

# British Literature: Quotable Quotes #1: Beowulf-Defoe

I had a fixed purpose when I put to sea.  
As I sat in the boat with my band of men,  
I meant to perform to the uttermost  
what your people wanted or perish in the attempt,  
in the fiend's clutches. And I shall fulfill that purpose,  
prove myself with a proud deed  
or meet my death here in the mead-hall.  
BEOWULF

I have wrested the hilt  
from the enemies' hand, avenged the evil  
done to the Danes; it is what was due.  
BEOWULF

So every elder and experienced councilman  
among my people supported my resolve  
to come here to you, King Hrothgar,  
because all knew of my awesome strength.  
BEOWULF

I have heard moreover that the monster scorns  
in his reckless way to use weapons;  
therefore, to heighten Hygelac's fame  
and gladden his heart, I hereby renounce  
sword and the shelter of the broad shield,  
the heavy war-board: hand-to-hand  
is how it will be, a life-and-death  
fight with the fiend.  
BEOWULF

The monster's whole  
body was in pain, a tremendous wound  
appeared on his shoulder. Sinews split  
and the bone-lappings burst.  
BEOWULF

Then a powerful demon, a prowler through the dark,  
nursed a hard grievance.  
BEOWULF

Whichever one death fells  
must deem it a just judgement by God.  
BEOWULF

Praise we the Fashioner Now of Heaven's Fabric

The majesty of his might and his mind's wisdom  
Work of the world-warden, worker of all wonders,  
How he the Lord of Glory everlasting,  
Wrought first for the race of men Heaven as a rooftree,  
Then made he Middle Earth to be their mansion.

#### CAEDMON'S HYMN

This tale is true, and mine. It tells  
How the sea took me, swept me bak  
And forth in sorrow and fear and pain,  
Showed me suffering in a hundred ships,  
In a thousand ports, and in me.

#### THE SEAFARER

When in April the sweet showers fall  
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all  
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power  
As brings about the engendering of the flower,  
When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath  
Exhales an air in every grove and heath  
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun  
His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run,  
And the small fowl are making melody  
That sleep away the night with open eye  
(So nature pricks them and their heart engage)  
Then people long to go on pilgrimages  
THE CANTERBURY TALES PROLOGUE GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A worthy woman from beside Bath city  
Was with us, somewhat deaf, which was a pity.  
In making cloth she showed so great a bent  
She bettered those of Ypres and of Ghent.  
In all the parish not a dame dared stir  
Toward the altar steps in front of her,  
And if indeed they did, so wrath was she  
As to be quite put out of charity.  
CANTERBURY TALES PROLOGUE CHAUCER

Then he spurred Gringolet down the path,  
Across a slope, beside a grove,  
Riding a rough road to the valley  
Below. Then he looked about. It seemed wild,  
No sign of shelter anywhere, nothing  
But steep hills on every side,  
Gnarled crags with huge rocks,  
Crag scratching at the sky! He stopped,  
Pulled back on the reins, held Gringolet ready  
While he stared this way and that, seeking

The chapel.

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

That belt you're wearing: It's mine, my wife  
Gave it to you -- I know it all, knight,  
The kisses you took, and gave, and all  
You did, and how she tempted you: everything.  
GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and broad, and in the midst of the lake  
Arthur was ware of an armed cloth in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand.  
MORTE D'ARTHUR THOMAS MALORY

Come live with me and be my love  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,  
Or woods or steepy mountain yields  
THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.  
THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE SHEPHERD WALTER RALEIGH

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun  
SONNET WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Let me not to the marriage of two minds admit impediments.  
SONNET WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
SONNET WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Sweetest love I do not go  
For weariness of thee  
Nor in the hope the world can show  
A fitter love for me  
But since that I  
Must die at last, 'tis best  
To use myself in jest,  
Thus by feigned deaths to die.  
SONG JOHN DONNE

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
SONNET JOHN DONNE

Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

MEDITATION JOHN DONNE

Had we but world enough and time  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way  
To walk and pass our long love's day.  
TO HIS COY MISTRESS ANDREW MARVELL

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying;  
And this same flower that smiles today  
Tomorrow will be dying.  
TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME ROBERT HERRICK

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
ON HIS BLINDNESS JOHN MILTON

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat  
Sing Heavenly Muse  
PARADISE LOST JOHN MILTON

Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,  
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,  
To do aught good never will be our task,  
But ever to do ill our sole delight,  
PARADISE LOST JOHN MILTON

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.  
What matter where, if I be still the same,  
And what I should be, all but less than he  
Whom thunder hath made greater? Hear at least  
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built  
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice  
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell;  
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.  
PARADISE LOST JOHN MILTON

How am I gluttred with conceit of this!  
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,  
Resolve me of all ambiguities,  
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?  
I'll have them fly to India for gold,  
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,  
And search all corners of the new-found world  
FAUSTUS CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Now that the gloomy shadow of the night,  
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,  
Leaps from th' antarctic world unto the sky,  
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,  
Faustus, begin thine incantations,  
And try if devils will obey thy hest,  
Seeing thou hast pray'd and sacrific'd to them.  
FAUSTUS CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

I charge thee to return, and change thy shape;  
Thou art too ugly to attend on me:  
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;  
That holy shape becomes a devil best.  
FAUSTUS CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

O, mercy, heaven! look not so fierce on me!  
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!  
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!  
I'll burn my books!—O Mephistophilis!  
FAUSTUS CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

I went out to Charing Cross, to see Major General Harrison hanged, drawn, and quartered; which was done there, he looking as cheerful as any man could do in that condition.  
DIARY SAMUEL PEPYS

Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast today, Jane called us up about 3 in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City.  
DIARY SAMUEL PEPYS

It would pierce the hearts of all that came by to hear the piteous cries of those infected people, who being thus out of their understandings by the violence of their pain, or the heat of their blood, were either shut in, or perhaps tied in their beds and chairs.  
JOURNAL OF A PLAGUE YEAR DANIEL DEFOE

There are fifty-four cities in the island, all large and well built: the manners, customs, and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived as near in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distant but that a man can go on foot in one day from it to that which lies next it.  
UTOPIA THOMAS MORE

Inhabitants are sent by turns from the cities to dwell in them; no country family has fewer than forty men and women in it, besides two slaves. There is a master and a mistress set over every family; and over thirty families there is a magistrate.

UTOPIA THOMAS MORE

Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Y cladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,  
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,  
The cruell markes of many' a bloudy fielde;

THE FAERIE QUEEN EDMUND SPENSER

Vpon a great aduenture he was bond,  
That greatest Gloriana to him gaue,  
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,  
To winne him worship, and her grace to haue,

THE FAERIE QUEEN EDMUND SPENSER

"It will be easy for me to compass this, although thou mayest think that it will not be easy."

KILWCH AND OLWEN

Then Arthur and his hosts proceeded until they overtook the boar in Cornwall, and the trouble which they had met with before was mere play to what they encountered in seeking the comb. But from one difficulty to another, the comb was at length obtained. And then he was hunted from Cornwall, and driven straight forward into the deep sea.

KILWCH AND OLWEN

The world is so taken up of late with novels and romances, that it will be hard for a private history to be taken for genuine, where the names and other circumstances of the person are concealed, and on this account we must be content to leave the reader to pass his own opinion upon the ensuing sheet, and take it just as he pleases.

MOLL FLANDERS DANIEL DEFOE

My true name is so well known in the records or registers at Newgate, and in the Old Bailey, and there are some things of such consequence still depending there, relating to my particular conduct, that it is not be expected I should set my name or the account of my family to this work; perhaps, after my death, it may be better known; at present it would not be proper, no not though a general pardon should be issued, even without exceptions and reserve of persons or crimes.

MOLL FLANDERS DANIEL DEFOE

My mother was convicted of felony for a certain petty theft scarce worth naming, viz. having an opportunity of borrowing three pieces of fine holland of a certain draper in Cheapside. The circumstances are too long to repeat, and I have heard them related so many ways, that I can scarce be certain which is the right account.

MOLL FLANDERS DANIEL DEFOE