

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Randolph

- poems -

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A Devout Lover

I have a mistress, for perfections rare
In every eye, but in my thoughts most fair.
Like tapers on the altar shine her eyes;
Her breath is the perfume of sacrifice;
And wheresoe'er my fancy would begin,
Still her perfection lets religion in.
We sit and talk, and kiss away the hours
As chastely as the morning dews kiss flowers:
I touch her, like my beads, with devout care,
And come unto my courtship as my prayer.

Thomas Randolph

A Pastoral Courtship

Behold these woods, and mark my Sweet
How all these boughes together meet!
The Cedar his fair arms displayes;
And mixes branches with the Bayes.
The lofty Pine dains to descend,
And sturdy Oaks do gently bend.
One with another subt'ly weaves
Into one loom their various leaves;
As all ambitious were to be
Mine and my Phyllis canopie!

Let's enter, and discourse our Loves;
These are, my dear, no tell-tale groves!
There dwell no Pyes, nor Parrots there,
To prate again the words they heare.
Nor babling Echo, that will tell
The neighbouring hills one syllable.

Being enter'd lets together lye,
Twin'd like the Zodiaks Gemini!
How soon the flowers do sweeter smell?
And all with emulation swell
To be thy pillow? These for thee
Were meant a bed, and thou for me,
And I may with as just esteem
Presse thee, as thou mayst lie on them.
And why so coy? What dost thou fear?
There lurks no speckled Serpent here.
No Venemous snake makes this his rode,
No Canker, nor the loathsome Toad.
And yon poor spider on the tree,
Thy spinster will, no poysoner be,
There is no Frog to leap and fright
Thee from my arms and break delight;
Nor Snail that o're thy coat shall trace,
And leave behind a slimy lace.
This is the hallowed shrine of Love,
No wasp nor hornet haunts this grove,
Nor Pismire to make pimples rise
Upon thy smooth and ivory thighes.
No danger in these shades doth lye,
Nothing that wears a sting: but I:
And in it doth no venome dwell,
Although perchance it make thee swell.

Being set, let's sport a while my Fair,
I will tie Love-knots in thy hair.
See Zephyrus through the leaves doth stray,
And has free liberty to play:
And braids thy locks: And shall I find
Lesse favour then a saucy winde?
Now let me sit, and fix my eyes,

On thee that art my Paradise.
 Thou art my all; the spring remains
 In the fair violets of thy vains:
 And that it is a summers day,
 Ripe Cherries in thy lips display.
 And when for Autumn I would seek.
 'Tis in the Apples of thy cheek.
 But that which onely moves my smart,
 Is to see winter in thy heart.
 Strange, when at once in one appear
 All the four seasons of the year!
 I'lle clasp that neck where should be set
 A rich and Orient Carkanet;
 But swains are poor, admit of then
 More naturall chains, the arms of men.
 Come let me touch those breasts, that swell
 Like two fair mountains, and may well
 Be stil'd the Alpes, but that I fear
 The snow has lesse of whitenesse there.
 But stay (my Love) a fault I spie,
 Why are these two fair fountains dry?
 Which if they run, no Muse would please
 To tast of any spring but these.
 And Ganymed employ'd should be
 To fetch his love Nectar from thee.
 Thou shalt be Nurse fair Venus swears,
 To the next Cupid that she bears.
 Were it not then discreetly done
 To ope one spring to let two run?
 Fy, fy, this Belly, Beauty's mint,
 Blushes to see no coyn stamp't in't.
 Employ it then, for though it be
 Our wealth it is your royalty;
 And beauty will have currant grace
 That bears the image of your face.
 How to the touch the Ivory thighes
 Veil gently, and again do rise,
 As plyable to impression
 As Virgins wax, or Barian stone
 Dissolv'd to softnesse; plump, and full,
 More white and soft then Cotsall wool,
 Or Cotten from from the Indian Tree,
 Or prety silk-worms huswifery.
 These on two marble pillars rais'd
 Make me in doubt which should be prais'd;
 They, or their Columnes must; but when
 I view those feet that I have seen
 So nimbly tript it o're the Lawns,
 That all the Satyrs and the Fawns
 Have stood amaz'd, when they would passe
 Over the layes, and not a grasse
 Would feel the weight, nor rush, nor bent

Drooping betray which way you went,
O then I felt my hot desires
Burn more, and flame with double fires.
Come let those thighs, those legs those feet
With mine in thousand windings meet.
And woven in more subtle twines
Then Woodbine, Ivie, or the Vines.
For when Love sees us circling thus
He'll like no Arbour more than us.
Now let us kisse, would you be gone?
Manners at least allows me one.
Blush you at this? pretty one stay,
And I will take that kisse away,
Thus with a second, and that too
A third wipes off; so will we go
To numbers that the stars out-run,
And all the Atoms in the Sun.
For though we kisse till Phoebus ray
Sink in the seas, and kissing stay
Till his bright beams return again,
There can of all but one remain:
And if for one good manners call,
In one, good manners, grant me all.

Are kisses all? they but fore-run
Another duty to be done.
What would you of that Minstrell say
That tunes his pipes and will not play?
Say what are blossoms in their prime,
That ripen not in harvest time?
Or what are buds that ne're disclose
The long'd for sweetness of the rose?
So kisses to a Lover's guest
Are invitations, not the feast.
See every thing that we espie
Is fruitfull saving you and I:
View all the fields, survey the bowers,
The buds, the blossoms, and the flowers,
And say if they so rich could be
In barren base Virginitie.
Earth's not so coy as you are now,
But willingly admits the Plow.
For how had man or beast been fed,
If she had kept her maiden-head?
Coelia once coy as are the rest
Hangs now a babe on either breast,
And Chloris since a man she took,
Has lesse of greennesse in her look.
Our Ewes have ean'd, and every damme
Gives suck unto her tender Lamb.
As by these groves we walk'd along,
Some birds were feeding of their young.

Some on their egges did brooding sit,
Sad that they had not hatch'd them yet.
Those that were slower then the rest,
Were busie building of the nest.
You only will not pay the fine,
You vow'd and ow'd to Valentine.
As you were angling in the brook
With silken line and silver hook,
Through Chrystall streams you might descry
How vast and numberlesse a fry
The fish hath spawn'd, that all along
The banks were crowded with the throng.
And shall fair Venus more command
By water then she does by land?
The Phænix chast, yet when she dies,
Her selfe with her owne ashes lies.
But let thy love more wisely thrive
To do the act while th' art alive.
'Tis time we left our childish Love
That trades for toyes, and now approve
Our abler skill; they are not wise
Look babies only in the eyes.
That smother'd smile shewes what you meant,
And modest silence gives consent.
That which we now prepare, will be
Best done in silent secresie.
Come do not weep, what is't you fear?
Lest some should know what we did here.
See not a flower you prest is dead,
But re-erects his bended head;
That whosoe're shall passe this way
Knows not by these where Phyllis lay.
And in your forehead there is none
Can read the act that we have done.
Phyllis.
Poor credulous and simple maid!
By what strange wiles art thou bearaid!
A treasure thou hast lost to day
For which thou canst no ransome pay.
How black art thou, transform'd with sin!
How strange a guilt gnaws me within?
Grief will convert this red to pale;
When every Wake, and Whitsund-ale
Shall talk my shame; break, break sad heart
There is no Medicine for my smart,
No herb nor balm can cure my sorrow,
Unlesse you meet again to morrow.

Thomas Randolph

An Ode to Master Anthony Stafford to hasten Him into the Country

COME, spur away,
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down
And leave the chargeable noise of this great town:
I will the country see,
Where old simplicity,
Though hid in gray,
Doth look more gay
Than foppery in plush and scarlet clad.
Farewell, you city wits, that are
Almost at civil war--
'Tis time that I grow wise, when all the world grows mad.

More of my days
I will not spend to gain an idiot's praise;
Or to make sport
For some slight Puisne of the Inns of Court.
Then, worthy Stafford, say,
How shall we spend the day?
With what delights
Shorten the nights?
When from this tumult we are got secure,
Where mirth with all her freedom goes,
Yet shall no finger lose;
Where every word is thought, and every thought is pure?

There from the tree
We'll cherries pluck, and pick the strawberry;
And every day
Go see the wholesome country girls make hay,
Whose brown hath lovelier grace
Than any painted face
That I do know
Hyde Park can show:
Where I had rather gain a kiss than meet
(Though some of them in greater state
Might court my love with plate)
The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street.

But think upon
Some other pleasures: these to me are none.
Why do I prate
Of women, that are things against my fate!
I never mean to wed
That torture to my bed:
My Muse is she
My love shall be.
Let clowns get wealth and heirs: when I am gone
And that great bugbear, grisly Death,
Shall take this idle breath,
If I a poem leave, that poem is my son.

Of this no more!
We'll rather taste the bright Pomona's store.
No fruit shall 'scape
Our palates, from the damson to the grape.
Then, full, we'll seek a shade,
And hear what music 's made;
How Philomel
Her tale doth tell,
And how the other birds do fill the quire;
The thrush and blackbird lend their throats,
Warbling melodious notes;
We will all sports enjoy which others but desire.

Ours is the sky,
Where at what fowl we please our hawk shall fly:
Nor will we spare
To hunt the crafty fox or timorous hare;
But let our hounds run loose
In any ground they'll choose;
The buck shall fall,
The stag, and all.
Our pleasures must from their own warrants be,
For to my Muse, if not to me,
I'm sure all game is free:
Heaven, earth, are all but parts of her great royalty.

And when we mean
To taste of Bacchus' blessings now and then,
And drink by stealth
A cup or two to noble Barkley's health,
I'll take my pipe and try
The Phrygian melody;
Which he that hears,
Lets through his ears
A madness to distemper all the brain:
Then I another pipe will take
And Doric music make,
To civilize with graver notes our wits again.

Thomas Randolph

An Ode to Master Anthony Stafford, to Hasten him into the Country

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26 We'll cherries pluck; and pick the strawberry;
27 And every day
28 Go see the wholesome country girls make hay,
29 Whose brown hath lovelier grace
30 Than any painted face
31 That I do know
32 Hyde Park can show.
33 Where I had rather gain a kiss, than meet
34 (Though some of them in greater state
35 Might court my love with plate)
36 The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street.

37 But think upon
38 Some other pleasures; these to me are none.
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40 Of women, that are things against my fate?
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79 Which he that hears,
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81 A madness to distemper all the brain.
82 Then I another pipe will take
83 And Doric music make,
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Thomas Randolph

Fairy Song

We the fairies blithe and antic,
Of Dimensions not gigantic,
Though the moonshine mostly keep us,
Oft in orchards frisk and peep us,

Stolen sweets are always sweeter;
Stolen kisses much completer;
Stolen looks are nice in chapels;
Stolen, stolen be your apples.

When to bed the world are bobbing,
Then's the time to go orchard robbing;
Yet the fruit were scarce worth peeling
Were it not for stealing, stealing.

Thomas Randolph

On Six Cambridge Lasses Bathing Themselves

1 When bashfull daylight now was gone
2 And night, that hides a blush, came on.
3 Sixe Pretty Nymphes to wash away
4 The sweatinge of a Summers daye
5 In Chams fair streames did gently swim
6 And naked bathd each curious limbe.
7 O Who had this blist sight but seene
8 Would thinke they all had Cl{oe}lia=s beene.
9 A Scholer that a walke did take
10 Perchance for Meditation sake.
11 This blessed Obiect chan'cd to find
12 Straight all thinges else went out of mind
13 No Studye=s better in this life
14 For Practicke or Contemplatiue:
15 Who thought Poore soule these hee had seene,
16 Fair Dian and her Nymphes had beene.
17 And therefore thought in piteous feare
18 Act{ae}ons fortune was too neere.
19 Or that the Water=Nymphes they were
20 Together met to sport 'um there
21 And that to him such loue they bore
22 As to Iolas once before.
23 What could hee thinke but that his eye
24 Sixe Venusses at once did spie
25 Rise from the waues, or that perchance
26 Fresh=Water Syrens came to dance
27 Vpon our streames, with songes and lookes
28 To tempt Poore Scholers from their bookes.
29 Hee cannot thinke they Graces are
30 Vnlesse their number doubled were.
31 Nor can hee thinke they muses bee
32 Bicause alasse they wanted three.
33 I should haue rather guess'd that here
34 Another brood of Helens were
35 Begot by Ioue upon |y+e+| playnes
36 Watchd by some L{ae}da of the Swans.
37 The maydes betrayd were in a fright
38 And blush'd (but twas not seene ith night.)
39 At last all by |y+e+| banke did stand
40 And hee, good harte lent them his hand.
41 Where twas his blisse to feele all ore
42 Soft Paps, smooth thighes and somethinge more.
43 But Enuious Night masqued from his eyes
44 The place where loue and pleasure lyes.
45 Guesse Louers guesse, o you |y+t+| dare
46 What then might bee this Scholers praier
47 That hee were but a Cat to spye
48 Or had but now Tyberius eyes.
49 Yet since this hope was all in Vaine
50 Hee helps 'um don there cloths agayne.
51 Makes Promise thye shall none bee shent
52 So with them to the Tauerne went.

53 Where how hee then might sport or play
54 Pardon mee Muse I must not say
55 Guesse you that haue a mind to knowe
56 Whither hee were a Foole of no.

Thomas Randolph

Upon His Picture

When age hath made me what I am not now,
And every wrinkle tells me where the plow
Of time hath furrowed; when an ice shall flow
Through every vein, and all my head wear snow;
When death displays his coldness in my cheek,
And I myself in my own picture seek,
Not finding what I am, but what I was,
In doubt which to believe, this or my glass:
Yet though I alter, this remains the same
As it was drawn, retains the primitive frame
And first complexion; here will still be seen
Blood on the cheek, and down upon the chin;
Here the smooth brow will stay, the lively eye,
The ruddy lip, and hair of youthful dye.
Behold what frailty we in man may see,
Whose shadow is less given to change than he!

Thomas Randolph