

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Dekker
- poems -

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Thomas Dekker(1572-1632)

Art Thou Poor

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O sweet content!

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?

O punishment!

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labour bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring?

O sweet content!

Swimm'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?

O punishment!

Then he that patiently want's burden bears

No burden bears, but is a king, a king:

O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, apace, apace;

Honest labour bears a lovely face;

Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,

Smiles awake you when you rise.

Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,

And I will sing a lullaby:

Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you;

You are care, and care must keep you.

Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,

And I will sing a lullaby:

Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Thomas Dekker

Beauty Arise

Beauty arise, show forth thy glorious shining,
Thine eyes feed love, for them he standeth pining ;
Honor and youth attend to do their duty
To thee, their only sovereign, Beauty.
Beauty arise, whilst we, thy servants, sing
Io to Hymen, wedlock's jocund king.
Io to Hymen, Io, Io, sing ;
Of wedlock, love, and youth is Hymen king.

Beauty arise, Beauty arise, thy glorious lights display,
Whilst we sing Io, glad to see this day.
Io, Io, to Hymen, Io, Io, sing ;
Of wedlock, love, and youth is Hymen king.

Thomas Dekker

Cast Away Care

Cast away care; he that loves sorrow
Lengthens not a day, nor can buy to-morrow ;
 Money is trash, and he that will spend it,
 Let him drink merrily, fortune will send it.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, oh, ho !
Play it off stiffly, we may not part so.

Wine is a charm, it heats the blood too,
Cowards it will arm, if the wine be good too ;
 Quickens the wit, and makes the back able,
 Scorns to submit to the watch or constable.
Merrily, &c.

Pots fly about, give us more liquor,
Brothers of a rout, our brains will flow quicker ;
 Empty the cask, score up, we care not ;
 Fill all the pots again, drink on, and spare not.
Merrily, &c.

Thomas Dekker

Country Glee

HAYMAKERS, rakers, reapers, and mowers,
Wait on your Summer-queen;
Dress up with musk-rose her eglantine bowers,
Daffodils strew the green;
Sing, dance, and play,
'Tis holiday;
The sun does bravely shine
On our ears of corn.
Rich as a pearl
Comes every girl,
This is mine, this is mine, this is mine;
Let us die, ere away they be borne.

Bow to the Sun, to our queen, and that fair one
Come to behold our sports:
Each bonny lass here is counted a rare one,
As those in a prince's courts.
These and we
With country glee,
Will teach the woods to resound,
And the hills with echoes hollow:
Skipping lambs
Their bleating dams,
'Mongst kids shall trip it round;
For joy thus our wenches we follow.

Wind, jolly huntsmen, your neat bugles shrilly,
Hounds make a lusty cry;
Spring up, you falconers, the partridges freely,
Then let your brave hawks fly.
Horses amain,
Over ridge, over plain,
The dogs have the stag in chase:
'Tis a sport to content a king.
So ho ho! through the skies
How the proud bird flies,
And sousing kills with a grace!
Now the deer falls; hark, how they ring!

Cradle Song

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise ;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.
Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and care must keep you ;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Thomas Dekker

Fancies Are But Streams

Fancies are but streams
Of vain pleasure:
They who by their dreams
True joys measure
Feasting, starve; laughing, weep;
Playing, smart. Whilst in sleep
Fools with shadows smiling,
Wake and find
Hopes like wind,
Idle hopes beguiling.
Thoughts fly away, Time hath past 'em;
Wake now, awake, see and taste 'em.

Thomas Dekker

Fortune Smiles

Fortune smiles, cry holiday,
Dimples on her cheeks do dwell,
Fortune frowns, cry welladay,
Her love is heaven, her hate is hell:
Since heaven and hell obey her power,
Tremble when her eyes do lour,
Since heaven and hell her power obey,
When she smiles, cry holiday.
Holiday with joy we cry
And bend, and bend and merrily,
Sing Hymns to Fortune's deity,
Sing Hymns to Fortune's deity.

Let us sing, merrily, merrily, merrily,
With our song let heaven resound,
Fortune's hands our heads have crown'd,
Let us sing merrily, merrily, merrily.

Thomas Dekker

From: Shoemaker's Holiday, Or The Gentle Craft

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed ;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

Troll the bowl, the jolly nut-brown bowl,
And here, kind mate, to thee ;
Let's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul,
And down it merrily.

Down-a-down, hey, down-a-down,
Hey derry derry down-a-down,
Close with the tenor, boy ;
Ho ! well done, to me let come,
Ring compass, gentle joy.
Troll the bowl, the nut-brown bowl,
And here, kind, &c. (As often as there be men to drink.)

(At last, when all have drunk, this verse.)

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed ;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

Thomas Dekker

Golden Slumbers Kiss Your Eyes

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise ;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.
Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and care must keep you ;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Thomas Dekker

Haymakers, Rakers, Reapers, And Mowers

Haymakers, rakers, reapers, and mowers,
Wait upon your summer queen.
Dress up with musk-rose her eglantine bowers,
Daffodils strew the green.
Sing, dance, and play,
'Tis holiday.
The sun does bravely shine
On our ears of corn.
Rich as a pearl,
Comes every girl,
This is mine, this is mine, this is mine;
Let us die, ere away they be borne.

Bow to the sun, to our queen, and that fair one,
Come to behold our sports.
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Spring up, you falconers, the partridges freely,
Then let your brave hawks fly.
Horses amain
Over ridge, over plain,
The dogs have the stag in chase;
'Tis a sport to content a king:
So ho! ho! through the skies
How the proud bird flies,
And sousing, kills with a grace.
Now the deer falls; hark! how they ring.

Here Lies The Blithe Spring

HERE lies the blithe Spring,
Who first taught birds to sing,
Yet in April herself fell a-crying:
Then May growing hot,
A sweating sickness she got,
And the first of June lay a-dying.

Yet no month can say,
But her merry daughter May
Stuck her coffins with flowers great plenty:
The cuckoo sung in verse
An epitaph o'er her hearse,
But assure you the lines were not dainty.

Thomas Dekker

Patience

Patience! why, 'tis the soul of peace:
OF all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to heaven:
It makes men look like gods. The best of men
That e'er wore earth about Him was a sufferer;
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

Thomas Dekker

Prologue: The Pleasant Comedy Of Old Fortunatus

OF Love's sweet war our timorous Muse doth sing,
And to the bosom of each gentle dear,
Offers her artless tunes, borne on the wing
Of sacred poesy. A benumbing fear,
That your nice souls, cloyed with delicious sounds,
Will loath her lowly notes, makes her pull in
Her fainting pinions, and her spirit confounds,
Before the weak voice of her song begin.
Yet since within the circle of each eye,
Being like so many suns in his round sphere,
No wrinkle yet is seen, she'll dare to fly,
Borne up with hopes, that as you oft do rear
With your fair hands, those who would else sink down,
So some will deign to smile, where all might frown:
And for this small circumference must stand,
For the imagined surface of much land,
Of many kingdoms, and since many a mile
Should here be measured out, our Muse entreats
Your thoughts to help poor art, and to allow
That I may serve as Chorus to her senses;
She begs your pardon, for she'll send one forth,
Not when the laws of poesy do call,
But as the story needs; your gracious eye
Gives life to Fortunatus' history.

Thomas Dekker

Rose

Here sit thou down upon this flow'ry bank,
And make a garland for thy Lacy's head.
These pinks, these roses, and these violets,
These blushing gilliflowers, these marigolds,
The fair embroidery of his coronet,
Carry not half such beauty in their cheeks,
As the sweet countenance of my Lacy doth.
O my most unkind father! O my stars,
Why lower'd you so at my nativity,
To make me love, yet live robb'd of my love?
Here as a thief am I imprisoned
For my dear Lacy's sake within those walls,
Which by my father's cost were builded up
For better purposes. Here must I languish
For him that doth as much lament, I know,
Mine absence, as for him I pine in woe.

Thomas Dekker

The Invitation

LIVE with me still, and all the measures
Played to by the spheres I'll teach thee;
Let's but thus daily, all the pleasures
The moon beholds, her man shall reach thee.

Dwell in mine arms, aloft we'll hover,
And see fields of armies fighting:
Oh, part not from me! I'll discover
There all but [?] books of fancy's writing.

Be but my darling, age to free thee
From her curse, shall fall a-dying;
Call me thy empress, Time to see thee
Shall forget his art of flying.

Thomas Dekker

The Merry Month Of May

O THE month of May, the merry month of May,
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!
O, and then did I unto my true love say,
Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my Summer's Queen.

Now the nightingale, the pretty nightingale,
The sweetest singer in all the forest quire,
Entreats thee, sweet Peggy, to hear thy true love's tale:
Lo, yonder she sitteth, her breast against a brier.

But O, I spy the cuckoo, the cuckoo, the cuckoo;
See where she sitteth; come away, my joy:
Come away, I prithee, I do not like the cuckoo
Should sing where my Peggy and I kiss and toy.

O, the month of May, the merry month of May,
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green;
And then did I unto my true love say,
Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my Summer's Queen

Thomas Dekker

The Noble Spanish Soldier

O, SORROW, SORROW, say where dost thou dwell?
In the lowest room of hell.
Art thou born of human race?
No, no, I have a fierier face.
Art thou in city, town, or court?
I to every place resort?
O, why into the world is Sorrow sent?
Men afflicted best repent.
What dost thou feed on?
Broken sleep.
What takest thou pleasure in?
To weep,
To sigh, to sob, to pine, to groan,
To wring my hands, to sit alone.
O when, O when shall Sorrow quiet have?
Never, never, never, never,
Never till she finds a grave.

Thomas Dekker

What Bird So Sings

What bird so sings, yet so does wail,
'Tis Philomel the Nightingale;
Jug, jug, jug, tereu she cries,
And hating earth, to heaven she flies.
Ha, ha, hark, hark, the Cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the Spring.
Brave prick-song; who is't now we hear!
'Tis the Lark's silver lir-a-lir:
Chirrup, the Sparrow flies away;
For he fell to't ere break of day.
Ha, ha, hark hark; the Cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the Spring

Thomas Dekker