

# Lyrical Fragments

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (January 2024)



A Reading from Homer— Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1885

We so much love to love our love,  
    To those of common mind,  
A poem *is* a poem of  
    The amatory kind.

A book of them is like a cold  
    Facility whose bins  
Accommodate sublimely old,  
    Exotic specimens,

Each marvel filed side-by-side  
    In pale, synthetic juice,  
Preserved for some unspecified  
    Experimental use.

Since granite needs no mortal heed

For its survival, give  
It nothing. Hatred cannot need  
A man's preservative.

*If there be Justice, soon you'll see  
Your body and your brain  
Repaid in simple misery  
That never ebbs again.*

\*\*\*

I've learned from Dante's manifold  
Devotion to the She  
How accurately to behold  
The force of chivalry,

Contriving, as it did, to churn  
A total worldview of  
Erotic love. The world, we learn,  
Entwines its way through Love,

And Love must be to Chivalry  
What Hatred is, I fear,  
To something that, against my plea,  
I shall discover here.

For each discrete disaster is  
A sympathetic string...  
Pluck the troubles that are his;  
The whole of life shall sing.

*When she was mistress of the grove,  
And I, a callow swain,  
I tendered vows, and then, my love  
Returned the like again.*

\*\*\*

Untutored heathens love to write.  
The child slits his wrists.  
The marble colonnades grow tight  
With insurrectionists.

Pulsating Saracens behead  
The flabbergasted Jew.  
Pandemic viruses are spread.  
My lover is untrue.

*When she is missing from a tree-  
And vine-embowered lane,  
A park, or my biography,  
The Desert comes again.*

\*\*\*

My body loosening its seals,  
I die amid my debts;  
It feels as fretless rosewood feels  
To fingers used to frets.

*Come wrap me in my winding-sheet.  
Amid the dire rain,  
Conduct me sadly through the street  
That slowly floods again.*

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Jeffrey Burghauer is a teacher in Columbus, Ohio. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*,

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