

Eve excerpts from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*  
All text in red is added by R. Cunningham, March 3, 2024.

This first excerpt is from Book 4 of the 1674 edition of the poem:

4.440 – 91     *Eve, describing her Creation*

4.440    To whom thus Eve repli'd. O thou for whom  
4.441    And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh,  
4.442    And without whom am to no end, my Guide  
4.443    And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.  
4.444    For wee to him indeed all praises owe,  
4.445    And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy  
4.446    So farr the happier Lot, enjoying thee  
4.447    Praeeminent by so much odds, while thou  
4.448    Like consort to thy self canst no where find.  
4.449    That day I oft remember, when from sleep  
4.450    I first awak't, and found my self repos'd  
4.451    Under a shade of flours, much wondring where  
4.452    And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.  
4.453    Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound  
4.454    Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread  
4.455    Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd  
4.456    Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n ; I thither went  
4.457    With unexperienc't thought, and laid me downe  
4.458    On the green bank, to look into the cleer  
4.459    Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie.  
4.460    As I bent down to look, just opposite,  
4.461    A Shape within the watry gleam appeerd  
4.462    Bending to look on me, I started back,  
4.463    It started back, but pleas'd I soon returnd,  
4.464    Pleas'd it returnd as soon with answering looks  
4.465    Of sympathie and love ; there I had fixt  
4.466    Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,  
4.467    Had not a voice thus warnd me, What thou seest,  
4.468    What there thou seest faire Creature is thy self,

4.469 With thee it came and goes : but follow me,  
4.470 And I will bring thee where no shadow staies  
4.471 Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces, hee  
4.472 Whose image thou art, him thou shall enjoy  
4.473 Inseperable thine, to him shalt beare  
4.474 Multitudes like thy self, and thence be call'd  
4.475 Mother of human Race : what could I doe,  
4.476 But follow strait, invisibly thus led?  
4.477 Till I espi'd thee, fair indeed and tall,  
4.478 Under a Platan, yet methought less faire,  
4.479 Less winning soft, less amiablie milde,  
4.480 Then that smooth watry image; back I turnd,  
4.481 Thou following cryd'st aloud, Return faire Eve,  
4.482 Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art,  
4.483 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent  
4.484 Out of my side to thee, neerest my heart  
4.485 Substantial Life, to have thee by my side  
4.486 Henceforth an individual solace dear ;  
4.487 Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim  
4.488 My other half : with that thy gentle hand  
4.489 Seisd mine, I yielded, and from that time see  
4.490 How beauty is excelld by manly grace  
4.491 And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

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The following excerpt is from Book 9 of the 1674 edition of the poem:

9.647 – 54                    **Eve, to the serpent**

9.647    Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither,  
9.648 Fruitless to mee, though Fruit be here to excess,  
9.649 The credit of whose vertue rest with thee,  
9.650 Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects.  
9.651 But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch ;  
9.652 God so commanded, and left that Command

9.653 Sole Daughter of his voice ; the rest, we live  
9.654 Law to our selves, our Reason is our Law.

9.656 – 63            **Satan, to Eve; Eve, to the serpent**

9.655 To whom the Tempter guilefully repli'd.  
9.656 Indeed ? hath God then said that of the Fruit  
9.657 Of all these Garden Trees ye shall not eate,  
9.658 Yet Lords declar'd of all in Earth or Aire ?  
9.659 To whom thus Eve yet sinless. Of the Fruit  
9.660 Of each Tree in the Garden we may eate,  
9.661 But of the Fruit of this fair Tree amidst  
9.662 The Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eate  
9.663 Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, least ye die.

9.664 – 78            **Narrator, to the Reader**

9.664 She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold  
9.665 The Tempter, but with shew of Zeale and Love  
9.666 To Man, and indignation at his wrong,  
9.667 New part puts on, and as to passion mov'd,  
9.668 Fluctuats disturbd, yet comely and in act  
9.669 Rais'd, as of som great matter to begin.  
9.670 As when of old som Orator renound  
9.671 In Athens or free Rome, where Eloquence  
9.672 Flourishd, since mute, to some great cause adrest,  
9.673 Stood in himself collected, while each part,  
9.674 Motion, each act won audience ere the tongue,  
9.675 Somtimes in highth began, as no delay  
9.676 Of Preface brooking through his Zeal of Right.  
9.677 So standing, moving, or to highth upgrown  
9.678 The Tempter all impassiond thus began.

9.679 – 732    **Satan, to Eve -- THE TEMPTATION**

9.679 O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant,

9.680 Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power  
9.681 Within me cleere, not onely to discerne  
9.682 Things in thir Causes, but to trace the wayes  
9.683 Of highest Agents, deemd however wise.  
9.684 Queen of this Universe, doe not believe  
9.685 Those rigid threats of Death ; ye shall not Die :  
9.686 How should ye? by the Fruit? it gives you Life  
9.687 To Knowledge ? By the Threatner, look on mee,  
9.688 Mee who have touch'd and tasted, yet both live,  
9.689 And life more perfet have attaind then Fate  
9.690 Meant mee, by ventring higher then my Lot.  
9.691 Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast  
9.692 Is open ? or will God incense his ire  
9.693 For such a petty Trespass, and not praise  
9.694 Rather your dauntless vertue, whom the pain  
9.695 Of Death denounc't, whatever thing Death be,  
9.696 Deterred not from atchieving what might leade  
9.697 To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil ;  
9.698 Of good, how just ? of evil, if what is evil  
9.699 Be real, why not known, since easier shunnd ?  
9.700 God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just ;  
9.701 Not just, not God ; not feard then, nor obeyd :  
9.702 Your feare it self of Death removes the feare.  
9.703 Why then was this forbid ? Why but to awe,  
9.704 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,  
9.705 His worshippers ; he knows that in the day  
9.706 Ye Eate thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere,  
9.707 Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then  
9.708 Op'nd and cleerd, and ye shall be as Gods,  
9.709 Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.  
9.710 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man,  
9.711 Internal Man, is but proportion meet,  
9.712 I of brute human, yee of human Gods.  
9.713 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off  
9.714 Human, to put on Gods, death to be wisht,  
9.715 Though threat'nd, which no worse then this can bring.

9.716 And what are Gods that Man may not become  
9.717 As they, participating God-like food ?  
9.718 The Gods are first, and that advantage use  
9.719 On our belief, that all from them proceeds ;  
9.720 I question it, for this fair Earth I see,  
9.721 Warm'd by the Sun, producing every kind,  
9.722 Them nothing : If they all things, who enclos'd  
9.723 Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree,  
9.724 That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains  
9.725 Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies  
9.726 Th' offence, that Man should thus attain to know?  
9.727 What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree  
9.728 Impart against his will if all be his ?  
9.729 Or is it envie, and can envie dwell  
9.730 In heav'nly breasts? these, these and many more  
9.731 Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.  
9.732 Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste.

9.733 – 44                    **Narrator, to the Reader**

9.733    He ended, and his words replete with guile  
9.734 Into her heart too easie entrance won :  
9.735 Fixt on the Fruit she gaz'd, which to behold  
9.736 Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound  
9.737 Yet rung of his perswasive words, impregn'd  
9.738 With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth ;  
9.739 Mean while the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd  
9.740 An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell  
9.741 So savorie of that Fruit, which with desire,  
9.742 Inclivable now grown to touch or taste,  
9.743 Sollicited her longing eye ; yet first  
9.744 Pausing a while, thus to her self she mus'd.

9.745 – 79 Eve, in monologue, to the Tree -- EVE'S REASONING

9.745 Great are thy Vertues, doubtless, best of Fruits.  
9.746 Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admir'd,  
9.747 Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay  
9.748 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught  
9.749 The Tongue not made for Speech to speak thy praise:  
9.750 Thy praise hee also who forbids thy use,  
9.751 Conceales not from us, naming thee the Tree  
9.752 Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil ;  
9.753 Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding  
9.754 Commends thee more, while it inferrs the good  
9.755 By thee communicated, and our want :  
9.756 For good unknown, sure is not had, or had  
9.757 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.  
9.758 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,  
9.759 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise ?  
9.760 Such prohibitions binde not. But if Death  
9.761 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then  
9.762 Our inward freedom ? In the day we eate  
9.763 Of this fair Fruit, our doom is, we shall die.  
9.764 How dies the Serpent ? hee hath eat'n and lives,  
9.765 And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,  
9.766 Irrational till then. For us alone  
9.767 Was death invented ? or to us deni'd  
9.768 This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?  
9.769 For Beasts it seems : yet that one Beast which first  
9.770 Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy  
9.771 The good befall'n him, Author unsuspect,  
9.772 Friendly to man, farr from deceit or guile.  
9.773 What fear I then, rather what know to feare  
9.774 Under this ignorance of good and Evil,  
9.775 Of God or Death, of Law or Penaltie ?  
9.776 Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine,  
9.777 Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste,

9.778 Of vertue to make wise : what hinders then  
9.779 To reach, and feed at once both Bodie and Mind?

9.780 – 94            **Narrator, to the Reader -- EVE'S FALL**

9.780    So saying, her rash hand in evil hour  
9.781 Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat :  
9.782 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat  
9.783 Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,  
9.784 That all was lost. Back to the Thicket slunk  
9.785 The guiltie Serpent, and well might, for Eve  
9.786 Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else  
9.787 Regarded, such delight till then, as seemd,  
9.788 In Fruit she never tasted, whether true  
9.789 Or fancied so, through expectation high  
9.790 Of knowledg, nor was God-head from her thought.  
9.791 Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint,  
9.792 And knew not eating Death : Satiated at length,  
9.793 And hight'nd as with Wine, jocond and boon,  
9.794 Thus to her self she pleasingly began.

9.795 – 833    **Eve, in monologue -- EVE'S DECISION TO CORRUPT ADAM**

9.795    O Sovran, vertuous, precious of all Trees  
9.796 In Paradise, of operation blest  
9.797 To Sapience, hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,  
9.798 And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end  
9.799 Created ; but henceforth my early care,  
9.800 Not without Song, each Morning, and due praise  
9.801 Shall tend thee, and fertil burden ease  
9.802 Of thy full branches offer'd free to all ;  
9.803 Till dieted by thee I grow mature  
9.804 In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know ;  
9.805 Though others envie what they cannot give ;

9.806 For had the gift bin theirs, it had not here  
9.807 Thus grown. Experience, next to thee I owe,  
9.808 Best guide ; not following thee, I had remaind  
9.809 In ignorance, thou op'nst Wisdoms way,  
9.810 And giv'st access, though secret she retire.  
9.811 And I perhaps am secret ; Heav'n is high,  
9.812 High and remote to see from thence distinct  
9.813 Each thing on Earth ; and other care perhaps  
9.814 May have diverted from continual watch  
9.815 Our great Forbidder, safe with all his Spies  
9.816 About him. But to Adam in what sort  
9.817 Shall I appeer? shall I to him make known  
9.818 As yet my change, and give him to partake  
9.819 Full happiness with mee, or rather not,  
9.820 But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power  
9.821 Without Copartner ? so to add what wants  
9.822 In Femal Sex, the more to draw his Love,  
9.823 And render me more equal, and perhaps,  
9.824 A thing not undesirable, sometime  
9.825 Superior ; for inferior who is free?  
9.826 This may be well : but what if God have seen,  
9.827 And Death ensue ? then I shall be no more,  
9.828 And Adam wedded to another Eve,  
9.829 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct ;  
9.830 A death to think. Confirm'd then I resolve,  
9.831 Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe :  
9.832 So dear I love him, that with him all deaths  
9.833 I could endure, without him live no life.