

Handout 2 – William Allingham

‘Jingle’ from Allingham’s copy of “Christmas-Eve”:

Ay, who can say? – or guess indeed
What all this is I make you read?

Who shall ever guess indeed

Summary:

Author, when other motives fail, is
By an Aurora Borealis
Converted. [?]: his fright a warning
To such as “won’t go home ‘Till morning”

From “The Fairies”:

UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men

...

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there ...

Letters to the Brownings – Allingham and Nature:

24th September, 1853:

In the sloped garden, where through warp of leaves
A rippled azure weft the river weaves
And through the chirruping of every bird
A murmur wide, at will forgot or heard

...

Between a rubied currant-bush
Caging the sun at heart of every flush
And a verbenum whose spicy sent
Pitches an Arab tent

“I squeezed a ripe red currant for memorandum on your letter. Since the remaining bunches have shrivelled, or deepened into a gloomy red, - for the children neglect them, both while the gooseberries are going out (this was a great gooseberry year) and the apples are coming in: and the common Roses are buried in clay ...”

“I thought of you through a moonlight night last year...”

“The fortnightly paper wherein Alex first appeared, announced ‘*another New Poet on the 1st of August,*’ but I have not yet beheld his sign in the heavens.”

“The unannounced Comet which (in compensation) has lately been bright of evenings, now hid in sunshines, promises to support the family reputation by shaking horrible things down on us out of its hair. North, West, East,— cholera, Yellow Fever, War. But the milder stars shine many, & always.”

“*Our* skies have been very un-blue all Summer. So ill humoured a season I don’t remember, if other years imitate it, the standard rhymes for June be Typhoon, July, you lie! ... August, raw gust, September—a fierce word to be coined”.

23rd October, 1858:

“We have calm weather here, misty mornings, orange sunsets, cold moonlights, & are thus sliding into winter.”

17th June, 1859:

“So much of your plans I have from a pleasant letter of Miss Browning, dated Paris, May 14, which, by the by, came on the evening on which I found the first wildrose this season.”

“To speak of Nature’s lyric effusions—this is a surprising year for wild roses & ferns, as last year was for hawthorn blossoms. For me, I read, walk, bathe—happy on the whole”

14th December, 1859:

“...then Berlin,—well worth being in of course, but horribly ugly, with long straight flat wide streets of stagnant kennels, rugged pavements, & huge mud-coloured houses, all in stucco; & Unter-den-Linden the poorest celebrity of a place I have ever seen, for the shops make no effect, the bottom is only four feet wide, and the limetrees are stunted.”

“In the garden, at back of the house, among falling leaves, we came to a door which leads directly to the Park, & to the “Garden House” on the hillside beyond. Altogether, the house seemed to me the most desirable one in Weimar (*homeliness* being one chief quality) & charmingly suitable.”

1st February, 1860 – Allingham and Edifices:

“Now that I have written the words, Mrs Browning’s objection to hear St Mark’s spoken of in connection with an old-fashioned chest of drawers (‘ormolic cabinet’ it was) occurs. She will say I have a talent for minimizing. Yet am I one of the greatest worshippers of names & places & shrines.”

