

I D E A

TO THE READER OF THESE SONNETS.

INTO these Loves who but for Passion looks,
At this first sight here let him lay them by
And seek elsewhere, in turning other books,
Which better may his labour satisfy.
No far-fetched sigh shall ever wound my breast,
Love from mine eye a tear shall never wring,
Nor in *Ah me's* my whining sonnets drest,
A libertine, fantastically I sing.
My verse is the true image of my mind,
Ever in motion, still desiring change ;
And as thus to variety inclined,
So in all humours sportively I range ;
 My Muse is rightly of the English strain,
 That cannot long one fashion entertain.

I.

LIKE an adventurous seafarer am I,
Who hath some long and dangerous voyage been,
And, called to tell of his discovery,
How far he sailed, what countries he had seen.
Proceeding from the port whence he put forth,
Shews by his compass how his course he steered,
When East, when West, when South, and when by North,
As how the Pole to every place was reared,
What capes he doubled, of what Continent,
The gulfs and straits that strangely he had past,
Where most becalmed, where with foul weather spent,
And on what rocks in peril to be cast.
 Thus in my love, Time calls me to relate
 My tedious travels and oft-varying fate.

II.

MY heart was slain, and none but you and I ;
 Who should I think the murther should commit,
 Since but yourself there was no creature by,
 But only I, guiltless of murth'ring it ?
 It slew itself ; the verdict on the view
 Doth quit the dead, and me not accessory.
 Well, well, I fear it will be proved by you,
 The evidence so great a prooffe doth carry.
 But O, see, see, we need enquire no further,
 Upon your lips the scarlet drops are found,
 And in your eye the boy that did the murther ;
 Your cheeks yet pale, since first he gave the wound.
 By this I see, however things be past,
 Yet Heaven will still have murther out at last.

III.

TAKING my pen, with words to cast my woe,
 Duly to count the sum of all my cares,
 I find my griefs innumerable grow,
 The reckonings rise to millions of despairs ;
 And thus dividing of my fatal hours,
 The payments of my love I read and cross,
 Subtracting, set my sweets unto my sour,
 My joy's arrearage leads me to my loss ;
 And thus mine eye's a debtor to thine eye,
 Which by extortion gaineth all their looks ;
 My heart hath paid such grievous usury
 That all their wealth lies in thy beauty's books,
 And all is thine which hath been due to me,
 And I a bankrupt, quite undone by thee.

IV.

BRIGHT star of beauty, on whose eyelids sit
 A thousand nymph-like and enamoured Graces,
 The Goddesses of Memory and Wit,
 Which there in order take their several places ;
 In whose dear bosom sweet delicious Love
 Lays down his quiver, which he once did bear,
 Since he that blessed Paradise did prove,
 And leaves his mother's lap to sport him there.
 Let others strive to entertain with words,
 My soul is of a braver metal made ;
 I hold that vile which vulgar wit affords,
 In me's that faith which Time cannot invade.
 Let what I praise be still made good by you ;
 Be you most worthy, whilst I am most true.

V.

NOTHING but *No*, and *Aye*, and *Aye*, and *No* ?
 How falls it out so strangely you reply ?
 I tell ye, fair, I'll not be answered so,
 With this affirming *No*, denying *Aye*.
 I say "I love," you slightly answer *Aye* ;
 I say "you love," you pule me out a *No* ;
 I say "I die," you echo me an *Aye* ;
 "Save me," I cry, you sigh me out a *No* ;
 Must woe and I have nought but *No* and *Aye* ?
 No I am I, if I no more can have ;
 Answer no more, with silence make reply,
 And let me take myself what I do crave.
 Let *No* and *Aye* with I and you be so ;
 Then answer *No*, and *Aye*, and *Aye* and *No*.

VI.

HOW many paltry, foolish, painted things,
 That now in coaches trouble every street,
 Shall be forgotten, whom no Poet sings,
 Ere they be well wrapt in their winding-sheet !
 Where I to thee eternity shall give,
 When nothing else remaineth of these days,
 And Queens hereafter shall be glad to live
 Upon the alms of thy superfluous praise.
 Virgins and matrons, reading these my rhymes,
 Shall be so much delighted with thy story
 That they shall grieve they lived not in these times,
 To have seen thee, their sex's only glory.
 So shalt thou fly above the vulgar throng,
 Still to survive in my immortal song.

VII.

LOVE in a humor played the prodigal
 And bade my Senses to a solemn feast ;
 Yet, more to grace the company withal,
 Invites my Heart to be the chiefest guest.
 No other drink would serve this glutton's turn
 But precious tears distilling from mine eyne,
 Which with my sighs this epicure doth burn,
 Quaffing carouses in this costly wine ;
 Where, in his cups o'ercome with foul excess,
 Straightways he plays a swaggering ruffian's part,
 And at the banquet in his drunkenness
 Slew his dear friend, my kind and truest Heart.
 A gentle warning, friends, thus may you see
 What 'tis to keep a drunkard company.

VIII.

THERE'S nothing grieves me, but that Age should haste,
 That in my days I may not see thee old,
 That where those two clear sparkling eyes are placed
 Only two loop-holes then I might behold ;
 That lovely, arched, ivory, polished brow
 Defaced with wrinkles that I might but see ;
 Thy dainty hair, so curl'd and crisped now,
 Like grizzled moss upon some aged tree ;
 Thy cheek, now flush with roses, sunk and lean ;
 Thy lips with age as any wafer thin ;
 Thy pearly teeth out of thy head so clean,
 That, when thou feed'st, thy nose shall touch thy chin.
 These lines that now thou scorn'st, which should delight thee,
 Then would I make thee read but to despite thee.

IX.

AS other men, so I myself do muse
 Why in this sort I wrest invention so,
 And why these giddy metaphors I use,
 Leaving the path the greater part do go.
 I will resolve you : I am lunatic ;
 And ever this in madmen you shall find,
 What they last thought of when the brain grew sick
 In most distraction they keep that in mind.
 Thus talking idly in this bedlam fit,
 Reason and I, you must conceive, are twain ;
 'Tis nine years now since first I lost my wit ;
 Bear with me then, though troubled be my brain.
 With diet and correction men distraught
 (Not too far past) may to their wits be brought.

X.

TO nothing fitter can I thee compare
 Than to the son of some rich penny-father,
 Who, having now brought on his end with care,
 Leaves to his son all he had heaped together ;
 This new rich novice, lavish of his chest,
 To one man gives, doth on another spend,
 Then here he riots, yet among the rest
 Haps to lend some to one true honest friend.
 Thy gifts thou in obscurity dost waste,
 False friends thy kindness, born but to deceive thee,
 Thy love that is on the unworthy placed,
 Time hath thy beauty, which with age will leave thee ;
 Only that little which to me was lent
 I give thee back, when all the rest is spent.

XI.

YOU not alone, when you are still alone,
 O God, from you that I could private be !
 Since you one were, I never since was one ;
 Since you in me, my self since out of me,
 Transported from my self into your being ;
 Though either distant, present yet to either,
 Senseless with too much joy, each other seeing,
 And only absent when we are together.
 Give me my self and take your self again,
 Devise some means but how I may forsake you ;
 So much is mine that doth with you remain,
 That, taking what is mine, with me I take you ;
 You do bewitch me ; O, that I could fly,
 From my self you, or from your own self I !

XII.

To the Soul

THAT learned Father, who so firmly proves
 The Soul of man immortal and divine,
 And doth the several offices define,
 Gives her that name, as she the Body moves ;
 Then is she Love, embracing charity ;
 Moving a Will in us, it is the Mind ;
 Retaining knowledge, still the same in kind ;
 As intellectual, it is Memory ;
 In judging, Reason only is her name ;
 In speedy apprehension it is Sense ;
 In right or wrong they call her Conscience ;
 The Spirit, when it to Godward doth inflame.
 These of the Soul the several functions be,
 Which my Heart, lightened by thy love, doth see.

 XIII.
To the Soul

LETTERS and lines we see are soon defaced,
 Metals do waste and fret with canker's rust,
 The diamond shall once consume to dust,
 And freshest colours with foul stains disgraced ;
 Paper and ink can paint but naked words,
 To write with blood of force offends the sight ;
 And if with tears I find them all too light,
 And sighs and signs a silly hope affords,
 O sweetest shadow, how thou serv'st my turn,
 Which still shalt be, as long as there is sun,
 Nor, whilst the world is, never shalt be done,
 Whilst moon shall shine or any fire shall burn ;
 That everything whence shadow doth proceed
 May in my shadow my love's story read.

XIV.

IF he from Heaven that filched that living fire
 Condemn'd by Jove to endless torment be,
 I greatly marvel how you still go free
 That far beyond Prometheus did aspire.
 The fire he stole, although of heavenly kind,
 Which from above he craftily did take,
 Of lifeless clods us living men to make,
 He did bestow in temper of the mind ;
 But you broke into Heaven's immortal store,
 Where Virtue, Honour, Wit, and Beauty lay,
 Which taking thence you have escaped away,
 Yet stand as free as e'er you did before ;
 Yet old Prometheus punished for his rape.
 Thus poor thieves suffer when the greater 'scape.

XV.

His Remedy for Love

SINCE to obtain thee nothing will me stead,
 I have a medicine that shall cure my love,
 The powder of her heart dried, when she is dead,
 That gold nor honour ne'er had power to move,
 Mixt with her tears, that ne'er her true-love crost
 Nor at fifteen ne'er longed to be a bride,
 Boiled with her sighs in giving up the ghost,
 That for her late deceased husband died ;
 Into the same then let a woman breathe,
 That, being chid, did never word reply,
 With one thrice-married's prayers, that did bequeath
 A legacy to stale virginity.
 If this receipt have not the power to win me,
 Little I'll say, but think the Devil's in me.

XVI.

An Allusion to the Phoenix

'MONGST all the creatures in this spacious round
 Of the birds' kind, the Phoenix is alone,
 Which best by you of living things is known ;
 None like to that, none like to you is found.
 Your beauty is the hot and splend'rous sun,
 The precious spices be your chaste desire,
 Which being kindled by that heavenly fire,
 Your life so like the Phoenix's begun ;
 Yourself thus burnèd in that sacred flame,
 With so rare sweetness all the heavens perfuming,
 Again increasing as you are consuming,
 Only by dying born the very same ;
 And, winged by fame, you to the stars ascend,
 So you of time shall live beyond the end.

 XVII.
To Time

STAY, speedy Time, behold, before thou pass,
 From age to age what thou hast sought to see,
 One in whom all the excellencies be,
 In whom Heaven looks itself as in a glass.
 Time, look thyself in this tralucent glass,
 And thy youth past in this pure mirror see,
 As the world's beauty in his infancy,
 What it was then, and thou before it was.
 Pass on, and to posterity tell this,
 Yet see thou tell but truly what hath been ;
 Say to our nephews that thou once hast seen
 In perfect human shape all heavenly bliss,
 And bid them mourn, nay more, despair with thee,
 That she is gone, her like again to see.

 XVIII.

To the Celestial Numbers

TO this our world, to Learning, and to Heaven,
Three Nines there are, to every one a Nine,
One number of the Earth, the other both divine ;
One woman now makes three odd numbers even.
Nine Orders first of Angels be in Heaven,
Nine Muses do with Learning still frequent,
These with the Gods are ever resident ;
Nine Worthy Women to the world were given.
My Worthy One to these Nine Worthies addeth,
And my fair Muse one Muse unto the Nine,
And my good Angel, in my soul divine,
With one more Order these Nine Orders gladdeth ;
 My Muse, my Worthy, and my Angel then
 Makes every One of these three Nines a Ten.

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XIX.

To Humor

YOU cannot love, my pretty heart, and why ?
There was a time you told me that you would ;
But now again you will the same deny,
If it might please you, would to God you could !
What, will you hate ? Nay, that you will not, neither.
Nor love nor hate, how then ? What will you do ?
What, will you keep a mean then betwixt either,
Or will you love me and yet hate me too ?
Yet serves not this. What next ? What other shift ?
You will, and will not ; what a coil is here !
I see your craft, now I perceive your drift,
And all this while I was mistaken there :
 Your love and hate is this, I now do prove you,
 You love in hate, by hate to make me love you.

XX.

To Humor

AN evil spirit, your beauty haunts me still,
 Wherewith, alas, I have been long possest,
 Which ceaseth not to tempt me to each ill,
 Nor gives me once but one poor minute's rest ;
 In me it speaks, whether I sleep or wake,
 And when by means to drive it out I try,
 With greater torments then it me doth take,
 And tortures me in most extremity ;
 Before my face it lays down my despairs,
 And hastes me on unto a sudden death,
 Now tempting me to drown myself in tears,
 And then in sighing to give up my breath.
 Thus am I still provoked to every evil
 By this good wicked spirit, sweet angel-devil.

XXI.

A WITLESS gallant a young wench that wooed
 (Yet his dull spirit her not one jot could move),
 Entreated me, as e'er I wished his good,
 To write him but one sonnet to his love ;
 When I, as fast as e'er my pen could trot,
 Poured out what first from quick invention came,
 Nor never stood one word thereof to blot,
 Much like his wit that was to use the same ;
 But with my verses he his mistress won,
 Which doted on the dolt beyond all measure.
 But see, for you to Heaven for phrase I run,
 And ransack all Apollo's golden treasure ;
 Yet by my froth this fool his love obtains,
 And I lose you for all my love and pains.

XXII.

To Folly

WITH fools and children good discretion bears ;
 Then, honest people, bear with Love and me,
 Nor older yet, nor wiser made by years,
 Amongst the rest of fools and children be ;
 Love, still a baby, plays with gauds and toys,
 And, like a wanton, sports with every feather,
 And idiots still are running after boys,
 Then fools and children fitt'st to go together.
 He still as young as when he first was born,
 No wiser I than when as young as he ;
 You that behold us laugh us not to scorn,
 Give Nature thanks you are not such as we.
 Yet fools and children sometimes tell in play
 Some, wise in show, more fools indeed than they.

XXIII.

LOVE, banished Heaven, on Earth was held in scorn,
 Wandering abroad in need and beggary,
 And wanting friends, though of a Goddess born,
 Yet craved the alms of such as passèd by.
 I, like a man devout and charitable,
 Clothèd the naked, lodged this wandering guest,
 With sighs and tears still furnishing his table
 With what might make the miserable blest.
 But this ungrateful, for my good desert,
 Enticed my thoughts against me to conspire,
 Who gave consent to steal away my heart,
 And set my breast, his lodging, on a fire.
 Well, well, my friends, when beggars grow thus bold,
 No marvel then though charity grow cold.

XXIV.

I HEAR some say, "This man is not in love."
 "What ? can he love ? a likely thing !" they say ;
 " Read but his verse, and it will easily prove."
 O judge not rashly, gentle Sir, I pray !
 Because I trifle loosely in this sort,
 As one that fain his sorrows would beguile.
 You now suppose me all this time in sport,
 And please yourself with this conceit the while.
 Ye shallow censors, sometime see ye not
 In greatest perils some men pleasant be ?
 Where fame by death is only to be got,
 They resolute ? So stands the case with me.
 Where other men in depth of passion cry,
 I laugh at Fortune, as in jest to die.

XXV.

O WHY should Nature niggardly restrain
 That foreign nations relish not our tongue ?
 Else should my lines glide on the waves of Rhene
 And crown the Pyrens with my living song.
 But, bounded thus, to Scotland get you forth,
 Thence take you wing unto the Orcades ;
 There let my verse get glory in the North,
 Making my sighs to thaw the frozen seas ;
 And let the Bards within that Irish isle,
 To whom my Muse with fiery wing shall pass,
 Call back the stiff-necked rebels from exile,
 And mollify the slaughtering Gallowglass ;
 And when my flowing numbers they rehearse,
 Let wolves and bears be charmèd with my verse.

XXVI.

To Despair

I EVER love where never hope appears,
 Yet hope draws on my never-hoping care,
 And my life's hope would die, but for despair ;
 My never-certain joy breeds ever-certain fears ;
 Uncertain dread gives wings unto my hope,
 Yet my hope's wings are laden so with fear,
 As they cannot ascend to my hope's sphere ;
 Though fear gives them more than a heavenly scope,
 Yet this large room is bounded with despair ;
 So my love is still fettered with vain hope,
 And liberty deprives him of his scope,
 And thus am I imprisoned in the air.
 Then, sweet despair, awhile hold up thy head,
 Or all my hope for sorrow will be dead.

XXVII.

IS not Love here as 'tis in other climes,
 And differeth it, as do the several nations ?
 Or hath it lost the virtue with the times,
 Or in this island altereth with the fashions ?
 Or have our passions lesser power than theirs,
 Who had less art them lively to express ?
 Is Nature grown less powerful in their heirs,
 Or in our fathers did she more transgress ?
 I am sure my sighs come from a heart as true
 As any man's that memory can boast ;
 And my respects and services to you
 Equal with his that loves his mistress most.
 Or nature must be partial to my cause,
 Or only you do violate her laws.

XXVIII.

TO such as say thy love I overprize,
 And do not stick to term my praises folly,
 Against these folks, that think themselves so wise,
 I thus oppose my reason's forces wholly,
 Though I give more than well affords my state,
 In which expense the most suppose me vain ;
 Which yields them nothing at the easiest rate,
 Yet at this price returns me treble gain.
 They value not, unskillful how to use,
 And I give much, because I gain thereby ;
 I that thus take, or they that thus refuse,
 Whether are these deceived then or I ?
 In everything I hold this maxim still,
 The circumstance doth make it good or ill.

XXIX.

To the Senses

WHEN conquering Love did first my heart assail,
 Unto mine aid I summoned every sense,
 Doubting, if that proud tyrant should prevail,
 My heart should suffer for mine eyes' offence ;
 But he with beauty first corrupted sight,
 My hearing bribed with her tongue's harmony,
 My taste by her sweet lips drawn with delight,
 My smelling won with her breath's spicery.
 But when my touching came to play his part
 (The king of senses, greater than the rest),
 He yields Love up the keys unto my heart,
 And tells the other how they should be blest.
 And thus by those of whom I hoped for aid
 To cruel Love my soul was first betrayed.

XXX.

To the Vestals

THOSE priests which first the Vestal fire begun,
Which might be borrowed from no earthly flame,
Devised a vessel to receive the sun,
Being steadfastly opposèd to the same ;
Where, with sweet wood, laid curiously by art,
On which the sun might by reflection beat,
Receiving strength from every secret part,
The fuel kindled with celestial heat ;
Thy blessed eyes the sun which lights this fire,
Thy holy thoughts, they be the Vestal flame,
The precious odours be my chaste desire,
My breast's the vessel which includes the same ;
 Thou art my Vesta, thou my Goddess art,
 Thy hallowed temple only is my heart.

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XXXI.

To the Critic

METHINKS I see some crooked mimic jeer,
And tax my Muse with this fantastic grace,
Turning my papers asks, What have we here ?
Making withal some filthy antic face.
I fear no censure, nor what thou canst say,
Nor shall my spirit one jot of vigour lose ;
Think'st thou my wit shall keep the pack-horse way
That every dudgen low invention goes ?
Since sonnets thus in bundles are imprest
And every drudge doth dull our satiate ear,
Think'st thou my love shall in those rags be drest,
That every dowdy, every trull, doth wear ?
 Up to my pitch no common judgement flies ;
 I scorn all earthly dung-bred scarabies.

XXXII.

To the River Anker

OUR flood's-queen Thames for ships and swans is crowned,
 And stately Severn for her shore is praised,
 The crystal Trent for fords and fish renowned,
 And Avon's fame to Albion's cliffs is raised ;
 Carlegion Chester vaunts her holy Dee,
 York many wonders of her Ouse can tell,
 The Peak her Dove, whose banks so fertile be,
 And Kent will say her Medway doth excel ;
 Cotswold commends her Isis to the Thame,
 Our Northern borders boast of Tweed's fair flood,
 Our Western parts extol their Wylye's fame,
 And the old Lea brags of the Danish blood.
 Arden's sweet Anker, let thy glory be,
 That fair Idea only lives by thee.

 XXXIII.
To Imagination

WHILST yet mine eyes do surfeit with delight,
 My woeful heart, imprisoned in my breast,
 Wisheth to be transformèd to my sight,
 That it, like those, by looking might be blest ;
 But whilst my eyes thus greedily do gaze,
 Finding their objects over-soon depart,
 These now the other's happiness do praise,
 Wishing themselves that they had been my heart,
 That eyes were heart, or that the heart were eyes,
 As covetous the other's use to have ;
 But finding Nature their request denies,
 This to each other mutually they crave :
 That since the one cannot the other be,
 That eyes could think, or that my heart could see.

XXXIV.

To Admiration

MARVEL not, Love, though I thy power admire,
 Ravished a world beyond the farthest thought,
 And knowing more than ever hath been taught,
 That I am only starved in my desire.

Marvel not, Love, though I thy power admire,
 Aiming at things exceeding all perfection,
 To wisdom's self to minister correction,
 That I am only starved in my desire.

Marvel not, Love, though I thy power admire,
 Though my conceit I further seem to bend
 Than possibly invention can extend,
 And yet am only starved in my desire.

If thou wilt wonder, here's the wonder, Love,
 That this to me doth yet no wonder prove.

 XXXV.
To Miracle

SOME, misbelieving and profane in love,
 When I do speak of miracles by thee,
 May say, that thou art flatterèd by me,
 Who only write my skill in verse to prove.
 See miracles, ye unbelieving, see,
 A dumb-born Muse made to express the mind,
 A cripple hand to write, yet lame by kind,
 One by thy name, the other touching thee ;
 Blind were mine eyes, till they were seen of thine,
 And mine ears deaf by thy fame healèd be,
 My vices cured by virtues sprung from thee,
 My hopes revived, which long in grave had lien,
 All unclean thoughts, foul spirits, cast out in me
 Only by virtue that proceeds from thee.

XXXVI.

Cupid Conjured

THOU purblind boy, since thou hast been so slack
 To wound her heart, whose eyes have wounded me,
 And suffered her to glory in my wrack,
 Thus to my aid I lastly conjure thee :
 By hellish Styx, by which the Thunderer swears,
 By thy fair mother's unavoyded power,
 By Hecate's names, by Proserpine's sad tears
 When she was rapt to the infernal bower,
 By thine own lovèd Psyche, by the fires
 Spent on thine altars, flaming up to heaven,
 By all true lovers' sighs, vows and desires,
 By all the wounds that ever thou hast given ;
 I conjure thee by all that I have named
 To make her love, or, Cupid, be thou damned.

XXXVII.

DEAR, why should you command me to my rest,
 When now the night doth summon all to sleep ?
 Methinks this time becometh lovers best ;
 Night was ordained, together friends to keep.
 How happy are all other living things,
 Which through the day disjoin by several flight,
 The quiet evening yet together brings,
 And each returns unto his love at night !
 O thou, that art so courteous else to all,
 Why shouldst thou, Night, abuse me only thus,
 That every creature to his kind dost call,
 And yet 'tis thou dost only sever us ?
 Well could I wish it would be ever day,
 If when night comes you bid me go away.

XXXVIII.

SITTING alone, Love bids me go and write ;
 Reason plucks back, commanding me to stay,
 Boasting that she doth still direct the way,
 Or else Love were unable to endite.
 Love, growing angry, vexèd at the spleen
 And scorning Reason's maimèd argument,
 Straight taxeth Reason, wanting to invent,
 Where she with Love conversing hath not been.
 Reason, reproachèd with this coy disdain,
 Despiteth Love, and laugheth at her folly ;
 And Love, contemning Reason's reason wholly,
 Thought it in weight too light by many a grain ;
 Reason, put back, doth out of sight remove,
 And Love alone picks reason out of love.

XXXIX.

SOME, when in rhyme they of their loves do tell,
 With flames and lightnings their exordiums paint,
 Some call on Heaven, some invoke on Hell,
 And Fates and Furies with their woes acquaint.
 Elysium is too high a seat for me ;
 I will not come in Styx or Phlegethon ;
 The thrice-three Muses but too wanton be,
 Like they that lust, I care not, I will none.
 Spiteful Erinnys frights me with her looks,
 My manhood dares not with foul Ate mell,
 I quake to look on Hecate's charming books,
 I still fear bugbears in Apollo's cell.
 I pass not for Minerva nor Astraea,
 Only I call on my divine Idea.

XL.

MY heart the anvil where my thoughts do beat,
 My words the hammers, fashioning my desire,
 My breast the forge, including all the heat,
 Love is the fuel which maintains the fire ;
 My sighs the bellows which the flame increaseth,
 Filling mine ears with noise and nightly groaning,
 Toiling with pain, my labour never ceaseth
 In grievous passions my woes still bemoaning ;
 My eyes with tears against the fire striving,
 Whose scorching gleeed my heart to cinders turneth ;
 But, with these drops the flame again reviving,
 Still more and more it to my torment turneth.
 With Sisyphus thus do I roll the stone,
 And turn the wheel with damnèd Ixion.

XLI.

Love's Lunacy

WHY do I speak of joy, or write of love,
 When my heart is the very den of horror,
 And in my soul the pains of Hell I prove,
 With all his torments and infernal terror ?
 What should I say ? What yet remains to do ?
 My brain is dry with weeping all too long,
 My sighs be spent in uttering of my woe,
 And I want words wherewith to tell my wrong ;
 But, still distracted in Love's lunacy,
 And, bedlam-like, thus raging in my grief,
 Now rail upon her hair, then on her eye,
 Now call her Goddess, then I call her thief,
 Now I deny her, then I do confess her,
 Now do I curse her, then again I bless her.

XLII.

SOME men there be which like my method well
 And much commend the strangeness of my vein ;
 Some say I have a passing pleasing strain ;
 Some say that in my humour I excel ;
 Some, who not kindly relish my conceit,
 They say, as poets do, I use to feign,
 And in bare words paint out my passion's pain.
 Thus sundry men their sundry words repeat ;
 I pass not, I, how men affected be,
 Nor who commends or discommends my verse ;
 It pleaseth me, if I my woes rehearse,
 And in my lines if she my love may see.
 Only my comfort still consists in this,
 Writing her praise I cannot write amiss.

XLIII.

WHY should your fair eyes with such sovereign grace
 Disperse their rays on every vulgar spirit,
 Whilst I in darkness, in the self-same place,
 Get not one glance to recompense my merit ?
 So doth the plowman gaze the wandering star,
 And only rest contented with the light,
 That never learned what constellations are
 Beyond the bent of his unknowing sight.
 Oh, why should beauty, custom to obey,
 To their gross sense apply herself so ill ?
 Would God I were as ignorant as they,
 When I am made unhappy by my skill,
 Only compelled on this poor good to boast,
 Heavens are not kind to them that know them most.

XLIV.

WHILST thus my pen strives to eternize thee
 Age rules my lines with wrinkles in my face,
 Where in the map of all my misery
 Is modelled out the world of my disgrace.
 Whilst, in despite of tyrannizing times,
 Medea-like, I make thee young again,
 Proudly thou scorn'st my world-outwearing rhymes
 And murderest virtue with thy coy disdain.
 And though in youth my youth untimely perish,
 To keep thee from oblivion and the grave
 Ensuing ages yet my rhymes shall cherish,
 When I entombed, my better part shall save ;
 And though this earthly body fade and die,
 My name shall mount upon eternity.

XLV.

MUSES, which sadly sit about my chair,
 Drowned in the tears extorted by my lines,
 With heavy sighs whilst thus I break the air,
 Painting my passions in these sad designs,
 Since she disdains to bless my happy verse,
 The strong-built trophies to her living fame,
 Ever henceforth my bosom be your hearse,
 Wherein the world shall now entomb her name.
 Enclose my music, you poor senseless walls,
 Since she is deaf and will not hear my moans,
 Soften yourselves with every tear that falls,
 Whilst I, like Orpheus, sing to trees and stones,
 Which with my plaint seem yet with pity moved,
 Kinder than she whom I so long have loved.

XLVI.

PLAIN-PATHED Experience, the unlearned's guide,
 Her simple followers evidently shews
 Sometimes what Schoolmen scarcely can decide,
 Nor yet wise Reason absolutely knows.
 In making trial of a murder wrought,
 If the vile actors of the heinous deed
 Near the dead body happily be brought,
 Oft it hath been proved the breathless corse will bleed.
 She's coming near, that my poor heart hath slain,
 Long since departed, to the world no more,
 The ancient wounds no longer can contain,
 But fall to bleeding as they did before.
 But what of this ? Should she to death be led,
 It furthers justice, but helps not the dead.

XLVII.

IN pride of wit when high desire of fame
 Gave life and courage to my labouring pen,
 And first the sound and virtue of my name
 Won grace and credit in the ears of men ;
 With those the throngèd theatres that press
 I in the circuit for the laurel strove,
 Where the full praise, I freely must confess,
 In heat of blood a modest mind might move ;
 With shouts and claps at every little pause
 When the proud round on every side hath rung,
 Sadly I sit, unmoved with the applause,
 As though to me it nothing did belong.
 No public glory vainly I pursue ;
 All that I seek is to eternize you.

XLVIII.

CUPID, I hate thee, which I'd have thee know ;
 A naked starveling ever may'st thou be !
 Poor rogue, go pawn thy fascia and thy bow
 For some few rags wherewith to cover thee.
 Or, if thou'lt not, thy archery forbear,
 To some base rustic do thyself prefer,
 And when corn's sown or grown into the ear,
 Practise thy quiver and turn crow-keeper.
 Or, being blind, as fittest for the trade,
 Go hire thyself some bungling harper's boy ;
 They that are blind are often minstrels made ;
 So may'st thou live, to thy fair mother's joy,
 That whilst with Mars she holdeth her old way,
 Thou, her blind son, may'st sit by them and play.

XLIX.

THOU leaden brain, which censur'st what I write,
 And say'st, my lines be dull and do not move,
 I marvel not thou feel'st not my delight,
 Which never felt'st my fiery touch of love ;
 But thou, whose pen hath like a pack-horse served,
 Whose stomach unto gall hath turned thy food,
 Whose senses, like poor prisoners, hunger-starved,
 Whose grief hath parched thy body, dried thy blood,
 Thou which hast scornèd life and hated death,
 And in a moment mad, sober, glad and sorry,
 Thou which hast banned thy thoughts and cursed thy breath
 With thousand plagues, more than in Purgatory ;
 Thou, thus whose spirit Love in his fire refines,
 Come thou and read, admire, applaud my lines.

L.

AS in some countries far remote from hence
 The wretched creature destinèd to die,
 Having the judgement due to his offence,
 By surgeons begged, their art on him to try,
 Which on the living work without remorse,
 First make incision on each mastering vein,
 Then staunch the bleeding, then transpierce the corse,
 And with their balms recure the wounds again,
 Then poison, and with physic him restore ;
 Not that they fear the hopeless man to kill,
 But their experience to increase the more ;
 Even so my mistress works upon my ill,
 By curing me and killing me each hour,
 Only to shew her beauty's sovereign power.

LI.

CALLING to mind, since first my love begun,
 The uncertain times oft varying in their course,
 How things still unexpectedly have run,
 As it please the Fates, by their resistless force.
 Lastly mine eyes amazedly have seen
 Essex' great fall, Tyrone his peace to gain,
 The quiet end of that long-living Queen,
 This King's fair entrance, and our peace with Spain,
 We and the Dutch at length ourselves to sever.
 Thus the world doth and evermore shall reel ;
 Yet to my Goddess am I constant ever,
 Howe'er blind Fortune turn her giddy wheel.
 Though Heaven and Earth prove both to me untrue,
 Yet am I still inviolate to you.

LII.

WHAT ? Dost thou mean to cheat me of my heart ?
 To take all mine and give me none again ?
 Or have thine eyes such magic or that art,
 That what they get they ever do retain ?
 Play not the tyrant, but take some remorse ;
 Rebate thy spleen, if but for pity's sake ;
 Or, cruel, if thou canst not, let us scourse,
 And, for one piece of thine, my whole heart take.
 But what of pity do I speak to thee,
 Whose breast is proof against complaint or prayer ?
 Or can I think what my reward shall be
 From that proud beauty, which was my betrayer ?
 What talk I of a heart, when thou hast none ?
 —Or if thou hast, it is a flinty one.

LIII.

CLEAR Anker, on whose silver-sanded shore
 My soul-shrined saint, my fair Idea, lies,
 Oh blessed brook, whose milk-white swans adore
 The crystal stream refinèd by her eyes,
 Where sweet myrrh-breathing Zephyr in the Spring
 Gently distils his nectar-dropping showers,
 Where nightingales in Arden sit and sing
 Among the dainty dew-impearlèd flowers ;
 Say thus, fair brook, when thou shalt see thy Queen,
 “ Lo, here thy shepherd spent his wandering years,
 And in these shades, dear nymph, he oft hath been,
 And here to thee he sacrificed his tears.”
 Fair Arden, thou my Tempe art alone,
 And thou, sweet Anker, art my Helicon.

LIV.

YET read at last the story of my woe,
 The dreary abstracts of my endless cares,
 With my life's sorrow interlinèd so,
 Smoked with my sighs and blotted with my tears,
 The sad memorials of my miseries,
 Penned in the grief of mine afflicted ghost,
 My life's complaint in doleful elegies,
 With so pure love as Time could never boast.
 Receive the incense which I offer here,
 By my strong faith ascending to thy fame,
 My zeal, my hope, my vows, my praise, my prayer,
 My soul's oblation to thy sacred name ;
 Which name my muse to highest heavens shall raise
 By chaste desire, true love, and virtuous praise.

LV.

MY fair, if thou wilt register my love,
 A world of volumes shall thereof arise ;
 Preserve my tears, and thou thyself shalt prove
 A second flood, down-raining from mine eyes.
 Note by my sighs, and thine eyes shall behold
 The sunbeams smothered with immortal smoke ;
 And if by thee my prayers may be enrolled,
 They heaven and earth to pity shall provoke.
 Look thou into my breast, and thou shalt see
 Chaste holy vows for my soul's sacrifice,
 That soul, sweet maid, which so hath honoured thee,
 Erecting trophies to thy sacred eyes,
 Those eyes to my heart shining ever bright
 When darkness hath obscured each other light.

LVI.

WHEN like an eaglet I first found my Love,
 For that the virtue I thereof would know,
 Upon the nest I set it forth, to prove
 If it were of that kingly kind or no ;
 But it no sooner saw my Sun appear,
 But on her rays with open eyes it stood,
 To shew that I had hatched it for the air
 And rightly came from that brave mounting brood ;
 And, when the plumes were summed with sweet desire,
 To prove the pinions it ascends the skies ;
 Do what I could it needsly would aspire
 To my soul's sun, those two celestial eyes.
 Thus from my breast, where it was bred alone,
 It after thee is, like an eaglet, flown.

LVII.

YOU best discerned of my mind's inward eyes,—
 And yet your graces outwardly divine,—
 Whose dear remembrance in my bosom lies,
 Too rich a relic for so poor a shrine ;
 You, in whom Nature chose herself to view
 When she her own perfection would admire,
 Bestowing all her excellence on you,
 At whose pure eyes Love lights his hallowed fire ;
 Even as a man that in some trance hath seen
 More than his wondering utterance can unfold,
 That, rapt in spirit, in better worlds hath been,
 So must your praise distractedly be told,
 Most of all short when I would shew you most,
 In your perfections so much am I lost.

LVIII.

IN former times such as had store of coin,
 In wars at home, or when for conquests bound,
 For fear that some their treasure should purloin,
 Gave it to keep to spirits within the ground,
 And to attend it them as strongly tied
 Till they returned ; home when they never came,
 Such as by art to get the same have tried
 From the strong Spirit by no means force the same ;
 Nearer men come, that further flies away,
 Striving to hold it strongly in the deep.
 Even as this spirit, so you alone do play
 With those rich beauties Heaven gives you to keep ;
 Pity, so left to the coldness of your blood,
 Not to avail you, nor do others good !

LIX.

AS Love and I, late harboured in one inn,
 With proverbs thus each other entertain,
 “ In Love there is no lack,” thus I begin ;
 “ Fair words make fools,” replieth he again ;
 “ Who spares to speak doth spare to speed,” quoth I ;
 “ As well,” saith he, “ too forward as too slow ;”
 “ Fortune assists the boldest,” I reply ;
 “ A hasty man,” quoth he, “ ne'er wanted woe ;”
 “ Labour is light where Love,” quoth I, “ doth pay ;”
 Saith he, “ Light burthen's heavy, if far borne ;”
 Quoth I, “ The main lost, cast the bye away ;”
 “ You have spun a fair thread,” he replies in scorn.
 And having thus awhile each other thwarted,
 Fools as we met, so fools again we parted.

LX.

DEFINE my weal, and tell the joys of Heaven,
 Express my woes, and shew the pains of Hell ;
 Declare what fate unlucky stars have given,
 And ask a world upon my life to dwell ;
 Make known the faith that Fortune could not move,
 Compare my worth with other's base desert ;
 Let virtue be the touch-stone of my love,
 So may the heavens read wonders in my heart ;
 Behold the clouds which have eclipsed my sun,
 And view the crosses which my course do let ;
 Tell me if ever since the world begun
 So fair a rising had so foul a set,
 And see if Time (if he would strive to prove)
 Can shew a second to so pure a love.

LXI.

SINCE here's no help, come, let us kiss and part,
 Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
 And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
 That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
 Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
 And when we meet at any time again
 Be it not seen in either of our brows
 That we one jot of former love retain.
 Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
 When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
 When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
 And Innocence is closing up his eyes.
 Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
 From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

LXII.

WHEN first I ended, then I first began,
 The more I travelled, further from my rest,
 Where most I lost, there most of all I wan,
 Pinèd with hunger rising from a feast.
 Methinks I fly, yet want I legs to go,
 Wise in conceit, in act a very sot,
 Ravished with joy amid a hell of woe ;
 What most I seem, that surest am I not.
 I build my hopes a world above the sky,
 Yet with the mole I creep into the earth,
 In plenty I am starved with penury,
 And yet I surfeit in the greatest dearth ;
 I have, I want, despair and yet desire,
 Burned in a sea of ice and drowned amidst a fire.

LXIII.

TRUCE, gentle Love, a parley now I crave,
 Methinks 'tis long since first these wars begun ;
 Nor thou nor I the better yet can have ;
 Bad is the match where neither party won.
 I offer free conditions of fair peace,
 My heart for hostage that it shall remain ;
 Discharge our forces, here let malice cease,
 So for my pledge thou give me pledge again.
 Or if no thing but death will serve thy turn,
 Still thirsting for subversion of my state,
 Do what thou canst, rase, massacre and burn,
 Let the world see the utmost of thy hate ;
 I send defiance, since, if overthrown,
 Thou vanquishing, the conquest is my own.

LXIV.

THINE eyes taught me the alphabet of Love,
To con my cross-row ere I learned to spell
(For I was apt, a scholar like to prove),
Gave me sweet looks when-as I learned well.
Vows were my vowels, when I then begun
At my first lesson in thy sacred name ;
My consonants, the next when I had done,
Words consonant and sounding to thy fame ;
My liquids then were liquid crystal tears,
My cares my mutes, so mute to crave relief ;
My doleful diphthongs were my life's despairs,
Redoubling sighs, the accents of my grief.
 My love's school-mistress now hath taught me so,
 That I can read a story of my woe.

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LXV.

READING sometime, my sorrows to beguile
I find old poets hills and floods admire ;
One he doth wonder monster-breeding Nile,
Another marvels sulphur Etna's fire ;
Now broad-brimmed Indus, then of Pindus' height,
Pelion and Ossa, frosty Caucasus old ;
The Delian Cynthus, then Olympus' weight,
Slow Arar, frantic Gallus, Cydnus cold ;
Some Ganges, Ister, and of Tagus tell,
Some whirlpool Po and sliding Hypasis,
Some old Parnassus where the Muses dwell,
Some Helicon, and some fair Simois.
 “Ah, fools,” think I, “had you Idea seen,
 Poor brooks and banks had no such wonders been.”

LXVI.

SINCE holy Vestal laws have been neglected,
 The God's pure fire hath been extinguished quite ;
 No virgin once attending on that light,
 Nor yet those heavenly secrets once respected ;
 Till thou alone, to pay the heavens their duty
 Within the temple of thy sacred name,
 With thine eyes kindling that celestial flame
 By those reflecting sunbeams of thy beauty.
 Here Chastity, that Vestal most divine,
 Attends that lamp with eye which never sleepeth ;
 The volumes of religion's laws she keepeth,
 Making thy breast that sacred relic's shrine,
 Where blessed angels, singing day and night,
 Praise Him which made that fire which lends that light.

LXVII.

MY fair, look from those turrets of thine eyes
 Into the ocean of a troubled mind,
 Where my poor soul, the bark of sorrow, lies,
 Left to the mercy of the waves and wind.
 See where she floats, laden with purest love,
 Which those fair islands of thy looks afford,
 Desiring yet a thousand deaths to prove,
 Than so to cast her ballast overboard.
 See how her sails be rent, her tacklings worn,
 Her cable broke, her surest anchor lost ;
 Her mariners do leave her all forlorn,
 Yet how she bends towards that blessed coast !
 Lo, where she drowns in storms of thy displeasure,
 Whose worthy prize should have enriched thy treasure.

LXVIII.

IF chaste and pure devotion of my youth,
 Or glory of my April-springing years,
 Unfeignèd love in naked simple truth,
 A thousand vows, a thousand sighs and tears ;
 Or if a world of faithful service done,
 Words, thoughts and deeds devoted to her honour,
 Or eyes that have beheld her as their sun,
 With admiration ever looking on her ;
 A life that never joyed but in her love,
 A soul that ever hath adored her name,
 A faith that time nor fortune could not move,
 A Muse that unto heaven hath raised her fame ;
 Though these nor these deserve to be embraced,
 Yet, fair unkind, too good to be disgraced.

 LXIX.

DIE, die, my soul, and never taste of joy,
 If sighs nor tears nor vows nor prayers can move,
 If faith and zeal be but esteemed a toy,
 And kindness be unkindness in my love.
 Then with unkindness, Love, revenge thy wrong,
 O sweet'st revenge that e'er the heavens gave !
 And with the swan record thy dying song,
 And praise her still to thy untimely grave.
 So in love's death shall love's perfection prove,
 That love divine which I have borne to you,
 By doom concealèd to heavens above,
 That yet the world unworthy never knew,
 Whose pure idea never tongue exprest :
 I feel, you know, the heavens can tell, the rest.

LXX.

BLACK pitchy night, companion of my woe,
The inn of care, the nurse of dreary sorrow,
Why lengthenest thou thy darkest hours so,
Still to prolong my long-time-looked-for morrow ?
Thou sable shadow, image of despair,
Portrait of hell, the air's black mourning weed,
Recorder of revenge, remembrancer of care,
The shadow and the veil of every sinful deed ;
Death like to thee, so live thou still in death,
The grave of joy, prison of day's delight ;
Let heavens withdraw their sweet ambrosian breath,
Nor moon nor stars lend thee their shining light ;
For thou alone renew'st that old desire,
Which still torments me in day's burning fire.

LXXI.

WHO list to praise the day's delicious light,
Let him compare it to her heavenly eye,
The sunbeams to the lustre of her sight ;
So may the learned like the simile,
The morning's crimson to her lips' alike,
The sweet of Eden to her breath's perfume,
The fair Elysium to her fairer cheek,
Unto her veins the only Phoenix' plume,
The angels' tresses to her tressèd hair,
The Galaxeia to her more than white ;
Praising the fairest compare it to my fair,
Still naming her in naming all delight.
So may he grace all these in her alone,
Superlative in all comparison.

LXXII.

GO you, my lines, ambassadors of love,
With my heart's tribute to her conquering eyes,
From whence if you one tear of pity move
For all my woes, that only shall suffice.
When you Minerva in the sun behold,
At her perfections stand you then and gaze,
Where in the compass of a marigold
Meridianis sits within a maze.
And let invention of her beauty vaunt,
When Dorus sings his sweet Pamela's love,
And tell the Gods Mars is predominant,
Seated with Sol, and wears Minerva's glove ;
 And tell the world, that in the world there is
 A heaven on earth, on earth no heaven but this.

LXXIII.

MANY there be excelling in this kind,
Whose well-tricked rhymes with all invention swell ;
Let each commend as best shall like his mind,
Some Sidney, Constable, some Daniel.
That thus their names familiarly I sing,
Let none think them disparagèd to be ;
Poor men with reverence may speak of a king,
And so may these be spoken of by me.
My wanton verse ne'er keeps one certain stay,
But now at hand, then seeks invention far,
And with each little motion runs astray,
Wild, madding, jocund and irregular.
 Like me that lust, my honest merry rhymes
 Nor care for critic, nor regard the times.

A CANSONET.

EYES, with your tears blind if you be,
Why have these tears such eyes to see ?
Poor eyes, if your tears cannot move,
My tears, eyes, then must moan my love.

Then, eyes, since you have lost your sight,
Weep still, and tears shall lend you light,
Till both dissolved and both want might.

No, no, clear eyes, you are not blind,
But in my tears discern my mind ;
Tears be the language which you speak,
Which my heart wanting yet, must break.

My tongue must cease to tell my wrongs,
And make my sighs to get them tongues ;
Yet more than this to her belongs.