

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Arphra Behn**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

2004

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

## A Congratulatory Poem

While my sad Muse the darkest Covert Sought,  
To give a loose to Melancholy Thought;  
Opprest, and sighing with the Heavy Weight  
Of an Unhappy dear Lov'd Monarch's Fate;  
A lone retreat, on Thames's Brink she found,  
With Murmuring Osiers fring'd, and bending Willows Crown'd,  
Thro' the thick Shade cou'd dart no Chearful Ray,  
Nature dwelt here as in disdain of Day:  
Content, and Pleas'd with Nobler Solitude,  
No Wood-Gods, Fawns, nor Loves did here Intrude,

Nor Nests for wanton Birds, the Glade allows;  
Scarce the soft Winds were heard amongst the Boughs.  
While thus She lay resolv'd to tune no more  
Her fruitless Songs on Brittain's Faithless Shore,  
All on a suddain thro' the Woods there Rung,  
Loud Sounds of Joy that Jo Peans Sung.  
Maria! Blest Maria! was the Theam,  
Great Brittain's happy Genius, and her Queen.

The River Nymphs their Crystal Courts forsake,  
Curl their Blew Locks, and Shelly Trumpets take:

And the surprising News along the Shore,  
In raptur'd Songs the wondring Virgins bore;  
Whilst Mourning Eccho now forgot her Sighs,  
And sung the new taught Anthem to the Skyes.  
All things in Nature, a New Face put on,  
Thames with Harmonious Purlings glides along,  
And tells her Ravisht Banks, she lately bore  
A Prize more great than all her hidden Store,  
Or all the Sun it self e're saw before.

The brooding Spring, her Fragrant Bloom sent out,  
Scattering her early Perfumes round about;  
No longer waits the Lasie teeming Hours,  
But e're her time produc'd her Oderous Flowers;  
Maria's Eyes Anticipate the May,  
And Life inspir'd beyond the God of Day.  
The Muses all upon this Theam Divine,  
Tun'd their best Lays, the Muses all, but mine,  
Sullen with Stubborn Loyalty she lay,  
And saw the World its eager Homage pay,  
While Heav'n and Earth on the new Scene lookt gay.

But Oh! What Human Fortitude can be  
Sufficient to Resist a Deity?  
Even our Allegiance here, too feebly pleads,  
The Change in so Divine a Form perswades;  
Maria with the Sun has equal Force,  
No Opposition stops her Glorious Course,

Her pointed Beams thro' all a passage find,  
And fix their Rays Triumphant in the Mind.  
And now I wish'd among the Crouds to Adore,  
And constant wishing did increase my Power;

From every thought a New-born Reason came  
Which fortified by bright Maria's Fame,  
Inspir'd My Genius with new Life and Flame,  
And thou, Great Lord, of all my Vows, permit  
My Muse who never fail'd Obedience yet,  
To pay her Tribute at Marias Feet,  
Maria so Divine a part of You,  
Let me be Just -- but Just with Honour too.

Resolv'd, She join'd her Chorus with the Throng,  
And to the listning Groves Marias Vertues Sung;

Maria all Inchanting, Gay, and Young,  
All Hail Illustrious Daughter of a King,  
Shining without, and Glorious all within,  
Whose Eyes beyond your scantier Power give Laws,  
Command the Word, and justifie the Cause;  
Nor to secure your Empire needs more Arms  
Than your resistless, and all Conquering Charms;  
Minerva Thus alone, Old Troy Sustain'd,  
Whilst her Blest Image with three Gods remain'd;  
But Oh! your Form and Manner to relate,

The Envyng Fair as soon may Imitate,  
'Tis all Engaging Sweet, 'tis all Surprising Great;  
A thousand Beauties Triumph in your Air,  
Like those of soft Young Loves your Smiles appear,  
And to th'Ungarded Hearts, as dangerous are:  
All Natures Charms are open'd in your Face,  
You Look, you Talk, with more than Human Grace;

All that is Wit, all that is Eloquence.  
The Births of finest Thought and Noblest Sense,  
Easie and Natural from your Language break,

And 'tis Eternal Musick when you speak;  
Thro' all no formal Nicety is seen,  
But Free and Generous your Majestick Meen,  
In every Motion, every Part a Queen;  
All that is Great and Lovely in the Sex,  
Heav'n did in this One Glorious Wonder fix,  
Apellis thus to dress the Queen of Love,  
Rob'd the whole Race, a Goddess to improve.  
Yet if with Sighs we View that Lovely Face,  
And all the Lines of your great Father's Trace,

Your Vertues should forgive, while we adore

That Face that Awes, and Charms our Hearts the more;  
But if the Monarch in your Looks we find,  
Behold him yet more glorious in your Mind;  
'Tis there His God-like Attributes we see.  
A Gracious Sweetness, Affability,  
A Tender Mercy and True Piety;  
And Vertues even sufficient to Attone  
For all the Ills the Ungrateful VWorld has done,  
Where several Factions, several Intrests sway,  
And that is still it'h Right who gains the Day;  
How e're they differ, this they all must grant,  
Your Form and Mind, no One Perfection want,  
Without all Angel, and within all Saint.

The Murmuring World till now divided lay,  
Vainly debating whom they shou'd Obey,  
Till You Great Cesar's Off-spring blest our Isle,  
The differing Multitudes to Reconcile;  
Thus Stiff-neckt Israel in defiance stood,  
Till they beheld the Prophet of their God;

Who from the Mount with dazzling brightness came,  
And Eyes all shining with Celestial Flame;  
Whose Awful Looks, dispel'd each Rebel Thought,  
And to a Just Compliance, the wilde Nations brought.

Arphra Behn

## **A Thousand Martyrs I Have Made**

A thousand Martyrs I have made,  
All sacrific'd to my desire;  
A thousand Beauties have betray'd,  
That languish in resistless Fire.  
The untam'd Heart to hand I brought,  
And fixt the wild and wandring Thought.

I never vow'd nor sigh'd in vain  
But both, thô false, were well receiv'd.  
The Fair are pleas'd to give us pain,  
And what they wish is soon believ'd.  
And thô I talk'd of Wounds and Smart,  
Loves Pleasures only toucht my Heart.

Alone the Glory and the Spoil  
I always Laughing bore away;  
The Triumphs, without Pain or Toil,  
Without the Hell, the Heav'n of Joy.  
And while I thus at random rove  
Despise the Fools that whine for Love.

Arphra Behn

## Disappointment, The

1.

One Day the Amorous Lisander,  
By an impatient Passion sway'd,  
Surpris'd fair Cloris, that lov'd Maid,  
Who cou'd defend her self no longer ;  
All things did with his Love conspire,  
The gilded Planet of the Day,  
In his gay Chariot, drawn by Fire,  
War now descending to the Sea,  
And left no Light to guide the World,  
But what from Cloris brighter Eyes was hurl'd.

2.

In lone Thicket, made for Love,  
Silent as yielding Maids Consent,  
She with a charming Languishment  
Permits his force, yet gently strove ?  
Her Hands his Bosom softly meet,  
But not to put him back design'd,  
Rather to draw him on inclin'd,  
Whilst he lay trembling at her feet;  
Resistance 'tis to late to shew,  
She wants the pow'r to sav -- Ah!what do you do?

3.

Her bright Eyes sweat, and yet Severe,  
Where Love and Shame confus'dly strive,  
Fresh Vigor to Lisander give :  
And whispering softly in his Ear,  
She Cry'd -- Cease -- cease -- your vain desire,  
Or I'll call out -- What wou'd you do ?  
My dearer Honour, ev'n to you,  
I cannot -- must not give -- retire,  
Or take that Life whose chiefest part  
I gave you with the Conquest of my Heart.

4.

But he as much unus'd to fear,  
As he was capable of Love,  
The blessed Minutes to improve,  
Kisses her Lips, her Neck, her Hair !  
Each touch her new Desires alarms !  
His burning trembling Hand he prest  
Upon her melting Snowy Breast,  
While she lay panting in his Arms !  
All her unguarded Beauties lie  
The Spoils and Trophies of the Enemy.

5.

And now, without Respect or Fear,  
He seeks the Objects of his Vows ;  
His Love no Modesty allows :  
By swift degrees advancing where  
His daring Hand that Alter seiz'd,  
Where Gods of Love do Sacrifice ;  
That awful Throne, that Paradise,  
Where Rage is tam'd, and Anger pleas'd ;  
That Living Fountain, from whose Trills  
The melted Soul in liquid Drops distils.

6.

Her balmy Lips encoutring his,  
Their Bodies as their Souls are joyn'd,  
Where both in Transports were confin'd,  
Extend themselves upon the Moss.  
Cloris half dead and breathless lay,  
Her Eyes appear'd like humid Light,  
Such as divides the Day and Night;  
Or falling Stars, whose Fires decay ;  
And now no signs of Life she shows,  
But what in short-breath-sighs returns and goes.

7.

He saw how at her length she lay,  
He saw her rising Bosom bare,  
Her loose thin Robes, through which appear  
A Shape design'd for Love and Play;  
Abandon'd by her Pride and Shame,  
She do's her softest Sweets dispence,  
Offering her Virgin-Innocence  
A Victim to Loves Sacred Flame ;  
Whilst th' or'e ravish'd Shepherd lies,  
Unable to perform the Sacrifice.

8.

Ready to taste a Thousand Joys,  
Thee too transported hapless Swain,  
Found the vast Pleasure turn'd to Pain :  
Pleasure, which too much Love destroys !  
The willing Garments by he laid,  
And Heav'n all open to his view ;  
Mad to possess, himself he threw  
On the defenceless lovely Maid.  
But oh ! what envious Gods conspire  
To snatch his Pow'r, yet leave him the Desire !

9.

Natures support, without whose Aid  
She can no humane Being give,  
It self now wants the Art to live,  
Faintness it slacken'd Nerves invade :  
In vain th' enraged Youth assaid  
To call his fleeting Vigour back,  
No Motion 'twill from Motion take,  
Excess of Love his Love betray'd ;  
In vain he Toils, in vain Commands,  
Th' Insensible fell weeping in his Hands.

10.

In this so Am'rous cruel strife,  
Where Love and Fate were too severe,  
The poor Lisander in Despair,  
Renounc'd his Reason with his Life.  
Now all the Brisk and Active Fire  
That should the Nobler Part inflame,  
Unactive Frigid, Dull became,  
And left no Spark for new Desire ;  
Not all her Naked Charms cou'd move,  
Or calm that Rage that had debauch'd his Love.

11.

Cloris returning from the Trance  
Which Love and soft Desire had bred,  
Her tim'rous Hand she gently laid,  
Or guided by Design or Chance,  
Upon that Fabulous Priapus,  
That Potent God (as Poets feign.)  
But never did young Shepherdess  
(Garth'ring of Fern upon the Plain)  
More nimbly draw her Fingers back,  
Finding beneath the Verdant Leaves a Snake.

12.

Then Cloris her fair Hand withdrew,  
Finding that God of her Desires  
Disarm'd of all his pow'rful Fires,  
And cold as Flow'rs bath'd in the Morning-dew.  
Who can the Nymphs Confusion guess ?  
The Blood forsook the kinder place,  
And strew'd with Blushes all her Face,  
Which both Disdain and Shame express ;  
And from Lisanders Arms she fled,  
Leaving him fainting on the gloomy Bed.

13.

Like Lightning through the Grove she hies,  
Or Daphne from the Delphick God ;  
No Print upon the Grassie Road  
She leaves, t' instruct pursuing Eyes.  
The Wind that wanton'd in her Hair,  
And with her ruffled Garments plaid,  
Discover'd in the flying Maid  
All that the Gods e're made of Fair.  
So Venus, when her Love was Slain,  
With fear and haste flew o're the fatal Plain.

14.

The Nymphs resentments, none but I  
Can well imagin, and Condole ;  
But none can guess Lisander's Soul,  
But those who sway'd his Destiny :  
His silent Griefs, swell up to Storms,  
And not one God, his Fury spares,  
He Curst his Birth, his Fate, his Stars,  
But more the Shepherdesses Charms ;  
Whose soft bewitching influence,  
Had Damn'd him to the Hell of Impotence.

Arphra Behn

## **Dream, The**

All trembling in my arms Aminta lay,  
Defending of the bliss I strove to take;  
Raising my rapture by her kind delay,  
Her force so charming was and weak.  
The soft resistance did betray the grant,  
While I pressed on the heaven of my desires;  
Her rising breasts with nimbler motions pant;  
Her dying eyes assume new fires.  
Now to the height of languishment she grows,  
And still her looks new charms put on;  
– Now the last mystery of Love she knows,  
We sigh, and kiss: I waked, and all was done.

`Twas but a dream, yet by my heart I knew,  
Which still was panting, part of it was true:  
Oh how I strove the rest to have believed;  
Ashamed and angry to be undeceived!

Arphra Behn

## Epitaph on the Tombstone of a Child

This Little, Silent, Gloomy Monument,  
Contains all that was sweet and innocent ;  
The softest pratler that e'er found a Tongue,  
His Voice was Musick and his Words a Song ;  
Which now each List'ning Angel smiling hears,  
Such pretty Harmonies compose the Spheres;  
Wanton as unfledg'd Cupids, ere their Charms  
Has learn'd the little arts of doing harms ;  
Fair as young Cherubins, as soft and kind,  
And tho translated could not be refin'd ;  
The Seventh dear pledge the Nuptial Joys had given,  
Toil'd here on Earth, retir'd to rest in Heaven ;  
Where they the shining Host of Angels fill,  
Spread their gay wings before the Throne, and smile.

Arphra Behn

## Love Arm'd

Love in Fantastique Triumph satt,  
Whilst bleeding Hearts around him flow'd,  
For whom Fresh pains he did create,  
And strange Tryanic power he show'd;  
From thy Bright Eyes he took his fire,  
Which round about, in sport he hurl'd;  
But 'twas from mine he took desire,  
Enough to undo the Amorous World.  
From me he took his sighs and tears,  
From thee his Pride and Crueltie;  
From me his Languishments and Feares,  
And every Killing Dart from thee;  
Thus thou and I, the God have arm'd,  
And sett him up a Deity;  
But my poor Heart alone is harm'd,  
Whilst thine the Victor is, and free.

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Whilst thine the Victor is, and free.

Arphra Behn

## On the Death of E. Waller, Esq.

How, to thy Sacred Memory, shall I bring  
(Worthy thy Fame) a grateful Offering?  
I, who by Toils of Sickness, am become  
Almost as near as thou art to a Tomb?  
While every soft, and every tender Strain  
Is ruff'd, and ill-natur'd grown with Pain.  
But, at thy Name, my languisht Muse revives,  
And a new Spark in the dull Ashes strives.  
I hear thy tuneful Verse, thy Song Divine;  
And am Inspir'd by every charming Line.  
But, Oh! -----  
What Inspiration, at the second hand,  
Can an Immortal Elegic Command?  
Unless, Me Pious Offerings, mine should be  
Made Sacred, being Consecrate to thee.  
Eternal, as thy own Almighty Verse,  
Should be those Trophies that adom thy Hearse.  
The Thought Illustrious, and the Fancy Young;  
The Wit Sublime, the Judgment Fine, and Strong;  
Soft, as thy Notes to Sacharissa sung.  
Whilst mine, like Transitory Flowers, decay,  
That come to deck thy Tomb a short-liv'd Day.  
Such Tributes are, like Tenures, only fit  
To shew from whom we hold our Right to Wit.  
Hafl, wondrous Bard, whose Heav'n-born Genius first  
My Infant Muse, and Blooming Fancy Nurst.  
With thy soft Food of Love I first began,  
Then fed on nobler Panegyrick Strain,  
Numbers Seraphic! and, at every View,  
My Soul extended, and much larger grew:

Where e're I Read, new Raptures seiz'd my Blood;  
Methought I heard the Language of a God.  
Long did the untun'd World in Ignorance stray,  
Producing nothing that was Great and Gay,  
Till taught, by thee, the true Poetick way.  
Rough were the Tracts before, Dull, and Obscure;  
Nor Pleasure, nor Instruction could procure.  
Their thoughtless Labour could no Passion move;  
Sure, in that Age, the Poets knew not Love:  
That Charming God, like Apparitions, then  
Was only talk'd on, but ne're seen by Men:  
Darkness was o're the Muses Land displaid,  
And even the Chosen Tribe unguided straid.  
Till, by thee rescu'd from th' Egyptian Night,  
They now look up, and view the God of Light,  
That taught them how to Love, and how to Write;  
And to Enhance the Blessing which Heav'n lent,  
When for our great Instructor thou wert sent.  
Large was thy Life, but yet thy Glories more;  
And, like the Sun, did still dispense thy Power,  
Producing somthing wondrous every hour:

And, in thy Circular Course, didst see  
The very Life and Death of Poetry.  
Thou saw'st the Generous Nine neglected lie,  
None listning to their Heav'nly Harmony;  
The World being grown to that low Ebb of Sense,  
To disesteem the noblest Excellence;  
And no Encouragement to Phophets shewn,  
Who in past Ages got so great Renown.  
Though Fortune Elevated thee above  
Its scanty Gratitude, or fickle Love;  
Yet, fallen with the World, untir'd by Age,  
Scorning th'unthinking Crowd, thou quit'st the Stage.

Arphra Behn

## **On the Death of the late Earl of Rochester**

Hi There! I see you're enjoying the site, and just wanted to extend an invitation to register for our free site. The members of oldpoetry strive to make this a fun place to learn and share - hope you join us! - Kevin

Arphra Behn

## Song

Oh love! that stronger art than Wine,  
Pleasing Delusion, Witchery divine,  
Wont to be priz'd above all Wealth,  
Disease that has more Joys than Health;  
Though we blaspheme thee in our Pain,  
And of Tyranny complain,  
We are all better'd by thy Reign.

What Reason never can bestow,  
We to this useful Passion owe:  
Love wakes the dull from sluggish ease,  
And learns a Clown the Art to please:  
Humbles the Vain, kindles the Cold,  
Makes Misers free, and Cowards bold;  
And teaches airy Fops to think.

When full brute Appetite is fed,  
And choak'd the Glutton lies and dead;  
Thou new Spirits dost dispense,  
And fine'st the gross Delights of Sense.

Virtue's unconquerable Aid  
That against Nature can persuade;  
And makes a roving Mind retire  
Within the Bounds of just Desire.  
Chearer of Age, Youth's kind Unrest,  
And half the Heaven of the blest!

Arphra Behn

## **Song (Love)**

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Arphra Behn

### **Song : 'Love Armed'**

Love in fantastic triumph sat,  
    Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd,  
For whom fresh pains he did create,  
    And strange tyrannic power he shew'd;  
From thy bright eyes he took his fire,  
    Which round about in sport he hurl'd;  
But 'twas from mine he took desire  
    Enough to undo the amorous world.

    From me he took his sighs and tears,  
    From thee his pride and cruelty;  
From me his languishments and fears,  
    And every killing dart from thee;  
Thus thou and I the God have arm'd,  
    And set him up a Deity;  
But my poor heart alone is harm'd,  
    Whilst thine the victor is, and free.

Arphra Behn

## **Song from Abdelazar**

Love in fantastic triumph sat,  
    Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd,  
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Arphra Behn

## The Disappointment

1.

One Day the Amorous Lisander,  
By an impatient Passion sway'd,  
Surpris'd fair Cloris, that lov'd Maid,  
Who cou'd defend her self no longer ;  
All things did with his Love conspire,  
The gilded Planet of the Day,  
In his gay Chariot, drawn by Fire,  
War now descending to the Sea,  
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He seeks the Objects of his Vows ;  
His Love no Modesty allows :  
By swift degrees advancing where  
His daring Hand that Alter seiz'd,  
Where Gods of Love do Sacrifice ;  
That awful Throne, that Paradise,  
Where Rage is tam'd, and Anger pleas'd ;  
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She do's her softest Sweets dispence,  
Offering her Virgin-Innocence  
A Victim to Loves Sacred Flame ;  
Whilst th' or'e ravish'd Shepherd lies,  
Unable to perform the Sacrifice.

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Ready to taste a Thousand Joys,  
Thee too transported hapless Swain,  
Found the vast Pleasure turn'd to Pain :  
Pleasure, which too much Love destroys !  
The willing Garments by he laid,  
And Heav'n all open to his view ;  
Mad to possess, himself he threw  
On the defenceless lovely Maid.  
But oh ! what envious Gods conspire  
To snatch his Pow'r, yet leave him the Desire !

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Natures support, without whose Aid  
She can no humane Being give,  
It self now wants the Art to live,  
Faintness it slacken'd Nerves invade :  
In vain th' enraged Youth assaid  
To call his fleeting Vigour back,  
No Motion 'twill from Motion take,  
Excess of Love his Love betray'd ;  
In vain he Toils, in vain Commands,  
Th' Insensible fell weeping in his Hands.

10.

In this so Am'rous cruel strife,  
Where Love and Fate were too severe,  
The poor Lisander in Despair,  
Renounc'd his Reason with his Life.  
Now all the Brisk and Active Fire  
That should the Nobler Part inflame,  
Unactive Frigid, Dull became,  
And left no Spark for new Desire ;  
Not all her Naked Charms cou'd move,  
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Then Cloris her fair Hand withdrew,  
Finding that God of her Desires  
Disarm'd of all his pow'rful Fires,  
And cold as Flow'rs bath'd in the Morning-dew.  
Who can the Nymphs Confusion guess ?  
The Blood forsook the kinder place,  
And strew'd with Blushes all her Face,  
Which both Disdain and Shame express ;  
And from Lisanders Arms she fled,  
Leaving him fainting on the gloomy Bed.

13.

Like Lightning through the Grove she hies,  
Or Daphne from the Delphick God ;  
No Print upon the Grassie Road  
She leaves, t' instruct pursuing Eyes.  
The Wind that wanton'd in her Hair,  
And with her ruffled Garments plaid,  
Discover'd in the flying Maid  
All that the Gods e're made of Fair.  
So Venus, when her Love was Slain,  
With fear and haste flew o're the fatal Plain.

14.

The Nymphs resentments, none but I  
Can well imagin, and Condole ;  
But none can guess Lisander's Soul,  
But those who sway'd his Destiny :  
His silent Griefs, swell up to Storms,  
And not one God, his Fury spares,  
He Curst his Birth, his Fate, his Stars,  
But more the Shepherdesses Charms ;  
Whose soft bewitching influence,  
Had Damn'd him to the Hell of Impotence.

Arphra Behn

## The Dream

All trembling in my arms Aminta lay,  
Defending of the bliss I strove to take;  
Raising my rapture by her kind delay,  
Her force so charming was and weak.  
The soft resistance did betray the grant,  
While I pressed on the heaven of my desires;  
Her rising breasts with nimbler motions pant;  
Her dying eyes assume new fires.  
Now to the height of languishment she grows,  
And still her looks new charms put on;  
– Now the last mystery of Love she knows,  
We sigh, and kiss: I waked, and all was done.

`Twas but a dream, yet by my heart I knew,  
Which still was panting, part of it was true:  
Oh how I strove the rest to have believed;  
Ashamed and angry to be undeceived!

Arphra Behn

## The Libertine

A THOUSAND martyrs I have made,  
All sacrificed to my desire,  
A thousand beauties have betray'd  
That languish in resistless fire:  
The untamed heart to hand I brought,  
And fix'd the wild and wand'ring thought.

I never vow'd nor sigh'd in vain,  
But both, tho' false, were well received;  
The fair are pleas'd to give us pain,  
And what they wish is soon believed:  
And tho' I talk'd of wounds and smart,  
Love's pleasures only touch'd my heart.

Alone the glory and the spoil  
I always laughing bore away;  
The triumphs without pain or toil,  
Without the hell the heaven of joy;  
And while I thus at random rove  
Despise the fools that whine for love.

Arphra Behn

## To the Fair Clarinda

Fair lovely Maid, or if that Title be  
Too weak, too Feminine for Nobler thee,  
Permit a Name that more Approaches Truth:  
And let me call thee, Lovely Charming Youth.  
This last will justifie my soft complaint,  
While that may serve to lessen my constraint;  
And without Blushes I the Youth persue,  
When so much beauteous Woman is in view.  
Against thy Charms we struggle but in vain  
With thy deluding Form thou giv'st us pain,  
While the bright Nymph betrays us to the Swain.  
In pity to our Sex sure thou wer't sent,  
That we might Love, and yet be Innocent:  
For sure no Crime with thee we can commit;  
Or if we shou'd - thy Form excuses it.  
For who, that gathers fairest Flowers believes  
A Snake lies hid beneath the Fragrant Leaves.

Though beauteous Wonder of a different kind,  
Soft Cloris with the dear Alexis join'd;  
When e'er the Manly part of thee, wou'd plead  
Though tempts us with the Image of the Maid,  
While we the noblest Passions do extend  
The Love to Hermes, Aphrodite the Friend.v

Arphra Behn