John Clare  
(1793-1864)  

An Idle Hour

Sauntering at ease I often love to lean  
O'er old bridge-walls and mark the flood below  
Whose ripples through the weeds of oily green  
Like happy travellers mutter as they go  
And mark the sunshine dancing on the arch  
Time keeping to the merry waves beneath  
And on the banks see drooping blossoms parch  
Thirsting for water in the day's hot breath  
Right glad of mud-drops plashed upon their leaves  
By cattle plunging from the steepy brink  
While water-flowers more than their share receive  
And revel to their very cups in drink.  
Just like the world some strive and fare but ill  
While others riot and have plenty still

(from John Clare, Selected Poems,  
edited by Geoffry Summerfield,  