



## Poems from Origin no. 19.

[s.l.]: Kyoto, Japan, 1970

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## HIS CARPETS FLOWERED

William Morris

## I

— how we're carpet-making  
 by the river  
 a long dream to unroll  
 and somehow time to pole  
 a boat

I designed a carpet today —  
 dogtooth violets  
 and spoke to a full hall  
 now that the gall  
 of society's

corruption stains throughout  
 Dear Janey I am tossed  
 by many things  
 If the change would bring  
 better art

but if it would not?  
 O to be home to sail the flood  
 I'm possessed  
 and do possess  
 Employer

of labor, true —  
 to get done  
 the work of the hand...  
 I'd be now a rich man  
 had I yielded

on a few points of principle  
 Item sabots  
 and blouse —

I work in the dye-house  
myself

Good sport dyeing  
tapestry wool  
I like the indigo vats  
I'm drawing patterns so fast  
Last night

in sleep I drew a sausage —  
somehow I had to eat it first  
Colorful shores — mouse ear...  
horse-mint... The Strawberry Thief  
our new chintz

## II

Yeats saw the betterment of the workers  
by religion — slow in any case  
as the drying of the moon  
He was not understood —  
I rang the bell

for him to sit down  
Yeats left the lecture circuit  
yet he could say: no one  
so well loved  
as Morris

## III

Entered new waters  
Studied Icelandic:  
At home last minute signs  
to post:  
*Vetch*

*grows here — Please do not mow*

We saw it — Iceland — the end  
 of the world rising out of the sea —  
 cliffs, caves like 13th century  
 illuminations

of hell-mouths  
 Rain squalls through moonlight  
 Cold wet  
 is so damned wet  
 Iceland's

black sand  
 Stone buntings'  
 fly-up-dispersion  
 Sea-pink and campion a Persian  
 carpet

## W A R

The trees full of snipers, the new kind  
 of bird  
 Men on the hunt for Russian furs  
 for Ukrainian sausage  
 and Chinese girls

They floated past a crescent moon  
 to Sicily —  
 strings of diminished pearls  
 In each pearl-parachute  
 a tommy gun

The Russian — only a man from Georgia  
 USSR  
 could dance like that  
 My baby son? — in some  
 secret zone

## PEACE

Dark road home  
from town —  
young neighbor as he walked  
wound up tiny Swiss works —  
a firefly music

Mickey Mouse leaned on a bubble  
removed a tear  
from the elephant's eye  
to a brush so he  
could scrubble

Our small boat's motor raced  
Great Blue  
the heron sailing as in China  
not caring  
to win

•

Blue and white  
china cups  
glacier-adjacent

lost  
in the foothills

Waded, watched, warbled  
learned to write on slate  
with chalk from an ancient sea

If I could float my tentacles  
through the deep...  
pulsate an invisible glow

• . . .  
Faithful to the marsh  
of my childhood  
we camp on the dryest portion

In April's flood-freeze  
crystals hang low on the bush  
all day

Then green — we're en rapport  
with grass as once or twice  
with humans

•  
Sleep's dream  
the nerve-flash in the blood

The sense  
of what's seen

'I took cold  
on my nerves' — my mother

tall, tormented  
darkinfested

and my sometimes  
happy fatherphosphor

Consider the alliance —  
ships and plants

The take-for-granted bloom  
of our roadsides

Queen Anne's Lace  
Black Eyed Susans  
rode the sea

'Specimens graciously passed  
between warring fleets'

And when an old boat rots ashore  
itself once living plant  
it sprouts

Wallace Stevens

What you say about the early  
yellow springtime is also something  
worth sticking to

Gail Roub  
57  
437 Adams  
Fort Atkinson

**THOMAS JEFFERSON**

1

My wife is ill!  
And I sit  
                  waiting  
for a quorum

2

Fast ride  
his horse collapsed  
Now *he* saddled walked

Borrowed a farmer's  
unbroken colt  
To Richmond

Richmond How stop —  
Arnold's redcoats  
there

3

Elk Hill destroyed —  
Cornwallis  
carried off 30 slaves

Jefferson:  
Were it to give them freedom  
he'd have done right

4

Latin and Greek  
my tools  
to understand  
humanity

I rode horse  
away from a monarch  
to an enchanting  
philosophy

5

The South of France

Roman temple  
'simple and sublime'

Maria Cosway  
harpist  
on his mind

white column  
and arch

6

To daughter Patsy: Read —  
read Livy

No person full of work  
was ever hysterical

Know music, history

dancing

(I calculate 14 to 1  
in marriage

she will draw  
a blockhead)

Science also  
Patsy

7

Agreed with Adams:  
send spermaceti oil to Portugal  
for their church candles

(light enough to banish mysteries?:  
three are one and one is three  
and yet the one not three  
and the three not one)

and send salt fish  
U. S. salt fish preferred  
above all other

8

Jefferson of Patrick Henry  
backwoods fiddler statesman:

'He spoke as Homer wrote'  
Henry eyed our minister at Paris —

the Bill of Rights hassle —

'he remembers . . .

in splendor and dissipation  
he thinks yet of bills of rights'

9

True, French frills and lace  
for Jefferson, sword and belt

but follow the Court to Fontainebleau  
he could not —

house rent would have left him  
nothing to eat

. . .

He bowed to everyone he met  
and talked with arms folded

He could be trimmed  
by a two-month migraine

and yet  
stand up

10

Dear Polly:  
I said No — no frost

in Virginia — the strawberries  
were safe

I'd have heard — I'm in that kind

of correspondence

with a young daughter —  
if they were not

Now I must retract  
I shrink from it

11

Political honors  
‘splendid torments’  
'If one could establish  
an absolute power  
of silence over oneself'

When I set out for Monticello  
(my grandchildren  
will they know me?)  
How are my young  
chestnut trees —

12

Hamilton and the bankers  
would make my country Carthage

I am abandoning the rich —  
their dinner parties —

I shall eat my simlins  
with the class of science

or not at all  
Next year the last of labors  
among conflicting parties

Then my family  
we shall sow our cabbages  
together

13

Delicious flower  
of the acacia

or rather

Mimosa Nilotica  
from Mr. Lomax

14

Polly Jefferson, 8, had crossed  
to father and sister in Paris

by way of London — Abigail  
embraced her — Adams said

'in all my life I never saw  
more charming child'

Death of Polly, 25,  
Monticello

15

My harpsichord  
my alabaster vase  
and bridle bit  
bound for Alexandria

## Virginia

The good sea weather  
of retirement  
The drift and suck  
and die-down of life  
but there is land

16

These were my passions:  
Monticello and the villa-temples  
I passed on to carpenters  
bricklayers what I knew

and to an Italian sculptor  
how to turn a volute  
on a pillar

You may approach the campus rotunda  
from lower to upper terrace  
Cicero had levels

17

John Adams' eyes  
dimming  
Tom Jefferson's rheumatism  
cantering

18

Ah soon must Monticello be lost  
to debts  
and Jefferson himself  
to death

19

Mind leaving, let body leave  
Let dome live, spherical dome  
and colonnade

Martha (Patsy) stay  
'The Committee of Safety  
must be warned'

Stay youth — Anne and Ellen  
all my books, the bantams  
and the seeds of the senega root

LORINE NIEDECKER

To Gail and Bonnie  
from Lorine  
1970

origin no. 19