

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Weelkes
- poems -

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Thomas Weelkes(1576 - 1623)

Believed to be the son of a clergyman Weelkes was born on the 25th October 1576, at Elstead, Surry.

He was educated in New College, Oxford, and in 1598 became the organist of Winchester College. It was here that he composed some of his greatest madrigals, which appeared in two volumes published in 1598 and 1600.

He graduated from New College in 1602 and was appointed organist and master chorist at Chichester Cathedral, until he was eventually dismissed for drunkenness and profanity of language.

Nearly 100 of his madrigals survive today, many still in use in christian services, including Hosanna to the son of David.

Upon his death on the 3rd November 1623, Joseph Kerman declared:- "A society that can allow a talent of this kind to go to waste while poets best forgotten flourish can hardly be considered a healthy one from a musical point of view."

Cease Sorrows Now

Cease sorrows now,
for you have done the deed,
lo care hath now consum'd
my carcass quite,
no hope is left
nor help can stand instead,
for doleful death
doth cut off pleasure quite,
yet whilst I hear
the knolling of the bell,
before I die,
I'll sing my faint farewell,
farewell.

Thomas Weelkes

Come Sirrah Jack Ho

Come sirrah Jack ho,
Fill some tobacco,
Bring a wire and some fire,
Haste haste away,
quick I say,
do not stay,
shun delay,
for I drank none good today.

I swear that this tobacco
Is perfect Trinidad-o;
By the very very Mass,
never never was
better gear
than is here,
by the rood,
for the blood,
it is very very good,
'tis very good.

Thomas Weelkes

Hark, All Ye Lovely Saints Above

Hark, all ye lovely saints above,
Diana hath agreed with Love,
His fiery weapon to remove. Fa la.
Do you not see
How they agree?
Then cease, fair ladies; why weep ye? Fa la.

See, see, your mistress bids you cease,
And welcome Love, with love's increase;
Diana hath procured your peace. Fa la.
Cupid hath sworn
His bow forlorn
To break and burn, ere ladies mourn. Fa la.

Thomas Weelkes

The Ape, The Monkey, And Baboon

The ape, the monkey and baboon did meet,
And breaking of their fast in Friday street,
Two of them swore together solemnly
In their three natures was a sympathy.

Nay, quoth baboon,
I do deny that strain:
I have more knavery in me
than you twain.

Why, quoth the ape, I have a horse at will
In Paris Garden for to ride on still,
And there show tricks. Tush, quoth the monkey,
For better tricks in great men's houses lie.

Tush, quoth baboon,
when men do know I come,
For sport from city, country
they will run.

Thomas Weelkes

Thule, The Period Of Cosmography

Thule, the period of cosmography,
Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphureous fire
Doth melt the frozen clime and thaw the sky;
Trinacrian Etna's flames ascend not higher:
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

The Andalusian merchant, that returns
Laden with cochineal and china dishes,
Reports in Spain how strangely Fogo burns
Amidst an ocean full of flying fishes:
These things seem wondrous, yet more wondrous I,
Whose heart with fear doth freeze, with love doth fry.

Thomas Weelkes

Tomorrow Is The Marriage Day

Tomorrow is the marriage day
Of Mopsus and fair Philida.
Come shepherds, bring your garlands gay.

O do not weep, fair Bellamour,
Though he be gone there's many more.
For love hath many loves in store.

Thomas Weelkes