

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Edward Herbert of Cherbury**

**- poems -**

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## Elegy over a Tomb

Must I then see, alas, eternal night  
Sitting upon those fairest eyes,  
And closing all those beams, which once did rise  
So radiant and bright  
That light and heat in them to us did prove  
Knowledge and love?

Oh, if you did delight no more to stay  
Upon this low and earthly stage,  
But rather chose an endless heritage,  
Tell us at least, we pray,  
Where all the beauties that those ashes ow'd  
Are now bestow'd.

Doth the sun now his light with yours renew?  
Have waves the curling of your hair?  
Did you restore unto the sky and air  
The red, and white, and blue?  
Have you vouchsaf'd to flowers since your death  
That sweetest breath?

Had not heav'n's lights else in their houses slept,  
Or to some private life retir'd?  
Must not the sky and air have else conspir'd,  
And in their regions wept?  
Must not each flower else the earth could breed,  
Have been a weed?

But thus enrich'd may we not yield some cause  
Why they themselves lament no more?  
That must have chang'd the course they held before,  
And broke their proper laws,  
Had not your beauties giv'n this second birth  
To heaven and earth.

Tell us (for oracles must still ascend  
For those that crave them at your tom ,  
Tell us where are those beauties now become,  
And what they now intend;  
Tell us, alas, that cannot tell our grief,  
Or hope relief.

Edward Herbert of Cherbury

## **Tears, flow no more**

TEARS, flow no more, or if you needs must flow,  
    Fall yet more slow,  
    Do not the world invade,  
From smaller springs than yours rivers have grown,  
    And they again a Sea have made,  
Brackish like you, and which like you hath flown.

Ebb to my heart, and on the burning fires  
    Of my desires,  
    O let your torrents fall,  
From smaller heate than theirs such sparks arise  
    As into flame converting all,  
This world might be but my love's sacrifice.

Yet if the tempests of my sighs so blow  
    You both must flow,  
    And my desires still burn,  
Since that in vain all help my love requires,  
    Why may not yet their rages turn  
To dry those teares, and to blow out those fires ?

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## **This Watch For When He Could Not Fleep**

UNcessant Minutes, whil'st you move  
    you tell  
    The time that tells our life, which  
        though it run  
    Never so fast or farr, you'r new  
        begun  
Short steps shall overtake ; for though life well

May scape his own Account, it shall not yours,  
    You are Death's Auditors, that both divide  
And summ what ere that life inspir'd endures  
    Past a beginning, and through you we bide

The doom of Fate, whose unrecall'd Decree  
    You date, bring, execute ; making what's new,  
    Ill and good, old, for as we die in you,  
You die in Time, Time in Eternity.

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## To Her face

Fatal Aspect ! that hast an Influence  
More powerful far than those Immortal Fires  
That but incline the Will and move the Sense,  
Which thou alone contrain'st, kindling Desires  
Of such an holy force, as more inspires  
The Soul with Knowledge, than Experience  
Or Revelation can do with all  
Their borrow'd helps : Sacred Astonishment  
Sits on thy Brow, threatning a sudden fall  
To all those Thoughts that are not lowly sent,  
In wonder and amaze, dazling that Eye  
Which on those Mysteries doth rudely gaze,  
Vow'd only unto Love's Divinity:  
Sure Adam sinn'd not in that spotless Face.

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