

# Thanksgiving

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

We walk on starry fields of white  
And do not see the daisies;  
For blessings common in our sight  
We rarely offer praises.

We sigh for some supreme delight  
To crown our lives with splendor,  
And quite ignore our daily store  
Of pleasures sweet and tender.

Our cares are bold and push their way  
Upon our thought and feeling.  
They hand about us all the day,  
Our time from pleasure stealing.  
So unobtrusive many a joy  
We pass by and forget it,  
But worry strives to own our lives,  
And conquers if we let it.

There's not a day in all the year  
But holds some hidden pleasure,  
And looking back, joys oft appear  
To brim the past's wide measure.  
But blessings are like friends, I hold,  
Who love and labor near us.  
We ought to raise our notes of praise  
While living hearts can hear us.

Full many a blessing wears the guise  
Of worry or of trouble;  
Far-seeing is the soul, and wise,  
Who knows the mask is double.  
But he who has the faith and strength  
To thank his God for sorrow  
Has found a joy without alloy  
To gladden every morrow.

We ought to make the moments notes  
Of happy, glad Thanksgiving;  
The hours and days a silent phrase  
Of music we are living.  
And so the theme should swell and grow  
As weeks and months pass o'er us,  
And rise sublime at this good time,  
A grand Thanksgiving chorus.

# *(from)* The Pumpkin

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807 - 1892

Ah! on Thanksgiving day, when from East and from West,  
From North and from South comes the pilgrim and guest;  
When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board  
The old broken links of affection restored,  
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,  
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before,  
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye?  
What calls back the past, like the rich Pumpkin pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood! the old days recalling,  
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!  
When wild, ugly faces we carved in its skin,  
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within!  
When we laughed round the corn-heap, with hearts all in tune,  
Our chair a broad pumpkin,—our lantern the moon,  
Telling tales of the fairy who travelled like steam  
In a pumpkin-shell coach, with two rats for her team!

Then thanks for thy present! none sweeter or better  
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!  
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,  
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking, than thine!  
And the prayer, which my mouth is too full to express,  
Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less,  
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below,  
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin-vine grow,  
And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky  
Golden-tinted and fair as thy own Pumpkin pie!

# Thanksgiving

James Whitcomb Riley, 1849 - 1916

Let us be thankful—not only because  
    Since last our universal thanks were told  
We have grown greater in the world's applause,  
    And fortune's newer smiles surpass the old—

But thankful for all things that come as alms  
    From out the open hand of Providence:—  
The winter clouds and storms—the summer calms—  
    The sleepless dread—the drowse of indolence.

Let us be thankful—thankful for the prayers  
    Whose gracious answers were long, long delayed,  
That they might fall upon us unawares,  
    And bless us, as in greater need we prayed.

Let us be thankful for the loyal hand  
    That love held out in welcome to our own,  
When love and *only* love could understand  
    The need of touches we had never known.

Let us be thankful for the longing eyes  
    That gave their secret to us as they wept,  
Yet in return found, with a sweet surprise,  
    Love's touch upon their lids, and, smiling, slept.

And let us, too, be thankful that the tears  
    Of sorrow have not all been drained away,  
That through them still, for all the coming years,  
    We may look on the dead face of To-day.

# A Thanksgiving Poem

Paul Laurence Dunbar, 1872 - 1906

The sun hath shed its kindly light,  
Our harvesting is gladly o'er  
Our fields have felt no killing blight,  
Our bins are filled with goodly store.

From pestilence, fire, flood, and sword  
We have been spared by thy decree,  
And now with humble hearts, O Lord,  
We come to pay our thanks to thee.

We feel that had our merits been  
The measure of thy gifts to us,  
We erring children, born of sin,  
Might not now be rejoicing thus.

No deed of our hath brought us grace;  
When thou were nigh our sight was dull,  
We hid in trembling from thy face,  
But thou, O God, wert merciful.

Thy mighty hand o'er all the land  
Hath still been open to bestow  
Those blessings which our wants demand  
From heaven, whence all blessings flow.

Thou hast, with ever watchful eye,  
Looked down on us with holy care,  
And from thy storehouse in the sky  
Hast scattered plenty everywhere.

Then lift we up our songs of praise  
To thee, O Father, good and kind;  
To thee we consecrate our days;  
Be thine the temple of each mind.

With incense sweet our thanks ascend;  
Before thy works our powers pall;  
Though we should strive years without  
end,  
We could not thank thee for them all.

# Thanksgiving Day

Lydia Maria Child

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To grandfather's house we go;  
The horse knows the way  
To carry the sleigh  
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river, and through the wood—  
Oh, how the wind does blow!  
It stings the toes  
And bites the nose  
As over the ground we go.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
To have a first-rate play.  
Hear the bells ring  
“Ting-a-ling-ding”,  
Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!

Over the river, and through the wood  
Trot fast, my dapple-gray!  
Spring over the ground,  
Like a hunting-hound!  
For this is Thanksgiving Day.

Over the river, and through the wood,  
And straight through the barn-yard gate.  
We seem to go  
Extremely slow,—  
It is so hard to wait!

Over the river and through the wood—  
Now grandmother's cap I spy!  
Hurrah for the fun!  
Is the pudding done?  
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!

# Thanksgiving

Edgar Albert Guest

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,  
An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;  
An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they  
Are growin' more beautiful day after day;  
Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,  
Buildin' the old family circle again;  
Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,  
Just for awhile at the end of the year.  
Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door  
And under the old roof we gather once more  
Just as we did when the youngsters were small;  
Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.  
Father's a little bit older, but still  
Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.  
Here we are back at the table again  
Tellin' our stories as women an' men.

Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;  
Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.  
Home from the east land an' home from the west,  
Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.  
Out of the sham of the cities afar  
We've come for a time to be just what we are.  
Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,  
Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun  
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;  
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,  
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,  
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,  
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,  
See the old table with all of its chairs  
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.

# First Thanksgiving Of All

Nancy Byrd Turner

Peace and Mercy and Jonathan,  
And Patience (very small),  
Stood by the table giving thanks  
The first Thanksgiving of all.  
There was very little for them to eat,  
Nothing special and nothing sweet;  
Only bread and a little broth,  
And a bit of fruit (and no tablecloth):  
But Peace and Mercy and Jonathan  
And Patience, in a row,  
Stood up and asked a blessing on  
Thanksgiving long ago.  
Thankful they were their ship had come  
Safely across the sea;  
Thankful they were for hearth and home,  
And kin and company;  
They were glad of broth to go with their bread,  
Glad their apples were round and red,  
Glad of mayflowers they would bring  
Out of the woods again next spring.  
So Peace and Mercy and Jonathan,  
And Patience (very small),  
Stood up gratefully giving thanks  
The first Thanksgiving of all.