

To His Coy Mistress

by
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TO HIS COY MISTRESS

HAD we but world enough, and time,
This coyness Lady were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Times winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

THE GALLERY

CHLORA, come view my soul, and tell
Whether I have contrived it well :
Now all its several lodgings lie,
Composed into one gallery,
And the great arras-hangings, made
Of various facings, by are laid,
That, for all furniture, you'll find
Only your picture in my mind.

Here thou art painted in the dress
Of an inhuman murderess ;
Examining upon our hearts,
(Thy fertile shop of cruel arts,)
Engines more keen than ever yet
Adornèd tryant's cabinet,
Of which the most tormenting are,
Black eyes, red lips, and curlèd hair.

But, on the other side, thou'rt drawn,
Like to AURORA in the dawn ;
When in the east she slumbering lies,
And stretches out her milky thighs,
While all the morning quire does sing,
And manna falls and roses spring,
And, at thy feet, the wooing doves
Sit perfecting their harmless loves.

Like an enchantress here thou show'st,
Vexing thy restless lover's ghost ;
And, by a light obscure, dost rave
Over his entrails, in the cave,
Divining thence, with horrid care,
How long thou shalt continue fair ;
And (when informed) them throw'st away
To be the greedy vulture's prey.

But, against that, thou sitt'st afloat,
Like VENUS in her pearly boat ;
The halcyons, calming all that's nigh,
Betwixt the air and water fly ;
Or, if some rolling wave appears,
A mass of ambergris it bears,
Nor blows more wind than what may well
Convoy the perfume to the smell.

These pictures, and a thousand more,
Of thee, my gallery doth store,
In all the forms thou canst invent,

Either to please me, or torment ;
For thou alone, to people me,
Art grown a numerous colony,
And a collection choicer far
Than or Whitehall's, or Mantua's were.

But of these pictures, and the rest,
That at the entrance likes me best,
Where the same posture and the look
Remains with which I first was took ;
A tender shepherdess, whose hair
Hangs loosely playing in the air,
Transplanting flowers from the green hill,
To crown her head and bosom fill.

THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

MY love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high;
It was begotten by Despair
Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone
Could show me so divine a thing
Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown,
But vainly flapp'd its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
Where my extended soul is fixt,
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eye does see
Two perfect loves, nor lets them close;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic pow'r depose.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have plac'd,
(Though love's whole world on us doth wheel)
Not by themselves to be embrac'd;

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear;
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramp'd into a planisphere.

As lines, so loves oblique may well
Themselves in every angle greet;
But ours so truly parallel,

Though infinite, can never meet.

Therefore the love which us doth bind,
But Fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars.

THE MOWER AGAINST GARDENS

Luxurious man, to bring his vice in use,
Did after him the world seduce;
And from the fields the flow'rs and plants allure,
Where nature was most plain and pure.
He first enclos'd within the garden's square
A dead and standing pool of air;
And a more luscious earth for them did knead,
Which stupefied them while it fed.
The pink grew then as double as his mind;
The nutriment did change the kind.
With strange perfumes he did the roses taint,
And flow'rs themselves were taught to paint.
The tulip, white, did for complexion seek,
And learn'd to interline its cheek;
Its onion root they then so high did hold,
That one was for a meadow sold.
Another world was search'd, through oceans new,
To find the Marvel of Peru.
And yet these rarities might be allow'd,
To man, that sov'reign thing and proud;
Had he not dealt between the bark and tree,
Forbidden mixtures there to see.
No plant now knew the stock from which it came,
He grafts upon the wild the tame;
That the uncertain and adult'rate fruit
Might put the palate in dispute.
His green seraglio has its eunuchs too,
Lest any tyrant him out-do;
And in the cherry he does nature vex,
To procreate without a sex.
'Tis all enforc'd, the fountain and the grot,
While the sweet fields do lie forgot;
Where willing nature does to all dispense
A wild and fragrant innocence;
And fauns and fairies do the meadows till,
More by their presence than their skill.
Their statues polish'd by some ancient hand,
May to adorn the gardens stand;
But howso'ere the figures do excel,
The gods themselves with us do dwell.

THE GARDEN

HOW vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
And their uncessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all flow'rs and all trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men;
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name;
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheres'e'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race:
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wond'rous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach

Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find,
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There like a bird it sits and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walk'd without a mate;
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skillful gard'ner drew
Of flow'rs and herbs this dial new,
Where from above the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs!