

THE OXFORD BOOK  
OF ENGLISH VERSE

*Milton to Burns*



THE OXFORD BOOK  
OF ENGLISH VERSE

*Part 3*

*Milton to Burns*

Chosen and Edited

by

*Arthur Quiller-Couch*

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

ITHACA, NEW YORK

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ISBN: 978-1-63334-040-4

Yesterday's Classics, LLC  
PO Box 339  
Ithaca, NY 14851

TO  
THE PRESIDENT  
FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS  
OF  
TRINITY COLLEGE OXFORD  
A HOUSE OF LEARNING  
ANCIENT LIBERAL HUMANE  
AND MY MOST KINDLY NURSE



## PREFACE

FOR this Anthology I have tried to range over the whole field of English Verse from the beginning, or from the Thirteenth Century to this closing year of the Nineteenth, and to choose the best. Nor have I sought in these Islands only, but wheresoever the Muse has followed the tongue which among living tongues she most delights to honour. To bring home and render so great a spoil compendiously has been my capital difficulty. It is for the reader to judge if I have so managed it as to serve those who already love poetry and to implant that love in some young minds not yet initiated.

My scheme is simple. I have arranged the poets as nearly as possible in order of birth, with such groupings of anonymous pieces as seemed convenient. For convenience, too, as well as to avoid a dispute-royal, I have gathered the most of the Ballads into the middle of the Seventeenth Century; where they fill a languid interval between two winds of inspiration—the Italian dying down with Milton and the French following at the heels of the restored Royalists. For convenience, again, I have set myself certain rules of spelling. In the very earliest poems inflection and spelling are structural, and to modernize is to destroy. But as old inflections fade into modern the old spelling becomes less and less vital, and has been brought (not, I hope, too abruptly) into line with that sanctioned by use and familiar. To do this seemed wiser than to discourage many readers

for the sake of diverting others by a scent of antiquity which—to be essential—should breathe of something rarer than an odd arrangement of type. But there are scholars whom I cannot expect to agree with me; and to conciliate them I have excepted Spenser and Milton from the rule.

Glosses of archaic and otherwise difficult words are given at the foot of the page: but the text has not been disfigured with reference-marks. And rather than make the book unwieldy I have eschewed notes—reluctantly when some obscure passage or allusion seemed to ask for a timely word; with more equanimity when the temptation was to criticize or ‘appreciate.’ For the function of the anthologist includes criticizing in silence.

Care has been taken with the texts. But I have sometimes thought it consistent with the aim of the book to prefer the more beautiful to the better attested reading. I have often excised weak or superfluous stanzas when sure that excision would improve; and have not hesitated to extract a few stanzas from a long poem when persuaded that they could stand alone as a lyric. The apology for such experiments can only lie in their success: but the risk is one which, in my judgement, the anthologist ought to take. A few small corrections have been made, but only when they were quite obvious.

The numbers chosen are either lyrical or epigrammatic. Indeed I am mistaken if a single epigram included

fails to preserve at least some faint thrill of the emotion through which it had to pass before the Muse's lips let it fall, with however exquisite deliberation. But the lyrical spirit is volatile and notoriously hard to bind with definitions; and seems to grow wilder with the years. With the anthologist—as with the fisherman who knows the fish at the end of his sea-line—the gift, if he have it, comes by sense, improved by practice. The definition, if he be clever enough to frame one, comes by after-thought. I don't know that it helps, and am sure that it may easily mislead.

Having set my heart on choosing the best, I resolved not to be dissuaded by common objections against anthologies—that they repeat one another until the proverb *δὶς ἢ τρὶς τὰ καλὰ* loses all application—or perturbed if my judgement should often agree with that of good critics. The best is the best, though a hundred judges have declared it so; nor had it been any feat to search out and insert the second-rate merely because it happened to be recondite. To be sure, a man must come to such a task as mine haunted by his youth and the favourites he loved in days when he had much enthusiasm but little reading.

A deeper import  
Lurks in the legend told my infant years  
Than lies upon that truth we live to learn.

Few of my contemporaries can erase—or would wish to erase—the dye their minds took from the late Mr. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*: and he who has returned to it again and again with an affection born

of companionship on many journeys must remember not only what the *Golden Treasury* includes, but the moment when this or that poem appealed to him, and even how it lies on the page. To Mr. Bullen's *Lyrics from the Elizabethan Song Books* and his other treasuries I own a more advised debt. Nor am I free of obligation to anthologies even more recent—to Archbishop Trench's *Household Book of Poetry*, Mr. Locker-Lampson's *Lyra Elegantiarum*, Mr. Miles' *Poets and Poetry of the Century*, Mr. Beeching's *Paradise of English Poetry*, Mr. Henley's *English Lyrics*, Mrs. Sharp's *Lyra Celtica*, Mr. Yeats' *Book of Irish Verse*, and Mr. Churton Collins' *Treasury of Minor British Poetry*: though my rule has been to consult these after making my own choice. Yet I can claim that the help derived from them—though gratefully owned—bears but a trifling proportion to the labour, special and desultory, which has gone to the making of my book.

For the anthologist's is not quite the *dilettante* business for which it is too often and ignorantly derided. I say this, and immediately repent; since my wish is that the reader should in his own pleasure quite forget the editor's labour, which too has been pleasant: that, standing aside, I may believe this book has made the Muses' access easier when, in the right hour, they come to him to uplift or to console—

ἄκλητος μὲν ἔγωγε μένοιμί κεν· ἐς δὲ καλεόντων  
θαρήσας Μοῖσαισι σὺν ἀμετέραισιν ἰκοίμαν.

October 1900

A.T.Q.C.

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# JOHN MILTON

1608–1674

## 307. *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*

**I**T was the Winter wilde,  
While the Heav'n-born-childe,  
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;  
Nature in aw to him  
Had doff't her gawdy trim,  
With her great Master so to sympathize:  
It was no season then for her  
To wanton with the Sun her lusty Paramour.

Only with speeches fair  
She woo's the gentle Air  
To hide her guilty front with innocent Snow,  
And on her naked shame,  
Pollute with sinfull blame,  
The Saintly Vail of Maiden white to throw,  
Confounded, that her Makers eyes  
Should look so neer upon her foul deformities.

But he her fears to cease,  
Sent down the meek-eyd Peace,  
She crown'd with Olive green, came softly sliding  
Down through the turning sphear  
His ready Harbinger,  
With Turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,  
And waving wide her mirtle wand,  
She strikes a universall Peace through Sea and Land.

*JOHN MILTON*

No War, or Battails sound  
Was heard the World around,  
    The idle spear and shield were high up hung;  
The hookéd Chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood,  
    The Trumpet spake not to the arméd throng,  
And Kings sate still with awfull eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peacefull was the night  
Wherin the Prince of light  
    His raign of peace upon the earth began:  
The Windes with wonder whist,  
Smoothly the waters kist,  
    Whispering new joyes to the milde Ocean,  
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,  
While Birds of Calm sit brooding on the charméd wave.

The Stars with deep amaze  
Stand fixt in stedfast gaze,  
    Bending one way their pretious influence,  
And will not take their flight,  
For all the morning light,  
    Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;  
But in their glimmering Orbs did glow,  
Untill their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And though the shady gloom  
Had given day her room,  
    The Sun himself with-held his wonted speed,  
And hid his head for shame,  
As his inferiour flame,  
    The new enlightn'd world no more should need;  
He saw a greater Sun appear  
Then his bright Throne, or burning Axletree could bear.

The Shepherds on the Lawn,  
Or ere the point of dawn,

*JOHN MILTON*

Sate simply chatting in a rustick row;  
Full little thought they than,  
That the mighty Pan  
Was kindly com to live with them below;  
Perhaps their loves, or els their sheep,  
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busie keep.

When such musick sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet,  
As never was by mortall finger strook,  
Divinely-warbled voice  
Answering the stringéd noise,  
As all their souls in blisfull rapture took:  
The Air such pleasure loth to lose,  
With thousand echo's still prolongs each heav'nly close.

Nature that heard such sound  
Beneath the hollow round  
Of Cynthia's seat, the Airy region thrilling,  
Now was almost won  
To think her part was don,  
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;  
She knew such harmony alone  
Could hold all Heav'n and Earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight  
A Globe of circular light,  
That with long beams the shame-fac't night array'd,  
The helméd Cherubim  
And sworded Seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displaid,  
Harping in loud and solemn quire,  
With unexpressive notes to Heav'ns new-born Heir.

Such musick (as 'tis said)  
Before was never made,  
But when of old the sons of morning sung,  
While the Creator Great

*JOHN MILTON*

His constellations set,  
    And the well-ballanc't world on hinges hung,  
And cast the dark foundations deep,  
And bid the weltring waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out ye Crystall spears,  
Once bless our human ears,  
    (If ye have power to touch our senses so)  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time;  
    And let the Base of Heav'ns deep Organ blow  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to th' Angelike symphony.

For if such holy Song  
Enwrap our fancy long,  
    Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold,  
And speckl'd vanity  
Will sicken soon and die,  
    And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould,  
And Hell it self will pass away,  
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea Truth, and Justice then  
Will down return to men,  
    Th' enameld Arras of the Rain-bow wearing,  
And Mercy set between,  
Thron'd in Celestiall sheen,  
    With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,  
And Heav'n as at som festivall,  
Will open wide the Gates of her high Palace Hall.

But wisest Fate sayes no,  
This must not yet be so,  
    The Babe lies yet in smiling Infancy,  
That on the bitter cross  
Must redeem our loss;  
    So both himself and us to glorifie:

*JOHN MILTON*

Yet first to those ychain'd in sleep,  
The wakefull trump of doom must thunder through the deep,

With such a horrid clang  
As on mount Sinai rang

While the red fire, and smouldring clouds out brake:  
The agéd Earth agast  
With terrour of that blast,  
Shall from the surface to the center shake;  
When at the worlds last session,  
The dreadfull Judge in middle Air shall spread his throne.

And then at last our bliss  
Full and perfect is,

But now begins; for from this happy day  
Th' old Dragon under ground  
In straiter limits bound,  
Not half so far casts his usurpéd sway,  
And wrath to see his Kingdom fail,  
Swindges the scaly Horrour of his fouled tail.

The Oracles are dumm,  
No voice or hideous humm

Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.  
Apollo from his shrine  
Can no more divine,  
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
No nightly trance, or breathéd spell,  
Inspire's the pale-ey'd Priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o're,  
And the resounding shore,

A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;  
From haunted spring, and dale  
Edg'd with poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with sighing sent,  
With flowre-inwov'n tresses torn  
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

*JOHN MILTON*

In consecrated Earth,  
And on the holy Hearth,  
    The Lars, and Lemures moan with midnight plaint,  
In Urns, and Altars round,  
A drear, and dying sound  
    Affrights the Flamins at their service quaint;  
And the chill Marble seems to sweat,  
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

Peor, and Baalim,  
Forsake their Temples dim,  
    With that wise-batter'd god of Palestine,  
And moonéd Ashtaroth,  
Heav'ns Queen and Mother both,  
    Now sits not girt with Tapers holy shine,  
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn,  
In vain the Tyrian Maids their wounded Thamuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch fled,  
Hath left in shadows dred,  
    His burning Idol all of blackest hue,  
In vain with Cymbals ring,  
They call the grisly king,  
    In dismall dance about the furnace blue;  
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,  
Isis and Orus, and the Dog Anubis hast.

Nor is Osiris seen  
In Memphian Grove, or Green,  
    Trampling the unshowr'd Grasse with lowings loud:  
Nor can he be at rest  
Within his sacred chest,  
    Naught but profoundest Hell can be his shroud,  
In vain with Timbrel'd Anthems dark  
The sable-stoléd Sorcerers bear his worshipt Ark.

He feels from Juda's Land  
The dredde'd Infants hand,

*JOHN MILTON*

The rayes of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;  
Nor all the gods beside,  
Longer dare abide,  
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:  
Our Babe to shew his Godhead true,  
Can in his swadling bands controul the damnéd crew.

So when the Sun in bed,  
Curtain'd with cloudy red,  
Pillows his chin upon an Orient wave,  
The flocking shadows pale,  
Troop to th' infernall jail,  
Each fetter'd Ghost slips to his severall grave,  
And the yellow-skirted Feyes,  
Fly after the Night-steeds, leaving their Moon-lov'd maze.

But see the Virgin blest,  
Hath laid her Babe to rest.  
Time is our tedious Song should here have ending,  
Heav'ns youngest teeméd Star,  
Hath fixt her polisht Car,  
Her sleeping Lord with Handmaid Lamp attending:  
And all about the Courtly Stable,  
Bright-harnest Angels sit in order serviceable.

**308.**                    *On Time*

**F**LY envious Time, till thou run out thy race,  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,  
Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace;  
And glut thy self with what thy womb devours,  
Which is no more then what is false and vain,  
And meerly mortal dross;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain.  
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,  
And last of all, thy greedy self consum'd,

JOHN MILTON

Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss;  
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood,  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
And perfectly divine,  
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever shine  
About the supreme Throne  
Of him, t'whose happy-making sight alone,  
When once our heav'nly-guided soul shall clime,  
Then all this Earthy grosnes quit,  
Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee O Time.

309. *At a Solemn Musick*

**B**LEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'ns joy,  
Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice, and Vers,  
Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ  
Dead things with inbreath'd sense able to pierce,  
And to our high-rai'd phantasie present,  
That undisturbéd Song of pure content,  
Ay sung before the saphire-colour'd throne  
To him that sits theron  
With Saintly shout, and solemn Jubily,  
Where the bright Seraphim in burning row  
Their loud up-lifted Angel trumpets blow,  
And the Cherubick host in thousand quires  
Touch their immortal Harps of golden wires,  
With those just Spirits that wear victorious Palms,  
Hymns devout and holy Psalms  
Singing everlastingly;  
That we on Earth with undiscording voice  
May rightly answer that melodious noise;  
As once we did, till disproportion'd sin  
Jarr'd against natures chime, and with harsh din  
Broke the fair musick that all creatures made

JOHN MILTON

To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd  
In perfect Diapason, whilst they stood  
In first obedience, and their state of good.  
O may we soon again renew that Song,  
And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere long  
To his celestial consort us unite,  
To live with him, and sing in endles morn of light.

310. *L'Allegro*

HENCE loathéd Melancholy  
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,  
In Stygian Cave forlorn  
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy.  
Find out som uncouth cell,  
Where brooding darknes spreads his jealous wings,  
And the night-Raven sings;  
There, under Ebon shades, and low-brow'd Rocks,  
As ragged as thy Locks,  
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.  
But com thou Goddes fair and free,  
In Heav'n ycleap'd Euphrosyne,  
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,  
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth  
With two sister Graces more  
To Ivy-crownéd Bacchus bore;  
Or whether (as som Sager sing)  
The frolick Wind that breathes the Spring,  
Zephir with Aurora playing,  
As he met her once a Maying,  
There on Beds of Violets blew,  
And fresh-blown Roses washt in dew,  
Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,  
So bucksom, blith, and debonair.  
Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee  
Jest and youthful Jollity,

*JOHN MILTON*

Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,  
Nods, and Becks, and Wreathéd Smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek;  
Sport that wrinced Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides.  
Com, and trip it as ye go  
On the light fantastick toe,  
And in thy right hand lead with thee,  
The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;  
And if I give thee honour due,  
Mirth, admit me of thy crue  
To live with her, and live with thee,  
In unprovéd pleasures free;  
To hear the Lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-towre in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
Then to com in spight of sorrow,  
And at my window bid good morrow,  
Through the Sweet-Briar, or the Vine,  
Or the twisted Eglantine.  
While the Cock with lively din,  
Scatters the rear of darknes thin,  
And to the stack, or the Barn dore,  
Stoutly struts his Dames before,  
Oft list'ning how the Hounds and horn  
Chearly rouse the slumbring morn,  
From the side of som Hoar Hill,  
Through the high wood echoing shrill.  
Som time walking not unseen  
By Hedge-row Elms, on Hillocks green,  
Right against the Eastern gate,  
Wher the great Sun begins his state,  
Rob'd in flames, and Amber light,  
The clouds in thousand Liveries dight.

*JOHN MILTON*

While the Plowman neer at hand,  
Whistles ore the Furrow'd Land,  
And the Milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the Mower whets his sithe,  
And every Shepherd tells his tale  
Under the Hawthorn in the dale.  
Streit mine eye hath caught new pleasures  
Whilst the Lantskip round it measures,  
Russet Lawns, and Fallows Gray,  
Where the nibling flocks do stray,  
Mountains on whose barren brest  
The labouring clouds do often rest:  
Meadows trim with Daisies pide,  
Shallow Brooks, and Rivers wide.  
Towers, and Battlements it sees  
Boosom'd high in tufted Trees,  
Wher perhaps som beauty lies,  
The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes.  
Hard by, a Cottage chimney smokes,  
From betwixt two agéd Okes,  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,  
Are at their savory dinner set  
Of Hearbs, and other Country Messes,  
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;  
And then in haste her Bowre she leaves,  
With Thestylis to bind the Sheaves;  
Or if the earlier season lead  
To the tann'd Haycock in the Mead,  
Som times with secure delight  
The up-land Hamlets will invite,  
When the merry Bells ring round,  
And the jocond rebecks sound  
To many a youth, and many a maid,  
Dancing in the Chequer'd shade;  
And young and old com forth to play  
On a Sunshine Holyday,

*JOHN MILTON*

Till the live-long day-light fail,  
Then to the Spicy Nut-brown Ale,  
With stories told of many a feat,  
How Faery Mab the junkets eat,  
She was pincht, and pull'd she sed,  
And he by Friars Lanthorn led  
Tells how the drudging Goblin swet,  
To ern his Cream-bowle duly set,  
When in one night, ere glimps of morn,  
His shadowy Flale hath thresh'd the Corn  
That ten day-labourers could not end,  
Then lies him down the Lubbar Fend,  
And stretch'd out all the Chimney's length,  
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;  
And Crop-full out of dores he flings,  
Ere the first Cock his Mattin rings.  
Thus don the Tales, to bed they creep,  
By whispering Windes soon lull'd asleep.

Towred Cities please us then,  
And the busie humm of men,  
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,  
In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,  
With store of Ladies, whose bright eies  
Rain influence, and judge the prise  
Of Wit, or Arms, while both contend  
To win her Grace, whom all commend.  
There let Hymen oft appear  
In Saffron robe, with Taper clear,  
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
With mask, and antique Pageantry,  
Such sights as youthfull Poets dream  
On Summer eeves by haunted stream.  
Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
If Jonsons learned Sock be on,  
Or sweetest Shakespear fancies childe,  
Warble his native Wood-notes wilde,

JOHN MILTON

And ever against eating Cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian Aires,  
Married to immortal verse  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
In notes, with many a winding bout  
Of linckéd sweetnes long drawn out,  
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running;  
Untwisting all the chains that ty  
The hidden soul of harmony.  
That Orpheus self may heave his head  
From golden slumber on a bed  
Of heapt Elysian flowres, and hear  
Such streins as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
His half regain'd Eurydice.  
These delights, if thou canst give,  
Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

311.

*Il Penseroso*

**H**ENCE, vain deluding joyes,  
The brood of folly without father bred,  
How little you bested,  
Or fill the fixéd mind with all your toyes;  
Dwell in som idle brain,  
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
As thick and numberless  
As the gay motes that people the Sun Beams,  
Or likest hovering dreams  
The fickle Pensioners of Morpheus train.  
But hail thou Goddes, sage and holy,  
Hail divinest Melancholy,  
Whose Saintly visage is too bright  
To hit the Sense of human sight;  
And therefore to our weaker view,

*JOHN MILTON*

Ore laid with black staid Wisdoms hue.  
Black, but such as in esteem,  
Prince Memnons sister might beseem,  
Or that Starr'd Ethiope Queen that strove  
To set her beauties praise above  
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.  
Yet thou art higher far descended,  
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta long of yore,  
To solitary Saturn bore;  
His daughter she (in Saturns raing,  
Such mixture was not held a stain)  
Oft in glimmering Bowres, and glades  
He met her, and in secret shades  
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,  
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.  
Com pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, stedfast, and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestick train,  
And sable stole of Cipres Lawn,  
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
Com, but keep thy wonted state,  
With eev'n step, and musing gate,  
And looks commercing with the skies,  
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:  
There held in holy passion still,  
Forget thy self to Marble, till  
With a sad Leaden downward cast,  
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.  
And joyn with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,  
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
And hears the Muses in a ring,  
Ay round about Joves Altar sing.  
And adde to these retiréd Leasure,  
That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure;  
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,

*JOHN MILTON*

Him that yon soars on golden wing,  
Guiding the fiery-wheeléd throne,  
The Cherub Contemplation,  
And the mute Silence hist along,  
'Less Philomel will daign a Song,  
In her sweetest, saddest plight,  
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,  
While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,  
Gently o're th' accustom'd Oke;  
Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
Most musicall, most melancholy!  
Thee Chauntress oft the Woods among,  
I woo to hear thy eeven-Song;  
And missing thee, I walk unseen  
On the dry smooth-shaven Green.  
To behold the wandring Moon,  
Riding neer her highest noon,  
Like one that had bin led astray  
Through the Heav'ns wide pathles way;  
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,  
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.  
Oft on a Plat of rising ground,  
I hear the far-off Curfeu sound,  
Over som wide-water'd shoar,  
Swinging slow with sullen roar;  
Or if the Ayr will not permit,  
Som still removéd place will fit,  
Where glowing Embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the Cricket on the hearth,  
Or the Belmans drousie charm,  
To bless the dores from nightly harm:  
Or let my Lamp at midnight hour,  
Be seen in som high lonely Towr,  
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,

*JOHN MILTON*

With thrice great Hermes, or unsphear  
The spirit of Plato to unfold  
What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold  
The immortal mind that hath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:  
And of those Dæmons that are found  
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,  
Whose power hath a true consent  
With Planet, or with Element.  
Som time let Gorgeous Tragedy  
In Scepter'd Pall com sweeping by,  
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops line,  
Or the tale of Troy divine.  
Or what (though rare) of later age,  
Ennobled hath the Buskind stage.

But, O sad Virgin, that thy power  
Might raise Musæus from his bower  
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing  
Such notes as warbled to the string,  
Drew Iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.  
Or call up him that left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold,  
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,  
And who had Canace to wife,  
That own'd the vertuous Ring and Glass,  
And of the wondrous Hors of Brass,  
On which the Tartar King did ride;  
And if ought els, great Bards beside,  
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,  
Of Turneys and of Trophies hung;  
Of Forests, and inchantments drear,  
Where more is meant then meets the ear.  
Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,  
Till civil-suited Morn appeer,  
Not trickt and frounc't as she was wont,

*JOHN MILTON*

With the Attick Boy to hunt,  
But Cherchef't in a comly Cloud,  
While rocking Winds are Piping loud,  
Or usher'd with a shower still,  
When the gust hath blown his fill,  
Ending on the russling Leaves,  
With minute drops from off the Eaves.  
And when the Sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me Goddes bring  
To archéd walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves,  
Of Pine, or monumental Oake,  
Where the rude Ax with heavéd stroke,  
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.  
There in close covert by som Brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from Day's garish eie,  
While the Bee with Honied thie,  
That at her flowry work doth sing,  
And the Waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;  
And let som strange mysterious dream,  
Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,  
Of lively portrature display'd,  
Softly on my eye-lids laid.  
And as I wake, sweet musick breath  
Above, about, or underneath,  
Sent by som spirit to mortals good,  
Or th' unseen Genius of the Wood.

But let my due feet never fail,  
To walk the studious Cloysters pale,  
And love the high embowéd Roof,  
With antick Pillars massy proof,  
And storied Windows richly dight,

JOHN MILTON

Casting a dimm religious light.  
There let the pealing Organ blow,  
To the full voic'd Quire below,  
In Service high, and Anthems cleer,  
As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into extasies,  
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.  
And may at last my weary age  
Find out the peacefull hermitage,  
The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every Star that Heav'n doth shew,  
And every Herb that sips the dew;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like Prophetic strain.  
These pleasures Melancholy give,  
And I with thee will choose to live.

312.

*From 'Arcades'*

O'RE the smooth enameld green  
Where no print of step hath been,  
Follow me as I sing,  
And touch the warbled string.  
Under the shady roof  
Of branching Elm Star-proof,  
Follow me,  
I will bring you where she sits  
Clad in splendor as befits  
Her deity.  
Such a rural Queen  
All Arcadia hath not seen.

JOHN MILTON

*From 'Comus'*

313.

*i.*

THE Star that bids the Shepherd fold,  
Now the top of Heav'n doth hold,  
And the gilded Car of Day,  
His glowing Axle doth allay  
In the steep Atlantick stream,  
And the slope Sun his upward beam  
Shoots against the dusky Pole,  
Pacing toward the other gole  
Of his Chamber in the East.  
Mean while welcom Joy, and Feast,  
Midnight shout, and revelry,  
Tipsie dance, and Jollity.  
Braid your Locks with rosie Twine  
Dropping odours, dropping Wine.  
Rigor now is gon to bed,  
And Advice with scrupulous head,  
Strict Age, and sowre Severity,  
With their grave Saws in slumber ly.  
We that are of purer fire  
Imitate the Starry Quire,  
Who in their nightly watchfull Sphears,  
Lead in swift round the Months and Years.  
The Sounds, and Seas with all their finny drove  
Now to the Moon in wavering Morrice move,  
And on the Tawny Sands and Shelves,  
Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves;  
By dimpled Brook, and Fountain brim,  
The Wood-Nymphs deckt with Daisies trim,  
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:  
What hath night to do with sleep?  
Night hath better sweets to prove,  
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love . . . .

JOHN MILTON

Com, knit hands, and beat the ground,  
In a light fantastick round.

314.

*ii*

**Echo**

**S**WEET Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen  
    Within thy airy shell  
    By slow Meander's margent green,  
And in the violet imbroider'd vale  
    Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well.  
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Pair  
    That likest thy Narcissus are?  
    O if thou have  
    Hid them in som flowry Cave,  
    Tell me but where  
Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear!  
So maist thou be translated to the skies,  
And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies!

315.

*iii*

**Sabrina**

*The Spirit sings:*

**S**ABRINA fair  
    Listen where thou art sitting  
Under the glassie, cool, translucent wave,  
    In twisted braids of Lillies knitting  
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair,  
    Listen for dear honour's sake,  
    Goddess of the silver lake,  
    Listen and save!  
Listen and appear to us,

*JOHN MILTON*

In name of great Oceanus,  
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,  
And Tethys grave majestick pace,  
By hoary Nereus wrinckled look,  
And the Carpathian wisards hook,  
By scaly Tritons winding shell,  
And old sooth-saying Glaucus spell,  
By Leucothea's lovely hands,  
And her son that rules the strands,  
By Thetis tinsel-slipper'd feet,  
And the Songs of Sirens sweet,  
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,  
And fair Ligea's golden comb,  
Wherwith she sits on diamond rocks  
Sleeking her soft alluring locks,  
By all the Nymphs that nightly dance  
Upon thy streams with wily glance,  
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosie head  
From thy coral-pav'n bed,  
And bridle in thy headlong wave,  
Till thou our summons answered have.  
Listen and save!

*Sabrina replies:*

By the rushy-fringéd bank,  
Where grows the Willow and the Osier dank,  
My sliding Chariot stays,  
Thick set with Agat, and the azurn sheen  
Of Turkis blew, and Emrauld green  
That in the channell strayes,  
Whilst from off the waters fleet  
Thus I set my printless feet  
O're the Cowslips Velvet head,  
That bends not as I tread,  
Gentle swain at thy request  
I am here.

316.

*iv*

*The Spirit epiloguizes:*

**T**O the Ocean now I fly,  
And those happy climes that ly  
Where day never shuts his eye,  
Up in the broad fields of the sky:  
There I suck the liquid ayr  
All amidst the Gardens fair  
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three  
That sing about the golden tree:  
Along the crispéd shades and bowres  
Revels the spruce and jocond Spring,  
The Graces, and the rosie-boosom'd Howres,  
Thither all their bounties bring,  
That there eternal Summer dwels,  
And West winds, with musky wing  
About the cedar'n alleys fling  
Nard, and Cassia's balmy smels.  
Iris there with humid bow,  
Waters the odorous banks that blow  
Flowers of more mingled hew  
Than her purfl'd scarf can shew,  
And drenches with Elysian dew  
(List mortals, if your ears be true)  
Beds of Hyacinth, and roses  
Where young Adonis oft reposes,  
Waxing well of his deep wound  
In slumber soft, and on the ground  
Sadly sits th' Assyrian Queen;  
But far above in spangled sheen  
Celestial Cupid her fam'd son advanc't,  
Holds his dear Psyche sweet intranc't  
After her wandring labours long,  
Till free consent the gods among  
Make her his eternal Bride,

JOHN MILTON

And from her fair unspotted side  
Two blissful twins are to be born,  
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly don,  
I can fly, or I can run  
Quickly to the green earths end,  
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,  
And from thence can soar as soon  
To the corners of the Moon.

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love vertue, she alone is free.  
She can teach ye how to clime  
Higher then the Spheary chime;  
Or if Vertue feeble were,  
Heav'n it self would stoop to her.

317.

*Lycidas*

*A Lament for a Friend Drowned in His Passage  
from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637*

YET once more, O ye Laurels, and once more  
Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never-sear,  
I com to pluck your Berries harsh and crude,  
And with forc'd fingers rude,  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,  
Compels me to disturb your season due:  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew  
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not flote upon his watry bear  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of som melodious tear.

Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well,

*JOHN MILTON*

That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,  
So may som gentle Muse  
With lucky words favour my destin'd Urn,  
And as he passes turn,  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shrowd.  
For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,  
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.

Together both, ere the high Lawns appear'd  
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,  
We drove a field, and both together heard  
What time the Gray-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the Star that rose, at Ev'ning, bright  
Toward Heav'ns descent had slop'd his westering wheel.  
Mean while the Rural ditties were not mute,  
Temper'd to th' Oaten Flute;  
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel,  
From the glad sound would not be absent long,  
And old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gon,  
Now thou art gon, and never must return!  
Thee Shepherd, thee the Woods, and desert Caves,  
With wilde Thyme and the gadding Vine o'regrown,  
And all their echoes mourn.  
The Willows, and the Hazle Copses green,  
Shall now no more be seen,  
Fanning their joyous Leaves to thy soft layes.  
As killing as the Canker to the Rose,  
Or Taint-worm to the weanling Herds that graze,  
Or Frost to Flowers, that their gay wardrop wear,  
When first the White thorn blows;  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherds ear.

Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep  
Clos'd o're the head of your lov'd Lycidas?

JOHN MILTON

For neither were ye playing on the steep,  
Where your old Bards, the famous Druids ly,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream:  
Ay me, I fondly dream!  
Had ye bin there—for what could that have don?  
What could the Muse her self that Orpheus bore,  
The Muse her self, for her enchanting son  
Whom Universal nature did lament,  
When by the rout that made the hideous roar,  
His goary visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore.

Alas! what boots it with uncessant care  
To tend the homely slighted Shepherds trade,  
And strictly meditate the thankles Muse,  
Were it not better don as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of Noble mind)  
To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;  
But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorréd shears,  
And slits the thin spun life. But not the praise,  
Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears;  
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistering foil  
Set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies,  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfet witnes of all judging Jove;  
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed.

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd floud,  
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocall reeds,  
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

*JOHN MILTON*

But now my Oate proceeds,  
And listens to the Herald of the Sea  
That came in Neptune's plea,  
He ask'd the Waves, and ask'd the Fellon winds,  
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?  
And question'd every gust of rugged wings  
That blows from off each beak'd Promontory,  
They knew not of his story,  
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd,  
The Ayr was calm, and on the level brine,  
Sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.  
It was that fatal and perfidious Bark  
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,  
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend Sire, went footing slow,  
His Mantle hairy, and his Bonnet sedge,  
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge  
Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.  
Ah; Who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?  
Last came, and last did go,  
The Pilot of the Galilean lake,  
Two massy Keyes he bore of metals twain,  
(The Golden opes, the Iron shuts amain)  
He shook his Miter'd locks, and stern bespake,  
How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain,  
Anow of such as for their bellies sake,  
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?  
Of other care they little reck'ning make,  
Then how to scramble at the shearers feast,  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.  
Blind mouthes! that scarce themselves know how to hold  
A Sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least  
That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs!  
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;  
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs

*JOHN MILTON*

Grate on their scannel Pipes of wretched straw,  
The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:  
Besides what the grim Woolf with privy paw  
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed,  
But that two-handed engine at the door,  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past,  
That shrunk thy streams; Return Sicilian Muse,  
And call the Vales, and bid them hither cast  
Their Bels, and Flourets of a thousand hues.  
Ye valleys low where the milde whispers use,  
Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
On whose fresh lap the swart Star sparely looks,  
Throw hither all your quaint enameld eyes,  
That on the green terf suck the honied showres,  
And purple all the ground with vernal flowres.  
Bring the rathe Primrose that forsaken dies.  
The tufted Crow-toe, and pale Gessamine,  
The white Pink, and the Pansie freakt with jeat,  
The glowing Violet.  
The Musk-rose, and the well attir'd Woodbine.  
With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive hed,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:  
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears,  
To strew the Laureat Herse where Lycid lies.  
For so to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.  
Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding Seas  
Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurld,  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
Or whether thou to our moist vows deny'd,

*JOHN MILTON*

Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,  
Where the great vision of the guarded Mount  
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;  
Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth.  
And, O ye Dolphins, waft the haples youth.

    Weep no more, woful Shepherds weep no more,  
For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the watry floor,  
So sinks the day-star in the Ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled Ore,  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:  
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves  
Where other groves, and other streams along,  
With Nectar pure his oozy Lock's he laves,  
And hears the unexpressive nuptial Song,  
In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the Saints above,  
In solemn troops, and sweet Societies  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
Now Lycidas the Shepherds weep no more;  
Hence forth thou art the Genius of the shore,  
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

    Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th' Okes and rills,  
While the still morn went out with Sandals gray,  
He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay:  
And now the Sun had stretch'd out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the Western bay;  
At last he rose, and twitch'd his Mantle blew:  
To morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

317.\* *To the Lady Margaret Ley*

**D**AUGHTER to that good Earl, once President  
Of Englands Council and her Treasury,  
Who liv'd in both, unstain'd with gold or fee,  
And left them both, more in himself content,  
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament  
Broke him, as that dishonest victory  
At Chæronéa, fatal to liberty,  
Kil'd with report that Old man eloquent.  
Though later born, then to have known the dayes  
Wherein your father flourisht, yet by you  
Madam, me thinks I see him living yet;  
So well your words his noble virtues praise,  
That all both judge you to relate them true,  
And to possess them, Honour'd Margaret.

318. *On His Blindness*

**W**HEN I consider how my light is spent  
E're half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide,  
Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, least he returning chide,  
Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,  
I fondly ask; But patience to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best  
Bear his milde yoak, they serve him best, his State  
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o're Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and waite.

319.            *To Mr. Lawrence*

**L**AURENCE of vertuous Father vertuous Son,  
Now that the Fields are dank, and ways are mire,  
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire  
Help wast a sullen day; what may be won  
From the hard Season gaining: time will run  
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire  
The frozen earth; and cloth in fresh attire  
The Lillie and Rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.  
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,  
Of Attick tast, with Wine, whence we may rise  
To hear the Lute well toucht, or artfull voice  
Warble immortal Notes and Tuskan Ayre?  
He who of those delights can judge, and spare  
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

320.            *To Cyriack Skinner*

**C**YRIACK, whose Grandsire on the Royal Bench  
Of Brittish Themis, with no mean applause  
Pronounc't and in his volumes taught our Lawes,  
Which others at their Barr so often wrench:  
To day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench  
In mirth, that after no repenting draws;  
Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,  
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.  
To measure life, learn thou betimes, and know  
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;  
For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,  
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,  
That with superfluous burden loads the day,  
And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

321. *On His Deceased Wife*

**M**ETHOUGHT I saw my late espouséd Saint  
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,  
Whom Joves great Son to her glad Husband gave,  
Rescu'd from death by force though pale and faint.  
Mine as whom washt from spot of child-bed taint,  
Purification in the old Law did save,  
And such, as yet once more I trust to have  
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,  
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:  
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight,  
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd  
So clear, as in no face with more delight.  
But O as to embrace me she enclin'd  
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

322. *Light*

**H**AIL holy light, ofspring of Heav'n first-born,  
Or of th' Eternal Coeternal beam  
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproachéd light  
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.  
Or hear'st thou rather pure Ethereal stream,  
Whose Fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,  
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a Mantle didst invest  
The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless infinite.  
Thee I re-visit now with bolder wing,  
Escap't the Stygian Pool, though long detain'd  
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight  
Through utter and through middle darkness borne  
With other notes then to th' Orphean Lyre

JOHN MILTON

I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night,  
Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down  
The dark descent, and up to reascend,  
Though hard and rare: thee I revisit safe,  
And feel thy sovran vital Lamp; but thou  
Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain  
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;  
So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veild. Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt  
Cleer Spring, or shadie Grove, or Sunnie Hill,  
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief  
Thee *Sion* and the flowrie Brooks beneath  
That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow,  
Nightly I visit: nor somtimes forget  
Those other two equal'd with me in Fate,  
So were I equal'd with them in renown.  
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,  
And Tiresias and Phineus Prophets old.  
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move  
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird  
Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid  
Tunes her nocturnal Note. Thus with the Year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summers Rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me, from the chearful waies of men  
Cut off, and for the Book of knowledg fair  
Presented with a Universal blanc  
Of Natures works to mee expung'd and ras'd,  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
So much the rather thou Celestial light  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence

JOHN MILTON

Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

*From 'Samson Agonistes'*

323.

*i*

**O**H how comely it is and how reviving  
To the Spirits of just men long oppress!  
When God into the hands of thir deliverer  
Puts invincible might  
To quell the mighty of the Earth, th' oppressour,  
The brute and boist'rous force of violent men  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue  
The righteous and all such as honour Truth;  
He all thir Ammunition  
And feats of War defeats  
With plain Heroic magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour arm'd,  
Thir Armories and Magazins contemns,  
Renders them useless, while  
With wingéd expedition  
Swift as the lightning glance he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who surpris'd  
Lose thir defence distracted and amaz'd.

324.

*ii*

**A**LL is best, though we oft doubt,  
What th' unsearchable dispose  
Of highest wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close.  
Oft he seems to hide his face,  
But unexpectedly returns  
And to his faithful Champion hath in place

JOHN MILTON

Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns  
And all that band them to resist  
His uncontrollable intent.  
His servants he with new acquist  
Of true experience from this great event  
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,  
And calm of mind all passion spent.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

1609–1642

325. *A Doubt of Martyrdom*

FOR some honest lover's ghost,  
Some kind unbodied post  
Sent from the shades below!  
I strangely long to know  
Whether the noble chaplets wear  
Those that their mistress' scorn did bear  
Or those that were used kindly.

For whatsoe'er they tell us here  
To make those sufferings dear,  
'Twill there, I fear, be found  
That to the being crown'd  
T' have loved alone will not suffice,  
Unless we also have been wise  
And have our loves enjoy'd.

What posture can we think him in  
That, here unloved, again  
Departs, and 's thither gone  
Where each sits by his own?  
Or how can that Elysium be  
Where I my mistress still must see  
Circl'd in other's arms?

*SIR JOHN SUCKLING*

For there the judges all are just,  
And Sophonisba must  
    Be his whom she held dear,  
    Not his who loved her here.  
The sweet Philoclea, since she died,  
Lies by her Pirocles his side,  
Not by Amphialus.

Some bays, perchance, or myrtle bough  
    For difference crowns the brow  
    Of those kind souls that were  
    The noble martyrs here:  
And if that be the only odds  
(As who can tell?), ye kinder gods,  
    Give me the woman here!

326.

*The Constant Lover*

**O**UT upon it, I have loved  
    Three whole days together!  
And am like to love three more,  
    If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings  
    Ere he shall discover  
In the whole wide world again  
    Such a constant lover.

But the spite on 't is, no praise  
    Is due at all to me:  
Love with me had made no stays,  
    Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,  
    And that very face,  
There had been at least ere this  
    A dozen dozen in her place.

327. *Why So Pale and Wan?*

**W**HY so pale and wan, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
Will, when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?  
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?  
Prithee, why so mute?  
Will, when speaking well can't win her,  
Saying nothing do 't?  
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;  
This cannot take her.  
If of herself she will not love,  
Nothing can make her:  
The devil take her!

328. *When, Dearest, I But Think of Thee*

**W**HEN, dearest, I but think of thee,  
Methinks all things that lovely be  
Are present, and my soul delighted:  
For beauties that from worth arise  
Are like the grace of deities,  
Still present with us, tho' unsighted.

Thus while I sit and sigh the day  
With all his borrow'd lights away,  
Till night's black wings do overtake me,  
Thinking on thee, thy beauties then,  
As sudden lights do sleepy men,  
So they by their bright rays awake me.

*SIR JOHN SUCKLING*

Thus absence dies, and dying proves  
No absence can subsist with loves  
    That do partake of fair perfection:  
Since in the darkest night they may  
By love's quick motion find a way  
    To see each other by reflection.

The waving sea can with each flood  
Bathe some high promont that hath stood  
    Far from the main up in the river:  
O think not then but love can do  
As much! for that's an ocean too,  
    Which flows not every day, but ever!

**SIR RICHARD FANSHAWE**

1608–1666

**329.                      *A Rose***

**B**LOWN in the morning, thou shalt fade ere noon.  
What boots a life which in such haste forsakes thee?  
Thou'rt wondrous frolic, being to die so soon,  
And passing proud a little colour makes thee.  
If thee thy brittle beauty so deceives,  
Know then the thing that swells thee is thy bane;  
For the same beauty doth, in bloody leaves,  
The sentence of thy early death contain.  
Some clown's coarse lungs will poison thy sweet flower,  
If by the careless plough thou shalt be torn;  
And many Herods lie in wait each hour  
To murder thee as soon as thou art born—  
    Nay, force thy bud to blow—their tyrant breath  
    Anticipating life, to hasten death!

# WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

1611–1643

## 330. *To Chloe*

### *Who for His Sake Wished Herself Younger*

**T**H**ERE** are two births; the one when light  
First strikes the new awaken'd sense;  
The other when two souls unite,  
And we must count our life from thence:  
When you loved me and I loved you  
Then both of us were born anew.

Love then to us new souls did give  
And in those souls did plant new powers;  
Since when another life we live,  
The breath we breathe is his, not ours:  
Love makes those young whom age doth chill,  
And whom he finds young keeps young still.

## 331. *Falsehood*

**S**T**ILL** do the stars impart their light  
To those that travel in the night;  
Still time runs on, nor doth the hand  
Or shadow on the dial stand;  
The streams still glide and constant are:  
Only thy mind  
Untrue I find,  
Which carelessly  
Neglects to be  
Like stream or shadow, hand or star.

Fool that I am! I do recall  
My words, and swear thou'rt like them all,  
Thou seem'st like stars to nourish fire,

WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT

But O how cold is thy desire!  
And like the hand upon the brass  
    Thou point'st at me  
    In mockery;  
    If I come nigh  
    Shade-like thou'lt fly,  
And as the stream with murmur pass.

332.           *On the Queen's Return  
                  from the Low Countries*

**H**ALLOW the threshold, crown the posts anew!  
The day shall have its due.

Twist all our victories into one bright wreath,  
    On which let honour breathe;  
Then throw it round the temples of our Queen!  
'Tis she that must preserve those glories green.

When greater tempests than on sea before  
    Received her on the shore;  
When she was shot at 'for the King's own good'  
    By legions hired to blood;  
How bravely did she do, how bravely bear!  
And show'd, though they durst rage, she durst not fear.

Courage was cast about her like a dress  
    Of solemn comeliness:  
A gather'd mind and an untroubled face  
    Did give her dangers grace:  
Thus, arm'd with innocence, secure they move  
Whose highest 'treason' is but highest love.