

Classic Poetry Series

**William Drummond (of
Hawthornden)
- poems -**

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Change should breed Change

NEW doth the sun appear,
The mountains' snows decay,
Crown'd with frail flowers forth comes the baby year.
My soul, time posts away;
And thou yet in that frost
Which flower and fruit hath lost,
As if all here immortal were, dost stay.
For shame! thy powers awake,
Look to that Heaven which never night makes black,
And there at that immortal sun's bright rays,
Deck thee with flowers which fear not rage of days!

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Doth then the world go thus?

Doth then the world go thus? doth all thus move?
Is this the justice which on earth we find?
Is this that firm decree which all doth bind?
Are these your influences, Powers above?
Those souls, which vice's moody mists most blind,
Blind Fortune, blindly, most their friend doth prove;
And they who thee, poor idol Virtue! love,
Ply like a feather tossed by storm and wind.
Ah! if a Providence doth sway this all,
Why should best minds groan under most distress?
Or why should pride humility make thrall,
And injuries the innocent oppress?
Heavens! hinder, stop this fate; or grant a time
When good may have, as well as bad, their prime!

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Her Passing

THE beauty and the life
Of life's and beauty's fairest paragon
--O tears! O grief!--hung at a feeble thread
To which pale Atropos had set her knife;
The soul with many a groan
Had left each outward part,
And now did take his last leave of the heart:
Naught else did want, save death, ev'n to be dead;
When the afflicted band about her bed,
Seeing so fair him come in lips, cheeks, eyes,
Cried, 'Ah! and can Death enter Paradise?'

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Madrigal

LIKE the Idalian queen,
Her hair about her eyne,
With neck and breast's ripe apples to be seen,
At first glance of the morn
In Cyprus' gardens gathering those fair flow'rs
Which of her blood were born,
I saw, but fainting saw, my paramours.
The Graces naked danced about the place,
The winds and trees amazed
With silence on her gazed,
The flowers did smile, like those upon her face;
And as their aspen stalks those fingers band,
That she might read my case,
A hyacinth I wish'd me in her hand.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Madrigal: My Thoughts Hold Mortal Strife

My thoughts hold mortal strife,
I do detest my life,
And with lamenting cries,
Peace to my soul to bring,
Oft calls that prince which here doth monarchize;
But he, grim-grinning king,
Who caitiffs scorns and doth the blest surprise,
Late having deck'd with beauty's rose his tomb,
Disdains to crop a weed, and will not come.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Phoebus Arise

Phœbus, arise,
And paint the sable skies
With azure, white, and red;
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed
That she thy career may with roses spread;
The nightingales thy coming each where sing;
Make an eternal spring;
Give life to this dark world which lieth dead.
Spread forth thy golden hair
In larger locks than thou wast wont before,
And emperor-like, decore
With diadem of pearl thy temples fair.
Chase hence the ugly night,
Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.
This is that happy morn,
That day, long wished day
Of all my life so dark,
(If cruel stars have not my ruin sworn,
And fates not hope betray)
Which, only white, deserves
A diamond forever should it mark;
This is the morn should bring unto this grove
My love, to hear and recompense my love.
Fair king, who all preserves,
But show thy blushing beams,
And thou two sweeter eyes
Shalt see than those which by Peneus' streams
Did once thy heart surprise;
Nay, suns, which shine as clear
As thou when two thou did to Rome appear.
Now Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise;
If that ye, winds, would hear
A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,
Your stormy chiding stay;
Let Zephyr only breathe
And with her tresses play,
Kissing sometimes these purple ports of death.
The winds all silent are,
And Phœbus in his chair,
Ensaffroning sea and air,
Makes vanish every star;
Night like a drunkard reels
Beyond the hills to shun his flaming wheels;
The fields with flow'rs are deck'd in every hue,
The clouds bespangle with bright gold their blue;
Here is the pleasant place,
And ev'ry thing save her, who all should grace.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Saint John Baptist

THE last and greatest Herald of Heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild.
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd;
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst he forth: 'All ye, whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!'
--Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their marble caves 'Repent! Repent!'

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Spring Bereaved 1

THAT zephyr every year
So soon was heard to sigh in forests here,
It was for her: that wrapp'd in gowns of green
Meads were so early seen,
That in the saddest months oft sung the merles,
It was for her; for her trees dropp'd forth pearls.
That proud and stately courts
Did envy those our shades and calm resorts,
It was for her; and she is gone, O woe!
Woods cut again do grow,
Bud doth the rose and daisy, winter done;
But we, once dead, no more do see the sun.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Spring Bereaved 2

SWEET Spring, thou turn'st with all thy goodly train,
Thy head with flames, thy mantle bright with flow'rs:
The zephyrs curl the green locks of the plain,
The clouds for joy in pearls weep down their show'rs.
Thou turn'st, sweet youth, but ah! my pleasant hours
And happy days with thee come not again;
The sad memorials only of my pain
Do with thee turn, which turn my sweets in sours.
Thou art the same which still thou wast before,
Delicious, wanton, amiable, fair;
But she, whose breath embalm'd thy wholesome air,
Is gone--nor gold nor gems her can restore.
 Neglected virtue, seasons go and come,
 While thine forgot lie closed in a tomb.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Spring Bereaved 3

ALEXIS, here she stay'd; among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did alone repair;
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair,
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mines.
She set her by these musked eglantines,
--The happy place the print seems yet to bear:
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugar'd lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend their ear.
Me here she first perceived, and here a morn
Of bright carnations did o'erspread her face;
Here did she sigh, here first my hopes were born,
And I first got a pledge of promised grace:
 But ah! what served it to be happy so?
 Sith passed pleasures double but new woe?

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

Summons To Love

Phœbus, arise,
And paint the sable skies
With azure, white, and red;
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed
That she thy career may with roses spread;
The nightingales thy coming each where sing;
Make an eternal spring;
Give life to this dark world which lieth dead.
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And ev'ry thing save her, who all should grace.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

This Life, which seems so fair,

This Life, which seems so fair,
Is like a bubble blown up in the air
By sporting children's breath,
Who chase it everywhere
And strive who can most motion it bequeath.
And though it sometimes seem of its own might
Like to an eye of gold to be fixed there,
And firm to hover in that empty height,
That only is because it is so light.
But in that pomp it doth not long appear;
For when 'tis most admired, in a thought,
Because it erst was nought, it turns to nought.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

To His Lute

My lute, be as thou wert when thou didst grow
With thy green mother in some shady grove,
When immelodious winds but made thee move,
And birds their ramage did on thee bestow.
Since that dear Voice which did thy sounds approve,
Which wont in such harmonious strains to flow,
Is reft from Earth to tune those spheres above,
What art thou but a harbinger of woe?
Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,
But orphans' wailings to the fainting ear;
Each stroke a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear;
For which be silent as in woods before:
Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,
Like widowed turtle, still her loss complain.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

To The Nightingale

Sweet bird, that sing'st away the early hours
Of winters past or coming, void of care,
Well pleased with delights which present are,
(Fair seasons, budding sprays, sweet-smelling flowers)
To rocks, to springs, to rills, from leafy bowers
Thou thy Creator's goodness dost declare,
And what dear gifts on thee He did not spare:
A stain to human sense in sin that lours,
What soul can be so sick which by thy songs
(Attired in sweetness) sweetly is not driven
Quite to forget earth's turmoils, spites, and wrongs,
And lift a reverend eye and thought to heaven?
Sweet artless songster, thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres, yes, and to angels' lays.

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)

What doth it serve

What doth it serve to see sun's burning face,
And skies enamelled with both the Indies' gold?
Or moon at night in jetty chariot roll'd,
And all the glory of that starry place?
What doth it serve earth's beauty to behold,
The mountain's pride, the meadow's flow'ry grace,
The stately comeliness of forests old,
The sport of floods which would themselves embrace?
What doth it serve to hear the sylvans' songs,
The wanton merle, the nightingale's sad strains,
Which in dark shades seem to deplore my wrongs?
For what doth serve all that this world contains,
Sith she for whom those once to me were dear,
No part of them can have now with me here?

William Drummond (of Hawthornden)