



HARVARD  
Department of the Classics

THE POPLAR FIELD: THE  
CHANCELLOR'S PRIZE 2014  
POETRY TRANSLATION

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## THE CHANCELLOR'S LATIN PRIZE 2014: PROSE

*Quid mea carmina possunt?*

Populeum nemus excisum est; frondosa valet  
umbra columnarum! nec iam stridentibus alis  
ludunt in foliis Zephyri gelidoque susurro  
cantant nec specie fluvialis lympha renidet.  
gramine non oculos bis sex labentibus annis  
iuvit ager nostros. iam iam qua consita ripa  
en arbusta iacent passim deiecta per herbam  
atque sedile coma est cuius sub tegmine sedi.  
et merula e mediis coryleti ut quareret umbram  
aestibus effugit, nidum procul inde locavit,  
et nemus omne silet quondam dulcedine plenum  
nec iam blanda meum pertemptant carmina pectus.  
sed velut arboribus fugit inreparabile tempus  
et nobis, humili requiescam in funere semper:  
ante caput lapis infelix, in pectore siccus  
caespes erit dum silva loco nova surget eodem.  
talia conspiciens hominis mecum ipse voluto  
gaudia quae pereunt: sua vita simillima sommo est;  
at tanto brevius quo gaudeat esse videtur.

The Poplars are fell'd, farewell to the shade  
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade,  
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.  
Twelve years have elapsed since I last took a view  
Of my favourite field and the bank where they grew,  
And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.  
The black-bird has fled to another retreat  
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before,  
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.  
My fugitive years are all hasting away,  
And I must e'er long lie as lowly as they,  
With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head  
E'er another such grove shall arise in its stead.  
'Tis a sight to engage me if any thing can  
To muse on the perishing pleasures of Man;  
Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,  
Have a Being less durable even than he.

WILLIAM COWPER  
THE POPLAR FIELD