

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Henry Howard**

**- poems -**

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## **A Praise of His Love**

Give place, ye lovers, here before  
That spent your boasts and brags in vain;  
My lady's beauty passeth more  
The best of yours, I dare well sayn,  
Than doth the sun the candle-light,  
Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just  
As had Penelope the fair;  
For what she saith, ye may it trust,  
As it by writing sealed were;  
And virtues hath she many mo  
Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I wold,  
The whole effect of Nature's plaint,  
When she had lost the perfit mould,  
The like to whom she could not paint;  
With wringing hands, how she did cry,  
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,  
Her kingdom only set apart,  
There was no loss by law of kind,  
That could have gone so near her heart;  
And this was chiefly all her pain;  
She could not make the like again.

Sith Nature thus gave her the praise,  
To be the chiefest work she wrought;  
In faith, methink, some better ways  
On your behalf might well be sought,  
Than to compare, as ye have done,  
To match the candle with the sun.

Henry Howard

## A Satire against the citizens of London

London, hast thou accused me  
Of breach of laws, the root of strife?  
Within whose breast did boil to see,  
So fervent hot, thy dissolute life,  
That even the hate of sins that grow  
Within thy wicked walls so rife,  
For to break forth did convert so  
That terror could it not repress.  
The which, by words since preachers know  
What hope is left for to redress,  
By unknown means it liked me  
My hidden burden to express,  
Whereby it might appear to thee  
That secret sin hath secret spite;  
From justice' rod no fault is free;  
But that all such as work unright  
In most quiet are next ill rest.  
In secret silence of the night  
This made me, with a reckless breast,  
To wake thy sluggards with my bow--  
A figure of the Lord's behest,  
Whose scourge for sin the Scriptures show.  
That, as the fearful thunder-clap  
By sudden flame at hand we know,  
Of pebble-stones the soundless rap  
The dreadful plague might make thee see  
Of God's wrath that doth thee enwrap;  
That pride might know, from conscience free  
How lofty works may her defend;  
And envy find, as he hath sought,  
How other seek him to offend;  
And wrath taste of each cruel thought  
The just shapp higher in the end;  
And idle sloth, that never wrought,  
To heaven his spirit lift may begin;  
And greedy lucre live in dread  
To see what hate ill-got goods win;  
The lechers, ye that lusts do feed,  
Perceive what secrecy is in sin;  
And gluttons' hearts for sorrow bleed,  
Awaked, when their fault they find:  
In loathsome vice each drunken wight  
To stir to God, this was my mind.  
Thy windows had done me no spite;  
But proud people that dread no fall,  
Clothed with falsehood and unright,  
Bred in the closures of thy wall;  
But wrested to wrath in fervent zeal,  
Thou haste to strife, my secret call.  
Endured hearts no warning feel.  
O shameless whore, is dread then gone  
By such thy foes as meant thy weal?

O member of false Babylon!  
The shop of craft, the den of ire!  
Thy dreadful doom draws fast upon;  
Thy martyrs' blood, by sword and fire,  
In heaven and earth for justice call.  
The Lord shall hear their just desire;  
The flame of wrath shall on thee fall;  
With famine and pest lamentably  
Stricken shall be thy lechers all;  
Thy proud towers and turrets high,  
En'mies to God, beat stone from stone,  
Thine idols burnt that wrought iniquity;  
When none thy ruin shall bemoan,  
But render unto the right wise Lord  
That so hath judged Babylon,  
Immortal praise with one accord.

Henry Howard

## **Alas! So All Things Now Do Hold Their Peace**

Alas! so all things now do hold their peace,  
Heaven and earth disturbed in nothing.  
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease,  
The night{:e}s chare the stars about doth bring.  
Calm is the sea, the waves work less and less:  
So am not I, whom love, alas, doth wring,  
Bringing before my face the great increase  
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing  
In joy and woe, as in a doubtful ease.  
For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure bring,  
But by and by the cause of my disease  
Gives me a pang that inwardly doth sting,  
When that I think what grief it is again  
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain.

Henry Howard

### **From Tuscan Came My Lady's Worthy Race**

From Tuscan came my lady's worthy race;  
Fair Florence was sometime her ancient seat.  
The western isle whose pleasant shore doth face  
Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat.  
Foster'd she was with milk of Irish breast;  
Her sire an earl, her dame of princes' blood.  
From tender years in Britain she doth rest  
With a king's child, where she tastes ghostly food.  
Hunsdon did first present her to mine eye;  
Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight;  
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine;  
And Windsor, alas, doth chase me from her sight.  
Beauty her mate, her virtues from above:  
Happy is he that may obtain her love.

Henry Howard

## Lady Surrey's Lament for Her Absent Lord

Good ladies, you that have your pleasure in exile,  
Step in your foot, come take a place, and mourn with me a while,  
And such as by their lords do set but little price,  
Let them sit still: it skills them not what chance come on the dice.  
But ye whom Love hath bound by order of desire  
To love your lords, whose good deserts none other would require:  
Come you yet once again, and set your foot by mine,  
Whose woeful plight and sorrows great no tongue may well define.  
My love and lord, alas, in whom consists my wealth,  
Hath fortune sent to pass the seas in hazard of his health.  
That I was wont for to embrace, contented mind's,  
Is now amid the foaming floods at pleasure of the winds.  
There God him well preserve, and safely me him send,  
Without which hope, my life alas were shortly at an end.  
Whose absence yet, although my hope doth tell me plain,  
With short return he comes anon, yet ceaseth not my pain.  
The fearful dreams I have, oft times they grieve me so,  
That then I wake and stand in doubt, if they be true, or no.  
Sometime the roaring seas, me seems, they grow so high,  
That my sweet lord in danger great, alas, doth often lie.  
Another time the same doth tell me, he is come;  
And playing, where I shall him find with T., his little son.  
So forth I go apace to see that liefsome sight,  
And with a kiss me thinks I say: "Now welcome home, my knight;  
Welcome my sweet, alas, the stay of my welfare;  
Thy presence bringeth forth a truce betwixt me and my care."  
Then lively doth he look, and salveth me again,  
And saith: "My dear, how is it now that you have all this pain?"  
Wherewith the heavy cares that heap'd are in my breast,  
Break forth, and me dischargeth clean of all my huge unrest.  
But when I me awake and find it but a dream,  
The anguish of my former woe beginneth more extreme,  
And me tormenteth so, that unneath may I find  
Some hidden where, to steal the grief of my unquiet mind.  
Thus every way you see with absence how I burn;  
And for my wound no cure there is but hope of good return;  
Save when I feel, by sour how sweet is felt the more,  
It doth abate some of my pains that I abode before.  
And then unto myself I say: "When that we two shall meet,  
But little time shall seem this pain, that joy shall be so sweet."  
Ye winds, I you convert in chiefest of your rage,  
That you my lord me safely send, my sorrows to assuage;  
And that I may not long abide in such excess,  
Do your good will to cure a wight that liveth in distress.

Henry Howard

## London, Hast Thou Accursed Me

London, hast thou accused me  
Of breach of laws, the root of strife?  
Within whose breast did boil to see,  
So fervent hot, thy dissolute life,  
That even the hate of sins that grow  
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The Lord shall hear their just desire;  
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Henry Howard

## **Love that Doth Reign and Live**

Love that doth reign and live within my thought  
And built his seat within my captive breast,  
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,  
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.  
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,  
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire  
With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,  
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.  
And coward Love then to the heart apace  
Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain  
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.  
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain;  
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:  
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

Henry Howard

## **Of the Death of Sir T.W. the Elder**

Wyatt resteth here, that quick could never rest;  
Whose heavenly gifts increased by disdain,  
And virtue sank the deeper in his breast;  
Such profit he by envy could obtain.

A head where wisdom mysteries did frame,  
Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain  
As on a stithy where that some work of fame  
Was daily wrought, to turn to Britain's gain.

A visage stern and mild, where both did grow,  
Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoice;  
Amid great storms, whom grace assured so  
To live upright and smile at fortune's choice.

A hand that taught what might be said in rhyme;  
That reft Chaucer the glory of his wit:  
A mark, the which (unparfited, for time)  
Some may approach, but never none shall hit.

A tongue that served in foreign realms his king;  
Whose courteous talk to virtue did enflame  
Each noble heart; a worthy guide to bring  
Our English youth by travail unto fame.

An eye whose judgment none affect could blind,  
Friends to allure, and foes to reconcile;  
Whose piercing look did represent a mind  
With virtue fraught, reposed, void of guile.

A heart where dread was never so impress'd,  
To hide the thought that might the truth advance;  
In neither fortune loft, nor yet repress'd,  
To swell in wealth, or yield unto mischance.

A valiant corps, where force and beauty met;  
Happy, alas, too happy, but for foes!  
Lived, and ran the race, that Nature set:  
Of manhood's shape, where she the mould did lose.

But to the heavens that simple soul is fled,  
Which left with such as covet Christ to know  
Witness of faith that never shall be dead,  
Sent for our health, but not received so.  
Thus, for our guilt, this jewel have we lost;  
The earth his bones, the heavens possess his ghost.

Henry Howard

## **Set Me Whereas the Sun Doth Parch the Green**

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green  
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice,  
In temperate heat where he is felt and seen;  
In presence prest of people, mad or wise;  
Set me in high or yet in low degree,  
In longest night or in the shortest day,  
In clearest sky or where clouds thickest be,  
In lusty youth or when my hairs are gray.  
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell;  
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;  
Thrall or at large, alive whereso I dwell,  
Sick or in health, in evil fame or good:  
Hers will I be, and only with this thought  
Content myself although my chance be nought.

Henry Howard

## So Cruel Prison

So cruel prison how could betide, alas,  
As proud Windsor? Where I in lust and joy  
With a king's son my childish years did pass  
In greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy;  
Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour:  
The large green courts, where we were wont to hove,  
With eyes cast up unto the maidens' tower,  
And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love;  
The stately salles, the ladies bright of hue,  
The dances short, long tales of great delight;  
With words and looks that tigers could but rue,  
Where each of us did plead the other's right;  
The palm play where, despoiled for the game,  
With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love  
Have miss'd the ball and got sight of our dame,  
To bait her eyes, which kept the leads above;  
The gravel'd ground, with sleeves tied on the helm,  
On foaming horse, with swords and friendly hearts,  
With cheer, as though the one should overwhelm,  
Where we have fought, and chased oft with darts;  
With silver drops the mead yet spread for ruth,  
In active games of nimbleness and strength,  
Where we did strain, trailed by swarms of youth,  
Our tender limbs that yet shot up in length;  
The secret groves which oft we made resound  
Of pleasant plaint and of our ladies' praise,  
Recording oft what grace each one had found,  
What hope of speed, what dread of long delays;  
The wild forest, the clothed holt with green,  
With reins aval'd, and swift ybreathed horse,  
With cry of hounds and merry blasts between,  
Where we did chase the fearful hart a force;  
The void walls eke that harbor'd us each night,  
Wherewith, alas, revive within my breast  
The sweet accord, such sleeps as yet delight,  
The pleasant dreams, the quiet bed of rest;  
The secret thoughts imparted with such trust,  
The wanton talk, the divers change of play,  
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just,  
Wherewith we pass'd the winter nights away.  
And with this thought the blood forsakes the face,  
The tears berain my cheeks of deadly hue,  
The which as soon as sobbing sighs (alas)  
Upsupped have, thus I my plaint renew:  
"O place of bliss, renewer of my woes,  
Give me account--where is my noble fere?  
Whom in thy walls thou didst each night enclose,  
To other lief, but unto me most dear."  
Echo (alas) that doth my sorrow rue,  
Returns thereto a hollow sound of plaint.  
Thus I alone, where all my freedom grew,  
In prison pine with bondage and restraint;

And with remembrance of the greater grief  
To banish the less, I find my chief relief.

Henry Howard

## The Ages of Man

Laid in my quiet bed, in study as I were,  
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts appear,  
And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes,  
That now I sigh'd, and then I smil'd, as cause of thought did rise.  
I saw the little boy, in thought how oft that he  
Did wish of God to scape the rod, a tall young man to be;  
The young man eke, that feels his bones with pains oppress'd,  
How he would be a rich old man, to live and lie at rest;  
The rich old man, that sees his end draw on so sore,  
How he would be a boy again, to live so much the more.  
Whereat full oft I smil'd, to see how all these three,  
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and change degree.  
And musing thus, I think the case is very strange  
That man from wealth, to live in woe, doth ever seek to change.  
Thus thoughtful as I lay, I saw my wither'd skin,  
How it doth show my dinted jaws, the flesh was worn so thin;  
And eke my toothless chaps, the gates of my right way,  
That opes and shuts as I do speak, do thus unto me say:  
"Thy white and hoarish hairs, the messengers of age,  
That show like lines of true belief that this life doth assuage,  
Bids thee lay hand and feel them hanging on thy chin,  
The which do write two ages past, the third now coming in.  
Hang up, therefore, the bit of thy young wanton time,  
And thou that therein beaten art, the happiest life define."  
Whereat I sigh'd and said: "Farewell, my wonted joy,  
Truss up thy pack and trudge from me to every little boy,  
And tell them thus from me: their time most happy is,  
If to their time they reason had to know the truth of this."

Henry Howard

## **The Frailty and Hurtfulness of Beauty**

Brittle beauty, that nature made so frail,  
Whereof the gift is small, and short the season;  
Flow'ring today, tomorrow apt to fail,  
Tickle treasure, abhorred of reason;  
Dangerous to deal with, vain, of none avail,  
Costly in keeping, past not worth two peason;  
Slipper in sliding, as is an eel's tail,  
Hard to obtain, once gotten, not geason;  
Jewel of jeopardy that peril doth assail,  
False and untrue, enticed oft to treason,  
Enemy to youth; that most may I bewail.  
Ah, bitter sweet, infecting as the poison,  
Thou farest as fruit that with the frost is taken,  
Today ready ripe, tomorrow all to-shaken.

Henry Howard

## **The Golden Gift that Nature Did Thee Give**

The golden gift that Nature did thee give  
To fasten friends and feed them at thy will  
With form and favour, taught me to believe  
How thou art made to show her greatest skill,  
Whose hidden virtues are not so unknown  
But lively dooms might gather at the first:  
Where beauty so her perfect seed hath sown  
Of other graces follow needs there must.  
Now certes, lady, since all this is true,  
That from above thy gifts are thus elect,  
Do not deface them then with fancies new,  
Nor change of minds let not thy mind infect,  
But mercy him, thy friend, that doth thee serve,  
Who seeks always thine honour to preserve.

Henry Howard

## **The Soote Season**

The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,  
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;  
The nightingale with feathers new she sings,  
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.  
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,  
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale,  
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings,  
The fishes float with new repaired scale,  
The adder all her slough away she slings,  
The swift swallow pursueth the flyës smale,  
The busy bee her honey now she mings--  
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.  
And thus I see, among these pleasant things  
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

Henry Howard

## **The Things that Cause a Quiet Life**

My friend, the things that do attain  
The happy life be these, I find:  
The riches left, not got with pain,  
The fruitful ground; the quiet mind;

The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;  
No charge of rule nor governance;  
Without disease the healthy life;  
The household of continuance;

The mean diet, no dainty fare;  
True wisdom joined with simpleness;  
The night discharged of all care,  
Where wine the wit may not oppress;

The faithful wife, without debate;  
Such sleeps as may beguile the night:  
Content thyself with thine estate,  
Neither wish death, nor fear his might.

Henry Howard