

Classic Poetry Series

John Skelton

- poems -

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A Ballad of the Scottysse Kyne

Kynge Jamy, Jomy your joye is all go.
Ye summoned our kynge. Why dyde ye so?
To you no thyng it dyde accorde
To sommom our kynge your soverayne lorde.
A kynge a sommer it is wonder;
Knowe ye not salte and suger asonder?
In your somnynage ye were to malaperte,
and your harolde no thyng experte;
Ye thought ye dyde it full valyauntolye,
But not worth thre skyppes of a pye.
Syr squyer-galyarde ye were to swyfte;
Your wyll renne before your wytte.
To be so scornefull to your alye
Your conseyle was not worth a flye.
Before the Frensshe kynge, Danes and other
Ye ought to honour your lorde and brother.
Trowe ye, Syr James, his noble grace
For you and your Scottes wolde tourne his face?
Now ye proude Scottes of Gelawaye
For your kynge may synge welawaye.
Now must ye knowe our kynge for your regent,
Your soverayne lorde and presedent.
In hym is figured Melchisedeche,
And ye be desolate as Armeleche.
He is our noble champyon,
A kynge anoynted, an ye be non.
Thruh your counseyle your fader was slayne;
Wherfore I fere ye wyll suffre payne.
And ye proude Scottes of Dunbar,
Parde ye be his homager
And suters to his paylyment.
Ye dyde not your dewty therin,
Wyerfore ye may it now repent.
Ye bere yourselfe somewhat to bolde,
Therefore ye have lost your copyholde.
Ye be bounde tenauntes to his estate;
Give up your game, ye playe chek mate;
For to the castell of Norham
I understonde to soone ye cam,
For a prysoner therenow ye be
Eyther to the devyll or the trinite.
Thanked be saynte Gorge, our ladyes knythe,
Your pryd is paste, adwe, good nyght,
Ye have determyned to make a fraye,
Our kynge than beyng out of the waye;
But by the power and myght of God
Ye were beten weth your owne rod.
By your wanton wyll, syr, at a worde,
Ye have loste spores, cote armure and sworde.
Ye had be better to have busked to Huntley Bankes,
Than in Englonde to playe ony suche prantes;
But ye had some wyld sede to sowe,

Therefore ye be layde now full lowe.
Your power coude no lenger attayne
Warre with our kynge to meyntayne.
Of the kynge of Naverne ye may take hede
How unfortunately he doth now spede;
In double walles now he dooth dreme.
That is a kynge without a realme.
At hym example ye wolde none take;
Experyence hath brought you in the same brake.
Of the out yles ye rough foted Scottes
We have well eased you of the bottes.
Ye rowe ranke Scottes and dronken Danes
Of our Englysshe bowes ye have fette your banes.
It is not syttyng in tour nor towne
A sumner to were a kynges crowne.
That noble erle, the Whyte Lyon,
Your pompe and pryde hath layde a downe.
His sone the lorde admyrall is full good,
His swerde hath bathed in the Scottes blode.
God save kynge Henry and his lordes all
And sende the Frensshe kynge suche another fall.

Amen, for saynt charyte and God save noble
Kynge Henry the viij.

John Skelton

A Lawde and Prayse

[a laude and prayse made for our souereigne lord the kyng.]

The Rose both white and Rede
In one rose now dothe grow:
Thus thorow every stede
Thereof the fame dothe blow:
Grace the sede did sow.
England now gaddir flowris
Exclude now all dolowrs

Noble Henry the eight
Thy loving souereine lorde
Of kingis line moost streight
His titille dothe Recorde:
In whome dothe wele Acorde
Alexis yonge of Age
Adrastus wise and sage:

Astrea Iustice hight
That from the starry sky
Shall now com and do Right:
This hunderd yere scantly
A man kowd not Aspy
That Right dwelt vs Among
And that was the more wrong.

Right shall the foxis chare
The wolvis the beris also
That wrowght have moche care
And browght Englund in wo
They shall wirry no mo
Nor wrote the Rosary
By extort Trechery.

Of this our noble king
The law they shall not breke
They shall com to Rekening
No man for them wil speke:
The pepil durst not creke
Theire grevis to complaine
They browght them in soche paine.

Therfor nomore they shall
The commouns overbace
That wont wer overall
Both lorde and knight to face:
For now the yeris of grace
And welthe ar com Agayne
That maketh England faine.

Adonis of Freshe colour
Of yowthe the godely flour

Our prince of hih honour
Our paves our succour
Our king our Emperour
Our Priamus of Troy
Our welth our worldly Ioy.

Vpon vs he doth Reigne
That makith our hartis glad
As king moost souereine
That ever Englund had
Demure sober and sad
And Martis lusty knight
God save him in his Right:

Amen

Bien men souient:

Deo .21. gracias

John Skelton

Cuncta Licet Cecidisse Putas Discrimina Rerum

Cuncta licet cecidisse putas discrimina rerum,
Et prius incerta nunc tibi certa manent,
Consiliis usure meis tamen aspice caute,
Subdola non fallat te dea fraude sua:
Saepe solet placido mortales fallere vultu,
Et cute sub placida tabida saepe dolent;
Ut quando secura putas et cuncta serena,
Anguis sub viridi gramine saepe latet.
Though ye suppose all jeopardyes are past,
And all is done that ye looked for before,
Ware yet, I rede you, of Fortunes double cast,
For one false point she is wont to keepe in store,
And vnder the fell oft festered is the sore:
That when ye thinke all daunger for to pas,
Ware of the lesard lyeth lurking in the gras.

Qd Skelton, laureat.

John Skelton

Knowledge, Acquayntance, Resort, Fauour With Grace

Knolege, acquayntance, resort, fauour with grace;
Delyte, desyre, respyte wyth lyberte;
Corage wyth lust, conuenient tyme and space;
Dysdayns, dystres, exylyd cruelte;
Wordys well set with good habylte;
Demure demenaunce, womanly of porte;
Transendyng plesure, surmountyng all dysporte;

Allectuary arrectyd to redres
These feuerous axys, the dedely wo and payne
Of thoughtfull hertys plungyd in dystres;
Refresshyng myndys the Aprell shoure of rayne;
Condute of comferte, and well most souerayne;
Herber enverduryd, contynuall fressh and grene;
Of lusty somer the passyng goodly quene;

The topas rych and precyouse in vertew;
Your ruddys wyth ruddy rubys may compare;
Saphyre of sadnes, enuayned wyth indy blew;
The pullyshed perle youre whytenes doth declare;
Dyamand poyntyd to rase oute hartly care;
Geyne surfetous suspecte the emeraud commendable;
Relucent smaragd, obiecte imcomperable;

Encleryd myrroure and perspectyue most bryght,
Illumynynd wyth feturys far passyng my reporte;
Radyent Esperus, star of the cloudy nyght,
Lode star to lyght these louers to theyr porte,
Gayne dangerous stormys theyr anker of supporte,
Theyr sayll of solace most comfortably clad,
Whych to behold makyth heuy hartys glad:

Remorse haue I of youre most goodlyhod,
Of youre behauoure curtes and benynge,
Of your bownte and of youre womanhod,
Which makyth my hart oft to lepe and sprynge,
And to remember many a praty thyng;
But absens, alas, wyth tremelyng fere and drede
Abashyth me, albeit I haue no nede.

You I assure, absens is my fo,
My dedely wo, my paynfull heuynes;
And if ye lyst to know the cause why so,
Open myne hart, beholde my mynde expres:
I wold ye coud ! then shuld ye se, mastres,
How there nys thyng that I couet so fayne
As to embrace you in myne armys twayne.

Nothyng yerthly to me more desyrous
Than to beholde youre bewteouse countenance:
But, hatefull absens, to me so enuyous,
Though thou withdraw me from her by long dystaunce,

Yet shall she neuer oute of remembrance;
For I haue grauyd her wythin the secret wall
Of my trew hart, to loue her best of all!

Qd Skelton, laureat.

John Skelton

Of all nacyons vnder the heuyn

[Skelton Laureate agaynste a comely Coystrowne that curyowsly chawntyd And curryshly cowntred, And madly in hys Musykkys mokkyshly made, Agaynste the .ix. Musys of polytyke Poems & Poettys matryculat.]

[Of all nacyons vnder the heuyn]

Of all nacyons vnder the heuyn.
These frantye foolys I hate most of all.
For though they stumble in the synnys seuyn.
In peuyshnes yet they snapper and fall.
Which men the .viii. dedly syn call.
This peuysh proud thys prendergest.
When he is well yet can he not rest.

A swete suger-lofe & sowre bayardys-bun.
Be sumdele lyke in forme & shap.
The one for a duke the other for dun.
A maunchet for morell thereon to snap.
Hys hart is to hy to haue any hap.
But for in his gamvt carp that he can.
Lo Iak wold be a Ientylman

Wyth hey troly loly lo whip here Iak.
Alumbek sodyldym syllorym ben.
Curyowsly he can both counter & knak
Of Martyn swart & all hys mery men.
Lord how perkyn is proud of hys Pohen.
But ask wher he fyndyth among hys monacordys.
An holy-water clarke a ruler of lordys.

He can not fynd it in rule nor in space.
He solfyth to haute hys Trybyll is to hy.
He braggyth of hys byrth that borne was full bace
Hys musyk withoute mesure to sharp is hys my
He trymmyth in hys tenor to counter pyrdewy.
Hys dyscant is besy it is withoute a mene.
To fat is hys fantasy hys wyt is to lene.

He lumbryth on a lewde lewte roty bully Ioyse.
Rumbyll downe tumbyll downe hey go now now.
He fumblyth in hys fyngeryng an vgly good noyse.
It semyth the sobbyng of an old sow.
He wold be made moch of & he wyst how.
Wele sped In spyndels and turnyng of tauellys.
A bungler a brawler a pyker of quarellys.

Comely he clappyth a payre of clauycordys.
He whystelyth so swetely he makyth me to swete.
His descant is dassed full of dyscordes
A red angry man but easy to intrete.
An vssher of the hall fayn wold I get.

To poynte this proude page a place and a rome
For Iak wold be a Ientylman that late was a grome

Iak wold Iet and yet Iyll sayd nay.
He counteth in his countenance to checke with the best.
A malaperte medler that pryeth for his pray
In a dysh dare he rush at the rypest.
Dremyng in dumpys to wrangyll & to wrest.
He fyndeth a proporcyon in his prycke-songe.
To drynk at a draught a larg & a long

Nay iape not with hym he is no small fole
It is a solempne syre and a solayne.
For lordes and ladyes lerne at his scole
He techyth them so wysely to solf and to fayne.
That neyther they synge wel prycke-songe nor playne
Thys docter deuyas commensyd in a cart.
A master a mynstrell a fydler a farte

What though ye can cownter Custodi nos.
As well it becomyth yow a parysh towne-Clarke.
To syng Sospitati dedit Egros.
Yet bere ye not to bold to braule ne to bark.
At me, that medeled nothyng with youre wark.
Correct fyrst thy-self, walk & be nought.
Deme what thou lyst thou knowyst not my thought.

A prouerbe of old say well or be still.
Ye are to vnhappy occasyons to fynde.
Uppon me to clater or els to say yll.
Now haue I shewyd you part of your proud mynde
Take thys in worth the best is behynde.
Wryten at Croydon by Crowland in the Clay.
On Candemas eyn the Kalendas of May.

John Skelton

The Auncient Acquaintance, Madam, Betwen Vs Twayn

The auncient acquaintance, madam, betwen vs twayn,
The famylyaryte, the formal dalyaunce,
Causyth me that I can not myself refrayne
But that I must wryte for my plesaunt pastaunce:
Remembryng your passyng goodly countenaunce,
Your goodly port, your bewteous visage,
Ye may be countyd comfort of all corage.

Of all your feturs fauorable to make tru discripcion,
I am insuffycyent to make such enterpryse;
For thus dare I say, without [con]tradiccyon,
That dame Menolope was neuer half so wyse:
Yet so it is that a rumer begynneth for to ryse,
How in good horsmen ye set your hole delyght,
And haue forgotten your old trew louyng knyght.

Wyth bound and rebound, bounsyngly take vp
Hys jentyll curtoyl, and set nowght by small naggys!
Spur vp at the hynder gyrrh, with Gup, morell, gup!
With, Jayst ye, jenet of Spayne, for your tayll waggys!
Ye cast all your corage vppon such courtly haggys.
Haue in sergeaunt ferroure, myne horse behynd is bare;
He rydeth well the horse, but he rydeth better the mare.

Ware, ware, the mare wynsyth wyth her wanton hele!
She kykyth with her kalkyns and keylyth with a clenche;
She goyth wyde behynde, and hewyth neuer a dele:
Ware gallyng in the widders, ware of that wrenche!
It is perlous for a horseman to dyg in the trenche.
Thus greuyth your husband, that ryght jentyll knyght,
And so with youre seruants he fersly doth fyght.

So fersly he fytyth, his mynde is so fell,
That he dryuyth them doune with dyntes on ther day wach;
He bresyth theyr braynpannyes and makyth them to swell,
Theyre browys all to-brokyn, such clappys they cach;
Whose jalawsy malycyous makyth them to lepe the hach;
By theyr conusaunce knowing how they serue a wily py:
Ask all your neybourys whether that I ly.

It can be no counsell that is cryed at the cros:
For youre jentyll husband sorowfull am I;
How be it, he is not furst hath had a los:
Aduertysyng you, madame, to warke more secretly,
Let not all the world make an owtcry;
Play fayre play, madame, and loke ye play clene,
Or ells with gret shame your game wylbe sene.

Qd Skelton, laureat.

John Skelton

The Book of Phillip Sparrow

Pla ce bo,
Who is there, who?
Di le xi,
Dame Margery;
Fa, re, my, my,
Wherfore and why, why?
For the sowle of Philip Sparowe,
That was late slayn at Carowe,
Among the Nones Blake,
For that swete soules sake,
And for all sparowes soules,
Set in our bederolles,
Pater noster qui,
With an Ave Mari,
And with the corner of a Crede,
The more shalbe your mede.

Whan I remembre agayn
How mi Philyp was slayn,
Never halfe the payne
Was betwene you twayne,
Pyramus and Thesbe,
As than befell to me:
I wept and I wayled,
The tearys downe hayled;
But nothings it avayled
To call Phyllyp agayne,
Whom Gyb our cat hath slayne.

Gib, I saye, our cat,
Worroyd her on that
Which I loved best:
It can not be exprest
My sorowfull hevynesse,
But all without redresse;
For within that stounde,
Halfe slumbrynge, in a swounde
I fell downe to the grounde.

Unneth I kest myne eyes
Towarde the cloudy skyes:
But whan I dyd beholde
My sparow dead and colde,
No creatuer but that wolde
Have rewed upon me,
To behold and se
What hevynesse dyd me pange;
Wherewith my handes I wrange,
That my senaws cracked,
As though I had ben racked,
So payned and so strayed,
That no lyfe wellnye remayned.

I syghed and I sobbed,
For that I was robbed
Of my sparowes lyfe.
O mayden, wydow, and wyfe,
Of what estate ye be,
Of hye or lowe degre,
Great sorowe than ye myght se,
And lerne to wepe at me!
Such paynes dyd me frete,
That myne hert dyd bete,
My vysage pale and dead,
Wanne, and blewe as lead;
The panges of hatefull death
Wellnye had stopped my breath.
Heu, heu, me,
That I am wo for the!
Ad Dominum, cum tribularer, clamavi:
Of God nothyng els crave I
But Phyllypes soule to kepe
From the marees deepe
Of Acherontes well,
That is a flode of hell;
And from the great Pluto,
The prynce of endles wo;
And from foule Alecto,
With vysage blacke and blo;
And from Medusa, that mare,
That lyke a fende doth stare;
And from Megeras edders,
For rufflyng of Phillips fethers,
And from her fyry sparklynges,
For burnyng of his wynges;
And from the smokes sowre
Of Proserpinas bowre;
And from the dennes darke,
Wher Cerberus doth barke,
Whom Theseus dyd afraye,
Whom Hercules dyd outraye,
As famous poetes say;
From that hell-hounde,
That lyeth in cheynes bounde,
With gastly hedes thre,
To Jupyter pray we
That Phyllyp preserved may be!
Amen, say ye with me!

Do mi nus,
Helpe nowe, swete Jesus!
Levavi oculos meos in montes:
Wolde God I had Zenophontes,
Or Socrates the wyse

To shew me their devyse,
Moderatly to take
This sorrow that I make
For Phyllyp Sparowes sake!
So fervently I shake,
I fele my body quake;
So urgently I am brought
Into carefull thought.
Like Andromach, Hectors wyfe,
Was wery of her lyfe,
Whan she had lost her joye,
Noble Hector of Troye;
In lyke maner also
Encreaseth my dedly wo,
For my sparowe is go.

It was so prety a fole,
It wold syt on a stole,
And lerned after my scole
For to kepe his cut,
With, "Phyllyp, kepe your cut!"

It had a velvet cap,
And wold syt upon my lap,
And seke after small wormes,
And somtyme white bred crommes;
And many tymes and ofte
Betwene my brestes softe
It wolde lye and rest;
It was propre and prest.

Somtyme he wolde gaspe
Whan he sawe a waspe;
A fly or a gnat,
He wolde flye at that;
And prytely he wold pant
Whan he saw an ant;
Lord, how he wolde pry
After the butterfly!
Lorde, how he wolde hop
After the gressop!
And whan I sayd, "Phyp! Phyp!"
Than he wold lepe and skyp,
And take me by the lyp.
Alas, it wyll me slo,
That Phyllyp is gone me fro!

John Skelton

The Bowge of Courte

In Autumpne whan the sonne in vyrgyne
By radyante hete enryped hath our corne
Whan luna full of mutabylyte
As Emperes the dyademe hath worne
Of our pole artyke smylunge halfe in scorne
At our foly and our vnstedfastnesse
The tyme whan Mars to werre hym dyd dres

I callynge to mynde the great auctoryte
Of poetes olde whyche full craftely
Under as couerte termes as coude be
Can touche a trougte and cloke it subtylly
Wyth fresshe vtteraunce full sentencyously
Dyuerse in style some spared not vyce to wrythe
Some of moralyte nobly dyde endyte

Wherby I rede theyr renome and theyr fame
Maye neuer dye bute euermore endure
I was sore moued to a force the same
But Ignoraunce full soone dyde me dyscure
And shewed that in this arte I was not sure
For to Illumyne she sayde I was to dulle
Auysynge me my penne awaye to pulle

And not to wrythe/ for he so wyll atteyne
Excedynge ferther than his connynge is
His hede maye be harde but feble is his brayne
Yet haue I knowen suche er this
But of reproche surely he maye not mys
That clymmeth hyer than he may fotyngge haue
What and he slyde downe who shall hym saue

Thus vp & down my mynde was drawen & cast
That I ne wyste what to do was beste
Soo sore enwered that I was at the laste
Enforced to slepe and for to take some reste
And to lye downe as soone as I me drete
At harwyche porte slumbryngge as I laye
In myne hostes house called powers keye

Me thoughte I sawe a shyppe goodly of sayle
Come saylyngge forth into that hauen brood
Her takelyngge ryche and of hye apparayle
She kyste an anker and there she laye at rode
Marchauntes her borded to see what she had lode
Therein they founde Royall marchaundyse
Fraghted with plesure of what ye coude deuyse

But than I thoughte I wolde not dwell behynde
Amonge all other I put myselfe in prece
Than there coude I none aquentaunce fynde
There was moche noyse anone one cryed cese

Sharpely commaundyng eche man holde hys pece
Maysters he sayde the shyp that ye here see
The bowge of courte it hyghte for certeynte

The awnner therof is lady of estate
Whoos name to tell is dame saunce pere
Her marchaundyse is ryche and fortunate
But who wyll haue it muste paye therfore dere
This Royall chaffre that is shyped here
Is called fauore to stonde in her good grace
Than sholde ye see there pressyng in a pace

Of one and other that wolde this lady see
Whiche sat behynde a traues of sylke fyne
Of golde of tessew the fynest that myghte be
In a trone whiche fer clerer dyde shyne
Than Phebus in his spere celestyne
Whoos beaute honoure goodly porte
I haue to lytyll connyng to reporte

But of eche thyng there as I toke hede
Amonge all other was wrytten in her trone
In golde letters this worde whiche I dyde rede
Garder le fortune que est mauelz et bone
And as I stode redyng this verse myselfe allone
Her chyef gentywoman daunger by her name
Gau me a taunte and sayde I was to blame

To be so pette to prese so proudly vppe
She sayde she trowed that I had eten sause
She asked yf euer I dranke of saucys cuppe
And I than softly answered to that clause
That so to saye. I had gyuen her no cause
Than asked she me Syr so god the spede
What is thy name and I sayde it was drede

What mouyd the quod she hydder to come
Forsoth quod I to bye some of youre ware
And with that worde on me she gau a glome
With browes bente and gan on me to stare
Full daynnously and fro me she dyde fare
Leuyng me stondyng as a mased man
To whome there came another gentywoman

Desyre her name was and so she me tolde
Sayenge to me broder be of good chere
Abasshe you not but hardely be bolde
Auaunce yourselfe to aproche and come nere
What though our chaffer be neuer so dere
Yet I auyse you to speke for ony drede
Who spareth to speke in fayth he spareth to spede

Maystres quod I. I haue none aquentaunce
That wyll for me be medyatoure and mene
And this another I haue but smale substaunce
Pece quod Desyre ye speke not worth a bene
Yf ye haue not in fayth I wyll you lene
A precyous Iewell no rycher in this londe
Bone aenture haue here now in your honde

Shyfte now therwith let see as ye can
In bowge of courte cheuysaunce to make
For I dare saye that there nys erthly man
But an he can bone aenture take
There can no fauour nor frendshyp hym forsake
Bone aenture may brynge you in suche case
That ye shall stonde in fauoure and in grace

But of one thyng I werne you er I goo
She that styreth the shyp make her your frende
Maystres quod I. I praye you tell me why soo
And how I maye that waye & meanes fynde
Forsothe quod she howeuer blowe the wynde
Fortune gydeth and ruleth all oure shyppe
Whome she hateth shall ouer the seeboorde skyp

Whome she loueth of all plesyre is rych
Whyles she laugheth and hath luste for to playe
Whome she hateth she casteth in the dyche
For whan she frouneth she thynketh to make a fray
She cheryssheth him and hym she casseth a waye
Alas quod I how myghte I haue her sure
In fayth quod she by bone aenture

Thus in a rowe of martchauntes a grete route
Suwed to fortune that she wold be theyre frynde
They thronge in fast and flocked her aboute
And I with them prayed her to haue in mynde
She promysed to vs all she wolde be kynde
Of bowge of court she asketh what we wold haue
And we asked fauoure/ and fauour she vs gaue

Thus endeth the prologue. And begynneth the bowge of Courte breuely compyled.

Drede

The sayle is vp fortune ruleth our helme
We wante no wynde to passe now ouerall
Fauoure we haue toughther than ony elme
That wyll abyde and neuer frome vs fall
But vnder hony oftetye lyeth bytter gall
For as methoughte in our shyppe I dyde see
Full subtyll persones in nombre foure and thre

The fyrste was Fauell full of flatery
Wyth fables false that well coude fayne a tale
The seconde was Suspecte whiche that dayly
Mysdempte eche man with face deedly & pale
And Haruy hafter that well coude picke a male
With other foure of theyr affynyte
Dysdayne. Ryotte. Dyssymuler. Subtylte.

Fortune theyr frende with whome oft she dyde daunce
They coude not faile thei thought they were so sure
And oftentymes I wolde myselfe auance
With them to make solace and pleasure
But my dysporte they coude not well endure
They sayde they hated for to dele with Drede
Than Fauell gan wyth fayre speche me to fede

Fauell.

Noothyng erthely that I wonder so sore
As of your connyng that is so excellent
Deynte to haue with vs suche one in store
So vertuously that hath his dayes spente
Fortune to you gyftes of grace hath lente
Loo what it is a man to haue connyng
All erthly tresoure it is surmountyng

Ye be an apte man as ony can be founde
To dwell with vs & serue my ladyes grace
Ye be to her yea worth a thousande ponde
I herde her speke of you within shorte space
Whan there were dyuerse that sore dyde you manace
And though I say it I was myselfe your frende
For here be dyuerse to you that be vnkynde

But this one thyng ye maye be sure of me
For by that lorde that bought dere all mankynde
I can not flater I muste be playne to the
And ye nede ought man shewe to me your mynde
For ye haue me whome faythfull ye shall fynde
Whyles I haue ought by god thou shalt not lacke
And yf nede be a bolde worde I dare cracke

Nay naye be sure whyles I am on your syde
Ye maye not fall truste me ye maye not fayle
Ye stonde in faouere and fortune is your gyde
And as she wyll so shall our grete shyppe sayle
Thyse lewde cokwattes shall neuermore preuayle
Ageynste you hardely therefore be not afrayde
Farewell tyll soone but no worde that I sayde

Drede.

Than thanked I hym for his grete gentylnes
But as methoughte he ware on hym a cloke
That lyled was with doubtfull doublenes
Methoughte of wordes that he had full a poke
His stomak stuffed oftetymes dyde reboke
Suspycyon methoughte mette hym at a brayde
And I drewe nere to herke what they two sayde

In fayth quod suspecte) spake drede no worde of me
Why what than wylte thou lete men to speke
He sayth he can not well accorde with the
Twyst quod suspecte) goo playe hym I ne reke
By cryste quod fauell drede is soleyne freke
What lete vs holde him vp man for a whyle
Ye soo quod suspecte) he maye vs bothe begyle

And whan he came walkynge soberly
Wyth whom/ and /ha/ and with a croked loke
Methoughte his hede was full of gelousy
His eyen rolynge his hondes faste they quoke
And to me warde the strayte waye he toke
God spede broder to me quod he than
And thus to talke with me he began

Suspycyon

Ye remembre the gentylman ryghte nowe
That commaunde with you methought a praty space
Beware of him for I make god auowe
He wyll begyle you and speke fayre to your face
Ye neuer dwelte in suche another place
For here is none that dare well other truste
But I wolde telle you a thyng and I durste

Spake he a fayth no worde to you of me
I wote and he dyde ye wolde me telle
I haue a faouere to you wherof it be
That I muste shewe you moche of my counselle
But I wonder what the deuyll of helle
He sayde of me whan he with you dyde talke
By myne auyse vse not with him to walke

The soueraynst thyng that ony man maye haue
Is lytyll to saye/ and moche to here and see
For but I trusted you so god me saue
I wolde noothyng so playne be
To you oonly methynke I durste shryue me
For now am I plenarely dysposed
To shewe you thynges that may not be disclosed

Drede

Than I assured hym my fydelyte
His counseyle secrete neuer to dyscure
Yf he coude fynde in herte to truste me
Els I prayed hym with all my besy cure
To kepe it hymselfe for than he myghte be sure
That noo man erthly coude hym bewreye
Whyles of his mynde it were lockte with the keye

By god quod he this and thus it is
And of his mynde he shewed me all and some
Farewell quod he we wyll talke more of this
Soo he departed there he wolde be come
I dare not speke I promysed to be dome
But as I stode musynge in my mynde
Haruy hafter came lepyng lyghte as lynde

Upon his breste he bare a versyngeboxe
His throte was clere and lustely coude fayne
Methoughte his gowne was all furred wyth foxe
And euer he sange/ sythe I am nothyng playne
To kepe him frome pykyng it was a grete payne
He gased on me with his gotyshe berde
Whan I loked on hym my purse was half aferde

Heruy hafter.

Syr god you saue why loke ye so sadde
What thyng is that I maye do for you
A wonder thyng that ye waxe not madde
For and I studye sholde as ye doo nowe
My wytte wolde waste I make god auowe
Tell me your mynde methynke ye make a verse
I coude it skan and ye wolde it reherse

But to the poynte shortely to procede
Where hathe your dwellyng ben er ye cam here
For as I trowe I haue sene you indede
Er this whan that ye made me Royall chere
Holde vp the helme loke vp & lete god stere
I wolde be mery what wynde that euer blowe
Heue & how rombelow row the bote norman rowe

Prynces of youghte can ye synge by rote
Or shall I sayle wyth you a felashyp assaye
For on the booke I can not synge a note
Wolde to god it wolde please you some daye
A baladeboke before me for to laye
And lerne me to synge Re my fa sol
And whan I fayle bobbe me on the noll

Loo what is to you a pleasure grete

To haue that connyng & wayes that ye haue
By goddis soule I wonder how ye gete
Soo greate pleasyre or who to you it gaue
Syr pardone me I am an homely knaue
To be with you thus perte and thus bolde
But ye be welcome to our housholde

And I dare saye there is no man hereInne
But wolde be glad of your company
I wyste neuer man that so soone coude wynne
The faouere that ye haue with my lady
I praye to god that it maye neuer dy
It is your fortune for to haue that grace
As I be saued it is a wonder case

For as for me I serued here many a daye
And yet vnneth I can haue my lyuyng
But I requyre you no worde that I saye
For and I knowe ony erthly thyng
That is agayne you ye shall haue wetyng
And ye be welcome syr so god me saue
I hope hereafter a frende of you to haue

Drede.

Wyth that as he departed soo fro me
Anone ther mette with him as methoughte
A man/ but wonderly besene was he
He loked hawte he sette eche man at noughte
His gawdy garment with scornys was all wrought
With Indygnacyon lyned was his hode
He frowned as he wolde swere by cockes blode

He bote the lyppe he loked passyng coy
His face was belymmed as byes had him stounge
It was no tyme with him to Iape nor toy
Enuye hathe wasted hys lyuer and his lounge
Hatred by the herte so had hym wrounge
That he loked pale as asshe to my syghte
Dysdayne I wene this comerous carkes hyghte

To heruy hafter than he spake of me
And I drewe nere to harke what they two sayde
Now quod Dysdayne as I shall saued be
I haue grete scorne & am ryghte euyll apayed
Than quod Heruy why arte thou so dysmayde
By cryste quod he for it is shame to saye
To see Iohan dawes that came but yesterdaye

How he is now taken in conceyte
This doctour dawcocke Drede I wene he hyghte
By goddis bones but yf we haue som sleyte

It is lyke he wyll stonde in our lyghte
By god quod Heruy & it so happen myghte
Lete vs therfore shortely at a worde
Fynde some mene to caste him ouer the borde

By him that me boughte than quod Dysdayne
I wonder sore he is in such conceyte
Turde quod Hafter I wyll the nothyngge layne
There muste for hym be layde some prety beyte
We tweyne I trowe be not withoute dysceyte
Fyrste pycke a quarell & fall oute with hym then
And soo outface hym with a carde of ten

Forthwith he made on me a prowde assawte
With scornfull loke meuyd all in moode
He wente aboute to take me in a fawte
He frounde he stared he stampped where he stoode
I loked on hym I wende he had be woode
He set the arme proudly vnder the syde
And in this wyse he gan with me to chyde

Disdayne.

Remembrest thou what thou sayd yesternyght
Wylt thou abyde by the wordes agayne
By god I haue of the now grete dyspyte
I shall the angre ones in euery vayne
It is greate scorne to see suche an hayne
As thou arte one that cam but yesterdaye
With vs olde seruauntes such maysters to playe

I tell the I am of countenaunce
What weneste I were. I trowe thou knowe not me
By goddis woundes but for dysplesaunce
Of my querell soone wolde I venged be
But no force I shall ones mete with the
Come whan it wyll oppose the I shall
Whatsomeuer auenture therof fall

Trowest thou dreuyll I saye thou gawdy knaue
That I haue deynte to see the cherysshed thus
By goddis syde my sworde thy berde shall shaue
Well ones thou shalte be chermed I wus
Naye strawe for tales thou shalte not rule vs
We be thy betters and so thou shalte vs take
Or we shall the oute of thy clothes shake

Drede.

Wyth that came Ryotte russhynge all atones
A rusty gallande to ragged and to rente
And on the borde he whyrled a payre of bones

Quater treye dewes he clatered as he wente
Nowe haue at all by saynte Thomas of kente
And euer he threwe & kyst I wote nere what
His here was growen thoroweoute his hat

Thenne I behelde how he dysgysed was
His hede was heuy for watchyng ouernyghte
His eyen blereed his face shone lyke a glas
His gowne so shorte that it ne couer myghte
His rumpe he wente so all for somer lyghte
His hose was garded wyth a lyste of grene
Yet at the knee they were broken I wene

His cote was checked with patches rede & blewe
Of kyrkeby kendall was his shorte demye
And ay he sange in fayth decon thou crewe
His elbowe bare he ware his gere so nye
His nose a droppyng his lyppes were full drye
And by his syde his whynarde & his pouche
The deuyll myghte daunce therin for ony crowche

Counter he coude (O lux) vpon a potte
An eestrychefedder of a capons tayle
He set vp fresshely vpon his hat a lofte
What reuellroute quod he and gan to rayle
How ofte he hadde hit Ienet on the tayle
Of felyce fetewse and lytell prety cate
How ofte he knocked at her klyckedgate

What sholde I tell more of his rebaudrye
I was ashamed so to here hym prate
He had no pleasure but in harlotrye
Ay quod he in the deuylls date
What arte thou I sawe the nowe but late
Forsothe quod I in this courte I dwell nowe
Welcome quod Ryote I make god auowe

Ryote.

And syr in fayth why comste not vs amonge
To make the mery as other felowes done
Thou muste swere and stare man aldaye longe
And wake all nyghte and slepe tyll it be none
Thou mayste not studye or muse on the mone
This worlde is nothyng but ete drynke & slepe
And thus with vs good company to kepe

Plucke vp thyne herte vpon a mery pyne
And lete us laugh a placke or tweyne at nale
What the deuyll man myrthe was neuer one
What loo man see here of dyce a bale
A brydelyngecaste for that is in thy male

Now haue at all that lyeth vpon the burde
Fye on this dyce they be not worth a turde

Haue at the hasarde or at the dosen browne
Or els I pas a peny to a pounce
Now wolde to god thou wolde leye money downe
Lorde how that I wolde caste it full rounde
Ay in my pouche a buckell I haue founde
The armes of calyce I haue no coyne nor crosse
I am not happy I renne ay on the losse

Now renne muste I to the stewys syde
To wete yf malkyn my lemman haue gete oughte
I lete her to hyre that men maye on her ryde
Her harnes easy ferre and nere is soughte
By goddis sydes syns I her thyder broughte
She hath gotte me more money with her tayle
Than hath some shyppe that into bordews sayle

Had I as good an hors as she is a mare
I durste auenture to Iourney thorough Fraunce
Who rydeth on her he nedeth not to care
For she is trussed for to breke a launce
It is a curtel that well can wynche & prounce
To her wyll I nowe all my pouerte lege
And tyll I come haue here is myne hat to plege

Drede

Gone is this knaue this rybaude foule & leude
He ran as fast as euer that he myghte
Unthryftynes in hym may well be shewed
For whome tyborne groneth both daye and nyghte
And as I stode and kyste asyde my syghte
Dysdayne I sawe with Dyssymulacyon
Standynge in sadde comunicacion

But there was poyntyng & noddynge with his hede
And many wordes sayde in secrete wyse
They wandred ay and stode styll in no stede
Methoughte alwaye Dyscymular dyde deuyse
Me passynge sore myne herte than gan aryse
I dempte & drede theyr talkynge was not good
Anone dyscymular came where I stode

Than in his hode I sawe there faces tweyne
That one was lene & lyke a pyned goost
That other loked as he wolde me haue slayne
And to mewarde as he gan for to coost
Whan that he was euen at me almoost
I sawe a knyfe hyd in his one sleue
Wheron was wryten this worde myscheue

And in his other sleue methought I sawe
A spone of golde full of hony swete
To fede a fole and for to preye a dawe
And on that sleue these wordes were wrete
A false abstracte cometh from a fals concrete
His hode was syde his cope was roset graye
Thyse were the wordes he to me dyde saye

Dyssimulation

How do ye mayster ye loke so soberly
As I be saued at the dredefull daye
It is a perylous vyce this enuy
Alas a connyng man ne dwelle maye
In no place well but foles with hym fraye
But as for that connyng hath no foo
Saue hym that nought can/ scrypture sayth soo.

I knowe your vertu and your lytterkture
By that lytel connyng that I haue
Ye be malygned sore I you ensure
But ye haue crafte yourselfe alwaye to saue
It is grete scorne to se a mysproude knaue
With a clerke that connyng is to prate
Lete them go lowse them in the deuylls date

For allbeit that this longe not to me
Yet on my backe I bere suche lewde delynge
Ryghte now I spake with one I trowe I see
But what a strawe I maye not tell allthyng
By god I saye there is a grete hertebrennyng
Betwene the persone ye wote of you
Alas I coude not dele so with a Iew

I wolde eche man were as playne as I
It is a worlde I saye to here of some
I hate this faynyng fye vpon it fye
A man can not wote where to become
I wys I coude tell but humlery home
I dare not speke we be so layde awayte
For all our courte is full of dysceyte

Now by saynte fraunceys that holy man & frere
I hate this wayes agayne you that they take
Were I as you I wolde ryde them full nere
And by my trouthe but yf an ende they make
Yet wyll I saye some wordes for your sake
That shall them angre I holde thereon a grote
For some shall wene be hanged by the throte

I haue a stoppyngoyster in my poke

Truste me and yf it come to a nede
But I am lothe for to reyse a smoke
Yf ye coude be otherwyse agrede
And so I wolde it were so god me spede
For this maye brede to a confusyon
Withoute god make a good conclusyon

Naye see where yonder stondest the teder man
A flaterynge knave & false he is god wote
The dreuyll stondest to herken and he can
It were more thryft he boughte him a newe cote
It wyll not be/ his purse is not on flote
All that he wereth it is borrowed ware
His wytte is thynne his hode is thredbare

More coude I saye but what this is ynowe
Adewe tyll soone we shall speke more of this
Ye muste be ruled as I shall tell you howe
Amendis maye be of that is now a mys
And I am your syr so haue I blys
In euery poynte that I can do or saye
Gyue me your honde farewell & haue good daye

Drede

Sodaynly as he departed me fro
Came pressynge in one in a wonder araye
Er I was ware behynde me he sayde bo
Thenne I astonyed of that sodeyne fraye
Sterte all at ones I lyked nothyng his playe
For yf I had not quyckely fledde the touche
He had plucte oute the nobles of my pouche

He was trussed in a garmente straye
I haue not sene suche anothers page
For he coude well vpon a casket wayte
His hode all pounsed and garded lyke a cage
Lyghte lymefynger he toke none other wage
Harken quod he loo here myne honde in thyne
To vs welcome thou arte by saynte Quyntyne

Disceyte.

But by that lorde that is one two and thre
I haue an errande to rounde in your ere
He tolde me so by god ye maye truste me
Parde remembre whan ye were there
There I wynked on you/ wote ye not where
In (A) loco I mene iuxta (B)
Woo is hym that is blynde and maye not see

But to here the subtylte and the crafte

As I shall tell you yf ye wyll harke agayne
And whan I sawe the horsons wolde you hafte
To holde myne honde by god I had grete payne
For forthwyth there I had him slayne
But that I drede mordre wolde come oute
Who deleth with shrewes hath nede to loke aboute

Drede.

And as he rounded thus in myne ere
Of false collusyon confetryd by assente
Methoughte I see lewde felawes here and there
Came for to slee me of mortall entente
And as they came the shypborde faste I hente
And thoughte to lepe/ and euen with that woke
Caughte penne and ynke & wroth this lytyll boke

I wolde therwith no man were myscontente
Besechyng you that shall it see or rede
In euery poynte to be indyfferente
Syth all in substaunce of slumbryng doth procede
I wyll not saye it is mater indede
But yet oftyme suche dremes be founde trewe
Now constrewe ye what is the resydewe

John Skelton

The Tunning of Elenor Rumming

Tell you I chyll,
If that ye wyll
A whyle be styll,
Of a comely gyll
That dwelt on a hyll:
But she is not gryll,
For she is somewhat sage
And well worne in age;
For her vysage
It would aswage
A mannes courage.

Her lothely lere
Is nothyng clere,
But ugly of chere,
Droupy and drowsy,
Scurvy and lowsy;
Her face all bowsy,
Comely crynkled,
Woundersly wrynkle,
Lyke a rost pygges eare,
Brystled wyth here.

Her lewde lyppes twayne,
They slaver, men sayne,
Lyke a ropy rayne,
A gummy glayre:
She is ugly fayre;
Her nose somdele hoked,
And camously croked,
Never stoppyng,
But ever droppynge;
Her skynne lose and slacke,
Grained lyke a sacke;
With a croked backe.

Her eyen gowndy
Are full unsowndy,
For they are blered;
And she gray hered;
Jawed lyke a jetty;
A man would have pytty
To se how she is gumbed,
Fyngered and thumbed,
Gently joynted,
Gresed and annoynted
Up to the knockles;
The bones of her huckels
Lyke as they were with buckels
Togyther made fast:
Her youth is farre past:
Foted lyke a plane,

Legged lyke a crane;
And yet she wyll jet,
Lyke a jollyvet,
In her furred flocket,
And gray russet rocket,
With symper the cocket.
Her huke of Lyncole grene,
It had ben hers, I wene,
More then fourty yere;
And so doth it apere,
For the grene bare thredes
Loke lyke sere wedes,
Wyddered lyke hay,
The woll worne away;
And yet I dare saye
She thynketh herselfe gaye
Upon the holy daye,
Whan she doth her aray,
And gyrdeth in her gytes
Stytched and pranked with pletes;
Her kyrtel Brystow red,
With clothes upon her hed
That wey a sowe of led,
Wrythen in wonder wyse,
After the Sarasyns gyse
With a whym wham,
Knyt with a trym tram,
Upon her brayne pan,
Lyke an Egyptian,
Capped about:
When she goeth out
Herselfe for to shewe,
She dryveth downe the dewe
Wyth a payre of heles
As brode as two wheles;
She hobles as a gose
With her blanket hose
Over the falowe;
Her shone smered wyth talowe,
Gresed upon dyrt
That baudeth her skyrt.

Primus passus

And this comely dame,
I understande, her name
Is Elynour Rummynge,
At home in her wonnynge;
And as men say
She dwelt in Sothray,
In a certayne stede

Bysyde Lederhede.
She is a tonnysh gyb;
The devyll and she be syb.

But to make up my tale,
She breweth nobby ale,
And maketh therof port sale
To travellars, to tynkers,
To sweters, to swynkers,
And all good ale drynkers,
That wyll nothyng spare,
But drynke tyll they stare
And brynge themselfe bare,
With, "Now away the mare,
And let us sley care,
As wyse as an hare!"

Come who so wyll
To Elynour on the hyll,
Wyth, "Fyll the cup, fyll,"
And syt there by styll,
Erly and late:
Thyther cometh Kate,
Cysly, and Sare,
With theyr legges bare,
And also theyr fete,
Hardely, full unswete;
Wyth theyr heles dagged,
Theyr kyrtelles all to-jagged,
Theyr smockes all to-ragged,
Wyth titters and tatters,
Brynge dysshes and platters,
Wyth all theyr myght runnyng
To Elynour Rummyng,
To have of her tunnyng:
She leneth them on the same.
And thus begynneth the game.

Instede of coyne and monny,
Some brynge her a conny,
And some a pot with honny,
Some a salt, and some a spone,
Some theyr hose, some theyr shone;
Some ran a good trot
With a skellet or a pot;
Some fyll theyr pot full
Of good Lemster woll:
An huswyfe of trust,
Whan she is athrust,
Suche a webbe can spyn,
Her thryft is full thyn.

Some go streyght thyder,
Be it slaty or slyder;
They holde the hye waye,
They care not what men say,
Be that as be maye;
Some, lothe to be espyde,
Start in at the backe syde,
Over the hedge and pale,
And all for the good ale.

Some renne tyll they swete,
Brynge wyth them malte or whete,
And dame Elynour entrete
To byrle them of the best.

Than cometh an other gest;
She swered by the rode of rest,
Her lyppes are so drye,
Without drynke she must dye;
Therefore fyll it by and by,
And have here a pecke of ry.

Anone cometh another,
As drye as the other,
And wyth her doth brynge
Mele, salte, or other thyng,
Her harvest gyrdle, her weddyng rynge,
To pay for her scot
As cometh to her lot.
Som bryngeth her husbandes hood,
Because the ale is good;
Another brought her his cap
To offer to the ale-tap,
Wyth flaxe and wyth towe;
And some brought sowre dowe;
Wyth, "Hey, and wyth, Howe,
Syt we downe a-rowe,
And drynke tyll we blowe,
And pype tyrly tyrlowe!"

Some layde to pledge
Theyr hatchet and theyr wedge,
Theyr hekell and theyr rele,
Theyr rocke, theyr spynnyng whele;
And some went so narrowe,
They layde to pledge theyr wharrowe,
Theyr rybskyn and theyr spyndell,
Theyr nedell and theyr thymbell:
Here was scant thryft
Whan they made suche shyft

Theyr thrust was so great,

They asked never for mete,
But drynke, styll drynke,
"And let the cat wynke,
Let us washe our gommies
From the drye crommes!"

But some than sat ryght sad
That nothyng had
There of theyre awne,
Neyther gelt nor pawne;
Suche were there menny
That had not a penny,
But, whan they should walke,
Were fayne wyth a chalke
To score on the balke,
Or score on the tayle:
God gyve it yll hayle!
For my fyngers ytche;
I have wrytten to mytche
Of this mad mummyng
Of Elynour Rummyng:
Thus endeth the gest
Of this worthy fest!

Quod Skelton, Laureat.

John Skelton

To Mistress Margaret Hussey

MERRY Margaret
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower:
With solace and gladness,
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness;
So joyously,
So maidenly,
So womanly
Her demeaning
In every thing,
Far, far passing
That I can indite,
Or suffice to write
Of Merry Margaret
As midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.
As patient and still
And as full of good will
As fair Isaphill,
Coliander,
Sweet pomander,
Good Cassander;
Steadfast of thought,
Well made, well wrought,
Far may be sought,
Ere that ye can find
So courteous, so kind
As merry Margaret,
This midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.

John Skelton

To Mistress Margery Wentworth

WITH margerain gentle,
The flower of goodlihead,
Embroidered the mantle
Is of your maidenhead.
Plainly I cannot glose;
Ye be, as I divine,
The pretty primrose,
The goodly columbine.

Benign, courteous, and meek,
With wordes well devised;
In you, who list to seek,
Be virtues well comprised.
With margerain gentle,
The flower of goodlihead,
Embroidered the mantle
Is of your maidenhead.

John Skelton

Vppon a Deedmans Hed

[Skelton Laureat vppon a deedmans hed that was sent to hym from an honorable Ientyll-woman for a token Deuysyd this gostly medytacyon in Englysh Couenable in sentence Comendable, Lamentable, Lacrymable, Profytable for the soule.]

Youre vgly tokyn.
My mynd hath brokyn.
From worldly lust.
For I haue dyscust.
We ar but dust.
And dy we must.

It is generall.
To be mortall.
I haue well espyde.
No man may hym hyde.
From deth holow-eyed.
With synnews wyderyd.
With bonys shyderyd.
With hys worme-etyn maw.
And hys gastly Iaw.
Gaspyng asyde.
Nakyd of hyde.
Neyther flesh nor fell.

Then by my councell.
Loke that ye spell.
Well thys gospels.
For wher-so we dwell.
Deth wyll vs quell.
And with vs mell.

For all oure pamperde paunchys.
Ther may no fraunchys.
Nor worldly blys.
Redeme vs from this.
Oure days be datyd.
To be chek-matyd.
With drawttys of deth.
Stoppynge oure breth.
Oure eyen synkyng.
Oure bodys stynkyng.
Oure gummys grynnynge.
Oure soulys brynnynge.
To whom then shall we sew.
For to haue rescew.
But to swete Iesu.
On vs then for to rew.

O goodly chyld.
Of Mary mylde.
Then be oure shyld.
That we be not exyld.

To the dyne dale.
Of boteles bale. Nor to the lake.
Of fendys blake.

But graunt vs grace.
To se thy face.
And to purchace.
Thyne heuenly place.
And thy palace.
Full of solace.
Aboue the sky.
That is so hy.
Eternally.
To beholde and se.
The Trynyte.

Amen.

John Skelton

With Lullay, Lullay

With lullay, lullay, like a child,
Thou sleepest too long, thou art beguiled!
"My darling dear, my daisy flower,
Let me," quoth he, "lie in your lap."
"Lie still," quoth she, "my paramour,
Lie still hardily, and take a nap."
His head was heavy, such was his hap,
All drowsy, dreaming, drowned in sleep,
That of his love he took no keep,
With hey, lullay, etc.

With ba, ba, ba, and bas, bas, bas!
She cherished him both cheek and chin
That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all deadly sin!
He wanted wit her love to win:
He trusted her payment and lost all his pay;
She left him sleeping and stale away,
With hey, lullay, etc.

The rivers rough, the waters wan;
She sparèd not to wet her feet.
She waded over, she found a man
That halsed her heartily and kissed her sweet;
Thus after her cold she caught a heat.
"My lief, she said, 'rowteth in his bed;
Iwys he hath an heavy head,"
With hey, lullay, etc.

What dreamest thou, drunkard, drowsy pate?
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;
Thou blinkard blowboll, thou wakest too late;
Behold thou liest, luggard, alone!
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,
To deal with her so cowardly.
Ywis, pole-hatchet, she bleared thine eye!

Quoth Skelton Laureate.

John Skelton

Womanhod Wanton Ye Want

Womanhod wanton ye want.
Youre medelyng mastres is manerles.
Plente of yll of goodnes skant.
Ye rayll at ryot recheles.
To prayse youre porte it is nedeles.
For all your draffe yet and your dreggys.
As well borne as ye full oft-tyme beggys.

Why so koy and full of skorne.
Myne horse is sold I wene you say.
My new furryd gowne when it is worne.
Put vp youre purs ye shall non pay.
By Crede I trust to se the day.
As proud a pohen as ye sprede.
Of me and other ye may haue nede.

Though angelyk be youre smylyng.
Yet is youre tong an adders tayle.
Full lyke a Scorpyon styngyng.
All those by whom ye haue auayle.
Good mastres Anne there ye do shayle.
What prate ye praty pyggys-ny.
I truste to quyte you or I dy.

Youre key is mete for euery lok.
Youre key is comen & hangyth owte.
Youre key is redy we nede not knock.
Nor stand long wrestyng there-about.
Of youre doregate ye haue no doute.
But one thyng is that ye be lewde.
Holde youre tong now all be shrewde.

To mastres Anne that farly swete.
That wonnes at the key in temmys strete.

John Skelton