

Classic Poetry Series

John Lyly

- poems -

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A Dittie

Behold her lockes like wiers of beaten gold,
her eies like starres that twinkle in the skie,
Her heauenly face not framd of earthly molde,
Her voice that sounds Apollos melodie,
The miracle of time, the [whole] worlds storie,
Fortunes Queen, Loues treasure, Natures glory.

No flattering hope she likes, blind Fortunes bait
nor shadowes of delight, fond fansies glasse,
Nor charmes that do inchant, false artes deceit,
nor fading ioyes, which time makes swiftly pas
But chast desires which beateth all these downe ;
A Goddesse looke is worth a Monarchs crowne.

Goddesse and Monarch of [t]his happie Ile,
vouchsafe this bow which is an huntresse part :
Your eies are arrows though they seeme to smile
which neuer glanst but gald the stateliest hart,
Strike one, strike all, for none at all can flie,
They gaze you in the face although they die.

John Lyly

A Song of Daphne to the Lute

My Daphne's Haire is twisted Gold,
Bright starres a-piece her Eyes doe hold,
My Daphne's Brow inthrones the Graces,
My Daphne's Beauty staines all Faces,
On Daphne's Cheeke grow Rose and Cherry,
On Daphne's Lip a sweeter Berry,
Daphne's snowy Hand but touch'd does melt,
And then no heauenlier Warmth is felt,
My Daphne's voice tunes all the Spheres,
My Daphne's Musick charmes all Eares.
Fond am I thus to sing her prayse ;
These glories now are turn'd to Bayes.

John Lyly

Apelles' Song

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses; Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple on his chin;
All these did my Campaspe win:
And last he set her both his eyes -
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.

O Love! has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

John Lyly

Apollo's Song

My Daphne's hair is twisted gold,
Bright stars apiece her eyes do hold,
My Daphne's brow enthrones the Graces,
My Daphne's beauty stains all faces,
On Daphne's cheek grow rose and cherry,
On Daphne's lip a sweeter berry,
Daphne's snowy hand but touched does melt,
And then no heavenlier warmth is felt,
My Daphne's voice tunes all the spheres,
My Daphne's music charms all ears.
Fond am I thus to sing her praise;
These glories now are turned to bays.

John Lyly

Cards and Kisses

CUPID and my Campaspe play'd
At cards for kisses--Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lips, the rose
Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how);
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes--
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
 O Love! has she done this for thee?
 What shall, alas! become of me?

John Lyly

Cupid and My Campaspe

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses;
Cupid paid.
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows,
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how),
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love! has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas, become of me?

John Lyly

Cupid and my Campaspe play'd

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At cards for kisses--Cupid paid:
He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows;
Loses them too; then down he throws
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With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes,
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
 O Love! has she done this to thee?
 What shall (alas!) become of me?

John Lyly

Eurymine's Song

Ye sacred Fyres, and powers aboue,
Forge of desires working loue,
Cast downe your eye, cast downe your eye
Vpon a Mayde in miserie.
My sacrifice is louers blood :
And from eyes salt teares a flood :
All which I spend, all which I spend
For thee Ascanio, my deare friend :
And though this houre I must feele
The bitter sower of pricking steele,
Yet ill or well, yet ill or well
To thee Ascanio still farewell

John Lyly

Mother Bombie

Sil.

O Cupid ! Monarch ouer Kings,
Wherefore hast thou feete and wings?
It is to shew how swift thou art,
When thou wound'st a tender heart:
Thy wings being clip'd, and feete held still,
Thy Bow so many could not kill.

Acc.

It is all one in Venus wanton schoole,
Who highest sits, the wise man or the foole:
Foolles in loues colledge
Haue farre more knowledge,
To reade a woman ouer,
Than a neate prating louer.
Nay, tis confest,
That foolles please women best.

John Lyly

Oh, For a Bowl of Fat Canary

Oh, for a bowl of fat Canary,
Rich Palermo, sparkling Sherry,
Some nectar else, from Juno's dairy;
Oh, these draughts would make us merry!

Oh, for a wench (I deal in faces,
And in other daintier things);
Tickled am I with her embraces,
Fine dancing in such fairy rings.

Oh, for a plump fat leg of mutton,
Veal, lamb, capon, pig, and coney;
None is happy but a glutton,
None an ass but who want money.

Wines indeed and girls are good,
But brave victuals feast the blood;
For wenches, wine, and lusty cheer,
Jove would leap down to surfeit here.

John Lyly

Sappho's Song

O cruel Love, on thee I lay
My curse, which shall strike blind the day ;
Never may sleep with velvet hand
Charm thine eyes with sacred wand ;
Thy jailors shall be hopes and fears ;
Thy prison-mates groans, sighs, and tears ;
Thy play to wear out weary times,
Fantastic passions, vows, and rimes ;
Thy bread be frowns ; thy drink be gall,
Such as when you Phao call ;
The bed thou liest on be despair,
Thy sleep fond dreams, thy dreams long care ;
Hope, like thy fool, at thy bed's head,
Mock thee, till madness strike thee dead,
As, Phao, thou dost me with thy proud eyes ;
In thee poor Sappho lives, for thee she dies.

John Lyly

Song

Gran.

O For a Bowle of fatt Canary,
Rich Palermo, sparkling Sherry,
Some Nectar else, from Iuno's Daiery,
O these draughts would make vs merry.

Psyllus.

O for a wench, (I deale in faces,
And in other dayntier things,)
Tickled am I with her Embraces,
Fine dancing in such Fairy Ringes.

Manes.

O for a plump fat leg of Mutton,
Veale, Lambe, Capon, Pigge, & Conney,
None is happy but a Glutton,
None an Asse but who wants money.

Chor.

Wines (indeed,) & Girles are good,
But braue victuals feast the bloud,
For wenches, wine, and Lusty cheere,
Ioue would leape down to surfet heere.

John Lyly

Spring's Welcome

WHAT bird so sings, yet so does wail?
O 'tis the ravish'd nightingale.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu! she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
Now at heaven's gate she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note!
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!

John Lyly

Trico's Song

What bird so sings, yet so does wail?
O 'tis the ravish'd nightingale.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu! she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
Now at heaven's gate she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note!
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!
Cuckoo! to welcome in the spring!

John Lyly

Vulcan's Song: In Making of the Arrows

MY shag-hair Cyclops, come, let's ply
Our Lemnian hammers lustily.
By my wife's sparrows,
I swear these arrows
Shall singing fly
Through many a wanton's eye.

These headed are with golden blisses,
These silver ones feathered with kisses,
But this of lead
Strikes a clown dead,
When in a dance
He falls in a trance,
To see his black-brow lass not buss him,
And then whines out for death t'untruss him.
So, so : our work being done, let's play :
Holiday ! boys, cry holiday !

John Lyly

What Bird So Sings, Yet So Does Wail?

What bird so sings, yet so does wail?
Oh, 'tis the ravished nightingale.
Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu, she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! Who is't now we hear?
None but the lark so shrill and clear;
How at heaven's gates she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin redbreast tunes his note;
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring,
Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring.

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