

# The Brook

I come from haunts  
of coot° and hern,°  
I make a sudden sally,°  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker° down a valley.  
By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps,° a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.  
Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go  
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,°  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.  
With many a curve my banks I fret,°  
By many a field and fallow,°  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.°  
I chatter, chatter as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go  
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling.°  
And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me as I travel  
With many a silver water-break  
Above the golden gravel.  
And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go  
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.  
I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted° sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.  
I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses;°  
And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go  
But I go on forever.

~ Alfred Lord Tennyson ~

coot: gray water bird  
hern: heron  
sally: excursion off main course  
bicker: move quickly; rush, hurry

thorp: hamlet or village  
treble: high-toned pitches  
fret: wear away  
fallow: uncultivated land

mallow: garden plant  
grayling: freshwater fish similar to trout  
netted: having appearance of a net  
cresses: plant of mustard family