

Breakfast

By Mary Lamb

A dinner party, coffee, tea,
Sandwich, or supper, all may be
In their way pleasant. But to me
Not one of these deserves the praise
That welcomer of new-born days,
A breakfast, merits; ever giving
Cheerful notice we are living
Another day refreshed by sleep,
When its festival we keep.
Now although I would not slight
Those kindly words we use 'Good night',
Yet parting words are words of sorrow,
And may not vie with sweet 'Good Morrow',
With which again our friends we greet,
When in the breakfast-room we meet,
At the social table round,
Listening to the lively sound
Of those notes which never tire,
Of urn, or kettle on the fire.
Sleepy Robert never hears
Or urn, or kettle; he appears
When all have finished, one by one
Dropping off, and breakfast done.
Yet has he too his own pleasure,
His breakfast hour's his hour of leisure;
And, left alone, he reads or muses,
Or else in idle mood he uses
To sit and watch the venturous fly,
Where the sugar's piled high,
Clambering o'er the lumps so white,
Rocky cliffs of sweet delight.



British Poet and anthologist Mary Lamb worked as a seamstress for 10 years to support her ailing family. She suffered from bipolar disorder and, during an episode in 1796, killed her mother with a kitchen knife. Her younger brother Charles, a poet and essayist who worked for the East India Company, agreed to serve as Mary's caretaker rather than consign her to lifelong

institutionalization. Despite her illness, the siblings developed a collaborative writing relationship and produced many well-known collections of poetry and prose for children. The books they wrote together were published anonymously or under Charles's name in order to shield Mary from unwanted publicity.

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