

Classic Poetry Series

Sir Philip Sidney

- poems -

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Sir Philip Sidney (1554 - 1586)

Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst Place, Kent, eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney. He entered Shrewsbury School in 1564 on the same day as Fulke Greville, his friend and biographer. After attending Christ Church, Oxford (1568-72), he travelled in Europe where for three years he perfected his knowledge of Latin, French and Italian. In 1577, aged twenty-two, he was sent as ambassador to the German Emperor and the Prince of Orange. His strong Protestant sympathies made him advise Elizabeth I in a private letter (1579) against marrying the Duke of Anjou, Roman Catholic heir to the French throne. He was knighted in 1583 and became Member of Parliament for Kent in 1581 and 1584-85. In 1585 he was appointed joint master of the ordnance, the office in charge of the country's military supplies. A patron of scholars, his wide range of interests accounted for the dedication to him of over forty works of various disciplines. The best-known poet to enjoy his patronage was Spenser who dedicated his *Shepherd's Calendar* to him. Avoiding commercialism, he did not publish his works in his lifetime. He was fighting against the Spaniards in the Netherlands when he received a wound which eventually killed him at the age of thirty-two. All England mourned this courtier and statesman who had embodied the Elizabethan ideal of virtue.

Astrophel and Stella LXXXIV: HIGHWAY

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
More oft than to a chamber melody.
Now, blessed you bear onward blessed me
To her, where I my heart, safe-left, shall meet:
My Muse and I must you of duty greet
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully.
Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed;
By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot,
Nor blam'd for blood, nor sham'd for sinful deed;
And that you know I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,--
Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella VII: When Nature Made her Chief Work

When Nature made her chief work, Stella's eyes,
In colour black why wrapt she beams so bright?
Would she in beamy black, like painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mix'd of shades and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise,
In object best to knit and strength our sight;
Lest, if no veil these brave gleams did disguise,
They, sunlike, should more dazzle than delight?
Or would she her miraculous power show,
That, whereas black seems beauty's contrary,
She even in black doth make all beauties flow?
Both so, and thus,--she, minding Love should be
Plac'd ever there, gave him this mourning weed
To honour all their deaths who for her bleed.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: I

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA: I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,--
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,--
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: III

ASTROPHEL AND STELLA: III

Let dainty wits cry on the sisters nine,
That, bravely mask'd, their fancies may be told;
Or, Pindar's apes, flaunt they in phrases fine,
Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold.
Or else let them in statelier glory shine,
Ennobling newfound tropes with problems old;
Or with strange similes enrich each line,
Of herbs or beasts which Ind or Afric hold.
For me, in sooth, no Muse but one I know;
Phrases and problems from my reach do grow,
And strange things cost too dear for my poor sprites.
How then? even thus: in Stella's face I read
What love and beauty be; then all my deed
But copying is, what in her Nature writes.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: LXIV

No more, my dear, no more these counsels try;
Oh, give my passions leave to run their race;
Let Fortune lay on me her worst disgrace;
Let folk o'ercharg'd with brain against me cry;
Let clouds bedim my face, break in mine eye;
Let me no steps but of lost labour trace;
Let all the earth with scorn recount my case,
But do not will me from my love to fly.
I do not envy Aristotle's wit,
Nor do aspire to Caesar's bleeding fame;
Nor aught do care though some above me sit;
Nor hope nor wish another course to frame,
But that which once may win thy cruel heart:
Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: LXXI

Who will in fairest book of nature know
How virtue may best lodg'd in beauty be,
Let him but learn of love to read in thee,
Stella, those fair lines which true goodness show.
There shall he find all vices' overthrow,
Not by rude force, but sweetest sovereignty
Of reason, from whose light those night-birds fly;
That inward sun in thine eyes shineth so.
And, not content to be perfection's heir
Thyself, dost strive all minds that way to move,
Who mark in thee what is in thee most fair.
So while thy beauty draws thy heart to love,
As fast thy virtue bends that love to good:
But "Ah," Desire still cries, "Give me some food!"

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XCII

Be your words made, good sir, of Indian ware,
That you allow me them by so small rate?
Or do you cutted Spartans imitate?
Or do you mean my tender ears to spare,
That to my questions you so total are?
When I demand of Phœnix Stella's state,
You say, forsooth, you left her well of late:
O God, think you that satisfies my care?
I would know whether she did sit or walk;
How cloth'd, how waited on; sigh'd she, or smil'd;
Whereof, with whom, how often did she talk;
With what pastime time's journey she beguiled;
If her lips deign'd to sweeten my poor name.
Say all; and all well said, still say the same.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XLI

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtain'd the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella look'd on, and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XV

You that do search for every purling spring
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flows,
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
Near thereabouts, into your poesy wring;
Ye that do dictionary's method bring
Into your rimes, running in rattling rows;
You that poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes
With new-born sighs and denizen'd wit do sing:
You take wrong ways; those far-fet helps be such
As do bewray a want of inward touch,
And sure, at length stol'n goods do come to light.
But if, both for your love and skill, your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
Stella behold, and then begin to endite.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XX

Fly, fly, my friends, I have my death wound, fly!
See there that boy, that murd'ring boy, I say,
Who, like a thief, hid in dark bush doth lie
Till bloody bullet get him wrongful prey.
So tyrant he no fitter place could spy,
Nor so fair level in so secret stay,
As that sweet black which veils the heav'nly eye;
There himself with his shot he close doth lay.
Poor passenger, pass now thereby I did,
And stay'd, pleas'd with the prospect of the place,
While that black hue from me the bad guest hid;
But straight I saw motions of lightning grace
And then descried the glist'ring of his dart:
But ere I could fly thence it pierc'd my heart.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XXIII

The curious wits, seeing dull pensiveness
Bewray itself in my long-settl'd eyes,
Whence those same fumes of melancholy rise,
With idle pains and missing aim do guess.
Some, that know how my spring I did address,
Deem that my Muse some fruit of knowledge plies;
Others, because the prince my service tries,
Think that I think state errors to redress;
But harder judges judge ambition's rage--
Scourge of itself, still climbing slipp'ry place--
Holds my young brain captiv'd in golden cage.
O fool or over-wise! alas, the race
Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start
But only Stella's eyes and Stella's heart.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XXXI

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XXXIII

I might!--unhappy word--O me, I might,
And then would not, or could not, see my bliss;
Till now wrapt in a most infernal night,
I find how heav'nly day, wretch! I did miss.
Heart, rend thyself, thou dost thyself but right;
No lovely Paris made thy Helen his,
No force, no fraud robb'd thee of thy delight,
Nor Fortune of thy fortune author is;
But to myself myself did give the blow,
While too much wit, forsooth, so troubled me
That I respects for both our sakes must show:
And yet could not by rising morn foresee
How fair a day was near: O punish'd eyes,
That I had been more foolish,--or more wise!

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel and Stella: XXXIX

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low.
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel And Stella-Eleventh Song

"Who is it that this dark night
Underneath my window plaineth?"
'It is one who from thy sight
Being, ah! exiled, disdaineth
Every other vulgar light.'

"Why, alas! and are you he?
Be not yet those fancies changed?"
'Dear, when you find change in me,
Though from me you be estranged,
Let my change to ruin be.'

"Well, in absence this will die;
Leave to see, and leave to wonder."
'Absence sure will help, If I
Can learn how myself to sunder
From what in my heart doth lie.'

"But time will these thoughts remove:
Time doth work what no man knoweth."
'Time doth as the subject prove,
With time still the affection groweth
In the faithful turtle dove.'

"What if you new beauties see?
Will not they stir new affection?"
'I will think they pictures be,
Image-like of saint's perfection,
Poorly counterfeiting thee.'

"But your reason's purest light
Bids you leave such minds to nourish."
'Dear, do reason no such spite,—
Never doth thy beauty flourish
More than in my reason's sight.'

"But the wrongs love bears will make
Love at length leave undertaking."
'No, the more fools do it shake
In a ground of so firm making,
Deeper still they drive the stake.'

"Peace! I think that some give ear;
Come no more, lest I get anger."
'Bliss, I will my bliss forbear,
Fearing, sweet, you to endanger;
But my soul shall harbour there.'

Well, begone, begone, I say,
Lest that Argus' eyes perceive you."
'O unjust Fortune's sway,
Which can make me thus to leave you,

And from louts to run away!'

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel And Stella-First Song

Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth,
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only in you my song begins and endeth.

Who hath the eyes which marry state with pleasure?
Who keeps the key of Nature's chiefest treasure?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only for you the heaven forgot all measure.

Who hath the lips where wit in fairness reigneth?
Who womankind at once both decks and staineth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only by you Cupid his crown maintaineth.

Who hath the feet whose step all sweetness planteth?
Who else, for whom Fame worthy trumpets wanteth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only to you her sceptre Venus granteth.

Who hath the breast whose milk doth passions nourish?
Whose grace is such that when it chides doth cherish?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only through you the tree of life doth flourish.

Who hath the hand which without stroke subdueth?
Who long-dead beauty with increase reneweth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only at you all envy hopeless rueth.

Who hath the hair which, loosest, fastest tieth?
Who makes a man live then glad when he dieth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
Only of you the flatterer never lieth.

Who hath the voice which soul from senses sunders?
Whose force but yours the bolts of beauty thunders?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;

Only with you not miracles are wonders.

Doubt you to whom my Muse these notes intendeth,
Which now my breast o'ercharged to music lendeth?
To you, to you, all song of praise is due;
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Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel And Stella-Sonnet LIV

Because I breathe not love to every one,
Nor do not use set colours for to wear,
Nor nourish special locks of vowed hair,
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan,
The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan
Of them who in their lips Love's standard bear,
"What, he!" say they of me, "now I dare swear
He cannot love. No, no, let him alone."—
And think so still, so Stella know my mind!
Profess indeed I do not Cupid's art;
But you, fair maids, at length this true shall find,
That his right badge is worn but in the heart.
Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do lovers prove:
They love indeed who quake to say they love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Astrophel And Stella-Sonnet XXXI

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
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Sir Philip Sidney

Come Sleep, O Sleep! The Certain Knot Of Peace

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw!
O make in me those civil wars to cease!—
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland, and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Sir Philip Sidney

Leave Me, O Love Which Rearest But To Dust

Leave me, O love which rearest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O, take fast hold; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

Sir Philip Sidney

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And thou my mind aspire to higher things:
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Sir Philip Sidney

Loving In Truth, And Fain In Verse My Love To Show

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That She, dear She, might take some pleasure of my pain,
—Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburnt brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite—
"Fool!" said my Muse to me "look in thy heart, and write!"

Sir Philip Sidney

My True Love Hath My Heart, And I Have His

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange, one for the other giv'n.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driv'n.
His heart in me keeps me and him in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;
He loves my heart, for once it was his own;
I cherish his, because in me it bides.
His heart his wound received from my sight:
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;
For as from me, on him his hurt did light,
So still me thought in me his hurt did smart:
Both equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss:
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney

My True-Love Hath My Heart

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By just exchange one for the other given:
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I cherish his because in me it bides.
His heart his wound received from my sight;
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;
For as from me on him his hurt did light,
So still, methought, in me his hurt did smart:
Both equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss,
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney

Philomela

The Nightingale, as soon as April bringeth
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,
While late-bare Earth, proud of new clothing, springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making;
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth,
For Tereus' force on her chaste will prevailing.
O Philomela fair, O take some gladness
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness!
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.

Alas! she hath no other cause of anguish
But Tereus' love, on her by strong hand wroken;
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish,
Full womanlike complains her will was broken
But I, who, daily craving,
Cannot have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me,
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.

O Philomela fair, O take some gladness
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness!
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.

Sir Philip Sidney

Psalm 19: Coeli Enarrant

The heavenly frame sets forth the fame
Of him that only thunders;
The firmament, so strangely bent,
Shows his handworking wonders.

Day unto day doth it display,
Their course doth it acknowledge,
And night to night succeeding right
In darkness teach clear knowledge.

There is no speech, no language which
Is so of skill bereaved,
But of the skies the teaching cries
They have heard and conceived.

There be no eye but read the line
From so fair book proceeding,
Their words be set in letters great
For everybody's reading.

Is not he blind that doth not find
The tabernacle builded
There by His Grace for sun's fair face
In beams of beauty gilded?

Who forth doth come, like a bridegroom,
From out his veiling places,
As glad is he, as giants be
To run their mighty races.

His race is even from ends of heaven;
About that vault he goeth;
There be no realms hid from his beams;
His heat to all he throweth.

O law of His, how perfect 'tis
The very soul amending;
God's witness sure for aye doth dure
To simplest wisdom lending.

God's dooms be right, and cheer the sprite,
All His commandments being
So purely wise it gives the eyes
Both light and force of seeing.

Of Him the fear doth cleanness bear
And so endures forever,
His judgments be self verity,
They are unrighteous never.

Then what man would so soon seek gold
Or glittering golden money?

By them is past in sweetest taste,
Honey or comb of honey.

By them is made Thy servants' trade
Most circumspectly guarded,
And who doth frame to keep the same
Shall fully be rewarded.

Who is the man that ever can
His faults know and acknowledge?
O Lord, cleanse me from faults that be
Most secret from all knowledge.

Thy servant keep, lest in him creep
Presumptuous sins' offenses;
Let them not have me for their slave
Nor reign upon my senses.

So shall my sprite be still upright
In thought and conversation,
So shall I bide well purified
From much abomination.

So let words sprung from my weak tongue
And my heart's meditation,
My saving might, Lord, in Thy sight,
Receive good acceptance!

Sir Philip Sidney

Ring Out Your Bells

Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread;
For Love is dead--
All love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain;
Worth, as nought worth, rejected,
And Faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Weep, neighbours, weep; do you not hear it said
That Love is dead?
His death-bed, peacock's folly;
His winding-sheet is shame;
His will, false-seeming holy;
His sole exec'tor, blame.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Let dirge be sung and trentals rightly read,
For Love is dead;
Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
My mistress' marble heart,
Which epitaph containeth,
"Her eyes were once his dart."
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Alas, I lie, rage hath this error bred;
Love is not dead;
Love is not dead, but sleepeth
In her unmatched mind,
Where she his counsel keepeth,
Till due desert she find.
Therefore from so vile fancy,
To call such wit a franzy,
Who Love can temper thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Sir Philip Sidney

Sleep

Come Sleep; O Sleep! the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Sir Philip Sidney

Song

Who hath his fancy pleased
With fruits of happy sight,
Let here his eyes be raised
On Nature's sweetest light;
A light which doth dis sever
And yet unite the eyes,
A light which, dying never,
Is cause the looker dies.

She never dies, but lasteth
In life of lover's heart;
He ever dies that wasteth
In love his chiefest part:
Thus is her life still guarded
In never-dying faith;
Thus is his death rewarded,
Since she lives in his death.

Look then, and die! The pleasure
Doth answer well the pain:
Small loss of mortal treasure,
Who may immortal gain!
Immortal be her graces,
Immortal is her mind;
They, fit for heavenly places--
This, heaven in it doth bind.

But eyes these beauties see not,
Nor sense that grace descries;
Yet eyes deprived be not
From sight of her fair eyes--
Which, as of inward glory
They are the outward seal,
So may they live still sorry,
Which die not in that weal.

But who hath fancies pleased
With fruits of happy sight,
Let here his eyes be raised
On Nature's sweetest light!

Sir Philip Sidney

Song from Arcadia

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By Just Exchange, one for the other given.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven.
His heart in me keeps me and him in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
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So still methought in me his hurt did smart.
Both equal hurt, in his change sought our bliss;
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet I: Loving In Truth

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she (dear She) might take some pleasure of my pain:
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain;

I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain:
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Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite--
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

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Sonnet II: Not At First Sight

Not at first sight, nor with a dribbed shot
Love gave the wound, which while I breathe will bleed;
But known worth did in mine of time proceed,
Till by degrees it had full conquest got:

I saw and liked, I liked but loved not;
I lov'd, but straight did not what Love decreed.
At length to love's decrees I, forc'd, agreed,
Yet with repining at so partial lot.

Now even that footstep of lost liberty
Is gone, and now like slave-born Muscovite
I call it praise to suffer tyranny;

And now employ the remnant of my wit
To make myself believe that all is well,
While with a feeling skill I paint my hell.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet III: With how sad steps

With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call 'virtue' there - ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet IV: Virtue, Alas

Virtue, alas, now let me take some rest.
Thou set'st a bate between my soul and wit.
If vain love have my simple soul oppress'd,
Leave what thou likest not, deal not thou with it.

The scepter use in some old Cato's breast;
Churches or schools are for thy seat more fit.
I do confess, pardon a fault confess'd,
My mouth too tender is for thy hard bit.

But if that needs thou wilt usurping be,
The little reason that is left in me,
And still th'effect of thy persuasions prove:

I swear, my heart such one shall show to thee
That shrines in flesh so true a deity,
That Virtue, thou thyself shalt be in love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet IX: Queen Virtue's Court

Queen Virtue's court, which some call Stella's face,
Prepar'd by Nature's choicest furniture,
Hath his front built of alabaster pure;
Gold in the covering of that stately place.

The door by which sometimes comes forth her Grace
Red porphir is, which lock of pearl makes sure,
Whose porches rich (which name of cheeks endure)
Marble mix'd red and white do interlace.

The windows now through which this heav'nly guest
Looks o'er the world, and can find nothing such,
Which dare claim from those lights the name of best,

Of touch they are that without touch doth touch,
Which Cupid's self from Beauty's mine did draw:
Of touch they are, and poor I am their straw.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet LXIV: No More, My Dear

No more, my dear, no more these counsels try;
Oh, give my passions leave to run their race;
Let Fortune lay on me her worst disgrace;
Let folk o'ercharg'd with brain against me cry;
Let clouds bedim my face, break in mine eye;
Let me no steps but of lost labour trace;
Let all the earth with scorn recount my case,
But do not will me from my love to fly.
I do not envy Aristotle's wit,
Nor do aspire to Caesar's bleeding fame;
Nor aught do care though some above me sit;
Nor hope nor wish another course to frame,
But that which once may win thy cruel heart:
Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet LXXI: Who Will in Fairest Book

Who will in fairest book of nature know
How virtue may best lodg'd in beauty be,
Let him but learn of love to read in thee,
Stella, those fair lines which true goodness show.
There shall he find all vices' overthrow,
Not by rude force, but sweetest sovereignty
Of reason, from whose light those night-birds fly;
That inward sun in thine eyes shineth so.
And, not content to be perfection's heir
Thyself, dost strive all minds that way to move,
Who mark in thee what is in thee most fair.
So while thy beauty draws thy heart to love,
As fast thy virtue bends that love to good:
But "Ah," Desire still cries, "Give me some food!"

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet LXXXIV: Highway

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
More oft than to a chamber melody.
Now, blessed you bear onward blessed me
To her, where I my heart, safe-left, shall meet:
My Muse and I must you of duty greet
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully.
Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed;
By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot,
Nor blam'd for blood, nor sham'd for sinful deed;
And that you know I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,--
Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet V: It Is Most True

It is most true, that eyes are form'd to serve
The inward light; and that the heavenly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
Rebles to Nature, strive for their own smart.

It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart,
An image is, which for ourselves we carve:
And, fools, adore in temple of hour heart,
Till that good God make Church and churchman starve.

True, that ture beauty virtue is indeed,
Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,
Which elements with mortal mixture breed:

True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,
And should in soul up to our country move:
True, and yet true that I must Stella love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet VI: Some Lovers Speak

Some lovers speak when they their Muses entertain,
Of hopes begot by fear, of wot not what desires:
Of force of heav'nly beams, infusing hellish pain:
Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms, and freezing fires.

Some one his song in Jove, and Jove's strange tales attires,
Broidered with bulls and swans, powdered with golden rain;
Another humbler wit to shepherd's pipe retires,
Yet hiding royal blood full oft in rural vein.

To some a sweetest plaint a sweetest style affords,
While tears pour out his ink, and sighs breathe out his words:
His paper pale despair, and pain his pen doth move.

I can speak what I feel, and feel as much as they,
But think that all the map of my state I display,
When trembling voice brings forth that I do Stella love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet VII: When Nature

When Nature made her chief work, Stella's eyes,
In color black why wrapp'd she beams so bright?
Would she in beamy black, like painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mix'd of shades and light?

Or did she else that sober hue devise,
In object best to knit and strength our sight,
Lest if no veil those brave gleams did disguise,
They sun-like should more dazzle than delight?

Or would she her miraculous power show,
That whereas black seems Beauty's contrary,
She even if black doth make all beauties flow?

Both so and thus, she minding Love should be
Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed,
To honor all their deaths, who for her bleed.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet VIII: Love, Born In Greece

Love, born in Greece, of late fled from his native place,
Forc'd by a tedious proof, that Turkish harden'd heart
Is no fit mark to pierce with his fine pointed dart,
And pleas'd with our soft peace, stayed here his flying race.

But finding these north climes do coldly him embrace,
Not used to frozen clips, he strave to find some part
Where with most ease and warmth he might employ his art:
At length he perch'd himself in Stella's joyful face,

Whose fair skin, beamy eyes, like morning sun on snow,
Deceiv'd the quaking boy, who thought from so pure light
Effects of lively heat must needs in nature grow.

But she most fair, most cold, made him thence take his flight
To my close heart, where while some firebrands he did lay,
He burnt un'wares his wings, and cannot fly away.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet X: Reason

Reason, in faith thou art well serv'd, that still
Wouldst brabbling be with sense and love in me:
I rather wish'd thee climb the Muses' hill,
Or reach the fruit of Nature's choicest tree,

Or seek heav'n's course, or heav'n's inside to see:
Why shouldst thou toil our thorny soil to till?
Leave sense, and those which sense's objects be:
Deal thou with powers of thoughts, leave love to will.

But thou wouldst needs fight both with love and sense,
With sword of wit, giving wounds of dispraise,
Till downright blows did foil thy cunning fence:

For soon as they strake thee with Stella's rays,
Reason thou kneel'dst, and offeredst straight to prove
By reason good, good reason her to love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XCII: Be Your Words Made

Be your words made, good sir, of Indian ware,
That you allow me them by so small rate?
Or do you cutted Spartans imitate?
Or do you mean my tender ears to spare,
That to my questions you so total are?
When I demand of Phœnix Stella's state,
You say, forsooth, you left her well of late:
O God, think you that satisfies my care?
I would know whether she did sit or walk;
How cloth'd, how waited on; sigh'd she, or smil'd;
Whereof, with whom, how often did she talk;
With what pastime time's journey she beguiled;
If her lips deign'd to sweeten my poor name.
Say all; and all well said, still say the same.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XI: In Truth, Oh Love

In truth, oh Love, with what a boyish kind
Thou doest proceed in thy most serious ways:
That when the heav'n to thee his best displays,
Yet of that best thou leav'st the best behind.

For like a child that some fair book doth find,
With gilded leaves or colored vellum plays,
Or at the most on some find picture stays,
But never heeds the fruit of writer's mind:

So when thou saw'st in Nature's cabinet
Stella, thou straight lookst babies in her eyes,
In her cheek's pit thou didst thy pitfall set:

And in her breast bopeep or couching lies,
Playing and shining in each outward part:
But, fool, seekst not to get into her heart.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XII: Cupid, Because Thou

Cupid, because thou shin'st in Stella's eyes,
That from her locks, thy day-nets, noe scapes free,
That those lips swell, so full of thee they be,
That her sweet breath makes oft thy flames to rise,

That in her breast thy pap well sugared lies,
That he Grace gracious makes thy wrongs, that she
What words so ere she speak persuades for thee,
That her clear voice lifts thy fame to the skies:

Thou countest Stella thine, like those whose powers
Having got up a breach by fighting well,
Cry, "Victory, this fair day all is ours."

Oh no, her heart is such a citadel,
So fortified with wit, stored with disdain,
That to win it, is all the skill and pain.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XIII: Phoebus Was Judge

Phoebus was judge between Jove, Mars, and Love,
Of those three gods, whose arms the fairest were:
Jove's golden shield did eagle sables bear,
Whose talons held young Ganymede above:

But in vert field Mars bare a golden spear,
Which through a bleeding heart his point did shove:
Each had his crest; Mars carried Venus' glove,
Jove in his helm the thunderbolt did rear.

Cupid them smiles, for on his crest there lies
Stella's fair hair, her face he makes his shield,
Where roses gules are borne in silver field.

Phoebus drew wide the curtains of the skies
To blaze these last, and sware devoutly then,
The first, thus match'd, were scanty gentlemen.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XIV: Alas, Have I Not

Alas, have I not pain enough, my friend,
Upon whose breast a fiercer gripe doth tire,
Than did on him who first stole down the fire,
While Love on me doth all his quiver spend,

But with your rhubarb words you must contend,
To grieve me worse, in saying that desire
Doth plunge my well-form'd soul even in the mire
Of sinful thoughts, which do in ruin end?

If that be sin which doth the manners frame,
Well stayed with truth in word and faith of deed,
Ready of wit and fearing nought but shame:

If that be sin which in fix'd hearts doth breed
A loathing of all loose unchastity,
Then love is sin, and let me sinful be.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XIX: On Cupid's Bow

On Cupid's bow how are my heartstrings bent,
That see my wrack, and yet embrace the same?
When most I glory, then I feel most shame:
I willing run, yet while I run, repent.

My best wits still their own disgrace invent:
My very ink turns straight to Stella's name;
And yet my words, as them my pen doth frame,
Advise themselves that they are vainly spent.

For though she pass all things, yet what is all
That unto me, who fare like him that both
Looks to the skies and in a ditch doth fall?

Oh let me prop my mind, yet in his growth,
And not in Nature, for best fruits unfit:
"Scholar," saith Love, "bend hitherward your wit."

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XLI: Having This Day My Horse

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtain'd the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella look'd on, and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XV: You That Do Search

You that do search for every purling spring,
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flows,
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
Near thereabouts, into your poesy wring;

You that do dictionary's method bring
Into your rimes, running in rattling rows;
You that poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes,
With new-born sighs and denizen'd wit do sing,

You take wrong ways: those far-fet helps be such
As do bewray a want of inward touch:
And sure at length stol'n goods do come to light.

But if (both for your love and skill) your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
Stella behold, and then begin to endite.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XVI: In Nature Apt

In nature apt to like when I did see
Beauties, which were of many carats fine,
My boiling sprites did thither soon incline,
And, Love, I thought that I was full of thee:

But finding not those restless flames in me,
Which others said did make their souls to pine,
I thought those babes of some pin's hurt did whine,
By my love judging what love's pain might be.

But while I thus with this young lion played,
Mine eyes (shall I say curst or blest?) beheld
Stella; now she is nam'd, need more be said?

In her sight I a lesson new have spell'd,
I now hav learn'd Love right, and learn'd even so,
As who by being poisoned doth poison know.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XVII: His Mother Dear Cupid

His mother dear Cupid offended late,
Because that Mars grown slacker in her love,
With pricking shot he did not throughly more
To keep the pace of their first loving state.

The boy refus'd for fear of Mars's hate,
Who threaten'd stripes, if he his wrath did prove:
But she in chafe him from her lap did shove,
Brake bow, brake shafts, while Cupid weeping sate:

Till that his grandame Nature pitying it
Of stella's brows make him two better bows,
And in her eyes of arrows infinite.

Oh how for joy he leaps, oh how he crows,
And straight therewith like wags new got to play,
Falls to shrewd turns, and I was in his way.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XVIII: With What Sharp Checks

With what sharp checks I in myself am shent,
When into Reason's audit I do go:
And by just counts myself a bankrupt know
Of all the goods, which heav'n to me hath lent:

Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent,
Which unto it by birthright I do owe:
And, which is worse, no good excuse can show,
But that my wealth I have most idly spend.

My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toys,
My wit doth strive those passions to defend,
Which for reward spoil it with vain annoys.

I see my course to lose myself doth bend:
I see and yet no greater sorrow take,
Than that I lose no more for Stella's sake.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XX: Fly, Fly, My Friends

Fly, fly, my friends, I have my death wound; fly!
See there that boy, that murdering boy I say,
Who like a thief, hid in dark bush doth lie,
Till bloody bullet get him wrongful prey.

So tyrant he no fitter place could spy,
Nor so fair level in so secret stay,
As that sweet black which veils the heav'nly eye:
There himself with his shot he close doth lay.

Poor passenger, pass now thereby I did,
And stayed pleas'd with the prospect of the place,
While that black hue from me the bad guest hid:

But straight I saw motions of lightning grace,
And then descried the glist'ring of his dart:
But ere I could fly hence, it pierc'd my heart.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXI: Your Words, My Friend

Your words, my friend, (right healthful caustics) blame
My young mind marr'd, whom Love doth windlass so,
That mine own writings like bad servants show
My wits, quick in vain thoughts, in virtue lame;

That Plato I read for nought, but if he tame
Such doltish gyres; that to my birth I owe
Nobler desires, lest else that friendly foe,
Great Expectation, were a train of shame.

For since mad March great promise made of me,
If now the May of my years much decline,
What can be hoped my harvest time will be?

Sure you say well, "Your wisdom's golden mine,
Dig deep with learning's spade." Now tell me this,
Hath this world aught so fair as Stella is?

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXII: In Highest Way of Heav'n

In highest way of heav'n the Sun did ride,
Progressing then from fair twins' golden place:
Having no scarf of clouds before his face,
But shining forth of heat in his chief pride;

When some fair ladies by hard promise tied,
On horseback met him in his furious race,
Yet each prepar'd with fan's well-shading grace
From that foe's wounds their tender skins to hide.

Stella alone with face unarmed march'd.
Either to do like him which open shone,
Or careless of the wealth because her own:

Yet were the hid and meaner beauties parch'd,
Her daintiest bare went free; the cause was this,
The Sun, which others burn'd, did her but kiss.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXIII: The Curious Wits

The curious wits seeing dull pensiveness
Bewray itself in my long settled eyes,
Whence those same fumes of melancholy rise,
With idle pains, and missing aim, do guess.

Some that know how my spring I did address,
Deem that my Muse some fruit of knowledge plies:
Others, because the Prince my service tries,
Think that I think state errors to redress.

But harder judges judge ambition's rage,
Scourge of itself, still climbing slipp'ry place,
Holds my young brain cativ'd in golden cage.

Oh Fools, or over-wise, alas the race
Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start,
But only Stella's eyes and Stella's heart.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXIV: Rich Fools There Be

Rich fools there be, whose base and filthy heart
Lies hatching still the goods wherein they flow:
And damning their own selves to Tantal's smart,
Wealth breeding want, more blist more wretched grow.

Yet to those fools heav'n such wit doth impart
As what their hands do hold, their heads do know,
And knowing love, and loving, lay apart,
As sacred things, far from all danger's show.

But that rich fool who by blind Fortune's lot
The richest gem of love and life enjoys,
And can with foul abuse such beauties blot;

Let him, depriv'd of sweet but unfelt joys,
(Exil'd for aye from those high treasures, which
He knows not) grow in only folly rich.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXIX: Like Some Weak Lords

Like some weak lords, neighbor'd by mighty kings,
To keep themselves and their chief cities free,
Do easily yield, that all their coasts may be
Ready to store their camps of needful things:

So Stella's heart finding what power Love brings,
To keep itself in life and liberty,
Doth willing grant, that in the frontiers he
Use all to help his other conquerings:

And thus her heart escapes, but thus her eyes
Serve him with shot, her lips his heralds are;
Her breasts his tents, legs his triumphal car;

Her flesh his food, her skin his armor brave,
And I, but for bacuse my prospect lies
Upon that coast, am giv'n up for a slave.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXV: The Wisest Scholar

The wisest scholar of the wight most wise
By Phoebus' doom, with sugar'd sentence says,
That Virtue, if it once met with our eyes,
Strange flames of love it in our souls would raise;

But for that man with pain his truth descries,
Whiles he each thing in sense's balance weighs,
And so nor will, nor can behold those skies
Which inward sun to heroic mind displays,

Virtue of late with virtuous care to stir
Love of herself, took Stella's shape, that she
To mortal eyes might sweetly shine in her.

It is most true, for since I her did see,
Virtue's great beauty in that face I prove,
And find th'effect, for I do burn in love.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXVI: Though Dusty Wits

Though dusty wits dare scorn astrology,
And fools can think those lamps of purest light
Whose numbers, ways, greatness, eternity,
Promising wonders, wonder do invite,

To have for no cause birthright in the sky,
But for to spangle the black weeds of night:
Or for some brawl, which in that chamber high,
They should still dance to please a gazer's sight;

For me, I do Nature unidle know,
And know great causes, great effects procure:
And know those bodies high reign on the low.

And if these rules did fail, proof makes me sure,
Who oft fore-judge my after-following race,
By only those two stars in Stella's face.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXVII: Because I Oft

Because I oft in dark abstracted guise
Seem most alone in greatest company,
With dearth of words, or answers quite awry,
To them that would make speech of speech arise,

They deem, and of their doom the rumor flies,
That poison foul of bubbling pride doth lie
So in my swelling breast that only I
Fawn on myself, and others do despise:

Yet pride I think doth not my soul possess,
Which looks too oft in his unflatt'ring glass:
But one worse fault, ambition, I confess,

That makes me oft my best friends overpass,
Unseen, unheard, while though to highest place
Bends all his powers, even unto Stella's grace.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXVIII: You That With Allegory's Curious Frame

You that with allegory's curious frame,
Of others' children changelings use to make,
With me those pains for God's sake do not take:
I list not dig so deep for brazen fame.

When I say "Stella," I do mean the same
Princess of Beauty, for whose only sake
The reins of Love I love, though never slake,
And joy therein, though nations count it shame.

I beg no subject to use eloquence,
Nor in hid ways do guide Philosophy:
Look at my hands for no such quintessence;

But know that I in pure simplicity
Breathe out the flames which burn within my heart
Love only reading unto me this art.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXX: Whether the Turkish New Moon

Whether the Turkish new moon minded be
To fill his horns this year on Christian coast;
How Poles' right king means, with leave of host,
To warm with ill-made fire cold Muscovy;

If French can yet three parts in one agree;
What now the Dutch in their full diets boast;
How Holland hearts, now so good towns be lost,
Trust in the shade of pleasing Orange tree;

How Ulster likes of that same golden bit
Wherewith my father once made it half tame;
If in the Scotch court be no welt'ring yet:

These questions busy wits to me do frame.
I, cumber'd with good manners, answer do,
But know not how, for still I think of you.

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXXI: With How Sad Steps, O Moon

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXXIII: I Might

I might!--unhappy word--O me, I might,
And then would not, or could not, see my bliss;
Till now wrapt in a most infernal night,
I find how heav'nly day, wretch! I did miss.
Heart, rend thyself, thou dost thyself but right;
No lovely Paris made thy Helen his,
No force, no fraud robb'd thee of thy delight,
Nor Fortune of thy fortune author is;
But to myself myself did give the blow,
While too much wit, forsooth, so troubled me
That I respects for both our sakes must show:
And yet could not by rising morn foresee
How fair a day was near: O punish'd eyes,
That I had been more foolish,--or more wise!

Sir Philip Sidney

Sonnet XXXIX: Come, Sleep!

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low.
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Sir Philip Sidney

Splendidis longum valedico Nugis

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things!
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be;
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh Heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world! thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me!

Sir Philip Sidney

The Bargain

MY true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

Sir Philip Sidney

The Highway

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
More oft than to a chamber-melody,--
Now blessed you bear onward blessed me
To her, where I my heart, safe-left, shall meet;
My Muse and I must you of duty greet
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully;
Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed;
By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot;
Nor blamed for blood, nor shamed for sinful deed;
And that you know I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,
Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss!

Sir Philip Sidney

This Lady's Cruelty

WITH how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:
I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call 'virtue' there--ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney

Thou Blind Man's Mark

Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self chosen snare,
Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scatter'd thought,
Band of all evils, cradle of causeless care,
Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought.

Desire, desire I have too dearly bought,
With price of mangled mind thy worthless ware,
Too long, too long asleep thou hast me brought,
Who should my mind to higher things prepare.

But yet in vain thou hast my ruin sought,
In vain thou madest me to vain things aspire,
In vain thou kindlest all thy smoky fire.

For virtue hath this better lesson taught,
Within myself to seek my only hire:
Desiring nought but how to kill desire.

Sir Philip Sidney

To The Sad Moon

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! May it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case:
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call 'virtue' there— ungratefulness?

Sir Philip Sidney

Voices at the Window

Who is it that, this dark night,
Underneath my window plaineth?
It is one who from thy sight
Being, ah, exiled, disdaineth
Every other vulgar light.

Why, alas, and are you he?
Be not yet those fancies changed?
Dear, when you find change in me,
Though from me you be estranged,
Let my change to ruin be.

Well, in absence this will die:
Leave to see, and leave to wonder.
Absence sure will help, if I
Can learn how myself to sunder
From what in my heart doth lie.

But time will these thoughts remove;
Time doth work what no man knoweth.
Time doth as the subject prove:
With time still the affection groweth
In the faithful turtle-dove.

What if you new beauties see?
Will not they stir new affection?
I will think they pictures be
(Image-like, of saints' perfection)
Poorly counterfeiting thee.

But your reason's purest light
Bids you leave such minds to nourish.
Dear, do reason no such spite!
Never doth thy beauty flourish
More than in my reason's sight.

Sir Philip Sidney

You Gote-heard Gods

Strephon.

You Gote-heard Gods, that loue the grassie mountaines,
You Nimphes that haunt the springs in pleasant vallies,
You Satyrs ioyde with free and quiet forests,
Vouchsafe your silent eares to playning musique,
Which to my woes giues still an early morning;
And drawes the dolor on till wery euening.

Klaius.

O Mercurie, foregoer to the euening,
O heauenlie huntresse of the sauage mountaines,
O louelie starre, entitled of the morning,
While that my voice doth fill these wofull vallies,
Vouchsafe your silent eares to plaining musique,
Which oft hath Echo tir'd in secrete forrests.

Strephon.

I that was once free-burges of the forrests,
Where shade from Sunne, and sports I sought at euening,
I that was once esteem'd for pleasant musique,
Am banisht now among the monstrous mountaines
Of huge despaire, and foule afflictions vallies,
Am growne a shrich-owle to my selfe each morning.

Klaius.

I that was once delighted euery morning,
Hunting the wilde inhabitants of forrests,
I that was once the musique of these vallies,
So darkened am, that all my day is euening,
Hart-broken so, that molehilles seeme high mountaines,
And fill the vales with cries in steed of musique.

Strephon.

Long since alas, my deadly Swannish musique
Hath made it selfe a crier of the morning,
And hath with wailing strength clim'd highest mountaines:
Long since my thoughts more desert be then forrests:
Long since I see my ioyes come to their euening,
And state throwen downe to ouer-troden vallies.

Klaius.

Long since the happie dwellers of these vallies,
Haue praide me leaue my strange exclaiming musique,
Which troubles their dayes worke, and ioyes of euening:
Long since I hate the night, more hate the morning:
Long since my thoughts chase me like beasts in forrests,

And make me wish my selfe layd vnder mountaines.

Strephon.

Me seemes I see the high and stately mountaines,
Transforme themselues to lowe delected vallies:
Me seemes I heare in these ill changed forrests,
The Nightingales doo learne of Owles their musique:
Me seemes I feele the comfort of the morning
Turnde to the mortall serene of an euening.

Klaius.

Me seemes I see a filthie clowdie euening,
As soon as Sunne begins to clime the mountaines:
Me seemes I feele a noysome sent, the morning
When I doo smell the flowers of these vallies:
Me seemes I heare, when I doo heare sweete musique,
The dreadfull cries of murdred men in forrests.

Strephon.

I wish to fire the trees of all these forrests;
I giue the Sunne a last farewell each euening;
I curse the fidling finders out of Musicke:
With enuie I doo hate the loftie mountaines;
And with despite despise the humble vallies:
I doo detest night, euening, day, and morning.

Klaius.

Curse to my selfe my prayer is, the morning:
My fire is more, then can be made with forrests;
My state more base, then are the basest vallies:
I wish no euenings more to see, each euening;
Shamed I hate my selfe in sight of mountaines,
And stoppe mine eares, lest I growe mad with Musicke.

Strephon.

For she, whose parts maintaine a perfect musique,
Whose beautie shin'de more then the blushing morning,
Who much did passe in state the stately mountaines,
In straightnes past the Cedars of the forrests,
Hath cast me wretch into eternall euening,
By taking her two Sunnes from these darke vallies.

Klaius.

For she, to whom compar'd, the Alpes are vallies,
She, whose lest word brings from the spheares their musique,
At whose approach the Sunne rose in the euening,

Who, where she went, bare in her forehead morning,
Is gone, is gone from these our spoyled forrests,
Turning to desarts our best pastur'de mountaines.

Strephon. Klaius.

These mountaines witnesse shall, so shall these vallies,
These forrests eke, made wretched by our musique,
Our morning hymne is this, and song at euening.

Sir Philip Sidney