

SONNET TO A STILTON CHEESE

Stilton, thou shouldst be living at this hour
And so thou art. Nor lovest grace thereby;
England has need of thee, and so have I—
She is a Fen. Far as the eye can scour,
League after grassy league from Lincoln tower
To Stilton in the fields, she is a Fen.
Yet this high cheese, by choice of fenland men,
Like a tall green volcano rose in power.

Plain living and long drinking are no more,
And pure religion reading 'Household Words',
And sturdy manhood sitting still all day
Shrink, like this cheese that crumbles to its core;
While my digestion, like the House of Lords,
The heaviest burdens on herself doth lay.

I confess I feel myself as if some literary influence, something that has haunted me, were present in this otherwise original poem; but it is hopeless to disentangle it now.