¹⁴

[Of Sir Walter Raleigh]: Such men ... are born once in a century. The warriors who are thinkers. The scholars with the courage to fight. [He is] a man chock full of faults ... but also a man so full of talents and inspiration that he is like one with a quiverful of arrows, each sharp and true. A born leader, the greatest living strategist, a poet, a philosopher, an essayist, an orator, a skilled musician, a soldier, an explorer, a founder of new England overseas. The crowds hate him, the leaders of the country ignore him, the Queen banishes him. But we who know him ... live to serve him!²⁷

As the sun went down behind St Ann's, the whole sky flared into a vivid primrose and orange. Clouds which had moved up to mourn the passing of the sun were caught in the blaze and twisted out of shape and daubed with wild colours. It was like a promise of the Second Coming ...¹⁴

There were no tears. The wound went too deep. Hers would be the perpetual ache of loss and loneliness, slowly dulled with time until it became a part of her character, a faint sourness tinged with withered pride. This room would see her dry up and fade. The gilt mirror in the corner would bear its dispassionate testimony. All these ornaments and furnishings would be her companions through the years to come. And she realised that she would come to hate them, if she didn't already hate them, as one hates the witnesses to one's humiliation and futility.^{14 (abridged)}

Empty bellies and dead fires and sick wives and wasting children are powerful advocates of unlawful riot.³⁴

Whatever she suffered, whatever loss came to her, she would throw it off, for it was not in her nature to go under. Although she was the woman and he a fierce and sometimes arrogant man, hers was the stronger nature because more pliant. That did not mean she did not feel Julia's death as deeply and as bitterly, but ... she would recover first. It might be because he had had all the other failures and disappointments. But chiefly it was because some element had put it in her nature to be happy ... A celandine flowering out of season, a litter of kittens found unexpectedly in a loft, warm sunshine after a cold spell, the smell of the first swathe of hay: these were always temporary reliefs for her, and so sorrow had less power to injure her ... She was born so and could not change. He thanked God for it.^{15, 19}

Animal nature is not kind, but kills only for food. Human kind kill for the pleasure or from a strange evil notion called principle ... You must learn from nature ... It will help you to find content[ment] such as no mixing in the company of men can ...²⁷

Come, I tell you all my adventures. To share 'em makes 'em live again.²⁷

She walks as peerless Dian rides
In moonlight and in rain,
As sea-bird gently windward flies
O'er wave and watery main.
Thus heavenly light and earthly tides
Combine in her as twain.

She smiles as sunrise on the wave
In summer and at dawn,
As daylight enters darkling cave
To bring the breath of morn.
Thus day and night in joy behave
With ardour newly born.

She walks like air and smiles like light
'Mong sinners yet unshriven,
But one among them knows his plight
Excluded yet from Heaven.³⁴

The waves ran into Hendrawna Beach like brides to their wedding, a veil of spray blowing round their heads. Near the rocks the swell moved more sleekly, the veils sank as they were left behind, white lace first in the shallower green, then misting to a mottled luminous cloud in the darker depths ... The bright day glimmered like a cameo.¹⁹

Man has many skins in himself, covering the depths of his heart. The kingdom of hell is within us.²⁸

– Be careful of the law. It is a cranky, twisty old thing and ye may flout it a half-dozen times. But let it once come to grips wi' ye and ye will find it as hard to be loose from as a black squid.

- I think perhaps you will agree that though we may revere the law in abstract, in practice there are considerations which take a higher place.
- Such as?
- Friendship.
- The law would not admit that.
- I do not expect the law to admit it. I am asking you to admit it.
- No, no. Oh, dear, no. I'll not be manoeuvred into a corner by such moral arguments.
- But moral argument is the most potent force in the world. It was that more than force of arms which defeated us in America.¹⁵ (abridged)

There be more'n one way of serving God. I d'believe two people – a man and a woman – in perfect harmony can give more to the world and to God than either of 'em can do separate.³²

Looking back, I've wondered if I was afraid. Fear disguises itself as anger so you can never be sure.²²

Fear and fascination are yoke-fellows, oxen out of step but pulling in the same direction.¹⁴

There's so *much* to love ... the sunrise, and the rain and the wind and the cloud, and the roaring of the sea and the cry of birds and the lowing of cows and the glow of corn and the smells of spring. And food and fresh water. New-laid eggs, warm milk, fresh-dug potatoes, home-made jams. Wood smoke, a baby robin, bluebells, a warm fire. I could go on (but) if you enjoy them wi' the one you love, then it is enjoyment *fourfold*! D'you think I would not give all my life to see ye sitting smiling in that chair? What is life if you live it alone?³⁵

There's only one loneliness, and that's the loneliness of all the world.²⁶

Remember one word – success. If you are a good success in your life people will forgive you far worse things than a little matter of your mother's wedding. You may do murder, you may betray your country, you may savage women, you may steal from orphans, you may have pillaged and perjured and burned – only let the outcome be success and the world will fawn on you.²⁷

Grambler ... was a benevolent Moloch to whom they fed their children at an early age and from whom they took their daily bread.¹⁴

The gold and the dross exist together in the same ground. It depends which you find.²⁷

[Demelza, on parting from her two small children for an extended period]:
Oh dear, I believe I am a small matter distraught.

– Try to forget them. Remember that in twenty years they will be likely to ride away and forget you.

– You must've been keeping some bad company.

– Why?

– To say a thing like that.

– It was half in jest, half in earnest. I mean nothing derogatory.

– What a big word for a mean thought.

– Then I take it back ... But it is partly true. We have to live our own lives. We have to give freedom to those we love.³⁵

It is human nature that if you tell a man a woman is bad it makes him more eager to meet her.²⁴

Hens an't so durty. Hens ye can live with. Hens *drop* their droppings like a gentleman, like you'd expect. Ducks *squirt*. Tedn right. Tedn proper. Tedn fitty. All them ducks squirting anywhere where they've the mind to squirt. Tedn *decent!*³⁷ (abridged)

– I should like to see Greece and all the islands (and) Rome.

– Do take care. I cannot bear to hear you say you wish to look at the scenery. Well, not to *admire* it. Some of these poets nowadays offend me to distraction. They have a *romantic* view of life. It is so low-class, so mediocre. What are mountains and lakes, to be stared at as if they were of *interest*? When I go through the Alps I always draw the blinds.³⁵ (abridged)

The most important thing was to strike a balance: poverty and riches each in their own way caused unhappiness. With money, the way to be happy was to continue to have almost enough.³⁷

Truth is not a claim ... The stars are in the sky, the moon will rise, the seasons change; these are not claims.⁵⁴

He wrote poetry in the Cornish language! Can you match that! As if there aren't enough languages in the world without trying to revive one that never was any good anyhow and never had any literature of its own. Could anything be more futile?⁴⁹

Personal possession is always unwise. What you grasp you destroy. Taste your pleasures and let them go.²⁴

I saw the look in his eye – like a horse that means mischief.³⁰

The ribbon of milky mist still lay in the gulley. It stretched down to the sea, and there were patches across the sandhills like steam from a kettle. When light came full the sea was calm ... The water was a pigeon's-egg blue with a dull terra-cotta haze above the horizon and a few pale carmine tips where the rising sun caught the ripples at the sand's edge.¹⁵

One of those *jack-knife bodies* ... *always folding or unfolding*³³; *skin as blue as skimmed milk*³² or *the colour of a man who has had yellow fever*⁴²; a *smile very contained, carefully poured out, like a half measure of some valuable liquid*³⁴; another *like someone spilling diamonds*³⁴; a *possessive nose above one of those chins which no razor's edge will whiten*¹⁹; another *large and shining like an overripe plum ... ready to drop from the tree*¹⁴; *tawny hair falling full length like an escaping flame*¹⁹; *black hair shredding in the breeze*³⁴; *raven hair with a gloss like japan leather*³⁷; *dark brown hair growing very fine and close to the scalp like mouse fur*³⁷; *black hair streaked with grey that looked as if had not seen brush or comb for a week*³⁸; *fair hair flowering under (a) dirty miner's hat*³⁸; *rich black hair in a queue*⁴²; a *hearthrug* of brown hair³⁴; *hair tin-grey*³⁷, *ash-blonde*⁴², *jackdaw black*³⁸, *gypsy-black*³⁸, *leonine*³⁷, *Spanish*⁴², *yellow*⁴⁶, *like a donkey's tail*³⁹, *hard to confine as dark thistledown*¹⁵, *awry under a mob cap*¹⁹ and *tied with a corn-flower-blue ribbon*³⁴; a *roof blown off like stripping a wig off a bald man*³⁵; *white tombstones trailing black cloaks of shadow*¹³; *news spreading like a fire in dead gorse*¹⁹; *leaves falling like copper snow*⁴⁶ or *flopping in the wind like spaniels' ears*⁴⁶; *rubber shoes: an invention of Old Scratch himself*¹³; *spilled sovereigns scattering like mice that's seen a cat*¹⁹; a *lacy bodice cascading like Zambesi Falls*¹³; a *tattered dawn like an unwashed shirt*¹⁶; a *black dawn sky torn and ragged as a beggar's coat*²¹; *mountains gleaming like bronze helmets in the sun*³³; a *river shining like a peeled grape among*

*the stark trees*³⁴; another's mouth *like a forked quicksilver tongue thrust into the dark flesh of the land*²⁷; a handshake *like taking hold of a bunch of wax candles*¹; a kitten *all red tongue and yellow eyes*³²; a question *hard as a bullet*³⁸; words halting on lips *like swimmers hesitating to dive*³³ or spoken *like corks being drawn out of wine bottles*³⁰; medical opinion *dressed up in the Latin tongue like ribbons on a maypole*³⁴; irrelevances *strung like rags on a kite*³⁷; a mouth *giving promise of the tender, the mischievous, the sensitive, the wilful, yet attaining only mystery*⁴; others *pinched like a darned button hole*¹⁵, *twisted to look like a crescent moon before the rain*¹⁵, *tight like a crack in the floorboards*³⁷ and *the prettiest in Great Britain*⁴²; a *quarterdeck voice*²¹; others *made for complacency but driven by circumstance into complaint*³⁴, *of five-shilling cigars, after-dinner speeches (and) too lavish tips*² or *like fudge*³⁵, *bed-springs creaking*³¹ or *an unoiled hinge*³⁹; a laugh *compounded of a lion's roar and a donkey's bray*³⁵; another *almost all breath, low, indolent and sophisticated*³⁷; kisses *smacking*⁴², *resealing a partnership*⁴⁶, *no worse than a cold bath*³⁸, *like kissing a butterfly, soft and frail and elusive*¹⁵ and *not at all disagreeable*³⁸

It was an errantly windy day. Black clumsy clouds were driving up from the north-west, imposing themselves upon a sky of an unusual shamrock green. The surf reared itself and tumbled in disarray as the gusts caught it, throwing up sharp spirals of spume like the blowing of sperm whales.³⁹

Happiness is a maker of cowards. Who cares what you lose if you've nothing to lose? But maybe it also makes fighters who fight longer in the end.²⁴

They sat on one of the green benches placed along the river bank where one could wait to catch the ferry. On the opposite bank the little town of Helford crouched among its massive shelter of trees. The river gleamed peacock blue and emerald in shafts of the morning sun. Three tiny boats with ochre and scarlet sails were tacking here and there, casting for mackerel and whiting. One of the fishermen threw something into the river and gulls swooped down in a patter of conflicting wings to seize on the prospective food. For a moment the assembly of them looked like a large paper dart fluttering in the boat's wake.⁴⁶ (abridged)

No one can sprawl more successfully than a man with a long ancestry.³⁸

The lights reflected in the canal were like drowned faces, shivering where the breeze touched them.²²

She was in one of her provocative moods. She looked about twenty-five and interested in men. It boded ill for their relationship, if their intention was to keep that relationship chaste. He said abruptly:

– It's time I went away.

– That would be a sad mistake, now that I am coming brave.

– You must be left alone to come brave.

– Who says so?

– I say so. Look at you now, like a skittish colt! By all rights you should be *fat* and sitting in a big armchair in front of the fire with a shawl round your shoulders, smelling of milk and babies' clouts. It would be a safer situation. Safer for you.

– You don't live life to be *safe*. You live to be alive, to take a deep breath of the air and to know your heart is beating! If you desert me now for some fancy guinea-hen in London I shall think very hard on you.

– [Placing his hand on her shoulder]: Well, maybe I will consider you suitable when I can no longer discern [this] bone so plain.

– D'you think I'm a goose hanging in a poulterer's? Because if *I* were ever to buy a goose, *that's* not the part I would feel.^{38 (abridged)}

[Four p.m.]: Although mid-December it was still full daylight. The setting sun had edged its way behind an escarpment of cloud, and the upper sky was ethereal, a thousand miles high, as if you were looking up at Heaven. In the distance gulls were wheeling and screaming, wings shadowed and glinting as they performed their lonely rituals. Smoke rose straight, and there was a hint of frost.³⁸

Foul play ... leaves foul marks.²²

One of the things I love is to make a woman scream, and then to stop her screaming. I assure you it is fascinating. There will be such a change in your face when I do what I intend to do to you. At first your face will be contorted with pain, but as you open your mouth for the second scream your lungs will collapse, and soon your face will go all grey and drawn like an old woman and your hair will drag. And as I open you up the greatest moment will be over.⁴⁶

A quiet night. All December so far had been the same, a time of early dews and wet leaves underfoot and darkness lingering in the day as if it were the earth's natural element. It was gentle weather – but gentle with the atmosphere of decay. There seemed nothing new or young in the world.¹⁹

All work is unpalatable ... otherwise it wouldn't be work but play. That's the definition.²²

"People are like snakes ... growing skins and discarding them. What happened four years ago is just something left behind – an old skin, best forgotten on all counts."²⁵

They ... belonged to the Hampstead intelligentsia. They believed in asepsis, Freud, Aldermaston, the four-letter word, the Berliner Ensemble, the anti-novel, Joan Littlewood, *The Observer*, co-educational day schools, and the use of Christian names between parents and children.³⁰

If a person doesn't know his own mind and his own conscience, he doesn't know anything at all.²²

[Demelza, after buying a revealing gown]: I feel like a wanton.

– That's just what you must try to look like. It's the ambition of all respectable women.

[Ross, on seeing it]: That is very pretty. But where is the gown? That's a petticoat.

– It's the fashion. Some women damp their frocks when they put them on so they will cling more.

– You damp anything and I'll smack you.^{35 (abridged)}

Like all human beings she could not refrain from idly comparing what she had with what she might have had.¹⁴

The sun was already flaring behind a ridge of cloud. It was as if someone had opened a furnace door and the red-hot glow was showing behind unburnt coal. Cliffs jutted black and jagged into a porcelain sea. Seagulls whirled like scimitars, silently cutting the afternoon air.³⁴

How clean her skin looks; she's like a westerly breeze at sunrise, rare and fresh, and good to get into your lungs and your heart.¹⁴

Tom ... and the baby both died. Fate should know its business better.²²

There is one fact about man that has distinguished him from his first appearance on the earth. It marks him as different from all other creatures. That is, he's a worshipping animal. Wherever he's existed there are the remains in some form of his worship ... And all through prehistory and recorded history, when he's deprived himself of that he's gone to pieces. Many people nowadays are going to pieces, or they find the first convenient prop to tie their instincts on to. It's behind the extraordinary adulation of royalty. It's behind the mobbing of film stars. If you don't give expression to an instinct, you've got to sublimate it or go out of your mind.²³

Morals are what other people think you ought to do.³⁰

I generally assume if someone asks my advice he really wants support for the thing he has already decided to do.³⁹

He was a middle-aged loose-jointed man [who] walked as if he was afraid of waking someone.²³

- Two things I like best of all: to fight and to make love.
- With the same person?
- No, but on the same day. On whets the appetite for the other.
- [If you kill for a third time, will you not be hanged?]
- Who knows? Who cares?^{35 (abridged)}

Everyone has something to lose ... even if it's only his self-respect.¹⁸

The shallow fog was smoking in the widening light, as if someone had lit a bonfire for a mile or so upon the sea. Out of the darker mist the sun already threw premonitory beams; and across the swept clean upper sky a single smear of cloud was lit a brilliant cadmium yellow. They watched the fog grow luminous along its higher reaches; then familiar landmarks began to jut out with startling clearness, like stage scenery unveiled. The sea licked quietly at the sand, uncommunicative, saying nothing of the night.¹⁹

Perhaps one of the more unagreeable truths is that man is born with a debt that for a time he isn't aware of owing. But all the time it piles up; and somewhere, usually in his middle years, life suddenly and unscrupulously

presents him with an account rendered. Then it depends on the quality of the man, how and whether he tries to pay.²³

It was not that she could not forgive. She did not know that he cared about her forgiveness, or in any case that that was of importance. You can forgive someone for cutting down a tree, for smashing a precious vase, for burning a picture; it makes no difference to the thing destroyed ... She was like a Christian who had lost God, a believer turned atheist, knowing relief and unexampled liberty, trying to rejoice over the outworn beliefs she had thrown away, conscious of the immense winds of freedom and utterly determined to make the most of them; but at heart lost, irretrievably lost.²¹

What *is* best, *always*, (is) work. Work is a challenge. I tried to drink myself out of my misery once. It didn't succeed. Only work did. Build yourself a wall, even if there's hell in your heart, and when it's done – even at the end of the first day – you feel better. You're too capable to mope your life away. Nobody should be able to destroy a man like that.^{35 (abridged)}

The drawn sword of the new day slid its cold steel between my ribs.³⁰

(She) liked (champagne) instantly, in spite of the way it made bubbles burst in your nose ... (It) had a sort of clean taste like cold water gone sour.¹⁷

It was an easterly sky, and as they reached Falmouth the sun was nearly setting – like a Chinese lantern, swollen and crimson and monstrous and decorated with ridges of curly cloud. The town was a grey smudge climbing the edge of the bay ... The harbour was brimming with the limpid colours of the afterglow.¹⁵

All women (are) the same when the candle (is) blown out.³⁴

One (woman)'s much like another when you take away the frills they disguise themselves in.¹⁷

There are *too many* birds in the world. They all look different and they all turn out the same.³¹

In the end, all women (are) alike.⁴⁶

Women are all right in their place – and their place is pleasure. One enjoys good wine and good food, but who'd think of marrying them!¹⁸

It's hard for a woman to be bossy when she's looking at the ceiling.³¹

Women are never satisfied unless they know their neighbours' business.¹⁵

– Be careful you don't forget your manners or the judge will not give you a hearing.

– The judge is not a woman, ma'am.

– And what do you mean by that?

– I mean he is not likely to be swayed by prejudice.¹⁹

It was just an idea. I'm a woman, so I get ideas.³¹

– I say I ain't a marrying man; and then without fail she says I'm a bedding man and what's the difference except for a service and a gold ring, and I say, ah, but the gold ring is just what I can't face, for you can't turn your wife out to grass like a prize mare.

– (If) you look on women as prize mares, then can you not forgive a woman for wanting to gallop off as she pleases with no hand to bridle her and no man to order her where or how she shall go? Must all women be just what you say so's to win your approval?^{21 (abridged)}

– These town dandies. He's found he is mistook, and will find it more if he prances in my stable again.

– Must we all be put in stables, even at a ball? Why not kennels, an' then you can call women what you really think them.^{15 (abridged)}

"Soapy" Wargrave took up with one of the ladies in waiting to the Queen. Quite a passionate affair, I believe; but when we returned to barracks it cooled off – at least on his side. She was very angry, very tight about it, sent him a letter demanding the return of the lock of hair she had given him. He sent his orderly up to Windsor with a packet containing more than a dozen locks of hair of all colours – fair, dark, auburn – and invited her to pick out her own!^{39 (abridged)}

Nothing (is) so unpredictable as a mine – one reason why they (are) always feminine.²¹

Ross would be an excellent catch for little Ruth, but his father had had such a deplorable habit of snapping up the bait without getting caught on the hook.¹⁴

[Morning]: Tide nearly full. Mist lay in a grey scarf along the line of the cliffs. The incoming waves scrawled dark furrows in the silver-grey sea ... In odd parts of the sky clouds lay thin and streaky, motionless and abandoned as by the sweeping of a careless broom.¹⁴

The problems of today are only the problems of yesterday repeated.¹⁷

We [scientists] are all agnostics, eh? ... That's humility for you. You can't believe anything until you confess you know nothing. But atheism's not just a step on; it's a mile away. Because atheism's intellectual pride, and pride and humility are not partners, they're opposites. That's it in a nutshell. All the rest ... is just poppycock.¹⁷

Donkeys can bray ... but they're not the best judges of corn.¹⁷

A watery sun was out; the wind kept blowing the clouds into smoke; they drifted in streaks before the washed sky, then re-formed in masses with the swiftness of moving scenery. It was half tide, and the surf made a noise like another wind, hissing and roaring. Icebergs of foam slid twisting and turning in the surf. The tide was making rapidly. Tongues of water came rushing over the soft sand, bubbling and sliding, receding again, leaving fringes of froth behind and the new-wet sand swelling and sinking. Foam detached itself and trundled across the beach, hurtling as far as the cliffs before it disintegrated.^{35 (abridged)}

A raddled little face, sharp under its wig, like a terrier ... shown the bait once too often¹⁵; an austere, lined face stamped by forty years of court rooms¹⁹; a thin, deeply furrowed face, which looked sombre as if it bore all the sorrows of the world – until it smiled³²; a ruddy, simian face on which no recognisable brand of Christianity was observable⁴²; faces pear-pointed³⁹, frost-encrusted³⁸, limp and linen-pale³², guileful as a perverted cherub's³⁸ and with features more prominent than life³³; others that could have come off a Roman coin³¹, on which the skin hung loosely as if it had a slow puncture²⁵, expressive as the Easter Island god outside the British Museum³

and clear like a cameo against the darker frame of hair³⁸; faces somewhat ship-like, jutting and aggressive and square, weathered but unbeaten¹⁵, as of one with a bad heart who has climbed too many stairs³¹, pale like honey³⁷ or as if the blood had suddenly remembered another appointment and gone elsewhere³¹; faces like Robespierre³⁷, the Emperor Vespasian⁴², an earthquake tremor⁵⁸, a well-polished Jonathan Red⁷ or a newly opened ox-eye daisy³⁷; others the colour of a pomegranate⁴, of pastry before it goes in the oven¹³ or a mulberry just before it comes ripe³⁵; seals' faces half-human, old-young, childish and whiskered, innocent yet worldly wise³⁴

Only been to London once, when I was twenty-odd; had a few days there; wasn't impressed. All the people looked as if they owed money.¹⁷

It was a curious sunshine, with something aged and sinister about it, as if it belonged to a world which was slipping away ... As the day waned the light lost its last warmth and the sun became a disc of brass, contaminating the sea with its base metal light and flinging shadows of cobalt grey among the cliffs and sandhills. The ceaseless wind had dropped: bough and twig and every blade of grass were still.³²

Neet brings crows home.¹⁷

All his movements were irritable and impatient like a man who's just missed a train.²⁰

If wishes were butter-cakes, beggars might bite.³⁸

People aren't born wise in this life, they buy experience, and if they're lucky they buy it in time.¹⁷

Some women ... when they're dancing seem to have a waist and no feet, a balance and no weight, so that a pleasant sensation gets above itself and becomes an art, a form of sophisticated experience. She was one ...²⁰

Gaming is for all times ... With eating, drinking, hunting and loving, it makes one of the five primaries.¹⁵

Ahead in the soft and sighing darkness was ... Nampara.¹⁴

As I see 'n, girl's only strength be when she have men dandling on a string. Once they get her, then she's got. String be round *her* neck, then. Come 'long, do's you're told, bear the childer, moole the bread, sweep the planchin, teel the ground; tes like that all the time from bedding night to burying night. So's I don't see as I can improve my lot by wedden anyone just yet awhile.³⁴

- I have never been able to understand why you came to marry George.
- It must be perfectly obvious. I was a moderately attractive widow with no money to speak of.
- You were a very attractive widow, and there are many rich men in the world.
- I do not descry them.
- So you married him for his money?
- So everyone thinks. And everyone would be partly right. In this life it is better to live by absolutes, not to live by subtle dealings that no one can understand. Of course I married George for his money.
- And?
- And I was physically attracted – sexually attracted to him too – not by his looks, though he is not bad looking if you take a detached view. Shall we say I am a self-willed woman and relish a challenge. Shall we say that I was sexually attracted by the transparent ugliness of his moral character.
- A perverse assessment.
- I told you we should live by absolutes.
- George and I always have – with dubious results.
- Have (you) ever shaken hands?
- I don't think so.
- Sometime it might be worth the experiment.^{46 (abridged)}

The sun lay white upon the front of the Blameys' house, which drowsed like a square-jawed cat. The river glimmered, and blue shadows and stained glass reflections were broken only by the passage of a fishing boat on the way to Penryn, a coracle conveying someone across the creek, or a group of swans paddling with the tide. On the other side of the pool, Falmouth climbed the hill, grey and hunch-backed and smoking, but at night it looked like a fairy castle lit with lanterns.³⁸

A child or a spaniel more or less: what's that in a large household?²⁷

Those old men [in Parliament] take themselves seriously, which is almost the worst fault a gentleman can have.³⁵

Life moved in a series of superficial moments strung together painlessly so that the days and the years slipped away, and only afterwards sometimes you paused and looked back and wondered if banality had been enough.²⁵

The silence of the room had become oppressive, it beat in his ears and swelled in his heart; it echoed the terror of the final initiative, the last compulsion of mind and muscle to which all this had been proceeding as a river hurries to the annihilation of the sea.

He raised the pistol to his head.¹⁹

It is hard to argue with your heart.⁴⁶

The curious slow regular sucking motion of the great engine was like an animal gasping, a giant sea mammal newly landed, breathing out its life on the wet sand ... Beyond Nampara and to the right the sea, with a dagger of moonlight in the black heart of the water ... Francis had been dead about an hour.²¹

[In a Chelsea artists' club]: There was a good bit of corduroy and dandruff about.²⁰

Intimacy is a sort of crucible ... either it refines one's love or the feeling disintegrates and proves to be fake. My feeling was fake.¹⁶

Rain and tears made a sort of kaleidoscope of the moving traffic.¹⁶

Debunking is a disease of civilisation. Modern man likes to think: "I'm no good, but neither is my neighbour."²⁵

[Of air travel]: Only modern man could devise an occupation that is at the same time both boring and dangerous.²⁵

The sun had recently dipped and flared behind the land and a night wrack of cloud had gathered over St Mawes. The water had lost all its colour and glittered like a tarnished pewter dish. Lights were beginning to wink in windows and at mastheads.³²

He was a goat tethered to the peg of his own character and could only consume the riches of the earth which came within his range.¹⁵

– I'll come with you [onto the balcony]. I like to hear a mob when it's baying.

– You may as well get a brick thrown as a bouquet.

– That's as it should be. Spice in the pudding.

The candidates were greeted with an immense roar, as if a lion had opened its mouth.

– They look like a field of turnips – only not so neatly set. What a rabble!

What is to be gained by pandering to them like this?

– A custom. It's only for five or six days, and then they can be forgot for as many years.^{19 (abridged)}

It doesn't matter twopence if Rembrandt was a rogue or Beethoven a bore. An artist is judged by his art, not by his life.^{25 (recast)}

An assessment was going on between two adult, highly intelligent women ... as subtle and as silent as the onset of frost.²⁵

The day had cleared with the sunset, and already a few stars glinted in the nacreous sky. The river, lying among its wooded banks, looked like molten lead. In a 'pool' nearby a half dozen tall ships were anchored and had their sails hung out drying after the rain. In the distance was Falmouth harbour and lights winking. Three herons creaked across the sky.³⁴

– I have been invited to dine with the Teagues.

– Mrs Teague still has four unmarried daughters to dispose of.

– So I have been told. But I think she'll be disappointed if she entertains hopes of that sort. Having just escaped from one prison I'm the less likely just yet to want to enter another.

– A sour view of marriage.

– I take a sour view of marriage only because I see so many of my friends bound in unions they find tedious and restricting. I don't take a sour view of love. For the overwhelming love of an Heloise, a Chloe, an Isolde, I would if need be jettison everything, even life. For life is a trumpery thing at best, isn't it? A few movements, a few words, between dark and dark. But in true love you keep company with the Gods.

– I don't think Mrs Teague will be thinking along those lines.^{34 (abridged)}

The tide was high, and in the orange afterglow the sea had become an unusual willow-pattern blue, so full, so overflowing, that it looked as if the land would never contain it. A shag flew across the brimming surface so close that it might have been skating on it.²¹ (abridged)

He seemed to see then and understand that the compulsions of life existed as elements too strong for the frail human beings that gave them existence. Like electrical forces they exerted sudden movements of attraction or repulsion, and the men and women in whom they moved were the victims of this force, not its masters. It was a new kind of pain that came to him then, a pain at once of compassion and contrition, as if he could suffer for them all.²⁵

He who denies most roundly accuses himself.²⁷

What you write is ... like a breath of Nampara. I can smell the sea, feel the push and pull of the wind, smell the cows in their byre, the scent of mown hay, hear the crackle of the Welsh coal in the hearth, and the tap-tap of Papa's pipe on the fire bars.⁴⁶

Kindling eyes like unmuzzled guns¹³; sorrowing eyes like flowers which had cupped the rain¹³; golden eyes lambent with the call of the night⁵; large dark eyes with lashes that any woman would envy³⁴; the deep sunken eyes of one with a short term to his days³²; glazed cat's eyes⁴⁶; grey eyes, candid and virginal²¹; inscrutable eyes conveying nothing in their green depths but a casual fronded curiosity³⁴; startled short-sighted sleepy brown eyes, soft and beautiful³²; startling hazel eyes under knitted black brows³⁹; jet-fringed eyes, misty after love⁵³; dark eyes thumb-printed with a heavier darkness³⁴; sword-point eyes, red with effort²⁷; pale blue eyes that seldom seemed to blink⁴⁴; bloodshot eyes old and wary ... half peevish, half wily¹⁵ or like those of a bulldog which has stolen the Sunday dinner¹⁴; pinpoint eyes expressing surprise, suspicion, irritation and finally responsibility⁴⁵; off-putting eyes that took up a sort of sister-in-law attitude to everyone⁹; intent eyes under eccentric Jack Nicholson eyebrows⁴³; handsome wild eyes above long elegant cheek-bones that would have pleased a twelfth-dynasty Egyptian²²; the fanatical black eyes of a Breton⁴²; the fierce blue eyes of a man who might have been holding himself always ready for the first leap forward of a race¹⁵; black eyes set deep ... like cave-dwellings overhung by rock²⁷; fine

eyes sparking like the glint of a soldier's sabre at night²¹; dark sockets under (their) ledge of brows, empty of life and expression³⁹; eyes, behind thick lenses, that wobbled like lightly poached eggs³⁰; eyes elfish¹⁵, cavernous⁴⁶, wayward¹⁹, porcelain³⁸, coal-black⁴⁶, Siamese blue⁴⁶, wisteria blue³⁹, dazed blue⁴², forget-me-not blue⁴⁶, popping¹⁹, saucer³⁸, button-bald³², diamond³⁸, velvety⁴⁶, wide-awake²¹, acquisitive²¹ and malicious⁴⁶; others malignantly curious⁴⁶, snake-grey³⁵, ice-grey and canny³², lashless and red-rimmed³², small and screwed-up⁴², alive with animal vitality³⁴, sharp as a cockerel's and with much the same ends in view³⁷, clear as undisturbed pools³⁹, half concealed among a pie-crust of wrinkles³⁷ and crusty with eczema and cupidity³⁷; eyes like brown pearls¹⁵, slits in a money-box⁴⁸, fire-blackened walnuts³⁷, pools lying in shadow³⁵ or dewy black sloes beneath eyebrows like black slugs³⁵; eyes almond-shaped with just a hint of the oriental¹⁴, basalt above a heavy upper lip¹⁴, interred before their time in a mass of folds and wrinkles¹⁵, so amber brown as to suggest a touch of the tar brush¹⁹, feline, lustful and dark¹⁵ or swimmy, shrewd, assessing and not altogether friendly³⁷; a cow's eyes soft, brown and mournful but uncomplaining¹⁹

He felt as if all love and hope and faith had been squandered ... and nothing was left but the atheism of staying alive.²⁵

A Christian should always think of dying. He should accustom himself to it, he should have beliefs that convince him he need not fear it ... Lao-tse, the Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism, said that a man who is afraid of dying is like a person just released from prison and afraid to step into freedom.⁴⁵

– Tell me about ... the cause of the feud.

– You angle for a fish that is not in my pond.³⁴

I shall be very happy [at Richmond, although] – as always with people who have lived there – I shall long for Cornwall, and hope to return from time to time.⁴⁵

Day was breaking. Streaks of watered green showed in the north-east, and the sky where the sun would rise was a bold pale orange behind the black ribs of the night. A wild sunrise and a strangely quiet one ... There had been

a heavy ground sea since afternoon yesterday ... Clouds of spray (began) to lift off the sea and drift away like sand before a sand storm. Here and there the cliffs were smoking ... The clouds were low over his head, brown and racing ... flying like torn rags before the frown of God.¹⁵

Meiss [a psychiatrist] had a hawk-like, sad face, as if rivers of other people's troubles had run down his cheeks and left them furrowed and worn.⁴⁰

Age had no privileges. Youth no virtue. It is what one does that matters.⁴⁰

When one looks back on one's life and observes the fine threads of chance and mischance which have shaped one's destiny (it) is impossible to suppose one is in personal control.⁴⁰

I don't know what (being happy) means ... I know a state of non-unhappiness ... Maybe it's the same thing seen through a dark window.⁴⁰

Sex without intellect? Isn't that for the apes? ⁴⁰

I have no fear of death at all. It means *nothing*. But I have the greatest fear of becoming old.⁴⁰

The sunset ... was a single vermilion scar above the dark blue cloak of the sea.¹⁴

Whatever good and splendid times one has shared with a person ... cannot make up for a joyless present.⁴⁰

You hardly ever meet a bridge player who doesn't think he's better than he really is.⁴⁰

Sometimes I think the human race suffers today not merely from a lack of religion but a lack of superstition ... It's good to have a sanction outside oneself. We have all become orphans ... There is no one ... to rebel against. There is no one to call us to bed.⁴⁰

Egoism is a built-in survival kit; without it you're apt to perish and die. With it you just *wish* you were dead.⁴⁰

- Talking of dogs, why don't you keep one?
- They make messes in the garden.⁴³

The day had a melancholy and autumnal look. There were precious few trees [around Nampara] to change colour or to drop their leaves, but the sea can look autumnal in its own right. Low clouds drifted across a fitful sun, and groups of seabirds – gulls, kittiwakes and terns – were mirrored like mourners in the damp sands, all facing the breeze.³⁸

One of the ultimate obscenities of war is the conscript army – invented by the French, you know – in which decent little men with no instincts to fight are virtually dragged from their houses and compelled to murder each other. That is civilisation in its grave.⁴³

[At a 1941 hotel breakfast table]: A waiter hovered ... vaguely apologetic. Force [i.e. toasted wheat flakes] or prunes or shredded wheat? Sorry, no bacon ... bacon was not served on even dates. Scrambled egg or smoked trout? (Dried eggs of course.) Had they brought their own marmalade? No? Well, he'd try his best to get them a little.⁴¹

War ...was exposed as the ludicrous thing it was when it enforced rationing and blackout curtains in the square where Tintoretto and Titian had walked ... or gas-masks at a Buckingham Palace levée.²⁹

- Nietzsche ... said that revenge was the sign of a noble mind.
- I hadn't heard. I can't say I agree with him. Was he a Frenchman?
- A German.
- Ah, well, there you are.⁴³

The French are such nice people as a rule, but they breed worse criminals than we do.⁷

My dear sir, we'd do much for a friend, but don't ask us to testify on behalf of a young vagrant who's been caught poaching. We couldn't do it. Twould come unnatural in us, like mothering a Frenchie.¹⁴

Most Frenchmen are inclined to be rhetorical as most Englishmen are inclined to be literal.¹⁸

- You ... are not French.
- How do you know that?
- Frenchmen do not sleep on the couch.⁹

There was something Welsh in that hint of the sinister underneath the polite.¹⁰

You think Wales is civilised ... but don't include these mountain districts.³³

The hall was full of half drunken Welshmen singing and shouting at the top of their voices. And the top of a Welsh voice is very loud indeed.³¹

Don't underrate him. He's a Scotsman.¹⁵

I suppose the English aren't uglier or more eccentric than any other race; but the public lounge of a hotel makes you think so.²⁰

By eleven most of them were ... a little befuddled. They had discussed the vulgarity of the Prussians, the inefficiency of the Belgians, the perfidy of the French, the ruthlessness of the Russians, the unreliability of the Austrians, the treachery of the Irish, the boastfulness of the Americans, and over and above all the total awfulness of the English.⁴²

There are not more than ten English in this hotel I would care to talk to. One wonders at the acreage of prosperous desolate suburbs in which these people breed.³¹

– Sometimes it seems as if our Father is not concerned with human happiness at all.

– He may not always be concerned with *earthly* happiness, but if you give yourself to Him you will find a greater happiness in looking towards the summits of eternity.³⁵

History, like biology, judges only by results. Ethics or morals are very late runners.⁴¹

A beautiful still dawn, with a pearly sun rising out of the early mists, turning them lemon-yellow and then to a grey scarf washed with scarlet. Yet as the

sun rose it never came to full health. Anaemia set in, and the mist became light cloud chasing the colour from the sky. The gulls ... rose and flapped and cried and settled again into the darkening water.⁴²

– You aren't fond of the Catholics?

– How could I be? I was brought up one.

– Perhaps the Communists have your sympathy?

– If it's of interest, they haven't ... I look on a Communist as only another sort of Catholic – an unfrocked Jesuit, so to speak ... People join the Communist party now for much the same reason they joined the Catholic church in the Middle Ages, because they are afraid. If they're stupid it's fear of intimidation. If they're intelligent it's fear of facing up to the spiritual consequences of standing alone.

– An individualist, then.

– I should use the word anarchist if it hadn't the wrong associations. Anarch is a bit better, perhaps ... The Anarch is surely a man who considers that all dogma exists only to be challenged and who admits no moral law beyond his own need – who sees his own judgment to be the equal of all men's and therefore more fundamentally important to himself, who's prepared to act alone and think alone and has the courage to face his own inevitable despair ... The idea of an anarchist as a man of violence is rather silly. He need not be at all. The Catholics and the Communists have killed and tortured millions. An anarchist would torture none and kill only those who interfered irremovably with his own peace of mind – as the Italians and the Germans did with mine during the war.¹⁸

As sometimes happens on still mornings, there was a momentous surf. It rode in like line upon line of matchless cavalry immolating itself before an impregnable position. Never ending, as fast as one line died another appearing, it pounded in against the obstructing beach. Here and there, where a rock stuck out, white peacock fans shot into the air and drifted, gradually disintegrating into sun-shot mist. The air drummed with sound and motion.³²

The darkness was like extra eyelids squeezing away the thought of sight.¹⁵

Gestures of protest ... are no better for being seen through the bottom of a brandy glass.⁴²

Split infinitives ... don't arise in French or Spanish.⁴³

Those who doubt most are sometimes those who want most to believe.¹¹

That every event in life has a tail of consequences as long as any comet is a truism in no way qualified by the complementary fact that each event is some part of another's tail. But, in the nature of man, the second truth is more easily recognised than the first ... The tail of a comet is not visible until you are behind it.⁵

– I want to marry you. I want you to become a part of me – each to become part of the other ... I want to claim the honour of knowing your body intimately – and your mind and your heart. I want to take you into the world and live with you always, to experience everything that the world offers, in *your* company – to talk to you, to listen to you, to face with you all the dangers and the sweets, the pains and the pleasures, the exhilaration, and the joys of being young – of challenge and fulfilment and happiness. I know I can marry someone else. I know you can. But it would be for both of us a retreat into a half-life, never breathing deep, never feeling all there is to feel, passing one's days without the ultimate and vital flavour. Will you come? Will you come?

– Yes, please.^{39 (abridged)}

As soon as he saw Eve Paterson he knew that this was something different. It was an organ voluntary after the conventional tinkle of a piano.⁵

[A newly-pregnant wife]: Of course, I don't *want* the brat (for) are they not revolting little specimens when they come? Wrinkled, red-faced little tyrants, greedy, selfish, demanding, incontinent, full of crudities and wind, claiming the whole attention of an adult person night and day and never saying thank you for it. They're warm and moist and clinging, and they smell of urine and sour milk, and there are far too many of 'em in the world already!³⁴

His thick Cornish accent and primitive sense of grammar belonged to the lower classes. His rough clothes, his rough mode of life, his lack of education, even his Methodism, marked him off as someone not to be considered as a suitable companion for her. But deep under that, like some strong slow-

moving current of the blood was a heart-lurching knowledge that only what had happened between [them] was real. As real as illness, as real as health, as real as life and as real as death. All else was vanity.³² (abridged)

The air was biting clear and biting cold. There had been a frost in the night but the sun was quickly thawing it. Spiders' webs spangled the melting dew. Seagulls screamed in the high remote sky, partly in control of themselves, partly at the behest of the wind. Surf tumbled and muttered in the distance. A day to be alive ...³⁴

An asthmatic's breathing *like a football team*⁶; a stab victim's *like sawing wood*⁴⁰; a bronchitic's *like a kettle just beginning to sing on the hob*³⁵; a fire survivor's *like a corncrake*⁴⁶; a paramour's quick *like an animal which knows it has been caught*¹⁵; a sleeper's *ticking gently like a metronome*³⁵; a stroke victim's *like inflating a tyre*⁷; a dying man's *like a fish put on a slab to die*³⁵; a fat man's waistcoat *like an oven door*³¹; another's cough *a small thin wheezy noise as if deep inside a very small dog was dying of asphyxiation*¹⁹; starlings walking *like old market women*²⁶ or *chattering in the snow, fighting for a crust*¹⁸ or perched on a roof *like pegs on a line*²⁶; a parade of crows *waddling in judicial procession as if about to open the assizes*⁴²; seagulls walking *like ungainly aldermen, the wind ruffling their tail coats*³⁵ or *big as geese*³⁷ or *crying as if hope were lost for ever*³⁷; grubby children who *lacked the lick of the mother cat*³⁵; a baby's hand *no bigger than a soft pink walnut*³⁵; its lips *pursed to blow Gabriel's trumpet*³²; dead lips *like soft cold stale putty*³⁵

There were too many people here, people of the kind who had sent Jim to prison. Painted and powdered up, dressed to the eyes, high-heeled, fan-flicking, snuff-box clicking, people with titles, people wanting titles, place holders, place seekers, squires, squireens, clergymen with two or three rich livings, brewers, millers, iron, tin and copper merchants, ship-owners, bankers. People of his own class. People he despised.¹⁵

– These disagreeable rumours, why do you make so much of them? You like to believe you are in good society. Well, I can tell you, in the *best* society hardly anyone can be certain who their father is. It is a mountain made out of a molehill.

Her sophisticated, cynical common sense was not without its balm.⁴⁶ (abridged)

It was another good day, with a corn-red sun glinting in and out of prison bars of cloud, and the sea very grumpy and very quiet. [On] the beach, gulls and other seabirds clustered together in protest meetings which, had they been human beings, would now [following passage of The Six Acts, 1819] be legally forbidden them.⁴⁶

Life was such a gamble, and the safest, sturdiest man existed on such a tightrope of circumstance that the merest vibration could throw him. We lived, belonged, felt solidly based, important in the world – and then, flick, and we were nothing.³⁵

I think [Calcutta is] the queerest city of all. There may be more vice in Port Said. And Singapore's got a worse name. But in Calcutta at night in the poorer native districts – you're back in the Black Hole.⁵

[At Jim Carter's trial]: The degree of a man's need should not determine the degree of his honesty, else all beggars would be thieves. And if a man is well enough to err, he is surely also well enough to be punished. In view, however, of the medical testimony and of your own testimony, we are willing to take a more lenient view. The prisoner is sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

– I trust I may never have the misfortune to have the leniency of the court extended to me.

– Have a care, Mr Poldark. Such remarks are not entirely outside our jurisdiction.

– Only mercy enjoys that privilege.

– The case is closed. Will you kindly step down. Otherwise we will have you committed for contempt of court.

– I can assure you, sir, that such a committal would be a reading of my inmost thoughts.^{14 (abridged)}

The horizon had almost faded into the cloudy tresses of the sky.⁵

[At a society gathering]: I know we see here a selection of men and women who are vain, self-seeking, arrogant, over-dressed, avaricious and shallow. But they are little different in this respect from other people, except that they have more possessions, and perhaps possessions are a corrupting influence ... It's true you may ... come across a greater simplicity, even a

greater generosity among *some* of the poor. *But* among *most* of the poor and the base you will also find a greater brutishness, an ignorance, a lower level of understanding of so very much that is *important* in life. Many are poor because they have had no chance to be anything else, but most are poor because they are of a lower order of intellect, feeling, taste, comprehension. It's an inescapable fact!³⁷

A bore ... is a man who can't distinguish between what interests him and what interests other people.⁵

Unfortunately it is only wild bores one is permitted to shoot.⁴

To people born in [the Scilly Isles] the wind was a prominent *motif* in their existence. This sound, so long forgotten, was like a pre-natal memory. It brought up sickness and soft arms and childish terrors; bare feet on cobbles and the kiss of the cold sea.⁵

Melancholy (is) more necessary to the world than joy, for from it (springs) more of the world's creative masterpieces, more greatness and more truth.⁵

The sun was setting without making a direct appearance, but the whole sky was lit up. The great cloud was like a gaunt, misshapen lattice across the door of a furnace. Splashes of scarlet and palest vermilion lay in ridges up the sky like red-hot bars. The sea near the horizon was a grey which had been diluted with heliotrope.⁵

Desire does not concern itself with desirability.⁵

In the east where the sun had risen a pale metallic streak like a drawn sword was fading from the sky. There would probably be more rain.⁵

A woman of originality and beauty creates her own precedent. Fashion is the hall-mark of the herd.^{5 (recast)}

On the beach, (the) sand (was) soft and churning at first, then hard where the tide had been. It was not yet far out. The waves were small but explosive, bursting into little flurries of self-importance as they turned. The

rim of the sun peered slanting over the sandhills and set fire to the first chimney top of Nampara. Clouds (marched) like rioting miners out of the western sky.^{35 (abridged)}

Physical love without the infusion of either affection or passion is flesh without spirit, and as dead.³¹

Once on a time came Sorrow
Saying,
"Stay with me and be my bride."
I answered him "good morrow,"
Praying
He would leave my side.

For Sorrow's love is grief,
Unwanted,
Grief before the morn;
Joy and pleasure's thief
And haunted
By a crown of thorn.¹⁷

It must have come as a disappointment ... that I didn't take this opportunity to commit suicide ... Unfortunately I haven't got the courage – or lack of imagination. Is there any difference?⁵

Europe's got the D.T.'s. For two years it's been seeing green snakes. Now, by the Lord, they're beginning to wriggle.⁹

How [Hitler] loves Saturdays* ... He leaves the League on a Saturday. He reintroduces conscription. He marches into the Rhineland. Those were astute moves. It is a wonder for [the occupation of Czechoslovakia] that his astrologer has not told him to change the day.⁹

* Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations on Saturday 14 October 1933, unveiled plans to reinstitute conscription in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles on Saturday 16 March 1935 and launched his occupation of the Rhineland on Saturday 7 March 1936. In *No Exit* (and possibly in reality too) the date of his planned invasion of Czechoslovakia was advanced at the eleventh hour from Saturday 18 to Wednesday 15 March 1939.

Passion's pleasure, love is pain.⁵

– In the third century B.C. ... two great powers, two opposing systems, two different ways of life, faced each other across the Mediterranean. In the twentieth century A.D. two great powers, two opposing systems, two different ways of life, face each other across the North Sea. After the first Punic War an uneasy peace existed between Rome and Carthage. It lasted twenty-two years. After the first Teutonic war an uneasy peace has existed between England and Germany. So far it has lasted twenty-one years ... After the first war the people of Rome watched uncomfortably while Carthage regained her vigour and fighting power. They saw her conquer Spain. A year later they were at war again. (But) history has its consolations, you know. The Roman Empire endured for six hundred years after that ... These evil things come from the East. Dictatorship in the modern sense; the suppression of the individual for the aggrandisement of the state; the philosophy of the ant; they're not European conceptions, but Asiatic. Men are worshipping false idols. Men are marching. It's a question only of time. We of this generation are caught and can't escape ... Forces stronger than the best of us lead us downhill ... (But) be of good heart ... The future is with God.

– I hope so.

– A disturbing thought ... The most disturbing, perhaps, of the afternoon. The Middle Ages had its beliefs to sustain it. Our abiding weakness is that we are not sure that the future is not with the Devil.⁹

It was a pleasant July night with the western sky still luminous as from the reflection of a lighted window.¹⁵

Winds as cold as charity¹³ and sharp as a surgeon's knife³⁸; a sighing wind blowing snow dove-soft against the face⁴²; an ultramarine sky in which the stars were never bright²⁷; others basilisk⁴², bone-grey³⁷, red as a wound³⁴, streaked as if broom-brushed³⁵, dappled mackerel³⁸ and heavy as a soup tureen³⁹; clouds like elephants' bellies⁵¹ or angry fists clenched in the sky⁴²; others swollen and pendulous as cows' udders⁴⁶; a great cloud black as the wrath of God³⁴; wisps of cloud aflame like fragments of burnt paper blown up from a fire³⁹; thin cloud like a gauze scarf wreathing the sun⁴²; a ragged cloud like a broken fish and chip bag²⁶; a Plymouth sea grey as a skating rink²⁶; a Torbay sea like a blue plate with bits chipped out of the edges²⁶; a

Mallorcan sea *like fluid green bottles*²⁶; a Cornish sea *shadowy slate blue*²¹; others *beryl blue*³⁸, *metal-blue*⁴⁶, *like silver paper under the winter sun*³⁷, *an oilcloth being lifted by a draught*³⁵ or *milk in a pan being heated to make cream*³⁹; palm trees *rustling like raffia skirts*²⁶; an ungainly apple tree *hung with the remains of wild clematis, looking like an elderly lady in Russian sables*⁴⁶; a tree's fall *like the tipping of a load of slates*¹⁴; autumn *lingering as if fond of its own perfection*¹⁴

No game's any good if you don't play it seriously.¹⁰

This was the lowest common factor of war. Weeping women all over the earth ... faced with the same measuring stick of sorrow.¹⁰

He waited until she had reached him, wading up rather breathlessly out of the sea. She was wearing a short blue costume. Although they had not previously spoken, she recognised him and smiled enquiringly ... The water was standing out like little blobs of perspiration upon her fine skin. The costume clung to her compact young figure. Tiny rivulets of water trickled down her arms from shoulder to elbow and then onto the wrist. He saw that she had coloured ... Perhaps the background was largely responsible: the blue-grey waste of sea framed in rock, a cold-blooded life, beating slow and impersonal upon the sand. But then the foreground consisted of this woman, whatever her name was. However detached one might really be, she remained the focal point of any picture his mind was concerned with, her face bereft of its softening hair, a clear-cut, youthful oval; her breast rising and falling deeply with the exertion of her swim, the inadequate blue costume; her wet skin gleaming whitely against the curtain of the sea. It was in a sense symbolic, he told himself. Her face, particularly the eyes and lips, was expressive of warmth and courage and individuality; seemed to be typical of humanity in its continuous struggle against inanimate force. At least he could bring himself to regard it as that.⁸

[With love] you don't take out a limited liability. It has to be all or nothing.⁸

All poets ... live by the grace of God and the Poor Law relief.⁸

Guinness: a plebeian drink ... which seems to show good taste on the part of the proletariat.⁸

It isn't where you're born in this world, it's what you do.¹⁹

Blood is over-rated ... It takes but a generation to make class. Times have changed. Wealth is what counts.¹⁵

– When did the first Poldarks come over from France?

– 1572. It's nothing. *Nothing*. I've said this to you before. People who brag of their ancestors are like root vegetables. All their importance is underground. But what does it all matter? Who is to say that *your* ancestors were not here before mine? It is only what you are yourself that counts. Consider it: who has a longer descent than anyone else? Are we not all from Adam? We all come from the same stock in the beginning. That some have had the good fortune, or the cunning, or the skill to climb higher than the others and to continue to ride the wave through the centuries makes them no more deserving of awe, praise or reverence.^{37 (abridged)}

She was a blonde with that sort of urchin cut that makes you look like a drowned cat.²⁶

– I'm a persistent fellow. Water weareth away stone.

– Not in one lifetime.²⁶

Being introduced to [Aunt Madge] was like making an appointment with somebody who forgot to turn up.¹³

You drink a glass of rum or have a bit of lovey-dovey, and where does it lead? Nobody knows. They say who rides on a tiger – but which of us isn't in that fix? Can I get down? Can you get down? We're all on our own tigers we've fed for a bit of sport or brought up from being a cub and now we wish we hadn't. You think you know everything [when you're young]. But the older you grow the more you see your mistake. The world's a snare *and* everybody in it. Everybody's different like the trees in a forest. Some's crooked; some's straight. Some's healthy; some's got moss on 'em. Some'll stand any storm; others'll fall at the first puff. Some's got fruit that's good to pick; some hasn't. *And* you can't tell. Not the cleverest person in the world can tell what's behind a face. They think they can, but they can't. It shakes your nerve. You don't know where you are. Then before you can say knife you're riding somebody else's tiger.^{13 (abridged)}

The evening was loud and wild. Black clumsy clouds were driving up from the north, lit at their edges by light from a sliver of moon. A few hazy stars speckled the patches of sky. But it was not dark. Even when the moon was quite gone there would be some luminescence from the restless sea because the longest day was still only a month past. Yet it did not seem like late summer. The sea drift was cold, the air was cold and noisy, the waves melancholy as if waiting for autumn.⁴⁶

It's the crowning tragedy for every widow that she can't be her son's wife.²⁶

The waves cracked dismally and rattled on the pebbly beach like the tipping of bags of small coal: the first heavy fall when the wave broke, then the rattle of small coal as the bag was pulled away. The sound was sad and old and impersonal, as if it spoke of creation and decay. It was like the loneliness of life, the loneliness of himself.^{13 (recast)}

The suspicion crept around in his eyes, like quicksilver in a saucer.²⁶

Death came like a rising tide, inch by inch, putting her body to sleep. Soon there was no stomach, then there was no breathing left. She did not gasp for breath for she no longer needed air. For the last time, seeing its approaching extinction, her brain came clear again. What had she said? What trouble had she started, and for whom? ... The bed shook as Smollett jumped on it again. Her head was sinking sideways on the pillow. With a great effort she straightened it. For a moment that was better. But then the light began to go, the warm, milk yellow sunlight of a summer day. The beamed ceiling smeared and blurred. She could not close her mouth. She tried to close her mouth and failed. Her tongue stopped. But one hand still slowly moved. Smollett nudged up to it and licked it with his rough tongue. The sensation of that roughness made its way from her fingers to her brain. It was the last feeling left. The fingers moved a moment on the cat's fur. Hold me, hold me, they said. Then quietly, peacefully at the last, submissively, beaten by a stronger will than her own, her eyes opened and she left the world behind.³²

- [The swollen belly] is the only part of having children that I detest ...
- I could well take a vow of abstinence when I see you put to so much strain and inconvenience just to satisfy my appetites.

- Don't take a vow that I shall persuade you to break. For abstinence is not in *me* yet.
- It would be a good name, wouldn't it. Abstinence. Abstinence Poldark. But would it be for a girl or a boy?
- Don't you think Indulgence would be better?
- Or Incontinence.
- That might be too near the truth!³⁸

Perry [who] had reverted to his rum again ... always looked as if he was going to produce some great thought and never did.¹³

The trees about Penryn ... would stand in groups upon their lonely hills and whisper of man's mortality. Human life was a stirring, a thin fermenting between the breasts of the world, a reaching for the light and a gathering of the dusk. A shifting and temporary interlocking of relationships between light and dark. The worst headache and the brightest happiness would soon be still. They loomed large as mountains, like clouds they were large as mountains but dispersed like smoke.¹³

Depression ... fell on her like a kidnapper's cloak.³³

People, countless thousands, were hatched upon the earth like maggots every day: they breathed and crawled and enough of them survived and bred to preserve the species; but within a space – the blinking of a few sunrises – some accident, some foul-smelling disease befell every one of them and they were thrust into the earth and hastily trodden down by the next generation. Julia, Francis, Agatha. Who came next? And did it matter? Did any damned thing matter at all?^{34 (abridged)}

You can build a house in twenty months; a garden takes twenty years.³³

In not liking gardening ... he displays ... some deficiency of the soul.⁶

Christianity visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, while psycho-analysis visits the sins of the children upon the fathers.³³

Introverts – the balanced introverts – make up most of what is worthwhile in the world.³³

Her expression resembled that of a Hindu Sadhu who has spent a week contemplating the Infinite.⁴⁸

Low grey cloud was blowing across the sun, and the thin smear of smoke from the mine chimney merged and blew away with it. Farther west, rifts in the shifting canopy showed distant sky, blue and pale green and misty indigo. It was a quiet day and should have been mild, but some northern air had infected it and the wind was chill. The trees in the valley were still as black as mid-winter.²¹

[She sat at the spinet with] the peculiar expression on her face which she always took on when reading music, as if she was just going to bite an apple.¹⁵

It's a good principle to have half of what you would like of any sweet thing.⁶

[By a 1930s pre-WWII fireside]: During a war the man who excels at the particular form of butchery involved is proclaimed a hero, and the man who, from religious conviction, refuses to do anything is vilified and thrown into prison. After the war everyone vies with everyone else in proving that the patriot who did his best for his country has feet of clay and a head of wood; and the man who didn't think his own people worth fighting for is dragged out of prison and invited to go round lecturing on the subject. Which is right? Don't ask me ...

– When the war was over everyone had such high hopes. We felt that those who had died had not died in vain. [Since then] it's been more like a Hardy novel; everything going wrong. Human nature struggling against a malignant fate ...

– I'm inclined to agree ... There may be no war. We may avoid that ... But it's difficult to deny that we're on a slope and the slope is getting steeper. We're all running about with our fingers in our ears and squealing to keep out the din.

– What are we fleeing from?

– From thought, from repose, from silence ... From the need to live as individuals, from the appreciation of quality to the demand for quantity, from craftsmanship to mass-production, from personal sentiment to mass emotion, from something like ordered progress to something like panic haste; but above all from the man to the machine ... We're no longer

masters of the machine, however much we may think so. Physically, of course, I grant you; but morally we're the servant ... Stand in a tube station and watch people being drawn into its vitals ... [They] can't even walk down the passages to the trains; they've got to run. Soon we shall have no time to think; already the newspapers do most of it for us. Already there are three taps in every house: hot water, cold water, and music. The mind of the man in the street is gradually losing its capacity for mastication and learning to subsist on babies' food. Electric signs and picture papers. Mental rattles and rocking-horses.⁶

Reasoned abstention is the secret of all enjoyment.¹

A man shoulders hunched like a vulture in a tree³⁴; others stubborn as a horse with glanders³⁸, thirsty as a goose with one eye shut⁴² or yellow as a well-worn guinea⁴²; men like a damned draper³⁸, a thin little sultan ruling over a harem³⁸, something out of a leper colony³¹ or a careworn and unspiritual Buddha³⁸; a man in his seventh heaven only because there was not an eighth⁴² or on whom black clothes hung so limply that he might just have been dragged from the sea³⁷ or hungry as a cannibal³⁵ or the grave³⁷ or good looking as a stiletto³⁹ or evasive as a pilchard³⁷ or thin as a shotten herring³⁴ or drunk as a haddock³⁷ or mad as Ajax³⁵ or limping like Jago's donkey⁴² or with a certain sultry, sallow look which gives one curious sensations in the crotch³⁸ or so full of bullet holes you could have used him for washing plums¹; a man who walks like a mean-natured cat expecting trouble²⁴ or as though making his carefree way through a minefield³⁸ or who knows a thousand people but doesn't have a friend³¹ or never forgets a favour and never forgets an injury⁴² or who would lend anyone a smiling hand on the way to perdition⁴⁶ or gives one the shrimps⁴⁶ or don't know the time o' day or whether tis Christmas or Easter⁴² or snarls like a fradgy dog³⁷ or a maimed wolf, ready to fight to the last³¹ or sits like a partly squashed beetle³⁷ or discards his thoughts, throwing them like a bone to a dog¹⁸ or attracts trouble like a magnet attracts iron filings⁴² or was put in wi' the bread and took out wi' the cakes⁴²; men considered a great lootal³⁹, a leaky old drainpipe³⁸, an inebriate half bankrupt squireen⁴², slow as a dewsnail³⁵, an odious little frog³⁷, a rare old lickerish devil³⁴, a bit of a blade⁴⁶, a wild worthless rake³⁵, hard and mean and niggard as a louse³⁷, a little fat squab, swart and jowly⁴², a simpering, scheming, sarcastic, good-for-nothing fop and ungrateful, ungracious, greedy, drunken, mala-pert, lazy wastrel³⁹; a

man at a soirée looking not so much *a fish out of water as a cat* in it³⁷; others *known as Mister Eleven from the thinness of his legs*³⁴ and *Quack because he struts like a duck*⁴²

Clouds were racing up from the north-west, monstrous and white like ships of the line, yet in a mysterious fashion they all contrived to avoid the sun, as if it were a lighthouse and they must not founder.¹⁴

Anyone can smell frost if they take the trouble to use their noses. And rain. And snow. The trouble with civilisation is that all the senses are becoming dulled ... How many people ... if you put them blindfolded into a room full of others could pick out their friends by their individual smells?⁴

During the four years of the [Great] War ... friendships were made in an hour, and the world spoke freely to its neighbour under the cloud of the deadly uncertainty of life.¹

I'd rather sleep with three dead men under my bed than one live rat.¹

I suppose your wife is used to disappointments? Most married women are.¹

The darkness was evil; the wind was evil. There was no God, nor any beneficent influence in the world. This earth was Hell. One strove and suffered, struggled and fought, persistently followed after a happiness which had no root in reality. The evil Spirit that had planned his destiny was surely out there among the dark trees laughing with the wind.²

By staying single [a girl may] sample the hors d'oeuvres without having to take a full seven-course dinner.³

- What's that building among the trees on the rise?
- I believe it's the new chapel.
- It looks like a cattle shed.³⁴ (abridged)

This single sentence seemed to drain the last remnants of insouciance from her, and left her a bent old woman living in a dead past peopled with the shadows of her memory.³

[To enter Lisbon via the Tagus affords] one of the finest sea approaches in Europe. Naples and Constantinople are the only two I know which are slightly more lovely.³

The sea was as wild as winter and between the white lines of breakers was a vivid oily green. In the distance the horizon was hidden in a pale grey mist ... Sure enough the rain came, blinding in the stronger wind that brought it. It lasted some minutes and then as abruptly ceased, leaving everything guttering and dripping, and the sun flung a single sabre of green across the sea.²¹

Had she been (more) honest with herself ... she would have acknowledged that these reasoned arguments were like little figures skating on the ice: they neither touched nor influenced the flow of what current there might be beneath.⁷

To be candid is the mark of a good friend.⁷

If you want to know a person's real opinion of you you must come on him by surprise.³

If you wish to discover a man's true feelings, it is always best to provoke him.²¹

Complete editions [of authors' works]: usual sign of the collector or house furnisher rather than the reader.⁷

More solicitors carry umbrellas on fine days than any other profession.³¹

Fear and hunger. Fear and hunger. They seemed to have a common frontier ... They met in a psychomatic no-man's-land between the countries of the body and the mind.³¹

Everyone knows the common man lacks (taste). One forgets how unforgivably some of these old landed families were equally lacking.³¹

I saw her blurred and misty and grey, like one of those tactful screen close-ups done to disguise the fact that the heroine is long in the tooth.¹⁸

Small change is riches to a beggar.¹⁸

Twenty-three ... can be old. It depends where you have lived.¹⁸

It was a soft summery day with white regiments of cloud mustered on the horizon. The sea was quiet, and the small wavelets turning their heads near the edge left behind them on the green surface a delicate arabesque of white.¹⁵

Underneath her liveliness, her self-chiding humour, her youth, was a layer of bitterness, or resentment or grief, I couldn't tell quite what. It was like wandering through flowery fields and stubbing your toe on a stone.¹⁸

One can see Corsica on a fine day. Not that there's any special pleasure in detecting a smudge on the horizon. Why do people suppose there is?¹⁸

Dank trees dappled in sunlight
Mosaics of green
Fresh, though an ardent moon seen blazing between
Has drained the ripe sky
Pale faced, like the early fulfilment of May.

Each branch laden full heavy
No wanton wind stirring
But the wings of a myriad insects whirring
Through streets of green gloom
Shadowed and sunshot, umber and grey

Young birds sharp with incentive
Bind twigs in their fluttering
Startled white tail shows a babe rabbit scuttering
Where intruding footstep
Soft though intended, has startled his play.⁵⁸

Mr Lytton kept screwing up his eyes as if dazzled by the witness ... his grey, pachydermatous face wearing a weary, dusty expression as if too many years of exposing human frailty had left him without illusions and without hope.²⁵

The clouds had broken up and a brilliant moon two days from full was riding the sky ... With the tide more than half out the beach lay tattered and broken in the moonlight, and covered with froth like the remnants of milk which had boiled away in a saucepan.³⁵

A country can't be occupied and practically at civil war within itself and get over it in two or three years. Think what London must have been like two years after Cromwell died ...¹⁸

Selfishness is the only true atheism.²³

Revenge is as useless as regret.¹⁸

Sentimentality is the cause of so much trouble in the world ... It leads people to tell themselves lies – which is so much more dangerous than telling lies to others.¹⁸

People talk about the law of the jungle, but the jungle is a haven of peace and mercy compared with Europe this last fifteen years. It seems to me that the only things that now make life and one's common humanity bearable are just those little graces, the spiritual adventures – call 'em what you like – which altogether weigh practically nothing in any material scale. Why shouldn't one believe in God and Santa Claus and the Moonlight Sonata if one chooses to? Perhaps it's sad to be the victim of sentimentality, but is it sadder than to be the victim of one's own disillusion?¹⁸

Life holds only two or three things worth the having, and if you possess them the rest don't matter, and if you do not possess them the rest are useless ... It is sentimental; but by and large we're creatures of sentiment and cannot escape. Nor is it always wise to want to. You see people every day who take a chance and damn the consequences. Many of them suffer for it, but I do not think they come off worst. The people who come off worst are the people who draw back at the last moment and spend the rest of their lives regretting it.²¹

The cold north-westerly breeze had altogether dropped ... [The day] was halcyon. The sun streamed out of a remote pale aniline sky, so different from the peacock blues of yesterday, the sea had settled, the Dark Cliffs

looked pale as bread in the afternoon sun, primroses peeped in the hedge-rows and little bristly tufts of future bluebells thrust out among the worn undergrowth of winter. Birds, not totally deceived, nevertheless chirped and twittered and pinked around the house and the stream.³⁸

No one can be a cynic unless he's been a romantic first ... Perhaps we're all born expecting too much. It's a question of how we get around to the disappointment.¹⁸

*A splay of letters*²³; *an octopus of lovers' limbs*⁴⁰; *a sulphurous silence*⁴⁶; *a chord of unease*³¹; *a conger eel of discord*³³; *a spider's web of sadness and suspicion*⁴²; *a worm of fear and compassion*¹⁴; *a stalagmite of horror and hatred and shock*³¹; *doubts not gone but locked like poisonous snakes in some dark cellar of the subconscious*⁴⁶; *foliage glistening like old spoons*²⁶; *umbrellas shining like the backs of porpoises*⁷; *a grand piano as big as two coffins*²⁶; *tea like liquid boot polish*²⁶; *a thick cough like a shovelful of wet coal*²⁶; *gravestone teeth*³⁷; *a huddle of front teeth*⁴⁶; *false teeth as regular as piano keys*⁴⁹; *morals as accommodating as a Greyfriar's sleeve*²⁷; *puffs of foam drifting like ghosts, hanging from brambles and branches like the seeds of wild clematis*³⁵; *seaweed hanging like shrouds from a corpse*³⁴; *Little God regarding Pearl with all the fullness of his eyes and as a small black leopard waiting to climb on its mate; Angell's neighbour eyeing God as if he was something out of the drains and Flora, on first meeting him, as if he was a piece of pre-wrapped sirloin in a supermarket; his look, in response, would have dried up a river-bed*^{all 31}; *a poor family a mixed bag of heathens, quarrelsome, vital, grudging, grasping, noisy and ragged*³⁴

It had been so dark all day that the long evening was only just beginning to show the fall of night. The gusty wind was spinning webs of rain, weaving them in and out of each other across the wide and darkening stretches of sand. The sea had not been blown up by the wind, it had been deadened by the rain, and it curled over at the edge in listless green caterpillars.³⁴

Drake loved this life; he loved everything about it: the sunsets, the moon-rises, the ruffled golden glow on ripe corn, the ink-black sheen of a blue-bottle's wings, the taste of fresh spring water, lying down and stretching on your back when you were tired, getting up in the morning with a whole new day ahead, eating fresh-baked bread, feeling the cold sea rushing

round your legs, roasting a potato in the embers of a fire and peeling it and eating it while it was still too hot to hold, walking on a cliff, lying in the sun, turning a good piece of wood, beating the sparks from iron ... Among the things he loved was a girl, and this was the greatest love of all ... Paradise might hold greater glories but he could not imagine them.³²

Snowy moors *brilliant in their unsoiled, sleeping whiteness*¹; hail striking windows *like fistfuls of gravel hurled by a petulant child*⁴⁶ or bare skin *like peas from a shooter*³⁵; a worn moon *like a counterfeit penny bitten in half*³⁵ or *veiled and warped and wasted with age*³⁵; another *silver-stitching the sea*³⁹; a boiler on trestles *like a fat baby whale that has lost its mother*³⁷; hay after rain *like a drunkard's hair newly roused from sleep*³²; part-cut fields *like embroidered handkerchiefs*³⁵; a stooping man's breeches *shining like a decaying planet*³⁵; a dressing table *bent-legged, like a soldier on a crutch*³⁹; candles leaning askew *like drunken guardsmen*³⁵; ships before the wind riding *like great seabirds that have settled on the water (with) wings still unfolded*³²; a husbandless home *empty as a tomb*³⁵; the sea moving quietly *like an animal settling for sleep*³; the winter sea stinging *like a plague of wasps*⁵⁷; mackintoshes flapping *like loose sails*⁷; rain falling stealthily on cheeks in *a moist caress*⁴² or *in peremptory sheets ... sweeping the roads like an early-morning hose*⁷; tide rising *slow as dough, slow as age, slow as death*³²; the sun *like a red hot coin smoking into the misty sea*³⁴ or *a six-shilling piece lying on a dusty floor*³⁷ or *a Chinese lantern appearing and disappearing through the winter mists*³⁹ or *a guinea behind a muslin cloth*⁴⁶; others *like a great luminous iceberg sinking into the sea*⁴⁶, *thieving through barred windows*⁴² or *peering sidelong among the cumbrous trees*⁴²; bees in foxglove bells *like fat robbers peering into caves*⁴²; rooks clapping their wings *like an unenthusiastic audience*⁴²; a necklace seeming to set fire to the wearer's *throat*³⁵; a sick man's life *flickering and wavering like a candle with a thief in it*³⁴; a glass of port: *over-sweet, cloying, like a moneyed existence*³¹; French bread: *the best in the world to eat new*⁴²; Boanerges: an old Riley⁴; verisimilitude: *a silly word*⁴⁶; Parliament: *a hybrid, born of a chapel for a father and a bear-pit for a mother*³⁵; Moses (a bulldog): *no artist's model but the best-behaved dog in the Home Counties*⁷; an unfit boxer *flabby as Tottenham pudding*³¹; cliffs with *headcloths of green and feet of black and brown and purple seaweed*⁴²; South cf. North Cornish cliffs: *the dagger and the broadsword*³⁷; itches *undependable as a comedian's trousers*²⁰

The sea was very quiet under the hot sun. Faint airs moved across from time to time, brushing dark gentle shadows over it as over the down of a bird's wing. Where the water was shallow its surface was an ever-shifting pattern of mauve and bottle-green wrinkles.¹⁴

If one man robs you it don't make all the world a thief. Nor one woman neither.²⁷

On the gathering night
From the faint harmony of an errant dream
I woke and found the moon's quiet light
Quiet in the gathering night
Echoing its theme.

Then in the early dawn
Sadness was mine and the desire to stay
Lest the rich theme so young new born
Fading in early dawn
Wither away.

Now in the clamorous noon
Nothing is left me but an empty husk
Yet do I wait and hope for soon
Gone is the clamorous noon
Welcome the dusk.⁵⁶

He half woke to find someone kneeling beside him. He must have been dragged back because he was in some sort of shelter. This man was kneeling beside him. Then he knew he was delirious.

– Father.

– Jeremy ...

The man was ragged and bloodstained and had a week's growth of beard. But he wore no hat and that made him unmistakable. Somebody wiped the corner of his mouth. The battle was still raging but seemed more distant. It was very dark.

– This ... a dream?

– No. Can you drink this?

Blessed water. But it didn't seem to go farther than his throat.

– What are you doing?
– I escaped from Verdun. I would have been with you earlier but my horse was killed. Jeremy, lie still.
– No choice. Is the battle ...?
– Still close. But the Imperial Guard have been broken. They came in a great mass and have been broken, have given way. And they say the Prussians are in sight.
– Lost a lot of my friends.
– By God, I can't find a surgeon! Jeremy, my son, lie quiet. Can you take some more water?
He wiped the blood again from the corner of Jeremy's mouth.
– These horses should never be in a war. If men have to fight, let 'em fight on foot.
– I will see if I can find someone.
Ross's voice was unrecognisable even to himself.
– Don't go ... Is it night yet?
– No, about eight, I think. I cannot tell you for my watch is broke.
Jeremy saw now there were a couple of dozen men in the hut. All must be in great pain, but no one was groaning – only the occasional sigh and grunt.
– Father ...
– Yes?
– My love to mother.
– Yes.
– Tell her ...
– What?
– No matter. I wanted to tell her ... something. Perhaps I left it too late. But I have written.
Ross felt the tears running down his face. He bent to wipe the blood once again from Jeremy's mouth.
– Perhaps the next war will be fought with steam engines. Father ...
– Yes?
– Look after Cuby ...
– Of course. I promise.
– That ... is the hardest part of all.
And then he died.⁴² (slightly condensed and recast)

Have a care for (the distinction between right and wrong), for a happy life and the hangman's noose are closer together than some realise.²⁷

A thin clerkly man *with a pinched face and a shiny suit*³⁵; a whipcord figure *trembling with anger*⁴²; two small peers *carrying enough self-importance to sink a three-decker* (and) *bristling and ruffling up like little bantams preparing to dispute over a hen*³⁴; three gaugers round a cache *like jackals about a fallen beast, like hounds at the kill*²¹; an old man's *three long hairs spread out to look like six*²; others *thin as asparagus tips*³⁸; a young midshipman *like a west wind, gusty and clean and no breath of malice*²¹; three old ladies *like flies in the last sun*²⁶; another sitting down *like a fall of sand*¹⁷; another *an ancient crone; an evil, festering harridan*³⁵; a haggard hunk of gristle and bone, *properly long since dead*³² with hands *trembling and fumbling unceasingly like wrinkled grey moles searching for something they could never find*¹⁹; another *fat and round as a saffron bun*³⁷; a pale tiny woman *who looked as if the leeches had been at her*³⁷; an attractive woman, *more beautiful than pretty but not quite either*³⁹; others *a money-grubbing little she-goat*³⁹, *a crouching, creaking old biddy*⁴⁶, *small-boned, like a quail*⁴² and *witless, nashed and screw-eyed*⁴⁶; a foreign wife *like a hedge rose – you had to get through the prickles to reach the flower*³⁹; a child *it would take a thunderbolt to wake*⁴⁶; another *the very daps of his father*³⁸; a nurse with *sharp narrow eyes, smelling of starch and camphor balls*³⁵; a hostess *brazen as the fattest whore in Houndsditch*³⁴; a cuckold *hunched low to the ground, like a dog severely thrashed for something it didn't do*³⁵; Lord Falmouth *looking like a prosperous farmer who had had a bad year*³⁴; Lady Whitworth: *a dewlapped pachydermatous mother-in-law and hard-faced old sow grunting about her lost, dead piglet*³⁵; Wilberforce: *a likeable, warm, religious man, but strangely blinkered, believing as he does that charity begins overseas*³⁵; Canning: *should be Cunning*³⁷; the Prince Regent: *a fat, pompous dandy; an elderly hen*³⁷; Napoleon: *the Little Father*⁴²; *the usurper*⁴⁶; *the wolf of Europe*⁴²

A pall of cloud the colour of coal and sulphur loured over the scene, threatening torrential rainfall if not thunder. Although there was little wind, the clouds kept sidling around and breaking and filling like warships shifting their ground to take better aim. Now and then a spot as big as a six-shilling piece would fall, splitting and spreading into a drying star.³⁸

There are few advantages ... to [being known as an author] ... but some ordinary people take note, especially if they are Celts or French or German.⁴⁴ (tense revised)

It was a fine afternoon with a few curvatures of cloud building up their white colonnades of cumulus. The tide was full in, licking white round all the rocks, and brimming a scintillant blue to the very edges of the land ... Fine veils of mist hung in the air ... A breeze rose and fell, errant, uncertain of direction.³⁹

To wait for inspiration [when writing] is fatal. Inspiration ... is the product of work, of regular writing at regular times, and every day, irrespective of the ultimate value or amount of the work produced.⁴⁴ (tense revised)

Writing novels, whatever the ignorant might think, is grinding hard work ... When it doesn't pay off, or pays so poorly relative to the amount of work put in, it is hardly a tolerable way of life.⁴⁴ (tense revised)

- Why [use a pseudonym]?
- Habit of writers.⁴⁴

A writer has to be much alone. He cannot create except by drawing on the wells within his own personality, and to do this he must be solitary and self-contained.²⁸

A work of creative art, once begun, is not dictated by the homely emotions of affection or dislike for the subject ... One follows deeper impulses of the spirit.¹²

"As you grow older ... you'll come to realise the dreadful mediocrity of nearly all talent."²⁵

A little talent is a tragic thing.¹²

If his mind is clear of other things ... the true artist ought to be able to produce anywhere.⁵

Nobody, least of all a writer, can put a name to the stages of his own growth. Maybe it's better, once he's a successful writer, never to grow any more at all.²⁸

Half of writing is gestation.²⁸

All art is a conflict between self-expression and self-criticism.²⁵

She was experienced, adult and grown-up now. But she had been happier then.¹⁵

You do not put a boiling kettle upon the fire. You put cold water in the kettle and allow it to warm. So with marriage.³²

Perfection is a full stop.
Give me the comma of imperfect striving,
Thus to find zest in the immediate living.
Ever the reaching but never the gaining,
Ever the climbing but never the attaining
Of the mountain top.⁴⁷

Dawn had just broken, and in a clear sky seven black clouds were following each other across the lightening east like seven ill-begotten sons of the storm.¹⁵

There are no permanent things; only fleeting moments of warmth and companionship, precious stationary seconds in a flicker of troubled days.¹⁹

It seemed to me just then that childhood, maturity, marriage, old age and death were each no more than the turning of a page; and soon it's all gone, and nothing's left but the sad wind sighing in an empty garden.³⁰

Cornish earth! Smell it! It's quite different! We're home!⁴⁶

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