

Classic Poetry Series

John Oldham

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

A Quiet Soul

Thy soul within such silent pomp did keep,
As if humanity were lull'd asleep;
So gentle was thy pilgrimage beneath,
Time's unheard feet scarce make less noise,
Or the soft journey which a planet goes:
Life seem'd all calm as its last breath.
A still tranquillity so hush'd thy breast,
As if some Halcyon were its guest,
And there had built her nest;
It hardly now enjoys a greater rest.

John Oldham

The Careless Good Fellow

1 A pox of this fooling, and plotting of late,
2 What a pother, and stir has it kept in the state?
3 Let the rabble run mad with suspicions, and fears,
4 Let them scuffle, and jar, till they go by the ears:
5 Their grievances never shall trouble my pate,
6 So I can enjoy my dear bottle at quiet.

7 What coxcombs were those, who would barter their ease
8 And their necks for a toy, a thin wafer and mass?
9 At old Tyburn they never had needed to swing,
10 Had they been but true subjects to drink, and their king;
11 A friend, and a bottle is all my design;
12 He has no room for treason, that's top-full of wine.

13 I mind not the members and makers of laws,
14 Let them sit or prorogue, as his majesty please:
15 Let them damn us to woollen, I'll never repine
16 At my lodging, when dead, so alive I have wine:
17 Yet oft in my drink I can hardly forbear
18 To curse them for making my claret so dear.

19 I mind not grave asses, who idly debate
20 About right and succession, the trifles of state;
21 We've a good king already: and he deserves laughter
22 That will trouble his head with who shall come after:
23 Come, here's to his health, and I wish he may be
24 As free from all care, and all trouble, as we.

25 What care I how leagues with the Hollander go?
26 Or intrigues betwixt Sidney, and Monsieur D'Avaux?
27 What concerns it my drinking, if Cassel be sold,
28 If the conqueror take it by storming, or gold?
29 Good Bordeaux alone is the place that I mind,
30 And when the fleet's coming, I pray for a wind.

31 The bully of France, that aspires to renown
32 By dull cutting of throats, and vent'ring his own;
33 Let him fight and be damn'd, and make matches and treat,
34 To afford the news-mongers, and coffee-house chat:
35 He's but a brave wretch, while I am more free,
36 More safe, and a thousand times happier than he.

37 Come he, or the Pope, or the Devil to boot,
38 Or come faggot, and stake; I care not a groat;
39 Never think that in Smithfield I porters will heat:
40 No, I swear, Mr. Fox, pray excuse me for that.
41 I'll drink in defiance of gibbet, and halter,
42 This is the profession, that never will alter.

John Oldham