**Song**

I hid my love when young while I

Coud’nt bear the buzzing of a flye

I hid my love to my despite

Till I could not bear to look at light

I dare not gaze upon her face

But left her memory in each place

Where ere I saw a wild flower lye

I kissed and bade my love good bye

I met her in the greenest dells

Where dew drops pearl the wood blue bells

The lost breeze kissed her bright blue eye

The bee kissed and went singing bye

A sun beam found a passage there

A gold chain round her neck so fair

As secret as the wild bees song

She lay there all the summer long

I hid my love in field and town

Till e’en the breeze would knock me down

The Bees seemed singing ballads oe’r

The flyes buss turned a Lions roar

And even silence found a tongue

To haunt me all the summer long

The Riddle nature could not prove

Was nothing else but secret love

—John Clare

**Winter: My Secret**

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I;

Perhaps some day, who knows?

But not today; it froze, and blows and snows,

And you’re too curious: fie!

You want to hear it? well:

Only, my secret’s mine, and I won’t tell.

Or, after all, perhaps there’s none:

Suppose there is no secret after all,

But only just my fun.

Today’s a nipping day, a biting day;

In which one wants a shawl,

A veil, a cloak, and other wraps:

I cannot ope to everyone who taps,

And let the draughts come whistling thro’ my hall;

Come bounding and surrounding me,

Come buffeting, astounding me,

Nipping and clipping thro’ my wraps and all.

I wear my mask for warmth: who ever shows

His nose to Russian snows

To be pecked at by every wind that blows?

You would not peck? I thank you for good will,

Believe, but leave the truth untested still.

Spring’s an expansive time: yet I don’t trust

March with its peck of dust,

Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,

Nor even May, whose flowers

One frost may wither thro’ the sunless hours.

Perhaps some languid summer day,

When drowsy birds sing less and less,

And golden fruit is ripening to excess,

If there’s not too much sun nor too much cloud,

And the warm wind is neither still nor loud,

Perhaps my secret I may say,

Or you may guess.

—Christina G. Rossetti

**Inapprehensiveness**

We two stood simply friend-like side by side,  
Viewing a twilight country far and wide,  
Till she at length broke silence. ‘How it towers  
Yonder, the ruin o’er this vale of ours!  
The West’s faint flare behind it so relieves  
Its rugged outline—sight perhaps deceives,  
Or I could almost fancy that I see  
A branch wave plain—belike some wind-sown tree  
Chance-rooted where a missing turret was.  
What would I give for the perspective glass  
At home, to make out if ’tis really so!  
Has Ruskin noticed here at Asolo  
That certain weed-growths on the ravaged wall  
Seem’ . . . something that I could not say at all,  
My thought being rather—as absorbed she sent  
Look onward after look from eyes distent  
With longing to reach Heaven’s gate left ajar—  
‘Oh, fancies that might be, oh, facts that are!  
What of a wilding? By you stands, and may  
So stand unnoticed till the judgment Day,  
One who, if once aware that your regard  
Claimed what his heart holds,—woke, as from its sward  
The flower, the dormant passion, so to speak—  
Then what a rush of life would startling wreak  
Revenge on your inapprehensive stare  
While, from the ruin and the West’s faint flare,  
You let your eyes meet mine, touch what you term  
Quietude—that’s an universe in germ—  
The dormant passion needing but a look  
To burst into immense life!’  
                                 ‘No, the book  
Which noticed how the wall-growths wave,’ said she,  
‘Was not by Ruskin.’  
                         I said, ‘Vernon Lee?’

—Robert Browning

**To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing**

Now all the truth is out,

Be secret and take defeat

From any brazen throat,

For how can you compete,

Being honor bred, with one

Who, were it proved he lies,

Were neither shamed in his own

Nor in his neighbours’ eyes?

Bred to a harder thing

Than Triumph, turn away

And like a laughing string

Whereon mad fingers play

Amid a place of stone,

Be secret and exult,

Because of all things known

That is most difficult.

—W. B. Yeats

**Secrets**

That we are always glad

When the Ugly Princess, parting the bushes

To find out why the woodcutter’s children are happy,

Disturbs a hornets’ nest, that we feel no pity

When the informer is trapped by the gang in a steam-room,

That we howl with joy

When the short-sighted Professor of Icelandic

Pronounces the Greek inscription

A Runic riddle which he then translates:

Denouncing by proxy our commonest fault as our worst;

That, waiting in his room for a friend,

We start so soon to turn over his letters,

That with such assurance we repeat as our own

Another’s story, that, dear me, how often

We kiss in order to tell,

Defines precisely what we mean by love:—

To share a secret.

The joke, which we seldom see, is on us;

For only true hearts know how little it matters

What the secret is they keep:

An old, a new, a blue, a borrowed something,

Anything will do for children

Made in God’s image and therefore

Not like the others, not like our dear dumb friends

Who, poor things, have nothing to hide,

Not, thank God, like our Father either

From whom no secrets are hid.

*—*W. H. Auden