

Percy Bisshe Shelley  
1792 - 1822

Ode to the West Wind

I  
O Wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
Are driven, like swifts from an enchanted ~~tree~~ <sup>tree</sup> ~~fleeing~~,  
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,

Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,  
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
With living hues and odours plain and hill;

Wild Spirit which art moving ever here;  
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, oh, hear!

I I

Thou, on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,  
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,  
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: ~~they~~ they are spread  
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce ~~Ma~~ Maenad, even from the dim verge  
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dinge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,  
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
Black rain, and fire, and hail ~~will burst~~ <sup>will burst</sup>: oh, hear!

I I I

Thou, who didst waken from his summer dreams  
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,  
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,  
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
Quivering within the ~~wave~~ wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers  
So sweet, the sense faints picturing ~~them~~ them! Thou  
For whose path the Atlantic's level waters

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
The sea-blossoms and the ozy woods which wear  
The ~~sapless~~ sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,  
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

I V

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;  
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even  
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,  
As then, when to outstrip thy <sup>skyey</sup> speed  
Scarce seemed a vision, I ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> never have striven

~~As~~ As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life! ~~I bleed!~~ I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed  
One too like thee: farmerless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lie, even as the honest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit here,  
My Spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an <sup>unextinguished</sup> ~~unextinguish~~ hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be ~~through~~ through my lips to unawakened earth

the trump of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?