

Classic Poetry Series

John Henry Dryden

- poems -

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A Song for St. Cecilia's Day

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
When nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
'Arise, ye more than dead!'
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger,
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!

The soft complaining flute,
In dying notes, discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

But O, what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the Blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky!

John Henry Dryden

Ah, how sweet it is to love!

AH, how sweet it is to love!
Ah, how gay is young Desire!
And what pleasing pains we prove
When we first approach Love's fire!
Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs which are from lovers blown
Do but gently heave the heart:
Ev'n the tears they shed alone
Cure, like trickling balm, their smart:
Lovers, when they lose their breath,
Bleed away in easy death.

Love and Time with reverence use,
Treat them like a parting friend;
Nor the golden gifts refuse
Which in youth sincere they send:
For each year their price is more,
And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides full and high,
Swells in every youthful vein;
But each tide does less supply,
Till they quite shrink in again:
If a flow in age appear,
'Tis but rain, and runs not clear.

John Henry Dryden

Alexander's Feast; Or, The Power Of Music

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride:—
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair!

Timotheus placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia prest,
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
- The listening crowd admire the lofty sound!
A present deity! they shout around:
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound!
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he Heaven and Earth defied
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse:
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
- With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of Chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
Honour but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying:
Lovely This sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
- The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again:
At length with love and wine at once opprest
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!

Break his bands of sleep asunder

And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head:
As awaked from the dead
And amazed he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arisel
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
- The princes applaud with a furious joy:
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, fired another Troy!

- Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
- Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down!

John Henry Dryden

An Ode, On the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell

Late Servant to his Majesty, and Organist of the Chapel Royal, and of St. Peter's Westminster

I

Mark how the Lark and Linnet Sing,
With rival Notes
They strain their warbling Throats,
To welcome in the Spring.
But in the close of Night,
When Philomel begins her Heav'nly lay,
They cease their mutual spite,
Drink in her Music with delight,
And list'ning and silent, and silent and list'ning,
And list'ning and silent obey.

II

So ceas'd the rival Crew when Purcell came,
They Sung no more, or only Sung his Fame.
Struck dumb they all admir'd the God-like Man,
The God-like Man,
Alas, too soon retir'd,
As He too late began.
We beg not Hell, our Orpheus to restore,
Had He been there,
Their Sovereign's fear
Had sent Him back before.
The pow'r of Harmony too well they know,
He long e'er this had Tun'd their jarring Sphere,
And left no Hell below.

III

The Heav'nly Choir, who heard his Notes from high,
Let down the Scale of Music from the Sky:
They handed him along,
And all the way He taught, and all the way they Sung.
Ye Brethren of the Lyre, and tuneful Voice,
Lament his Lot: but at your own rejoice.
Now live secure and linger out your days,
The Gods are pleas'd alone with Purcell's Lays,
Nor know to mend their Choice.

John Henry Dryden

Ask not the cause why sullen spring

Ask not the cause why sullen spring
So long delays her flow'rs to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year?
Chloris is gone; and Fate provides
To make it spring where she resides.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye:
But left her lover in despair,
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah, how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure!

Great god of Love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of ev'ry land?
Where thou hadst plac'd such pow'r before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs,
And ev'ry life but mine recall.

I only am by love design'd

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John Henry Dryden

By a dismal cypress lying: A Song from the Italian

By a dismal cypress lying,
Damon cried, all pale and dying,
Kind is death that ends my pain,
But cruel she I lov'd in vain.
The mossy fountains
Murmur my trouble,
And hollow mountains
My groans redouble:
Ev'ry nymph mourns me,
Thus while I languish;
She only scorns me,
Who caus'd my anguish.
No love returning me, but all hope denying;
By a dismal cypress lying,
Like a swan, so sung he dying:
Kind is death that ends my pain,
But cruel she I lov'd in vain.

John Henry Dryden

Calm was the even, and clear was the sky

Calm was the even, and clear was the sky,
And the new budding flowers did spring,
When all alone went Amyntas and I
To hear the sweet nightingale sing;
I sate, and he laid him down by me;
But scarcely his breath he could draw;
For when with a fear, he began to draw near,
He was dash'd with A ha ha ha ha!

He blush'd to himself, and lay still for a while,
And his modesty curb'd his desire;
But straight I convinc'd all his fear with a smile,
Which added new flames to his fire.
O Silvia, said he, you are cruel,
To keep your poor lover in awe;
Then once more he press'd with his hand to my breast,
But was dash'd with A ha ha ha ha!

I knew 'twas his passion that caus'd all his fear;
And therefore I pitied his case:
I whisper'd him softly, there's nobody near,
And laid my cheek close to his face:
But as he grew bolder and bolder,
A shepherd came by us and saw;
And just as our bliss we began with a kiss,
He laugh'd out with A ha ha ha ha!

John Henry Dryden

Can life be a blessing

Can life be a blessing,
Or worth the possessing,
Can life be a blessing if love were away?
Ah no! though our love all night keep us waking,
And though he torment us with cares all the day,
Yet he sweetens, he sweetens our pains in the taking,
There's an hour at the last, there's an hour to repay.

In ev'ry possessing,
The ravishing blessing,
In ev'ry possessing the fruit of our pain,
Poor lovers forget long ages of anguish,
Whate'er they have suffer'd and done to obtain;
'Tis a pleasure, a pleasure to sigh and to languish,
When we hope, when we hope to be happy again.

John Henry Dryden

Fair Iris I Love and Hourly I Die

Fair Iris I love and hourly I die,
But not for a lip nor a languishing eye:
She's fickle and false, and there I agree;
For I am as false and as fickle as she:
We neither believe what either can say;
And, neither believing, we neither betray.

'Tis civil to swear and say things, of course;
We mean not the taking for better or worse.
When present we love, when absent agree;
I think not of Iris, nor Iris of me:
The legend of love no couple can find
So easy to part, or so equally join'd.

John Henry Dryden

Farewell Ungrateful Traitor

Farewell ungrateful traitor,
Farewell my perjured swain,
Let never injured creature
Believe a man again.
The pleasure of possessing
Surpasses all expressing,
But 'tis too short a blessing,
And love too long a pain.

'Tis easy to deceive us
In pity of your pain,
But when we love you leave us
To rail at you in vain.
Before we have descried it,
There is no bliss beside it,
But she that once has tried it
Will never love again.

The passion you pretended
Was only to obtain,
But when the charm is ended
The charmer you disdain.
Your love by ours we measure
Till we have lost our treasure,
But dying is a pleasure,
When living is a pain.

John Henry Dryden

Happy the man

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call today his own:
He who, secure within, can say,
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.
Be fair or foul or rain or shine
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself upon the past has power,
But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

John Henry Dryden

Heroic Stanzas

Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of His
Most Serene and Renowned Highness, Oliver,
Late Lord Protector of This Commonwealth, etc.
Written After the Celebration of his Funeral

1

And now 'tis time; for their officious haste,
Who would before have borne him to the sky,
Like eager Romans ere all rites were past
Did let too soon the sacred eagle fly.

2

Though our best notes are treason to his fame
Join'd with the loud applause of public voice;
Since Heav'n, what praise we offer to his name,
Hath render'd too authentic by its choice;

3

Though in his praise no arts can liberal be,
Since they whose Muses have the highest flown
Add not to his immortal memory,
But do an act of friendship to their own;

4

Yet 'tis our duty and our interest too
Such monuments as we can build to raise,
Lest all the world prevent what we should do
And claim a title in him by their praise.

5

How shall I then begin, or where conclude
To draw a fame so truly circular?
For in a round what order can be shew'd,
Where all the parts so equal perfect are?

6

His grandeur he deriv'd from Heav'n alone,
For he was great ere fortune made him so,
And wars like mists that rise against the sun
Made him but greater seem, not greater grown.

7

No borrow'd bays his temples did adorn,
But to our crown he did fresh jewels bring.

Nor was his virtue poison'd soon as born
With the too early thoughts of being king.

8

Fortune (that easy mistress of the young
But to her ancient servant coy and hard)
Him at that age her favorites rank'd among
When she her best-lov'd Pompey did discard.

9

He, private, mark'd the faults of others' sway,
And set as sea-marks for himself to shun,
Not like rash monarchs who their youth betray
By acts their age too late would wish undone.

10

And yet dominion was not his design;
We owe that blessing not to him but Heaven,
Which to fair acts unsought rewards did join,
Rewards that less to him than us were given.

11

Our former chiefs like sticklers of the war
First sought t'inflame the parties, then to poise,
The quarrel lov'd, but did the cause abhor,
And did not strike to hurt but make a noise.

12

War, our consumption, was their gainfull trade;
We inward bled whilst they prolong'd our pain;
He fought to end our fighting and assay'd
To stanch the blood by breathing of the vein.

13

Swift and resistless through the land he pass'd
Like that bold Greek who did the east subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste
As if on wings of victory he flew.

14

He fought secure of fortune as of fame,
Till by new maps the island might be shown,
Of conquests which he strew'd where'er he came
Thick as a galaxy with stars is sown.

15

His palms, though under weights they did not stand,
Still thriv'd; no winter could his laurels fade;
Heav'n in his portrait shew'd a workman's hand
And drew it perfect yet without a shade.

16

Peace was the prize of all his toils and care,
Which war had banish'd and did now restore;
Bologna's walls thus mounted in the air
To seat themselves more surely than before.

17

Her safety rescu'd Ireland to him owes,
And treacherous Scotland, to no int'rest true,
Yet bless'd that fate which did his arms dispose
Her land to civilize as to subdue.

18

Nor was he like those stars which only shine
When to pale mariners they storms portend;
He had his calmer influence, and his mien
Did love and majesty together blend.

19

'Tis true, his count'nance did imprint an awe,
And naturally all souls to his did bow,
As wands of divination downward draw
And points to beds where sov'reign gold doth grow.

20

When past all offerings to Feretrian Jove,
He Mars depos'd and arms to gowns made yield;
Successful councils did him soon approve
As fit for close intrigues as open field.

21

To suppliant Holland he vouchsaf'd a peace,
Our once bold rival in the British main,
Now tamely glad her unjust claim to cease
And buy our friendship with her idol, gain.

22

Fame of th' asserted sea through Europe blown

Made France and Spain ambitious of his love;
Each knew that side must conquer he would own,
And for him fiercely as for empire strove.

23

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd
Than the light monsieur the grave don outweigh'd;
His fortune turn'd the scale where it was cast,
Though Indian mines were in the other laid.

24

When absent, yet we conquer'd in his right,
For though some meaner artist's skill were shown
In mingling colours, or in placing light,
Yet still the fair designment was his own.

25

For from all tempers he could service draw;
The worth of each with its alloy he knew,
And as the confidant of Nature saw
How she complexions did divide and brew.

26

Or he their single virtues did survey
By intuition in his own large breast,
Where all the rich ideas of them lay,
That were the rule and measure to the rest.

27

When such heroic virtue Heav'n sets out,
The stars like Commons sullenly obey,
Because it drains them when it comes about,
And therefore is a tax they seldom pay.

28

From this high spring our foreign conquests flow,
Which yet more glorious triumphs do portend,
Since their commencement to his arms they owe,
If springs as high as fountains may ascend.

29

He made us freemen of the continent
Whom Nature did like captives treat before,
To nobler preys the English lion sent,
And taught him first in Belgian walks to roar.

30

That old unquestion'd pirate of the land,
Proud Rome, with dread the fate of Dunkirk heard,
And trembling wish'd behind more Alps to stand,
Although an Alexander were here guard.

31

By his command we boldly cross'd the line
And bravely fought where southern stars arise,
We trac'd the far-fetch'd gold unto the mine
And that which brib'd our fathers made our prize.

32

Such was our prince; yet own'd a soul above
The highest acts it could produce to show:
Thus poor mechanic arts in public move
Whilst the deep secrets beyond practice go.

33

Nor di'd he when his ebbing fame went less,
But when fresh laurels courted him to live;
He seem'd but to prevent some new success,
As if above what triumphs earth could give.

34

His latest victories still thickest came,
As near the center motion does increase,
Till he, press'd down by his own weighty name,
Did, like the vestal, under spoils decrease.

35

But first the ocean as a tribute sent
That giant prince of all her watery herd,
And th' isle when her protecting genius went
Upon his obsequies loud sighs conferr'd.

36

No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey,
And wars have that respect for his repose,
As winds for halycons when they breed at sea.

37

His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest;
His name a great example stands to show
How strangely high endeavours may be blest,
Where piety and valour jointly go.

John Henry Dryden

Hidden Flame

I FEED a flame within, which so torments me
That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me:
'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it,
That I had rather die than once remove it.

Yet he, for whom I grieve, shall never know it;
My tongue does not betray, nor my eyes show it.
Not a sigh, nor a tear, my pain discloses,
But they fall silently, like dew on roses.

Thus, to prevent my Love from being cruel,
My heart 's the sacrifice, as 'tis the fuel;
And while I suffer this to give him quiet,
My faith rewards my love, though he deny it.

On his eyes will I gaze, and there delight me;
While I conceal my love no frown can fright me.
To be more happy I dare not aspire,
Nor can I fall more low, mounting no higher.

John Henry Dryden

Mac Flecknoe: A Satire upon the True-blue Protestant Poet T

All human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey:
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long:
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute
Through all the realms of Non-sense, absolute.
This aged prince now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the State:
And pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit;
Cry'd, 'tis resolv'd; for nature pleads that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me:
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dullness from his tender years.
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day:
Besides his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty:
Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology:
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames did'st cut thy way,
With well tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of an host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well sharpen'd thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar:
Echoes from Pissing-Alley, Shadwell call,
And Shadwell they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast, that floats along.
Sometimes as prince of thy harmonious band
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.

St. Andre's feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not ev'n the feet of thy own Psyche's rhyme:
Though they in number as in sense excel;
So just, so like tautology they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore
The lute and sword which he in triumph bore
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius more.
Here stopt the good old sire; and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dullness he was made.

Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd)
An ancient fabric, rais'd t'inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:
A watch tower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys.
Where their vast courts, the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a nursery erects its head,
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear;
But gentle Simkin just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds:
Pure clinches, the suburban muse affords;
And Panton waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Shadwell's throne.
For ancient Decker prophesi'd long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense:
To whom true dullness should some Psyches owe,
But worlds of Misers from his pen should flow;
Humorists and hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.

Now Empress Fame had publisht the renown,
Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.
Rous'd by report of fame, the nations meet,
From near Bun-Hill, and distant Watling-street.
No Persian carpets spread th'imperial way,
But scatter'd limbs of mangled poets lay:
From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and reliques of the bum.
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,

But loads of Shadwell almost chok'd the way.
 Bilk'd stationers for yeoman stood prepar'd,
 And Herringman was Captain of the Guard.
 The hoary prince in majesty appear'd,
 High on a throne of his own labours rear'd.
 At his right hand our young Ascanius sat
 Rome's other hope, and pillar of the state.
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
 And lambent dullness play'd around his face.
 As Hannibal did to the altars come,
 Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
 So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain,
 That he till death true dullness would maintain;
 And in his father's right, and realm's defence,
 Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
 The king himself the sacred unction made,
 As king by office, and as priest by trade:
 In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
 He plac'd a mighty mug of potent ale;
 Love's kingdom to his right he did convey,
 At once his sceptre and his rule of sway;
 Whose righteous lore the prince had practis'd young,
 And from whose loins recorded Psyche sprung,
 His temples last with poppies were o'er spread,
 That nodding seem'd to consecrate his head:
 Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
 On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
 So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
 Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
 Th'admiring throng loud acclamations make,
 And omens of his future empire take.
 The sire then shook the honours of his head,
 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
 Full on the filial dullness: long he stood,
 Repelling from his breast the raging god;
 At length burst out in this prophetic mood:

Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
 To far Barbadoes on the Western main;
 Of his dominion may no end be known,
 And greater than his father's be his throne.
 Beyond love's kingdom let him stretch his pen;
 He paus'd, and all the people cry'd Amen.
 Then thus, continu'd he, my son advance
 Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
 Success let other teach, learn thou from me
 Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
 Let Virtuosos in five years be writ;
 Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
 Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,
 Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
 Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,

And in their folly show the writer's wit.
 Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,
 And justify their author's want of sense.
 Let 'em be all by thy own model made
 Of dullness, and desire no foreign aid:
 That they to future ages may be known,
 Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
 Nay let thy men of wit too be the same,
 All full of thee, and differing but in name;
 But let no alien Sedley interpose
 To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose.
 And when false flowers of rhetoric thou would'st cull,
 Trust Nature, do not labour to be dull;
 But write thy best, and top; and in each line,
 Sir Formal's oratory will be thine.
 Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill,
 And does thy Northern Dedications fill.
 Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
 By arrogating Jonson's hostile name.
 Let Father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
 And Uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
 Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part;
 What share have we in Nature or in Art?
 Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
 And rail at arts he did not understand?
 Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein,
 Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain?
 Where sold he bargains, whip-stitch, kiss my arse,
 Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
 When did his muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,
 As thou whole Eth'ridge dost transfuse to thine?
 But so transfus'd as oil on waters flow,
 His always floats above, thine sinks below.
 This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
 New humours to invent for each new play:
 This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
 By which one way, to dullness, 'tis inclin'd,
 Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
 And in all changes that way bends thy will.
 Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence
 Of likeness; thine's a tympany of sense.
 A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
 But sure thou 'rt but a kilderkin of wit.
 Like mine thy gentle numbers feebly creep,
 Thy Tragic Muse gives smiles, thy Comic sleep.
 With whate'er gall thou sett'st thy self to write,
 Thy inoffensive satires never bite.
 In thy felonious heart, though venom lies,
 It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
 Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
 In keen iambics, but mild anagram:
 Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command

Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or if thou would'st thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar'd,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Born upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

John Henry Dryden

Marriage A-La-Mode

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decay'd?
We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could,
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another:
For all we can gain is to give our selves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Henry Dryden

Ode

To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady, Mrs Anne Killigrew,
Excellent in the Two Sister-arts of Poesy and Painting.

Thou youngest Virgin Daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new-plucked from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green, above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,
Or, in procession fixed and regular
Moved with the heavens' majestic pace;
Or, called to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss:
Whatever happy region be thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since Heaven's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal muse thy praise rehearse
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesie were given,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer
And candidate of Heaven.

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfused into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was formed, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before;
If so, then cease thy flight, O Heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say that at thy birth
New joy was sprung in Heav'n as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tuned it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;

And then if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees
On thy sweet mouth distilled their golden dew,
'Twas that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemnized there thy birth, and kept thy holyday above.

O gracious God! how far have we
Profaned thy Heav'nly gift of poesy!
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debased to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordained above,
For tongues of angels and for hymns of love!
Oh wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubrique and adult'rate age
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own)
T' increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t' excuse our second fall?
Let this thy vestal, Heav'n, atone for all:
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoiled,
Unmixed with foreign filth and undefiled;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child.

Art she had none, yet wanted none,
For nature did that want supply:
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seemed borrowed, where 'twas only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test and ev'ry light her muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her muse expressed)
Was but a lambent-flame which played about her breast,
Light as the vapours of a morning dream;
So cold herself, while she such warmth expressed,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretched her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A chamber of dependences was framed,
(As conquerers will never want pretence,

When armed, to justify th' offence),
And the whole fief, in right of poetry, she claimed.
The country open lay without defence;
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament;

And all the large domains which the dumb-sister swayed,
All bowed beneath her government,
Received in triumph wheresoe'er she went.
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul designed,
And oft the happy draught surpassed the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks;
Of shallow brooks that flowed so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods
Which as in mirrors showed the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns, broken lie,
And, though defaced, the wonder of the eye;
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

The scene then changed; with bold erected look
Our martial king the sight with rev'rence strook:
For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand called out the image of his heart,
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figured there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phoenix Queen was portrayed too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observed, as well as heavenly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands:
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank, the Queen!
Thus nothing to her genius was denied,
But like a ball of fire, the farther thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had designed, Heaven only knows:

To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose,
That Fate alone its progress could oppose.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
That well-proportioned shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies!
Not wit nor piety could Fate prevent;

Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;
But, like a hardened felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plundered first, and then destroyed.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic, and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda died:
Heaven, by the same disease, did both translate;
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

Meantime, her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, gen'rous youth! that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wrecked at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far
Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star,
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations underground;
When in the valley of Jehosaphat
The judging God shall close the book of Fate;
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky,
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those clothed with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound:
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight with in-born vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the New Morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shall go,
As harbinger of Heav'n, the way to show,

The way which thou so well hast learned below.

John Henry Dryden

Religio Laici

(OR A LAYMAN'S FAITH)

Dim, as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand'ring travellers,
Is reason to the soul; and as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky
Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere
So pale grows reason at religion's sight:
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.
Some few, whose lamp shone brighter, have been led
From cause to cause, to Nature's secret head;
And found that one first principle must be:
But what, or who, that Universal He;
Whether some soul incompassing this ball
Unmade, unmov'd; yet making, moving all;
Or various atoms' interfering dance
Leapt into form (the noble work of chance
Or this great all was from eternity;
Not even the Stagirite himself could see;
And Epicurus guess'd as well as he:
As blindly grop'd they for a future state;
As rashly judg'd of Providence and Fate:
But least of all could their endeavours find
What most concern'd the good of human kind.
For happiness was never to be found;
But vanish'd from 'em, like enchanted ground.
One thought content the good to be enjoy'd:
This, every little accident destroy'd:
The wiser madmen did for virtue toil:
A thorny, or at best a barren soil:
In pleasure some their glutton souls would steep;
But found their line too short, the well too deep;
And leaky vessels which no bliss could keep.
Thus anxious thoughts in endless circles roll,
Without a centre where to fix the soul:
In this wild maze their vain endeavours end:
How can the less the greater comprehend?
Or finite reason reach infinity?
For what could fathom God were more than He.

The Deist thinks he stands on firmer ground;
Cries [lang g]eur{-e}ka[lang e] the mighty secret's found:
God is that spring of good; supreme, and best;
We, made to serve, and in that service blest;
If so, some rules of worship must be given;
Distributed alike to all by Heaven:
Else God were partial, and to some deny'd
The means his justice should for all provide.

This general worship is to PRAISE, and PRAY:
One part to borrow blessings, one to pay:
And when frail Nature slides into offence,
The sacrifice for crimes is penitence.
Yet, since th'effects of providence, we find
Are variously dispens'd to human kind;
That vice triumphs, and virtue suffers here,
(A brand that sovereign justice cannot bear
Our reason prompts us to a future state:
The last appeal from fortune, and from fate:
Where God's all-righteous ways will be declar'd;
The bad meet punishment, the good, reward.

Thus man by his own strength to Heaven would soar:
And would not be oblig'd to God for more.
Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled
To think thy wit these god-like notions bred!
These truths are not the product of thy mind,
But dropt from Heaven, and of a nobler kind.
Reveal'd religion first inform'd thy sight,
And reason saw not, till faith sprung the light.
Hence all thy natural worship takes the source:
'Tis revelation what thou think'st discourse.
Else how com'st thou to see these truths so clear,
Which so obscure to heathens did appear?
Not Plato these, nor Aristotle found:
Nor he whose wisdom oracles renown'd.
Hast thou a wit so deep, or so sublime,
Or canst thou lower dive, or higher climb?
Canst thou, by reason, more of God-head know
Than Plutarch, Seneca, or Cicero?
Those giant wits, in happier ages born,
(When arms, and arts did Greece and Rome adorn)
Knew no such system; no such piles could raise
Of natural worship, built on pray'r and praise,
To one sole God.
Nor did remorse, to expiate sin, prescribe:
But slew their fellow creatures for a bribe:
The guiltless victim groan'd for their offence;
And cruelty, and blood was penitence.
If sheep and oxen could atone for men
Ah! at how cheap a rate the rich might sin!
And great oppressors might Heaven's wrath beguile
By offering his own creatures for a spoil!

Dar'st thou, poor worm, offend Infinity?
And must the terms of peace be given by thee?
Then thou art justice in the last appeal;
Thy easy God instructs thee to rebel:
And, like a king remote, and weak, must take
What satisfaction thou art pleas'd to make.

But if there be a pow'r too just, and strong
To wink at crimes, and bear unpunish'd wrong;
Look humbly upward, see his will disclose
The forfeit first, and then the fine impose:
A mulct thy poverty could never pay
Had not Eternal Wisdom found the way:
And with celestial wealth supply'd thy store:
His justice makes the fine, his mercy quits the score.
See God descending in thy human frame;
Th'offended, suff'ring in th'offender's name:
All thy misdeeds to him imputed see;
And all his righteousness devolv'd on thee.

For granting we have sinn'd, and that th'offence
Of man, is made against omnipotence,
Some price, that bears proportion, must be paid;
And infinite with infinite be weigh'd.
See then the Deist lost: remorse for vice,
Not paid, or paid, inadequate in price:
What farther means can reason now direct,
Or what relief from human wit expect?
That shows us sick; and sadly are we sure
Still to be sick, till Heav'n reveal the cure:
If then Heaven's will must needs be understood,
(Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good)
Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;
With Scripture, all in equal balance thrown,
And our one sacred Book will be that one.

Proof needs not here, for whether we compare
That impious, idle, superstitious ware
Of rites, lustrations, offerings, (which before,
In various ages, various countries bore)
With Christian faith and virtues, we shall find
None answ'ring the great ends of human kind,
But this one rule of life: that shows us best
How God may be appeas'd, and mortals blest.
Whether from length of time its worth we draw,
The world is scarce more ancient than the law:
Heav'n's early care prescrib'd for every age;
First, in the soul, and after, in the page.
Or, whether more abstractedly we look,
Or on the writers, or the written Book,
Whence, but from Heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.

If on the Book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true:

The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heav'n in them appeals to human sense:
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws.

Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produc'd our frame.
All faiths beside, or did by arms ascend;
Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friend:
This only doctrine does our lusts oppose:
Unfed by Nature's soil, in which it grows;
Cross to our interests, curbing sense, and sin;
Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
It thrives through pain; its own tormentors tires;
And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
To what can reason such effects assign,
Transcending Nature, but to laws divine:
Which in that sacred volume are contain'd;
Sufficient, clear, and for that use ordain'd.

But stay: the Deist here will urge anew,
No supernatural worship can be true:
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all, and everywhere be known:
A style so large as not this Book can claim
Nor aught that bears reveal'd religion's name.
'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's Birth
Is gone through all the habitable earth:
But still that text must be confin'd alone
To what was then inhabited, and known:
And what Provision could from thence accrue
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?
In other parts it helps, that ages past,
The Scriptures there were known, and were embrac'd,
Till sin spread once again the shades of night:
What's that to these who never saw the light?

Of all objections this indeed is chief
To startle reason, stagger frail belief:
We grant, 'tis true, that Heav'n from human sense
Has hid the secret paths of Providence:
But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may
Find ev'n for those bewilder'd souls, a way:
If from his nature foes may pity claim,
Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name.
And though no name be for salvation known,
But that of his eternal Son's alone;
Who knows how far transcending goodness can
Extend the merits of that Son to man?
Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead;

Or ignorance invincible may plead?
Not only charity bids hope the best,
But more the great Apostle has expressed.
That, if the Gentiles (whom no law inspir'd,)
By nature did what was by law requir'd;
They, who the written rule had never known,
Were to themselves both rule and law alone:
To nature's plain indictment they shall plead;
And, by their conscience, be condemn'd or freed.
Most righteous doom! because a rule reveal'd
Is none to those, from whom it was conceal'd.
Then those who follow'd reason's dictates right;
Liv'd up, and lifted high their natural light;
With Socrates may see their Maker's Face,
While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place.

Nor does it baulk my charity, to find
Th'Egyptian Bishop of another mind:
For, though his Creed eternal truth contains,
'Tis hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believ'd not all, his zeal requir'd,
Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.
Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and as his Christian fury rose
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose.

Thus far my charity this path has tried;
(A much unskilful, but well meaning guide
Yet what they are, ev'n these crude thoughts were bred
By reading that, which better thou hast read,
Thy matchless Author's work: which thou, my friend,
By well translating better dost commend:
Those youthful hours which, of thy equals most
In toys have squander'd, or in vice have lost,
Those hours hast thou to nobler use employ'd;
And the severe delights of truth enjoyed.
Witness this weighty book, in which appears
The crabbed toil of many thoughtful years,
Spent by thy author in the sifting care
Of rabbins' old sophisticated ware
From gold divine; which he who well can sort
May afterwards make algebra a sport.
A treasure, which if country-curates buy,
They Junius and Tremellius may defy:
Save pains in various readings, and translations;
And without Hebrew make most learn'd quotations.
A work so full with various learning fraught,
So nicely ponder'd, yet so strongly wrought,
As nature's height and art's last hand requir'd:

As much as man could compass, uninspir'd.
Where we may see what errors have been made
Both in the copier's and translator's trade:
How Jewish, Popish, interests have prevail'd,
And where infallibility has fail'd.

For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest:
For fashion-sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and Councils, and tradition's force:
But he that old traditions could subdue,
Could not but find the weakness of the new:
If Scripture, though deriv'd from Heavenly birth,
Has been but carelessly preserv'd on earth;
If God's own people, who of God before
Knew what we know, and had been promis'd more,
In fuller terms, of Heaven's assisting care,
And who did neither time, nor study spare
To keep this Book untainted, unperplex'd;
Let in gross errors to corrupt the text:
Omitted paragraphs, embroil'd the sense;
With vain traditions stopp'd the gaping fence,
Which every common hand pull'd up with ease:
What safety from such brushwood-helps as these?
If written words from time are not secur'd,
How can we think have oral sounds endur'd?
Which thus transmitted, if one mouth has fail'd,
Immortal lies on ages are entail'd:
And that some such have been, is prov'd too plain;
If we consider interest, church, and gain.

Oh but says one, tradition set aside,
Where can we hope for an unerring guide?
For since th' original Scripture has been lost,
All copies disagreeing, maim'd the most,
Or Christian faith can have no certain ground,
Or truth in Church tradition must be found.

Such an omniscient church we wish indeed;
'Twere worth both Testaments, and cast in the Creed:
But if this Mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure;
Then her infallibility, as well
Where copies are corrupt, or lame, can tell?
Restore lost Canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains:
Which yet no Council dare pretend to do;
Unless like Esdras, they could write it new:
Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd,
Is in the blest Original contain'd.
More safe, and much more modest 'tis, to say

God would not leave mankind without a way:
And that the Scriptures, though not everywhere
Free from corruption, or entire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, entire,
In all things which our needful faith require.
If others in the same glass better see
'Tis for themselves they look, but not for me:
For my salvation must its doom receive
Not from what others , but what I believe.

Must all tradition then be set aside?
This to affirm were ignorance, or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful sure
To saving faith, that Scripture leaves obscure?
Which every sect will wrest a several way
(For what one sect interprets, all sects may
We hold, and say we prove from Scripture plain,
That Christ is God ; the bold Socinian
From the same Scripture urges he's but man .
Now what appeal can end th'important suit;
Both parts talk loudly, but the Rule is mute?

Shall I speak plain, and in a nation free
Assume an honest layman's liberty?
I think (according to my little skill,
To my own Mother-Church submitting still)
That many have been sav'd, and many may,
Who never heard this question brought in play.
Th' unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
Plods on to Heaven; and ne'er is at a loss:
For the Strait-gate would be made straiter yet,
Were none admitted there but men of wit.
The few, by nature form'd, with learning fraught,
Born to instruct, as others to be taught,
Must study well the sacred page; and see
Which doctrine, this, or that, does best agree
With the whole tenor of the Work divine:
And plainliest points to Heaven's reveal'd design:
Which exposition flows from genuine sense;
And which is forc'd by wit and eloquence.
Not that tradition's parts are useless here:
When general, old, disinterest'd and clear:
That ancient Fathers thus expound the page,
Gives truth the reverend majesty of age:
Confirms its force, by biding every test;
For best authority's next Rules are best.
And still the nearer to the Spring we go
More limpid, more unsoil'd the waters flow.
Thus, first traditions were a proof alone;
Could we be certain such they were, so known:
But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth but probability.

Even Arius and Pelagius durst provoke
To what the centuries preceding spoke.
Such difference is there in an oft-told tale:
But truth by its own sinews will prevail.
Tradition written therefore more commends
Authority, than what from voice descends:
And this, as perfect as its kind can be,
Rolls down to us the Sacred History:
Which, from the Universal Church receiv'd,
Is tried, and after, for its self believ'd.

The partial Papists would infer from hence
Their church, in last resort, should judge the sense.
But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant they were
The handers down, can they from thence infer
A right t'interpret? or would they alone
Who brought the present, claim it for their own?
The Book's a common largess to mankind;
Not more for them, than every man design'd:
The welcome news is in the letter found;
The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
In all things needful to be known, is plain.

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance:
When want of learning kept the laymen low,
And none but priests were authoriz'd to know:
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell;
And he a God who could but read or spell;
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail:
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail:
But still expounded what she sold or gave;
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad:
God's Word they had not, but the priests they had.
Yet, whate'er false conveyances they made,
The lawyer still was certain to be paid.
In those dark times they learn'd their knack so well.
That by long use they grew infallible:
At last, a knowing age began t'enquire
If they the Book, or that did them inspire:
And, making narrower search they found, though late,
That what they thought the priest's was their estate:
Taught by the will produc'd, (the written Word)
How long they had been cheated on record.
Then, every man who saw the title fair,
Claim'd a child's part, and put in for a share:

Consulted soberly his private good;
And sav'd himself as cheap as e'er he could.

'Tis true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence)
This good had full as bad a consequence:
The Book thus put in every vulgar hand,
Which each presum'd he best could understand,
The common rule was made the common prey;
And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd;
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:
The spirit gave the doctoral degree:
And every member of a company
Was of his trade, and of the Bible free.
Plain truths enough for needful use they found;
But men would still be itching to expound:
Each was ambitious of th'obscurest place,
No measure ta'en from knowledge, all from grace .
Study and pains were now no more their care:
Texts were explain'd by fasting, and by prayer:
This was the fruit the private spirit brought;
Occasion'd by great zeal, and little thought.
While crowds unlearn'd, with rude devotion warm,
About the sacred viands buzz and swarm,
The fly-blown text creates a crawling brood;
And turns to maggots what was meant for food.
A thousand daily sects rise up, and die;
A thousand more the perish'd race supply:
So all we make of Heaven's discover'd Will
Is, not to have it, or to use it ill.
The danger's much the same; on several shelves
If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.

What then remains, but, waving each extreme,
The tides of ignorance, and pride to stem?
Neither so rich a treasure to forego;
Nor proudly seek beyond our pow'r to know:
Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe, are few, and plain:
But since men will believe more than they need;
And every man will make himself a creed:
In doubtful questions 'tis the safest way
To learn what unsuspected ancients say:
For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of Heav'n, than all the Church before:
Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
The Scripture, and the Fathers disagree.
If after all, they stand suspected still,
(For no man's faith depends upon his will
'Tis some relief, that points not clearly known,
Without much hazard may be let alone:
And, after hearing what our Church can say,

If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb:
For points obscure are of small use to learn:
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

Thus have I made my own opinions clear:
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose;
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose:
For, while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's, or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.

John Henry Dryden

Song (Sylvia The Fair, In The Bloom Of Fifteen)

Sylvia the fair, in the bloom of fifteen,
Felt an innocent warmth as she lay on the green:
She had heard of a pleasure, and something she guessed
By the tousing and tumbling and touching her breast:
She saw the men eager, but was at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

"Ah!" she cried, "ah, for a languishing maid
In a country of Christians to die without aid!
Not a Whig, or a Tory, or Trimmer at least,
Or a Protestant parson, or Catholic priest,
To instruct a young virgin that is at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close."

Cupid in shape of a swain did appear;
He saw the sad wound, and in pity drew near;
Then showed her his arrow, and bid her not fear,
For the pain was no more than a maiden may bear;
When the balm was infused, she was not at a loss
What they meant by their sighing and kissing so close;
By their praying and whining,
And clasping and twining,
And panting and wishing,
And sighing and kissing,
And sighing and kissing so close.

John Henry Dryden

Song From Amphitryon

Air Iris I love, and hourly I die,
But not for a lip, nor a languishing eye:
She's fickle and false, and there we agree,
For I am as false and as fickle as she.
We neither believe what either can say;
And, neither believing, we neither betray.
'Tis civil to swear, and say things of course;
We mean not the taking for better or worse.
When present, we love; when absent, agree:
I think not of Iris, nor Iris of me.
The legend of love no couple can find,
So easy to part, or so equally join'd.

John Henry Dryden

Song From An Evening's Love

After the pangs of a desperate lover,
When day and night I have sighed all in vain,
Ah, what a pleasure it is to discover
In her eyes pity, who causes my pain!

When with unkindness our love at a stand is,
And both have punished ourselves with the pain,
Ah, what a pleasure the touch of her hand is!
Ah, what a pleasure to touch it again!

When the denial comes fainter and fainter,
And her eyes give what her tongue does deny,
Ah, what a trembling I feel when I venture!
Ah, what a trembling does usher my joy!

When, with a sigh, she accords me the blessing,
And her eyes twinkle 'twixt pleasure and pain,
Ah, what a joy 'tis beyond all expressing!
Ah, what a joy to hear 'Shall we again!'

John Henry Dryden

Song From Marriage-A-La-Mode

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now,
When passion is decayed?
We loved, and we loved, as long as we could,
Till our love was loved out in us both;
But our marriage is dead when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another;
For all we can gain is to give ourselves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Henry Dryden

Song to a Fair Young Lady

Ask not the cause why sullen Spring
So long delays her flowers to bear;
Why warbling birds forget to sing,
And winter storms invert the year:
Chloris is gone; and fate provides
To make it Spring where she resides.

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair;
She cast not back a pitying eye:
But left her lover in despair
To sigh, to languish, and to die:
Ah! how can those fair eyes endure
To give the wounds they will not cure?

Great God of Love, why hast thou made
A face that can all hearts command,
That all religions can invade,
And change the laws of every land?
Where thou hadst placed such power before,
Thou shouldst have made her mercy more.

When Chloris to the temple comes,
Adoring crowds before her fall;
She can restore the dead from tombs
And every life but mine recall,
I only am by Love designed
To be the victim for mankind.

John Henry Dryden

The Hind and the Panther: Part I (excerpts)

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

Not so her young; for their unequal line
Was hero's make, half human, half divine.
Their earthly mold obnoxious was to fate,
Th' immortal part assum'd immortal state.
Of these a slaughter'd army lay in blood,
Extended o'er the Caledonian wood,
Their native walk; whose vocal blood arose,
And cried for pardon on their perjur'd foes.
Their fate was fruitful, and the sanguine seed,
Endued with souls, increas'd the sacred breed.
So captive Israel multiplied in chains,
A numerous exile, and enjoy'd her pains.
With grief and gladness mix'd, their mother view'd
Her martyr'd offspring, and their race renew'd;
Their corps to perish, but their kind to last,
So much the deathless plant the dying fruit surpass'd.

Panting and pensive now she rang'd alone,
And wander'd in the kingdoms, once her own.
The common hunt, tho' from their rage restrain'd
By sov'reign pow'r, her company disdain'd;
Grinn'd as they pass'd, and with a glaring eye
Gave gloomy signs of secret enmity.
'T is true, she bounded by, and tripp'd so light,
They had not time to take a steady sight,
For Truth has such a face and such a mien,
As to be lov'd needs only to be seen.

The bloody Bear, an Independent beast,
Unlick'd to form, in groans her hate express'd.
Among the timorous kind the Quaking Hare
Profess'd neutrality, but would not swear.
Next her the buffoon Ape, as atheists use,
Mimick'd all sects, and had his own to choose:
Still when the Lion look'd, his knees he bent,
And paid at church a courtier's compliment.

The bristled Baptist Boar, impure as he,
(But whiten'd with the foam of sanctity,)
With fat pollutions fill'd the sacred place,
And mountains levell'd in his furious race:
So first rebellion founded was in grace.
But since the mighty ravage which he made

In German forests had his guilt betray'd,
With broken tusks, and with a borrow'd name,
He shunn'd the vengeance, and conceal'd the shame;
So lurk'd in sects unseen. With greater guile
False Reynard fed on consecrated spoil:
The graceless beast by Athanasius first
Was chas'd from Nice; then, by Socinus nurs'd,
His impious race their blasphemy renew'd,
And nature's King through nature's optics view'd.
Revers'd, they view'd him lessen'd to their eye,
Nor in an infant could a God descry:
New swarming sects to this obliquely tend,
Hence they began, and here they all will end.

What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reason hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in th' abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.
O teach me to believe Thee thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than Thyself reveal'd;
But her alone for my director take,
Whom Thou hast promis'd never to forsake!
My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires,
My manhood, long misled by wand'ring fires,
Follow'd false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am,
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.
Good life be now my task: my doubts are done:
(What more could fright my faith, than Three in One?)
Can I believe eternal God could lie
Disguis'd in mortal mould and infancy?
That the great Maker of the world could die?
And after that trust my imperfect sense
Which calls in question his omnipotence?
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight, and touch, and taste rebel?
Superior faculties are set aside,
Shall their subservient organs be my guide?
Then let the moon usurp the rule of day,
And winking tapers show the sun his way;
For what my senses can themselves perceive,
I need no revelation to believe.

...
The Panther, sure the noblest, next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be wash'd away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey!
How can I praise, or blame, and not offend,

Or how divide the frailty from the friend!
Her faults and virtues lie so mix'd that she
Nor wholly stands condemn'd, nor wholly free.
Then, like her injur'd Lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.
Unkind already, and estrang'd in part,
The Wolf begins to share her wand'ring heart.
Though' unpolluted yet with actual ill,
She half commits, who sins but in her will.
If, as our dreaming Platonists report,
There could be spirits of a middle sort,
Too black for heav'n, and yet too white for hell,
Who just dropp'd halfway down, nor lower fell;
So pois'd, so gently she descends from high,
It seems a soft dismissal from the sky.

...

John Henry Dryden

The Secular Masque

Enter JANUS

JANUS

Chronos, Chronos, mend thy pace,
An hundred times the rolling sun
Around the radiant belt has run
In his revolving race.
Behold, behold, the goal in sight,
Spread thy fans, and wing thy flight.

Enter CHRONOS, with a scythe in his hand, and a great globe on his back,
which he sets down at his entrance

CHRONOS

Weary, weary of my weight,
Let me, let me drop my freight,
And leave the world behind.
I could not bear
Another year
The load of human-kind.

Enter MOMUS Laughing

MOMUS

Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha! well hast thou done,
To lay down thy pack,
And lighten thy back.
The world was a fool, e'er since it begun,
And since neither Janus, nor Chronos, nor I,
Can hinder the crimes,
Or mend the bad times,
'Tis better to laugh than to cry.

Cho. of all

'Tis better to laugh than to cry

JANUS

Since Momus comes to laugh below,
Old Time begin the show,
That he may see, in every scene,
What changes in this age have been,

CHRONOS

Then Goddess of the silver bow begin.

Horns, or hunting-music within Enter DIANA

DIANA

With horns and with hounds I waken the day,
And hie to my woodland walks away;
I tuck up my robe, and am buskin'd soon,

And tie to my forehead a waxing moon.
I course the fleet stag, unkennel the fox,
And chase the wild goats o'er summits of rocks,
With shouting and hooting we pierce thro' the sky;
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

Cho. of all
With shouting and hooting, we pierce through the sky,
And Echo turns hunter, and doubles the cry.

JANUS
Then our age was in its prime,

CHRONOS Chronos
Free from rage,

DIANA
--And free from crime.

MOMUS
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.

Cho. of all
Then our age was in its prime,
Free from rage, and free from crime,
A very merry, dancing, drinking,
Laughing, quaffing, and unthinking time.
Dance of Diana's attendants

Enter MARS
MARS
Inspire the vocal brass, inspire;
The world is past its infant age:
Arms and honour,
Arms and honour,
Set the martial mind on fire,
And kindle manly rage.
Mars has look'd the sky to red;
And peace, the lazy good, is fled.
Plenty, peace, and pleasure fly;
The sprightly green
In woodland-walks, no more is seen;
The sprightly green, has drunk the Tyrian dye.

Cho. of all
Plenty, peace, |&|c.

MARS
Sound the trumpet, beat the drum,
Through all the world around;
Sound a reveille, sound, sound,

The warrior god is come.

Cho. of all
Sound the trumpet, |&|c.

MOMUS

Thy sword within the scabbard keep,
And let mankind agree;
Better the world were fast asleep,
Than kept awake by thee.
The fools are only thinner,
With all our cost and care;
But neither side a winner,
For things are as they were.

Cho. of all
The fools are only, |&|c.

Enter VENUS

VENUS
Calms appear, when storms are past;
Love will have his hour at last:
Nature is my kindly care;
Mars destroys, and I repair;
Take me, take me, while you may,
Venus comes not ev'ry day.

Cho. of all
Take her, take her, |&|c.

CHRONOS

The world was then so light,
I scarcely felt the weight;
Joy rul'd the day, and love the night.
But since the Queen of Pleasure left the ground,
I faint, I lag,
And feebly drag
The pond'rous Orb around.
All, all of a piece throughout;

MOMUS,
pointing {} to Diana {}

Thy chase had a beast in view;
to Mars
Thy wars brought nothing about;
to Venus
Thy lovers were all untrue.

JANUS

'Tis well an old age is out,
And time to begin a new.

Cho. of all

All, all of a piece throughout;
Thy chase had a beast in view;
Thy wars brought nothing about;
Thy lovers were all untrue.
And time to begin a new.
Dance of huntsmen, nymphs, warriors, and lovers.

John Henry Dryden

To My Dear Friend Mr. Congreve On His Commedy Call'd The Double Dealer

Well then; the promis'd hour is come at last;
The present age of wit obscures the past:
Strong were our sires; and as they fought they writ,
Conqu'ring with force of arms, and dint of wit;
Theirs was the giant race, before the Flood;
And thus, when Charles return'd, our empire stood.
Like Janus he the stubborn soil manur'd,
With rules of husbandry the rankness cur'd:
Tam'd us to manners, when the stage was rude;
And boisterous English wit, with art endu'd.
Our age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gained in skill we lost in strength.
Our builders were, with want of genius, curst;
The second temple was not like the first:
Till you, the best Vitruvius, come at length;
Our beauties equal; but excel our strength.
Firm Doric pillars found your solid base:
The fair Corinthian crowns the higher space;
Thus all below is strength, and all above is grace.
In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise:
He mov'd the mind, but had not power to raise.
Great Jonson did by strength of judgment please:
Yet doubling Fletcher's force, he wants his ease.
In differing talents both adorn'd their age;
One for the study, t'other for the stage.
But both to Congreve justly shall submit,
One match'd in judgment, both o'er-match'd in wit.
In him all beauties of this age we see;
Etherege's courtship, Southern's purity;
The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherly.
All this in blooming youth you have achiev'd;
Nor are your foil'd contemporaries griev'd;
So much the sweetness of your manners move,
We cannot envy you because we love.
Fabius might joy in Scipio, when he saw
A beardless Consul made against the law,
And join his suffrage to the votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal was overcome.
Thus old Romano bow'd to Raphael's fame;
And scholar to the youth he taught, became.

Oh that your brows my laurel had sustain'd,
Well had I been depos'd, if you had reign'd!
The father had descended for the son;
For only you are lineal to the throne.
Thus when the State one Edward did depose;
A greater Edward in his room arose.
But now, not I, but poetry is curs'd;
For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.
But let 'em not mistake my patron's part;
Nor call his charity their own desert.
Yet this I prophesy; thou shalt be seen,

(Tho' with some short parenthesis between
High on the throne of wit; and seated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy laurel wear.
Thy first attempt an early promise made;
That early promise this has more than paid.
So bold, yet so judiciously you dare,
That your least praise, is to be regular.
Time, place, and action, may with pains be wrought,
But genius must be born; and never can be taught.
This is your portion; this your native store;
Heav'n that but once was prodigal before,
To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more.

Maintain your post: that's all the fame you need;
For 'tis impossible you should proceed.
Already I am worn with cares and age;
And just abandoning th' ungrateful stage:
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's expense,
I live a rent-charge on his providence:
But you, whom ev'ry muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and oh defend,
Against your judgment your departed friend!
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue;
But shade those laurels which descend to you:
And take for tribute what these lines express:
You merit more; nor could my love do less.

John Henry Dryden

To my Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton (excerpt)

The longest tyranny that ever sway'd
Was that wherein our ancestors betray'd
Their free-born reason to the Stagirite,
And made his torch their universal light.
So truth, while only one supplied the state,
Grew scarce, and dear, and yet sophisticate;
Until 't was bought, like emp'ric wares, or charms,
Hard words seal'd up with Aristotle's arms.
Columbus was the first that shook his throne,
And found a temp'rate in a torrid zone:
The fev'rish air fann'd by a cooling breeze,
The fruitful vales set round with shady trees;
And guiltless men, who danc'd away their time,
Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.
Had we still paid that homage to a name,
Which only God and Nature justly claim,
The western seas had been our utmost bound,
Where poets still might dream the sun was drown'd:
And all the stars that shine in southern skies
Had been admir'd by none but savage eyes.

Among th' asserters of free reason's claim,
Th' English are not the least in worth, or fame.
The world to Bacon does not only owe
Its present knowledge, but its future too.
Gilbert shall live, till loadstones cease to draw,
Or British fleets the boundless ocean awe.
And noble Boyle, not less in nature seen,
Than his great brother read in states and men.
The circling streams, once thought but pools, of blood
(Whether life's fuel or the body's food),
From dark oblivion Harvey's name shall save;
While Ent keeps all the honour that he gave.

...

John Henry Dryden

To The Memory Of Mr Oldham

Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive;
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
While his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more?
It might (what Nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail and farewell! farewell, thou young,
But ah too short, Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

John Henry Dryden

To The Pious Memory Of The Accomplished Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the Blest;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
Whether, adopted to some neighbouring star,
Thou roll'st above us, in thy wand'ring race,
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'd with the Heavens' majestic pace:
Or, call'd to more superior bliss,
Thou tread'st, with seraphims, the vast abyss.
What ever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
(Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since Heav'n's eternal year is thine.)
Hear then a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n;
To make thyself a welcome inmate there:
While yet a young probationer,
And Candidate of Heav'n.

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfus'd into thy blood:
So wert thou born into the tuneful strain,
(An early, rich, and inexhausted vein.)
But if thy preexisting soul
Was form'd, at first, with myriads more,
It did through all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last, which once it was before.
If so, then cease thy flight, O Heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore:
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return, to fill or mend the choir, of thy celestial kind.

May we presume to say, that at thy birth,
New joy was sprung in Heav'n as well as here on earth.
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And ev'n the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother-angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;
And then if ever, mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres!
And if no clust'ring swarm of bees

On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,
'Twas that, such vulgar miracles,
Heav'n had not leisure to renew:
For all the blest fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy Holyday above.

O Gracious God! How far have we
Profan'd thy Heav'nly gift of poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love?
O wretched we! why were we hurried down
This lubrique and adult'rate age,
(Nay added fat pollutions of our own)
T'increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t'excuse our Second Fall?
Let this thy vestal, Heav'n, atone for all!
Her Arethusian stream remains unsoil'd,
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefil'd,
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child!

Art she had none, yet wanted none:
For Nature did that want supply,
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seem'd borrow'd, where 'twas only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of Books, her Father's Life, she read.
And to be read her self she need not fear,
Each test, and ev'ry light, her Muse will bear,
Though Epictetus with his lamp were there.
Ev'n love (for love sometimes her Muse express'd)
Was but a lambent-flame which play'd about her breast:
Light as the vapours of a morning dream,
So cold herself, whilst she such warmth express'd,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought, she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province, and alluring prey.
A chamber of dependences was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretence,
When arm'd, to justify th'offence)
And the whole fief, in right of poetry she claim'd.
The country open lay without defence:

For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament:
And all the large domains which the Dumb-sister sway'd,
All bow'd beneath her government,
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she went,
Her pencil drew, what e'er her soul design'd,
And oft the happy draught surpass'd the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which as in mirrors, show'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns broken lie,
And tho' defac'd, the wonder of the eye,
What Nature, art, bold fiction e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopl'd Ark the whole creation bore.

The scene then chang'd, with bold erected look
Our martial king the sight with reverence strook:
For not content t'express his outward part,
Her hand call'd out the image of his heart,
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts, were figur'd there,
As when, by magic, ghosts are made appear.
Our phoenix queen was portray'd too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands:
Before a train of heroines was seen,
In beauty foremost, as in rank, the queen!
Thus nothing to her genius was deny'd,
But like a ball of fire the further thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had design'd, Heaven only knows,
To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose,
That fate alone its progress could oppose.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,

The well-proportion'd shape, and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much lamented virgin lies!
Not wit, not piety could fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life, and beauty too;
But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride
 To work more mischievously slow,
 And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.
O double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relique, and deface the shrine!
 But thus Orinda died:
Heav'n, by the same disease, did both translate,
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, generous youth, that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here!
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far,
Among the Pleiad's, a new-kindl'd star,
If any sparkles, than the rest, more bright,
'Tis she that shines in that propitious light.

When in mid-air, the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the valley of Jehosophat,
The Judging God shall close the book of fate;
And there the last Assizes keep,
For those who wake, and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly,
From the four corners of the sky,
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound:
For they are cover'd with the lightest ground,
And straight, with in-born vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shall go,
As harbinger of Heav'n, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learn'd below.

John Henry Dryden

Troilus And Cressida

Can life be a blessing,
Or worth the possessing,
Can life be a blessing if love were away?
Ah no! though our love all night keep us waking,
And though he torment us with cares all the day,
Yet he sweetens, he sweetens our pains in the taking,
There's an hour at the last, there's an hour to repay.

In ev'ry possessing,
The ravishing blessing,
In ev'ry possessing the fruit of our pain,
Poor lovers forget long ages of anguish,
Whate'er they have suffer'd and done to obtain;
'Tis a pleasure, a pleasure to sigh and to languish,
When we hope, when we hope to be happy again.

John Henry Dryden

Veni, Creator Spiritus

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit ev'ry pious mind;
Come, pour thy joys on human kind;
From sin, and sorrow set us free;
And make thy temples worthy Thee.

O, Source of uncreated Light,
The Father's promis'd Paraclete!
Thrice Holy Fount, thrice Holy Fire,
Our hearts with heav'nly love inspire;
Come, and thy Sacred Unction bring
To sanctify us, while we sing!

Plenteous of grace, descend from high,
Rich in thy sev'n-fold energy!
Thou strength of his Almighty Hand,
Whose pow'r does heav'n and earth command:
Proceeding Spirit, our Defence,
Who do'st the gift of tongues dispence,
And crown'st thy gift with eloquence!

Refine and purge our earthly parts;
But, oh, inflame and fire our hearts!
Our frailties help, our vice control;
Submit the senses to the soul;
And when rebellious they are grown,
Then, lay thy hand, and hold 'em down.

Chase from our minds th' Infernal Foe;
And peace, the fruit of love, bestow;
And, lest our feet should step astray,
Protect, and guide us in the way.

Make us Eternal Truths receive,
And practise, all that we believe:
Give us thy self, that we may see
The Father and the Son, by thee.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend th' Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost Man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to thee.

John Henry Dryden

Why should a foolish marriage vow

Why should a foolish marriage vow,
Which long ago was made,
Oblige us to each other now
When passion is decay'd?
We lov'd, and we lov'd, as long as we could,
Till our love was lov'd out in us both:
But our marriage is dead, when the pleasure is fled:
'Twas pleasure first made it an oath.

If I have pleasures for a friend,
And farther love in store,
What wrong has he whose joys did end,
And who could give no more?
'Tis a madness that he should be jealous of me,
Or that I should bar him of another:
For all we can gain is to give our selves pain,
When neither can hinder the other.

John Henry Dryden

You charm'd me not with that fair face

You charm'd me not with that fair face
Though it was all divine:
To be another's is the grace,
That makes me wish you mine.

The Gods and Fortune take their part
Who like young monarchs fight;
And boldly dare invade that heart
Which is another's right.

First mad with hope we undertake
To pull up every bar;
But once possess'd, we faintly make
A dull defensive war.

Now every friend is turn'd a foe
In hope to get our store:
And passion makes us cowards grow,
Which made us brave before.

John Henry Dryden

Your hay it is mow'd, and your corn is reap'd

(Comus.) Your hay it is mow'd, and your corn is reap'd;
Your barns will be full, and your hovels heap'd:
Come, my boys, come;
Come, my boys, come;
And merrily roar out Harvest Home.
(Chorus.) Come, my boys, come;
Come, my boys, come;
And merrily roar out Harvest Home.

(Man.) We ha' cheated the parson, we'll cheat him agen,
For why should a blockhead ha' one in ten?
One in ten,
One in ten,
For why should a blockhead ha' one in ten?

For prating so long like a book-learn'd sot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot.
(Chorus.) Burn to pot,
Burn to pot,
Till pudding and dumplin burn to pot.
We'll toss off our ale till we canno' stand,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England:
Old England,
Old England,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England.
(Chorus.) Old England,
Old England,
And Hoigh for the honour of Old England.

John Henry Dryden