

Classic Poetry Series

Francis Quarles
- poems -

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Francis Quarles(8 May 1592 – 8 September 1644)

Francis Quarles was an English poet most famous for his Emblem book aptly entitled Emblems.

Career

Francis was born in Romford, Essex, (now London Borough of Havering), and baptised there on 8 May 1592. He traced his ancestry to a family settled in England before the Norman Conquest with a long history in royal service. His great-grandfather, George Quarles, was Auditor to Henry VIII, and his father, James Quarles, held several places under Elizabeth I and James I, for which he was rewarded with an estate called Stewards in Romford. His mother, Joan Dalton, was the daughter and heiress of Eldred Dalton of Mores Place, Hadham. There were eight children in the family; the eldest, Sir Robert Quarles, was knighted by James I in 1608, and another, John Quarles, also became a poet.

Francis was entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1608, and subsequently at Lincoln's Inn. He was made cupbearer to the Princess Elizabeth, in 1613, remaining abroad for some years; and before 1629 he was appointed secretary to Ussher, the primate of Ireland.

About 1633 he returned to England, and spent the next two years in the preparation of his Emblems. In 1639 he was made city chronologer, a post in which Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton had preceded him. At the outbreak of the Civil War he took the Royalist side, drawing up three pamphlets in 1644 in support of the king's cause. It is said that his house was searched and his papers destroyed by the Parliamentarians in consequence of these publications.

Quarles married Ursula Woodgate in 1618, by whom he had eighteen children. His son, John Quarles (1624–1665), was exiled to Flanders for his Royalist sympathies and was the author of Fons Lachrymarum (1648) and other poems. Quarles descendants, Charles Henry Langston and John Mercer Langston were American abolitionists whom pressed for greater freedom and suffrages among the African Americans in the 19th century. Charles Henry Langston's grandson (and Quarles' descendant), Langston Hughes, was a celebrated author and poet during the Harlem Renaissance.

The work by which Quarles is best known, the Emblems, was originally published in 1635, with grotesque illustrations engraved by William Marshall and others. The forty-five prints in the last three books are borrowed from the designs by Boetius à Bolswert for the *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp, 1624) of Herman Hugo. Each "emblem" consists of a paraphrase from a passage of Scripture, expressed in ornate and metaphorical language, followed by passages from the Christian Fathers, and concluding with an epigram of four lines.

The Emblems was immensely popular with the common people, but the critics of the 17th and 18th centuries had no mercy on Quarles. [Sir John Suckling](http://www.poemhunter.com/sir-john-suckling/) in his *Sessions of the Poets* disrespectfully alluded to him as he "that makes God speak so big in's poetry." [Alexander Pope](http://www.poemhunter.com/alexander-pope/) in the *Dunciad* spoke of the Emblems, "Where the pictures for the page atone And Quarles is saved by beauties not his own."

A Good Night

Close now thine eyes and rest secure;
Thy soul is safe enough, thy body sure;
 He that loves thee, He that keeps
And guards thee, never slumbers, never sleeps.
The smiling conscience in a sleeping breast
 Has only peace, has only rest;
 The music and the mirth of kings
Are all but very discords, when she sings;
 Then close thine eyes and rest secure;
No sleep so sweet as thine, no rest so sure.

Francis Quarles

An Ecstasy

E'EN like two little bank-dividing brooks,□
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams,□
And having ranged and search'd a thousand nooks,□
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames,□
Where in a greater current they conjoin:□
So I my Best-belovèd's am; so He is mine.□

E'en so we met; and after long pursuit,□
E'en so we joined; we both became entire;□
No need for either to renew a suit,□
For I was flax, and He was flames of fire:□
Our firm-united souls did more than twine;□
So I my Best-belovèd's am; so He is mine.□

If all those glittering Monarchs, that command□
The servile quarters of this earthly ball,□
Should tender in exchange their shares of land,□
I would not change my fortunes for them all:□
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin:□
The world's but theirs; but my Belovèd's mine.

Francis Quarles

Delight In God Only

I love (and have some cause to love) the earth;
She is my Maker's creature, therefore good:
She is my mother, for she gave me birth;
She is my tender nurse; she gives me food;
But what's a creature, Lord, compared with Thee?
Or what's my mother, or my nurse to me?

I love the air; her dainty fruits refresh
My drooping soul, and to new sweets invite me;
Her shrill-mouth'd choirs sustain me with their flesh.
And with their polyphonian notes delight me:
But what's the air, or all the sweets that she
Can bless my soul withal, compared to Thee?

I love the sea; she is my fellow-creature,
My careful purveyor; she provides me store;
She walls me round; she makes my diet greater;
She wafts my treasure from a foreign shore:
But, Lord of oceans, when compared with Thee,
What is the ocean, or her wealth to me?

To heaven's high city I direct my journey,
Whose spangled suburbs entertain mine eye;
Mine eye, by contemplation's great attorney,
Transcends the crystal pavement of the sky.
But what is heaven, great God, compared to Thee?
Without Thy presence, heaven's no heaven to me.

Without Thy presence, earth gives no reflection:
Without Thy presence, sea affords no treasure;
Without Thy presence, air's a rank infection;
Without Thy presence, heaven itself no pleasure:
If not possess'd, if not enjoyed in Thee,
What's earth, or sea, or air, or heaven to me?

The highest honours that the world can boast,
Are subjects far too low for my desire;
Its brightest gleams of glory are, at most,
But dying sparkles of Thy living fire:

The brightest flames that earth can kindle, be
But nightly glowworms, if compared to Thee.

Without Thy presence, wealth is bags of cares;
Wisdom, but folly; joy, disquiet, sadness;
Friendship is treason, and delights are snares;
Pleasures, but pain; and mirth, but pleasing madness:
Without Thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have their being when compared with Thee.

In having all things, and not Thee, what have I?
Not having Thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but Thee, what have my labours got?
And having Thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea nor land; nor would I be
Possess'd of heaven, heaven unpossess'd of Thee.

Francis Quarles

Epigram

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;
Judge not the play before the play is done:
Her plot hath many changes; every day
Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns the play.

Francis Quarles

Epigram - On Players And Ballad-Singers

They're like the Priest and Clerk at Belial's altar;
One makes the Sermon; t'other tunes the Psalter.

Francis Quarles

From 'A Feast For Wormes'

The Argument.

The Ninivites beleeve the word,
Their hearts retiu'ne mito the Lord;
In him they put their onely trust;
They niourne in sackcloth and in dust.

SECTION IX.

So said ; the Ninivites belev'd the word,
Beleeved Jonas, and belev'd the Lord.
They made no pause, nor jested at the newes,
Nor slighted it because it was a Jew's
Denouncement : no, nor did their gazing eyes
(As taken captive with such novelties)
Admire the stranger's garb, so quaint to theirs;
No idle chat possest their itching eares
The whilst he spake ; nor were their tongues on fier
To raile upon, or interrupt the cryer ;
Nor did they question whether true the message,
Or fals the prophet were that brought th' embassy.
But they gave faith to what he said : relented,
And (changing their miswandred wayes) repented;
Before the searching ayre could coole his word
Their hearts returned and belev'd the Lord ;
And they, whose dainty lips were cloy'd while-ere
With cates and viands and with wanton cheare.
Doe now enjoyne their palats not to taste
The offal bread (for they proclaim'd a fast):
And they wliose looser bodies once did lie
Wrapt up in robes and silkes of princely dye,
Loe, now instead of robes in rags they mourne.
And all their silks doe into sackcloth turne:
They reade themselves sad lectures on the ground,
Learning to want as well as to abound.
The prince was not exempted, nor the peere,
Nor yet the richest, nor the poorest there ;
The old man was not freed, whose hoary age

Had even almost outronne his pilgrimage;
 Nor yet the young, whose glasse (but new begun)
 By course of nature had an age to runne:
 For when that fatall word came to the king,
 (ConvayM with speed, upon the nimble wing
 Of flitting fame,) he straight dismounts his throne,
 Forsakes his chaire of state he sate upon,
 Disrob'd his body, and his head discrown'd,
 In dust and ashes grov'ling on the ground ;
 And when he rear'd his trembling corps againe,
 (His haire all filthy with the dust he lay in)
 He, clad in pensive sackcloth, did depose
 Himself from state imperiall, and chose
 To live a vassall, or a baser thing,
 Than to usurpe the scepter of a king :
 (Respectlesse of his pompe) he quite forgate
 He was a monarch, mindelesse of his state ;
 He neither sought to rule or be obay'd,
 Nor with the sword nor with the scepter sway'd

MEDITA IX.

Is fasting then the thing that God requires ?
 Can fasting expiate or slake those fires
 That sinne hath blowne to such a mightie flame .'
 Can sackcloth clothe a fault, or hide a shame ?
 Can ashes cleanse thy blot, or purge thy offence .'
 Or doe thy hands make heaven a recompence,
 By strowing dust upon thy briny face ?
 Are these the tricks to purchase heavenly grace ?
 No ! though thou pine thyself with willing want,
 Or face looke thinne, or carkas nere so gaunt,
 Although thou worser weeds than sackcloth weare,
 Or naked goe, or sleep in shirts of haire,
 Or though thou chuse an ash-tub for thy bed,
 Or make a daily dunghill on thy head;
 Thy labour is not poys'd with equal gaines,
 For thou hast nought but labour for thy paines.
 Such holy madnesse God rejects, and loathes
 That sinks no deeper than the skin or clothes:
 'Tis not thine eyes which (taught to weepe by art)
 Look red with teares (not guilty of thy heart):

'Tis not the holding of thy hands so high,
 Nor yet the purer squinting of thine eye ;
 'Tis not your mimick mouthes, your antick faces,
 Your scripture phrases or affected graces.
 Nor prodigall upbanding of thine eyes.
 Whose gashfuU bals doe seeme to pelt the skies;
 'Tis not the strickt reforming of your haire.
 So close that all the neighbour skull is bare;
 'Tis not the drooping of thy head so low.
 Nor yet the low'ring of thy sullen brow.
 Nor wolvish howling that disturbs the aire,
 Nor repetitions, or your tedious prayer :
 No, no, 'tis none of this that God regards ;
 Such sort of fooles their owne applause rewards :
 Such puppet plaies to heaven are strange and quaint.
 Their service is unsweet and foully taint.
 Their words fall fruitlesse from their idle braine.
 But true repentance runnes in other straine ;
 Where sad contrition harbours, there the heart
 Is truely acquainted with the secret smart
 Of past offences, hates the bosome sin
 The most which most the soul took pleasure in ;
 No crime unsifted, no sinne unpresented.
 Can lurke unseene ; and scene, none unlamented.
 The trouble soule's amazed witli dire aspects
 Of lesser sinnes committed, and detects
 The wounded conscience ; it cries amaine
 For mercy, mercy, cries, and cries againe :
 It sadly grieves, and soberly laments,
 It yernes for grace, reformes, returnes, repents.
 I, this is incense, whose accepted favour
 Mounts up the heavenly throne and findeth favour:
 I, this is it whose valour never failes—
 With God it stoutly wrestles and prevailes :
 I, this is it that pearces heaven above.
 Never returning home (like Noah's dove)
 But brings an olive- leafe, or some increase,
 That workes salvation and etemall peace.

Francis Quarles

From 'The History Of Samson'

The Argument.

He goes to Timnah : as he went
He slew a lyon by the way;
He sues, obtaines the maid's consent,
And they appoint the marriage-day.

SECTION VIII.

When the next day had with his morning light
Redeem'd the East from the dark shades of night,
And with his golden rayes had overspred
The neighb'ring moimtains, from his loathed bed
Sick-tholighted Samson rose, whose watchfull eyes
Morpheus that night had with his leaden keyes
Not power to close : his thoughts did so incumber
His restlesse soule, his eyes could never slumber;
Whose softer language by degrees did wake
His father's sleep-bedeafned eares, and spake ;
' Sir, let your early blessings light upon
The tender bosome of your prosprou sonne.
And let the God of Israel repay
Those blessings, double, on your head this day:
The long since banisht shadowes make me bold
To let you know the morning waxes old;
The sun-beames are growne strong, their brighter hiew
Have broke the mists and dride the morning dew;
The sweetness of the season does invite
Your steps to visit Timnah, and acquite
Your last night's promise.'
With that the Danite and his wife arose,
Scarce yet resolved ; at last they did dispose
Their doubtfull paces to behold the prize
Of Samson's heart, and pleasure of his eyes.
They went, and when their travell had attain'd
Those fruitfuU hils whose clusters entertain'd
Their thirsty palats with their swelling pride,
The musing lover being stept aside

To gaine the pleasure of a lonely thought,
 Appeare d a full-ag'd lyon, who had sought
 (But could not find) his long-desired prey.
 Soone as his eye had given him hopes to pay
 His debt to nature, and to mend that fault
 His empty stomack found, he made assault
 Vpon th' unarm'd lover's breast, whose hand
 Had neither staffe nor weapon to withstand
 His greedy rage ; but he whose mighty strength
 Or sudden death must now appeare, at length
 Strecht forth his brawny arme, (his arme supplide
 With power from heaven,) and did with ease divide
 His body limme from limme, and did betray
 His flesh to foules that lately sought his prey.
 This done, his quick redoubled paces make
 His stay amends ; his nimble steps o'rtake
 His leading parents, who by this discover
 The smoake of Timnah : now the greedy lover
 Thinkes every step a mile, and every pace
 A measured league, untill he see that face.
 And finde the treasure of his heart that lies
 In the fair casket of his mistresse' eyes.
 But all this while close Samson made not knowne
 Vnto his parents what his hands had done.
 By this the gate of Timnah entertaines
 The welcome travellers ; the parents' paines
 Are now rewarded with their Sonne's best pleasure:
 The virgin comes ; his eyes can finde no leisure
 To owne another object. O the greeting
 Th' impatient lovers had at their first meeting!
 The lover speakes ; she answers ; he replies ;
 She blushes ; he demandeth ; she denies ;
 He pleades affection ; she doubts ; hee sues
 For nuptiall love ; she questions ; he renewes
 His earnest suit: importunes; she relents;
 He must have no deniall ; she consents :
 They passe their mutuall loves ; their joynd hands
 Are equall earnestes of the nuptiall bands.
 The parents are agreed ; all parties pleas'd;
 The daye's set downe ; the lovers hearts are eas'd ;
 Nothing displeases now but the long stay
 Betwixt th' appointment and the mariage-day.

MEDITA VIII.

'Tis too severe a censure : if the sonne
Take him a wife ; the marriage fairely done,
Without consent of parents (who perchance
Had rais'd his higher price, knew where t' advance
His better'd fortunes to one hundred more,)
He lives a fornicator, she, a whore :
Too hard a censure ! and it seems to me
The parent 's most delinquent of the three.
What if the better minded sonne doe aime
At worth ? what if rare vertues doe inflame
His rapt affection ? what if the condition
Of an admired and dainty disposition
Hath won his soule ? whereas the covetous father
Findes her gold light, and recommends him rather
T' an old worne widow, whose more weighty purse
Is filled with gold, and with the orphan's curse;
The sweet exuberance of whose full-mouth'd portion
Is but the cursed issue of extortion;
Whose worth, perchance, lies onely in her weight,
Or in tlie bosome of her great estate.
Wliat if the sonne (that does not care to buy
Abundance at so deare a rate,) deny
The soule-detesting profer of his father,
And, in his better judgement, chooses rather
To match with meaner fortunes and desert ?
I thinke that Mary cliose the better part.
What noble families (that have outgrowne
The best records) have quite bin overthrowne
By wilfuU parents, that will either force
Their sonnes to match, or haunt them with a curse!
That can adapt their humors to rejoyce
And fcincy all things, but their children's choyce!
Which makes them often timorous to reveale
The close desiers of their hearts, and steale
Such matches as perchance their faire advice
Might in the bud have hindred in a trice ;
Which done, and past, then their hasty spirit
Can thinke of nothing under disinherit:
He must be quite discarded and exiled ;

The furious father must renounce his childe;
Nor pray'r nor blessing must he have ; bereiven
Of all ; nor must he live, nor die, forgiven;
When as the father's rashnesse oftentimes
Was the first causer of the children's crimes.
Parents, be not too cruel! ; children doe
Things oft too deepe for us t' inquire into.
What father would not storme if his wilde sonne
Should doe the deed that Samson here had done ?
Nor doe I make it an exemplar act,
Onely let parents not be too exact.
To curse their children, or to dispossesse Qblesse.
Them of their blessings. Heaven may chance to
Be not too strict ; faire language may recure
A fault of youth, whilst rougher words obdure.

Francis Quarles

Funerall Elegy Vii

GOE, glorious saint ! I knew 'twas not a shrine
Of flesh could lodge so pure a soule as thine;
I saw it labour (in a holy scorne
Of living dust and ashes) to be swome
A heavenly quirister : it sigh'd and groan'd
To be dissolv'd from mortall, and enthron'd
Among his fellow-angels, there to sing
Perpetuall anthems to his heavenly King :
He was a stranger to his house of clay;
Scarce own'd it, but that necessary stay
Miscall'd it his ; and onely zeale did make
Him love the building for the builder's sake.

Francis Quarles

Funerall Elegy Xiii

No, no, he is not dead ; the mouth of fame,
Honor's shrill herald, would preserve his name,
And make it live in spight of death and dust,
Were there no other heaven, no other trust.
He is not dead: the sacred nine deny
The soule that merits fame should ever die:
He lives, and when the latest breath of fame
Shall want her trumpe, to glorify a name,
He shall survive, and these selfe-closed eyes
That now lie slumbering in the dust shall rise,
And, fill'd with endlesse glory, shall enjoy
The perfect vision of eternall joy.

Francis Quarles

Funerall Elegy Xx

Vnconstant earth ! why doe not mortals cease
To build their hopes upon so short a lease ?
Vncertaine lease, whose terme but once begun,
Tels never when it ends till it be done :
We dote upon thy smiles, not knowing why.
And whiles we but prepare to live, we die :
We spring like flowers for a daye's delight,
At noone we flourish, and we fade at night.
Wetoylefor kingdomes, conquer crownes, and then
We that were gods but now, now lesse than men.
If wisdom, learning, knowledge, cannot dwell
Secure from change, vaine bubble earth, farewell!

Francis Quarles

Hos Ego Versiculos

*

LIKE to the damaske rose you see,
Or like the blossome on the tree,
Or like the daintie flower of May,
Or like the Morning to the day,
Or like the Sunne, or like the shade,
Or like the Gourd which Jonas had;
Even such is man whose thred is spun,
Drawn out and cut, and so is done.

The Rose withers, the blossome blasteth,
The flowre fades, the morning hasteth:
The Sunne sets, the shadow flies,
The Gourd consumes, and man he dies.

Like to the blaze of fond delight;
Or like a morning cleare and bright;
Or like a frost, or like a showre;
Or like the pride of Babel's Tower;

Or like the houre that guides the time;
Or like to beauty in her prime;
Even such is man, whose glory lends
His life a blaze or two, and ends.

Delights vanish; the morne o'ercasteth,
The frost breaks, the shower hasteth;
The Tower falls, the hower spends;
The beauty fades, and man's life ends.

*

Francis Quarles

My Beloved Is Mine And I Am His

Even like two little bank-dividing brooks,
That wash the pebbles with their wanton stream,
And having ranged and searched a thousand nook
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames
Where in a greater current they conjoin
So I my Best-Beloved's am, so he is mine
Even so we met; and after long pursuit
Even so we joined; we both became entire
No need for either to renew a suit,
For I was flax and he was flames of fire
Our firm united souls did more than
So I my Best-Beloved's am, so he is mine.

If all those glittering monarchs that command
The servile quarters of this earthly ball
Should tender in exchange their shares of land,
I would not change my fortunes for them all:
Their wealth is but a counter to my coin;
The world's but theirs, but my Beloved's mine.

Nay, more: if the fair Thespian ladies all
Should heap together their diviner treasure,
That treasure should be deemed a price too small
To buy a minute's lease of half my pleasure.
'Tis not the sacred wealth of all the Nine
Can buy my heart from him, or his from being mine.

Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow
My least desires unto the least remove;
He's firmly mine by oath, I his by vow;
He's mine by faith, and I am his by love;
He's mine by water, I am his by wine;
"Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

He is my altar, I his holy place;
I am his guest, and he my living food;
I'm his by penitence, he mine by grace;
I'm his by purchase, he is mine by blood;
He's my supporting elm, and I his vine:

Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

He gives me wealth, I give him all my vows;
I give him songs, he gives me length of days;
With wreaths of grace he crowns my conquering brows;
And I his temples with a crown of praise,
Which he accepts as an everlasting sign,
That I my Best-Beloved's am; that he is mine.

Francis Quarles

On Change Of Weather

And were it for thy profit, to obtain
All sunshine? No vicissitude of rain?
Think'st thou that thy laborious plough requires
Not winter frosts as well as summer fires?
There must be both: sometimes these hearts of ours
Must have the sweet, the seasonable showers
Of tears; sometimes the frost of chill despair
Makes our desired sunshine seem more fair;
Weathers that most oppose the flesh and blood
Are such as help to make our harvest good.
We may not choose, great God: it is thy task;
We know not what to have, nor how to ask

Francis Quarles

On The Infancy Of Our Savior

Hail! blessed Virgin, full of heavenly grace,
Blest above all that sprang from human race,
Whose heaven-saluted womb brought forth in one
A blessed Savior and a blessed Son.

O what a ravishment 't had been to see
Thy little Savior perking on thy knee!
To see Him nuzzle in thy virgin breast,
His milk-white body all unclad, undressed;
To see thy busy fingers clothe and wrap
His spraddling limbs in thy indulgent lap;
To see His desperate eyes with childish grace
Smiling upon His smiling mother's face;
And when His forward strength began to bloom
To see Him diddle up and down the room.

O who would think so sweet a Babe as this
Should ere be slain by a false-hearted kiss?
Had I a rag, if sure Thy body wore it,
Pardon, sweet Babe, I think I should adore it;
Till then, O grant this boon, a boon far dearer:
The weed not being, I may adore the Wearer.

Francis Quarles

On The Life And Death Of Man

The world's a theatre. The earth, a stage
Placed in the midst: where both prince and page,
Both rich and poor, fool, wise man, base and high,
All act their parts in life's short tragedy.
Our life's a tragedy. Those secret rooms,
Wherein we 'tire us, are our mothers' wombs.
The music ushering in the play is mirth
To see a man-child brought upon the earth.
That fainting gasp of breath which first we vent,
Is a dumb show; presents the argument.
Our new-born cries, that new-born griefs bewray,
Are the sad prologue of the ensuing play.
False hopes, true fears, vain joys, and fierce distracts,
Are like the music that divides the Acts.
Time holds the glass, and when the hour's outrun,
Death strikes the epilogue, and the play is done.

Francis Quarles

On The World

The world's an Inn; and I her guest.
I eat; I drink; I take my rest.
My hostess, nature, does deny me
Nothing, wherewith she can supply me;
Where, having stayed a while, I pay
Her lavish bills, and go my way.

Francis Quarles

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I eat; I drink; I take my rest.
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Nothing, wherewith she can supply me;
Where, having stayed a while, I pay
Her lavish bills, and go my way.

Francis Quarles

Respice Finem

MY soul, sit thou a patient looker-on;
Judge not the play before the play is done:
Her plot hath many changes; every day
Speaks a new scene; the last act crowns the play.

Francis Quarles

Sion's Sonnets

Bridegroom.

Now rests my love : till nuw her tender brest,
Wanting her joy, could finde no peace, no rest;
I charge you all, by the true love you beare
To friendship, or what else you count most deare,
Disturbe her not, but let her sleep her fill:
I charge you all upon your lives be still.
O may that labouring soule that lives opprest
For me, in me receive eternall rest.
What curious face is this ? what mortall birth
Can shew a beauty thus unstain'd with earth!
What glorious angell wanders there alone,
From earth's foule dungeon, to my father's throne!
It is my love ; my love that hath deny'd
The world for me, it is my fairest bride ;
How fragrant is her breath ! how heavenly faire
Her angel face ! each glorifying the ayre.

Bride.

O how I'm ravisht with eternall blisse !
Whoe'r thought heaven a joy compar'd to this ?
How doe the pleasures of this glorious face
Adde glory to the glory of his place !
See how kings' courts surmount poore shepherds' cels,
So this the pride of Salomon excels ;
Rich wreathes of glory crowne his royall head,
And troopes of angels waite upon his bed.
The court of princely Salomon was guarded
With able men at armes ; their faith rewarded
With fading honours, subject to the fate
Of fortune, and the jealous frownes of state:
But here the harmonious quire of heaven attend,
Whose prize is glory, glory without end,
Vnmixt with doubtings or denegerous feare—
A greater prince than Salomon is here.
The bridall bed of princely Salomon,
Whose beauty amaz'd the greedy lookers on.

Which all the world admired to behold.
Was but of cedar, and her sted of gold,
Her pillars silver, and her canopie
Of silkes, but richly stain'd with purple die.
Her curtaines wrought in vvorkes, workes rarely led
By th' needles' art : such was the bridall bed.
Such was the bridall bed, which time, or age.
Durst never warrant from th' approbrious rage
Of envious fate, earth's measures but a minute;
Earth fades, all ftides upon it, all within it;
O but the glory of thy divined place
No age can injure, nor yet time deface;
Too weak an object for weake eyes to bide,
Or tongues t' expresse: who ever saw't but dy'd.
Whoe'r beheld the royall crown set on
The nuptiall brovves of princely Salomon ?
His glorious pompe whose honour did display
The noysed triumphs of his marriage-day:
A greater prince than Salomon is here.
The beauty of whose nuptials shall appeare
More glorious, farre transcending his, as farre
As heaven's bright lamp outshines th' obscurest star.

Francis Quarles

Sonnets

Mors Christi.

And am I here, and my Redeemer gone ?
Can he be dead, and is not my life done ?
Was he tormented in excesse of measure,
And doe I live yet? and yet live in pleasure ?
Alas ! could sinners finde out ne'r a one
More fit than thee for them to spit upon ?
Did thy cheekes entertaine a traytor's lips ?
Was thy deare body scourg'd and tome with whips.
So that the guiltlesse blood came trickling after?
And did thy fainting browes sweat blood and water ?
Wert thou (Lord) hang'd upon the cursed tree ?
O world of grieffe ! and was all this for me ?
Burst forth, my teares, into a world of sorrow,
And let my nights of grieffe finde ne'r a morrow:
Since thou art dead (Lord) grant thy servant roome
Within his heart to build thy heart a tombe.

Mors Tna.

Can he be faire, that withers at a blast ?
Or he be strong, that ayery breath can cast ?
Can he be wise, that knowves not how to live ?
Or he be rich, that nothing hath to give ?
Can he be young, that's feeble, weake, and wan?
So faire, strong, wise, so rich, so young is man:
So faire is man, that death (a parting blast)
Blasts his faire flow'r, and makes him earth at last
So strong is man, that with a gasping breath
He totters, and bequeathes his strength to death;
So wise is man, that if with death he strive
His wisdom cannot teach him how to live;
So rich is man that (all his debts b'ing paid)
His wealth's the winding-sheet wherein he's laid;
So young is man, that, broke with care and sorrow,
He's old enough to day to dye to-morrow.
Why bragg'st thou then, thou worme of five foot long ;
Th' art neither faire, nor strong, nor wise, nor rich, nor yong.

Gloria Cceli.

When I behold, and well advise upon
The wise man's speech. There's nought beneath the sun
But vanitie, my soule rebels within.
And loathes the dunghill prison she is in:
But when I looke to new Jerusalem,
Wherein 's reserv'd my crowne, my diadem,
O what a heaven of blisse my soule enjoyes,
On sudden wrapt into that heaven of ioyes!
Where (ravisht in the depth of meditation)
She well discernes, with eye of contemplation.
The glory of God in his imperiall seat;
Full strong in might, in majestic compleate.
Where troops of powers, vertues, cherubims,
Angels, archangel, saints and seraphims.
Are chaunting praises to their heavenly King—
Where Hallelujah they for ever sing.

Francis Quarles

The Loadstone

Eternal God! O Thou that only art
The sacred fountain of eternal light,
And blessed loadstone of my better part,
O Thou my heart's desire, my soul's delight!
Reflect upon my soul, and touch my heart;
And then my heart shall prize no good above Thee,
And then my soul shall know Thee; knowing, love Thee;
And then my trembling thoughts shall never start
From thy commands, or swerve the least degree,
Or once presume to move, but as they move in Thee.

Francis Quarles

The Shortness Of Life

And what's a life? A weary pilgrimage,
Whose glory in one day doth fill the stage
With childhood, manhood, and decrepit age.

And what's a life? The flourishing array
Of the proud summer-meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.

Read on this dial, how the shades devour
My short-lived winter's day! hour eats up the hour;
Alas! the total's but from eight to four.

Behold these lilies, which Thy hands have made
Fair copies of my life, and open laid
To view, how soon they droop, how soon they fade!

Shade not that dial, night will blind too soon;
My nonaged day already points to noon;
How simple is my suit! how small my boon!

Nor do I beg this slender inch to wile
The time away, or falsely to beguile
My thoughts with joy: here's nothing worth a smile.

Francis Quarles

Why Dost Thou Shade Thy Lovely Face?

1 Why dost thou shade thy lovely face? Oh, why
2 Does that eclipsing hand so long deny
3 The sunshine of thy soul-enliv'ning eye?

4 Without that light, what light remains in me?
5 Thou art my life, my way, my light; in thee
6 I live, I move, and by thy beams I see.

7 Thou art my life; if thou but turn away
8 My life's a thousand deaths: thou art my way;
9 Without thee, Lord, I travel not, but stray.

10 My light thou art; without thy glorious sight
11 Mine eyes are darken'd with perpetual night.
12 My God, thou art my way, my life, my light.

13 Thou art my way; I wander if thou fly:
14 Thou art my light; if hid, how blind am I!
15 Thou art my life; if thou withdraw, I die.

16 Mine eyes are blind and dark, I cannot see;
17 To whom or whither should my darkness flee,
18 But to the light? and who's that light but thee?

19 My path is lost, my wand'ring steps do stray;
20 I cannot safely go, nor safely stay;
21 Whom should I seek but thee, my path, my way?

22 Oh, I am dead: to whom shall I, poor I,
23 Repair? to whom shall my sad ashes fly,
24 But life? and where is life but in thine eye?

25 And yet thou turn'st away thy face, and fly'st me;
26 And yet I sue for grace, and thou deny'st me;
27 Speak, art thou angry, Lord, or only try'st me?

28 Unscreen those heavenly lamps, or tell me why
29 Thou shad'st thy face; perhaps thou think'st no eye
30 Can view those flames, and not drop down and die.

31 If that be all, shine forth, and draw thee nigher;
32 Let me behold and die, for my desire
33 Is phoenix-like to perish in that fire.

34 Death-conquer'd Laz'rus was redeem'd by thee;
35 If I am dead, Lord, set death's prisoner free;
36 Am I more spent, or stink I worse than he?

37 If my puff'd life be out, give leave to tine
38 My shameless snuff at that bright lamp of thine;
39 Oh, what's thy light the less for lighting mine?

40 If I have lost my path, great Shepherd, say,
41 Shall I still wander in a doubtful way?
42 Lord, shall a lamb of Israel's sheep-fold stray?

43 Thou art the pilgrim's path, the blind man's eye,
44 The dead man's life; on thee my hopes rely;
45 If thou remove, I err, I grope, I die.

46 Disclose thy sunbeams; close thy wings, and stay;
47 See, see how I am blind, and dead, and stray,
48 O thou, that art my light, my life, my way.

Francis Quarles