The Morning after Woe –
’Tis frequently the Way –
Surpasses all that rose before –
For utter Jubilee –

As Nature did not care –
And piled her Blossoms on –
And further to parade a Joy
Her Victim stared upon –

The Birds declaim their Tunes –
Pronouncing every word
Like Hammers – Did they know they fell
Like Litanies of Lead –

On here and there – a creature –
They’d modify the Glee
To fit some Crucifixal Clef –
Some Key of Calvary –

 —Emily Dickinson

**Afterwards**

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,

 And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,

Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,

 “He was a man who used to notice such things”?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid’s soundless blink,

 The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight

Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,

 “To him this must have been a familiar sight.”

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,

 When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,

One may say, “He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,

 But he could do little for them; and now he is gone.”

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,

 Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,

Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,

 “He was one who had an eye for such mysteries”?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,

 And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,

Till they rise again, as they were a new bell’s boom,

 “He hears it not now, but used to notice such things”?

 —Thomas Hardy

**A Quoi Bon Dire**

Seventeen years ago you said

 Something that sounded like Good-bye;

 And everybody thinks that you are dead,

 But I.

 So I, as I grow stiff and cold

 To this and that say Good-bye too;

 And everybody sees that I am old

 But you.

 And one fine morning in a sunny lane

 Some boy and girl will meet and kiss and swear

 That nobody can love their way again

 While over there

 You will have smiled, I shall have tossed your hair.

 —Charlotte Mew

**After Apple-Picking**

My long two-pointed ladder’s sticking through a tree

Toward heaven still,

And there’s a barrel that I didn’t fill

Beside it, and there may be two or three

Apples I didn’t pick upon some bough.

But I am done with apple-picking now.

Essence of winter sleep is on the night,

The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.

I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight

I got from looking through a pane of glass

I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough

And held against the world of hoary grass.

It melted, and I let it fall and break.

But I was well

Upon my way to sleep before it fell,

And I could tell

What form my dreaming was about to take.

Magnified apples appear and disappear,

Stem end and blossom end,

And every fleck of russet showing clear.

My instep arch not only keeps the ache,

It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.

I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin

The rumbling sound

Of load on load of apples coming in.

For I have had too much

Of apple-picking: I am overtired

Of the great harvest I myself desired.

There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,

Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.

For all

That struck the earth,

No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,

Went surely to the cider-apple heap

As of no worth.

One can see what will trouble

This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.

Were he not gone,

The woodchuck could say whether it’s like his

Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,

Or just some human sleep.

 —Robert Frost

 **“Awakened by the Clock Striking Five”**

Awakened by the clock striking five

Already light,

I still see the dream

Three Corn Maidens in green

Green leaves, skirt, sleeves—

Walking by.

 I turned my eyes, knowing not to stare.

And wake thinking

I should have looked more

To see the way they were

Corn Maidens in green.

Green leaf face, too

Eyes turned aside.

But then I’m glad for once I knew

Not to look too much when

*Really there.*

 Or try to write it down.

 —Gary Snyder

**Then**

You looked up vaguely

or you didn’t—even the memory

is dying. Then your whole body

breathed out, and the argument ended.

Heaven surfaced about you

like a glass tabletop, hard

and cold. *Whatever you do*

*don’t turn me into poetry.* Sorry:

I am done crying about it

but I am not done crying.

 —Daniel Hall