

W. H. AUDEN – Poems selected by John Fuller
 WILLIAM BARNES – Poems selected by Andrew Motion
 JOHN BERRYMAN – Poems selected by Michael Hofmann
 JOHN BETJEMAN – Poems selected by Hugo Williams
 ROBERT BROWNING – Poems selected by Douglas Dunn
 ROBERT BURNS – Poems selected by Don Paterson
 BYRON – Poems selected by Paul Muldoon
 THOMAS CAMPION – Poems selected by Charles Simic
 JOHN CLARE – Poems selected by Paul Farley
 SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE – Poems selected by
 James Fenton
 EMILY DICKINSON – Poems selected by Ted Hughes
 KEITH DOUGLAS – Poems selected by Ted Hughes
 JOHN DRYDEN – Poems selected by Charles Tomlinson
 THOM GUNN – Poems selected by August Kleinzahler
 THOMAS HARDY – Poems selected by Tom Paulin
 GEORGE HERBERT – Poems selected by Jo Shapcott
 A. E. HOUSMAN – Poems selected by Alan Hollinghurst
 TED HUGHES – Poems selected by Simon Armitage
 JOHN KEATS – Poems selected by Andrew Motion
 D. H. LAWRENCE – Poems selected by Tom Paulin
 ROBERT LOWELL – Poems selected by Michael Hofmann
 LOUIS MACNEICE – Poems selected by Michael Longley
 WILFRED OWEN – Poems selected by Jon Stallworthy
 SYLVIA PLATH – Poems selected by Ted Hughes
 EZRA POUND – Poems selected by Thom Gunn
 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE – Poems selected by Ted Hughes
 JONATHAN SWIFT – Poems selected by Derek Mahon
 ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON – Poems selected by Mick Imlah
 DYLAN THOMAS – Poems selected by Derek Mahon
 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH – Poems selected by Seamus Heaney
 W. B. YEATS – Poems selected by Seamus Heaney

WILLIAM BARNES

Poems selected by ANDREW MOTION



faber and faber

Photoset by RefineCatch Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed in England by Bookmarque Ltd, Croydon

All rights reserved
Introduction and selection © Andrew Motion, 2007

The right of Andrew Motion to be identified as editor
of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77
of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

*This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or
otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in
any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is
published and without a similar condition including this
condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser*

A CIP record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-571-23665-7

Contents

Introduction ix
Note on the Text and Punctuation xxvii
Some Notes on Dorset Word-shapes xxvii

FIRST COLLECTION

(Originally *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*, 1844)

Spring

The Blackbird 3
Vellèn o' the Tree 5
Eclogue: The 'Lotments 6

Summer

Uncle an' Aunt 9
Hay-Meäkèn 11
The Clote 13

Fall

Shrodon Feäir: The Vu'st Peärt 15
Shrodon Feäir: The Rest o't 17
Eclogue: The Common a-Took in 18

Winter

The Happy Days When I wer Young 21
The Carter 23
Eclogue: Father Come Hwome 25

SUNDRY PIECES

The Hwomestead 29
Uncle out o' Debt an' out o' Danger 30
The Wold Waggon 33
The Common a-Took in 35
The Music o' the Dead 37
The Hwomestead a-Vell into Hand 39
Eclogue: The Times 42

My Orcha'd in Linden Lea 50
Ellen Brine ov Allenburn 51
Childhood 53
Meäry's Smile 54
Meäry Wedded 55
The Young that Died in Beauty 57
Minden House 59
The Wold Wall 61
Zun-zet 62
The Water Crowvoot 64
Trees be Company 66
False Friends-like 68
The Wife a-Lost 69
The Bwoat 70
Pentridge by the River 72
My Love's Guardian Angel 74

THIRD COLLECTION

(Originally *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*, 1862)

The Lark 76
Woak Hill 77
Pickèn o' Scroff 79
The Rwose in the Dark 81
The Child an' the Mowers 82
The Turnstile 84

OTHER POEMS IN THE DORSET DIALECT

Which Road? 86
Jaÿ a-Pass'd 87
Air an' Light 89
The Vierzide Chairs 90
The Stwonon Steps 92
The Vield Path 94
The Wind at the Door 95

Melhill Feast 96
White an' Blue 98
The Geäte a-Vallèn to 99

POEMS IN NATIONAL ENGLISH

(Originally from *Poems Partly of Rural Life in National English*, 1846; *Poems of Rural Life in Common English*, 1868; and manuscript)

Rustic Childhood 101
The Eegrass 103
Moss 105
Plorata Veris Lachrymis 108
My Dearest Julia 110
The River Stour 111
The Moor 113
Seasons and Times 115

SPRING

The Blackbird

Ov all the birds upon the wing
Between the zunny show'rs o' spring,—
Vor all the lark, a-swingèn high,
Mid zing below a cloudless sky,
An' sparrows, clust'rèn roun' the bough,
Mid chatter to the men at plough,—
The blackbird, whisslèn in among
The boughs, do zing the gayest zong.

Vor we do hear the blackbird zing
His sweetest ditties in the spring,
When nippèn win's noo mwore do blow
Vrom northern skies, wi' sleet or snow,
But drève light doust along between
The leäne-zide hedges, thick an' green;
An' zoo the blackbird in among
The boughs do zing the gayest zong.

'Tis blithe, wi' newly-open'd eyes,
To zee the mornèn's ruddy skies;
Or, out a-haulèn frith or lops
Vrom new-plèsh'd hedge or new vell'd copse,
To rest at noon in primrwose beds
Below the white-bark'd woak trees' heads;
But there's noo time, the whole day long,
Lik' evenèn wi' the blackbird's zong.

Vor when my work is all a-done
Avore the zettèn o' the zun,
Then blushèn Jeäne do walk along
The hedge to meet me in the drong,

An' stay till all is dim an' dark
Bezides the ashen tree's white bark,
An' all bezides the blackbird's shrill
An' 'runnèn evenèn-whistle's still.

An' there in bwoyhood I did rove
Wi' pryèn eyes along the drove
To vind the nest the blackbird meäde
O' grass-stalks in the high bough's sheäde:
Or clim' aloft, wi' clingèn knees,
Vor crows' aggs up in swayèn trees,
While frighten'd blackbirds down below
Did chatter o' their little foe.
An' zoo there's noo pleäce lik' the drong,
Where I do hear the blackbird's zong.

*drëve, drive; frith, brushwood; lops, kindling sticks; plësh, to lay a hedge by
pegging down the cut stems; drong, a narrow way*

Vellèn o' the Tree

Aye, the girt elem tree out in little hwome groun'
Wer a-stannèn this mornèn, an' now's a-cut down.
Aye, the girt elem tree, so big roun' an' so high,
Where the mowers did goo to their drink, an' did lie
In the sheäde ov his head, when the zun at his heighth
Had a-drove em vrom mowèn, wi' het an' wi' drith,
Where the hay-meäkers put all their picks an' their reäkes,
An' did squot down to snabble their cheese an' their ceäkes,
An' did vill vrom their flaggons their cups wi' their eäle,
An' did meäke theirzelves merry wi' joke an' wi' teäle.

Ees, we took up a rwope an' we tied en all round
At the top o'n, wi' woone end a-hangèn to ground,
An' we cut, near the ground, his girt stem a'most drough,
An' we bent the wold head o'n wi' woone tug or two;
An' he sway'd all his limbs, an' he nodded his head,
Till he vell away down like a pillar o' lead:
An' as we did run vrom en, there, clwose at our backs,
Oh! his boughs come to groun' wi' sich whizzes an' cracks;
An' his top wer so lofty that, now he is down,
The stem o'n do reach a'most over the groun'.
Zoo the girt elem tree out in little hwome groun',
Wer a-stannèn this mornèn, an' now's a-cut down.

*girt, great; drith, dryness, thirst; het, heat; squot, squat (also to flatten at a
blow); snabble, snap up quickly*

Eclogue: The 'Lotments
John and Richard

JOHN

Zoo you be in your groun' then, I do zee,
A-workèn and a-zingèn lik' a bee.
How do it answer? what d'ye think about it?
D'ye think 'tis better wi' it than without it?
A-reck'nèn rent, an' time, an' zeed to stock it,
D'ye think that you be any thing in pocket?

RICHARD

O, 'tis a goodish help to woone, I'm sure o't.
If I had not a-got it, my poor bwones
Would now ha' eäch'd a-crackèn stwones
Upon the road; I wish I had zome mwore o't.

JOHN

I wish the girt woones had a-got the greäce
To let out land lik this in ouer pleäce;
But I do fear there'll never be nwone vor us,
An I can't tell whatever we shall do:
We be a most a-starvèn, an' we'd goo
To 'merica, if we'd enough to car us.

RICHARD

Why 'twere the squire, good now! a worthy man,
That vu'st brought into ouer pleäce the plan;
He zaid he'd let a vew odd eäcres
O' land to us poor leäb'rèn men;
An', faith, he had enough o' teäkers
Vor that, an' twice so much ageän.
Zoo I took zome here, near my hovel,
To exercise my speäde an' shovel;
An' what wi' dungèn, diggèn up, an' zeedèn,
A-thinnèn, cleänèn, howèn up an' weedèn,

I, an' the biggest o' the children too,
Do always vind some useful jobs to do.

JOHN

Aye, wi' a bit o' ground, if woone got any,
Woone's bwoys can soon get out an' eärn a penny;
An' then, by workèn, they do learn the vaster
The way to do things when they have a meäster;
Vor woone must know a deäl about the land
Bevere woone's fit to lend a useful hand,
In geärden or a-vield upon a farm.

RICHARD

An' then the work do keep em out o' harm;
Vor vo'ks that don't do nothèn wull be vound
Soon doèn woorse than nothèn, I'll be bound.
But as vor me, d'ye zee, wi' theäse here bit
O' land, why I have ev'ry thing a'mwost:
Vor I can fatten vowels vor the spit,
Or zell a good fat goose or two to rwoast;
An' have my beäns or cabbage, greens or grass,
Or bit o' wheat, or, sich my happy feäte is,
That I can keep a little cow, or ass,
An' a vew pigs to eat the little teäties.

JOHN

An' when your pig's a-fatted pretty well
Wi' teäties, or wi' barley an' some bran,
Why you've a-got zome vlitches vor to zell,
Or hang in chimney-corner, if you can.

RICHARD

Aye, that's the thing; an' when the pig do die,
We got a lot ov offal vor to fry,
An' netlens vor to bwoil; or put the blood in,
An' meäke a meal or two o'good black-pudden.