

Classic Poetry Series

Richard Crashaw
- poems -

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Richard Crashaw(1612 - 1649)

Richard was the only son of William Crashaw, a puritan preacher in London who had officiated at the burning of Mary, Queen of Scots. In defiance of his father's views on religion, Crashaw went to a High Church college at Cambridge, Pembroke. He later became a fellow of Peterhouse College but was forced to resign because of his Roman Catholic leanings.

Victory for Oliver Cromwell's Puritans in the Civil War made England a dangerous place for Catholic sympathisers like Crashaw, and in 1644 he fled to France. He became a Catholic sometime around 1645. His friend Abraham Cowley found him living in poverty in Paris, and introduced him to Charles I's Queen, Henrietta Maria. She sent Crashaw to Rome with a recommendation to the Pope. On his arrival in Italy however, Crashaw was simply allotted a position in a cardinal's household. Four months before he died, he was made a sub-canon of the Cathedral of Santa Casa in Loreto.

Crashaw was much influenced by the Italian poet Marino, as well as his reading of the Italian and Spanish mystics. Though his verse is somewhat uneven in quality, at its best it is characterised by brilliant use of extravagant baroque imagery.

A Hymn To The Name And Honour Of The Admirable Saint Teresa

LOVE, thou art absolute, sole Lord
Of life and death. To prove the word,
We'll now appeal to none of all
Those thy old soldiers, great and tall,
Ripe men of martyrdom, that could reach down
With strong arms their triumphant crown:
Such as could with lusty breath
Speak loud, unto the face of death,
Their great Lord's glorious name; to none
Of those whose spacious bosoms spread a throne
For love at large to fill. Spare blood and sweat:
We'll see Him take a private seat,
And make His mansion in the mild
And milky soul of a soft child.
Scarce has she learnt to lisp a name
Of martyr, yet she thinks it shame
Life should so long play with that breath
Which spent can buy so brave a death.
She never undertook to know
What death with love should have to do.
Nor has she e'er yet understood
Why, to show love, she should shed blood;
Yet, though she cannot tell you why,
She can love, and she can die.
Scarce has she blood enough to make
A guilty sword blush for her sake;
Yet has a heart dares hope to prove
How much less strong is death than love....

Since 'tis not to be had at home,
She'll travel for a martyrdom.
No home for her, confesses she,
But where she may a martyr be.
She'll to the Moors, and trade with them
For this unvalued diadem;
She offers them her dearest breath,
With Christ's name in 't, in charge for death:

She'll bargain with them, and will give
Them God, and teach them how to live
In Him; or, if they this deny,
For Him she'll teach them how to die.
So shall she leave amongst them sown
Her Lord's blood, or at least her own.

Farewell then, all the world, adieu!
Teresa is no more for you.
Farewell all pleasures, sports, and joys,
Never till now esteemed toys!

Farewell whatever dear may be--
Mother's arms, or father's knee!
Farewell house, and farewell home!
She 's for the Moors and Martyrdom.

Sweet, not so fast; lo! thy fair spouse,
Whom thou seek'st with so swift vows,
Calls thee back, and bids thee come
T' embrace a milder martyrdom....

O how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtle pain!
Of intolerable joys!
Of a death, in which who dies
Loves his death, and dies again,
And would for ever so be slain;
And lives and dies, and knows not why
To live, but that he still may die!
How kindly will thy gentle heart
Kiss the sweetly-killing dart!
And close in his embraces keep
Those delicious wounds, that weep
Balsam, to heal themselves with thus,
When these thy deaths, so numerous,
Shall all at once die into one,
And melt thy soul's sweet mansion;
Like a soft lump of incense, hasted
By too hot a fire, and wasted
Into perfuming clouds, so fast
Shalt thou exhale to heaven at last

In a resolving sigh, and then,--
O what? Ask not the tongues of men.

Angels cannot tell; suffice,
Thyself shalt feel thine own full joys,
And hold them fast for ever there.
So soon as thou shalt first appear,
The moon of maiden stars, thy white
Mistress, attended by such bright
Souls as thy shining self, shall come,
And in her first ranks make thee room;
Where, 'mongst her snowy family,
Immortal welcomes wait for thee.
O what delight, when she shall stand
And teach thy lips heaven, with her hand,
On which thou now may'st to thy wishes
Heap up thy consecrated kisses!
What joy shall seize thy soul, when she,
Bending her blessed eyes on thee,
Those second smiles of heaven, shall dart
Her mild rays through thy melting heart!

Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee.
All thy good works which went before,
And waited for thee at the door,
Shall own thee there; and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of crowns, with which the King, thy spouse,
Shall build up thy triumphant brows.
All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
And thy pains sit bright upon thee:
All thy sorrows here shall shine,
And thy sufferings be divine.
Tears shall take comfort, and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.
Even thy deaths shall live, and new
Dress the soul which late they slew.
Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scars
As keep account of the Lamb's wars.

Those rare works, where thou shalt leave writ

Love's noble history, with wit
Taught thee by none but Him, while here
They feed our souls, shall clothe thine there.
Each heavenly word by whose hid flame
Our hard hearts shall strike fire, the same
Shall flourish on thy brows, and be
Both fire to us and flame to thee;
Whose light shall live bright in thy face
By glory, in our hearts by grace.
Thou shalt look round about, and see
Thousands of crown'd souls throng to be
Themselves thy crown, sons of thy vows,
The virgin-births with which thy spouse
Made fruitful thy fair soul; go now,
And with them all about thee bow
To Him; put on, He'll say, put on,
My rosy Love, that thy rich zone,
Sparkling with the sacred flames
Of thousand souls, whose happy names
Heaven keeps upon thy score: thy bright
Life brought them first to kiss the light
That kindled them to stars; and so
Thou with the Lamb, thy Lord, shalt go.
And, wheresoe'er He sets His white
Steps, walk with Him those ways of light,
Which who in death would live to see,
Must learn in life to die like thee.

Richard Crashaw

A Song

Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face.
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious Fire.
O love, I am thy Sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes.
Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I dy.

Though still I dy, I live again;
Still longing so to be still slain,
So gainfull is such losse of breath.
I dy even in desire of death.
Still live in me this loving strife
Of living Death and dying Life.
For while thou sweetly slayest me
Dead to my selfe, I live in Thee.

Richard Crashaw

An Epitaph Upon Husband And Wife

TO these whom death again did wed
This grave 's the second marriage-bed.
For though the hand of Fate could force
'Twixt soul and body a divorce,
It could not sever man and wife,
Because they both lived but one life.
Peace, good reader, do not weep;
Peace, the lovers are asleep.
They, sweet turtles, folded lie
In the last knot that love could tie.
Let them sleep, let them sleep on,
Till the stormy night be gone,
And the eternal morrow dawn;
Then the curtains will be drawn,
And they wake into a light
Whose day shall never die in night.

Richard Crashaw

But Men Loved Darkness Rather Than Light

The world's light shines, shine as it will,
The world will love its darkness still.
I doubt though when the world's in hell,
It will not love its darkness half so well.

Richard Crashaw

Charitas Nimia; Or, The Dear Bargain

Lord, what is man? why should he cost Thee
So dear? what had his ruin lost Thee?
Lord, what is man, that Thou hast over-bought
So much a thing of naught?

Love is too kind, I see, and can
Make but a simple merchant-man.
'Twas for such sorry merchandise
Bold painters have put out his eyes.

Alas, sweet Lord! what were't to Thee
If there were no such worms as we?
Heav'n ne'er the less still Heav'n would be,
Should mankind dwell
In the deep hell.
What have his woes to do with Thee?

Let him go weep
O'er his own wounds;
Seraphims will not sleep,
Nor spheres let fall their faithful rounds.

Still would the youthful spirits sing,
And still Thy spacious palace ring;
Still would those beauteous ministers of light
Burn all as bright,
And bow their flaming heads before Thee;
Still thrones and dominations would adore Thee.
Still would those ever-wakeful sons of fire
Keep warm Thy praise
Both nights and days,
And teach Thy loved name to their noble lyre.

Let froward dust then do its kind,
And give itself for sport to the proud wind.
Why should a piece of peevish clay plead shares
In the eternity of Thy old cares?
Why shouldst Thou bow Thy awful breast to see
What mine own madneses have done with me?

Should not the king still keep his throne
Because some desperate fool's undone?
Or will the world's illustrious eyes
Weep for every worm that dies?

Will the gallant sun
E'er the less glorious run?
Will he hang down his golden head,
Or e'er the sooner seek his western bed,
Because of some foolish fly
Grows wanton, and will die?

If I were lost in misery,
What was it to Thy heaven and Thee?
What was it to Thy precious blood
If my foul heart called for a flood?
What if my faithless soul and I
Would needs fall in
With guilt and sin;
What did the Lamb that He should die?
What did the Lamb that He should need,
When the wolf sins, Himself to bleed?

If my base lust
Bargained with death and well-beseeming dust,
Why should the white
Lamb's bosom write
The purple name
Of my sin's shame?
Why should His unstrained breast make good
My blushes with His own heart-blood?

O my Saviour, make me see
How dearly Thou has paid for me;
That, lost again, my life may prove,
As then in death, so now in love.

Richard Crashaw

Divine Epigrams: On The Baptized Ethiopian

Let it no longer be a forlorn hope

To wash an Ethiope;

He's wash'd, his gloomy skin a peaceful shade,

For his white soul is made;

And now, I doubt not, the Eternal Dove

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Richard Crashaw

Divine Epigrams: On The Miracle Of The Multiplied Loaves

See here an easy feast that knows no wound,
That under hunger's teeth will needs be sound;
A subtle harvest of unbounded bread,
What would ye more? Here food itself is fed.

Richard Crashaw

Divine Epigrams: Samson To His Delilah

Could not once blinding me, cruel, suffice?
When first I look'd on thee, I lost mine eyes.

Richard Crashaw

Divine Epigrams: To Our Lord, Upon The Water Made Wine

Thou water turn'st to wine, fair friend of life,
Thy foe, to cross the sweet arts of thy reign,
Distills from thence the tears of wrath and strife,
And so turns wine to water back again.

Richard Crashaw

Euthanasia

Wouldst see blithe looks, fresh cheeks beguile
Age? wouldst see December smile?
Wouldst see nests of new roses grow
In a bed of reverend snow?
Warm thoughts, free spirits, flattering
Winter's self into a spring?
In sum wouldst see a man that can
Live to be old, and still a man?
Whose latest and most leaden hours,
Fall with soft wings stuck with soft flowers;
And, when life's sweet fable ends,
Soul and body part like friends;
No quarrels, murmurs, no delay -
A kiss, a sigh, and so away.
This rare one, reader, wouldst thou see?
Hark hither! - and thyself be he.

Richard Crashaw

In The Holy Nativity Of Our Lord

CHORUS

Come we shepherds whose blest sight
Hath met love's noon in nature's night;
Come lift we up our loftier song
And wake the sun that lies too long.

To all our world of well-stol'n joy
He slept, and dreamt of no such thing,
While we found out heav'n's fairer eye,
And kiss'd the cradle of our King.
Tell him he rises now too late
To show us aught worth looking at.

Tell him we now can show him more
Than he e'er show'd to mortal sight,
Than he himself e'er saw before,
Which to be seen needs not his light.
Tell him, Tityrus, where th' hast been;
Tell him, Thyrsis, what th' hast seen.

TITYRUS

Gloomy night embrac'd the place
Where the Noble Infant lay;
The Babe look'd up and show'd his face,
In spite of darkness, it was day.
It was thy day, Sweet! and did rise
Not from the east, but from thine eyes.

CHORUS

It was thy day, Sweet! and did rise
Not from the east, but from thine eyes.

THYRSIS

Winter chid aloud, and sent
The angry North to wage his wars;
The North forgot his fierce intent,
And left perfumes instead of scars.
By those sweet eyes' persuasive pow'rs,
Where he meant frost, he scatter'd flow'rs.

CHORUS

By those sweet eyes' persuasive pow'rs,
Where he meant frost, he scatter'd flow'rs.

BOTH

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
 Young dawn of our eternal day!
We saw thine eyes break from their east
 And chase the trembling shades away.
We saw thee, and we bless'd the sight,
We saw thee by thine own sweet light.

TITYRUS

Poor World, said I, what wilt thou do
 To entertain this starry stranger?
Is this the best thou canst bestow,
 A cold, and not too cleanly, manger?
Contend, ye powers of heav'n and earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth.

CHORUS

Contend, ye powers of heav'n and earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth.

THYRSIS

Proud World, said I, cease your contest,
 And let the Mighty Babe alone;
The phoenix builds the phoenix' nest,
 Love's architecture is his own;
The Babe whose birth embraves this morn,
Made his own bed ere he was born.

CHORUS

The Babe whose birth embraves this morn,
Made his own bed ere he was born.

TITYRUS

I saw the curl'd drops, soft and slow,
 Come hovering o'er the place's head,
Off'ring their whitest sheets of snow
 To furnish the fair Infant's bed.

Forbear, said I, be not too bold;
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.

CHORUS

Forbear, said I, be not too bold;
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.

THYRSIS

I saw the obsequious Seraphims
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow;
For well they now can spare their wings,
Since Heav'n itself lies here below.
Well done, said I, but are you sure
Your down so warm will pass for pure?

CHORUS

Well done, said I, but are you sure
Your down so warm will pass for pure?

TITYRUS

No no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose his royal head;
See see, how soon his new-bloom'd cheek
'Twixt's mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we! no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow.

CHORUS

Sweet choice, said we! no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow.

BOTH

We saw thee in thy balmy nest,
Bright dawn of our eternal day!
We saw thine eyes break from their east,
And chase the trembling shades away.
We saw thee, and we bless'd the sight,
We saw thee, by thine own sweet light.

CHORUS

We saw thee, and we bless'd the sight,
We saw thee, by thine own sweet light.

FULL CHORUS

Welcome, all wonders in one sight!
Eternity shut in a span;
Summer in winter; day in night;
Heaven in earth, and God in man.
Great little one, whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heav'n to earth.

Welcome; though nor to gold nor silk,
To more than C{ae}sar's birthright is;
Two sister seas of virgin-milk,
With many a rarely temper'd kiss,
That breathes at once both maid and mother,
Warms in the one, cools in the other.

Welcome, though not to those gay flies
Gilded i' th' beams of earthly kings,
Slippery souls in smiling eyes;
But to poor shepherds, homespun things,
Whose wealth's their flock, whose wit, to be
Well read in their simplicity.

Yet when young April's husband-show'rs
Shall bless the fruitful Maia's bed,
We'll bring the first-born of her flow'rs
To kiss thy feet and crown thy head.
To thee, dread Lamb! whose love must keep
The shepherds more than they the sheep.

To thee, meek Majesty! soft King
Of simple graces and sweet loves,
Each of us his lamb will bring,
Each his pair of silver doves;
Till burnt at last in fire of thy fair eyes,
Ourselves become our own best sacrifice.

Richard Crashaw

Music's Duel

Now westward Sol had spent the richest beams
Of noon's high glory, when, hard by the streams
Of Tiber, on the scene of a green plat,
Under protection of an oak, there sat
A sweet lute's master : in whose gentle airs
He lost the day's heat, and his own hot cares.
Close in the covert of the leaves there stood
A nightingale, come from the neighbouring wood :—
The sweet inhabitant of each glad tree,
Their muse, their Syren, harmless Syren she,—
There stood she list'ning, and did entertain
The music's soft report, and mould the same
In her own murmurs, that what ever mood
His curious fingers lent, her voice made good.
The man perceived his rival, and her art ;
Disposed to give the light-foot lady sport,
Awakes his lute, and 'gainst the fight to come
Informs it, in a sweet
præludium

Of closer strains ; and ere the war begin
He slightly skirmishes on every string,
Charged with a flying touch ; and straightway she
Carves out her dainty voice as readily
Into a thousand sweet distinguish'd tones :
And reckons up in soft divisions
Quick volumes of wild notes, to let him know
By that shrill taste she could do something too.
His nimble hand's instinct then taught each string
A cap'ring cheerfulness ; and made them sing
To their own dance ; now negligently rash
He throws his arm, and with a long-drawn dash
Blends all together, then distinctly trips
From this to that, then, quick returning, skips
And snatches this again, and pauses there.
She measures every measure, everywhere
Meets art with art ; sometimes, as if in doubt—
Not perfect yet, and fearing to be out—
Trails her plain ditty in one long-spun note

Through the sleek passage of her open throat :
A clear unwrinkled song ; then doth she point it
With tender accents, and severely joint it
By short diminutives, that, being rear'd
In controverting warbles evenly shared,
With her sweet self she wrangles ; he, amazed
That from so small a channel should be raised
The torrent of a voice, whose melody
Could melt into such sweet variety,
Strains higher yet, that tickled with rare art
The tattling strings—each breathing in his part—
Most kindly do fall out ; the grumbling base
In surly groans disdains the treble's grace ;
The high-perch'd treble chirps at this, and chides
Until his finger—moderator—hides
And closes the sweet quarrel, rousing all,
Hoarse, shrill, at once : as when the trumpets call
Hot Mars to th' harvest of death's field, and woo
Men's hearts into their hands ; this lesson, too,
She gives him back, her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness, hovers o'er her skill,
And folds in waved notes, with a trembling bill,
The pliant series of her slippery song ;
Then starts she suddenly into a throng
Of short thick sobs, whose thundring volleys float
And roll themselves over her lubric throat
In panting murmurs, 'still'd out of her breast,
That ever-bubbling spring, the sugar'd nest
Of her delicious soul, that there does lie
Bathing in streams of liquid melody,—
Music's best seed-plot ; when in ripen'd airs
A golden-headed harvest fairly rears
His honey-dropping tops, plough'd by her breath,
Which there reciprocally laboureth.
In that sweet soil it seems a holy quire
Founded to th' name of great Apollo's lyre ;
Whose silver roof rings with the sprightly notes
Of sweet-lipp'd angel-imps, that swill their throats
In cream of morning Helicon ; and then
Prefer soft anthems to the ears of men,
To woo them from their beds, still murmuring

That men can sleep while they their matins sing ;—
Most divine service ! whose so early lay
Prevents the eyelids of the blushing day.
There might you hear her kindle her soft voice
In the close murmur of a sparkling noise,
And lay the ground-work of her hopeful song ;
Still keeping in the forward stream so long,
Till a sweet whirlwind, striving to get out,
Heaves her soft bosom, wanders round about,
And makes a pretty earthquake in her breast ;
Till the fledged notes at length forsake their nest,
Fluttering in wanton shoals, and to the sky,
Wing'd with their own wild echos, pratt'ling fly.
She opes the floodgate, and lets loose a tide
Of streaming sweetness, which in state doth ride
On the waved back of every swelling strain,
Rising and falling in a pompous train ;
And while she thus discharges a shrill peal
Of flashing airs, she qualifies their zeal
With the cool epode of a graver note ;
Thus high, thus low, as if her silver throat
Would reach the brazen voice of war's hoarse bird ;
Her little soul is ravish'd : and so pour'd
Into loose ecstasies, that she is placed
Above herself—music's enthusiast !
Shame now and anger mixed a double stain
In the musician's face ; yet once again,
Mistress, I come. Now reach a strain, my lute,
Above her mock, or be for ever mute ;
Or tune a song of victory to me,
Or to thyself sing thine own obsequy !
So said, his hands sprightly as fire he flings,
And with a quivering coyness tastes the strings :
The sweet-lipp'd sisters, musically frightened,
Singing their fears, are fearfully delighted :
Trembling as when Apollo's golden hairs
Are fann'd and frizzled in the wanton airs
Of his own breath, which, married to his lyre,
Doth tune the spheres, and make heaven's self look higher ;
From this to that, from that to this, he flies,
Feels music's pulse in all her arteries ;
Caught in a net which there Apollo spreads,

His fingers struggle with the vocal threads,
Following those little rills, he sinks into
A sea of Helicon : his hand does go
Those parts of sweetness which with nectar drop,
Softer than that which pants in Hebe's cup :
The humourous strings expound his learned touch
By various glosses ; now they seem to grutch,
And murmur in a buzzing din, then gingle
In shrill-tongued accents, striving to be single ;
Every smooth turn, every delicious stroke,
Gives life to some new grace : thus doth he invoke
Sweetness by all her names ; thus, bravely thus—
Fraught with a fury so harmonious—
The lute's light Genius now does proudly rise,
Heaved on the surges of swoll'n rhapsodies,
Whose flourish, meteor-like, doth curl the air
With flash of high-born fancies ; here and there
Dancing in lofty measures, and anon
Creeps on the soft touch of a tender tone,
Whose trembling murmurs, melting in wild airs
Runs to and fro, complaining his sweet cares ;
Because those precious mysteries that dwell
In music's ravish'd soul he dare not tell,
But whisper to the world : thus do they vary
Each string his note, as if they meant to carry
Their master's blest soul, snatch'd out at his ears
By a strong ecstasy, through all the spheres
Of music's heaven ; and seat it there on high
In th'
empyræum
of pure harmony.
At length—after so long, so loud a strife
Of all the strings, still breathing the best life
Of blest variety, attending on
His fingers' fairest revolution,
In many a sweet rise, many as sweet a fall—
A full-mouth'd diapason swallows all.
This done, he lists what she would say to this ;
And she, although her breath's late exercise
Had dealt too roughly with her tender throat,
Yet summons all her sweet powers for a note.
Alas, in vain ! for while, sweet soul, she tries

To measure all those wild diversities
Of chatt'ring strings, by the small size of one
Poor simple voice, raised in a natural tone,
She fails ; and failing, grieves ; and grieving, dies ;—
She dies, and leaves her life the victor's prize,
Falling upon his lute. O, fit to have—
That lived so sweetly—dead, so sweet a grave !

Richard Crashaw

On Marriage

I would be married, but I'd have no wife ;
I would be married to a single life.

Richard Crashaw

On Mr. G. Herbert's Book, Entitled The Temple Of Sacred Poe

Know you fair, on what you look;

Divinest love lies in this book,

Expecting fire from your eyes,

To kindle this his sacrifice.

When your hands untie these strings,

Think you have an angel by th' wings.

One that gladly will be nigh,

To wait upon each morning sigh.

To flutter in the balmy air

Of your well-perfumed prayer.

These white plumes of his he'll lend you,

Which every day to heaven will send you,

To take acquaintance of the sphere,

And all the smooth-fac'd kindred there.

And though Herbert's name do owe

These devotions, fairest, know

That while I lay them on the shrine

Of your white hand, they are ts and CopyrightTogether with the editors, the Department of English (University of Toronto), and the University of Toronto Press, the following individuals share copyright for the work that went into this edition: Screen Design (Electronic Edition): Sian Meikle (University of Toronto Library) Scanning: Sharine Leung (Centre for Computing in the Humanities)

Richard Crashaw

On The Baptized Ethiopian

Let it no longer be a forlorn hope
To wash an Ethiop :
He's wash'd, his gloomy skin a peaceful shade
For his white soul is made :
And now, I doubt not, the Eternal Dove
A black-faced house will love.

Richard Crashaw

On The Miracle Of The Multiplied Loaves

See here an easy feast that knows no wound,
That under hunger's teeth will needs be sound;
A subtle harvest of unbounded bread,
What would ye more? Here food itself is fed.

Richard Crashaw

On The Prodigal

Tell me, bright boy, tell me, my golden lad,
Whither away so frolic ? why so glad ?
What all thy wealth in council ? all thy state ?
Are husks so dear ? troth 'tis a mighty rate.

Richard Crashaw

On The Sepulchre Of Our Lord

Here, where our Lord once laid his Head,
Now the grave lies buried.

Richard Crashaw

On The Still Surviving Marks Of Our Saviour's

Whatever story of their cruelty,
Or nail, or thorn, or spear have writ in Thee,
Are in another sense
Still legible ;
Sweet is the difference :
Once I did spell
Every red letter
A wound of Thine ;
Now, what is better,
Balsam for mine.

Richard Crashaw

On The Water Of Our Lord's Baptism

Each blest drop on each blest limb,
Is wash't itself, in washing Him :
'Tis a gem while it stays here ;
While it falls hence 'tis a tear.

Richard Crashaw

Prayer

LO here a little volume, but great Book
A nest of new-born sweets;
Whose native fires disdaining
To ly thus folded, and complaining
Of these ignoble sheets,
Affect more comly bands
(Fair one) from the kind hands
And confidently look
To find the rest
Of a rich binding in your Brest.
It is, in one choise handfull, heavenn; and all
Heavn's Royall host; incamp't thus small
To prove that true schooles use to tell,
Ten thousand Angels in one point can dwell.
It is love's great artillery
Which here contracts itself, and comes to ly
Close couch't in their white bosom: and from thence
As from a snowy fortresse of defence,
Against their ghostly foes to take their part,
And fortify the hold of their chast heart.
It is an armory of light
Let constant use but keep it bright,
You'l find it yeilds
To holy hands and humble hearts
More swords and sheilds
Then sin hath snares, or Hell hath darts.
Only be sure
The hands be pure
That hold these weapons; and the eyes
Those of turtles, chast and true;
Wakefull and wise;
Here is a freind shall fight for you,
Hold but this book before their heart;
Let prayer alone to play his part,
But ô the heart
That studyes this high Art
Must be a sure house-keeper
And yet no sleeper.
Dear soul, be strong.

Mercy will come e're long
And bring his bosom fraught with blessings,
Flowers of never fading graces
To make immortall dressings
For worthy soules, whose wise embraces
Store up themselves for Him, who is alone
The Spouse of Virgins and the Virgin's son.
But if the noble Bridegroom, when he come
Shall find the loytering Heart from home;
Leaving her chast aboard
To gadde abroad
Among the gay mates of the god of flyes;
To take her pleasure and to play
And keep the devill's holyday;
To dance th'sunshine of some smiling
But beguiling
Spheares of sweet and sugred Lyes,
Some slippery Pair
Of false, perhaps as fair,
Flattering but forswearing eyes;
Doubtlesse some other heart
Will gett the start
Mean while, and stepping in before
Will take possession of that sacred store
Of hidden sweets and holy ioyes.
Words which are not heard with Eares
(Those tumultuous shops of noise)
Effectuall wispers, whose still voice
The soul it selfe more feeles then heares;
Amorous languishments; luminous trances;
Sights which are not seen with eyes;
Spirituall and soul-peircing glances
Whose pure and subtil lightning flyes
Home to the heart, and setts the house on fire
And melts it down in sweet desire
Yet does not stay
To ask the windows leave to passe that way;
Delicious Deaths; soft exalations
Of soul; dear and divine annihilations;
A thousand unknown rites
Of ioyes and rarefy'd delights;
A hundred thousand goods, glories, and graces,

And many a mystick thing
Which the divine embraces
Of the deare spouse of spirits with them will bring
For which it is no shame
That dull mortality must not know a name.
Of all this store
Of blessings and ten thousand more
(If when he come
He find the Heart from home)
Doubtlesse he will unload
Himself some other where,
And poure abroad
His pretious sweets
On the fair soul whom first he meets.
O fair, ô fortunate! O riche, ô dear!
O happy and thrice happy she
Selected dove
Who ere she be,
Whose early love
With winged vowes
Makes hast to meet her morning spouse
And close with his immortall kisses.
Happy indeed, who never misses
To improve that pretious hour,
And every day
Seize her sweet prey
All fresh and fragrant as he rises
Dropping with a baulmy Showr
A delicious dew of spices;
O let the blissfull heart hold fast
Her heavnly arm-full, she shall tast
At once ten thousand paradises;
She shall have power
To rifle and deflour
The rich and roseall spring of those rare sweets
Which with a swelling bosome there she meets
Boundles and infinite
Bottomles treasures
Of pure inebriating pleasures
Happy proof! she shal discover
What ioy, what blisse,
How many Heav'ns at once it is

To have her God become her Lover.

Richard Crashaw

Saint Mar Magdalene; Or, The Weeper

Hail, sister springs,
Parents of silver-footed rills!
Ever bubbling things,
Thawing crystal, snowy hills!
Still spending, never spent; I mean
Thy fair eyes, sweet Magdalene.

Heavens thy fair eyes be;
Heavens of ever-falling stars;
'Tis seed-time still with thee,
And stars thou sow'st whose harvest dares
Promise the earth to countershine
Whatever makes Heaven's forehead fine.

But we're deceived all.
Stars indeed they are, too true,
For they but seem to fall,
As heav'n's other spangles do.
It is not for our earth and us
To shine in things so precious.

Upwards thou dost weep;
Heavn's bosom drinks the gentle stream;
Where the milky rivers creep,
Thine floats above, and is the cream.
Waters above th' heav'n's, what they be
We're taught best by thy tears and thee.

Every morn from hence
A brisk cherub something sips
Whose soft influence
Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips;
Then to his music: and his song
Tastes of this breakfast all day long.

Not in the evening's eyes,
When they red with weeping are
For the sun that dies,
Sits sorrow with a face so fair;

Nowhere but here did ever meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

When sorrow would be seen
In her brightest majesty,
For she is a queen,
Then is she dressed by none but thee;
Then, and only then, she wears
Her proudest pearls; I mean thy tears.

The dew no more will weep
The primrose's pale cheek to deck;
The dew no more will sleep,
Nuzzled in the lily's neck;
Much rather would it be thy tear,
And leave them both to tremble here.

There's no need at all
That the balsam-sweating bough
So coyly should let fall
His med'cinable tears, for now
Nature hath learn't extract a dew
More sovereign and sweet from you.

You let the poor drops weep,
Weeping is the ease of woe;
Softly let them creep,
Sad that they are vanquished so;
They, though to others no relief,
Balsam may be for their own grief.

Such the maiden gem
By the purpling vine put on,
Peeps from her parent stem
And blushes at the bridegroom sun;
This wat'ry blossom of thy eyne,
Ripe, will make the richer wine.

When some new bright guest
Takes up among the stars a room,
And Heav'n will make a feast,
Angels with crystal vials come

And draw from these full eyes of thine
Their Master's water, their own wine.

Golden though he be,
Golden Tagus murmurs though;
Were his way by thee,
Content and quiet he would go;
So much more rich would he esteem
Thy silver, than his golden stream.

Well does the May that lies
Smiling in thy cheeks confess
The April in thine eyes;
Mutual sweetness they express;
No April e'er lent kinder showers,
Nor May returned more faithful flowers.

O cheeks! beds of chaste loves
By your own showers seasonably dashed;
Eyes! nests of milky doves
In your own wells decently washed;
O wit of Love! that thus could place
Fountain and garden in one face.

O sweet contest, of woes
With loves, of tears with smiles disputing!
O fair and friendly foes,
Each other kissing and confuting!
While rain and sunshine, cheeks and eyes,
Close in kind contrarities.

But can these fair floods be
Friends with the bosom fires that fill thee?
Can so great flames agree
Eternal tears should thus distill thee?
O floods, O fires, O suns, O showers!
Mixed and made friends by Love's sweet powers.

'Twas his well-pointed dart
That digged these wells and dressed this vine;
And taught the wounded heart
The way into these weeping eyne.

Vain loves, avaunt! bold hands, forbear!
The Lamb hath dipped His white foot here.

And now where'er He strays
Among the Galilean mountains,
Or more unwelcome ways,
He's followed by two faithful fountains,
Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

O thou, thy Lord's fair store!
In thy so rich and rare expenses,
Even when He showed most poor,
He might provoke the wealth of princes;
What prince's wanton'st pride e'er could
Wash with silver, wipe with gold?

Who is that King, but He
Who call'st His crown to be called thine,
That thus can boast to be
Waited on by a wand'ring mine,
A voluntary mint, that strows
Warm silver showers where'er He goes!

O precious prodigal!
Fair spendthrift of thyself! thy measure,
Merciless love, is all,
Even to the last pearl in thy treasure;
All places, times, and objects be
Thy tears' sweet opportunity.

Does the day-star rise?
Still thy tears do fall and fall.
Does day close his eyes?
Still the fountain weeps for all.
Let night or day do what they will,
Thou hast thy task, thou weepest still.

Does thy song lull the air?
Thy falling tears keep faithful time.
Does thy sweet-breathed prayer
Up in clouds in incense climb?

Still at each sigh, that is, each stop,
A bead, that is, a tear, does drop.

At these thy weeping gates,
Watching their wat'ry motion,
Each winged moment waits,
Takes his tear and gets him gone;
By thine eye's tinct ennobled thus,
Time lays him up, he's precious.

Not, 'So long she lived,'
Shall thy tomb report of thee;
But, 'So long she grieved,'
Thus must we date thy memory.
Others by moments, months and years,
Measure their ages, thou by tears.

So do perfumes expire;
So sigh tormented sweets, oppressed
With proud unpitying fire;
Such tears the suff'ring rose that's vexed
With ungentle flames does shed,
Sweating in a too warm bed.

Say, ye bright brothers,
The fugitive sons of those fair eyes,
Your faithful mothers,
What make you here? What hopes can 'tice
You to be born? What cause can borrow
You from those nests of noble sorrow?

Whither away so fast?
For sure the sordid earth
Your sweetness cannot taste,
Nor does the dust deserve your birth.
Sweet, whiter haste you then? O say
Why you trip so fast away!

'We go not to seek
The darlings of Aurora's bed,
The rose's modest cheek,
Nor the violet's humble head;

Though the field's eyes, too, weepers be
Because they want such tears as we.

'Much less mean we to trace
The fortune of inferior gems,
Preferred to some proud face,
Or perched upon feared diadems:
Crowned heads are toys. We go to meet
A worthy object, our Lord's feet.'

Richard Crashaw

Samson To His Delilah

Could not once blinding me, cruel, suffice?
When first I look'd on thee, I lost mine eyes.

Richard Crashaw

Satan

Below the bottom of the great Abyss,
There where one centre reconciles all things,
The world's profound heart pants; there placed is
Mischief's old Master! close about him clings
A curled knot of embracing snakes, that kiss
His correspondent cheeks: these loathsome strings
Hold the perverse prince in eternal ties,
Fast bound since first he forfeited the skies.

Heaven's golden-winged herald late he saw
To a poor Galilean virgin sent;
How long the bright youth bowed, and with what awe
Immortal flowers to her fair hand present:
He saw the old Hebrew's womb neglect the law
Of age and barrenness; and her Babe prevent
His birth by his devotion, who began
Betimes to be a saint before a man!

Yet, on the other side, fain would he start
Above his fears, and think it cannot be:
He studies Scripture, strives to sound the heart
And feel the pulse of every prophecy,
He knows, but knows not how, or by what art
The heaven-expecting ages hope to see
A mighty Babe, whose pure, unspotted birth
From a chaste virgin womb should bless the earth!

But these vast mysteries his senses smother,
And reason, - for what's faith to him! - devour,
How she that is a maid should prove a mother,
Yet keep inviolate her virgin flower:
How God's eternal Son should be man's brother,
Poseth his proudest intellectual power;
How a pure spirit should incarnate be,
And life itself wear death's frail livery.

That the great angel-blinding light should shrink
His blaze, to shine in a poor shepherd's eye;
That the unmeasured God so low should sink

As prisoner in a few poor rags to lie; milk should drink,
Who feeds with nectar Heaven's fair family;
That a vile manger his low bed should prove
Who in a throne of stars thunders above.

That He whom the sun serves, should faintly peep
Through clouds of infant flesh: that He the old
Eternal Word would be a child, and weep;
That He who made the fire should feel the cold;
That Heaven's high Majesty his court should keep
In a clay-cottage, by each blast controlled:
That Glory's self should serve our griefs and fears:
And free Eternity submit to years.

Richard Crashaw

The Flaming Heart

O heart, the equal poise of love's both parts,
Big alike with wounds and darts,
Live in these conquering leaves; live all the same,
And walk through all tongues one triumphant flame;
Live here, great heart, and love and die and kill,
And bleed and wound, and yield and conquer still.
Let this immortal life, where'er it comes,
Walk in a crowd of loves and martyrdoms;
Let mystic deaths wait on 't, and wise souls be
The love-slain witnesses of this life of thee.
O sweet incendiary! show here thy art,
Upon this carcass of a hard cold heart,
Let all thy scatter'd shafts of light, that play
Among the leaves of thy large books of day,
Combin'd against this breast, at once break in
And take away from me my self and sin;
This gracious robbery shall thy bounty be,
And my best fortunes such fair spoils of me.
O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dow'r of lights and fires,
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove,
By all thy lives and deaths of love,
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they,
By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire,
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seiz'd thy parting soul and seal'd thee his,
By all the heav'ns thou hast in him,
Fair sister of the seraphim!
By all of him we have in thee,
Leave nothing of my self in me:
Let me so read thy life that I

Unto all life of mine may die.

.

Richard Crashaw

The Recommendation

These houres, and that which hovers o're my End,
Into thy hands, and hart, lord, I commend.

Take Both to Thine Account, that I and mine
In that Hour, and in these, may be all thine.

That as I dedicate my devoutest Breath
To make a kind of Life for my lord's Death,

So from his living, and life-giving Death,
My dying Life may draw a new, and never fleeting Breath.

Richard Crashaw

The Weeper

HAIL, sister springs,
Parents of silver-footed rills!
 Ever bubbling things,
Thawing crystal, snowy hills!
 Still spending, never spent; I mean
 Thy fair eyes, sweet Magdalene.

 Heavens thy fair eyes be;
Heavens of ever-falling stars;
 'Tis seed-time still with thee,
And stars thou sow'st whose harvest dares
 Promise the earth to countershine
 Whatever makes Heaven's forehead fine.

 Every morn from hence
A brisk cherub something sips
 Whose soft influence
Adds sweetness to his sweetest lips;
 Then to his music: and his song
 Tastes of this breakfast all day long.

 When some new bright guest
Takes up among the stars a room,
 And Heaven will make a feast,
Angels with their bottles come,
 And draw from these full eyes of thine
 Their Master's water, their own wine.

 The dew no more will weep
The primrose's pale cheek to deck;
 The dew no more will sleep
Nuzzled in the lily's neck:
 Much rather would it tremble here,
 And leave them both to be thy tear.

 When sorrow would be seen
In her brightest majesty,
 --For she is a Queen--
Then is she drest by none but thee:

The Widow's Mites

Two mites, two drops, yet all her house and land,
Fall from a steady heart, though trembling hand :
The other's wanton wealth foams high, and brave ;
The other cast away, she only gave.

Richard Crashaw

To Our Lord, Upon The Water Made Wine

Thou water turn'st to wine, fair friend of life,
Thy foe, to cross the sweet arts of thy reign,
Distills from thence the tears of wrath and strife,
And so turns wine to water back again.

Richard Crashaw

To The Name Above Every Name, The Name Of Jesus

I sing the Name which None can say
But touch't with An interior Ray:
The Name of our New Peace; our Good:
Our Blisse: and Supernaturall Blood:
The Name of All our Lives and Loves.
Hearken, And Help, ye holy Doves!
The high-born Brood of Day; you bright
Candidates of blissefull Light,
The Heirs Elect of Love; whose Names belong
Unto The everlasting life of Song;
All ye wise Soules, who in the wealthy Brest
Of This unbounded Name build your warm Nest.
Awake, My glory. Soul, (if such thou be,
And That fair Word at all referr to Thee)
Awake and sing
And be All Wing;
Bring hither thy whole Self; and let me see
What of thy Parent Heaven yet speakes in thee,
O thou art Poore
Of noble Powres, I see,
And full of nothing else but empty Me,
Narrow, and low, and infinitely lesse
Then this Great mornings mighty Busynes.
One little World or two
(Alas) will never doe.
We must have store.
Goe, Soul, out of thy Self, and seek for More.
Goe and request
Great Nature for the Key of her huge Chest
Of Heavns, the self involving Sett of Sphears
(Which dull mortality more Feeles then heares)
Then rouse the nest
Of nimble, Art, and traverse round
The Aiery Shop of soul-appeasing Sound:
And beat a summons in the Same
All-soveraign Name
To warn each severall kind
And shape of sweetnes, Be they such
As sigh with supple wind

Or answer Artfull Touch,
 That they convene and come away
 To wait at the love-crowned Doores of
 This Illustrious Day.
 Shall we dare This, my Soul? we'l doe't and bring
 No Other note for't, but the Name we sing.
 Wake Lute and Harp
 And every sweet-lipp't Thing
 That talkes with tunefull string;
 Start into life, And leap with me
 Into a hasty Fitt-tun'd Harmony.
 Nor must you think it much
 T'obey my bolder touch;
 I have Authority in Love's name to take you
 And to the worke of Love this morning wake you;
 Wake; In the Name
 Of Him who never sleeps, All Things that Are,
 Or, what's the same,
 Are Musicall;
 Answer my Call
 And come along;
 Help me to meditate mine Immortall Song.
 Come, ye soft ministers of sweet sad mirth,
 Bring All your household stuffe of Heavn on earth;
 O you, my Soul's most certain Wings,
 Complaining Pipes, and prattling Strings,
 Bring All the store
 Of Sweets you have; And murmur that you have no more.
 Come, né to part,
 Nature and Art!
 Come; and come strong,
 To the conspiracy of our Spatious song.
 Bring All the Powres of Praise
 Your Provinces of well-united Worlds can raise;
 Bring All your Lutes and Harps of Heaven and Earth;
 What ére cooperates to The common mirthe
 Vessells of vocall Ioyes,
 Or You, more noble Architects of Intellectual Noise,
 Cymballs of Heav'n, or Humane sphears,
 Solliciters of Soules or Eares;
 And when you'are come, with All
 That you can bring or we can call;

O may you fix
 For ever here, and mix
 Your selves into the long
 And everlasting series of a deathlesse Song;
 Mix All your many Worlds, Above,
 And loose them into One of Love.
 Chear thee my Heart!
 For Thou too hast thy Part
 And Place in the Great Throng
 Of This unbounded All-imbracing Song.
 Powres of my Soul, be Proud!
 And speake lowd
 To All the dear-bought Nations This Redeeming Name,
 And in the wealth of one Rich Word proclaim
 New Similes to Nature.
 May it be no wrong
 Blest Heavns, to you, and your Superiour song,
 That we, dark Sons of Dust and Sorrow,
 A while Dare borrow
 The Name of Your Dilights and our Desires,
 And fitt it to so farr inferior Lyres.
 Our Murmurs have their Musick too,
 Ye mighty Orbes, as well as you,
 Nor yeilds the noblest Nest
 Of warbling Seraphim to the eares of Love,
 A choicer Lesson then the joyfull Brest
 Of a poor panting Turtle-Dove.
 And we, low Wormes have leave to doe
 The Same bright Busynes (ye Third Heavens) with you.
 Gentle Spirits, doe not complain.
 We will have care
 To keep it fair,
 And send it back to you again.
 Come, lovely Name! Appaere from forth the Bright
 Regions of peacefull Light,
 Look from thine own Illustrious Home,
 Fair King of Names, and come.
 Leave All thy native Glories in their Georgeous Nest,
 And give thy Self a while The gracious Guest
 Of humble Soules, that seek to find
 The hidden Sweets
 Which man's heart meets

When Thou art Master of the Mind.
 Come, lovely Name; life of our hope!
 Lo we hold our Hearts wide ope!
 Unlock thy Cabinet of Day
 Dearest Sweet, and come away.
 Lo how the thirsty Lands
 Gasp for thy Golden Showres! with longstretch't Hands.
 Lo how the laboring Earth
 That hopes to be
 All Heaven by Thee,
 Leapes at thy Birth.
 The' attending World, to wait thy Rise,
 First turn'd to eyes;
 And then, not knowing what to doe;
 Turn'd Them to Teares, and spent Them too.
 Come Royall Name, and pay the expence
 Of all this Pretious Patience.
 O come away
 And kill the Death of This Delay.
 O see, so many Worlds of barren yeares
 Melted and measur'd out is Seas of Teares.
 O see, The Weary liddes of wakefull Hope
 (Love's Eastern windowes) All wide ope
 With Curtains drawn,
 To catch The Day-break of Thy Dawn.
 O dawn, at last, long look't for Day!
 Take thine own wings, and come away.
 Lo, where Aloft it comes! It comes, Among
 The Conduct of Adoring Spirits, that throng
 Like diligent Bees, And swarm about it.
 O they are wise;
 And know what Sweetes are suck't from out it.
 It is the Hive,
 By which they thrive,
 Where All their Hoard of Hony lyes.
 Lo where it comes, upon The snowy Dove's
 Soft Back; And brings a Bosom big with Loves.
 Welcome to our dark world, Thou
 Womb of Day!
 Unfold thy fair Conceptions; And display
 The Birth of our Bright Ioyes.
 O thou compacted

Body of Blessings: spirit of Soules extracted!
O dissipate thy spicy Powres
(Clowd of condensed sweets) and break upon us
In balmy showers;
O fill our senses, And take from us
All force of so Prophane a Fallacy
To think ought sweet but that which smells of Thee.
Fair, flowry Name; In none but Thee
And Thy Nectareall Fragrancy,
Hourly there meetes
An universall Synod of All sweets;
By whom it is defined Thus
That no Perfume
For ever shall presume
To passe for Odoriferous,
But such alone whose sacred Pedigree
Can prove it Self some kin (sweet name) to Thee.
Sweet Name, in Thy each Syllable
A Thousand Blest Arabias dwell;
A Thousand Hills of Frankincense;
Mountains of myrrh, and Beds of species,
And ten Thousand Paradises,
The soul that tastes thee takes from thence.
How many unknown Worlds there are
Of Comforts, which Thou hast in keeping!
How many Thousand Mercyes there
In Pitty's soft lap ly a sleeping!
Happy he who has the art
To awake them,
And to take them
Home, and lodge them in his Heart.
O that it were as it was wont to be!
When thy old Freinds of Fire, All full of Thee,
Fought against Frowns with smiles; gave Glorious chase
To Persecutions; And against the Face
Of Death and feircest Dangers, durst with Brave
And sober pace march on to meet A Grave.
On their Bold Brests about the world they bore thee
And to the Teeth of Hell stood up to teach thee,
In Center of their inmost Soules they wore thee,
Where Rackes and Torments striv'd, in vain, to reach thee.
Little, alas, thought They

Who tore the Fair Brests of thy Freinds,
Their Fury but made way
For Thee; And serv'd them in Thy glorious ends.
What did Their weapons but with wider pores
Inlarge thy flaming-brested Lovers
More freely to transpire
That impatient Fire
The Heart that hides Thee hardly covers.
What did their Weapons but sett wide the Doores
For Thee: Fair, purple Doores, of love's devising;
The Ruby windowes which inrich't the East
Of Thy so oft repeated Rising.
Each wound of Theirs was Thy new Morning;
And reinthron'd thee in thy Rosy Nest,
With blush of thine own Blood thy day adorning,
It was the witt of love óreflowd the Bounds
Of Wrath, and made thee way through All Those wounds.
Wellcome dear, All-Adored Name!
For sure there is no Knee
That knowes not Thee.
Or if there be such sonns of shame,
Alas what will they doe
When stubborn Rocks shall bow
And Hills hang down their Heavn-saluting Heads
To seek for humble Beds
Of Dust, where in the Bashfull shades of night
Next to their own low Nothing they may ly,
And couch before the dazeling light of thy dread majesty.
They that by Love's mild Dictate now
Will not adore thee,
Shall Then with Just Confusion, bow
And break before thee.

Richard Crashaw

To The Noblest And Best Of Ladies, The Countess Of Denbigh

Persuading her to resolution in religion, and to
Render herself without further delay into the
Communion of the Catholic Church

What Heaven-entreated heart is this,
Stands trembling at the gate of bliss?
Holds fast the door, yet dares not venture
Fairly to open it, and enter;
Whose definition is a doubt
'Twi't life and death, 'twixt in and out.
Say, lingering fair, why comes the birth
Of your brave soul so slowly forth?
Plead your pretenses, O you strong
In weakness, why you choose so long
In labor of yourself to lie,
Not daring quite to live nor die.
Ah, linger not, loved soul! A slow
And late consent was a long no;
Who grants at last, long time tried
And did his best to have denied.
What magic bolts, what mystic bars
Maintain the will in these strange wars!
What fatal, yet fantastic bands
Keep the free heart from its own hands!
So when the year takes cold we see
Poor waters their own prisoners be;
Fettered and locked up fast they lie
In a sad self-captivity.
The astonished nymphs their flood's strange fate deplore,
To see themselves their own severer shore.
Thou that alone canst thaw this cold,
And fetch the heart from its stronghold,
Almighty Love! end this long war,
And of a meteor make a star.
Oh, fix this fair indefinite,
And 'mongst Thy shafts of sovereign light

Choose out that sure decisive dart
Which has the key of this close heart,
Knows all the corners of 't, and can control
The self-shut cabinet of an unsearched soul.
Oh, let it be at last Love's hour;
Raise this tall trophy of Thy power;
Come once the conquering way, not to confute
But kill this rebel-word, 'irresolute,'
That so, in spite of all this peevish strength
Of weakness, she may write, 'Resolved at length.'
Unfold at length, unfold, fair flower,
And use the season of Love's shower;
Meet His well-meaning wounds, wise heart!
And haste to drink the wholesome dart,
That healing shaft, which Heaven till now
Hath in Love's quiver hid for you.
O dart of Love! arrow of light!
O happy you, if it hit right!
It must not fall in vain, it must
Not mark the dry regardless dust.
Fair one, it is your fate, and brings
Eternal worlds upon its wings.
Meet it with wide-spread arms, and see
Its seat your soul's just center be.
Disband dull fears, give faith the day;
To save your life, kill your delay.
It is Love's siege, and sure to be
Your triumph, through His victory.
'Tis cowardice that keeps this field,
And want of courage not to yield.
Yield then, O yield, that Love may win
The fort at last, and let life in;
Yield quickly, lest perhaps you prove
Death's prey, before the prize of Love.
This fort of your fair self, if't be not won,
He is repulsed indeed, but you're undone.

Richard Crashaw

Two Went Up Into The Temple To Pray

Two went to pray? O rather say
One went to brag, th' other to pray:

One stands up close and treads on high,
Where th' other dares not send his eye.

One nearer to God's altar trod,
The other to the altar's God.

Richard Crashaw

Upon Ford's Two Tragedies

Love's Sacrifice, and the Broken Heart.

Thou cheat'st us, Ford, mak'st one seem two by art ;
What is love's sacrifice but the broken heart ?

Richard Crashaw

Upon The Book And Picture Of The Seraphical Saint Teresa

O THOU undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His;
By all the Heav'n thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!);
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die!

Richard Crashaw

Wishes To His (Supposed) Mistress

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me;

Where'er she lie,
Locked up from mortal eye
In shady leaves of destiny:

Till that ripe birth
Of studied fate stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth;

Till that divine
Idea take a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine:

Meet you her, my wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye called my absent kisses.

I wish her beauty,
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ring shoe-tie;

Something more than
Taffata or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan;

More than the spoil
Of shop, or silkworm's toil,
Or a bought blush, or a set smile.

A face that's best
By its own beauty drest,
And can alone commend the rest:

A face made up
Out of no other shop
Than what nature's white hand sets ope.

A cheek where youth
And blood with pen of truth
Write what the reader sweetly ru'th.

A cheek where grows
More than a morning rose,
Which to no box his being owes.

Lips, where all day
A lovers kiss may play,
Yet carry nothing thence away.

Looks that oppress
Their richest tires, but dress
And clothe their simplest nakedness.

Eyes, that displaces
The neighbour diamond, and outfaces
That sunshine by their own sweet graces.

Tresses, that wear
Jewels, but to declare
How much themselves more precious are;

Whose native ray
Can tame the wanton day
Of gems that in their bright shades play.

Each ruby there,
Or pearl that dare appear,
Be its own blush, be its own tear.

A well-tamed heart,
For whose more noble smart
Love may be long choosing a dart.

Eyes, that bestow
Full quivers on Love's bow,
Yet pay less arrows than they owe.

Smiles, that can warm

The blood, yet teach a charm,
That chastity shall take no harm.

Blushes, that bin
The burnish of no sin,
Nor flames of aught too hot within.

Joyes, that confess
Virtue their mistress,
And have no other head to dress.

Fears, fond and flight
As the coy bride's when night
First does the longing lover right.

Tears, quickly fled
And vain as those are shed
For a dying maidenhead.

Days, that need borrow
No part of their good morrow
From a forspent night of sorrow.

Days, that, in spite
Of darkness, by the light
Of a clear mind are day all night.

Nights, sweet as they,
Made short by lovers' play,
Yet long by th' absence of the day.

Life, that dares send
A challenge to its end,
And when it comes say Welcome Friend.

Sydneian showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old winter's head with flowers.

Soft silken hours,
Open suns, shady bowers
'Bove all; nothing within that lours.

Whate'er delight
Can make day's forehead bright,
Or give down to the wings of night.

In her whole frame
Have nature all the name,
Art and ornament the shame.

Her flattery
Picture and poesy,
Her counsel her own virtue be.

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes; and I wish—no more.

Now, if Time knows
That Her, whose radiant brows
Weave them a garland of my vows;

Her, whose just bays
My future hopes can raise,
A trophy to her present praise;

Her, that dares be
What these lines wish to see:
I seek no further, it is she.

'Tis she, and here
Lo! I unclothe and clear
My wishes' cloudy character.

May she enjoy it,
Whose merit dare apply it,
But modesty dares still deny it!

Such worth as this is
Shall fix my flying wishes,
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full glory,

My fancies, fly before ye;
Be ye my fictions, but her story.

Richard Crashaw