

# To Joy

Citations from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)

Music by David Evan Thomas (2017)

## Part I

### Promise

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

—John Keats (1795–1821), *Endymion*, 1818

### Infant Joy

“I have no name:  
I am but two days old.”  
What shall I call thee?  
“I happy am,  
Joy is my name.”  
Sweet joy befall thee

Pretty joy!  
Sweet joy, but two days old.  
Sweet joy I call thee:  
Thou dost smile,  
I sing the while,  
Sweet joy befall thee!

—William Blake (1757–1827), *Songs of Innocence*, 1789

### Grace

Consider it  
(This outer world we tread on) as a harp,—  
A gracious instrument on whose fair strings  
We learn those airs we shall be set to play  
When mortal hours are ended. Let the wings,  
Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,  
And draw forth melody.

Let thy praise  
Go up as birds go up that, when they wake,  
Shake off the dew and soar.

So take Joy home,  
And make a place in thy great heart for her,  
And give her time to grow, and cherish her;  
Then will she come, and oft will sing to thee,  
When thou art working in the furrows; ay,  
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.  
It is a comely fashion to be glad,—  
Joy is the grace we say to God.

—Jean Ingelow (1820–1897), “Dominion”

### Air

A voice by the cedar tree,  
In the meadow under the Hall!  
She is singing an air that is known to me,  
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,

Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), *Maud*, v. iii, 1855

### Ode

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
Ay, in the very temple of Delight  
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;  
His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,  
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

—Keats, “Ode on Melancholy,” 1820

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## Part II

### Alarm

*Cara! Cara!* silence all that train:  
Joy to great Chaos! let Division reign:  
Chromatic tortures soon shall drive them hence,  
Break all their nerves, and fritter all their sense:  
One Trill shall harmonize joy, grief, and rage,  
Wake the dull Church, and lull the ranting Stage;  
To the same notes thy sons shall hum, or snore,  
And all thy yawning daughters cry, *encore*. [60]

—Alexander Pope (1688–1744), *Dunciad*, 1742

### Questions

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without  
knowledge?  
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?  
Who hath laid the measures thereof.  
Who hath stretched the line upon it?  
Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?  
Who laid the corner stone thereof;  
When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God  
shouted for joy?

—Job 38: 2, 4–7, King James Version, 1611

### Scherzetto

*Gioia*: a joy, a gemme, a jewell,  
or any precious thing.  
Also jouissance, delight,  
hearts-safe or comfort

—J. Florio (1553–1625), *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, 1611

## Carol

Make we joy now in this fest  
*In quo Christus natus est. Eya.* [On which Christ was born. Hurrah.]  
*A Patre unigenitus* [The father's only begotten]  
 Is through a maiden come to us:  
 Sing we of Him and say Welcome,  
*Veni, Redemptor gentium.* [O come redeemer of the nations] Refrain.  
*Agnoscat omne seculum,* [Let the whole world acknowledge]  
 A bright star made three kings come,  
 Him for to seek with their presen's,  
*Verbum supernum prodiens.* [The heavenly word proceeding] Refrain.  
*Maria ventre concepit,* [Conceived in Mary's womb]  
 The Holy Ghost was ay her with,  
 Of her in Bethlem born He is,  
*Consors paterni luminis.* [Consort of the father of light] Refrain.  
*O lux beata Trinitas,* [O Trinity of Blessed Light]  
 He lay between an ox and ass,  
 Beside His mother maiden free,  
*Gloria tibi, Domine.* [Glory to Thee, O Lord.] Refrain.  
 –15<sup>th</sup>-century English

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## Part III

### Song

With lifted feet, hands still,  
 I am poised, and down the hill  
 Dart, with heedful mind;  
 The air goes by in a wind.  
 Swifter and yet more swift,  
 Till the heart with a mighty lift  
 Makes the lungs laugh, the throat cry:—  
 “O bird, see; see, bird, I fly.  
 “Is this, is this your joy?  
 O bird, then I, though a boy,  
 For a golden moment share  
 Your feathery life in air!”  
 Say, heart, is there aught like this  
 In a world that is full of bliss?  
 ‘Tis more than skating, bound  
 Steel-shod to the level ground.  
 Speed slackens now, I float  
 Awhile in my airy boat;  
 Till, when the wheels scarce crawl,  
 My feet to the treadles fall.  
 Alas, that the longest hill  
 Must end in a vale; but still,  
 Who climbs with toil, wheresoe'er,  
 Shall find wings waiting there.  
 –Henry Charles Beeching (1859–1919), “A Boy's Song,” 1895

## Pæan

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that  
 bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that publisheth  
 salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!  
 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem:  
 for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed  
 Jerusalem.  
 –Isaiah. 52:9, King James Version, 1611

## Responsory

*Rejoice in the Lord, and again, I say rejoice...*  
 Have you rejoiced all day in feasts, in musics, in conversations?  
 Well, at night you must be alone, hand to hand with God.  
 Sleep not till you have tried whether you joy will hold out  
 there too. *Rejoice in the Lord ...*  
 Have you rejoiced in the contemplation of those temporal  
 blessings which God hath given you? 'tis well, for you may  
 do so: *Rejoice in the Lord ...*  
 See whether you can rejoice again in such a use of those blessings,  
 as he that gave them requires of you. *Rejoice in the Lord ...*  
 Have you rejoiced in your zeal of God's service? That's a true  
 rejoicing in the Lord; *But again I say rejoice...*  
 See that this joy be accompanied with another joy; that you have  
 zeal with knowledge. *Rejoice in the Lord ...*  
 Refine your joy, purge away all dross and lees from your joy,  
 Joy, which when it is true, and truly placed, is the nearest  
 representation of heaven itself to this world.

–John Donne (1573–1631), Sermon 97, 1621

## Hymn

When the darkness melts away  
 at the breaking of the day,  
 bid us hail the cheering ray:  
 light for evermore.  
 When for vanished days we yearn,  
 Days that never can return,  
 Teach us in Thy love to learn  
 Love for evermore.  
 When the breath of life is flown,  
 when the grace must claim its own,  
 Lord of life, be ours thy crown,  
 life for evermore.  
 When the heart by sorrow tried,  
 feels at length its throbs subside,  
 bring us, where all tears are dried,  
 joy for evermore.  
 –John Ellerton (1826-1893) “Things Eternal” (1888)

## Envoy

Joy, joy forever! my task is done—  
 The gates are passed, and heaven is won!  
 Farewell, ye odors of earth, that die  
 Passing away like a lover's sigh:  
 My feast is now of the Tooba Tree,  
 Whose scent is the breath of Eternity!  
 Joy, joy forever! my task is done—  
 The gates are passed, and heaven is won!”  
 –Thomas Moore (1779–1852), *Lalla Rookh*, 1817