



## A CREED

I hold that when a person dies  
His soul returns again to earth;  
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise  
Another mother gives him birth.  
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
The old soul takes the roads again.

Such is my own belief and trust;  
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,  
Has many a hundred times been dust  
And turned, as dust, to dust again;  
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

All that I rightly think and do,  
Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,  
Is curse or blessing justly due  
For sloth or effort in the past.  
My life's a statement of the sum  
Of vice indulged, or overcome.

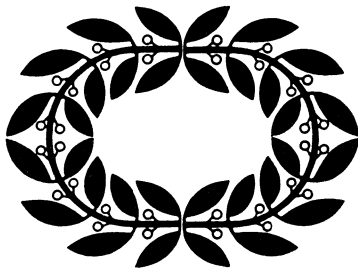
I know that in my lives to be  
My sorry heart will ache and burn,  
And worship unavailingly,  
The woman whom I used to spurn,  
And shake to see another have  
The love I spurned, the love she gave.

And I shall know, in angry words,  
    In gibes, and mocks, and many a tear,  
A carrion flock of homing-birds;  
    The gibes and scorns I uttered here.  
The brave word that I failed to speak  
Will brand me dastard on the cheek.

And as I wander on the roads  
    I shall be helped and healed and blessed;  
Dear words shall cheer and be as goads  
    To urge to heights before unguessed.  
My road shall be the road I made;  
All that I gave shall be repaid.

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,  
    In this long war beneath the stars;  
So shall a glory wreathe my head,  
    So shall I faint and show the scars,  
Until this case, this clogging mould,  
Be smithied all to kingly gold.

JOHN MASEFIELD





## POETRY OF REINCARNATION

Poetry is the art of communing with the spiritual forces of Nature. It is Beauty from the land of imagination and fancy, probably more real than we ascribe even to our materialistic world. It is a viewpoint of peace, harmony, and fascination, a beautiful, restful refuge in which true spiritual development meets appreciative recognition.

Fortunately the poet is not required to prove scientifically or logically his surmise and sentiments. He is given the fullest latitude, and the truer his poems ring to Life and the more perfect his style fits his thought the greater is he ranked as a seer of Nature. He visions the Truth and measures it by his highest ideals. Some of his innermost secrets and spiritual revelations may have been wrung from an anguished heart suffering from ideals cruelly shattered by the rough experiences of life. It is not shameful to try to enter into the poet's consciousness or even to endeavor to intuit greater revelations. It is manna for the soul.

The poetry of reincarnation is a real viewpoint. The fact that all occult and mystical poets sing highly of that sublime truth, and that practically every poet of account has expressed some form of belief in it, or knowledge of it, is highly significant. Very few of the poets have had the courage to voice only their highest ideals, but have felt it necessary to satisfy the popular demand for the expression of materialistic ideas. So it is that many poets advance arguments or present the logic in favor of reincarnation, and at other times seem to disregard its truth. But it must be remembered that the sensitiveness of the poetic mind places the true poet in the vanguard of humanity. So universal is the belief among poets that brief quotations from only fifty-two of the greatest and most well known are here given, the majority of whom are not included in the selections made by E.D. Walker in his excellent book *Reincarnation*. It has been necessary to exclude quotations from the many unrecognized poets, for they would easily create another chapter in themselves.

Authors excluded from the above mentioned work include, among others, Blackledge, Byron, Dante, Dryden, Holmes, Khayyam, Keats, Kipling, Markham, Masfield, Miller, Noyes, Shakespeare, Virgil, and Wilcox. Instead of duplicating quotations from the authors noted by Mr. Walker, rather the effort has been to give quotations from other works hitherto unmentioned. For convenience the poets are considered alphabetically with no attempt at a chronological or geographical classification.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was a nineteenth-century American poet, and at one time editor of *Atlantic Monthly*. His knowledge of reincarnation is indicated in the following excerpt from his poem "The Metempsychosis":

A century was as a single day.  
 What is a day to an immortal soul?  
 A breath, no more. . . .  
     There I slept  
 From moon to moon, . . .  
 We weep when we are born, not when we die!  
 So was it destined; and thus came I here,  
 To walk the earth and wear the form of Man,  
 To suffer bravely as becomes my state,  
 One step, one grade, one cycle nearer God.

In the twentieth century Sir Edwin Arnold, immortalized by his magnificent work, *The Light of Asia*, a long narrative poem expounding many occult truths, writes:

'Tis but as when one layeth  
 His worn-out robes away,  
 And, taking new ones, sayeth  
 "These will I wear today!"  
 So putteth by the Spirit  
 Lightly its garb of flesh,  
 And passeth to inherit  
 A residence afresh.

Matthew Arnold, a British poet of the nineteenth century, was not sure of a future life, but he seemed willing at times to give himself the benefit of his doubt, as shown in the opening verses of his "Immortality":

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,  
 We leave the brutal world to take its way,  
 And, Patience! in another life, we say,  
 The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.

A very good belief in reincarnation is expressed by K.T. Blackledge in her fascinating novel, *The Amulet*, where she created a beautiful supplementary poem "From Sunset to Sunrise", a part of which runs:

This is the pilgrimage of the soul,  
 That journeys upward to its goal;  
 Oh drops from out the Ocean's brim,  
 Oh rays that start, and live in Him,  
 Return we all, thro' countless years,  
 Through cycles long, to our Eternal spheres.

H.H. Bogenes, a Norwegian poet and an American citizen by birth, wrote "Transmigration", giving his ideas on reincarnation, a part of which runs as follows:

My spirit wrestles in anguish  
 With fancies that will not depart;  
 A ghost who borrowed my semblance  
 Has hid in the depth of my heart.  
 A dim, resistless possession  
 Impels me forever to do  
 The phantom deeds of this phantom  
 That liv'd ages ago.

Robert Browning was particularly noted for his great spiritual insight. Since he was also said to have been an initiate in occult teachings, it is not surprising to find a clear belief in reincarnation expressed throughout his works. In "Evelyn Hope" he writes of his recognition of his real spiritual lover, a girl who died at sixteen summers. Thus:

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?  
 What, your soul was pure and true,  
 The good stars met in your horoscope,  
 Made you of spirit, fire, and dew —  
 And, just because I was thrice as old  
 And our paths in the world diverged so wide,

Each was naught to each, must I be told?  
 We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above  
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
 And creates the love to reward the love:  
 I claim you still, for my own love's sake!  
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet  
 Through worlds I must traverse, not a few —  
 Much is to learn and much to forget  
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

Again, quoting from "Old Pictures in Florence":

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate —  
 That, when this life is ended, begins  
 New work for the soul in another state,  
 Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins:  
 Where the strong and the weak, this world's  
 congeries,  
 Repeat in large what they practised in small,  
 Through life after life in unlimited series;  
 Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.

In "One Word More" he writes:

I shall never, in the years remaining,  
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues. . . .  
 This of verse alone one life allows me;  
 Other heights in other lives, God willing.

"Abt Vogler" gives a painter's picture of the soul's pilgrimage, a fragment of which runs:

Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the  
 Protoplast,  
 Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind  
 should blow,  
 Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking  
 at last;  
 Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through  
 the body and gone,  
 But were back once more to breathe in an old world  
 worth their new.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, always singing from her heart, contributed much to the lore of poetry. In "Aurora Leigh", which is a part of the story of her own life, are found many philosophical interspersions, and some of them infer reincarnation. For instance, we read:

The cygnet finds the water, but the man  
 Is born in ignorance of his element,  
 And feels out, blind at first, disorganized  
 By sin i' the blood, his spirit insight dulled  
 And crossed by his sensation. Presently  
 He feels it quicken in the dark sometimes,  
 When, mark, be reverent, be obedient,  
 For such dumb motions of imperfect life  
 Are oracles of vital Deity,  
 Attesting the Hereafter. Let who says  
 "The soul's a clean white paper", rather say  
 A palimpsest, a prophet's holograph,  
 Defiled, erased, and covered by a monk's —  
 The apocalypse, by a Longus! poring on  
 Which obscene text, we may discern perhaps  
 Some fair, fine trace of what was written once,  
 Some upstroke of an alpha and omega.

A somewhat queer and quite elusive touch of reincarnation is given by the noted English poet of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, George G. Byron, in "The Vision of Judgement". First, he writes:

"Sir," replied Michael, "you mistake; these things  
 Are of a former life, and what we do  
 Above is more august."

Then, in describing a being in heaven, he continues:

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less  
 Could they distinguish whose the features were;  
 . . . . .  
 And several people swore from out the press,  
 They knew him perfectly; and one could swear  
 He was his father; upon which another  
 Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,  
 An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,  
 A nabob, a man-midwife.

How could one entity be all those personages at the close of one life-time? It must represent the different personalities which the soul had had in many past lives. Byron goes on to explain that this "being" was "really, truly, nobody at all". Quite so, if he means a reincarnating ego, with the "Shades" of his past still reflecting upon those who knew him in the various lives; in which case this poem becomes extremely significant.

A catchy bit of poetry by the comparatively little known George W. Carey called "The New Name" is based upon the conception of evolution through reincarnation. One stanza of this poem runs:

Man struggling up to the sunlight  
 Up from the mire and clay,  
 Fighting through wars and jungles,  
 And sometimes learning to pray —  
 And sometimes a king with a sceptre,  
 And sometimes a slave with a hod —  
 Some people call it Karma,  
 And others call it God.

Edward Carpenter, a popular writer of today, in reviewing the soul's pilgrimage in Heavenly states, sings in "After Long Ages":

After many times lying down to sleep and rising again,  
 After many times passing thro' the gates of birth and  
 death

. . . . .

Henceforth the long chain of births and deaths I  
 abandon,

I arise and go forth with thee — to begin my real life.

Arthur H. Clough of the nineteenth century was not an artistic nor an idealistic poet, but merely wrote what came to him, whether of the highest expression or not. For the most part his poems are very materialistic, but here and there we find snatches of his overcoming his doubt of a future life. In "Sonnets on the Thought of Death" he writes:

If it is thou whose casual hand withdraws



What it at first as casually did make,  
 Say what amount of ages it will take  
 With tardy rare concurrences of laws,  
 And subtle multiplicities of cause,  
 The thing they had once made us to re-make;  
 May hopes dead slumbering dare to re-awake,  
 E'en after utmost interval of pause,  
 What revolutions must have passed, before  
 The great celestial cycles shall restore  
 The starry sign whose present hour is gone;  
 . . . . .  
 If in this human complex there be aught  
 Not lost in death, as not in birth acquired,  
 . . . . .  
 Thou yet, we think, somewhere still art.

A Greek touch comes through the benevolent and pious works of the eighteenth-century English poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll  
 Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)  
 Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,  
 Mixed with such feelings as perplex the soul  
 Self-questioned in her sleep; and some have said  
 We lived, ere yet this fleshy robe we wore.

Dante, who has already been quoted for his philosophical contribution to reincarnation, writes in his *Divine Comedy*:

When we are again clothed in the flesh,  
 Glorified and made holy,  
 We shall become more acceptable unto God  
 Because complete.

John Dryden, a poet-laureate of England in the seventeenth century, turns to reincarnation in his most touching "Ode" to Mrs. Anne Killigrew in order to express his noblest thoughts on life:

But if thy pre-existing soul  
 Was formed at first with myriads more,  
 It did through all the mighty poets roll  
 Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,  
 And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.  
 If so, then cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind!

Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore;  
 Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find  
 Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:  
 Return, to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

In "Woodnotes" by Ralph Waldo Emerson we find:

All the forms are fugitive,  
 But the substances survive.

Onward and on, the eternal Pan,  
 Who layeth the world's incessant plan,  
 Halteth never in one shape,  
 But forever doth escape,  
 Like wave or flame, into new forms  
 Of gem, and air, of plants, and worms,  
 I that today am a pine  
 Yesterday was a bundle of grass.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who has been previously quoted for his philosophical belief in reincarnation, also puts the same ideas into poetry. He lightly speaks of it in *Faust* through "The Song of the Earth Spirits":

The soul of man  
 Is like the water:  
 From heaven it cometh  
 To heaven it riseth  
 And thence at once  
 It must back to earth,  
 Forever changing.

John Hawkes in "Recollection" tests the idea of reincarnation:

*She:*

What can it mean — this haunting strain  
 Of other days, so old, so new?

*He:*

But I was once an Asian Khan,  
 For Ishtabel  
 Is come again  
 And you are Sheba  
 My bride to be.

From a longer poem the following excerpt from “Pre-existence” by P.H. Hayne gives a trace of remembrance of a former life:

While sauntering through the crowded street  
Some half-remembered face I meet,  
Albeit upon no mortal shore  
That face, methinks, hath smiled before.

The distinguished nineteenth-century American poet, Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his “Chambered Nautilus” sums up the various lives of a soul, symbolized by the growth of each chamber of the shell:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life’s unresting sea!

By stretching a point Victor Hugo, the great French romanticist of the nineteenth century, can be said to have expressed the idea of reincarnation in his poem “To the Invisible One”:

Art thou not too, like unto me  
A torch to light earth’s gloom,  
A soul, therefore a mystery,  
A wanderer bound to roam?

John Keats, that youthful English poet of the nineteenth century, was a natural bard particularly noted for many poems of classical beauty. When but a boy he wrote:

Thus ye live on high, and then  
On the earth ye live again.

Little wonder that Rudyard Kipling voiced belief in reincarnation, for he was born in India, and traveled widely in the Orient, thus imbibing the very essence of oriental wisdom. A part of “L’Envoi” runs:

When earth’s last picture is painted, and the tubes are  
twisted and dried,

When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest  
 critic has died;  
 We shall rest, and faith, we shall need it — lie down for  
 an aeon or two,  
 Till the Master of all Good Workmen shall put us to  
 work anew.

Omar Khayyam, the Persian Mystic, in his “Rubaiyat” seeks the true philosophy of life after purification through worldly experience, and writes:

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,  
 Some letter of that After-life to spell:  
 And by and by my Soul returned to me  
 And answered, “I myself am Heaven and Hell.”

“Intimations of Previous Existence” is a catchy bit of poetry, and was written by the nineteenth-century American poet L.E. Landon. The following is just a fragment of the whole poem, which stands as quite a treatise on reincarnation:

Methinks we must have known some former state  
 More glorious than our present, and the heart  
 Is haunted with dim memories, shadows left  
 By past magnificence.

Although Charles Leland is but little known his poems on evolution have attracted wide attention, especially “One Thousand Years Ago”:

Thou and I in the spirit land  
 One thousand years ago  
 Watched the waves beat on the strand,  
 Ceaseless ebb and flow,  
 Vowed to love and ever love  
 One thousand years ago.

. . . . .  
 Thou and I but yesterday  
 Met in fashion’s show,  
 Love, did you remember me,  
 Love of long ago?  
 Yes, we kept the fond oath sworn  
 One thousand years ago.

Dr. Leyden's "Ode to Scottish Music" is a delightful bit from the pen of an obscure English poet:

Ah, sure, as Hindu legends tell,  
When music's tones the bosom swell  
The scenes of former life return.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the beloved American poet, was acquainted with the essence of reincarnation, though the references are not so widespread in his poems. He clearly states in "Rain in Summer":

Thus the Seer,  
With vision clear,  
Sees forms appear and disappear,  
In the perpetual round of strange,  
Mysterious change  
From birth to death, from death to birth,  
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth.

In "Resignation" we find:

There is no Death! What seems so is transition;  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
Whose portal we call Death.

James Russell Lowell, a contemporary of Longfellow, also brings forth similar ideals. In "The Twilight" he writes:

Sometimes a breath floats by me  
An odour from Dreamland sent,  
Which makes the ghost seem nigh me  
Of a something that came and went,  
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not  
In what diviner sphere!  
Of mem'ries that come not and go not,  
Like music once heard by an ear  
That cannot forget or reclaim it;  
A something so shy, it would shame it  
To make it a show.  
A something too vague, could I name it,  
For others to know:  
As though I had lived it and dreamed it,

As though I had acted and schemed it  
 Long ago.

Edwin Markham is a popular contributor to modern literature, and is one of the many of our contemporary writers who give voice to the possibility of reincarnation. He writes, in part:

Perhaps we are led, and our lives are fated,  
 And steps are counted, one by one.  
 Perhaps we shall meet, and our souls be mated,  
 After the burnt-out sun.  
 There are more lives yet; there are more worlds waiting,  
 For the Way climbs up to the eldest sun.

A very sincere statement of the truth of reincarnation comes from the pen of John Masefield, the poet of the common people, who is not afraid to assert his beliefs. The entire poem "A Creed" tells in detail some of the laws underlying reincarnation, but only a few stanzas are quoted:

I hold that when a person dies  
 His soul returns again to earth;  
 Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise  
 Another mother gives him birth;  
 With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
 The old soul takes the road again.

Such was my belief and trust;  
 This hand, hand that holds the pen,  
 Has many a hundred times been dust  
 And turned, as dust, to dust again;  
 These eyes of mine have blinked and shone  
 In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

All that I rightly think or do  
 Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast  
 Is curse or blessing justly due  
 For sloth or effort in the past.  
 My life's a statement of the sum  
 Of vice indulged or overcome.

In his "Song of Creation" Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, writes:

White reindeer's milk is yellow gold  
 And he who drinks it lives for aye;  
 He will not drown, he cannot die,  
 Nor hunger, thirst, nor yet grow cold,  
 But live and live a thousand lives —  
 Ten thousand deer, two thousand wives.

In "With Love to You and Yours", a poem which breathes of soul mates throughout evolution, he sings:

As one who comes upon a street,  
 Or sudden turn in pleasant path,  
 As one who suddenly may meet  
 Some scene, some sound, some sense that hath  
 A memory of olden days,  
 Of days that long have gone their ways,

. . . . .  
 How her heart beat! Three thousand years  
 Of weary, waiting womanhood,

. . . . .  
 But now at last to meet once more  
 Upon the bright all shining shore  
 Of earth, in life's resplendent dawn  
 And he so fair to look upon!

. . . . .  
 And, "Phaon, I am Sappho. I —"  
 Nay, nay, she did not speak

. . . . .  
 She raised her eyes, and lo! her doves!  
 Just of old they came.

A very interesting expression of reincarnation is found in the poem "On the Death of a Fair Infant" by John Milton. In discussing with some mourners the possible personalities which the dead infant may have possessed in past lives he questions:

Wert thou that just maid who once before  
 Forsook the hated Earth, O tell me sooth,  
 And cam'st again to visit us once more?

He further asks if the babe were other characters returned, but since the poem cannot easily be condensed the reader is referred to it.

William Vaughn Moody, the great nineteenth- and twentieth-

century poet-dramatist, wrote:

We have felt the ancient swaying  
 Of the earth before the sun,  
 On the darkness marge of midnight heard sidereal rivers  
 playing;  
 Rash it was to bathe our souls there, but we plunged  
 and all is done.  
 That is lives and lives behind us — lo, our journey is  
 begun.

A fragment from *Philosophical Poems* by Henry More runs:

I would sing the pre-existency  
 Of human souls and live once o'er again  
 By recollection and quick memory  
 All that is past since first we all began.

Alfred Noyes, a favorite poet and mystic of today, captivates one with his lilting, spontaneous verses which breathe natural beauty and true mysticism. He sings:

Soul to soul in the darkness, dust to dust in the light,  
 The wefts outworn of the ages are gathered again from  
 the night  
 Losing never a thread of their scattered hopes and fears  
 As they come from the Loom of the Weaver that weaves  
 the Web of Years.

Ovid writes in his poem "Metamorphosis", as translated by Dryden:

Death, so called, is but old matter dressed  
 In some new form; and in a varied vest  
 From tenement to tenement tho' tossed,  
 The soul is still the same, the figure only lost.  
 And, as the softened wax new seals receives,  
 This face assumes, and that impression leaves;  
 Now called by one, now by another name,  
 The Form is only changed, the wax is still the same.  
 Then, to be born, is to begin to be  
 Some other thing we were not formerly.

Souls cannot die. They leave a former home,



And in new bodies dwell, and from them roam.

. . . . .

That, when its present body turns to clay,  
Seeks a new home, and with lessened night  
Inspires another frame with life and light.

Thomas Parnell, one of the recent popular poets, writes in "The Hermit":

Long had our pious friend in virtue trod,  
But now the child half weaned his heart from God;  
Child of his age, for him he lived in pain,  
And measured back his steps to earth again.

Thomas W. Parsons, another author of the present day, beautifully expresses reincarnation in his "Stanzas", a part of which runs:

We have forgot what we have been,  
And what we are we little know  
We fancy new events begin,  
But all has happened long ago.

. . . . .

So looking into thy fond eyes,  
Strange memories come to me, as tho  
Somewhere — perchance in Paradise —  
I had adored thee long ago.

Alexander Pope, the eighteenth-century poet of great repute, wrote in his "Essay on Man":

The strong connections, nice dependencies,  
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul  
Looked through? . . .  
Where all must full or not coherent be,  
And all that rises, rise in due degree.

. . . . .

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;  
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same.

D.G. Rossetti, one of the foremost Pre-Raphaelites, had that southern Italian spirit, and his poems breathe forth a natural

symbolism. He also caught the essence of the truth of reincarnation as portrayed in his "Sudden Light":

I have been here before,  
 But when or how I cannot tell:  
 I know the grass beyond the door,  
 The sweet keen smell,  
 The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before, —  
 How long ago I may not know:  
 But just when at that swallow's soar  
 Your neck turned so,  
 Some veil did fall, — I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?  
 And shall not thus time's eddying flight  
 Still with our lives our love restore  
 In death's despite,  
 And day and night yield one delight once more?

The author of *William Tell*, Friedrich von Schiller, of the eighteenth century, was a firm believer in reincarnation if we can judge from his "The Secret of Reminiscence", where we read:

Were our Beings once together twined?  
 Was it therefore that our bosoms pin'd?  
 Were we in the light of suns now dead,  
 In the days of rapture long since fled,  
 Into One united?  
 Aye, we were so! thou wert linked with me  
 In Aeon that has ceased to be.

Shakespeare's writings give evidence of the author's having held to the doctrine of reincarnation. . . . In "Sonnet 59" we find:

If there be nothing new, but that which is  
 Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,  
 Which labouring for invention, bear amiss  
 The second burthen of a former child!  
 O, that record could with a backward look,  
 Even of five hundred courses of the sun,  
 Show me your image in some antique book,

Since mind at first in character was done!  
 That I might see what the old world would say  
 To this composed wonder of your frame;  
 Whether we are mended, or whether better they,  
 Or whether revolution be the same.  
 O, sure I am, the wits of former days  
 To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

The entire play *As You Like It* is based upon reincarnation if it be interpreted occultly. In Act II, Scene 7, we find:

All the world's a stage,  
 And all the men and women merely players:  
 They have their exits and their entrances,  
 And one man in his time plays many parts.

William Sharp, whose personal self is known as Fiona MacLeod, is a modern poet whose beautiful little verse, "A Record", has been printed in several scientific books illustrating evolution. As seen from the following extract it also represents true reincarnation:

None sees the slow sure upward sweep  
 By which the soul from life-depths deep  
 Ascends, — unless, mayhap, when free  
 With each new death we backward see  
 The long perspective of our race,  
 Our multitudinous past lives trace.

The following also comes from his pen:

On one day yet to come I see  
 This body pale and cold and dead:  
 The spirit once again made free  
 Hovers triumphant overhead.

A glimpse of reincarnation comes from that exquisite youthful poet of the nineteenth century, Percy B. Shelley. A part of "The Cloud", which must be interpreted symbolically, runs:

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,  
 And the nursling of the Sky;

I pass through the pores, of the ocean and shores;  
 I change, but I cannot die.

. . . . .  
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,  
 And out of the caverns of rain,  
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the  
 tomb,  
 I arise, and unbuild it again.

Langdon Smith, the author of "Evolution", that popular rhythmic poem, beginning, "When you were a tadpole and I was a fish", after tracing life evolving upwards through the lower kingdoms, makes the direct challenge that that Life behind all Nature and Mankind reincarnates:

Our love is old, and our lives are old,  
 And death shall come amain.  
 Should it come today, what man may say  
 We shall not live again?

One of America's most outstanding authors and travelers of the nineteenth century, Bayard Taylor, and one who had a unique skill in recording his thoughts and the results of his travels, also believed in reincarnation. In "The Metempsychosis of the Pine" he writes:

Another life, the life of today o'erwhelms,  
 The past from present consciousness takes hue  
 As we remember vast and cloudy realms  
 Our feet have wandered through.

The nineteenth century brought forth another great idealistic poet in the person of Alfred Tennyson, a poet-laureate of Great Britain, who was said to have been a theosophist. A fragment of "In Memoriam" alludes to reincarnation:

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit walks;  
 And these are but the shattered stalks,  
 Or ruined chrysalis of one.

"The Two Voices" is particularly pointed in its meaning:

Or, if through lower lives I came —  
 Though all experience past became  
 Consolidate in mind and frame —  
 I might forget my weaker lot;  
 For is not our first year forgot?  
 The haunts of memory echo not.

. . . . .

Moreover, something is, or seems,  
 That touches me with mystic gleams,  
 Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —  
 Of something, like something here;  
 Of something done, I know not where;  
 Such as no language may declare.

Again, in his “De Profundis” he clearly states:

From death to death through life and life to find  
 near and even nearer Him . . .

In one of his Sonnets we read:

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood  
 And ebb into a former life . . .  
 We say all this has been before,  
 All this hath been, I know not when or where.

Of “The Mystic” he writes:

Ye could not read the marvel in his eye,  
 The still serene abstraction: he hath felt  
 The vanities of after and before;  
 Albeit his spirit and his secret heart  
 The stern experiences of converse lives,  
 The linked woes of many a fiery change  
 Had purified, and chastened, and made free.

Virgil, a poet-laureate of Rome, was steeped in Roman and Grecian mythology, and through the School of Sextus in the first century B.C. had full knowledge of reincarnation. In the sixth book of his great work *The Aeneid* (Harvard Classics), he pictures the father of Aeneas in Hades explaining to his son how the soul is purified in the heaven-world to receive a later earthly

birth. The drinking of the water of Lethe is that which effaces the memory of the past.

... in a low'ry vale,  
 Reviewed his mustered race, and took the tale;  
 Those happy spirits, which, ordained by fate,  
 For future beings and new bodies wait.

. . . . .

Aeneas wond'ring stood, then ask'd the cause  
 Which to the stream the crowding people draws.  
 Then thus the sire: "The souls that throng the flood  
 Are those to whom, by fate, are other bodies ow'd:  
 In Lethe's lake they long oblivion taste,  
 Of future life secure, forgetful of the past.  
 Long has my soul desir'd this time and place,  
 To set before your sight yon glorious race,  
 That this presaging joy may fire your mind  
 To seek the shores of destiny design'd."  
 "O father, can it be, that souls sublime  
 Return to visit our terrestrial clime,  
 And that the gen'rous mind, releas'd by death,  
 Can covet lazy limbs and mortal breath?"

. . . . .

Then the father answer'd, "Yes,  
 A thousand years to cleanse a corrupted soul,  
 A one common soul inspires and animates the whole  
 And every soul is filled with equal flame."

. . . . .

"And some are hung to bleach upon the wind,  
 Some plunged in waters, others purged in fires,  
 Till all the dregs are drained, and all the rust expires."

The final cleansing comes in the Elysian Fields, and after the thousand-era period, he explains:

That, unrememb'ring of its former pain,  
 The soul may suffer mortal flesh again.

Christian Wagner, rather a minor poet of the nineteenth century, wrote:

Yea, thy fragrant breath — who knows

May lend fragrance to the rose;  
 All the love that it expressed  
 May be rosebuds at thy breast;  
 Breaths of a distant childhood yet  
 Greet thee in the violet.

One of the most mystical of our recent poets, Walt Whitman, profoundly breathes the reality of reincarnation in his “Night on the Prairies”:

Now while the great thoughts of space and eternity fill  
 me I will measure myself by them,  
 And now touched with the lives of other globes  
 arrived as far along as those of the earth,  
 Or waiting to arrive, or passed on farther than those of the  
 earth,  
 I henceforth no more ignore them than I ignore my  
 own life,  
 Or the lives of the earth, as far as mine, or waiting to  
 arrive.

Another American poet of the nineteenth century indicating the plausibility of reincarnation was John Greenleaf Whittier, for, in “A Mystery” we read:

A presence strange at once and known  
 Walked with me as my guide,  
 The skirts of some forgotten life  
 Trailed noiseless at my side.

After a heart-rending struggle at the death of her husband, Ella Wheeler Wilcox turned to the true philosophy of life, and reached her solace in the doctrine of reincarnation. She sought for this enlightenment everywhere, and breathes of her struggle and final consummation in many of her poems. The following excerpt from “The Finish” shows her final acceptance of reincarnation:

Out of that wonderful world where God is,  
 The Lords of Karma the path have shown,  
 And given us lessons to learn in bodies —  
 Oh, many the bodies our souls have known!

Quotations of reincarnation would be incomplete without that from “Intimations of Immortality” by William Wordsworth, another poet-laureate of England:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.

*Reincarnation: A Universal Truth*

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