Robert Browning's "A Lovers' Quarrel" (c.1853; 1855)	
I.	
Oh, what a dawn of day! How the March sun feels like May! All is blue again After last night's rain, And the South dries the hawthorn-spray. Only, my Love's away! I'd as lief that the blue were grey.	5
II.	
Runnels, which rillets swell, Must be dancing down the dell, With a foaming head On the beryl bed Paven smooth as a hermit's cell; Each with a tale to tell Could my love but attend as well.	10
III.	
Dearest, three months ago! When we lived blocked-up with snow, When the wind would edge	15
In and in his wedge, In, as far as the point could go— Not to our ingle, though, Where we loved each the other so!	20
IV.	
Laughs with so little cause! We devised games out of straws. We would try and trace One another's face In the ash, as an artist draws; Free on each other's flaws, How we chattered like two church daws!	25

What's in the "Times"?—a scold At the Emperor deep and cold He has taken a bride To his gruesome side,	30
That's as fair as himself is bold: There they sit <i>ermine-stoled</i> , And she <i>powders her hair with gold</i> .	35
VI.	
Fancy the Pampas' sheen! Miles and miles of gold and green Where the sunflowers blow In a solid glow, And—to break now and then the screen— Black neck and eyeballs keen, Up a wild horse leaps between!	40
VII.	
Try, will our table turn Lay your hands there light, and yearn Till the yearning slips Thro' the finger-tips In a fire which a few discern, And a very few feel burn, And the rest, they may live and learn!	45
VIII.	
Then we would up and pace, For a change, about the place, Each with arm o'er neck: 'T is our quarter-deck,	50
We are seamen in woeful case. Help in the ocean-space! Or, if no help, we'll embrace.	55

IX.

See, how she looks now, dressed In a sledging-cap and vest! 'T is a huge fur cloak— Like a reindeer's yoke Falls the lappet along the breast: Sleeves for her arms to rest, Or to hang, as my Love likes best.	60
X.	
Teach me to flirt a fan As the Spanish ladies can, Or I tint your lip	65
With a burnt stick's tip And you turn into such a man! Just the two spots that span Half the bill of the young male swan.	70
XI.	
Dearest, three months ago When the mesmerizer Snow With his hand's first sweep Put the earth to sleep: 'T was a time when the heart could show All—how was earth to know, 'Neath the mute hand's to-and-fro?	75
XII.	
Dearest, three months ago When we loved each other so, Lived and loved the same 'Till an evening came When a shaft from the devil's bow Pierced to our ingle-glow,	80
And the friends were friend and foe!	

XIII.

Not from the heart beneath— 'T was a bubble born of breath, Neither sneer nor vaunt, Nor reproach nor taunt. See <i>a word</i> , how it severeth! Oh, power of life and death In the tongue, as the Preacher saith!	8590
in the tongue, as the Frederick said.	
XIV.	
Woman, and will you cast For a word, quite off at last Me, your own, your You, Since, as truth is true, I was You all the happy past— Me do you leave aghast With the memories We amassed?	95
XV.	
Love, if you knew the light That your soul casts in my sight, How I look to you For the pure and true	100
For the pure and true And the beauteous and the right,	
Bear with a moment's spite When a mere mote threats the white!	105
XVI.	
What of a hasty word? Is the fleshy heart not stirred By a worm's pin-prick Where its roots are quick? See the eye, by a fly's foot blurred— Ear, when a straw is heard Scratch the brain's coat of curd!	110

XVII.

Foul be the world or fair More or less, how can I care? 'T is the world the same For my praise or blame, And endurance is easy there. Wrong in the one thing rare— Oh, it is hard to bear!		115
XVIII.		
Here's the spring back or close, When the almond-blossom blows: We shall have the word In a minor third There is none but the cuckoo knows: Heaps of the guilder-rose! I must bear with it, I suppose.	120	125
XIX.		
Could but November come, Were the noisy birds struck dumb At the warning slash Of his driver's-lash— I would laugh like the valiant Thumb Facing the castle glum And the giant's fee-faw-fum!		130
XX.		
Then, were the world well stripped Of the gear wherein equipped We can stand apart, Heart dispense with heart		135
In the sun, with the flowers unnipped, Oh, the world's hangings ripped, We were both in a bare-walled crypt!		140

XXI.

Each in the crypt would cry

"But one freezes here! and why?

When a heart, as chill,

At my own would thrill

Back to life, and its fires out-fly?

Heart, shall we live or die?

The rest, . . . settle by-and-by!"

XIII.

So, she'd efface the score,
And forgive me as before.

It is twelve o'clock:
I shall hear her knock
In the worst of a storm's uproar,
I shall pull her through the door,
I shall have her for evermore!

ca. 1853