

Classic Poetry Series

Sir Walter Raleigh

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Sir Walter Raleigh(1552 - 1618)

Sir Walter Raleigh was an English aristocrat, writer, poet, soldier, courtier, spy, and explorer. He is also well known for popularising tobacco in England.

Raleigh was born to a Protestant family in Devon, the son of Walter Raleigh and Catherine Champernowne. Little is known for certain of his early life, though he spent some time in Ireland, in Killua Castle, Clonmellon, County Westmeath, taking part in the suppression of rebellions and participating in a massacre at Smerwick. Later he became a landlord of properties confiscated from the Irish rebels. He rose rapidly in Queen Elizabeth I's favour, being knighted in 1585. He was involved in the early English colonisation of Virginia under a royal patent. In 1591 he secretly married Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, without the Queen's permission for which he and his wife were sent to the Tower of London. After his release, they retired to his estate at Sherborne, Dorset.

In 1594 Raleigh heard of a "City of Gold" in South America and sailed to find it, publishing an exaggerated account of his experiences in a book that contributed to the legend of "El Dorado". After Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 Raleigh was again imprisoned in the Tower, this time for allegedly being involved in the Main Plot against King James I, who was not favourably disposed toward him. In 1616 he was released in order to conduct a second expedition in search of El Dorado. This was unsuccessful and men under his command ransacked a Spanish outpost. He returned to England and, to appease the Spanish, was arrested and executed in 1618.

Raleigh's poetry is written in the relatively straightforward, unornamented mode known as the plain style. C. S. Lewis considered Raleigh one of the era's "silver poets", a group of writers who resisted the Italian Renaissance influence of dense classical reference and elaborate poetic devices.

In poems such as "What is Our Life" and "The Lie", Raleigh expresses a contemptus mundi (contempt of the world) attitude more characteristic of the Middle Ages than of the dawning era of humanistic optimism. But, his lesser-known long poem "The Ocean to Cynthia" combines this vein with the more elaborate conceits associated with his contemporaries Edmund Spenser and John Donne, expressing a melancholy sense of history.

A minor poem of Raleigh's captures the atmosphere of the court at the time of Queen Elizabeth I. His response to Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate

"Shepherd to His Love" was "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd". "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" was written in 1592, while Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to The Shepherd" was written four years later. Both were written in the style of traditional pastoral poetry. They follow the same structure of six four-line stanzas employing a rhyme scheme of AABB.

A Farewell To False Love

Farewell, false love, the oracle of lies,
A mortal foe and enemy to rest,
An envious boy, from whom all cares arise,
A bastard vile, a beast with rage possessed,
A way of error, a temple full of treason,
In all effects contrary unto reason.

A poisoned serpent covered all with flowers,
Mother of sighs, and murderer of repose,
A sea of sorrows whence are drawn such showers
As moisture lend to every grief that grows;
A school of guile, a net of deep deceit,
A gilded hook that holds a poisoned bait.

A fortress foiled, which reason did defend,
A siren song, a fever of the mind,
A maze wherein affection finds no end,
A raging cloud that runs before the wind,
A substance like the shadow of the sun,
A goal of grief for which the wisest run.

A quenchless fire, a nurse of trembling fear,
A path that leads to peril and mishap,
A true retreat of sorrow and despair,
An idle boy that sleeps in pleasure's lap,
A deep mistrust of that which certain seems,
A hope of that which reason doubtful deems.

Sith then thy trains my younger years betrayed,
And for my faith ingratitude I find;
And sith repentance hath my wrongs bewrayed,
Whose course was ever contrary to kind:
False love, desire, and beauty frail, adieu.
Dead is the root whence all these fancies grew.

Sir Walter Raleigh

A Literature Lesson. Sir Patrick Spens In The Eighteenth Century Manner

VERSE I

In a famed town of Caledonia's land,
A prosperous port contiguous to the strand,
A monarch feasted in right royal state;
But care still dogs the pleasures of the Great,
And well his faithful servants could surmise
From his distracted looks and broken sighs
That though the purple bowl was circling free,
His mind was prey to black perplexity.

At last, while others thoughtless joys invoke,
Fierce from his breast the laboured utterance broke;
"Alas!" he cried, "and what to me the gain
Though I am king of all this fair domain,
Though Ceres minister her plenteous hoard,
And Bacchus with his bounty crowns my board,
If Neptune still, reluctant to obey,
Neglects my sceptre and denies my sway?
On a far mission must my vessels urge
Their course impetuous o'er the boiling surge;
But who shall guide them with a dextrous hand,
And bring them safely to that distant land?
Whose skill shall dare the perils of the deep,
And beard the Sea-god in his stormy keep?

VERSE II

He spake: and straightway, rising from his side
An ancient senator, of reverend pride,
Unsealed his lips, and uttered from his soul
Great store of flatulence and rigmarole;
-- All fled the Court, which shades of night invest,
And Pope and Gay and Prior told the rest.

Sir Walter Raleigh

A Vision Upon The Fairy Queen

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and, passing by that way,
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen,
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept ;
And from thenceforth those graces were not seen,
For they this Queen attended; in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce :
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And cursed the access of that celestial thief.

Sir Walter Raleigh

As You Came From The Holy Land

As you came from the holy land
Of Walsingham,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?
'How shall I know your true love,
That have met many one,
I went to the holy land,
That have come, that have gone?'
She is neither white, nor brown,
But as the heavens fair;
There is none hath a form so divine
In the earth, or the air.
'Such a one did I meet, good sir,
Such an angelic face,
Who like a queen, like a nymph, did appear
By her gait, by her grace.'
She hath left me here all alone,
All alone, as unknown,
Who sometimes did me lead with herself,
And me loved as her own.
'What's the cause that she leaves you alone,
And a new way doth take,
Who loved you once as her own,
And her joy did you make?'
I have lov'd her all my youth;
But now old, as you see,
Love likes not the falling fruit
From the withered tree.
Know that Love is a careless child,
And forgets promise past;
He is blind, he is deaf when he list,
And in faith never fast.
His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy:
He is won with a world of despair,
And is lost with a toy.
Of womenkind such indeed is the love,
Or the word love abus'd,
Under which many childish desires

And conceits are excus'd.
But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never old, never dead,
From itself never turning.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Epitaph

Even such is time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust,
Who in the dark and silent grave
When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days,
And from which earth, and grave, and dust
The Lord will raise me up, I trust.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Even Such Is Time

Even such is time, which takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust,
Who in the dark and silent grave
When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days,
And from which earth, and grave, and dust
The Lord will raise me up, I trust.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Farewell To The Court

Like truthless dreams, so are my joys expir'd,
And past return are all my dandled days;
My love misled, and fancy quite retir'd--
Of all which pass'd the sorrow only stays.

My lost delights, now clean from sight of land,
Have left me all alone in unknown ways;
My mind to woe, my life in fortune's hand--
Of all which pass'd the sorrow only stays.

As in a country strange, without companion,
I only wail the wrong of death's delays,
Whose sweet spring spent, whose summer well-nigh done--
Of all which pass'd only the sorrow stays.

Whom care forewarns, ere age and winter cold,
To haste me hence to find my fortune's fold.

Sir Walter Raleigh

From Catullus V

The sun may set and rise,
But we, contrariwise,
Sleep, after our short light,
One everlasting night.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Her Reply

IF all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy Love.

But Time drives flocks from field to fold;
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields:
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither--soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy-buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,--
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy Love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy Love.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Hymn

Rise, O my soul! with thy desires to heaven,
And with divinest contemplation use
Thy time, when time's eternity is given,
And let vain thoughts no more thy thoughts abuse;
But down in darkness let them lie;
So live thy better, let thy worse thoughts die.

And thou, my soul, inspired with holy flame,
View and review with most regardful eye
That holy cross whence thy salvation came,
On which thy Saviour and thy sin did die!
For in the sacred object is much pleasure,
And in that Saviour is my life treasure.

To Thee, O Jesu! I direct mine eyes,
To Thee my hands, to Thee my humble knees;
To Thee my heart shall offer sacrifice;
To Thee my thoughts, who thoughts only see;
To Thee myself, myself and all I give;
To Thee I die, to Thee I only live.

Sir Walter Raleigh

If Cynthia Be a Queen

If Cynthia be a queen, a princess, and supreme,
Keep these among the rest, or say it was a dream,
For those that like, expound, and those that loathe express
Meanings according as their minds are moved more or less;
For writing what thou art, or showing what thou were,
Adds to the one disdain, to the other but despair,
 Thy mind of neither needs, in both seeing it exceeds.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Life

What is our life? A play of passion,
Our mirth the music of division,
Our mother's wombs the tiring-houses be,
Where we are dressed for this short comedy.
Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,
That sits and marks still who doth act amiss.
Our graves that hide us from the setting sun
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.
Thus march we, playing, to our latest rest,
Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.

Sir Walter Raleigh

My Last Will

When I am safely laid away,
Out of work and out of play,
Sheltered by the kindly ground
From the world of sight and sound,
One or two of those I leave
Will remember me and grieve,
Thinking how I made them gay
By the things I used to say;
-- But the crown of their distress
Will be my untidiness.

What a nuisance then will be
All that shall remain of me!
Shelves of books I never read,
Piles of bills, undocketed,
Shaving-brushes, razors, strops,
Bottles that have lost their tops,
Boxes full of odds and ends,
Letters from departed friends,
Faded ties and broken braces
Tucked away in secret places,
Baggy trousers, ragged coats,
Stacks of ancient lecture-notes,
And that ghostliest of shows,
Boots and shoes in horrid rows.
Though they are of cheerful mind,
My lovers, whom I leave behind,
When they find these in my stead,
Will be sorry I am dead.

They will grieve; but you, my dear,
Who have never tasted fear,
Brave companion of my youth,
Free as air and true as truth,
Do not let these weary things
Rob you of your junketings.

Burn the papers; sell the books;
Clear out all the pestered nooks;

Make a mighty funeral pyre
For the corpse of old desire,
Till there shall remain of it
Naught but ashes in a pit:
And when you have done away
All that is of yesterday,
If you feel a thrill of pain,
Master it, and start again.

This, at least, you have never done
Since you first beheld the sun:
If you came upon your own
Blind to light and deaf to tone,
Basking in the great release
Of unconsciousness and peace,
You would never, while you live,
Shatter what you cannot give;
-- Faithful to the watch you keep,
You would never break their sleep.

Clouds will sail and winds will blow
As they did an age ago
O'er us who lived in little towns
Underneath the Berkshire downs.
When at heart you shall be sad,
Pondering the joys we had,
Listen and keep very still.
If the lowing from the hill
Or the tolling of a bell
Do not serve to break the spell,
Listen; you may be allowed
To hear my laughter from a cloud.

Take the good that life can give
For the time you have to live.
Friends of yours and friends of mine
Surely will not let you pine.
Sons and daughters will not spare
More than friendly love and care.
If the Fates are kind to you,
Some will stay to see you through;
And the time will not be long

Till the silence ends the song.

Sleep is God's own gift; and man,
Snatching all the joys he can,
Would not dare to give his voice
To reverse his Maker's choice.
Brief delight, eternal quiet,
How change these for endless riot
Broken by a single rest?
Well you know that sleep is best.

We that have been heart to heart
Fall asleep, and drift apart.
Will that overwhelming tide
Reunite us, or divide?
Whence we come and whither go
None can tell us, but I know
Passion's self is often marred
By a kind of self-regard,
And the torture of the cry
"You are you, and I am I."
While we live, the waking sense
Feeds upon our difference,
In our passion and our pride
Not united, but allied.

We are severed by the sun,
And by darkness are made one.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Nature That Washed Her Hands In Milk

Nature, that washed her hands in milk,
And had forgot to dry them,
Instead of earth took snow and silk,
At love's request to try them,
If she a mistress could compose
To please love's fancy out of those.

Her eyes he would should be of light,
A violet breath, and lips of jelly;
Her hair not black, nor overbright,
And of the softest down her belly;
As for her inside he'd have it
Only of wantonness and wit.

At love's entreaty such a one
Nature made, but with her beauty
She hath framed a heart of stone;
So as Love, by ill destiny,
Must die for her whom nature gave him
Because her darling would not save him.

But time, which nature doth despise
And rudely gives her love the lie,
Makes hope a fool, and sorrow wise,
His hands do neither wash nor dry;
But being made of steel and rust,
Turns snow and silk and milk to dust.

The light, the belly, lips, and breath,
He dims, discolors, and destroys;
With those he feeds but fills not death,
Which sometimes were the food of joys.
Yea, time doth dull each lively wit,
And dries all wantonness with it.

Oh, cruel time, which takes in trust
Our youth, or joys, and all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave

When we have wandered all our ways
Shuts up the story of our days.

Sir Walter Raleigh

No Pleasure Without Pain

SWEET were the joys that both might like and last; □
Strange were the state exempt from all distress; □
Happy the life that no mishap should taste; □
Blessed the chance might never change success. □
Were such a life to lead or state to prove, □
Who would not wish that such a life were love? □

But oh! the soury sauce of sweet unsure, □
When pleasures flit, and fly with waste of wind. □
The trustless trains that hoping hearts allure, □
When sweet delights do but allure the mind;
When care consumes and wastes the wretched wight, □
While fancy feeds and draws of her delight. □

What life were love, if love were free from pain? □
But oh that pain with pleasure matched should meet! □
Why did the course of nature so ordain □
That sugared sour must sauce the bitter sweet? □
Which sour from sweet might any means remove, □
What hap, what heaven, what life, were like to love!

Sir Walter Raleigh

Now What Is Love

Now what is Love, I pray thee, tell?
It is that fountain and that well
Where pleasure and repentance dwell;
It is, perhaps, the sauncing bell
That tolls all into heaven or hell;
And this is Love, as I hear tell.

Yet what is Love, I prithee, say?
It is a work on holiday,
It is December matched with May,
When lusty bloods in fresh array
Hear ten months after of the play;
And this is Love, as I hear say.

Yet what is Love, good shepherd, sain?
It is a sunshine mixed with rain,
It is a toothache or like pain,
It is a game where none hath gain;
The lass saith no, yet would full fain;
And this is Love, as I hear sain.

Yet, shepherd, what is Love, I pray?
It is a yes, it is a nay,
A pretty kind of sporting fray,
It is a thing will soon away.
Then, nymphs, take vantage while ye may;
And this is Love, as I hear say.

Yet what is Love, good shepherd, show?
A thing that creeps, it cannot go,
A prize that passeth to and fro,
A thing for one, a thing for moe,
And he that proves shall find it so;
And shepherd, this is Love, I trow.

Sir Walter Raleigh

On Being Challenged To Write An Epigram In The Manner Of Herrick

To Griggs, that learned man, in many a bygone session,
His kids were his delight, and physics his profession;
Now Griggs, grown old and glum, and less intent on knowledge,
Physics himself at home, and sends his kids to college.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Prais'D Be Diana's Fair And Harmless Light

Prais'd be Diana's fair and harmless light;
Prais'd be the dews wherewith she moist's the ground;
Prais'd be her beams, the glory of the night;
Prais'd be her power by which all powers abound.
Prais'd be her nymphs with whom she decks the woods,
Prais'd be her knights in whom true honour lives;
Prais'd be that force by which she moves the floods;
Let that Diana shine which all these gives.
In heaven queen she is among the spheres;
In aye she mistress-like makes all things pure;
Eternity in her oft change she bears;
She beauty is; by her the fair endure.
Time wears her not: she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is plac'd;
By her the virtue of the stars down slide;
In her is virtue's perfect image cast.
A knowledge pure it is her worth to know:
With Circes let them dwell that think not so.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Sestina Otiosa

Our great work, the Otia Merseiana,
 Edited by learned Mister Sampson,
 And supported by Professor Woodward,
 Is financed by numerous Bogus Meetings
 Hastily convened by Kuno Meyer
 To impose upon the Man of Business.

 All in vain! The accomplished Man of Business
 Disapproves of Otia Merseiana,
 Turns his back on Doctor Kuno Meyer;
Cannot be enticed by Mister Sampson,
To be present at the Bogus Meetings,
Though attended by Professor Woodward.

Little cares the staid Professor Woodward:
He, being something of a man of business,
Knows that not a hundred Bogus Meetings
To discuss the Otia Merseiana
Can involve himself and Mister Sampson
In the debts of Doctor Kuno Meyer.

So the poor deluded Kuno Meyer,
Unenlightened by Professor Woodward --
Whom, upon the word of Mister Sampson,
He believes to be a man of business
Fit to run the Otia Merseiana --
Keeps on calling endless Bogus Meetings.

Every week has now its Bogus Meetings,
Punctually convened by Kuno Meyer
In the name of Otia Merseiana:
Every other week Professor Woodward
Takes his place, and, as a man of business,
Audits the accounts with Mister Sampson.

He and impecunious Mister Sampson
Are the mainstay of the Bogus Meetings;
But the alienated Man of Business
Cannot be allured by Kuno Meyer

To attend and meet Professor Woodward,
Glory of the Otia Merseiana.

Kuno Meyer! Great Professor Woodward!
Bogus Meetings damn, for men of business,
Mister Sampson's Otia Merseiana.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Sir Walter Raleigh To His Son

Three things there be that prosper up apace
And flourish, whilst they grow asunder far,
But on a day, they meet all in one place,
And when they meet, they one another mar;
And they be these: the wood, the weed, the wag.
The wood is that which makes the gallow tree;
The weed is that which strings the hangman's bag;
The wag, my pretty knave, betokeneth thee.
Mark well, dear boy, whilst these assemble not,
Green springs the tree, hemp grows, the wag is wild,
But when they meet, it makes the timber rot,
It frets the halter, and it chokes the child.
Then bless thee, and beware, and let us pray
We part not with thee at this meeting day.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Song Of Myself

I was a Poet!

But I did not know it,
Neither did my Mother,
Nor my Sister nor my Brother.
The Rich were not aware of it;
The Poor took no care of it.
The Reverend Mr. Drewitt
Never knew it.

The High did not suspect it;
The Low could not detect it.

Aunt Sue

Said it was obviously untrue.

Uncle Ned

Said I was off my head:

(This from a Colonial
Was really a good testimonial.)

Still everybody seemed to think
That genius owes a good deal to drink.

So that is how

I am not a poet now,

And why

My inspiration has run dry.

It is no sort of use

To cultivate the Muse

If vulgar people

Can't tell a village pump from a church steeple.

I am merely apologizing

For the lack of the surprising

In what I write

To-night.

I am quite well-meaning,

But a lot of things are always intervening

Between

What I mean

And what it is said

I had in my head.

It is all very puzzling.

Uncle Ned

Says Poets need muzzling.

He might
Be right.
Good-night!

Sir Walter Raleigh

Stans Puer Ad Mensam

Attend my words, my gentle knave,
And you shall learn from me
How boys at dinner may behave
With due propriety.

Guard well your hands: two things have been
Unfitly used by some;
The trencher for a tambourine,
The table for a drum.

We could not lead a pleasant life,
And 'twould be finished soon,
If peas were eaten with the knife,
And gravy with the spoon.

Eat slowly: only men in rags
And gluttons old in sin
Mistake themselves for carpet bags
And tumble victuals in.

The privy pinch, the whispered tease,
The wild, unseemly yell --
When children do such things as these,
We say, "It is not well."

Endure your mother's timely stare,
Your father's righteous ire,
And do not wriggle on your chair
Like flannel in the fire.

Be silent: you may chatter loud
When you are fully grown,
Surrounded by a silent crowd
Of children of your own.

If you should suddenly feel bored
And much inclined to yawning,
Your little hand will best afford
A modest useful awning.

Think highly of the Cat: and yet
You need not therefore think
That portly strangers like your pet
To share their meat and drink.

The end of dinner comes ere long
When, once more full and free,
You cheerfully may bide the gong
That calls you to your tea.

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Crosse Of Christ

Rise, O my soul, with thy desires to heaven,
And with divinest contemplation use
Thy time, where time's eternity is given ;
And let vain thoughts no more thy thoughts abuse,
But down in midnight darkness let them lie ;
So live thy better, let thy worst thoughts die.

And thou, my soul, inspired with holy flame,
View and review, with most regardful eie,
That holy crosse whence thy salvation came,
On which thy Saviour and thy sin did die;
For in that sacred object is much pleasure,
And in that Saviour is my life, my treasure.

To thee, O Jesu ! I direct mine eies,
To thee my hands, to thee my humble knees;
To thee my heart shall offer sacrifice,
To thee my thoughts, who my thoughts only sees ;
To thee myself—myself and all, I give;
To thee I die, to thee I only live.

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Lie

Go, soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless errand;
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant:
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good, and doth no good:
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live
Acting by others' action;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by a faction.
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That manage the estate,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate:
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,
They beg for more by spending,
Who, in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending.
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion;
Tell love it is but lust;
Tell time it is but motion;
Tell flesh it is but dust:

And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;
Tell honour how it alters;
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
Tell favour how it falters:
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in overwiseness:
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
Tell skill it is pretension;
Tell charity of coldness;
Tell law it is contention:
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay:
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming;
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming:
If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity
And virtue least preferreth:

And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing--
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing--
Stab at thee he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Nymph's Reply To The Shepherd

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every Shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee, and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When Rivers rage and Rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb,
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields,
To wayward winter reckoning yields,
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of Roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten:
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and Ivy buds,
The Coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Ocean To Cynthia

But stay, my thoughts, make end, give fortune way ;
Harsh is the voice of woe and sorrow's sound ;
Complaints cure not, and tears do but allay
Griefs for a time, which after more abound.

To seek for moisture in the Arabian sand
Is but a loss of labor and of rest ;
The links which time did break of hearty bands

Words cannot knit, or wailings make anew.
Seek not the sun in clouds when it is set.
On highest mountains, where those cedars grew,
Against whose banks the troubled ocean beat,

And were the marks to find thy hopèd port,
Into a soil far off themselves remove ;
On Sestos' shore, Leander's late resort,
Hero hath left no lamp to guide her love.

Thou lookest for light in vain, and storms arise;
She sleeps thy death that erst thy danger sighed;
Strive then no more, bow down thy weary eyes,
Eyes which to all these woes thy heart have guided.

She is gone, she is lost, she is found, she is ever fair;
Sorrow draws weakly where love draws not too;
Woe's cries sound nothing, but only in love's ear.
Do then by dying what life cannot do.
Unfold thy flocks and leave them to the fields,
To feed on hills or dales, where likes them best,
Of what the summer or the springtime yields,
For love and time hath given thee leave to rest.

Thy heart which was their fold, now in decay
By often storms and winter's many blasts,
All torn and rent becomes misfortune's prey;
False hope, my shepherd's staff, now age hath brast.

My pipe, which love's own hand gave my desire

To sing her praises and my woe upon,
Despair hath often threatened to the fire,
As vain to keep now all the rest are gone.

Thus home I draw, as death's long night draws on;
Yet every foot, old thoughts turn back mine eyes;
Constraint me guides, as old age draws a stone
Against the hill, which over-weighty lies

For feeble arms or wasted strength to move:
My steps are backward, gazing on my loss,
My mind's affection and my soul's sole love,
Not mixed with fancy's chaff or fortune's dross.

To God I leave it, who first gave it me,
And I her gave, and she returned again,
As it was hers; so let His mercies be
Of my last comforts the essential mean.

But be it so or not, the effects are past;
Her love hath end; my woe must ever last.

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage

Give me my scallop shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.
Blood must be my body's balmer,
No other balm will there be given,
Whilst my soul, like a white palmer,
Travels to the land of heaven;
Over the silver mountains,
Where spring the nectar fountains;
And there I'll kiss
The bowl of bliss,
And drink my eternal fill
On every milken hill.
My soul will be a-dry before,
But after it will ne'er thirst more;
And by the happy blissful way
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see,
That have shook off their gowns of clay,
And go apparelled fresh like me.
I'll bring them first
To slake their thirst,
And then to taste those nectar suckets,
At the clear wells
Where sweetness dwells,
Drawn up by saints in crystal buckets.
And when our bottles and all we
Are fill'd with immortality,
Then the holy paths we'll travel,
Strew'd with rubies thick as gravel,
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral, and pearl bowers.
From thence to heaven's bribeless hall
Where no corrupted voices brawl,
No conscience molten into gold,
Nor forg'd accusers bought and sold,
No cause deferr'd, nor vain-spent journey,

For there Christ is the king's attorney,
Who pleads for all without degrees,
And he hath angels, but no fees.
When the grand twelve million jury
Of our sins and sinful fury,
'Gainst our souls black verdicts give,
Christ pleads his death, and then we live.
Be thou my speaker, taintless pleader,
Unblotted lawyer, true proceeder,
Thou movest salvation even for alms,
Not with a bribed lawyer's palms.
And this is my eternal plea
To him that made heaven, earth, and sea,
Seeing my flesh must die so soon,
And want a head to dine next noon,
Just at the stroke when my veins start and spread,
Set on my soul an everlasting head.
Then am I ready, like a palmer fit,
To tread those blest paths which before I writ.

Sir Walter Raleigh

To A Lady With An Unruly And Ill-Mannered Dog Who Bit Several Persons Of Importance

Your dog is not a dog of grace;
He does not wag the tail or beg;
He bit Miss Dickson in the face;
He bit a Bailie in the leg.

What tragic choices such a dog
Presents to visitor or friend!
Outside there is the Glasgow fog;
Within, a hydrophobic end.

Yet some relief even terror brings,
For when our life is cold and gray
We waste our strength on little things,
And fret our puny souls away.

A snarl! A scruffle round the room!
A sense that Death is drawing near!
And human creatures reassume
The elemental robe of fear.

So when my colleague makes his moan
Of careless cooks, and warts, and debt,
-- Enlarge his views, restore his tone,
And introduce him to your Pet!

Quod Raleigh.

Sir Walter Raleigh

To His Love When He Had Obtained Her

Now Serena be not coy,
Since we freely may enjoy
Sweet embraces, such delights,
As will shorten tedious nights.
Think that beauty will not stay
With you always, but away,
And that tyrannizing face
That now holds such perfect grace
Will both changed and ruined be;
So frail is all things as we see,
So subject unto conquering Time.
Then gather flowers in their prime,
Let them not fall and perish so;
Nature her bounties did bestow
On us that we might use them, and
'Tis coldness not to understand
What she and youth and form persuade
With opportunity that's made
As we could wish it. Let's, then, meet
Often with amorous lips, and greet
Each other till our wanton kisses
In number pass the day Ulysses
Consumed in travel, and the stars
That look upon our peaceful wars
With envious luster. If this store
Will not suffice, we'll number o'er
The same again, until we find
No number left to call to mind
And show our plenty. They are poor
That can count all they have and more.

Sir Walter Raleigh

What Is Our Life

WHAT is our life? The play of passion.□
Our mirth? The music of division:□
Our mothers' wombs the tiring-houses be,□
Where we are dressed for life's short comedy.□
The earth the stage; Heaven the spectator is,□
Who sits and views whosoe'er doth act amiss.□
The graves which hide us from the scorching sun□
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.□
Thus playing post we to our latest rest,□
And then we die in earnest, not in jest.

Sir Walter Raleigh