Classic Poetry Series

George Peele

- 9 poems -

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George Peele (Bapitized 25 July 1556 - 9 November 1596)

George Peele, was an English dramatist.

Life

Peele was christened on 25 July 1556 at St James Garlickhythe in the City of London. His father, who appears to have belonged to a Devonshire family, was clerk of Christ's Hospital, and wrote two treatises on bookkeeping. Peele was educated at Christ's Hospital, and entered Broadgates Hall (Pembroke College), Oxford, in 1571. In 1574 he removed to Christ Church, taking his B.A. degree in 1577, and proceeding M.A. in 1579. In that year, the governors of Christ's Hospital requested their clerk to "discharge his house of his son, George Peele." He went up to London about 1580, but in 1583 when Albertus Alasco (Albert Laski), a Polish nobleman, was entertained at Christ Church, Peele was entrusted with the arrangement of two Latin plays by William Gager (fl. 1580-1619) presented on the occasion.

He was also complimented by Dr. Gager for an English verse translation of one of the Iphigenias of Euripides. In 1585 he was employed to write the Device of the Pageant borne before Woolston Dixie, and in 1591 he devised the pageant in honour of another Lord Mayor, Sir William Webbe. This was the Descensus Astraeae (printed in the Harleian Miscellany, 1808), in which Queen Elizabeth is honoured as Astraea.

Peele had married as early as 1583 a lady who brought him some property, which he speedily dissipated. Robert Greene, at the end of his pamphlet Greene's Groats-Worth of Wit, exhorts Peele to repentance, saying that he has, like himself, "been driven to extreme shifts for a living." Anecdotes of his reckless life were emphasized by the use of his name in connection with the apocryphal Merrie conceited Jests of George Peele (printed in 1607). Many of the stories had circulated before in other jestbooks, unattached to Peele's name, but there are personal touches that may be biographical. The book provided source material for the play The Puritan, one of the works of the Shakespeare Apocrypha.

Peele died "of the pox," according to Francis Meres, and was buried on 9 November 1596. One of the eight boarding houses at the Horsham campus is now named Peele after George Peele and as a commemoration to the work of the Peele family with the ancient foundation of the Christs Hospital school.

Plays

His pastoral comedy The Arraignment of Paris was presented by the Children of the Chapel Royal before Queen Elizabeth perhaps as early as 1581, and

was printed anonymously in 1584. In the play, Paris is arraigned before Jupiter for having assigned the apple to Venus. Diana, with whom the final decision rests, gives the apple to none of the competitors but to a nymph called Eliza, a reference to Queen Elizabeth I.

His play Edward I was printed in 1593. This chronicle history is an advance on the old chronicle plays, and marks a step towards the Shakespearean historical drama. Peele is said by some scholars to have written or contributed to the bloody tragedy Titus Andronicus, which was published as the work of Shakespeare. This theory is in part due to Peele's predilection for gore, as evidenced in The Battle of Alcazar (acted 1588-1589, printed 1594), published anonymously, which is attributed with much probability to him. The Old Wives' Tale (printed 1595) was followed by The Love of King David and fair Bethsabe (written ca. 1588, printed 1599), which is notable as an example of Elizabethan drama drawn entirely from Scriptural sources. F. G. Fleay sees in it a political satire, and identifies Elizabeth and Leicester as David and Bathsheba, Mary, Queen of Scots as Absalom.

Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes (printed 1599) has been attributed to Peele, but on insufficient grounds. Other plays attributed to Peele include Jack Straw (ca. 1587), The Wisdom of Dr. Doddypoll (printed 1600), The Maid's Metamorphosis (printed 1600), and Wily Beguiled (printed 1606) — though the scholarly consensus has judged these attributions to be insufficiently supported by evidence. Indeed, individual scholars have repeatedly resorted to Peele in their attempts to grapple with Elizabethan plays of uncertain authorship. Plays that have been assigned to (or blamed on) Peele include Locrine, The Troublesome Reign of King John, and Parts 1 and 2 of Shakespeare's Henry VI trilogy, in addition to Titus Andronicus. Edward III was attributed to Peele by Tucker Brooke in 1908. While the attribution of the entire play to Peele is no longer accepted, Sir Brian Vickers demonstrated using metrical and other analysis that Peele wrote the first act and the first two scenes in Act II of Titus Andronicus, with Shakespeare responsible for the rest.

Minor works

Among his occasional poems are The Honour of the Garter, which has a prologue containing Peele's judgments on his contemporaries, and Polyhymnia (1590), a blank verse description of the ceremonies attending the retirement of the queens' champion, Sir Henry Lee. This is concluded by the sonnet, A Farewell to Arms, quoted by Thackeray in the seventy-sixth chapter of The Newcomes and which served as the title of Ernest Hemingway's novel of the same name. To The Phoenix Nest in 1593 he contributed The Praise of Chastity.

Reputation

Peele belonged to the group of university scholars who, in Greene's phrase, "spent their wits in making playes." Greene went on to say that he was "in some things rarer, in nothing inferior," to Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe. This praise was not unfounded. The credit given to Greene and Marlowe for the increased dignity of English dramatic diction, and for the new smoothness infused into blank verse, must certainly be shared by Peele. The most familiar parts of Peele's work are, however, the delightful songs in his plays—from The Old Wives' Tale and The Arraignment of Paris, and the song "A Farewell to Arms"—which are regularly anthologized.

Professor F. B. Gummere, in a critical essay prefixed to his edition of The Old Wives Tale, puts in another claim for Peele. In the contrast between the romantic story and the realistic dialogue he sees the first instance of humour quite foreign to the comic business of earlier comedy. The Old Wives Tale is a play within a play, slight enough to be perhaps better described as an interlude. Its background of rustic folklore gives it additional interest, and there is much fun poked at Gabriel Harvey and Richard Stanyhurst. Perhaps Huanebango, who parodies Harvey's hexameters, and actually quotes him on one occasion, may be regarded as representing that arch-enemy of Greene and his friends.

Peele's Works were edited by Alexander Dyce (1828, 1829–1839 and 1861), A. H. Bullen (2 vols., 1888), and by Charles Tyler Prouty (3 vols., 1952–1970). An examination of the metrical peculiarities of his work is to be found in Richard Lämmerhirt's Georg Peele, Untersuchungen über sein Leben und seine Werke (Rostock, 1882). See also Professor F.B. Gummere, in Representative English Comedies (1903); and an edition of The Battell of Alcazar, printed for the Malone Society in 1907.

Works:

Poems

Polyhymnia (1590)
The Honour of the Garter

Drama

The Battle of Alcazar (acted 1588-1589, printed 1594)
Old Wives' Tale (printed 1595)
The Love of King David and fair Bethsabe (written ca. 1588, printed 1599)
Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes (printed 1599)

A Farewell to Arms (To Queen Elizabeth)

HIS golden locks Time hath to silver turn'd;
   O Time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurn'd,
   But spurn'd in vain; youth waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
   And, lovers' sonnets turn'd to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
   And feed on prayers, which are Age his alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His Saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
   He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,--
'Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
   Curst be the souls that think her any wrong.'
Goddess, allow this aged man his right
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

George Peele

Bathsheba's Song

Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair.
Shine, sun; burn fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me;
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning,
Make not my glad cause cause of mourning.
Let not my beauty's fire
Inflame unstaid desire,
Nor pierce any bright eye
That wand'reth lightly.

George Peele

Fair and Fair

Oenone:

Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.

Paris:

Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone
And for no other lady.

Oenone:

My love is fair, my love is gay,
As fresh as bin the flowers in May
And of my love my roundelay,
My merry, merry, merry roundelay,
Concludes with Cupid's curse,--
'They that do change old love for new
Pray gods they change for worse!'

Ambo Simul:

They that do change old love for new,
Pray gods they change for worse!

Oenone:

Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any lady.

Paris:

Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
As fair as any may be;
Thy love is fair for thee alone
And for no other lady.

Oenone:

My love can pipe, my love can sing,
My love can many a pretty thing,
And of his lovely praises ring
My merry, merry, merry roundelays
Amen to Cupid's curse.

George Peele

Hot Sun, Cool Fire

Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair.
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease me;
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me.
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning;
Make not my glad cause cause of mourning.
    Let not my beauty's fire
    Inflame unstaid desire,
    Nor pierce any bright eye
    That wandereth lightly.

George Peele

Not Iris in Her Pride

Not Iris in her pride and bravery
Adorns her arch with such variety;
Nor doth the Milk-white Way in frosty night
Appear so fair and beautiful in sight,
As do these fields and groves and sweetest bowers
Bestrewed and decked with parti-coloured flowers.
Along the bubbling brooks and silver glide,
That at the bottom doth in silence slide,
The water-flowers and lilies on the banks
Like blazing comets burgeon all in ranks;
Under the hawthorn and the poplar tree,
Where sacred Phoebe may delight to be,
The primrose and the purple hyacinth,
The dainty violet and the wholesome minth,
The double-daisy and the cowslip (Queen)
Of summer flowers) do over-peer the green;
And round about the valley as ye pass,
Ye may not see, for peeping flowers, the grass.

George Peele

Œnone's Complaint

Melpomene, the muse of tragic songs,
With mournful tunes, in stole of dismal hue,
Assist a silly nymph to wail her woe,
And leave thy lusty company behind.

Thou luckless wreath! becomes not me to wear
The poplar tree for triumph of my love:
Then as my joy, my pride of love, is left,
Be thou unclothed of thy lovely green;

And in thy leaves my fortune written be,
And them some gentle wind let blow abroad,
That all the world may see how false of love
False Paris hath to his Œnone been.

George Peele

Polyhymnia

[Polyhymnia: Describing, The honourable Triumph at Tylt, before her Maiestie, on the 17. of Nouember, last past, being the first day of the three and thirtith yeare of her Highnesse raigne. With Sir Henrie Lea, his resignation of honour at Tylt, to her Maiestie, and receiued by the right honourable, the Earle of Cumberland.]

[Polyhimnia. Entituled, with all dutie to the Right Honourable, Lord Compton of Compton.]

Therefore, when thirtie two were come and gone,
Years of her raigne, daies of her countries peace,
Elizabeth great Empresse of the world,
Britanias Atlas, Star of Englands globe,
That swaies the massie scepter of her land,
And holdes the royall raynes of Albion:
Began the gladsome sunnie day to shine,
That drawes in length date of her golden raigne:
And thirtie three shee numbreth in her throne:
That long in happinesse and peace (I pray)
May number manie to these thirtie three.
Wherefore it fares as whilom and of yore,
In armour bright and sheene, faire Englands knights
In honour of their peerelesse Soueraigne:
High Maistresse of their seruice, thoughtes and liues
Make to the Tyltamaine: and trumpets sound,
And princelie Coursers neigh, and champ the byt,
When all addrest for deeds of high deuoyre,
Preace to the sacred presence of their Prince.

The 1. couple. Sir Henrie Lea. The Earle of Cumberland.

Mightie in Armes, mounted on puissant horse,
Knight of the Crown in rich imbroderie,
And costlie faire Caparison charg'd with Crownes,
Oreshadowed with a withered running Vine,
As who would say, My spring of youth is past:
In Corslet gylt of curious workmanship,
Sir Henry Lea, redoubted man at Armes.
Leades in the troopes, whom woorthie Cumberland
Thrice noble Earle, aucutred as became
So greate a Warriour and so good a Knight.
Encountred first, yclad in coate of steele,
And plumes and pendants al as white as Swanne,
And speare in rest, right readie to performe
What long'd vnto the honour of the place.
Together went these Champions, horse and man,
Thundring along the Tylt, that at the shocke
The hollow gyring vault of heauen resoundes.
Six courses spent, and speares in shiuers split,

The 2. couple. The L. Straunge. M. Iohn Gerrarde.

The Earle of Darbies valiant sonne and heire,
Braue Ferdinande Lord Straunge, straunglie embarkt,
Vnder Ioues kinglie byrd, the golden Eagle,
Stanleyes olde Crest and honourable badge,
As veering fore the winde, in costlie ship,
And armour white and watchet buckled fast,
Presentes himselfe, his horses and his men,
Suted in Satten to their Maisters collours,
Welneere twise twentie Squires that went him by
And hauing by his Trounch-man pardon crau'd,
Vailing his Eagle to his Soueraignes eies,
As who should say, stoope Eagle to this Sun,
Dismountes him from his pageant, and at once,
Taking his choice of lustie Tilting horse,
Couered with sumptuous rich Caparisons,
He mountes him brauely for his friendlie foe,
And at the head he aimes, and in his aime
Happily thriues, and breakes his Azure staues.
Whom gentle Gerrarde, all in white and greene,
Collours (belike) best seruing his conceit,
Lustilie meetes, mounted in seate of steele,
With flourishing plume and faire Caparison,
And then at euerie shocke the shiuers flie,
That recommend their honors to the skie.

The 3. couple. The L. Compton. M. Henry Nowell.

Next in the Virgins collours, as before
Ran Cumberland; comes louely Compton in,
His Courser trapt in white, and plumes and staues
Of snowie hue, and Squires in faire aray,
Waiting their Lords good fortune in the field.
His armour glittering like the Moones bright raies,
Or that cleare siluer path, the milk-white way
That in Olympus, leads to Ioues high court,
Him noble minded Nowell pricks to meet,
All arm'd in Sables with rich Bandalier,
That Bawdrick wise he ware, set with faire stones
And pearles of Inde, that like a siluer bend
Shew'd on his varnish't Corslet black as Iet,
And beauteous plumes and bases sutable,
And on his styrrop waites a trustie train
Of seruants, clad in tawnie liueries,
And toote they goe, this Lord and lusty Knight
To doo their roiall mistresse honors right.

The 4. couple. The L. Burke. Sir Edward Dennye.

When mounted on his fieree and foming Steed,
In Riches and in Collours like his peeres,
With Iuorie plumes in siluer shining Armes,
His men in Crimson dight, and staues in Red
Comes in Lord Burck, a faire yoong Ireland Lord,
Bent chiefly to the exercise of Armes,
And bounding in his princelie Mistresse eie,
Chargeth his staffe when trumpet cals away,
At noble Dennies head, braue man at Armes,
(As if the God of warre had sent him downe,
Or if you will, to shew his burning zeale
And forwardnesse in seruice to her person,
To whome those Martiall deedes were consecrate)
Speedes to the Tylt amaine, rich as the rest,
Himselfe, his horse, and pages all in greene,
Greene veluet fairely garnish'd horse and man.

The 5. couple. The Earle of Essex. M. Foulke Greuile.

Then proudly shocks amid the Martiall throng,
Of lustie Lancieres, all in Sable sad,
Drawen on with cole-blacke Steeds of duskie hue,
In stately Chariot full of deepe deuice,
Where gloomie Time sat whipping on the teame,
Iust backe to backe with this great Champion;
Yoong Essex, that thrice honorable Earle,
Yclad in mightie Armes of mourners hue,
And plume as blacke as is the Rauens wing,
That from his armour borrowed such a light,
As bowes of Vu receiues from shady streame,
His staues were such, or of such hue at least,
As are those banner staues that mourners beare,
And all his companie in funerall blacke,
As if he mourn'd to thinke of him he mist,
Sweete Sydney, fairest shepheard of our greene,
Well lettred Warriour, whose successor he
In loue and Armes had euer vowed to be.
In loue and Armes, may he so succeede,
As his deserts, as his desires would speede.
With this great Lord must gallant Greuill run,
Faire man at Armes, the Muses fauouret,
Louer of Learning and of Chiualrie,
Sage in his sawes, sound Iudge of Poesie:
That lightlie mounted, makes to him amaine,
In armour gilt, and basses full of cost.
Together goe these friendes as enemies,
As when a Lion in a thicket pent,
Spieng the Boare all bent to combat him,
Makes through the shrubs,and thunders as he goes.

The 6. couple. Sir Charles Blunt-M. Iohn Vauasor.

And then as blithe, as bird of mornings light,
Inflamb'd with honor, glistering as the Sun,
What time he mountes the sweating Lions back,
Beset with glorious Sun-shine of his traine,
Bearing the Sun vpon his armed breast,
That like a precious shining Carbunkle,
Or Phoebus eye, in heauen it selfe reflects,
Comes Sir Charles Blunt in Or and Azure dight,
Rich in his colours, richer in his thoughts,
Rich in his Fortune, Honor, Armes and Arte:
And him the valiant Vauasor assailes
On fierce and readie horse with speare in rest,
In Orenge-tawnie bright and beautifull,
Himselfe, his men and all: and on they speed,
And hast they make to meete, and meete they doo,
And doo the thing for which they meete in hast,
Each in his Armour amiable to see,
That in their lookes bare loue and Chiualrie.

The 7. couple. Master Robert Carey. Master William Gresham.

By this the Trumpe cal'd Carey to the Tilt,
Faire bird, faire Cignet of our siluer Swanne,
When like a Lord in pompe and princelie shew,
And like a Champion fitted for the warre,
And not vnlike the sonne of such a syre,
Vnder a plume of murrie and of white,
That like a Palme tree beautifullie spread,
On mightie horse of Naples mounted faire,
And horse at hand, and men and pages pight;
All with a burning heart greets he her grace,
Whose gracious countnance he his heauen esteems,
And to her sacred person it presents;
As who would say, my heart and life is hers,
To whom my loyaltie this heart prefers.
And at the summons out his foe man flyes,
Gresham the heire of golden Greshams land,
That beautifi'd new Troy with royall Change,
Badge of his honor and magnificence.
Siluer and Sable such his colours were,
And readie was his horse, and readier he,
To bound, and well behaue him in her eie,
Vpon whose lookes his life and honour stood.
Then horse and man conspir'd to meet amaine,
Along the Tylt Carey and Gresham goe,
Swift as the Swallow, or that Greekish Nymph
That seem'd to ouerfly the eyles of corne:

And breake they doo, they misse not as I weene,
And all was done in honour of their Queene.

The 8. couple. Sir William Knowles. M. Anthony Cooke.

Then like the three Horaty in the field,
Betwixt the Roman and the Alban camp,
That triumpht in the roiall right of Rome;
Or olde Duke Aymons glory, Dordans pride,
Came in the noble English Nestors sonnes,
Braue Knowles his ofspring, hardy Champions,
Each in his plumes, his colours and deuice,
Expressing Warriors wit and Courtiers grace.
Against Sir William ran a lusty Knight.
Fine in deuice he was, and full of wit,
Famous beyond the chalkie Brittish cliffes,
And lou'd and honored in his country boundes.
Anthony Cooke, a man of noble name,
For Armes and Courtship equall to the best:
Valour and Vertue sat vpon his helme,
Whome Loue and lowring Fortune led along.
And Life and Death he portraied in his show.
A liberall Hand, badge of nobilitie,
A Hart, that in his mistresse honor vowes
To taske his hand in witnesse of his heart
Till age shake off rough wars abiliments.
Then with such cunning can they couch their staues
That worthily each knight himselfe behaues.

The 9. couple. Sir Thomas Knowles. Sir Philip Butler.

The yongest brother, Mars his sworne man,
That wan his knightly spurs in Belgia,
And followed dub of drum in Fortunes grace,
Well horst and arm'd, Sir Philip Butler greetes
The noble Essex friend and follower,
In mourning Sable dight by simpathie,
A gentle Knight, and meekely at the Tylt
He standes, as one that had no hart to hurt
His friendly foe: but at the trumpets sound
He flies along, and brauely at the face
His force he bendes: the riuall of his fame
Spurs on his steede, nor shuns the shocke for feare,
And so they meet; the armour beares the skar,
Of this encounter and delightfull war.

The 10. couple. M. Robert Knowles. M. Ralph Bowes.

The last; not least, of these braue bretheren,

Laden with honour, and with golden boughes,
Entring the listes like Tytan, arm'd with fire,
When in the queackie plot Python he slew.
Bowes takes to taske, with strong and mightie arme,
Right richly mounted: horse and man it seem'd
Were well agreed to serue as roughlie there,
As in the enemies reach for life they would.
And when they ran, me thought a tempest rose,
That in the storme the clattering armours sound,
As horse and man had both bene borne to ground.

The 11. couple. M. Thomas Sydney. M. Robert Alexander.

Thus long hath daintie Sydney sit and seene,
Honour and Fortune houer in the aire,
That from the glorious beames of Englands eie,
Came streaming: Sydney, at which name I sigh,
Because I lacke the Sydney that I loue,
And yet I loue the Sydneys that suruiue.
Thus long (I say) sat Sydney and beheld
The shiuers flie of many a shaken speare,
When mounted on a Courser trapt in white,
And throughly wel appointed he and his;
Pure sparkes of Vertue kindling Honors fire,
He thought he might, and for he might, he would
Reach at this glorie, faire befall him still:
And to the Tylt (impatient of delay)
He comes, encountred with a threatning point
That Alexander menac'd to him fast:
A valorous and a lustie Gentleman,
Well fitted with his armour and his Steed,
And him young Sydney sits: and had he chardg'd
The Macedonian Alexanders staffe,
He had bene answered by that valiant youth:
So well behau'd himselfe this faire yoong Knight,
As Paris had to great Achilles Launce
Applied his tender fingers and his force.

The 12. couple. M. Nedham. M. Richard Acton.

The next came Nedham in on lustie horse,
That angrie with delay, at Trumpets sound
Would snort, & stamp, and stand vpon no ground,
Vnwilling of his maisters tariance.
Yet tarie must his maister, and with him
His prauncing steed, till trumpets sounding shrill,
Made Acton spur apace, that with applause
Of all beholders, hied him lustilie;
As who would say, Now goe I to the goale,
And then they ride and run and take their chance

As death were fixt at point of eithers lance.

The 13. couple. M. Charles Dauers. M. Euerard Digbie.

Now drew this martiall exercise to ende,
And Dauers here and Digbie were the last
Of six and twentie gallant Gentlemen,
Of noble birth and princelie resolution.
That ran in couplement, as you haue heard,
In honour of their mistresse holiday.
A gracious sport, fitting that golden time,
The day, the byrth-day of our happinesse,
The blooming time, the spring of Englands peace.
Peace then my muse, yet ere thou peace, report,
Say how thou sawest these Actors play their partes.
Both mounted brauely, brauelie minded both,
Second to fewe or none for their successe;
Their hie deuoyre, their deeds doo say no lesse.
And now had Englands Queene, faire Englands life,
Beheld her Lordes, and louely Lordly Knightes
Doo Honors seruice to their Soueraigne;
And heauen by this distil'd down teares of ioy,
In memorie and honour of this day.

Sir Henry Lea resignes his place of Honour at Tylt,
to the Earle of Cumberland.

And now as first by him intended was,
In sight of Prince and Peeres, and people round,
Old Henry Lea, Knight of the Crowne dismountes,
And in a faire Pauilion hard at hand,
Where holie lightes burnt on the hallowed shrine
To Vertue or to Vesta consecrate,
Hauing vnarm'd his body, head and all,
To his great Mistresse his petition makes,
That in regard and fauour of his age,
It would so please her princely Maiestie
To suffer him giue vp his staffe and Armes,
And honourable place wherein he seru'd,
To that thrice valiant Earle, whose Honors pledge
His life should be: with that he singled foorth
The flower of English Knightes, the valiant Earle
Of Cumberland, and him (before them all)
He humbly prayes her Highnesse to accept,
And him install in place of those designes,
And to him giues his armour and his launce,
Protesting to her princelie Maiestie,
In sight of heauen and all her princelie Lordes,
He would betake him to his Oraysons:
And spend the remnant of his waining age,

(Vnfit for warres and Martiall exploites)
In praiers for her endlesse happines.
Whereat she smiles, and sighes, and seem'd to say
Good Woodman, though thy greene be turn'd to gray,
Thy age past Aprils prime, and pleasant May:
Haue thy request, we take him at thy praise,
May he succeed the honour of thy daies.
Amen, said all, and hope they doo no lesse,
No lesse his vertue and nobilitie,
His skill in Armes and practise promiseth,
And many Champions such may England liue to haue
And daies & yeares as many such, as she in heart can craue.

George Peele

Polyhymnia: Sonnet

His golden locks time hath to silver turn'd;
O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurn'd,
But spurn'd in vain; youth waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
And lovers' sonnets turn'd to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
And feed on prayers, which are age his alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
He'll teach his swains this carol for a song:
"Blest be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Curst be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,
To be your beadsman now that was your knight.

George Peele

The Sad Shepherd's Passion of Love

O Gentle Love, ungentle for thy deed,
Thou makest my heart
A bloody mark
With piercing shot to bleed.
Shoot soft, sweet Love, for fear thou shoot amiss,
For fear too keen
Thy arrows been,
And hist the heart where my beloved is.
Too fair that fortune were, nor never I
Shall be so blest,
Among the rest,
That Love shall seize on her by sympathy.
Then since with Love my prayers bear no boot,
This doth remain
To cease my pain,
I take the wound, and die at Venus' foot.

George Peele