Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)
Excerpts from Songs of Travel and Other Verses

I. THE VAGABOND
(TO AN AIR OF SCHUBERT)

Give to me the life I love,
   Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
    And the byway nigh me.

Bed in the bush with stars to see,
   Bread I dip in the river—
There’s the life for a man like me,
   There’s the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
   Let what will be o’er me;
Give the face of earth around
    And the road before me.

Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
    Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
    And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
   Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
    Biting the blue finger:
White as meal the frosty field—
    Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
    Not to winter even!

Let the blow fall soon or late,
   Let what will be o’er me;
Give the face of earth around,
    And the road before me.

Wealth I ask not, hope nor love,
    Nor a friend to know me.
All I ask the heaven above,
    And the road below me.
VI.
THE infinite shining heavens
    Rose and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
    Showering sorrow and light.

I saw them distant as heaven,
    Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of night
    Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow
    The stars stood over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
    And a star had come down to me.

XV.
BRIGHT is the ring of words
    When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
    When the singer sings them.
Still they are carolled and said—
    On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
    And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
    In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
    The swains together.
And when the west is red
    With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
    And the maid remembers.