

Classic Poetry Series

Robert Herrick
- poems -

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Robert Herrick(1591-1674)

Clergyman and poet, Robert Herrick was born in London, the seventh child of Nicholas Herrick, a wealthy goldsmith. In November 1592, two days after making a will, his father killed himself by jumping from the fourth-floor window of his house. However, the Queen's Almoner did not confiscate the Herrick estate for the crown as was usually the case with suicides. There is no record of Herrick attending school. In 1607 he was apprenticed to his uncle Sir William Herrick as a goldsmith.

'A Country Life: To his Brother M. Tho. Herrick' (1610) is Herrick's earliest known poem, and deals with the move from London to farm life in Leicestershire. 'To My Dearest Sister M. Merice Herrick' was written before 1612. He entered St John's College, Cambridge in 1613, and became friends with Clipsby Crew to whom he addressed several poems such as 'Nuptial Song'. He graduated a Bachelor of Arts in 1617, Master of Arts in 1620, and in 1623 he was ordained priest. By 1625 he was well known as a poet, mixing in literary circles in London such as that of Ben Jonson. In 1629 he was presented by Charles I to the living of Dean Prior, a remote parish of Devonshire. The best of his work was written in the peace and seclusion of country life; 'To Blossoms' and 'To Daffodils' are classical depictions of a devoted appreciation of nature.

However, having refused to subscribe to The Solemn League and Covenant, he was ejected from Devonshire in 1647. He then returned to London publishing his religious poems *Noble Numbers* (1647), and *Hesperides* (1648). He was distinguished as a lyric poet, and some of his love songs, for example, 'To Anthea' and 'Gather Ye Rose-buds' are considered exceptional. In 1660 he was reinstated at Dean Prior where he lived for the remainder of his life. He wrote no more poems after 1648, and is buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard at Dean Prior.

A Bucolic Betwixt Two; Lacon And Thyrsis

LACON. For a kiss or two, confess,
What doth cause this pensiveness,
Thou most lovely neat-herdess?
Why so lonely on the hill?
Why thy pipe by thee so still,
That erewhile was heard so shrill?
Tell me, do thy kine now fail
To fulfil the milking-pail?
Say, what is't that thou dost ail?

THYR. None of these; but out, alas!
A mischance is come to pass,
And I'll tell thee what it was:
See, mine eyes are weeping ripe.
LACON. Tell, and I'll lay down my pipe.

THYR. I have lost my lovely steer,
That to me was far more dear
Than these kine which I milk here;
Broad of forehead, large of eye,
Party-colour'd like a pye,
Smooth in each limb as a die;
Clear of hoof, and clear of horn,
Sharply pointed as a thorn;
With a neck by yoke unworn,
From the which hung down by strings,
Balls of cowslips, daisy rings,
Interplaced with ribbonings;
Faultless every way for shape;
Not a straw could him escape,
Ever gamesome as an ape,
But yet harmless as a sheep.
Pardon, Lacon, if I weep;
Tears will spring where woes are deep.
Now, ai me! ai me! Last night
Came a mad dog, and did bite,
Ay, and kill'd my dear delight.

LACON Alack, for grief!

THYR. But I'll be brief.
Hence I must, for time doth call
Me, and my sad playmates all,
To his evening funeral.
Live long, Lacon; so adieu!

LACON Mournful maid, farewell to you;
Earth afford ye flowers to strew!

Robert Herrick

A Canticle To Apollo

Play, Phoebus, on thy lute,
And we will sit all mute;
By listening to thy lyre,
That sets all ears on fire.

Hark, hark! the God does play!
And as he leads the way
Through heaven, the very spheres,
As men, turn all to ears!

Robert Herrick

A Child's Grace

HERE a little child I stand
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all. Amen.

Robert Herrick

A Christmas Carol, Sung To The King In The Presence At White-Hall

Chorus.

What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a Carol, for to sing
The Birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the Voice! Awake the String!
Heart, Ear, and Eye, and every thing
Awake! the while the active Finger
Runs division with the Singer.

From the Flourish they came to the Song.

Voice 1:

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honor to this Day,
That sees December turn'd to May.

Voice 2:

If we may ask the reason, say:
The why, and wherefore all things here
Seem like the Spring-time fo the year?

Voice 3:

Why does the chilling Winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell, like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus, on the sudden?

Voice 4:

Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born, whose quick'ning Birth
Gives life and luster, public mirth,
To Heaven and the under-Earth.

Chorus:

We see Him come, and know Him ours,

Who, with His Sun-shine, and His Showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

Voice 1:

The Darling of the World is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome Him.

Voice 2:

The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the Heart,

Chorus:

Which we will give Him; and bequeath
This Holly and this Ivy Wreath,
To do Him honor; who's our King,
And Lord of all this Revelling.

Robert Herrick

A Conjunction To Electra

By those soft tods of wool
With which the air is full;
By all those tinctures there,
That paint the hemisphere;
By dews and drizzling rain
That swell the golden grain;
By all those sweets that be
I' the flowery nunnery;
By silent nights, and the
Three forms of Hecate;
By all aspects that bless
The sober sorceress,
While juice she strains, and pith
To make her philters with;
By time that hastens on
Things to perfection;
And by yourself, the best
Conjurement of the rest:
O my Electra! be
In love with none but me.

Robert Herrick

A Conjunction: To Electra

By those soft tods of wool,
With which the air is full;
By all those tinctures there
That paint the hemisphere;
By dews and drizzling rain,
That swell the golden grain;
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I'th' flowery nunnery;
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Three forms of Hecate;
By all aspects that bless
The sober sorceress,
While juice she strains, and pith
To make her philtres with;
By Time, that hastens on
Things to perfection;
And by your self, the best
Conjurement of the rest;
--O, my Electra! be
In love with none but me.

Robert Herrick

A Dialogue Betwixt Himself And Mistress Elizawheeler, Under The Name Of Amarillis

My dearest Love, since thou wilt go,
And leave me here behind thee;
For love or pity, let me know
The place where I may find thee.

AMARIL. In country meadows, pearl'd with dew,
And set about with lilies;
There, filling maunds with cowslips, you
May find your Amarillis.

HER. What have the meads to do with thee,
Or with thy youthful hours?
Live thou at court, where thou mayst be
The queen of men, not flowers.

Let country wenches make 'em fine
With posies, since 'tis fitter
For thee with richest gems to shine,
And like the stars to glitter.

AMARIL. You set too-high a rate upon
A shepherdess so homely.

HER. Believe it, dearest, there's not one
I' th' court that's half so comely.

I prithee stay. AMARIL. I must away;
Let's kiss first, then we'll sever;
AMBO And though we bid adieu to day,
We shall not part for ever.

Robert Herrick

A Hymn To Bacchus

Bacchus, let me drink no more!
Wild are seas that want a shore!
When our drinking has no stint,
There is no one pleasure in't.
I have drank up for to please
Thee, that great cup, Hercules.
Urge no more; and there shall be
Daffadils giv'n up to thee.

Robert Herrick

A Hymn To Love

I will confess
With cheerfulness,
Love is a thing so likes me,
That, let her lay
On me all day,
I'll kiss the hand that strikes me.

I will not, I,
Now blubb'ring cry,
It, ah! too late repents me
That I did fall
To love at all--
Since love so much contents me.

No, no, I'll be
In fetters free;
While others they sit wringing
Their hands for pain,
I'll entertain
The wounds of love with singing.

With flowers and wine,
And cakes divine,
To strike me I will tempt thee;
Which done, no more
I'll come before
Thee and thine altars empty.

Robert Herrick

A Hymn To The Graces

When I love, as some have told
Love I shall, when I am old,
O ye Graces! make me fit
For the welcoming of it!
Clean my rooms, as temples be,
To entertain that deity;
Give me words wherewith to woo,
Suppling and successful too;
Winning postures; and withal,
Manners each way musical;
Sweetness to allay my sour
And unsmooth behaviour:
For I know you have the skill
Vines to prune, though not to kill;
And of any wood ye see,
You can make a Mercury.

Robert Herrick

A Hymn To Venus And Cupid

Sea-born goddess, let me be
By thy son thus graced, and thee,
That whene'er I woo, I find
Virgins coy, but not unkind.
Let me, when I kiss a maid,
Taste her lips, so overlaid
With love's sirop, that I may
In your temple, when I pray,
Kiss the altar, and confess
There's in love no bitterness.

Robert Herrick

A Lyric To Mirth

While the milder fates consent,
Let's enjoy our merriment :
Drink, and dance, and pipe, and play ;
Kiss our dollies night and day :
Crowned with clusters of the vine,
Let us sit, and quaff our wine.
Call on Bacchus, chant his praise ;
Shake the thyrses, and bite the bays :
Rouse Anacreon from the dead,
And return him drunk to bed :
Sing o'er Horace, for ere long
Death will come and mar the song :
Then shall Wilson and Gotiere
Never sing or play more here.

Robert Herrick

A Mean In Our Means

Though frankincense the deities require,
We must not give all to the hallow'd fire.
Such be our gifts, and such be our expense,
As for ourselves to leave some frankince

Robert Herrick

A Meditation For His Mistress

You are a Tulip seen to-day,
But, Dearest, of so short a stay,
That where you grew, scarce man can say.

You are a lovely July-flower;
Yet one rude wind, or ruffling shower,
Will force you hence, and in an hour.

You are a sparkling Rose i'th' bud,
Yet lost, ere that chaste flesh and blood
Can show where you or grew or stood.

You are a full-spread fair-set Vine,
And can with tendrils love entwine;
Yet dried, ere you distil your wine.

You are like Balm, enclosed well
In amber, or some crystal shell;
Yet lost ere you transfuse your smell.

You are a dainty Violet;
Yet wither'd, ere you can be set
Within the virgins coronet.

You are the Queen all flowers among;
But die you must, fair maid, ere long,
As he, the maker of this song.

Robert Herrick

A New Year's Gift, Sent To Sir Simeon Steward

No news of navies burnt at seas;
No noise of late spawn'd tittyries;
No closet plot or open vent,
That frights men with a Parliament:
No new device or late-found trick,
To read by th' stars the kingdom's sick;
No gin to catch the State, or wring
The free-born nostril of the King,
We send to you; but here a jolly
Verse crown'd with ivy and with holly;
That tells of winter's tales and mirth
That milk-maids make about the hearth;
Of Christmas sports, the wassail-bowl,
That toss'd up, after Fox-i'-th'-hole;
Of Blind-man-buff, and of the care
That young men have to shoe the Mare;
Of twelf-tide cakes, of pease and beans,
Wherewith ye make those merry scenes,
Whenas ye chuse your king and queen,
And cry out, 'Hey for our town green!'--
Of ash-heaps, in the which ye use
Husbands and wives by streaks to chuse;
Of crackling laurel, which fore-sounds
A plenteous harvest to your grounds;
Of these, and such like things, for shift,
We send instead of New-year's gift.
--Read then, and when your faces shine
With buxom meat and cap'ring wine,
Remember us in cups full crown'd,
And let our city-health go round,
Quite through the young maids and the men,
To the ninth number, if not ten;
Until the fired chestnuts leap
For joy to see the fruits ye reap,
From the plump chalice and the cup
That tempts till it be tossed up.--
Then as ye sit about your embers,
Call not to mind those fled Decembers;
But think on these, that are t' appear,

As daughters to the instant year;
Sit crown'd with rose-buds, and carouse,
Till LIBER PATER twirls the house
About your ears, and lay upon
The year, your cares, that's fled and gone:
And let the russet swains the plough
And harrow hang up resting now;
And to the bag-pipe all address,
Till sleep takes place of weariness.
And thus throughout, with Christmas plays,
Frolic the full twelve holy-days.

Robert Herrick

A Panegyric To Sir Lewis Pemberton

Till I shall come again, let this suffice,
I send my salt, my sacrifice
To thee, thy lady, younglings, and as far
As to thy Genius and thy Lar;
To the worn threshold, porch, hall, parlour, kitchen,
The fat-fed smoking temple, which in
The wholesome savour of thy mighty chines,
Invites to supper him who dines:
Where laden spits, warp'd with large ribs of beef,
Not represent, but give relief
To the lank stranger and the sour swain,
Where both may feed and come again;
For no black-bearded Vigil from thy door
Beats with a button'd-staff the poor;
But from thy warm love-hatching gates, each may
Take friendly morsels, and there stay
To sun his thin-clad members, if he likes;
For thou no porter keep'st who strikes.
No comer to thy roof his guest-rite wants;
Or, staying there, is scourged with taunts
Of some rough groom, who, yirk'd with corns, says, 'Sir,
'You've dipp'd too long i' th' vinegar;
'And with our broth and bread and bits, Sir friend,
'You've fared well; pray make an end;
'Two days you've larded here; a third, ye know,
'Makes guests and fish smell strong; pray go
'You to some other chimney, and there take
'Essay of other giblets; make
'Merry at another's hearth; you're here
'Welcome as thunder to our beer;
'Manners knows distance, and a man unrude
'Would soon recoil, and not intrude
'His stomach to a second meal.'--No, no,
Thy house, well fed and taught, can show
No such crabb'd vizard: Thou hast learnt thy train
With heart and hand to entertain;
And by the arms-full, with a breast unhid,
As the old race of mankind did,
When either's heart, and either's hand did strive

To be the nearer relative;
Thou dost redeem those times: and what was lost
Of ancient honesty, may boast
It keeps a growth in thee, and so will run
A course in thy fame's pledge, thy son.
Thus, like a Roman Tribune, thou thy gate
Early sets ope to feast, and late;
Keeping no currish waiter to affright,
With blasting eye, the appetite,
Which fain would waste upon thy cates, but that
The trencher creature marketh what
Best and more suppling piece he cuts, and by
Some private pinch tells dangers nigh,
A hand too desp'rate, or a knife that bites
Skin-deep into the pork, or lights
Upon some part of kid, as if mistook,
When checked by the butler's look.
No, no, thy bread, thy wine, thy jocund beer
Is not reserved for Trebius here,
But all who at thy table seated are,
Find equal freedom, equal fare;
And thou, like to that hospitable god,
Jove, joy'st when guests make their abode
To eat thy bullocks thighs, thy veals, thy fat
Wethers, and never grudged at.
The pheasant, partridge, gotwit, reeve, ruff, rail,
The cock, the curlew, and the quail,
These, and thy choicest viands, do extend
Their tastes unto the lower end
Of thy glad table; not a dish more known
To thee, than unto any one:
But as thy meat, so thy immortal wine
Makes the smirk face of each to shine,
And spring fresh rose-buds, while the salt, the wit,
Flows from the wine, and graces it;
While Reverence, waiting at the bashful board,
Honours my lady and my lord.
No scurril jest, no open scene is laid
Here, for to make the face afraid;
But temp'rate mirth dealt forth, and so discreet-
Ly, that it makes the meat more sweet,
And adds perfumes unto the wine, which thou

Dost rather pour forth, than allow
By cruse and measure; thus devoting wine,
As the Canary isles were thine;
But with that wisdom and that method, as
No one that's there his guilty glass
Drinks of distemper, or has cause to cry
Repentance to his liberty.
No, thou know'st orders, ethics, and hast read
All oeconomics, know'st to lead
A house-dance neatly, and canst truly show
How far a figure ought to go,
Forward or backward, side-ward, and what pace
Can give, and what retract a grace;
What gesture, courtship, comeliness agrees,
With those thy primitive decrees,
To give subsistence to thy house, and proof
What Genii support thy roof,
Goodness and greatness, not the oaken piles;
For these, and marbles have their whiles
To last, but not their ever; virtue's hand
It is which builds 'gainst fate to stand.
Such is thy house, whose firm foundations trust
Is more in thee than in her dust,
Or depth; these last may yield, and yearly shrink,
When what is strongly built, no chink
Or yawning rupture can the same devour,
But fix'd it stands, by her own power
And well-laid bottom, on the iron and rock,
Which tries, and counter-stands the shock
And ram of time, and by vexation grows
The stronger. Virtue dies when foes
Are wanting to her exercise, but, great
And large she spreads by dust and sweat.
Safe stand thy walls, and thee, and so both will,
Since neither's height was raised by th'ill
Of others; since no stud, no stone, no piece
Was rear'd up by the poor-man's fleece;
No widow's tenement was rack'd to gild
Or fret thy cieling, or to build
A sweating-closet, to anoint the silk-
Soft skin, or bath[e] in asses' milk;
No orphan's pittance, left him, served to set

The pillars up of lasting jet,
For which their cries might beat against thine ears,
Or in the damp jet read their tears.
No plank from hallow'd altar does appeal
To yond' Star-chamber, or does seal
A curse to thee, or thine; but all things even
Make for thy peace, and pace to heaven.
--Go on directly so, as just men may
A thousand times more swear, than say
This is that princely Pemberton, who can
Teach men to keep a God in man;
And when wise poets shall search out to see
Good men, they find them all in thee.

Robert Herrick

A Paranaeticall, Or Advisive Verseto His Friend, Mr John Wicks

Is this a life, to break thy sleep,
To rise as soon as day doth peep?
To tire thy patient ox or ass
By noon, and let thy good days pass,
Not knowing this, that Jove decrees
Some mirth, t' adulce man's miseries?
--No; 'tis a life to have thine oil
Without extortion from thy soil;
Thy faithful fields to yield thee grain,
Although with some, yet little pain;
To have thy mind, and nuptial bed,
With fears and cares uncumbered
A pleasing wife, that by thy side
Lies softly panting like a bride;
--This is to live, and to endear
Those minutes Time has lent us here.
Then, while fates suffer, live thou free,
As is that air that circles thee;
And crown thy temples too; and let
Thy servant, not thy own self, sweat,
To strut thy barns with sheaves of wheat.
--Time steals away like to a stream,
And we glide hence away with them:
No sound recalls the hours once fled,
Or roses, being withered;
Nor us, my friend, when we are lost,
Like to a dew, or melted frost.
--Then live we mirthful while we should,
And turn the iron age to gold;
Let's feast and frolic, sing and play,
And thus less last, than live our day.
Whose life with care is overcast,
That man's not said to live, but last;
Nor is't a life, seven years to tell,
But for to live that half seven well;
And that we'll do, as men who know,
Some few sands spent, we hence must go,

Both to be blended in the urn,
From whence there's never a return.

Robert Herrick

A Pastoral Sung To The King

MONTANO, SILVIO, AND MIRTILLO, SHEPHERDS

MON. Bad are the times. SIL. And worse than they are we.

MON. Troth, bad are both; worse fruit, and ill the tree:

The feast of shepherds fail. SIL. None crowns the cup

Of wassail now, or sets the quintel up:

And he, who used to lead the country-round,

Youthful Mirtillo, here he comes, grief-drown'd.

AMBO. Let's cheer him up. SIL. Behold him weeping-ripe.

MIRT. Ah, Amarillis! farewell mirth and pipe;

Since thou art gone, no more I mean to play

To these smooth lawns, my mirthful roundelay.

Dear Amarillis! MON. Hark! SIL. Mark! MIRT. This

earth grew sweet

Where, Amarillis, thou didst set thy feet.

AMBO Poor pitied youth! MIRT. And here the breath

of kine

And sheep grew more sweet by that breath of thine.

This dock of wool, and this rich lock of hair,

This ball of cowslips, these she gave me here.

SIL. Words sweet as love itself. MON. Hark!--

MIRT. This way she came, and this way too she went;

How each thing smells divinely redolent!

Like to a field of beans, when newly blown,

Or like a meadow being lately mown.

MON. A sweet sad passion----

MIRT. In dewy mornings, when she came this way,

Sweet bents would bow, to give my Love the day;

And when at night she folded had her sheep,

Daisies would shut, and closing, sigh and weep.

Besides (Ai me!) since she went hence to dwell,

The Voice's Daughter ne'er spake syllable.

But she is gone. SIL. Mirtillo, tell us whither?

MIRT. Where she and I shall never meet together.

MON. Fore-fend it, Pan! and Pales, do thou please

To give an end... MIRT. To what? SIL. Such griefs

as these.

MIRT. Never, O never! Still I may endure

The wound I suffer, never find a cure.

MON. Love, for thy sake, will bring her to these hills
And dales again. MIRT. No, I will languish still;
And all the while my part shall be to weep;
And with my sighs call home my bleating sheep;
And in the rind of every comely tree
I'll carve thy name, and in that name kiss thee.

MON. Set with the sun, thy woes! SIL. The day
grows old;
And time it is our full-fed flocks to fold.

CHOR. The shades grow great; but greater grows
our sorrow:--
But let's go steep
Our eyes in sleep;
And meet to weep
To-morrow.

Robert Herrick

A Request To The Graces

Ponder my words, if so that any be
Known guilty here of incivility;
Let what is graceless, discomposed, and rude,
With sweetness, smoothness, softness be endued:
Teach it to blush, to curtsy, lisp, and show
Demure, but yet full of temptation, too.
Numbers ne'er tickle, or but lightly please,
Unless they have some wanton carriages:--
This if ye do, each piece will here be good
And graceful made by your neat sisterhood.

Robert Herrick

A Ring Presented To Julia

Julia, I bring
To thee this Ring.
Made for thy finger fit;
To shew by this,
That our love is
(Or sho'd be) like to it.

Close though it be,
The joynt is free:
So when Love's yoke is on,
It must not gall,
Or fret at all
With hard oppression.

But it must play
Still either way;
And be, too, such a yoke,
As not too wide,
To over-slide;
Or be so strait to choak.

So we, who beare,
The beame, must reare
Our selves to such a height:
As that the stay
Of either may
Create the burden light.

And as this round
Is no where found
To flaw, or else to sever:
So let our love
As endless prove;
And pure as Gold for ever.

Robert Herrick

A Thanksgiving To God, For His House

Lord, thou hast given me a cell,
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate;
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
Good words, or meat.
Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipt, unflead;
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee;
The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,

Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides, my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine:
All these, and better, thou dost send
Me, to this end,--
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly thine;
--But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by Thee.

Robert Herrick

A Vow To Venus

Happily I had a sight
Of my dearest dear last night;
Make her this day smile on me,
And I'll roses give to thee!

Robert Herrick

All Things Decay And Die

All things decay with time: The forest sees
The growth and down-fall of her aged trees;
That timber tall, which three-score lustres stood
The proud dictator of the state-like wood,
I mean the sovereign of all plants, the oak,
Droops, dies, and falls without the cleaver's stroke.

Robert Herrick

Ambition

In man, ambition is the common'st thing;
Each one by nature loves to be a king.

Robert Herrick

An Epitaph Upon A Child

Virgins promised when I died,
That they would each primrose-tide
Duly, morn and evening, come,
And with flowers dress my tomb.
--Having promised, pay your debts
Maids, and here strew violets.

Robert Herrick

An Epitaph Upon A Virgin

Here a solemn fast we keep,
While all beauty lies asleep;
Hush'd be all things, no noise here
But the toning of a tear;
Or a sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

Robert Herrick

An Hymn To The Muses

Honour to you who sit
Near to the well of wit,
And drink your fill of it!

Glory and worship be
To you, sweet Maids, thrice three,
Who still inspire me;

And teach me how to sing
Unto the lyric string,
My measures ravishing!

Then, while I sing your praise,
My priest-hood crown with bays
Green to the end of days!

Robert Herrick

An Ode For Ben Jonson

Ah Ben!
Say how or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun;
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad?
And yet each verse of thine
Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine.

My Ben!
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it,
Lest we that talent spend;
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock,--the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

Robert Herrick

An Ode Of The Birth Of Our Saviour

In numbers, and but these few,
I sing thy birth, oh JESU!
Thou pretty Baby, born here,
With sup'rabundant scorn here;
Who for thy princely port here,
Hadst for thy place
Of birth, a base
Out-stable for thy court here.

Instead of neat enclosures
Of interwoven osiers;
Instead of fragrant posies
Of daffadils and roses,
Thy cradle, kingly stranger,
As gospel tells,
Was nothing else,
But, here, a homely manger.

But we with silks, not cruels,
With sundry precious jewels,
And lily-work will dress thee;
And as we dispossess thee
Of clo}ts, we'll make a chamber,
Sweet babe, for thee,
Of ivory,
And plaster'd round with amber.

The Jews, they did disdain thee;
But we will entertain thee
With glories to await here,
Upon thy princely state here,
And more for love than pity:
From year to year
We'll make thee, here,
A free-born of our city.

Robert Herrick

An Ode To Master Endymion Porter, Upon His Brother's Death

Not all thy flushing suns are set,
Herrick, as yet ;
Nor doth this far-drawn hemisphere
Frown and look sullen ev'rywhere.
Days may conclude in nights, and suns may rest
As dead within the west ;
Yet, the next morn, regild the fragrant east.

Alas ! for me, that I have lost
E'en all almost ;
Sunk is my sight, set is my sun,
And all the loom of life undone :
The staff, the elm, the prop, the shelt'ring wall
Whereon my vine did crawl,
Now, now blown down ; needs must the old stock fall.

Yet, Porter, while thou keep'st alive,
In death I thrive :
And like a phoenix re-aspire
From out my nard and fun'ral fire ;
And as I prune my feathered youth, so I
Do mar'l how I could die
When I had thee, my chief preserver, by.

I'm up, I'm up, and bless that hand
Which makes me stand
Now as I do, and but for thee
I must confess I could not be.
The debt is paid ; for he who doth resign
Thanks to the gen'rous vine
Invites fresh grapes to fill his press with wine.

Robert Herrick

An Ode To Sir Clipsby Crew

Here we securely live, and eat
The cream of meat;
And keep eternal fires,
By which we sit, and do divine,
As wine
And rage inspires.

If full, we charm; then call upon
Anacreon
To grace the frantic Thyse:
And having drunk, we raise a shout
Throughout,
To praise his verse.

Then cause we Horace to be read,
Which sung or said,
A goblet, to the brim,
Of lyric wine, both swell'd and crown'd,
Around
We quaff to him.

Thus, thus we live, and spend the hours
In wine and flowers;
And make the frolic year,
The month, the week, the instant day
To stay
The longer here.

--Come then, brave Knight, and see the cell
Wherein I dwell;
And my enchantments too;
Which love and noble freedom is:--
And this
Shall fetter you.

Take horse, and come; or be so kind
To send your mind,
Though but in numbers few:--
And I shall think I have the heart

Or part
Of Clipsby Crew.

Robert Herrick

Anacreontic

Born I was to be old,
And for to die here;
After that, in the mould
Long for to lie here.
But before that day comes,
Still I be bousing;
For I know, in the tombs
There's no carousing.

Robert Herrick

Another

HERE a pretty baby lies
Sung asleep with lullabies:
Pray be silent and not stir
Th' easy earth that covers her.

Robert Herrick

Another Grace For A Child

Here a little child I stand
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all. Amen.

Robert Herrick

Anthea's Retractation

Anthea laugh'd, and, fearing lest excess
Might stretch the cords of civil comeliness
She with a dainty blush rebuked her face,
And call'd each line back to his rule and space.

Robert Herrick

Art Above Nature: To Julia

When I behold a forest spread
With silken trees upon thy head;
And when I see that other dress
Of flowers set in comeliness;
When I behold another grace
In the ascent of curious lace,
Which, like a pinnacle, doth shew
The top, and the top-gallant too;
Then, when I see thy tresses bound
Into an oval, square, or round,
And knit in knots far more than I.
Can tell by tongue, or True-love tie;
Next, when those lawny films I see
Play with a wild civility;
And all those airy silks to flow,
Alluring me, and tempting so--
I must confess, mine eye and heart
Dotes less on nature than on art.

Robert Herrick

Barley-Break; Or, Last In Hell

We two are last in hell; what may we fear
To be tormented or kept pris'ners here I
Alas! if kissing be of plagues the worst,
We'll wish in hell we had been last and first.

Robert Herrick

Be My Mistress Short Or Tall

Be my mistress short or tall
And distorted therewithall
Be she likewise one of those
That an acre hath of nose
Be her teeth ill hung or set
And her grinders black as jet
Be her cheeks so shallow too
As to show her tongue wag through
Hath she thin hair, hath she none
She's to me a paragon.

Robert Herrick

Burial

Man may want land to live in; but for all
Nature finds out some place for burial.

Robert Herrick

Casualties

Good things, that come of course, far less do please
Than those which come by sweet contingencies.

Robert Herrick

Ceremonies For Candlemas Eve

Down with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the misletoe;
Instead of holly, now up-raise
The greener box, for show.

The holly hitherto did sway;
Let box now domineer,
Until the dancing Easter-day,
Or Easter's eve appear.

Then youthful box, which now hath grace
Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped yew.

When yew is out, then birch comes in,
And many flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
To honour Whitsuntide.

Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,
With cooler oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments,
To re-adorn the house.
Thus times do shift; each thing his turn does hold;
New things succeed, as former things grow old.

Robert Herrick

Ceremonies For Christmas

Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psalteries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-teending.

Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a-shredding;
For the rare mince-pie,
And the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a kneading.

Robert Herrick

Ceremony Upon Candlemas Eve

Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and misletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all
Wherewith ye dress'd the Christmas hall;
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind;
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids, trust to me,
So many goblins you shall see.

Robert Herrick

Cherry Ripe

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come, and buy:
If so be you ask me where
They do grow? I answer, there
Where my Julia's lips do smile;--
There's the land, or cherry-isle;
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

Robert Herrick

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Full and fair ones; come and buy.
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: There
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There's the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

Robert Herrick

Cock-Crow

Bell-man of night, if I about shall go
For to deny my Master, do thou crow!
Thou stop'st Saint Peter in the midst of sin;
Stay me, by crowing, ere I do begin;
Better it is, premonish'd, for to shun
A sin, than fall to weeping when 'tis done.

Robert Herrick

Comfort To A Youth That Had Lost His Love

What needs complaints,
When she a place
Has with the race
Of saints?
In endless mirth,
She thinks not on
What's said or done
In earth:
She sees no tears,
Or any tone
Of thy deep groan
She hears;
Nor does she mind,
Or think on't now,
That ever thou
Wast kind:--
But changed above,
She likes not there,
As she did here,
Thy love.
--Forbear, therefore,
And lull asleep
Thy woes, and weep
No more.

Robert Herrick

Corinna's Going A-Maying

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming Morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.

See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colours through the air;
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.

Each flower has wept, and bow'd toward the east,
Above an hour since; yet you not drest,

Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said,
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,

Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise; and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green;

And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown, or hair;
Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you;

Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;

Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night;
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still

Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying;
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park

Made green and trimm'd with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch; each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,

Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.

Can such delights be in the street

And open fields and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May,
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy, or girl, this day,
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden, home.
Some have despatch'd their cakes and cream,
Before that we have left to dream;
And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth;
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks pick'd, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And as a vapour, or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

Robert Herrick

Crutches

Thou see'st me, Lucia, this year droop;
Three zodiacs fill'd more, I shall stoop;
Let crutches then provided be
To shore up my debility:
Then, while thou laugh'st, I'll sighing cry,
A ruin underpropt am I:
Don will I then my beadsman's gown;
And when so feeble I am grown
As my weak shoulders cannot bear
The burden of a grasshopper;
Yet with the bench of aged sires,
When I and they keep termly fires,
With my weak voice I'll sing, or say
Some odes I made of Lucia;--
Then will I heave my wither'd hand
To Jove the mighty, for to stand
Thy faithful friend, and to pour down
Upon thee many a benison.

Robert Herrick

Delight In Disorder

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness;
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction;
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly;
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility;--
Do more bewitch me, than when art
Is too precise in every part.

Robert Herrick

Departure Of The Good Daemon

What can I do in poetry,
Now the good spirit's gone from me?
Why, nothing now but lonely sit
And over-read what I have writ.

Robert Herrick

Discontents In Devon

More discontents I never had
 Since I was born, than here;
Where I have been, and still am, sad,
 In this dull Devonshire.
Yet justly too I must confess,
 I ne'er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the press,
 Than where I loath'd so much.

Robert Herrick

Divination By A Daffodil

When a daffodil I see,
Hanging down his head towards me,
Guess I may what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried.

Robert Herrick

Draw-Gloves

At draw-gloves we'll play,
And prithee let's lay
A wager, and let it be this :
Who first to the sum
Of twenty shall come,
Shall have for his winning a kiss.

Robert Herrick

Dreams

Here we are all, by day; by night we're hurl'd
By dreams, each one into a several world.

Robert Herrick

Eternity

O years! and age! farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost i' th' sea
Of vast eternity:--

Where never moon shall sway
The stars; but she,
And night, shall be
Drown'd in one endless day.

Robert Herrick

Farewell Frost, Or Welcome Spring

Fled are the frosts, and now the fields appear
Reclothed in fresh and verdant diaper;
Thaw'd are the snows; and now the lusty Spring
Gives to each mead a neat enamelling;
The palms put forth their gems, and every tree
Now swaggers in her leafy gallantry.
The while the Daulian minstrel sweetly sings
With warbling notes her Terean sufferings.
--What gentle winds perspire! as if here
Never had been the northern plunderer
To strip the trees and fields, to their distress,
Leaving them to a pitied nakedness.
And look how when a frantic storm doth tear
A stubborn oak or holm, long growing there,--
But lull'd to calmness, then succeeds a breeze
That scarcely stirs the nodding leaves of trees;
So when this war, which tempest-like doth spoil
Our salt, our corn, our honey, wine, and oil,
Falls to a temper, and doth mildly cast
His inconsiderate frenzy off, at last,
The gentle dove may, when these turmoils cease,
Bring in her bill, once more, the branch of Peace.

Robert Herrick

Felicity Quick Of Flight

Every time seems short to be
That's measured by felicity;
But one half-hour that's made up here
With grief, seems longer than a year.

Robert Herrick

Four Things Make Us Happy Here

Health is the first good lent to men;
A gentle disposition then:
Next, to be rich by no by-ways;
Lastly, with friends t' enjoy our days.

Robert Herrick

Good Precepts, Or Counsel

In all thy need, be thou possest
Still with a well prepared breast;
Nor let the shackles make thee sad;
Thou canst but have what others had.
And this for comfort thou must know,
Times that are ill won't still be so:
Clouds will not ever pour down rain;
A sullen day will clear again.
First, peals of thunder we must hear;
When lutes and harps shall stroke the ear.

Robert Herrick

Grace For A Child

Here, a little child, I stand,
Heaving up my either hand:
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all.
Amen.

Robert Herrick

Her Bed

See'st thou that cloud as silver clear,
Plump, soft, and swelling every where?
'Tis Julia's bed, and she sleeps there.

Robert Herrick

His Age:Dedicated To His Peculiar Friend,Mr John Wickes, Under The Name Ofpostumus

Ah, Posthumus! our years hence fly
And leave no sound: nor piety,
Or prayers, or vow
Can keep the wrinkle from the brow;
But we must on,
As fate does lead or draw us; none,
None, Posthumus, could e'er decline
The doom of cruel Proserpine.

The pleasing wife, the house, the ground
Must all be left, no one plant found
To follow thee,
Save only the curst cypress-tree!
--A merry mind
Looks forward, scorns what's left behind;
Let's live, my Wickes, then, while we may,
And here enjoy our holiday.

We've seen the past best times, and these
Will ne'er return; we see the seas,
And moons to wane,
But they fill up their ebbs again;
But vanish'd man,
Like to a lily lost, ne'er can,
Ne'er can repullulate, or bring
His days to see a second spring.

But on we must, and thither tend,
Where Ancus and rich Tullus blend
Their sacred seed;
Thus has infernal Jove decreed;
We must be made,
Ere long a song, ere long a shade.
Why then, since life to us is short,
Let's make it full up by our sport.

Crown we our heads with roses then,

And 'noint with Tyrian balm; for when
We two are dead,
The world with us is buried.
Then live we free
As is the air, and let us be
Our own fair wind, and mark each one
Day with the white and lucky stone.

We are not poor, although we have
No roofs of cedar, nor our brave
Baiae, nor keep
Account of such a flock of sheep;
Nor bullocks fed
To lard the shambles; barbels bred
To kiss our hands; nor do we wish
For Pollio's lampreys in our dish.

If we can meet, and so confer,
Both by a shining salt-cellar,
And have our roof,
Although not arch'd, yet weather-proof,
And cieling free,
From that cheap candle-baudery;
We'll eat our bean with that full mirth
As we were lords of all the earth.

Well, then, on what seas we are tost,
Our comfort is, we can't be lost.
Let the winds drive
Our bark, yet she will keep alive
Amidst the deeps;
'Tis constancy, my Wickes, which keeps
The pinnacle up; which, though she errs
I' th' seas, she saves her passengers.

Say, we must part; sweet mercy bless
Us both i' th' sea, camp, wilderness!
Can we so far
Stray, to become less circular
Than we are now?
No, no, that self-same heart, that vow
Which made us one, shall ne'er undo,

Or ravel so, to make us two.

Live in thy peace; as for myself,
When I am bruised on the shelf
Of time, and show
My locks behung with frost and snow;
When with the rheum,
The cough, the pthisic, I consume
Unto an almost nothing; then,
The ages fled, I'll call again,

And with a tear compare these last
Lame and bad times with those are past,
While Baucis by,
My old lean wife, shall kiss it dry;
And so we'll sit
By th' fire, foretelling snow and slit
And weather by our aches, grown
Now old enough to be our own

True calendars, as puss's ear
Wash'd o'er 's, to tell what change is near;
Then to assuage
The gripings of the chine by age,
I'll call my young
Iulus to sing such a song
I made upon my Julia's breast,
And of her blush at such a feast.

Then shall he read that flower of mine
Enclosed within a crystal shrine;
A primrose next;
A piece then of a higher text;
For to beget
In me a more transcendant heat,
Than that insinuating fire
Which crept into each aged sire

When the fair Helen from her eyes
Shot forth her loving sorceries;
At which I'll rear
Mine aged limbs above my chair;

And hearing it,
Flutter and crow, as in a fit
Of fresh concupiscence, and cry,
'No lust there's like to Poetry.'

Thus frantic, crazy man, God wot,
I'll call to mind things half-forgot;
And oft between
Repeat the times that I have seen;
Thus ripe with tears,
And twisting my Iulus' hairs,
Doting, I'll weep and say, 'In truth,
Baucis, these were my sins of youth.'

Then next I'll cause my hopeful lad,
If a wild apple can be had,
To crown the hearth;
Lar thus conspiring with our mirth;
Then to infuse
Our browner ale into the cruse;
Which, sweetly spiced, we'll first carouse
Unto the Genius of the house.

Then the next health to friends of mine.
Loving the brave Burgundian wine,
High sons of pith,
Whose fortunes I have frolick'd with;
Such as could well
Bear up the magic bough and spell;
And dancing 'bout the mystic Thyrse,
Give up the just applause to verse;

To those, and then again to thee,
We'll drink, my Wickes, until we be
Plump as the cherry,
Though not so fresh, yet full as merry
As the cricket,
The untamed heifer, or the pricket,
Until our tongues shall tell our ears,
We're younger by a score of years.

Thus, till we see the fire less shine

From th' embers than the kitling's eyne,
We'll still sit up,
Sphering about the wassail cup,
To all those times
Which gave me honour for my rhymes;
The coal once spent, we'll then to bed,
Far more than night bewearied.

Robert Herrick

His Content In The Country

HERE, Here I live with what my board
Can with the smallest cost afford;
Though ne'er so mean the viands be,
They well content my Prue and me:
Or pea or bean, or wort or beet,
Whatever comes, Content makes sweet.
Here we rejoice, because no rent
We pay for our poor tenement;
Wherein we rest, and never fear
The landlord or the usurer.
The quarter-day does ne'er affright
Our peaceful slumbers in the night:
We eat our own, and batten more,
Because we feed on no man's score;
But pity those whose flanks grow great,
Swell'd with the lard of other's meat.
We bless our fortunes, when we see
Our own beloved privacy;
And like our living, where we're known
To very few, or else to none.

Robert Herrick

His Covenant Or Protestation To Julia

Why dost thou wound and break my heart,
As if we should for ever part?
Hast thou not heard an oath from me,
After a day, or two, or three,
I would come back and live with thee?
Take, if thou dost distrust that vow,
This second protestation now:--
Upon thy cheek that spangled tear,
Which sits as dew of roses there,
That tear shall scarce be dried before
I'll kiss the threshold of thy door;
Then weep not, Sweet, but thus much know,--
I'm half returned before I go.

Robert Herrick

His Desire

Give me a man that is not dull,
When all the world with rifts is full;
But unamazed dares clearly sing,
Whenas the roof's a-tottering;
And though it falls, continues still
Tickling the Cittern with his quill.

Robert Herrick

His Grange, Or Private Wealth

Though clock,
To tell how night draws hence, I've none,
A cock
I have to sing how day draws on:
I have
A maid, my Prue, by good luck sent,
To save
That little, Fates me gave or lent.
A hen
I keep, which, creaking day by day,
Tells when
She goes her long white egg to lay:
A goose
I have, which, with a jealous ear,
Lets loose
Her tongue, to tell what danger's near.
A lamb
I keep, tame, with my morsels fed,
Whose dam
An orphan left him, lately dead:
A cat
I keep, that plays about my house,
Grown fat
With eating many a miching mouse:
To these
A Trasy I do keep, whereby
I please
The more my rural privacy:
Which are
But toys, to give my heart some ease:--
Where care
None is, slight things do lightly please.

Robert Herrick

His Last Request To Julia

I have been wanton, and too bold, I fear,
To chafe o'er-much the virgin's cheek or ear;--
Beg for my pardon, Julia! he doth win
Grace with the gods who's sorry for his sin.
That done, my Julia, dearest Julia, come,
And go with me to chuse my burial room:
My fates are ended; when thy Herrick dies,
Clasp thou his book, then close thou up his eyes.

Robert Herrick

His Litany, To The Holy Spirit

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart, and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,
Has, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing-bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath pray'd,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decay'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm tost about
Either with despair, or doubt;
Yet, before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears, and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd;
When to Thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

Robert Herrick

His Loss

All has been plunder'd from me but my wit:
Fortune herself can lay no claim to it.

Robert Herrick

His Meditation Upon Death

BE those few hours, which I have yet to spend,
Blest with the meditation of my end;
Though they be few in number, I'm content;
If otherwise, I stand indifferent,
Nor makes it matter, Nestor's years to tell,
If man lives long, and if he live not well.
A multitude of days still heaped on
Seldom brings order, but confusion.
Might I make choice, long life should be with-stood;
Nor would I care how short it were, if good;
Which to effect, let ev'ry passing bell
Possess my thoughts, next comes my doleful knell;
And when the night persuades me to my bed,
I'll think I'm going to be buried;
So shall the blankets which come over me
Present those turfs, which once must cover me;
And with as firm behaviour I will meet
The sheet I sleep in, as my winding-sheet.
When Sleep shall bathe his body in mine eyes,
I will believe, that then my body dies;
And if I chance to wake, and rise thereon,
I'll have in mind my resurrection,
Which must produce me to that Gen'ral Doom,
To which the peasant, so the prince must come,
To hear the Judge give sentence on the Throne,
Without the least hope of affection.
Tears, at that day, shall make but weak defense,
When Hell and horror fright the conscience.
Let me, though late, yet at the last, begin
To shun the least temptation to a sin;
Though to be tempted be no sin, until
Man to th'alluring object gives his will.
Such let my life assure me, when my breath
Goes thieving from me, I am safe in death;
Which is the height of comfort, when I fall,
I rise triumphant in my funeral.

Robert Herrick

His Mistress To Him At His Farewell

You may vow I'll not forget
To pay the debt
Which to thy memory stands as due
As faith can seal it you.
--Take then tribute of my tears;
So long as I have fears
To prompt me, I shall ever
Languish and look, but thy return see never.
Oh then to lessen my despair,
Print thy lips into the air,
So by this
Means, I may kiss thy kiss,
Whenas some kind
Wind
Shall hither waft it:--And, in lieu,
My lips shall send a thousand back to you.

Robert Herrick

His Poetry His Pillar

Only a little more
I have to write:
Then I'll give o'er,
And bid the world good-night.

'Tis but a flying minute,
That I must stay,
Or linger in it:
And then I must away.

O Time, that cut'st down all,
And scarce leav'st here
Memorial
Of any men that were;

--How many lie forgot
In vaults beneath,
And piece-meal rot
Without a fame in death?

Behold this living stone
I rear for me,
Ne'er to be thrown
Down, envious Time, by thee.

Pillars let some set up
If so they please;
Here is my hope,
And my Pyramides.

Robert Herrick

His Prayer For Absolution

For those my unbaptized rhymes,
Writ in my wild unhallowed times,
For every sentence, clause, and word,
That's not inlaid with Thee, my Lord,
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book, that is not Thine.
But if, 'mongst all, Thou find'st here one
Worthy thy benediction,
That one of all the rest shall be
The glory of my work, and me.

Robert Herrick

His Prayer To Ben Jonson

When I a verse shall make,
Know I have pray'd thee,
For old religion's sake,
Saint Ben to aid me.

Make the way smooth for me,
When I, thy Herrick,
Honouring thee, on my knee
Offer my lyric.

Candles I'll give to thee,
And a new altar,
And thou, Saint Ben, shalt be
Writ in my psalter.

Robert Herrick

His Request To Julia

Julia, if I chance to die
Ere I print my poetry,
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my book were dead,
Than to live not perfected.

Robert Herrick

His Return To London

From the dull confines of the drooping west,
To see the day spring from the pregnant east,
Ravish'd in spirit, I come, nay more, I fly
To thee, blest place of my nativity!
Thus, thus with hallow'd foot I touch the ground,
With thousand blessings by thy fortune crown'd.
O fruitful Genius! that bestowest here
An everlasting plenty year by year;
O place! O people! manners! framed to please
All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!
I am a free-born Roman; suffer then
That I amongst you live a citizen.
London my home is; though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment;
Yet since call'd back, henceforward let me be,
O native country, repossess'd by thee!
For, rather than I'll to the west return,
I'll beg of thee first here to have mine urn.
Weak I am grown, and must in short time fall;
Give thou my sacred reliques burial.

Robert Herrick

His Sailing From Julia

When that day comes, whose evening says I'm gone
Unto that watery desolation;
Devoutly to thy Closet-gods then pray,
That my wing'd ship may meet no Remora.
Those deities which circum-walk the seas,
And look upon our dreadful passages,
Will from all dangers re-deliver me,
For one drink-offering poured out by thee,
Mercy and Truth live with thee! and forbear,
In my short absence, to unsluice a tear;
But yet for love's-sake, let thy lips do this,--
Give my dead picture one engendering kiss;
Work that to life, and let me ever dwell
In thy remembrance, Julia. So farewell.

Robert Herrick

His Winding-Sheet

Come thou, who art the wine and wit
Of all I've writ;
The grace, the glory, and the best
Piece of the rest;
Thou art of what I did intend
The All, and End;
And what was made, was made to meet.
Thee, thee my sheet.
Come then, and be to my chaste side
Both bed and bride.
We two, as reliques left, will have
One rest, one grave;
And, hugging close, we need not fear
Lust entering here,
Where all desires are dead or cold,
As is the mould;
And all affections are forgot,
Or trouble not.
Here, here the slaves and prisoners be
From shackles free;
And weeping widows, long opprest,
Do here find rest.
The wronged client ends his laws
Here, and his cause;
Here those long suits of Chancery lie
Quiet, or die;
And all Star-chamber bills do cease,
Or hold their peace.
Here needs no court for our Request
Where all are best;
All wise, all equal, and all just
Alike i'th' dust.
Nor need we here to fear the frown
Of court or crown;
Where fortune bears no sway o'er things,
There all are kings.
In this securer place we'll keep,
As lull'd asleep;
Or for a little time we'll lie,

As robes laid by,
To be another day re-worn,
Turn'd, but not torn;
Or like old testaments engrost,
Lock'd up, not lost;
And for a-while lie here conceal'd,
To be reveal'd
Next, at that great Platonic year,
And then meet here.

Robert Herrick

His Wish To God

I would to God, that mine old age might have
Before my last, but here a living grave;
Some one poor almshouse, there to lie, or stir,
Ghost-like, as in my meaner sepulchre;
A little piggin, and a pipkin by,
To hold things fitting my necessity,
Which, rightly us'd, both in their time and place,
Might me excite to fore, and after, grace.
Thy cross, my Christ, fix'd 'fore mine eyes should be,
Not to adore that, but to worship Thee.
So here the remnant of my days I'd spend,
Reading Thy bible, and my book; so end.

Robert Herrick

His Wish To Privacy

Give me a cell
To dwell,
Where no foot hath
A path;
There will I spend,
And end,
My wearied years
In tears.

Robert Herrick

How His Soul Came Ensnared

My soul would one day go and seek
For roses, and in Julia's cheek
A richness of those sweets she found,
As in another Rosamond;
But gathering roses as she was,
Not knowing what would come to pass,
it chanced a ringlet of her hair
Caught my poor soul, as in a snare;
Which ever since has been in thrall;
--Yet freedom she enjoys withal.

Robert Herrick

How Pansies Or Hearts-Ease Came First

Frolic virgins once these were,
Overloving, living here;
Being here their ends denied
Ran for sweet-hearts mad, and died.
Love, in pity of their tears,
And their loss in blooming years,
For their restless here-spent hours,
Gave them hearts-ease turn'd to flowers.

Robert Herrick

How Springs Came First

These springs were maidens once that loved,
But lost to that they most approved:
My story tells, by Love they were
Turn'd to these springs which we see here:
The pretty whimpering that they make,
When of the banks their leave they take,
Tells ye but this, they are the same,
In nothing changed but in their name.

Robert Herrick

I Call And I Call

I call, I call: who do ye call?
The maids to catch this cowslip ball!
But since these cowslips fading be,
Troth, leave the flowers, and maids, take me!
Yet, if that neither you will do,
Speak but the word, and I'll take you,

Robert Herrick

Impossibilities: To His Friend

My faithful friend, if you can see
The fruit to grow up, or the tree;
If you can see the colour come
Into the blushing pear or plum;
If you can see the water grow
To cakes of ice, or flakes of snow;
If you can see that drop of rain
Lost in the wild sea once again;
If you can see how dreams do creep
Into the brain by easy sleep:--
--Then there is hope that you may see
Her love me once, who now hates me.

Robert Herrick

Kissing Usury

Biancha, let
Me pay the debt
I owe thee for a kiss
Thou lend'st to me;
And I to thee
Will render ten for this.

If thou wilt say,
Ten will not pay
For that so rich a one;
I'll clear the sum,
If it will come
Unto a million.

He must of right,
To th' utmost mite,
Make payment for his pleasure,
(By this I guess)
Of happiness
Who has a little measure.

Robert Herrick

Life Is The Body's Light

Life is the body's light; which, once declining,
Those crimson clouds i' th' cheeks and lips leave shining:-
Those counter-changed tabbies in the air,
The sun once set, all of one colour are:
So, when death comes, fresh tinctures lose their place,
And dismal darkness then doth smutch the face.

Robert Herrick

Loss From The Least

Great men by small means oft are overthrown;
He's lord of thy life, who contemns his own.

Robert Herrick

Love Dislikes Nothing

Whatsoever thing I see,
Rich or poor although it be,
--'Tis a mistress unto me.

Be my girl or fair or brown,
Does she smile, or does she frown;
Still I write a sweet-heart down.

Be she rough, or smooth of skin;
When I touch, I then begin
For to let affection in.

Be she bald, or does she wear
Locks incurl'd of other hair;
I shall find enchantment there.

Be she whole, or be she rent,
So my fancy be content,
She's to me most excellent.

Be she fat, or be she lean;
Be she sluttish, be she clean;
I'm a man for every scene.

Robert Herrick

Love Lightly Pleased

Let fair or foul my mistress be,
Or low, or tall, she pleaseth me;
Or let her walk, or stand, or sit,
The posture her's, I'm pleased with it;
Or let her tongue be still, or stir
Graceful is every thing from her;
Or let her grant, or else deny,
My love will fit each history.

Robert Herrick

Love, What It Is

Love is a circle, that doth restless move
In the same sweet eternity of Love.

Robert Herrick

Lovers How They Come And Part

A Gyges ring they bear about them still,
To be, and not seen when and where they will;
They tread on clouds, and though they sometimes fall,
They fall like dew, and make no noise at all:
So silently they one to th' other come,
As colours steal into the pear or plum,
And air-like, leave no pression to be seen
Where'er they met, or parting place has been.

Robert Herrick

Man's Dying-Place Uncertain

Man knows where first he ships himself; but he
Never can tell where shall his landing be.

Robert Herrick

Matins, Or Morning Prayer

When with the virgin morning thou dost rise,
Crossing thyself come thus to sacrifice;
First wash thy heart in innocence; then bring
Pure hands, pure habits, pure, pure every thing.
Next to the altar humbly kneel, and thence
Give up thy soul in clouds of frankincense.
Thy golden censers fill'd with odours sweet
Shall make thy actions with their ends to meet.

Robert Herrick

Men Mind No State In Sickness

That flow of gallants which approach
To kiss thy hand from out the coach;
That fleet of lackeys which do run
Before thy swift postilion;
Those strong-hoof'd mules, which we behold
Rein'd in with purple, pearl, and gold,
And shed with silver, prove to be
The drawers of the axle-tree;
Thy wife, thy children, and the state
Of Persian looms and antique plate:
--All these, and more, shall then afford
No joy to thee, their sickly lord.

Robert Herrick

Mirth

True mirth resides not in the smiling skin;
The sweetest solace is to act no sin.

Robert Herrick

Miseries

Though hourly comforts from the gods we see,
No life is yet life-proof from misery.

Robert Herrick

Money Makes The Mirth

When all birds else do of their music fail,
Money's the still-sweet-singing nightingale!

Robert Herrick

Mrs Eliz: Wheeler, Under The Name Of The lost Shepherdess

Among the myrtles as I walk'd
Love and my sighs thus intertalk'd:
Tell me, said I, in deep distress,
Where I may find my Shepherdess?
--Thou fool, said Love, know'st thou not this?
In every thing that's sweet she is.
In yond' carnation go and seek,
There thou shalt find her lip and cheek;
In that enamell'd pansy by,
There thou shalt have her curious eye;
In bloom of peach and rose's bud,
There waves the streamer of her blood.
--'Tis true, said I; and thereupon
I went to pluck them one by one,
To make of parts an union;
But on a sudden all were gone.
At which I stopp'd; Said Love, these be
The true resemblances of thee;
For as these flowers, thy joys must die;
And in the turning of an eye;
And all thy hopes of her must wither,
Like those short sweets here knit together.

Robert Herrick

No Fault In Women

No fault in women, to refuse
The offer which they most would chuse.

- No fault: in women, to confess
How tedious they are in their dress;

- No fault in women, to lay on
The tincture of vermilion;
And there to give the cheek a dye
Of white, where Nature doth deny.

- No fault in women, to make show
Of largeness, when they're nothing so;
When, true it is, the outside swells
With inward buckram, little else.

- No fault in women, though they be
But seldom from suspicion free;

- No fault in womankind at all,
If they but slip, and never fall.

Robert Herrick

No Man Without Money

No man such rare parts hath, that he can swim,
If favour or occasion help not him.

Robert Herrick

No Pains, No Gains

If little labour, little are our gains;
Man's fortunes are according to his pains.

Robert Herrick

Not Every Day Fit For Verse

'Tis not ev'ry day that I
Fitted am to prophesy:
No, but when the spirit fills
The fantastic pannicles,
Full of fire, then I write
As the Godhead doth indite.
Thus enraged, my lines are hurl'd,
Like the Sibyl's, through the world:
Look how next the holy fire
Either slakes, or doth retire;
So the fancy cools:--till when
That brave spirit comes again.

Robert Herrick

Nothing Free-Cost

Nothing comes free-cost here; Jove will not let
His gifts go from him, if not bought with sweat.

Robert Herrick

Oberon's Feast

Hapcot! To thee the Fairy State
I with discretion, dedicate.
Because thou prizest things that are
Curious, and un-familiar.
Take first the feast; these dishes gone,
We'll see the Fairy Court anon.
A little mushroom table spread,
After short prayers, they set on bread;
A moon-parched grain of purest wheat,
With some small glit'ring grit, to eat
His choice bits with; then in a trice
They make a feast less great than nice.
But all this while his eye is serv'd,
We must not think his ear was sterv'd:
But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,
The merry cricket, the puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstralcy.
And now, we must imagine first,
The elves present to quench his thirst
A pure seed-pearl of infant dew,
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies,
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of that we call the "cuckoo's spittle."
A little fuzz-ball-pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands,
That was too coarse; but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sag
And well bestrutted bee's sweet bag;
Gladding his palate with some store
Of emit's eggs; what would he more?
But beards of mice, a newt's stew'd thigh,
A bloated earwig, and a fly,
With the red-capp'd worm that's shut

Within the concave of a nut,
Brown as his tooth. a little moth
Late fatten'd in a piece of cloth;
With wither'd cherries, mandrake's ears,
Mole's eyes; to these, the slain stag's tears,
The unctuous dewlaps of a snail,
The broke-heart of a nightingale
O'er-come in music; with a wine,
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently press'd from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height; this done, commended
Grace by his priest, the feast is ended.

Robert Herrick

Of Love: A Sonnet

How Love came in, I do not know,
Whether by th'eye, or ear, or no;
Or whether with the soul it came,
At first, infused with the same;
Whether in part 'tis here or there,
Or, like the soul, whole every where.
This troubles me; but I as well
As any other, this can tell;
That when from hence she does depart,
The outlet then is from the heart.

Robert Herrick

On A Perfumed Lady

You say you're sweet: how should we know
Whether that you be sweet or no?
--From powders and perfumes keep free;
Then we shall smell how sweet you be!

Robert Herrick

On Himself

A wearied pilgrim I have wander'd here,
Twice five-and-twenty, bate me but one year;
Long I have lasted in this world; 'tis true
But yet those years that I have lived, but few.
Who by his gray hairs doth his lustres tell,
Lives not those years, but he that lives them well:
One man has reach'd his sixty years, but he
Of all those three-score has not lived half three:
He lives who lives to virtue; men who cast
Their ends for pleasure, do not live, but last.

Robert Herrick

On Julia's Voice

So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice,
As, could they hear, the Damned would make no noise,
But listen to thee (walking in thy chamber)
melting melodious words to Lutes of Amber.

Robert Herrick

On Love

Love's of itself too sweet; the best of all
Is, when love's honey has a dash of gall.

Robert Herrick

Orpheus

Orpheus he went, as poets tell,
To fetch Eurydice from hell;
And had her, but it was upon
This short, but strict condition;
Backward he should not look, while he
Led her through hell's obscurity.
But ah! it happen'd, as he made
His passage through that dreadful shade,
Revolve he did his loving eye,
For gentle fear or jealousy;
And looking back, that look did sever
Him and Eurydice for ever.

Robert Herrick

Pardons

Those ends in war the best contentment bring,
Whose peace is made up with a pardoning.

Robert Herrick

Peace Not Permanent

Great cities seldom rest; if there be none
T' invade from far, they'll find worse foes at home.

Robert Herrick

Poverty And Riches

Who with a little cannot be content,
Endures an everlasting punishment.

Robert Herrick

Pray And Prosper

First offer incense; then, thy field and meads
Shall smile and smell the better by thy beads.
The spangling dew dredged o'er the grass shall be
Turn'd all to mell and manna there for thee.
Butter of amber, cream, and wine, and oil,
Shall run as rivers all throughout thy soil.
Would'st thou to sincere silver turn thy mould?
--Pray once, twice pray; and turn thy ground to gold.

Robert Herrick

Proof To No Purpose

You see this grntle stream that glides,
Shoved on, by quick-succeeding tides:
Try if this sober stream you can
Follow to th' wider ocean,
And see, if there it keeps unspent
In that congesting element.
Next, from that world of waters, then
By pores and caverns back again
Induct that inadultrate same
Stream to the spring from whence it came.
This with a wonder when ye do,
As easy, and else easier too:
Then ye may recollect the grains
Of my particular remains,
After a thousand lusters hurled,
By roughing winds, around the world.

Robert Herrick

Purposes

No wrath of men, or rage of seas,
Can shake a just man's purposes;
No threats of tyrants, or the grim
Visage of them can alter him;
But what he doth at first intend,
That he holds firmly to the end.

Robert Herrick

Rewards

Still to our gains our chief respect is had ;
Reward it is that makes us good or bad.

Robert Herrick

Safety On The Shore

What though the sea be calm? Trust to the shore;
Ships have been drown'd, where late they danced before.

Robert Herrick

Satisfaction For Sufferings

For all our works a recompence is sure;
'Tis sweet to think on what was hard t'endure.

Robert Herrick

Soft Music

The mellow touch of music most doth wound
The soul, when it doth rather sigh, than sound.

Robert Herrick

Sweet Disorder

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction--
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher--
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly--
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat--
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility--
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

Robert Herrick

Tears And Laughter

Knew'st thou one month would take thy life away,
Thou'dst weep; but laugh, should it not last a day.

Robert Herrick

The Apparition Of His, Mistress, Calling Him To Elysium

THE APPARITION OF HIS, MISTRESS,
CALLING HIM TO ELYSIUM

DESUNT NONNULLA--

Come then, and like two doves with silvery wings,
Let our souls fly to th' shades, wherever springs
Sit smiling in the meads; where balm and oil,
Roses and cassia, crown the untill'd soil;
Where no disease reigns, or infection comes
To blast the air, but amber-gris and gums.
This, that, and ev'ry thicket doth transpire
More sweet than storax from the hallow'd fire;
Where ev'ry tree a wealthy issue bears
Of fragrant apples, blushing plums, or pears;
And all the shrubs, with sparkling spangles, shew
Like morning sun-shine, tinselling the dew.
Here in green meadows sits eternal May,
Purfling the margents, while perpetual day
So double-gilds the air, as that no night
Can ever rust th' enamel of the light:
Here naked younglings, handsome striplings, run
Their goals for virgins' kisses; which when done,
Then unto dancing forth the learned round
Commix'd they meet, with endless roses crown'd.
And here we'll sit on primrose-banks, and see
Love's chorus led by Cupid; and we'll he
Two loving followers too unto the grove,
Where poets sing the stories of our love.
There thou shalt hear divine Musaeus sing
Of Hero and Leander; then I'll bring
Thee to the stand, where honour'd Homer reads
His Odyssees and his high Iliads;
About whose throne the crowd of poets throng
To hear the incantation of his tongue:
To Linus, then to Pindar; and that done,
I'll bring thee, Herrick, to Anacreon,
Quaffing his full-crown'd bowls of burning wine,
And in his raptures speaking lines of thine,

Like to his subject; and as his frantic
Looks shew him truly Bacchanalian like,
Besmear'd with grapes,--welcome he shall thee thither,
Where both may rage, both drink and dance together.
Then stately Virgil, witty Ovid, by
Whom fair Corinna sits, and doth comply
With ivory wrists his laureat head, and steeps
His eye in dew of kisses while he sleeps.
Then soft Catullus, sharp-fang'd Martial,
And towering Lucan, Horace, Juvenal,
And snaky Persius; these, and those whom rage,
Dropt for the jars of heaven, fill'd, t' engage
All times unto their frenzies; thou shalt there
Behold them in a spacious theatre:
Among which glories, crown'd with sacred bays
And flatt'ring ivy, two recite their plays,
Beaumont and Fletcher, swans, to whom all ears
Listen, while they, like sirens in their spheres,
Sing their Evadne; and still more for thee
There yet remains to know than thou canst see
By glimm'ring of a fancy; Do but come,
And there I'll shew thee that capacious room
In which thy father, Jonson, now is placed
As in a globe of radiant fire, and graced
To be in that orb crown'd, that doth include
Those prophets of the former magnitude,
And he one chief. But hark! I hear the cock,
The bell-man of the night, proclaim the clock
Of late struck One; and now I see the prime
Of day break from the pregnant east:--'tis time
I vanish:--more I had to say,
But night determines here;(Away!

Robert Herrick

The Apron Of Flowers

To gather flowers, Sappha went,
And homeward she did bring
Within her lawny continent,
The treasure of the Spring.

She smiling blush'd, and blushing smiled,
And sweetly blushing thus,
She look'd as she'd been got with child
By young Favonius.

Her apron gave, as she did pass,
An odour more divine,
More pleasing too, than ever was
The lap of Proserpine.

Robert Herrick

The Argument Of His Book

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers.
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes.
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness.
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris.
I sing of Time's trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab, and of the fairy king.
I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

Robert Herrick

The Bad Season Makes The Poet Sad

Dull to myself, and almost dead to these,
My many fresh and fragrant mistresses;
Lost to all music now, since every thing
Puts on the semblance here of sorrowing.
Sick is the land to th' heart; and doth endure
More dangerous faintings by her desperate cure.
But if that golden age would come again,
And Charles here rule, as he before did reign;
If smooth and unperplex'd the seasons were,
As when the sweet Maria lived here;
I should delight to have my curls half drown'd
In Tyrian dews, and head with roses crown'd:
And once more yet, ere I am laid out dead,
Knock at a star with my exalted head.

Robert Herrick

The Bag Of The Bee

About the sweet bag of a bee
Two Cupids fell at odds;
And whose the pretty prize should be
They vow'd to ask the Gods.

Which Venus hearing, thither came,
And for their boldness stript them;
And taking thence from each his flame,
With rods of myrtle whipt them.

Which done, to still their wanton cries,
When quiet grown she'd seen them,
She kiss'd and wiped their dove-like eyes,
And gave the bag between them.

Robert Herrick

The Beggar To Mab, The Fairy Queen

Please your Grace, from out your store
Give an alms to one that's poor,
That your mickle may have more.
Black I'm grown for want of meat,
Give me then an ant to eat,
Or the cleft ear of a mouse
Over-sour'd in drink of souce;
Or, sweet lady, reach to me
The abdomen of a bee;
Or commend a cricket's hip,
Or his huckson, to my scrip;
Give for bread, a little bit
Of a pease that 'gins to chit,
And my full thanks take for it.
Flour of fuz-balls, that's too good
For a man in needy-hood;
But the meal of mill-dust can
Well content a craving man;
Any orts the elves refuse
Well will serve the beggar's use.
But if this may seem too much
For an alms, then give me such
Little bits that nestle there
In the pris'ner's pannier.
So a blessing light upon
You, and mighty Oberon;
That your plenty last till when
I return your alms again.

Robert Herrick

The Bellman

From noise of scare-fires rest ye free,
From murders Benedicite.
From all mischances that may fright
Your pleasing slumbers in the night :
Mercy secure ye all, and keep
The goblin from ye while ye sleep.
Past one o'clock, and almost two,
My masters all, good-day to you.

Robert Herrick

The Bell-Man

From noise of scare-fires rest ye free
From murders, Benedicite;
From all mischances that may fright
Your pleasing slumbers in the night
Mercy secure ye all, and keep
The goblin from ye, while ye sleep.
--Past one a clock, and almost two,--
My masters all, 'Good day to you.'

Robert Herrick

The Bleeding Hand; Or The Sprig Of Eglantine Given To A Maid

From this bleeding hand of mine,
Take this sprig of Eglantine:
Which, though sweet unto your smell,
Yet the fretful briar will tell,
He who plucks the sweets, shall prove
Many thorns to be in love.

Robert Herrick

The Bracelet To Julia

Why I tie about thy wrist,
Julia, this my silken twist?
For what other reason is't,
But to shew thee how in part
Thou my pretty captive art?
But thy bond-slave is my heart;
'Tis but silk that bindeth thee,
Knap the thread and thou art free;
But 'tis otherwise with me;
I am bound, and fast bound so,
That from thee I cannot go;
If I could, I would not so.

Robert Herrick

The Bracelet: To Julia

Why I tie about thy wrist,
Julia, this silken twist;
For what other reason 'tis
But to show thee how, in part,
Thou my pretty captive art?
But thy bond slave is my heart:
'tis but silk that bindeth thee,
Knap the thread and thou art free;
But 'tis otherwise with me:
-I am bound and fast bound, so
That from thee I cannot go;
If I could, I would not so.

Robert Herrick

The Bride-Cake

This day, my Julia, thou must make
For Mistress Bride the wedding-cake:
Knead but the dough, and it will be
To paste of almonds turn'd by thee;
Or kiss it thou but once or twice,
And for the bride-cake there'll be spice.

Robert Herrick

The Bubble: A Song

To my revenge, and to her desperate fears,
Fly, thou made bubble of my sighs and tears!
In the wild air, when thou hast roll'd about,
And, like a blasting planet, found her out;
Stoop, mount, pass by to take her eye--then glare
Like to a dreadful comet in the air:
Next, when thou dost perceive her fixed sight
For thy revenge to be most opposite,
Then, like a globe, or ball of wild-fire, fly,
And break thyself in shivers on her eye!

Robert Herrick

The Ceremonies For Candlemas Day

Kindle the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunset let it burn;
Which quench'd, then lay it up again,
Till Christmas next return.

Part must be kept, wherewith to teend
The Christmas log next year;
And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.

Robert Herrick

The Changes: To Corinna

Be not proud, but now incline
Your soft ear to discipline;
You have changes in your life,
Sometimes peace, and sometimes strife;
You have ebbs of face and flows,
As your health or comes or goes;
You have hopes, and doubts, and fears,
Numberless as are your hairs;
You have pulses that do beat
High, and passions less of heat;
You are young, but must be old:--
And, to these, ye must be told,
Time, ere long, will come and plow
Loathed furrows in your brow:
And the dimness of your eye
Will no other thing imply,
But you must die
As well as I.

Robert Herrick

The Cheat Of Cupid; Or, The Ungentle Guest

One silent night of late,
When every creature rested,
Came one unto my gate,
And knocking, me molested.

Who's that, said I, beats there,
And troubles thus the sleepy?
Cast off; said he, all fear,
And let not locks thus keep ye.

For I a boy am, who
By moonless nights have swerved;
And all with showers wet through,
And e'en with cold half starved.

I pitiful arose,
And soon a taper lighted;
And did myself disclose
Unto the lad benighted.

I saw he had a bow,
And wings too, which did shiver;
And looking down below,
I spied he had a quiver.

I to my chimney's shine
Brought him, as Love professes,
And chafed his hands with mine,
And dried his dropping tresses.

But when he felt him warm'd,
Let's try this bow of ours
And string, if they be harm'd,
Said he, with these late showers.

Forthwith his bow he bent,
And wedded string and arrow,
And struck me, that it went
Quite through my heart and marrow

Then laughing loud, he flew
Away, and thus said flying,
Adieu, mine host, adieu,
I'll leave thy heart a-dying.

Robert Herrick

The Coming Of Good Luck

So Good-Luck came, and on my roof did light,
Like noiseless snow, or as the dew of night;
Not all at once, but gently,- as the trees
Are by the sun-beams, tickled by degrees.

Robert Herrick

The Country Life:

TO THE HONOURED MR ENDYMION PORTER, GROOM OF
THE BED-CHAMBER TO HIS MAJESTY

Sweet country life, to such unknown,
Whose lives are others', not their own!
But serving courts and cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee.
Thou never plough'st the ocean's foam
To seek and bring rough pepper home:
Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove
To bring from thence the scorched clove:
Nor, with the loss of thy loved rest,
Bring'st home the ingot from the West.
No, thy ambition's master-piece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece:
Or how to pay thy hinds, and clear
All scores: and so to end the year:
But walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
Not envying others' larger grounds:
For well thou know'st, 'tis not th' extent
Of land makes life, but sweet content.
When now the cock (the ploughman's horn)
Calls forth the lily-wristed morn;
Then to thy corn-fields thou dost go,
Which though well soil'd, yet thou dost know
That the best compost for the lands
Is the wise master's feet, and hands.
There at the plough thou find'st thy team,
With a hind whistling there to them:
And cheer'st them up, by singing how
The kingdom's portion is the plough.
This done, then to th' enamell'd meads
Thou go'st; and as thy foot there treads,
Thou seest a present God-like power
Imprinted in each herb and flower:
And smell'st the breath of great-eyed kine,
Sweet as the blossoms of the vine.
Here thou behold'st thy large sleek neat
Unto the dew-laps up in meat:

And, as thou look'st, the wanton steer,
The heifer, cow, and ox draw near,
To make a pleasing pastime there.
These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks
Of sheep, safe from the wolf and fox,
And find'st their bellies there as full
Of short sweet grass, as backs with wool:
And leav'st them, as they feed and fill,
A shepherd piping on a hill.

For sports, for pageantry, and plays,
Thou hast thy eves, and holydays:
On which the young men and maids meet,
To exercise their dancing feet:
Tripping the comely country Round,
With daffadils and daisies crown'd.
Thy wakes, thy quintels, here thou hast,
Thy May-poles too with garlands graced;
Thy Morris-dance; thy Whitsun-ale;
Thy shearing-feast, which never fail.
Thy harvest home; thy wassail bowl,
That's toss'd up after Fox i' th' hole:
Thy mummeries; thy Twelve-tide kings
And queens; thy Christmas revellings:
Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man pays too dear for it.--
To these, thou hast thy times to go
And trace the hare i' th' treacherous snow:
Thy witty wiles to draw, and get
The lark into the trammel net:
Thou hast thy cockrood, and thy glade
To take the precious pheasant made:
Thy lime-twigs, snares, and pit-falls then
To catch the pilfering birds, not men.

--O happy life! if that their good
The husbandmen but understood!
Who all the day themselves do please,
And younglings, with such sports as these:
And lying down, have nought t' affright
Sweet Sleep, that makes more short the night.
CAETERA DESUNT--

Robert Herrick

The Cruel Maid

--AND, cruel maid, because I see
You scornful of my love, and me,
I'll trouble you no more, but go
My way, where you shall never know
What is become of me; there I
Will find me out a path to die,
Or learn some way how to forget
You and your name for ever;--yet
Ere I go hence, know this from me,
What will in time your fortune be;
This to your coyness I will tell;
And having spoke it once, Farewell.
--The lily will not long endure,
Nor the snow continue pure;
The rose, the violet, one day
See both these lady-flowers decay;
And you must fade as well as they.
And it may chance that love may turn,
And, like to mine, make your heart burn
And weep to see't; yet this thing do,
That my last vow commends to you;
When you shall see that I am dead,
For pity let a tear be shed;
And, with your mantle o'er me cast,
Give my cold lips a kiss at last;
If twice you kiss, you need not fear
That I shall stir or live more here.
Next hollow out a tomb to cover
Me, me, the most despised lover;
And write thereon, THIS, READER, KNOW;
LOVE KILL'D THIS MAN. No more, but so.

Robert Herrick

The Definition Of Beauty

Beauty no other thing is, than a beam
Flash'd out between the middle and extreme.

Robert Herrick

The Dirge Of Jephthah's Daughter: Sung By The Virgins

O thou, the wonder of all days!
O paragon, and pearl of praise!
O Virgin-martyr, ever blest
Above the rest
Of all the maiden-train! We come,
And bring fresh strewings to thy tomb.

Thus, thus, and thus, we compass round
Thy harmless and unhaunted ground;
And as we sing thy dirge, we will
The daffadil,
And other flowers, lay upon
The altar of our love, thy stone.

Thou wonder of all maids, liest here,
Of daughters all, the dearest dear;
The eye of virgins; nay, the queen
Of this smooth green,
And all sweet meads, from whence we get
The primrose and the violet.

Too soon, too dear did Jephthah buy,
By thy sad loss, our liberty;
His was the bond and cov'nant, yet
Thou paid'st the debt;
Lamented Maid! he won the day:
But for the conquest thou didst pay.

Thy father brought with him along
The olive branch and victor's song;
He slew the Ammonites, we know,
But to thy woe;
And in the purchase of our peace,
The cure was worse than the disease.

For which obedient zeal of thine,
We offer here, before thy shrine,

Our sighs for storax, tears for wine;
And to make fine
And fresh thy hearse-cloth, we will here
Four times bestrew thee every year.

Receive, for this thy praise, our tears;
Receive this offering of our hairs;
Receive these crystal vials, fill'd
With tears, distill'd
From teeming eyes; to these we bring,
Each maid, her silver filleting,

To gild thy tomb; besides, these cauls,
These laces, ribbons, and these falls,
These veils, wherewith we use to hide
The bashful bride,
When we conduct her to her groom;
All, all we lay upon thy tomb.

No more, no more, since thou art dead,
Shall we e'er bring coy brides to bed;
No more, at yearly festivals,
We, cowslip balls,
Or chains of columbines shall make,
For this or that occasion's sake.

No, no; our maiden pleasures be
Wrapt in the winding-sheet with thee;
'Tis we are dead, though not i' th' grave;
Or if we have
One seed of life left, 'tis to keep
A Lent for thee, to fast and weep.

Sleep in thy peace, thy bed of spice,
And make this place all paradise;
May sweets grow here, and smoke from hence
Fat frankincense;
Let balm and cassia send their scent
From out thy maiden-monument.

May no wolf howl, or screech owl stir
A wing about thy sepulchre!

No boisterous winds or storms come hither,
To starve or wither
Thy soft sweet earth; but, like a spring,
Love keep it ever flourishing.

May all shy maids, at wonted hours,
Come forth to strew thy tomb with flowers;
May virgins, when they come to mourn,
Male-incense burn
Upon thine altar; then return,
And leave thee sleeping in thy urn.

Robert Herrick

The Fairies

If ye will with Mab find grace,
Set each platter in his place;
Rake the fire up, and get
Water in, ere sun be set.
Wash your pails and cleanse your dairies,
Sluts are loathsome to the fairies;
Sweep your house; Who doth not so,
Mab will pinch her by the toe.

Robert Herrick

The Fairy Temple; Or, Oberon's Chapel

THE FAIRY TEMPLE; OR, OBERON'S CHAPEL

DEDICATED TO MR JOHN MERRIFIELD,
COUNSELLOR AT LAW

RARE TEMPLES THOU HAST SEEN, I KNOW,
AND RICH FOR IN AND OUTWARD SHOW;
SURVEY THIS CHAPEL BUILT, ALONE,
WITHOUT OR LIME, OR WOOD, OR STONE.
THEN SAY, IF ONE THOU'ST SEEN MORE FINE
THAN THIS, THE FAIRIES' ONCE, NOW THINE.

THE TEMPLE

A way enchaced with glass and beads
There is, that to the Chapel leads;
Whose structure, for his holy rest,
Is here the Halcyon's curious nest;
Into the which who looks, shall see
His Temple of Idolatry;
Where he of god-heads has such store,
As Rome's Pantheon had not more.
His house of Rimmon this he calls,
Girt with small bones, instead of walls.
First in a niche, more black than jet,
His idol-cricket there is set;
Then in a polish'd oval by
There stands his idol-beetle-fly;
Next, in an arch, akin to this,
His idol-canker seated is.
Then in a round, is placed by these
His golden god, Cantharides.
So that where'er ye look, ye see
No capital, no cornice free,
Or frieze, from this fine frippery.
Now this the Fairies would have known,
Theirs is a mixt religion:
And some have heard the elves it call
Part Pagan, part Papistical.

If unto me all tongues were granted,
I could not speak the saints here painted.
Saint Tit, Saint Nit, Saint Is, Saint Itis,
Who 'gainst Mab's state placed here right is.
Saint Will o' th' Wisp, of no great bigness,
But, alias, call'd here FATUUS IGNIS.
Saint Frip, Saint Trip, Saint Fill, Saint Filly;--
Neither those other saint-ships will I
Here go about for to recite
Their number, almost infinite;
Which, one by one, here set down are
In this most curious calendar.

First, at the entrance of the gate,
A little puppet-priest doth wait,
Who squeaks to all the comers there,
'Favour your tongues, who enter here.
'Pure hands bring hither, without stain.'
A second pules, 'Hence, hence, profane!'
Hard by, i' th' shell of half a nut,
The holy-water there is put;
A little brush of squirrels' hairs,
Composed of odd, not even pairs,
Stands in the platter, or close by,
To purge the fairy family.
Near to the altar stands the priest,
There offering up the holy-grist;
Ducking in mood and perfect tense,
With (much good do't him) reverence.
The altar is not here four-square,
Nor in a form triangular;
Nor made of glass, or wood, or stone,
But of a little transverse bone;
Which boys and bruckel'd children call
(Playing for points and pins) cockall.
Whose linen-drapery is a thin,
Sub|ile, and ductile codling's skin;
Which o'er the board is smoothly spread
With little seal-work damasked.
The fringe that circumbinds it, too,
Is spangle-work of trembling dew,
Which, gently gleaming, makes a show,

Like frost-work glitt'ring on the snow.
Upon this fetuous board doth stand
Something for shew-bread, and at hand
(Just in the middle of the altar)
Upon an end, the Fairy-psalter,
Graced with the trout-flies' curious wings,
Which serve for watchet ribbonings.
Now, we must know, the elves are led
Right by the Rubric, which they read:
And if report of them be true,
They have their text for what they do;
Ay, and their book of canons too.
And, as Sir Thomas Parson tells,
They have their book of articles;
And if that Fairy knight not lies
They have their book of homilies;
And other Scriptures, that design
A short, but righteous discipline.
The bason stands the board upon
To take the free-oblation;
A little pin-dust, which they hold
More precious than we prize our gold;
Which charity they give to many
Poor of the parish, if there's any.
Upon the ends of these neat rails,
Hatch'd with the silver-light of snails,
The elves, in formal manner, fix
Two pure and holy candlesticks,
In either which a tall small bent
Burns for the altar's ornament.
For sanctity, they have, to these,
Their curious copes and surplices
Of cleanest cobweb, hanging by
In their religious vestery.
They have their ash-pans and their brooms,
To purge the chapel and the rooms;
Their many mumbling mass-priests here,
And many a dapper chorister.
Their ush'ring vergers here likewise,
Their canons and their chaunteries;
Of cloister-monks they have enow,
Ay, and their abbey-lubbers too:--

And if their legend do not lie,
They much affect the papacy;
And since the last is dead, there's hope
Elve Boniface shall next be Pope.
They have their cups and chalices,
Their pardons and indulgences,
Their beads of nits, bells, books, and wax-
Candles, forsooth, and other knacks;
Their holy oil, their fasting-spittle,
Their sacred salt here, not a little.
Dry chips, old shoes, rags, grease, and bones,
Beside their fumigations.
Many a trifle, too, and trinket,
And for what use, scarce man would think it.
Next then, upon the chanter's side
An apple's-core is hung up dried,
With rattling kernels, which is rung
To call to morn and even-song.
The saint, to which the most he prays
And offers incense nights and days,
The lady of the lobster is,
Whose foot-pace he doth stroke and kiss,
And, humbly, chives of saffron brings
For his most cheerful offerings.
When, after these, he's paid his vows,
He lowly to the altar bows;
And then he dons the silk-worm's shed,
Like a Turk's turban on his head,
And reverently departeth thence,
Hid in a cloud of frankincense;
And by the glow-worm's light well guided,
Goes to the Feast that's now provided.

Robert Herrick

The Funeral Rites Of The Rose

The Rose was sick, and smiling died;
And, being to be sanctified,
About the bed, there sighing stood
The sweet and flowery sisterhood.
Some hung the head, while some did bring,
To wash her, water from the spring;
Some laid her forth, while others wept,
But all a solemn fast there kept.
The holy sisters some among,
The sacred dirge and trental sung;
But ah! what sweets smelt everywhere,
As heaven had spent all perfumes there!
At last, when prayers for the dead,
And rites, were all accomplished,
They, weeping, spread a lawny loom,
And closed her up as in a tomb.

Robert Herrick

The Good-Night Or Blessing

Blessings in abundance come
To the bride and to her groom ;
May the bed and this short night
Know the fulness of delight !
Pleasure many here attend ye,
And, ere long, a boy love send ye,
Curled and comely, and so trim,
Maids in time may ravish him.
Thus a dew of graces fall
On ye both ; good-night to all.

Robert Herrick

The Hag

The Hag is astride,
This night for to ride,
The devil and she together;
Through thick and through thin,
Now out, and then in,
Though ne'er so foul be the weather.

A thorn or a bur
She takes for a spur;
With a lash of a bramble she rides now,
Through brakes and through briars,
O'er ditches and mires,
She follows the spirit that guides now.

No beast, for his food,
Dares now range the wood,
But hush'd in his lair he lies lurking;
While mischiefs, by these,
On land and on seas,
At noon of night are a-working.

The storm will arise,
And trouble the skies
This night; and, more for (the wonder,
The ghost from the tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Call'd out by the clap of the thunder.

Robert Herrick

The Heart

In prayer the lips ne'er act the winning part
Without the sweet concurrence of the heart.

Robert Herrick

The Hock-Cart, Or Harvest Home

To the Right Honourable Mildmay, Earl of Westmoreland

Come, sons of summer, by whose toil
We are the lords of wine and oil;
By whose tough labours, and rough hands,
We rip up first, then reap our lands.
Crown'd with the ears of corn, now come,
And to the pipe sing Harvest Home.
Come forth, my lord, and see the cart
Dress'd up with all the country art.
See, here a malkin, there a sheet,
As spotless pure, as it is sweet;
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,
(Clad, all, in linen, white as lilies.)
The harvest swains and wenches bound
For joy, to see the Hock-cart crown'd.
About the cart, hear, how the rout
Of rural younglings raise the shout;
Pressing before, some coming after,
Those with a shout, and these with laughter.
Some bless the cart; some kisses the sheaves;
Some prank them up with oaken leaves;
Some cross the fill-horse; some with great
Devotion, stroke the home-borne wheat;
While other rustics, less attent
To prayers than to merriment,
Run after with their breeches rent.
Well, on, brave boys, to your lord's hearth,
Glitt'ring with fire, where, for your mirth,
Ye shall see first the large and chief
Foundation of your feast, fat beef,
With upper stories, mutton, veal,
And bacon, (which makes full the meal)
With sev'ral dishes standing by,
As here a custard, there a pie,
And here all tempting frumenty.
And for to make the merry cheer,
If smirking wine be wanting here,
There's that which drowns all care, stout beer,

Which freely drink to your lord's health,
Then to the plough, (the common-wealth)
Next to your flails, your fanes, your fats;
Then to the maids with wheaten hats;
To the rough sickle and crook'd scythe,
Drink frolic boys, till all be blythe.
Feed and grow fat; and as ye eat,
Be mindful, that the lab'ring neat
(As you) may have their fill of meat
And know, besides, ye must revoke
The patient ox unto the yoke,
And all go back unto the plough
And harrow, (though they're hang'd up now.)
And, you must know, your lord's word's true,
Feed him ye must, whose food fills you.
And that this pleasure is like rain,
Not sent ye for to drown your pain,
But for to make it spring again.

Robert Herrick

The Hock-Cart, Or Harvest Home: To The Right Honourable Mildmay, Earl Of Westmorland

Come, Sons of Summer, by whose toil
We are the lords of wine and oil:
By whose tough labours, and rough hands,
We rip up first, then reap our lands.
Crown'd with the ears of corn, now come,
And, to the pipe, sing Harvest Home.

Come forth, my lord, and see the cart
Drest up with all the country art.
See, here a maukin, there a sheet,
As spotless pure, as it is sweet:
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,
Clad, all, in linen white as lilies.
The harvest swains and wenches bound
For joy, to see the Hock-Cart crown'd.
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Then to the plough, the common-wealth;
Next to your flails, your fanes, your vats;
Then to the maids with wheaten hats:
To the rough sickle, and crookt scythe,--
Drink, frolic, boys, till all be blythe.
Feed, and grow fat; and as ye eat,
Be mindful, that the lab'ring neat,
As you, may have their fill of meat.
And know, besides, ye must revoke
The patient ox unto the yoke,
And all go back unto the plough
And harrow, though they're hang'd up now.
And, you must know, your lord's word's true,
Feed him ye must, whose food fills you;
And that this pleasure is like rain,
Not sent ye for to drown your pain,
But for to make it spring again.

Robert Herrick

The Hour-Glass

That hour-glass which there you see
With water fill'd, sirs, credit me,
The humour was, as I have read,
But lovers' tears incrystalled.
Which, as they drop by drop do pass
From th' upper to the under-glass,
Do in a trickling manner tell,
By many a watery syllable,
That lovers' tears in lifetime shed
Do restless run when they are dead.

Robert Herrick

The Kiss: A Dialogue

1 Among thy fancies, tell me this,
What is the thing we call a kiss?

2 I shall resolve ye what it is:--

It is a creature born and bred
Between the lips, all cherry-red,
By love and warm desires fed,--
CHOR. And makes more soft the bridal bed.

2 It is an active flame, that flies
First to the babies of the eyes,
And charms them there with lullabies,--
CHOR. And stills the bride, too, when she cries.

2 Then to the chin, the cheek, the ear,
It frisks and flies, now here, now there:
'Tis now far off, and then 'tis near,--
CHOR. And here, and there, and every where.

1 Has it a speaking virtue? 2 Yes.
1 How speaks it, say? 2 Do you but this,--
Part your join'd lips, then speaks your kiss;
CHOR. And this Love's sweetest language is.

1 Has it a body? 2 Ay, and wings,
With thousand rare encolourings;
And as it flies, it gently sings--
CHOR. Love honey yields, but never stings.

Robert Herrick

The Lily In A Crystal

You have beheld a smiling rose
When virgins' hands have drawn
O'er it a cobweb-lawn:
And here, you see, this lily shows,
Tomb'd in a crystal stone,
More fair in this transparent case
Than when it grew alone,
And had but single grace.

You see how cream but naked is,
Nor dances in the eye
Without a strawberry;
Or some fine tincture, like to this,
Which draws the sight thereto,
More by that wantoning with it,
Than when the paler hue
No mixture did admit.

You see how amber through the streams
More gently strokes the sight,
With some conceal'd delight,
Than when he darts his radiant beams
Into the boundless air;
Where either too much light his worth
Doth all at once impair,
Or set it little forth.

Put purple grapes or cherries in-
To glass, and they will send
More beauty to commend
Them, from that clean and subtle skin,
Than if they naked stood,
And had no other pride at all,
But their own flesh and blood,
And tinctures natural.

Thus lily, rose, grape, cherry, cream,
And strawberry do stir
More love, when they transfer

A weak, a soft, a broken beam;
Than if they should discover
At full their proper excellence,
Without some scene cast over,
To juggle with the sense.

Thus let this crystall'd lily be
A rule, how far to teach
Your nakedness must reach;
And that no further than we see
Those glaring colours laid
By art's wise hand, but to this end
They should obey a shade,
Lest they too far extend.

--So though you're white as swan or snow,
And have the power to move
A world of men to love;
Yet, when your lawns and silks shall flow,
And that white cloud divide
Into a doubtful twilight;--then,
Then will your hidden pride
Raise greater fires in men.

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Robert Herrick

The Mad Maid's Song

Good morrow to the day so fair;
Good morning, sir, to you;
Good morrow to mine own torn hair,
Bedabbled with the dew.

Good morning to this primrose too;
Good morrow to each maid;
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
Wherein my Love is laid.

Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me,
Alack and well-a-day!
For pity, sir, find out that bee,
Which bore my Love away.

I'll seek him in your bonnet brave;
I'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think they've made his grave
I' th' bed of strawberries.

I'll seek him there; I know, ere this,
The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
But I will go, or send a kiss
By you, sir, to awake him.

Pray hurt him not; though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him;
And who with green turfs rear his head,
And who do rudely move him.

He's soft and tender, pray take heed,
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home;--but 'tis decreed
That I shall never find him.

Robert Herrick

The Maypole

The May-pole is up,
Now give me the cup;
I'll drink to the garlands around it;
But first unto those
Whose hands did compose
The glory of flowers that crown'd it.

A health to my girls,
Whose husbands may earls
Or lords be, granting my wishes,
And when that ye wed
To the bridal bed,
Then multiply all, like to fishes.

Robert Herrick

The Night Piece, To Julia

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee;
 And the elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mis-light thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
 But on, on thy way,
 Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the moon does slumber?
 The stars of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
Like tapers clear without number.

Then Julia let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
 And when I shall meet
 Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

Robert Herrick

The Old Wives' Prayer

Holy-Rood, come forth and shield
Us i' th' city and the field;
Safely guard us, now and aye,
From the blast that burns by day;
And those sounds that us affright
In the dead of dampish night;
Drive all hurtful fiends us fro,
By the time the cocks first crow.

Robert Herrick

The Olive Branch

Sadly I walk'd within the field,
To see what comfort it would yield;
And as I went my private way,
An olive-branch before me lay;
And seeing it, I made a stay,
And took it up, and view'd it; then
Kissing the omen, said Amen;
Be, be it so, and let this be
A divination unto me;
That in short time my woes shall cease,
And love shall crown my end with peace.

Robert Herrick

The Parcae; Or, Three Dainty Destinies: The Armilet

Three lovely sisters working were,
As they were closely set,
Of soft and dainty maiden-hair,
A curious Armilet.
I, smiling, ask'd them what they did,
Fair Destinies all three?
Who told me they had drawn a thread
Of life, and 'twas for me.
They shew'd me then how fine 'twas spun
And I replied thereto;
'I care not now how soon 'tis done,
Or cut, if cut by you.'

Robert Herrick

The Parliament Of Roses To Julia

I dreamt the Roses one time went
To meet and sit in Parliament;
The place for these, and for the rest
Of flowers, was thy spotless breast.
Over the which a state was drawn
Of tiffany, or cob-web lawn;
Then in that Parly all those powers
Voted the Rose the Queen of flowers;
But so, as that herself should be
The Maid of Honour unto thee.

Robert Herrick

The Pillar of Fame

Fame's pillar here at last we set,
Out-during marble, brass or jet;
Charmed and enchanted so
As to withstand the blow
Of overthrow;
Nor shall the seas,
Or outrages
Of storms, o'erbear
What we uprear;
Tho' kingdoms fall,
This pillar never shall
Decline or waste at all;
But stand for ever by his own
Firm and well-fixed foundation.

Robert Herrick

The Plaudite, Or End Of Life

If after rude and boisterous seas
My wearied pinnace here finds ease;
If so it be I've gain'd the shore,
With safety of a faithful oar;
If having run my barque on ground,
Ye see the aged vessel crown'd;
What's to be done? but on the sands
Ye dance and sing, and now clap hands.
--The first act's doubtful, but (we say)
It is the last commends the Play.

Robert Herrick

The Present Time Best Pleaseth

Praise, they that will, times past: I joy to see
Myself now live; this age best pleaseth me!

Robert Herrick

The Present; Or, The Bag Of The Bee:

Fly to my mistress, pretty pilfering bee,
And say thou bring'st this honey-bag from me;
When on her lip thou hast thy sweet dew placed,
Mark if her tongue but slyly steal a taste;
If so, we live; if not, with mournful hum,
Toll forth my death; next, to my burial come.

Robert Herrick

The Primrose

Ask me why I send you here
This sweet Infanta of the year?
Ask me why I send to you
This Primrose, thus bepearl'd with dew?
I will whisper to your ears,--
The sweets of love are mixt with tears.

Ask me why this flower does show
So yellow-green, and sickly too?
Ask me why the stalk is weak
And bending, yet it doth not break?
I will answer,--these discover
What fainting hopes are in a lover.

Robert Herrick

The Rock Of Rubies, And The Quarry Ofpearls

Some ask'd me where the Rubies grew:
And nothing I did say,
But with my finger pointed to
The lips of Julia.
Some ask'd how Pearls did grow, and where:
Then spoke I to my girl,
To part her lips, and shew me there
The quarrelets of Pearl.

Robert Herrick

The Rosary

One asked me where the roses grew:
I bade him not go seek,
But forwith bade my Julia show
A bud in either cheek.

Robert Herrick

The Shower Of Blossoms

Love in a shower of blossoms came
Down, and half drown'd me with the same;
The blooms that fell were white and red;
But with such sweets commingled,
As whether (this) I cannot tell,
My sight was pleased more, or my smell;
But true it was, as I roll'd there,
Without a thought of hurt or fear,
Love turn'd himself into a bee,
And with his javelin wounded me;---
From which mishap this use I make;
Where most sweets are, there lies a snake;
Kisses and favours are sweet things;
But those have thorns, and these have stings.

Robert Herrick

The Succession Of The Four Sweet Months

First, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers;
Then after her comes smiling May,
In a more rich and sweet array;
Next enters June, and brings us more
Gems than those two that went before;
Then, lastly, July comes, and she
More wealth brings in than all those three.

Robert Herrick

The Transfiguration

Immortal clothing I put on
So soon as, Julia, I am gone
To mine eternal mansion.

Thou, thou art here, to human sight
Clothed all with incorrupted light;
--But yet how more admir'dly bright

Wilt thou appear, when thou art set
In thy refulgent thronelet,
That shin'st thus in thy counterfeit!

Robert Herrick

The Vine

I dreamed this mortal part of mine
 Was metamorphosed to a vine,
 Which, crawling one and every way,
 Enthralled my dainty Lucia.
Methought, her long small legs and thighs
 I with my tendrils did surprise:
Her belly, buttocks, and her waist
 By my soft nervelets were embraced
 About her head I writhing hung
And with rich clusters (hid Among
The leaves) her temples i behung,
 So that my Lucia seemed to me
Young Bacchus ravished by his tree.
 My curls about her neck did crawl,
AND arms and hands they did enthrall,
 So that she could not freely stir
(All parts there made one prisoner).
But when I crept with leaves to hide
Those parts which maids keep unespied,
 Such fleeting pleasures there I took
 That with the fancy i awoke,
And found (ah me!) this flesh of mine
 More like a stock than like a vine.

Robert Herrick

The Voice And Viol

Rare is the voice itself: but when we sing
To th' lute or viol, then 'tis ravishing.

Robert Herrick

The Wake

Come, Anthea, let us two
Go to feast, as others do:
Tarts and custards, creams and cakes,
Are the junkets still at wakes;
Unto which the tribes resort,
Where the business is the sport:
Morris-dancers thou shalt see,
Marian, too, in pageantry;
And a mimic to devise
Many grinning properties.
Players there will be, and those
Base in action as in clothes;
Yet with strutting they will please
The incurious villages.
Near the dying of the day
There will be a cudgel-play,
Where a coxcomb will be broke,
Ere a good word can be spoke:
But the anger ends all here,
Drench'd in ale, or drown'd in beer.
--Happy rusticks! best content
With the cheapest merriment;
And possess no other fear,
Than to want the Wake next year.

Robert Herrick

The Wassail

Give way, give way, ye gates, and win
An easy blessing to your bin
And basket, by our entering in.

May both with manchet stand replete;
Your larders, too, so hung with meat,
That though a thousand, thousand eat,

Yet, ere twelve moons shall whirl about
Their silv'ry spheres, there's none may doubt
But more's sent in than was served out.

Next, may your dairies prosper so,
As that your pans no ebb may know;
But if they do, the more to flow,

Like to a solemn sober stream,
Bank'd all with lilies, and the cream
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

Then may your plants be press'd with fruit,
Nor bee or hive you have be mute,
But sweetly sounding like a lute.

Last, may your harrows, shares, and ploughs,
Your stacks, your stocks, your sweetest mows,
All prosper by your virgin-vows.

--Alas! we bless, but see none here,
That brings us either ale or beer;
In a dry-house all things are near.

Let's leave a longer time to wait,
Where rust and cobwebs bind the gate;
And all live here with needy fate;

Where chimneys do for ever weep
For want of warmth, and stomachs keep
With noise the servants' eyes from sleep.

It is in vain to sing, or stay
Our free feet here, but we'll away:
Yet to the Lares this we'll say:

'The time will come when you'll be sad,
'And reckon this for fortune bad,

Robert Herrick

The Watch

Man is a watch, wound up at first, but never
Wound up again; Once down, he's down for ever.
The watch once down, all motions then do cease;
The man's pulse stopt, all passions sleep in peace.

Robert Herrick

The White Island: Or Place Of The Blest

In this world, the Isle of Dreams,
While we sit by sorrow's streams,
Tears and terrors are our themes,
Reciting:

But when once from hence we fly,
More and more approaching nigh
Unto young eternity,
Uniting

In that whiter Island, where
Things are evermore sincere:
Candour here, and lustre there,
Delighting:--

There no monstrous fancies shall
Out of hell an horror call,
To create, or cause at all
Affrighting.

There, in calm and cooling sleep,
We our eyes shall never steep,
But eternal watch shall keep,
Attending

Pleasures such as shall pursue
Me immortalized, and you;
And fresh joys, as never too
Have ending.

Robert Herrick

The Widows' Tears; Or, Dirge Of Dorcas

Come pity us, all ye who see
Our harps hung on the willow-tree;
Come pity us, ye passers-by,
Who see or hear poor widows' cry;
Come pity us, and bring your ears
And eyes to pity widows' tears.
CHOR. And when you are come hither,
Then we will keep
A fast, and weep
Our eyes out all together,

For Tabitha; who dead lies here,
Clean wash'd, and laid out for the bier.
O modest matrons, weep and wail!
For now the corn and wine must fail;
The basket and the bin of bread,
Wherewith so many souls were fed,
CHOR. Stand empty here for ever;
And ah! the poor,
At thy worn door,
Shall be relieved never.

Woe worth the time, woe worth the day,
That reft us of thee, Tabitha!
For we have lost, with thee, the meal,
The bits, the morsels, and the deal
Of gentle paste and yielding dough,
That thou on widows did bestow.
CHOR. All's gone, and death hath taken
Away from us
Our maundy; thus
Thy widows stand forsaken.

Ah, Dorcas, Dorcas! now adieu
We bid the cruise and pannier too;
Ay, and the flesh, for and the fish,
Doled to us in that lordly dish.
We take our leaves now of the loom
From whence the housewives' cloth did come;

CHOR. The web affords now nothing;
Thou being dead,
The worsted thread
Is cut, that made us clothing.

Farewell the flax and reaming wool,
With which thy house was plentiful;
Farewell the coats, the garments, and
The sheets, the rugs, made by thy hand;
Farewell thy fire and thy light,
That ne'er went out by day or night:--

CHOR. No, or thy zeal so speedy,
That found a way,
By peep of day,
To feed and clothe the needy.

But ah, alas! the almond-bough
And olive-branch is wither'd now;
The wine-press now is ta'en from us,
The saffron and the calamus;
The spice and spikenard hence is gone,
The storax and the cinnamon;
CHOR. The carol of our gladness
Has taken wing;
And our late spring
Of mirth is turn'd to sadness.

How wise wast thou in all thy ways!
How worthy of respect and praise!
How matron-like didst thou go drest!
How soberly above the rest
Of those that prank it with their plumes,
And jet it with their choice perfumes!

CHOR. Thy vestures were not flowing;
Nor did the street
Accuse thy feet
Of mincing in their going.

And though thou here liest dead, we see
A deal of beauty yet in thee.
How sweetly shews thy smiling face,
Thy lips with all diffused grace!

Thy hands, though cold, yet spotless, white,
And comely as the chrysolite.
CHOR. Thy belly like a hill is,
Or as a neat
Clean heap of wheat,
All set about with lilies.

Sleep with thy beauties here, while we
Will shew these garments made by thee;
These were the coats; in these are read
The monuments of Dorcas dead:
These were thy acts, and thou shalt have
These hung as honours o'er thy grave:--
CHOR. And after us, distressed,
Should fame be dumb,
Thy very tomb
Would cry out, Thou art blessed.

Robert Herrick

The Wounded Cupid

Cupid as he lay among
Roses, by a Bee was stung.
Whereupon in anger flying
To his Mother, said thus crying;
Help! O help! your Boy's a dying.
And why, my pretty Lad, said she?
Then blubbering, replied he,
A winged Snake has bitten me,
Which Country people call a Bee.
At which she smil'd; then with her hairs
And kisses drying up his tears:
Alas! said she, my Wag! if this
Such a pernicious torment is:
Come, tel me then, how great's the smart
Of those, thou woundest with thy Dart!

Robert Herrick

The Wounded Heart

Come, bring your sampler, and with art
Draw in't a wounded heart,
And dropping here and there;
Not that I think that any dart
Can make your's bleed a tear,
Or pierce it any where;
Yet do it to this end,--that I
May by
This secret see,
Though you can make
That heart to bleed, your's ne'er will ache
For me,

Robert Herrick

Things Mortal Still Mutable

Things are uncertain; and the more we get,
The more on icy pavements we are set.

Robert Herrick

To A Gentlewoman, Objecting To Him Hisgray Hairs

Am I despised, because you say;
And I dare swear, that I am gray?
Know, Lady, you have but your day!
And time will come when you shall wear
Such frost and snow upon your hair;
And when, though long, it comes to pass,
You question with your looking-glass,
And in that sincere crystal seek
But find no rose-bud in your cheek,
Nor any bed to give the shew
Where such a rare carnation grew:-
Ah! then too late, close in your chamber keeping,
It will be told
That you are old,--
By those true tears you're weeping.

Robert Herrick

To Anthea

Anthea, I am going hence
With some small stock of innocence;
But yet those blessed gates I see
Withstanding entrance unto me;
To pray for me do thou begin;--
The porter then will let me in.

Robert Herrick

To Anthea, Who May Command Him Any Thing

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy Protestant to be;
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honour thy decree;
Or bid it languish quite away,
And't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep,
While I have eyes to see;
And having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair,
Under that cypress tree;
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death, to die for thee.

--Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me;
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee.

Robert Herrick

To Bacchus: A Canticle

Whither dost thou hurry me,
Bacchus, being full of thee?
This way, that way, that way, this,--
Here and there a fresh Love is;
That doth like me, this doth please;
--Thus a thousand mistresses
I have now: yet I alone,
Having all, enjoy not one!

Robert Herrick

To Be Merry

Let's now take our time,
While we're in our prime,
And old, old age is afar off;
For the evil, evil days
Will come on apace,
Before we can be aware of.

Robert Herrick

To Blossoms

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here a-while,
To blush and gently smile;
And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight;
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth,
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride,
Like you, a-while;--they glide
Into the grave.

Robert Herrick

To Carnations: A Song

Stay while ye will, or go,
And leave no scent behind ye:
Yet trust me, I shall know
The place where I may find ye.

Within my Lucia's cheek,
(Whose livery ye wear)
Play ye at hide or seek,
I'm sure to find ye there.

Robert Herrick

To Daffodils

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon.
 Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run
 But to the even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything.
 We die
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away,
 Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

To Daisies, Not To Shut So Soon

Shut not so soon; the dull-eyed night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear;
Nor doth the early shepherds' star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye;
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

Robert Herrick

To Death

Thou bidst me come away,
And I'll no longer stay,
Than for to shed some tears
For faults of former years;
And to repent some crimes
Done in the present times;
And next, to take a bit
Of bread, and wine with it;
To don my robes of love,
Fit for the place above;
To gird my loins about
With charity throughout;
And so to travel hence
With feet of innocence;
These done, I'll only cry,
'God, mercy!' and so die.

Robert Herrick

To Electra

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile;
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share
Of my desire shall be,
Only to kiss that air
That lately kissed thee,

Robert Herrick

To Enjoy The Time

While fates permit us, let's be merry;
Pass all we must the fatal ferry;
And this our life, too, whirls away,
With the rotation of the day.

Robert Herrick

To Groves

Ye silent shades, whose each tree here
Some relique of a saint doth wear;
Who for some sweet-heart's sake, did prove
The fire and martyrdom of Love:--
Here is the legend of those saints
That died for love, and their complaints;
Their wounded hearts, and names we find
Encarved upon the leaves and rind.
Give way, give way to me, who come
Scorch'd with the self-same martyrdom!
And have deserved as much, Love knows,
As to be canonized 'mongst those
Whose deeds and deaths here written are
Within your Greeny-kalendar.
--By all those virgins' fillets hung
Upon! your boughs, and requiems sung
For saints and souls departed hence,
Here honour'd still with frankincense;
By all those tears that have been shed,
As a drink-offering to the dead;
By all those true-love knots, that be
With mottoes carved on every tree;
By sweet Saint Phillis! pity me;
By dear Saint Iphis! and the rest
Of all those other saints now blest,
Me, me forsaken,--here admit
Among your myrtles to be writ;
That my poor name may have the glory
To live remember'd in your story.

Robert Herrick

To Heaven

Open thy gates
To him who weeping waits,
And might come in,
But that held back by sin.
Let mercy be
So kind, to set me free,
And I will straight
Come in, or force the gate.

Robert Herrick

To His Book

Make haste away, and let one be
A friendly patron unto thee;
Lest, rapt from hence, I see thee lie
Torn for the use of pastery;
Or see thy injured leaves serve well
To make loose gowns for mackarel;
Or see the grocers, in a trice,
Make hoods of thee to serve out spice.

Robert Herrick

To His Conscience

Can I not sin, but thou wilt be
My private protonotary?
Can I not woo thee, to pass by
A short and sweet iniquity?
I'll cast a mist and cloud upon
My delicate transgression,
So utter dark, as that no eye
Shall see the hugg'd impiety.
Gifts blind the wise, and bribes do please
And wind all other witnesses;
And wilt not thou with gold be tied,
To lay thy pen and ink aside,
That in the mirk and tongueless night,
Wanton I may, and thou not write?
--It will not be: And therefore, now,
For times to come, I'll make this vow;
From aberrations to live free:
So I'll not fear the judge, or thee.

Robert Herrick

To His Dying Brother, Master William Herrick

Life of my life, take not so soon thy flight,
But stay the time till we have bade good-night.
Thou hast both wind and tide with thee; thy way
As soon dispatch'd is by the night as day.
Let us not then so rudely henceforth go
Till we have wept, kiss'd, sigh'd, shook hands, or so.
There's pain in parting, and a kind of hell
When once true lovers take their last farewell.
What? shall we two our endless leaves take here
Without a sad look, or a solemn tear?
He knows not love that hath not this truth proved,
Love is most loth to leave the thing beloved.
Pay we our vows and go; yet when we part,
Then, even then, I will bequeath my heart
Into thy loving hands; for I'll keep none
To warm my breast, when thou, my pulse, art gone,
No, here I'll last, and walk, a harmless shade,
About this urn, wherein thy dust is laid,
To guard it so, as nothing here shall be
Heavy, to hurt those sacred seeds of thee.

Robert Herrick

To His Girls

Wanton wenches do not bring
For my hairs black colouring :
For my locks, girls, let 'em be
Grey or white, all's one to me.

Robert Herrick

To His Honoured And Most Ingenious Friend Mr. Charles Cotton

For brave comportment, wit without offence,
Words fully flowing, yet of influence:
Thou art that man of men, the man alone,
Worthy the public admiration:
Who with thine own eyes read'st what we do write,
And giv'st our numbers euphony, and weight.
Tell'st when a verse springs high, how understood
To be, or not born of the Royal blood.
What state above, what symmetry below,
Lines have, or should have, thou the best canst show.
For which (my Charles) it is my pride to be,
Not so much known, as to be loved by thee.
Long may I live so, and my wreath of bays,
Be less another's laurel, than thy praise.

Robert Herrick

To His Honoured And Most Ingenious Friendmr Charles Cotton

For brave comportment, wit without offence,
Words fully flowing, yet of influence,
Thou art that man of men, the man alone
Worthy the public admiration;
Who with thine own eyes read'st what we do write,
And giv'st our numbers euphony and weight;
Tell'st when a verse springs high; how understood
To be, or not, born of the royal blood
What state above, what symmetry below,
Lines have, or should have, thou the best can show:--
For which, my Charles, it is my pride to be,
Not so much known, as to be loved of thee:--
Long may I live so, and my wreath of bays
Be less another's laurel, than thy praise.

Robert Herrick

To His Kinswoman, Mistress Susanna Herrick

When I consider, dearest, thou dost stay
But here awhile, to languish and decay;
Like to these garden glories, which here be
The flowery-sweet resemblances of thee:
With grief of heart, methinks, I thus do cry,
Would thou hadst ne'er been born, or might'st not die!

Robert Herrick

To His Lovely Mistresses

One night i'th' year, my dearest Beauties, come,
And bring those dew-drink-offerings to my tomb;
When thence ye see my reverend ghost to rise,
And there to lick th' effused sacrifice,
Though paleness be the livery that I wear,
Look ye not wan or colourless for fear.
Trust me, I will not hurt ye, or once show
The least grim look, or cast a frown on you;
Nor shall the tapers, when I'm there, burn blue.
This I may do, perhaps, as I glide by,--
Cast on my girls a glance, and loving eye;
Or fold mine arms, and sigh, because I've lost
The world so soon, and in it, you the most:
--Than these, no fears more on your fancies fall,
Though then I smile, and speak no words at all.

Robert Herrick

To His Mistress, Objecting To Him Neither Toying Or Talking

You say I love not, 'cause I do not play
Still with your curls, and kiss the time away.
You blame me, too, because I can't devise
Some sport, to please those babies in your eyes; -
By Love's religion, I must here confess it,
The most I love, when I the least express it.
Small griefs find tongues; full casks are ever found
To give, if any, yet but little sound.
Deep waters noisless are; and this we know,
That chiding streams betray small depth below.
So when love speechless is, she doth express
A depth in love, and that depth bottomless.
Now, since my love is tongueless, know me such,
Who speak but little, 'cause I love so much.

Robert Herrick

To His Mistress, Objecting To Him Neithertoying Or Talking

You say I love not, 'cause I do not play
Still with your curls, and kiss the time away.
You blame me, too, because I can't devise
Some sport, to please those babies in your eyes;
By Love's religion, I must here confess it,
The most I love, when I the least express it.
Shall griefs find tongues; full casks are ever found
To give, if any, yet but little sound.
Deep waters noiseless are; and this we know,
That chiding streams betray small depth below.
So when love speechless is, she doth express
A depth in love, and that depth bottomless.
Now, since my love is tongueless, know me such,
Who speak but little, 'cause I love so much.

Robert Herrick

To His Muse

Whither, mad maiden, wilt thou roam?
Far safer 'twere to stay at home;
Where thou mayst sit, and piping, please
The poor and private cottages.
Since cotes and hamlets best agree
With this thy meaner minstrelsy.
There with the reed thou mayst express
The shepherd's fleecy happiness;
And with thy Eclogues intermix:
Some smooth and harmless Bucolics.
There, on a hillock, thou mayst sing
Unto a handsome shepherdling;
Or to a girl, that keeps the neat,
With breath more sweet than violet.
There, there, perhaps such lines as these
May take the simple villages;
But for the court, the country wit
Is despicable unto it.
Stay then at home, and do not go
Or fly abroad to seek for woe;
Contempts in courts and cities dwell
No critic haunts the poor man's cell,
Where thou mayst hear thine own lines read
By no one tongue there censured.
That man's unwise will search for ill,
And may prevent it, sitting still.

Robert Herrick

To His Paternal Country

O earth! earth! earth! hear thou my voice, and be
Loving and gentle for to cover me!
Banish'd from thee I live;--ne'er to return,
Unless thou giv'st my small remains an urn.

Robert Herrick

To His Peculiar Friend, Mr John Wicks

Since shed or cottage I have none,
I sing the more, that thou hast one;
To whose glad threshold, and free door
I may a Poet come, though poor;
And eat with thee a savoury bit,
Paying but common thanks for it.
--Yet should I chance, my Wicks, to see
An over-leaven look in thee,
To sour the bread, and turn the beer
To an exalted vinegar;
Or should'st thou prize me as a dish
Of thrice-boil'd worts, or third-day's fish,
I'd rather hungry go and come
Than to thy house be burdensome;
Yet, in my depth of grief, I'd be
One that should drop his beads for thee.

Robert Herrick

To His Saviour, A Child; A Present, By A Child

Go, pretty child, and bear this flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
And tell him, by that bud now blown,
He is the Rose of Sharon known.
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his bib or stomacher;
And tell him, for good handsel too,
That thou hast brought a whistle new,
Made of a clean straight oaten reed,
To charm his cries at time of need;
Tell him, for coral, thou hast none,
But if thou hadst, he should have one;
But poor thou art, and known to be
Even as moneyless as he.
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
From those melifluous lips of his;--
Then never take a second on,
To spoil the first impression.

Robert Herrick

To His Sweet Saviour

Night hath no wings to him that cannot sleep;
And Time seems then not for to fly, but creep;
Slowly her chariot drives, as if that she
Had broke her wheel, or crack'd her axletree.
Just so it is with me, who list'ning, pray
The winds to blow the tedious night away,
That I might see the cheerful peeping day.
Sick is my heart; O Saviour! do Thou please
To make my bed soft in my sicknesses;
Lighten my candle, so that I beneath
Sleep not for ever in the vaults of death;
Let me thy voice betimes i' th' morning hear;
Call, and I'll come; say Thou the when and where:
Draw me but first, and after Thee I'll run,
And make no one stop till my race be done.

Robert Herrick

To His Verses

What will ye, my poor orphans, do,
When I must leave the world and you;
Who'll give ye then a sheltering shed,
Or credit ye, when I am dead?
Who'll let ye by their fire sit,
Although ye have a stock of wit,
Already coin'd to pay for it?
--I cannot tell: unless there be
Some race of old humanity
Left, of the large heart and long hand,
Alive, as noble Westmorland;
Or gallant Newark; which brave two
May fost'ring fathers be to you.
If not, expect to be no less
Ill used, than babes left fatherless.

Robert Herrick

To Julia

How rich and pleasing thou, my Julia, art,
In each thy dainty and peculiar part!
First, for thy Queen-ship on thy head is set
Of flowers a sweet commingled coronet;
About thy neck a carkanet is bound,
Made of the Ruby, Pearl, and Diamond;
A golden ring, that shines upon thy thumb;
About thy wrist the rich Dardanium;
Between thy breasts, than down of swans more white,
There plays the Sapphire with the Chrysolite.
No part besides must of thyself be known,
But by the Topaz, Opal, Calcedon.

Robert Herrick

To Laurels

A funeral stone
Or verse, I covet none;
But only crave
Of you that I may have
A sacred laurel springing from my grave:
Which being seen
Blest with perpetual green,
May grow to be
Not so much call'd a tree,
As the eternal monument of me.

Robert Herrick

To Live Freely

Let's live in haste; use pleasures while we may;
Could life return, 'twould never lose a day.

Robert Herrick

To Live Merrily, And To Trust To Good Verses

Now is the time for mirth,
Nor cheek or tongue be dumb;
For with the flow'ry earth
The golden pomp is come.

The golden pomp is come;
For now each tree does wear,
Made of her pap and gum,
Rich beads of amber here.

Now reigns the rose, and now
Th' Arabian dew besmears
My uncontrolled brow
And my retorted hairs.

Homer, this health to thee,
In sack of such a kind
That it would make thee see
Though thou wert ne'er so blind.

Next, Virgil I'll call forth
To pledge this second health
In wine, whose each cup's worth
An Indian commonwealth.

A goblet next I'll drink
To Ovid, and suppose,
Made he the pledge, he'd think
The world had all one nose.

Then this immensive cup
Of aromatic wine,
Catullus, I quaff up
To that terse muse of thine.

Wild I am now with heat;
O Bacchus! cool thy rays!
Or frantic, I shall eat
Thy thyrses, and bite the bays.

Round, round the roof does run;
And being ravish'd thus,
Come, I will drink a tun
To my Propertius.

Now, to Tibullus, next,
This flood I drink to thee;
But stay, I see a text
That this presents to me.

Behold, Tibullus lies
Here burnt, whose small return
Of ashes scarce suffice
To fill a little urn.

Trust to good verses then;
They only will aspire,
When pyramids, as men,
Are lost i' th' funeral fire.

And when all bodies meet,
In Lethe to be drown'd,
Then only numbers sweet
With endless life are crown'd.

Robert Herrick

To Meadows

Ye have been fresh and green,
Ye have been fill'd with flowers;
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

You've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round;
Each virgin, like a spring,
With honeysuckles crown'd.

But now, we see none here,
Whose silvery feet did tread
And with dishevell'd hair
Adorn'd this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown
You're left here to lament
Your poor estates alone.

Robert Herrick

To Mistress Katharine Bradshaw, The Lovely, That Crowned Him With Laurel

My Muse in meads has spent her many hours
Sitting, and sorting several sorts of flowers,
To make for others garlands; and to set
On many a head here, many a coronet.
But amongst all encircled here, not one
Gave her a day of coronation;
Till you, sweet mistress, came and interwove
A laurel for her, ever young as Love.
You first of all crown'd her; she must, of due,
Render for that, a crown of life to you.

Robert Herrick

To Music

Begin to charm, and as thou strok'st mine ears
With thine enchantment, melt me into tears.
Then let thy active hand scud o'er thy lyre,
And make my spirits frantic with the fire;
That done, sink down into a silvery strain,
And make me smooth as balm and oil again.

Robert Herrick

To Music, To Becalm A Sweet Sick Youth

Charms, that call down the moon from out her sphere,
On this sick youth work your enchantments here!
Bind up his senses with your numbers, so
As to entrance his pain, or cure his woe.
Fall gently, gently, and a-while him keep
Lost in the civil wilderness of sleep:
That done, then let him, dispossess'd of pain,
Like to a slumbering bride, awake again.

Robert Herrick

To Music, To Becalm His Fever

Charm me asleep, and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers;
That being ravish'd, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.
Ease my sick head,
And make my bed,
Thou Power that canst sever
From me this ill;--
And quickly still,
Though thou not kill
My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
From a consuming fire,
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep,
And give me such reposes,
That I, poor I,
May think, thereby,
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers,
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains
With thy soft strains;
That having ease me given,
With full delight,
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For Heaven.

Robert Herrick

To Music: A Song

Music, thou queen of heaven, care-charming spell,
That strik'st a stillness into hell;
Thou that tam'st tigers, and fierce storms, that rise,
With thy soul-melting lullabies;
Fall down, down, down, from those thy chiming spheres
To charm our souls, as thou enchant'st our ears.

Robert Herrick

To Music: A Song

Music, thou Queen of Heaven, Care-charming-spell,
That strik'st a stillness into hell:
Thou that tam'st Tygers, and fierce storms (that rise)
With thy soul-melting Lullabies:
Fall down, down, down, from those thy chiming spheres,
To charm our souls, as thou enchant'st our ears.

Robert Herrick

To Oenone.

What conscience, say, is it in thee,
When I a heart had one, [won]
To take away that heart from me,
And to retain thy own?

For shame or pity, now incline
To play a loving part;
Either to send me kindly thine,
Or give me back my heart.

Covet not both; but if thou dost
Resolve to part with neither;
Why! yet to shew that thou art just,
Take me and mine together.

Robert Herrick

To Pansies

Ah, Cruel Love! must I endure
Thy many scorns, and find no cure?
Say, are thy medicines made to be
Helps to all others but to me?
I'll leave thee, and to Pansies come:
Comforts you'll afford me some:
You can ease my heart, and do
What Love could ne'er be brought unto.

Robert Herrick

To Perenna

When I thy parts run o'er, I can't espy
In any one, the least indecency;
But every line and limb diffused thence
A fair and unfamiliar excellence;
So that the more I look, the more I prove
There's still more cause why I the more should love.

Robert Herrick

To Perilla

Ah, my Perilla, dost thou grieve to see
Me day by day to steal away from thee?
Age calls me hence, and my grey hairs bid come,
And haste away to mine eternal home.
'Twill not be long, Perilla, after this,
That I must give thee the supremest kiss.
Dead when I am, first cast in salt, and bring
Part of the cream from that religious spring,
With which, Perilla, wash my hands and feet.
That done, then wind me in that very sheet
Which wrapped thy smooth limbs when thou didst implore
The gods' protection but the night before.
Follow me weeping to my turf, and there
Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear;
Then, lastly, let some weekly-strewings be
Devoted to the memory of me:
Then shall my ghost not walk about, but keep
Still in the cool and silent shades of sleep.

Robert Herrick

To Perilla

Ah, my Perilla! dost thou grieve to see
Me, day by day, to steal away from thee?
Age calls me hence, and my gray hairs bid come,
And haste away to mine eternal home;
'Twill not be long, Perilla, after this,
That I must give thee the supremest kiss:--
Dead when I am, first cast in salt, and bring
Part of the cream from that religious spring,
With which, Perilla, wash my hands and feet;
That done, then wind me in that very sheet
Which wrapt thy smooth limbs, when thou didst implore
The Gods' protection, but the night before;
Follow me weeping to my turf, and there
Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear:
Then lastly, let some weekly strewings be
Devoted to the memory of me;
Then shall my ghost not walk about, but keep
Still in the cool and silent shades of sleep.

Robert Herrick

To Phillis, To Love And Live With Him

TO PHILLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM

Live, live with me, and thou shalt see
The pleasures I'll prepare for thee:
What sweets the country can afford
Shall bless thy bed, and bless thy board.
The soft sweet moss shall be thy bed,
With crawling woodbine over-spread:
By which the silver-shedding streams
Shall gently melt thee into dreams.
Thy clothing next, shall be a gown
Made of the fleeces' purest down.
The tongues of kids shall be thy meat;
Their milk thy drink; and thou shalt eat
The paste of filberts for thy bread
With cream of cowslips buttered:
Thy feasting-table shall be hills
With daisies spread, and daffadils;
Where thou shalt sit, and Red-breast by,
For meat, shall give thee melody.
I'll give thee chains and carcanets
Of primroses and violets.
A bag and bottle thou shalt have,
That richly wrought, and this as brave;
So that as either shall express
The wearer's no mean shepherdess.
At shearing-times, and yearly wakes,
When Themilis his pastime makes,
There thou shalt be; and be the wit,
Nay more, the feast, and grace of it.
On holydays, when virgins meet
To dance the heys with nimble feet,
Thou shalt come forth, and then appear
The Queen of Roses for that year.
And having danced ('bove all the best)
Carry the garland from the rest,
In wicker-baskets maids shall bring
To thee, my dearest shepherdling,
The blushing apple, bashful pear,

And shame-faced plum, all simp'ring there.
Walk in the groves, and thou shalt find
The name of Phillis in the rind
Of every straight and smooth-skin tree;
Where kissing that, I'll twice kiss thee.
To thee a sheep-hook I will send,
Be-prank'd with ribbands, to this end,
This, this alluring hook might be
Less for to catch a sheep, than me.
Thou shalt have possets, wassails fine,
Not made of ale, but spiced wine;
To make thy maids and self free mirth,
All sitting near the glitt'ring hearth.
Thou shalt have ribbands, roses, rings,
Gloves, garters, stockings, shoes, and strings
Of winning colours, that shall move
Others to lust, but me to love.
--These, nay, and more, thine own shall be,
If thou wilt love, and live with me.

Robert Herrick

To Primroses Filled With Morning Dew

Why do ye weep, sweet babes? can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew?
Alas, you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt th' unkind
Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years;
Or warp'd as we,
Who think it strange to see,
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears, before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimp'ring younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep;
Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that Sweet-heart, to this?
--No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed,
Would have this lecture read,
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.

Robert Herrick

To Robin Red-Breast

Laid out for dead, let thy last kindness be
With leaves and moss-work for to cover me;
And while the wood-nymphs my cold corpse inter,
Sing thou my dirge, sweet-warbling chorister!
For epitaph, in foliage, next write this:
HERE, HERE THE TOMB OF ROBIN HERRICK IS!

Robert Herrick

To Sapho

Sapho, I will chuse to go
Where the northern winds do blow
Endless ice, and endless snow;
Rather than I once would see
But a winter's face in thee,--
To benumb my hopes and me.

Robert Herrick

To Silvia

Pardon my trespass, Silvia! I confess
My kiss out-went the bounds of shamefacedness:--
None is discreet at all times; no, not Jove
Himself, at one time, can be wise and love.

Robert Herrick

To Silvia To Wed

Let us, though late, at last, my Silvia, wed;
And loving lie in one devoted bed.
Thy watch may stand, my minutes fly post haste;
No sound calls back the year that once is past.
Then, sweetest Silvia, let's no longer stay;
True love, we know, precipitates delay.
Away with doubts, all scruples hence remove!
No man, at one time, can be wise, and love.

Robert Herrick

To Sir Clipsby Crew

Since to the country first I came,
I have lost my former flame;
And, methinks, I not inherit,
As I did, my ravish'd spirit.
If I write a verse or two,
'Tis with very much ado;
In regard I want that wine
Which should conjure up a line.
Yet, though now of Muse bereft,
I have still the manners left
For to thank you, noble sir,
For those gifts you do confer
Upon him, who only can
Be in prose a grateful man.

Robert Herrick

To The Genius Of His House

Command the roof, great Genius, and from thence
Into this house pour down thy influence,
That through each room a golden pipe may run
Of living water by thy benison;
Fulfil the larders, and with strength'ning bread
Be ever-more these bins replenished.
Next, like a bishop consecrate my ground,
That lucky fairies here may dance their round;
And, after that, lay down some silver pence,
The master's charge and care to recompence.
Charm then the chambers; make the beds for ease,
More than for peevish pining sicknesses;
Fix the foundation fast, and let the roof
Grow old with time, but yet keep weather-proof.

Robert Herrick

To The Handsome Mistress Grace Potter

As is your name, so is your comely face
Touch'd every where with such diffused grace,
As that in all that admirable round,
There is not one least solecism found;
And as that part, so every portion else
Keeps line for line with beauty's parallels.

Robert Herrick

To The Lady Crewe, Upon The Death Of Her Child

Why, Madam, will ye longer weep,
Whenas your baby's lull'd asleep?
And, pretty child, feels now no more
Those pains it lately felt before.

All now is silent; groans are fled;
Your child lies still, yet is not dead,
But rather like a flower hid here,
To spring again another year.

Robert Herrick

To The Maids, To Walk Abroad

Come, sit we under yonder tree,
Where merry as the maids we'll be;
And as on primroses we sit,
We'll venture, if we can, at wit;
If not, at draw-gloves we will play,
So spend some minutes of the day;
Or else spin out the thread of sands,
Playing at questions and commands:
Or tell what strange tricks Love can do,
By quickly making one of two.
Thus we will sit and talk, but tell
No cruel truths of Philomel,
Or Phillis, whom hard fate forced on
To kill herself for Demophon;
But fables we'll relate; how Jove
Put on all shapes to get a Love;
As now a satyr, then a swan,
A bull but then, and now a man.
Next, we will act how young men woo,
And sigh and kiss as lovers do;
And talk of brides; and who shall make
That wedding-smock, this bridal-cake,
That dress, this sprig, that leaf, this vine,
That smooth and silken columbine.
This done, we'll draw lots who shall buy
And gild the bays and rosemary;
What posies for our wedding rings;
What gloves we'll give, and ribbonings;
And smiling at our selves, decree
Who then the joining priest shall be;
What short sweet prayers shall be said,
And how the posset shall be made
With cream of lilies, not of kine,
And maiden's-blush for spiced wine.
Thus having talk'd, we'll next commend
A kiss to each, and so we'll end.

Robert Herrick

To The Rose: Song

Go, happy Rose, and interweave
With other flowers, bind my Love.
Tell her, too, she must not be
Longer flowing, longer free,
That so oft has fetter'd me.

Say, if she's fretful, I have bands
Of pearl and gold, to bind her hands;
Tell her, if she struggle still,
I have myrtle rods at will,
For to tame, though not to kill.

Take thou my blessing thus, and go
And tell her this,--but do not so!--
Lest a handsome anger fly
Like a lightning from her eye,
And burn thee up, as well as I!

Robert Herrick

To The Virgins, Make Much Of Time

Gather ye rose-buds while ye may:
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the Sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best, which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

- Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry.

Robert Herrick

To The Water-Nymphs Drinking At The fountain

Reach with your whiter hands to me
Some crystal of the spring;
And I about the cup shall see
Fresh lilies flourishing.

Or else, sweet nymphs, do you but this--
To th' glass your lips incline;
And I shall see by that one kiss
The water turn'd to wine.

Robert Herrick

To The Willow-Tree

Thou art to all lost love the best,
The only true plant found,
Wherewith young men and maids distrest
And left of love, are crown'd.

When once the lover's rose is dead
Or laid aside forlorn,
Then willow-garlands, 'bout the head,
Bedew'd with tears, are worn.

When with neglect, the lover's bane,
Poor maids rewarded be,
For their love lost their only gain
Is but a wreath from thee.

And underneath thy cooling shade,
When weary of the light,
The love-spent youth, and love-sick maid,
Come to weep out the night.

Robert Herrick

To Violets

Welcome, maids of honour,
You do bring
In the Spring;
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies;
And so graced,
To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

--Yet, though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

Robert Herrick

To Youth

Drink wine, and live here blitheful while ye may;
The morrow's life too late is; Live to-day.

Robert Herrick

Truth And Error

Twixt truth and error, there's this difference known
Error is fruitful, truth is only one.

Robert Herrick

Truth And Falsehood

Truth by her own simplicity is known,
Falsehood by varnish and vermilion.

Robert Herrick

Up Scoble

Scobble for whoredom whips his wife and cries
He'll slit her nose; but blubbering she replies,
"Good sir, make no more cuts i' th' outward skin,
One slit's enough to let adultery in.

Robert Herrick

Upon A Child

Here a pretty baby lies
Sung asleep with lullabies;
Pray be silent, and not stir
Th' easy earth that covers her.

Robert Herrick

Upon A Child That Died

Here she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood;
Who as soon fell fast asleep,
As her little eyes did peep.
--Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth, that lightly covers her.

Robert Herrick

Upon A Delaying Lady

Come, come away
Or let me go;
Must I here stay
Because you're slow,
And will continue so;
--Troth, lady, no.

I scorn to be
A slave to state;
And since I'm free,
I will not wait,
Henceforth at such a rate,
For needy fate.

If you desire
My spark should glow,
The peeping fire
You must blow;
Or I shall quickly grow
To frost, or snow.

Robert Herrick

Upon A Maid

Here she lies, in bed of spice,
Fair as Eve in paradise;
For her beauty, it was such,
Poets could not praise too much.
Virgins come, and in a ring
Her supremest REQUIEM sing;
Then depart, but see ye tread
Lightly, lightly o'er the dead.

Robert Herrick

Upon A Painted Gentlewoman

Men say you're fair; and fair ye are, 'tis true;
But, hark! we praise the painter now, not you.

Robert Herrick

Upon Ben Jonson

Here lies Jonson with the rest
Of the poets; but the best.
Reader, would'st thou more have known?
Ask his story, not this stone.
That will speak what this can't tell
Of his glory. So farewell.

Robert Herrick

Upon Cupid

Love, like a gipsy, lately came,
And did me much importune
To see my hand, that by the same
He might foretell my fortune.

He saw my palm; and then, said he,
I tell thee, by this score here,
That thou, within few months, shalt be
The youthful Prince D'Amour here.

I smiled, and bade him once more prove,
And by some cross-line show it,
That I could ne'er be Prince of Love,
Though here the Princely Poet.

Robert Herrick

Upon Her Eyes

Clear are her eyes,
Like purest skies;
Discovering from thence
A baby there
That turns each sphere,
Like an Intelligence.

Robert Herrick

Upon Her Feet

Her pretty feet
Like snails did creep
A little out, and then,
As if they played at Bo-peep,
Did soon draw in again.

Robert Herrick

Upon Himself

Thou shalt not all die; for while Love's fire shines
Upon his altar, men shall read thy lines;
And learn'd musicians shall, to honour Herrick's
Fame, and his name, both set and sing his lyrics.

To his book's end this last line he'd have placed:--
Jocund his Muse was, but his Life was chaste.

Robert Herrick

Upon His Sister-In-Law, Mistress Elizabeth Herrick

First, for effusions due unto the dead,
My solemn vows have here accomplished;
Next, how I love thee, that my grief must tell,
Wherein thou liv'st for ever.--Dear, farewell!

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Breasts

Display thy breasts, my Julia, there let me
Behold that circummortal purity;
Between whose glories, there my lips I'll lay,
Ravished in that fair Via Lactea.

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Clothes

Whenas inn silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free ;
O how that glittering taketh me !

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Hair Filled With Dew

Dew sate on Julia's hair,
And spangled too,
Like leaves that laden are
With trembling dew;
Or glitter'd to my sight,
As when the beams
Have their reflected light
Danced by the streams.

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Recovery

Droop, droop no more, or hang the head,
Ye roses almost withered;
Now strength, and newer purple get,
Each here declining violet.
O primroses! let this day be
A resurrection unto ye;
And to all flowers allied in blood,
Or sworn to that sweet sisterhood.
For health on Julia's cheek hath shed
Claret and cream commingled;
And those, her lips, do now appear
As beams of coral, but more clear.

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Ribbon

As shews the air when with a rain-bow graced,
So smiles that ribbon 'bout my Julia's waist;
Or like----Nay, 'tis that Zonulet of love,
Wherein all pleasures of the world are wove.

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Unlacing Herself

Tell, if thou canst, and truly, whence doth come
This camphire, storax, spikenard, galbanum,
These musks, these ambers, and those other smells
Sweet as the Vestry of the Oracles.

I'll tell thee:—while my Julia did unlace
Her silken bodice but a breathing space,
The passive air such odour then assumed
As when to Jove great Juno goes perfumed,
Whose pure immortal body doth transmit
A scent that fills both heaven and earth with it.

Robert Herrick

Upon Julia's Voice

When I thy singing next shall hear,
I'll wish I might turn all to ear,
To drink-in notes and numbers, such
As blessed souls can't hear too much
Then melted down, there let me lie
Entranced, and lost confusedly;
And by thy music stricken mute,
Die, and be turn'd into a Lute.

Robert Herrick

Upon Love

A crystal vial Cupid brought,
Which had a juice in it:
Of which who drank, he said, no thought
Of Love he should admit.

I, greedy of the prize, did drink,
And emptied soon the glass;
Which burnt me so, that I do think
The fire of hell it was.

Give me my earthen cups again,
The crystal I contemn,
Which, though enchased with pearls, contain
A deadly draught in them.

And thou, O Cupid! come not to
My threshold,--since I see,
For all I have, or else can do,
Thou still wilt cozen me.

Robert Herrick

Upon Love:By Way Of Question And Answer

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Like, and dislike ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Stroke ye, to strike ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Love will be-fool ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Heat ye, to cool ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Love, gifts will send ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Stock ye, to spend ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Love will fulfil ye.

I bring ye love. QUES. What will love do?

ANS. Kiss ye, to kill ye.

Robert Herrick

Upon Man

Man is composed here of a twofold part;
The first of nature, and the next of art;
Art presupposes nature; nature, she
Prepares the way for man's docility.

Robert Herrick

Upon Mrs Eliz. Wheeler, Under The Name Ofamarillis

Sweet Amarillis, by a spring's
Soft and soul-melting murmurings,
Slept; and thus sleeping, thither flew
A Robin-red-breast; who at view,
Not seeing her at all to stir,
Brought leaves and moss to cover her:
But while he, perking, there did pry
About the arch of either eye,
The lid began to let out day,--
At which poor Robin flew away;
And seeing her not dead, but all displeaved,
He chirpt for joy, to see himself deceived.

Robert Herrick

Upon Parson Beanes

Old Parson Beanes hunts six days of the week,
And on the seventh, he has his notes to seek.
Six days he hollows so much breath away
That on the seventh he can nor preach or pray.

Robert Herrick

Upon Prew His Maid

In this little Urne is laid
Prewdence Baldwin (once my maid)
From whose happy spark here let
Spring the purple violet.

Robert Herrick

Upon Roses

Under a lawn, than skies more clear,
Some ruffled Roses nestling were,
And snuggling there, they seem'd to lie
As in a flowery nunnery;
They blush'd, and look'd more fresh than flowers
Quickened of late by pearly showers;
And all, because they were possest
But of the heat of Julia's breast,
Which, as a warm and moisten'd spring,
Gave them their ever-flourishing.

Robert Herrick

Upon Shark

Shark, when he goes to any publick feast,
Eates to ones thinking, of all there, the least.
What saves the master of the House thereby?
When if the servants search, they may descry
In his wide Codpeece, (dinner being done)
Two Napkins cram'd up, and a silver Spooone.

Robert Herrick

Upon Tears

Tears, though they're here below the sinner's brine,
Above, they are the Angels' spiced wine.

Robert Herrick

Upon The Detracter

I ask'd thee oft what poets thou hast read,
And lik'st the best? Still thou repli'st, The dead.
--I shall, ere long, with green turfs cover'd be;
Then sure thou'lt like, or thou wilt envy, me.

Robert Herrick

Upon The Loss Of His Mistresses

I have lost, and lately, these
Many dainty mistresses:--
Stately Julia, prime of all;
Sapho next, a principal:
Smooth Anthea, for a skin
White, and heaven-like crystalline:
Sweet Electra, and the choice
Myrha, for the lute and voice.
Next, Corinna, for her wit,
And the graceful use of it;
With Perilla:--All are gone;
Only Herrick's left alone,
For to number sorrow by
Their departures hence, and die.

Robert Herrick

Upon The Nipples Of Julia's Breast

Have ye beheld (with much delight)
A red rose peeping through a white?
Or else a cherry (double graced)
Within a lily? Centre placed?
Or ever marked the pretty beam
A strawberry shows half drowned in cream?
Or seen rich rubies blushing through
A pure smooth pearl, and orient too?
So like to this, nay all the rest,
Is each neat niplet of her breast.

Robert Herrick

Upon Time

Time was upon
The wing, to fly away;
And I call'd on
Him but awhile to stay;
But he'd be gone,
For aught that I could say.

He held out then
A writing, as he went,
And ask'd me, when
False man would be content
To pay again
What God and Nature lent.

An hour-glass,
In which were sands but few,
As he did pass,
He shew'd,--and told me too
Mine end near was;--
And so away he flew.

Robert Herrick

Upon Wrinkles

Wrinkles no more are, or no less,
Than beauty turn'd to sourness.

Robert Herrick

Want

Want is a softer wax, that takes thereon,
This, that, and every base impression,

Robert Herrick

What Kind Of Mistress He Would Have

Be the mistress of my choice,
Clean in manners, clear in voice;
Be she witty, more than wise,
Pure enough, though not precise;
Be she showing in her dress,
Like a civil wilderness,
That the curious may detect
Order in a sweet neglect;
Be she rolling in her eye,
Tempting all the passers by;
And each ringlet of her hair,
An enchantment, or a snare,
For to catch the lookers on;
But herself held fast by none.
Let her Lucrece all day be,
Thais in the night, to me.
Be she such, as neither will
Famish me, nor overfill.

Robert Herrick

When He Would Have His Verses Read

In sober mornings, do not thou rehearse
The holy incantation of a verse;
But when that men have both well drunk, and fed,
Let my enchantments then be sung or read.
When laurel spirts i' th' fire, and when the hearth
Smiles to itself, and gilds the roof with mirth;
When up the Thyrses is raised, and when the sound
Of sacred orgies, flies A round, A round;
When the rose reigns, and locks with ointments shine,
Let rigid Cato read these lines of mine.

Robert Herrick

Why Flowers Change Colour

These fresh beauties, we can prove,
Once were virgins, sick of love,
Turn'd to flowers: still in some,
Colours go and colours come.

Robert Herrick

Wit Punished Prospers Most

Dread not the shackles; on with thine intent,
Good wits get more fame by their punishment.

Robert Herrick

Writing

When words we want, Love teacheth to indite;
And what we blush to speak, she bids us write.

Robert Herrick