

## Complaints.

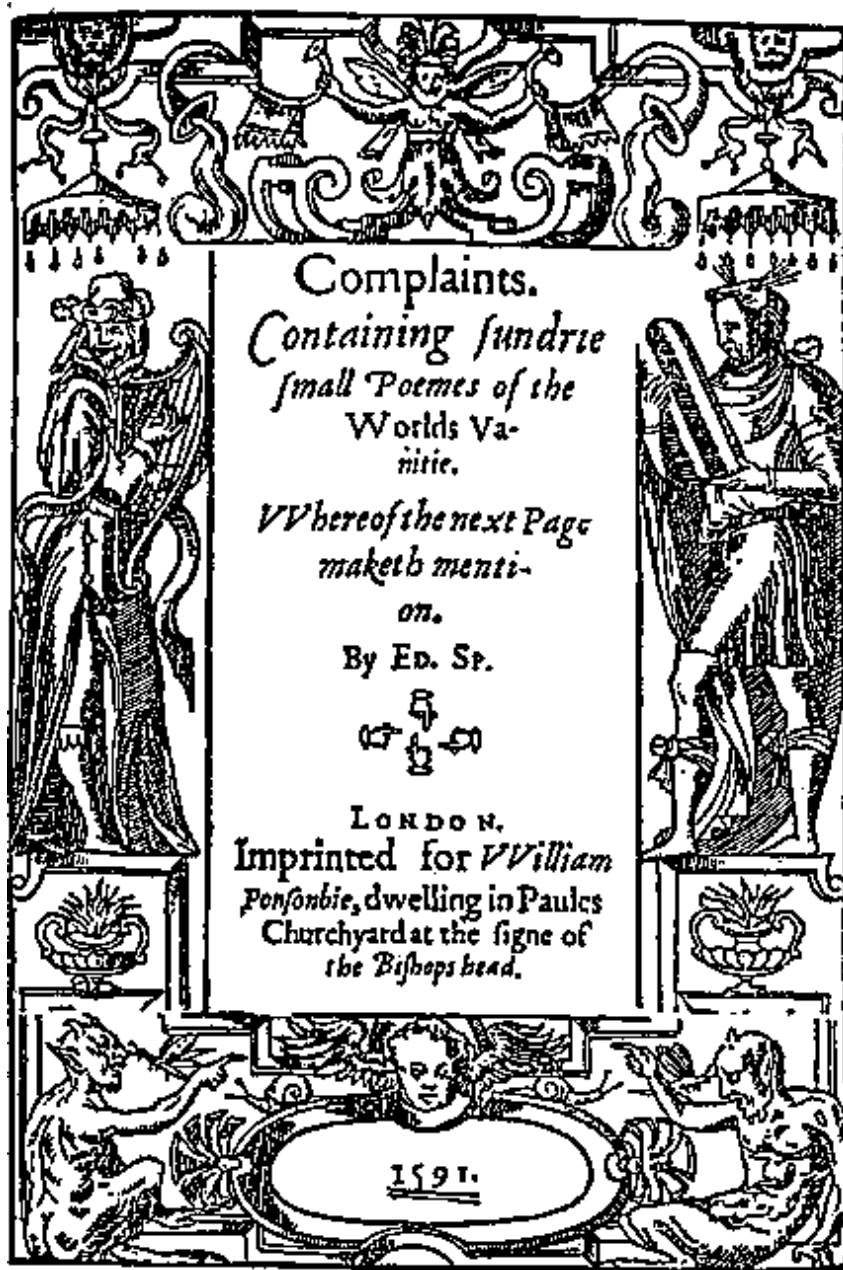
### Edmund Spenser

---

A Note on the [Renascence Editions](#) text:

This html etext of the *Complaints* was prepared from Alexander B. Grosart's *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* [1882] and from Ernest de Sélincourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [Oxford, 1910] by R.S. Bear at the [University of Oregon](#). The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, February 1996.

---



# Complaints.

*Containing sundrie  
small Poemes of the  
Worlds Vanitie.*

*VWhereof the next Page  
maketh mention.*

By Ed. Sp.

+  
+ +  
+

LONDON.  
Imprinted for *VWilliam*  
*Ponsonbie*, dwelling in Paules  
Churchyard at the signe of  
*the Bishops head.*

1591.

---

A note of the sundrie Poemes contained  
in this Volume.

- *The Ruines of Time.*
- *The Teares of the Muses.*
- *Virgils Gnat.*
- *Prosopopoiia, or Mother Hubberds Tale.*
- *The Ruines of Rome: by Bellay.*
- *Muiopotmos, or The Tale of the Butterflie.*
- *Visions of the Worlds vanitie.*
- *Bellayes visions.*
- *Petrarches visions.*

---

*Gentle Reader*

**S**INCE my late setting foorth of the *Faerie Queene*, finding that it hath found a fauourable passage amongst you; I haue sithence endeouored by all good meanes (for the better encrease and accomplishment of your delights,) to get into my handes such smale Poemes of the same Authors; as I heard were disperst abroad in sundrie hands, and not easie to bee come by, by himselfe; some of them hauing bene diuerslie imbeziled and purloyned from him, since his departure ouer Sea. Of the which I haue by good meanes gathered togethaer these fewe parcels present, which I haue caused to bee imprinted altogether, for that they al seeme to containe like matter of argument in them: being all

complaints and meditations of the worlds vanitie; verie graue and profitable. To which effect I vnderstand that he besides wrote sundrie others, namelie *Ecclesiastes*, & *Canticum canticorum* translated, *A senights slumber*, *The hell of louers*, *his Purgatorie*, being all dedicated to Ladies; so as it may seem he ment them all to one volume. Besides some other Pamphlets looselie scattered abroad: as *The dying Pellican*, *The howers of the Lord*, *The sacrifice of a sinner*, *The seuen Psalmes*, &c. which when I can either by himselfe, of otherwise attaine too, I meane likewise for your fauour sake to set foorth. In the meane time praying you gentlie to accept of these, & graciouslie to entertaine the new Poet, *I take leaue*.

---

Continue on to [The Ruines of Time](#).



# The Ruines of Time

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on this [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *The Ruines of Time* was prepared from Alexander B. Grosart's *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* [1882] by [Richard Bear](#) at the University of Oregon. Grosart's text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © [The University of Oregon](#), February 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## *THE RUINE OF TIME.*

DEDICATED

To the right Noble and beauti-

*full Ladie,*

THE LA. M A R I E  
COUNTESSE OF PEMBROOKE.

**M**OST Honourable and bountifull Ladie, there bee long sithens deepe sowed in my brest, the seede of most entire loue & humble affection vnto that most braue Knight your noble brother deceased; which taking roote began in his life time some what to bud forth: and to shew themselues to him, as then in the weaknes of their first spring. And would in their riper strength (had it pleased high God till then to drawe out his daies) spired forth fruit of more perfection. But since God hath disdeigned the world of that most noble Spirit, which was the hope of all learned men, and the Patron of my young Muses; together with him both their hope of anie further fruit was cut off: and also the tender delight of those their first blossoms nipped and quite dead. Yet sithens my late cumming into England, some frends of mine (which might

*much preuaile with me, and indeede commaund me) knowing with howe straight bandes of duetie I was tied to him: as also bound vnto that noble house, (of which the chiefe hope then rested in him) haue sought to reuiue them by vpbraiding me: for that I haue not shewed anie thankefull remembrance towards him or any of them; but suffer their names to sleep in silence and forgetfullnesse. Whome chieflie to satisfie, or els to auoide that fowle blot of vnthankefullnesse, as I haue conceiued this small Poeme, intituled by a generall name of the worlds Ruines: yet speciallie intended to the renowming of that noble race, from which both you and he sprong, and to the eternizing of some of the chiefe of them late deceased. The which I dedicate vnto your La. as whome it most speciallie concerneth: and to whome I acknowledge my selfe bounden, by manie singular fauours & great graces. I pray for your Honourable happinesse: & so humblie kisse your ha[n]des.*

Your Ladships euer  
 humblie at commaund.  
*E.S.*

---

## *THE RUINES OF TIME.*



**I**t chaunced me on day beside the shore  
 Of siluer streaming *Thamesis* to bee,  
 Nigh where the goodly *Verlame* stood of yore,  
 Of which there now remains no memorie,  
 Nor anie little monument to see,  
 By which the trauailer, that fares that way,  
 This once was she, may warned be to say.

There on the other side, I did behold  
 A Woman sitting sorrowfullie wailing,

Rending her yeolow locks, like wyrie golde,  
 About her shoulders careleslie downe trailing,  
 And streames of teares from her faire eyes forth railing.  
 In her right hand a broken rod she held,  
 Which towards heauen shee seemd on high to weld.

10

Whether she were one of that Riuers Nymphes,

Which did the losse of some dere loue lament,  
I doubt; or one of those three fatall Impes,  
Which draw the dayes of men forth in extent;  
Or th' auncient *Genius* of that Citie brent:

But seeing her so piteouslie perplexed, 20  
I (to her calling) askt what her so vexed.

Ah what delight (quoth she) in earthlie thing,  
Or comfort can I, wretched creature haue?  
Whose happines the heauens enuying,  
From highest staire to lowest step me draue,  
And haue in mine owne bowels made my graue,  
That of all Nations now I am forlorne,  
The worlds sad spectacle, and fortunes scorne.

Much was I mooued at her piteous plaint,

And felt my heart nigh riuen in my brest 30  
With tender ruth to see her sore constraint,  
That shedding teares a while I still did rest,  
And after did her name of her request.  
Name haue I none (quoth she) nor anie being,  
Bereft of both by Fates vniust decreeing.

I was that Citie, which the garland wore  
Of *Britaines* pride, deliuer'd vnto me  
By *Romane* Victors, which it wonne of yore;  
Though nought at all but ruines now I bee,

And lye in mine owne ashes, as ye see: 40  
*Verlame* I was; what bootes it that I was,  
Sith now I am but weedes and wastfull gras?

O vaine worlds glorie, and vnstedfast state  
Of all that liues, on face of sinfull earth,  
Which from their first vntill their vtmost date  
Tast no one hower of happines or merth,  
But like as at the ingate of their berth,  
They crying creep out of their mothers woomb,  
So wailing backe go to their wofull toomb.

Why then dooth flesh, a bubble glas of breath,

Hunt after honour and aduancement vaine, 50  
 And reare a trophee for deuouring death,  
 With so great labour and long lasting paine,  
 As if his daies for euer should remaine?  
 Sith all that in this world is great or gaie,  
 Doth as a vapour vanish, and decaie.

Looke backe, who list, vnto the former ages,  
 And call to count, what is of them become:  
 Where be those learned wits and antique Sages,

Which of all wisdomes knew the perfect somme: 60  
 Where those great warriors, which did ouercomme  
 The world with conquest of their might and maine,  
 And made one meare of th' earth & of their raine?

What nowe is of th' *Assyrian* Lyonesse,  
 Of whom no footing now on earth appears?  
 What of the *Persian* Beares outrageousnesse,  
 Whose memorie is quite worne out with yeares?  
 Who of the *Grecian* Libbard now ought heares,  
 That ouerran the East with greedie powre,

And left his whelps their kingdomes to deuoure? 70

And where is that same great seuen headed beast,  
 That made all nations vassals of her pride,  
 To fall before her feete at her beheast,  
 And in the necke of all the world did ride?  
 Where doth she all that wondrous welth nowe hide?  
 With her owne weight downe pressed now shee lies,  
 And by her heaps her hugenesse testifies.

O *Rome* thy ruine I lament and rue,  
 And in thy fall my fatall ouerthrowe,

That whilom was, whilst heauens with equall vewe 80  
 Deignd to behold me, and their gifts bestowe,  
 The picture of thy pride in pompous shew:  
 And of the whole world as thou wast the Empresse,  
 So I of this small Northerne world was Princesse.

To tell the beawtie of my buildings fayre,



Adorn'd with purest golde and precious stone;  
To tell my riches, and endowments rare  
That by my foes are now all spent and gone:  
To tell my forces matchable to none,

Were but lost labour, that few would beleue, 90  
And with rehearsing would me more agreeue.

High towers, faire temples, goodly theaters,  
Strong walls, rich porches, princelie pallaces,  
Large streetes, braue houses, sacred sepulchers,  
Sure gates, sweete gardens, stately galleries,  
Wrought with faire pillours and fine imageries  
All those (ô pitie) now are turnd to dust,  
And ouergrowen with black obliuions rust.

Theretoo for warlike power, and peoples store,

In *Brittanie* was none to match with mee, 100  
That manie often did abie full sore:  
Ne *Troynouaunt*, though elder sister shee,  
With my great forces might compared bee;  
That stout *Pendragon* to his perill felt,  
Who in a seige seauen yeres about me dwelt.

But long ere this *Bunduca* Britonesse  
Her mightie hoast against my bulwarkes brought,  
*Bunduca*, that victorious conqueresse,  
That lifting vp her braue heroïck thought

Bove womens weaknes, with the *Romanes* fought, 110  
Fought, and in field against them thrice preuailed:  
Yet was she foyld, when as she me assailed.

And though at last by force I conquer'd were  
Of hardie *Saxons*, and became their thrall;  
Yet was I with much bloodshed bought full deere,  
And prizde with slaughter of their Generall:  
The monument of whose sad funerall,  
For wonder of the world, long in me lasted;  
But now to nought through spoyle of time is wasted.

Wasted it is, as if it neuer were,

And all the rest that me so honord made, 120  
 And of the world admired eu'rie where,  
 Is turnd to smoake, that doth to nothing fade;  
 And of that brightnes now appears no shade,  
 But greislie shades, such as doo haunt in hell.  
 With fearfull fiends, that in deep darknes dwell.

Where my high steeples whilom vsde to stand,  
 On which the lordly Faulcon wont to towre,  
 There now is but an heap of lyme and sand,

For the Shricke-owle to build her baleful bowre: 130  
 And where the Nightingale wont forth to powre  
 Her restles plaints, to comfort wakefull Louers,  
 There now haunt yelling Mewes & whining Plouers.

And where the christall *Thamis* wont to slide  
 In siluer channell, downe along the Lee,  
 About whose flowrie bankes on either side  
 A thousand Nymphes, with mirthfull iollitee,  
 Were wont to play, from all annoyance free;  
 There now no riuers course is to be seene,

But moorish fennes, and marshes euer greene. 140

Seemes, that that gentle Riuer for great grieffe  
 Of my mishaps, which oft I to him plained;  
 Of for to shunne the horrible mischiefe,  
 With which he saw my cruell foes me pained,  
 And his pure streames with guiltles blood oft stained,  
 From my vnhappy neighborhood farre fled,  
 And his sweete waters away with him led.

There also where the winged ships were seene  
 In liquid waues to cut their fomie waie,

And thousand Fishers numbred to haue been, 150  
 In that wide lake looking for plenteous praie  
 Of fish, which they with baits vsde to betraie,  
 Is now no lake, nor anie fishers store,  
 Nor euer ship shall saile there anie more.

They all are gone, and all with them is gone,

Ne ought to me remaines, but to lament  
My long decay, which no man els doth mone,  
And mourne my fall with dolefull dreriment.  
Yet it is comfort in great languishment,

To be bemoned with compassion kinde, 160  
And mitigates the anguish of the minde.

But me no man bewaileth, but in game,  
Ne sheddeth teares from lamentable eie:  
Nor anie liues that mentioneth my name  
To be remembred of posteritie,  
Saue One that maugre fortunes iniurie,  
And times decay, and enuies cruell tort,  
Hath writ my record in true-seeming sort.

*Cambden* the nourice of antiquitie,

And lanterne vnto late succeeding age, 170  
To see the light of simple veritie,  
Buried in ruines, through the great outrage  
Of her owne people, led with warlike rage;  
*Cambden*, though Time all monuments obscure,  
Yet thy iust labours euer shall endure.

But whie (vnhappie wight) doo I thus crie,  
And grieue that my remembrance quite is raced  
Out of the knowledge of posteritie,  
And all my antique monuments defaced?

Sith I doo dailie see things highest placed, 180  
So soone as fates their vitall thred haue neuer borne.

It is not long, since these two eyes beheld  
A mightie Prince, of most renowned race,  
Whom *England* high in count of honour held,  
And greatest ones did serue to gaine his grace;  
Of greatest ones he greatest in his place,  
Sate in the bosome of his Soueraine,  
And *Right and loyall* did his worde maintaine.

I saw him die, I saw him die, as one 190  
Of the meane people, and brought foorth on beare,

I saw him die, and no man left to mone  
His dolefull fate, that late him loued deare:  
Scarse anie left to close his eylids neare;  
Scarse anie left vpon his lips to laie  
The sacred sod, or *Requiem* to saie.

O trustlesse state of miserable men,  
That builde your blis on hope of earthly thing,  
And vainly thinke your selues halfe happy then,

When painted faces with smooth flattering  
Doo fawne on you, and your wide praises sing, 200  
And when the courting masker louteth lowe,  
Him true in heart and trustie to you trow.

All is but fained, and with oaker die,  
That euerie shower will wash and wipe away,  
All things doo change that vnder heauen abide  
And after death all friendship doth decaie.  
Therefore what euer man bearst worldlie sway,  
Liuing, on God, and on thy selfe relie;

For when thou diest, all shall with thee die. 210

He now is dead, and all is with him dead,  
Saue what in heauens storehouse he vplaid:  
His hope is faild, and come to passe his dread,  
And euill men, now dead, his deedes vpbraid:  
Spite bites the dead, that liuing neuer baid.  
He now is gone, and whiles the Foxe is crept  
Into the hole, the which the Badger swept.

He now is dead, and all his glorie gone,  
And all his greatnes vapoured to nought,

That as a glasse vpon the water is shone, 220  
Which vanisht quite, so soone as it was sought:  
His name is worne alreadie out of thought,  
Ne anie Poet seekes him to reuiue;  
Yet manie Poets honourd him aliue.

Ne doth his *Colin*, carelesse *Colin Cloute*,  
Care now his idle bagpipe vp to raise,

Ne tell his sorrow to the listning rout  
Of shepherd groomes which wont his songs to praise:  
Praise who so list, yet I will him dispraise,

Vntill he quite him of his guiltie blame: 230  
Wake shepherds boy, at length awake for shame.

And who so els did goodnes by him gaine,  
And who so els his bounteous minde did trie,  
Whether he shepheard be, or shepherds swaine,  
(for manie did, which doo it now denie)  
Awake, and to his Song a part applie:  
And I, the whilest you mourne for his decease,  
Will with my mourning plaints your plaint increase.

He dyde, and after him his brother noble Peere,

His brother Prince, his brother noble Peere, 240  
That whilst he liued, was of none enuyde,  
And dead is now, as liuing, counted deare,  
Deare vnto all that true affection beare:  
But vnto thee most deare, ô dearest Dame,  
His noble Spouse, and Paragon of fame.

He whilest he liued, happie was through thee,  
And being dead is happie now much more;  
Liuing, that lincked chaunst with thee to bee,  
And dead, because him dead thou dost adore

As liuing, and thy lost deare loue deplore. 250  
So whilst that thou, faire flower of chastitie,  
Dost liue, by thee thy Lord shall neuer die.

Thy Lord shall neuer die, the whiles this verse  
Shall live, and surely it shall liue for euer:  
For euer it shall liue, and shall rehearse  
His worthie praise, and vertues dying neuer,  
Though death his soule doo from his bodie seuer.  
And thou thy selfe herein shalt also liue;  
Such grace the heauens doo to my verses giue.

Ne shall his sister, ne thy father die, 260  
Thy father, that good Earle of rare renowne,

And noble Patrone of weak pouertie;  
Whose great good deeds in countrey and in towne  
Haue purchast him in heauen an happie crowne;  
Where he now liueth in eternall blis,  
And left his sonne t' ensue those steps of his.

He noble bud, his Grandsires liuelie hayre,  
Vnder the shadow of thy countenaunce  
Now ginnes to shoote vp fast, and flourish fayre,

In learned artes and goodlie gouernaunce, 270  
That him to highest honour shall aduaunce.  
Braue Impe of *Bedford*, grow apace in bountie,  
And count of wisdom more than of thy Countie.

Ne may I let thy husbands sister die,  
That goodly Ladie, sith she eke did spring  
Out of his stocke, and famous familie,  
Whose praises I to future age doo sing,  
And foorth out of her happie womb did bring  
The sacred brood of learning and all honour;

In whom the heuens powrde all their gifts vpon her. 280

Most gentle spirite breathed from aboue,  
Out of the bosome of the makers blis,  
In whom all bountie and all vertuous loue  
Appeared in their natiue propertis,  
And did enrich that noble breast of his,  
With treasure passing all this worldes worth,  
Worthie of heaven it selfe, which brought it forth.

His blessed spirite full of power diuine  
And influence of all celestiall grace,

Loathing this sinfull earth and earthlie slime, 290  
Fled backe too soone vnto his natiue place.  
Too soone for all that did his loue embrace,  
Too soone for all this wretched world, whom he  
Robd of all right and true nobilitie.

Yet ere his happie soule to heauen went  
Out of this fleshlie g[ao]le, he did devise

Vnto his heauenlie maker to present  
 His bodie, as a spotles sacrifice;  
 And chose, that guiltie hands of enemies

Should powre forth th' offering of his guiltles blood: 300  
 So life exchanging for his countries good.

O noble spirite, liue there euer blessed,  
 The worlds late wonder, and the heauens new ioy,  
 Liue euer there, and leaue me here distressed  
 With mortall cares, and cumbrous worlds anoy.  
 But where thou dost that happines enjoy,  
 Bid me, ô bid me quicklie come to thee,  
 That happie there I maie thee alwaies see.

Yet whilest the fates affoord me vitall breath,

I will it spend in speaking of thy praise, 310  
 And sing to thee, vntill that timelie death  
 By heauens doome doo ende my earthlie daies:  
 Thereto doo thou my humble spirite raise,  
 And into me that sacred breath inspire,  
 Which thou there breathest perfect and entire.

Then will I sing, but who can better sing,  
 Than thine owne sister, peerles Ladie bright,  
 Which to thee sings with deep harts sorrowing,  
 Sorrowing tempered with deare delight;

That her to heare I feele my feeble spright 320  
 Robbed of sense, and rauished with ioy:  
 O sad ioy made of mourning and anoy.

Yet will I sing, but who can better sing,  
 Than thou thy selfe, thine owne selfes valiance,  
 That whilest thou liuedst, madest the forrests ring,  
 And fields resownd, and flockes to leap and daunce,  
 And shepherds leaue their lambs vnto mischaunce,  
 To runne thy shrill *Arcadian* Pipe to heare:  
 O happie were those dayes, thrice happie were.

But now more happie thou, and wretched wee, 330  
 Which want the wonted sweetnes of thy voice,

Whiles thou now in *Elisian* fields so free,  
With *Orpheus*, and with *Linus* and the choice  
Of all that euer did in rimes reioyce,  
Conuersest, and doost heare their heauenlie layes,  
And they heare thine, and thine doo better praise.

So there thou liuest, singing euermore,  
And here thou liuest, being euer song  
Of vs, which liuing loued thee afore,

Which now thee worship, mongst that blessed throng 340  
Of heauenlie Poets and Heroes strong.  
So thou both here and there immortall art,  
And euerie where through excellent desart.

But such as neither of themselues can sing,  
Nor yet are sung of others for reward,  
Die in obscure obliuion, as the thing  
Which neuer was, ne euer with regard  
Their names shall of the later age be heard,  
But shall in rustie darknes euer lie,

Vnles they mentiond be with infamie. 350

What booteth it to haue beene rich aliue?  
What to be great? what to be gracious?  
When after death no token doth suruiue  
Of former being in this mortall hous,  
But sleepes in dust dead and inglorious,  
Like beast, whose breath but in his nostrels is,  
And hath no hope of happinesse or blis.

How manie great ones may remembred be,  
Which in their daise most famouslie did florish;

Of whome no word we heare, nor signe now see, 360  
But as things wipt out with a sponge to perishe,  
Because they liuing cared not to cherishe  
No gentle wits, through pride or couetize,  
Which might their names for ever memorize.

Prouide therefore (ye Princes) whilst ye liue,  
That of the *Muses* ye may friended bee,



Which vnto men eternitie do giue;  
For they be daughters of Dame memorie  
And *Ioue* the father of eternitie,

And do those men in golden thrones repose, 370  
Whose merits they to glorifie do chose.

The seuen fold yron gates of grislie Hell,  
And horrid house of sad *Proserpina*,  
They able are with power of mightie spell  
To breake, and thence the soules to bring awai  
Out of dread darknesse, to eternall day,  
And them immortall make, which els would die  
In foule forgetfulnesse, and nameles lie.

So whilome raised they the puissant brood

Of golden girt *Alcmena*, for great merite, 380  
Out of the dust, to which the *Oetoean* wood  
Had him consum'd, and spent his vitall spirite:  
To highest heauen, where now he doth inherite  
All happinesse in *Hebes* siluer bowre,  
Chosen to be her dearest Paramoure.

So raise they eke faire *Ledaes* warlick twinnes,  
And interchanged life vnto them lent,  
That when th'one dies, th' other then beginnes  
To shew in Heauen his brightnes orient;

And they, for pittie of the sad wayment 390  
Which *Orpheus* for *Eurydice* did make,  
Her back againe to life sent for his sake.

So happie are they, and so fortunate,  
Whome the *Pierian* sacred sisters loue,  
That freed from bands of implacable fate  
And power of death, they liue for aye aboue,  
Where mortall wreakes their blis may not remoue:  
But with the Gods, for former vertues meede,  
On *Nectar* and *Ambrosia* do feede.

For deeds doe die, how euer noblie donne, 400  
And thoughts of men do as themselues decay,

But wise wordes taught in numbers for to runne,  
Recorded by the Muses, liue for ay;  
Ne may with storming showers be washt away,  
Ne bitter breathing windes with harmfull blast,  
Nor age, nor envie shall them euer wast.

In vaine doo earthly Princes then, in vaine  
Seeke with Pyramides, to heauen aspired;  
Or huge Colosses, built with costlie paine;

Or brasen Pillours, neuer to be fired, 410  
Or Shrines, made of the mettall most desired;  
To make their memories for euer liue:  
For how can mortall immortalitie giue.

Such one *Mausolus* made, the worlds great wonder,  
But now no remnant doth thereof remaine:  
Such one *Marcellus* but was torne with thunder:  
Such one *Lisippus*, but is worne with raine;  
Such one King *Edmond*, but was rent for gaine.  
All such vaine monuments of earthlie masse,

Deuour'd of Time, in time to nought doo passe. 420

But fame with golden wings aloft doth flie,  
Aboue the reach of ruinous decay,  
And with braue plumes doth beate the azure skie,  
Admir'd of base-borne men from farre away:  
Then who so will with vertuous deeds assay  
To mount to heauen, on *Pegasus* must ride,  
And with sweete Poets verse be glorifide.

For not to haue been dipt in *Lethe* lake,  
Could saue the sonne of *Thetis* from to die;

But that blinde bard did him immortall make 430  
With verses, dipt in deaw of *Castalie*:  
Which made the Easterne Conqueror to crie,  
O fortunate yong-man, whose vertue found  
So braue a Trompe, thy noble acts to sound.

Therefore in this halfe happie I doo read  
Good *Meliboe*, that hath a Poet got,

To sing his liuing praises being dead,  
Deseruing neuer here to be forgot,  
In spite of enuie that his deeds would spot:

Since whose decease, learning lies vnregarded, 440  
And men of armes doo wander vnrewarded.

Those two be those two great calamities,  
That long agoe did grieue the noble spright  
Of *Salomon* with great indignities;  
Who whilome was alieue the wisest wight.  
But now his wisdom is disprooued quite;  
For he that now welds all things at his will,  
Scorns th' one and th' other in his deeper skill.

O grieffe of griefes, ô: gall of all good heartes,

to see that vertue should dispised bee 450  
Of him, that first was raisde for vertuous parts,  
And now broad spreading like an aged tree,  
Lets none shoot vp, that nigh him planted bee:  
O let the man, of whom the Muse is scorned,  
Nor alieue, nor dead be of the Muse adorned.

O vile worlds trust, that with such vaine illusion  
Hath so wise men bewicht, and ouerkest,  
That they see not the way of their confusion,  
O vainesse to be added to the rest,

That do my soule with inward grieffe infest: 460  
Let them behold the piteous fall of mee:  
And in my case their owne ensample see.

And who so els that sits in highest seate  
Of this worlds glorie, worshipped of all,  
Ne feareth change of time, nor fortunes threate,  
Let him behold the horror of my fall,  
And his owne end vnto remembrance call;  
That of like ruine he may warned bee,  
And in himselfe be moou'd to pittie mee.

Thus hauing ended all her piteous plaint, 470  
With dolefull shrikes shee vanished away,

That I through inward sorrowe wexen faint,  
And all astonished with deepe dismay,  
For her departure, had no word to say:  
But fate long time in sencelesse sad affright,  
Looking still, if I might of her haue sight.

Which when I missed, hauing looked long,  
My thought returned greeued home againe,  
Renewing her complaint with passion strong,

For ruth of that same womans piteous paine;  
Whose wordes recording in my troubled braine,  
I felt such anguish wound my feeble heart,  
That frozen horror ran through euerie part.

480

So inlie greeuing in my groning brest,  
And deepelie musing at her doubtfull speach,  
Whose meaning much I labor'd forth to wreste,  
Being aboue my slender reasons reach;  
At length by demonstration me to teach,  
Before mine eies strange sights presented were,

Like tragicke Pageants seeming to appeare.

490

1.

I SAW an Image, all of ma[ss]ie gold,  
Plac'd on high vpon an Altare faire,  
That all, which did the same from farre beholde,  
Might worship it, and fall on lowest staire.  
Not that great Idoll might with this compaire,  
To which the *Assyrian* tyrant would haue made  
The holie brethren, falslie to haue praid,

But th' Altare, on the which this Image staid,  
Was (ô great pitie) built of brickle clay,

That shortly the foundation decaid,  
With showres of heauen and tempests worne away,  
Then downe it fell, and low in ashes lay,  
Scorn'd of euerie one, which by it went;  
That I it seeing, dearelie did lament.

500

## 2.

Next vnto this a statelie Towre appeared,  
 Built all of richest stone, that might bee found,  
 And nigh vnto the Heauens in height vpreared,  
 But placed on a plot of sandie ground:  
 Not that great Towre, which is so much renownd

For tongues confusion in holie writ, 510  
 King *Ninus* worke, might be compar'd to it.

But ô vaine labours of terrestriall wit,  
 That buildes so stronglie on so frayle a soyle,  
 As with each storme does fall away, and flit,  
 And giues the fruit of all your trauailes toyle  
 To be the pray of Tyme, and Fortunes spoyle:  
 I saw this Towre fall sodainelie to dust,  
 That nigh with grieve thereof my heart was Brust.

## 3.

Then did I see a pleasant Paradize,

Full of sweete flowres and daintiest delights, 520  
 Such as on earth man could not more deuize,  
 With pleasures choyce to feed his cheerefull sprights;  
 Not that, which *Merlin* by his Magicke slights  
 Made for the gentle squire, to entertaine  
 His fayre *Belphoebe*, could this gardine staine.

But ô short pleasure bought with lasting paine,  
 Why will hereafter anie flesh delight  
 In earthlie blis, and ioy in pleasures vaine,  
 Since that I sawe this gardine wasted quite,

That where it was scarce seemed anie sight? 530  
 That I, which once that beautie did beholde,  
 Could not from teares my melting eyes with-holde.

## 4.

Soone after this a Giaunt came in place,

Of wondrous power, and of exceeding stature,  
That none durst vewe the horror of his face,  
Yet was he milde of speach, and meeke of nature.  
Not he, which in despight of his Creatour  
With railing tearmes defied the Iewish hoast,  
Might with this mightie one in hugenes boast.

For from the one he could to th' other coast, 540  
Stretch his strong thighes, and th' Occæan ouerstride,  
And reach his hand into his enemies hoast.  
But see the end of pompe and fleshlie pride;  
One of his feete vnwares from him did slide,  
That downe hee fell into the deepe Abisse,  
Where drownd with him is all his earthlie blisse.

5.

Then did I see a Bridge, made all of golde,  
Ouer the Sea from one to other side,  
Withouten prop or pillour it t' vpholde,

But like the colour'd Rainbowe arched wide: 550  
Not that great Arche, which *Traian* edificide,  
To be a wonder to all age ensuing,  
Was matchable to this in equall vewing.

But (ah) what bootes it to see earthlie thing  
In glorie, or in greatnes to excell,  
Sith time doth greatest things to ruine bring?  
This goodlie bridge, one foote not fastned well,  
Gan faile, and all the rest downe shortlie fell,  
Ne of so braue a building ought remained,

That grieffe thereof my spirite greatly pained. 560

6.

I saw two Beares, as white as anie milke,  
Lying together in a mightie caue,  
Of milde aspect, and haire as soft as silke,  
That saluage nature seemed not to haue,  
Nor after greedie spoyle of blood to craue:  
Two fairer beasts might not elsewhere be found,

Although the compast world were sought around.

But what can long abide about this ground  
In state of blis, or stedfast happinesse?

The Caue, in which these Beares lay sleeping sound, 570  
Was but earth, and with her owne weightinesse,  
Vpon them fell, and did vnwares oppresse,  
That for great sorrow of their sudden fate,  
Henceforth all wor[l]ds felicitie I hate.

¶ Much was I troubled in my heauie spright,  
At sight of these sad spectacles forepast,  
That all my senses were bereaued quight,  
And I in minde remained sore agast,  
Distraught twixt feare and pitie; when at last

I heard a voyce, which loudly to me called, 580  
That with the suddein shrill I was appalled.

Behold (said it) and by ensample see,  
That all is vanitie and grieffe of minde,  
Ne other comfort in this world can be,  
But hope of heauen, and heart to God inclinde;  
For all the rest must needs be left behinde:  
With that it bad me, to the other side  
To cast mine eye, where other sights I spide[.]

1.

¶ VPON that famous Riuers further shore,

There stood a snowie Swan of heauenlie hiew, 590  
And gentle kinde, as euer Fowle afore;  
A fairer one in all the goodlie crieue  
Of white *Strimonian* brood might no man view:  
There he most sweetly sung the prophecie  
Of his owne death in dolefull Elegie.

At last, when all his mourning melodie  
He ended had, that both the shores resounded,  
Feeling the fit that him forewarnd to die,

With loftie flight aboue the earth he bounded,

And out of sight to highest heauen mounted: 600  
Where now he is become an heauenly signe;  
There now the ioy is his, here sorrow mine.

2.

Whilist thus I looked, loe adowne the *Lee*,  
I saw an Harpe stroong all with siluer twyne,  
And made of golde and costlie yuorie,  
Swimming, that whilome seemed to haue been  
The harpe, on which *Dan Orpheus* was seene  
Wylde beasts and forrests after him to lead,  
But was th' Harpe of *Philisides* now dead.

At length out of the Riuer it was reard 610  
And borne aboue the cloudes to be diuin'd,  
Whilst all the way most heauenly noyse was heard  
Of the strings, stirred with the warbling wind,  
That wrought both ioy and sorrow in my mind:  
So now in heauen a signe it doth appeare,  
The Harpe well knowne beside the Northern Beare.

3.

Soone after this I saw, on th' other side,  
A curious Coffe made of *Heben* wood,  
That in it did most precious treasure hide,

Exceeding all this baser worldes good: 620  
Yet through the ouerflowing of the flood  
It almost drowned was, and done to nought,  
That sight thereof much grieu'd my pensiuie thought.

At length when most in perill it was brought,  
Two Angels downe descending with swift flight,  
Out of the swelling streame it lightly caught,  
And twixt their blessed armes it carried quight  
Aboue the reach of anie liuing sight:  
So now it is transform'd into that starre,

In which all heauenly treasures are.



## 4.

Looking aside I saw a stately Bed,  
 Adorned all with costly cloth of gold,  
 That might for anie Princes couche be red,  
 And dect with daintie flowres, as if it shold  
 Be for some bride, her ioyous night to hold:  
 Therein a goodly Virgine sleeping lay;  
 A fairer wight saw neuer summers day.

I heard a voyce that called farre away  
 And her awaking bad her quickly dight,

For lo her Bridegrome was in readie ray  
 To come to her, and seeke her loues delight:  
 With that she started vp with cherefull sight,  
 When suddeinly both bed and all was gone,  
 And I in languor left there all alone.

640

## 5.

Still as I gazed, I beheld where stood  
 A Knight all arm'd, vpon a winged steed,  
 The same that was bred of *Medusaes* blood,  
 In which *Dan Perseus* borne of heauenly see,  
 The faire *Andromeda* from perill freed:

Full mortally this Knight ywounded was,  
 That streames of blood fourth flowed on the gras.

650

Yet was he dect (small ioy it was to him alas)  
 With manie garlands for his victories,  
 And with rich spoyles, which late he did purchas  
 Through braue atcheiuements from his enemies:  
 Fainting at last through long infirmities,  
 He smote his steed, that straight to heauen him bore,  
 And left me here his losse for to deplore.

## 6.

Lastly I saw an Arke of purest golde

Vpon a brazen pillour standing hie, 660  
 Which th' ashes seem'd of some great Prin[c]e to hold,  
 Enclosde therein for endles memorie  
 Of him, whom all the world did glorifie:  
 Seemed the heauens with the earth did disagree,  
 Whether should of those ashes keeper bee.

At last me seem'd wing footed *Mercurie*,  
 From heauen descending to appease their strife,  
 The Arke did beare with him aboute the skie,  
 And to those ashes gaue a second life,

To liue in heauen, where happines is rife: 670  
 At which the earth did grieue exceedingly,  
 And I for dole was almost like to die.

*L'Enuoy.*

Immortall spirite of *Philisides*,  
 Which now art made the heauens ornament,  
 That whilome wast the worlds chiefst riches;  
 Giue leaue to him that lou'de thee to lament  
 His losse, by lacke of thee to heauen hent,  
 And with last duties of this broken verse,  
 Broken with sighes, to decke thy sable Herse.

And ye faire Ladie th' honor of your daies, 680  
 And glorie of the world, your high thoughts scorne;  
 Vouchsafe this monument of his last praise,  
 With some few siluer dropping teares t'adorne:  
 And as ye be of heauenlie off-spring borne,  
 So vnto heauen let your high minde aspire,  
 And loath this drosse of sinfull worlds desire.

FINIS.

---

Continue on to [The Teares of the Muses](#).



Richard Bear's CV has moved to <<http://epud.net/~bears/resume.html>>

# Risa Stephanie Bear

## Curriculum Vitae

### Education

- M.S. in [Arts & Administration](#) (Museum Studies), University of Oregon, 1999.
- M.A. in [English](#), University of Oregon, 1993.
- B.A. in [English](#), *summa cum laude*, University of Oregon, 1989.

### Professional and Community Activities

- Pending: UO Library Faculty presentation on Oregonian digitization project, April 2005; presentation on Oregonian digitization project to American Society of Indexers, Pasadena, CA, May 2005.
- Gender Equity Team, University Standing Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns, UO, 2004-
- Presentation on digitization project to Oregon Educational Media Association, Seaside, Oregon, October 2004
- Board member, PFLAG Eugene-Springfield (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders)
- Presentation on digitization project to Pacific Northwest Library Association, Wenatchee, Washington, August 2004
- Award for contributions to UO Arts & Administration program, July, 2004
- Presentation on digitization project to Oregon Library Association, Eugene, Oregon, March, 2004
- Received LSTA (IMLS) Federal grant, 2004, for Oregonian digitization project
- Grants & Awards Committee, UO Libraries, 2003-5. Committee Chair, 2004-5
- Presentation on online publishing to Renaissance Society of America, 2003, Toronto
- Oregon Library Association Conference, 2002, Portland, Oregon
- Online Northwest Conference, 2002, Eugene, Oregon
- NINCH Copyright Town Meeting, UO, November 2001
- Arts & Administration Courtesy Faculty (Editor, CultureWork), 1997-2004
- UO Library Faculty Vice President 2001-2
- UO Library Disaster Preparedness Committee 2001-2
- UO Library Circulation Supervisors Conference 2001-
- UO Library Collections Initiative Subgroup 2001-2
- UO Library Map-GIS Librarian Search Committee 1999
- Northwest Academic Computing Consortium Conference 2001
- Online Northwest Conference, Portland, Oregon 2000
- Spenser Millennium Conference, Doneraile, Ireland, 1999
- Online Northwest Conference, Portland, Oregon 1998
- Classes on indexing, Marylhurst University, Fall-Winter 1998
- Presentation on online publishing to Congress of Learned Societies, St. Johns,

Newfoundland, 1997 (COCH/COSH)

- Awards for Renaissance Editions website, 1996-2000

## Professional Associations

- Editorial Board member, *Microform & Imaging Review* (ISSN 0949-5770).
- American Society of Indexers
- Consortium for Computing in the Humanities (COCH/COSH)
- Lane Arts Council
- Advisory Board member emeritus, Northwest Outreach Center, Regional Resource Center on Deafness
- Advisory Board member emeritus, Wired Humanities Project
- Wired Research Interest Group, Center for the Study of Women in Society
- Oregon Library Association
- Renaissance Society of America

## Publications and Lectures

- Author of *Desire for the Land*, poems, Stony Run Press, 1995, nominated for the Oregon Book Awards and the Paterson Poetry Prize, 1996.
- Author of *Stony Run: A Gardener's Journal*, Stony Run Press, 1997, 2001.
- Author of *Lettuce in Winter*, poems, Stony Run Press, 2003. Poems have appeared in *Rockhurst Review*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Bellowing Ark*, *Sand River Journal*, *ZeroCity*, *Aerious*, *Ariga: Visions*, *Disquieting Muses*, *Lynx: Poetry from Bath*, *writtenmind.com*, and *New Zoo Poetry Review*. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize in 1999 for "Cityscape with Pink Rose."
- Publisher, general editor and webmaster of the award-winning electronic text repository Renaissance Editions.
- "Oregon Newspaper Indexing." Presentation to Oregon Library Association, Eugene, Oregon, March, 2004 and to Pacific Northwest Library Association, Wenatchee, Washington, August 2004.
- "Nexus :Renaissance Editions and the Art of Online Publishing," Renaissance Society of America, Toronto, March 2003.
- Publisher, general editor and webmaster emeritus of the award winning Edmund Spenser Home Page, 1996-2000. This site is now maintained by Cambridge University.
- Listowner, 1996-2000, of SPENSER-L, an online discussion group on early modern English literature.
- Interviewee in "First Impressions," newspaper history documentary that aired on Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1999.
- Listowner, 1999-2000, of SPENSER\_PROJECT, an online discussion group on distance education and Early Modern texts.

- Listowner of [MICROFORMS](#), an online discussion group for microforms managers.
- Founding editor emeritus and webmaster of [CultureWork](#) (ISSN 1531-983X), an online advisory from the [Institute for Community Arts Studies](#) at the University of Oregon.
- "A History of Renaissance Editions," Faculty Forum, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon, March 2001.
- "The Lady of May: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Etext" in [TEXT Technology](#), Winter 1998.
- "'Text Version': An Exercise in Accessibility Design" in *Culturework: A Broadside for Arts and Culture Workers* [Vol. 2, No. 1](#) (February, 1998).
- "Internet for the Humanities." April 1993. Oregon Humanities Center, University of Oregon.
- "E-Mail and the Humanities." March 1994. Oregon Humanities Center, University of Oregon.
- [The Lady of May: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Etext](#). May 1997. COCH/COSH, Congress of Learned Societies, Memorial University, St. Johns, Newfoundland.
- [The Spenser Project: A Proposal](#). Spenser Millennium Conference, Doneraile, Ireland, August 27, 1999 (by proxy).

## Work History

Computer Skills: HTML, Mac OS, DOS, Windows, Unix, X-Windows, VMS; wide variety of word processing, scanning, OCR, database, spreadsheet, presentation, and studio software.

- February 2004-present. Principal Investigator, [Oregon Newspaper Indexing](#). Concurrent with Circulation and Support Services Supervisor, below. Conceived project. Obtained LSTA federal grant for 2004-2005 to convert 800,000 record card index to online database, with object of sharing developed software and procedures with other Oregon libraries and create collaborative opportunities. Hire, train and equip crew of one classified and up to 25 student workers. With in-kind contributions and grant awards, budget will total more than \$200,000. Track progress at <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/govdocs/indexing/news.html>.
- February 2000-present. Circulation and Support Services Supervisor, [Document Center](#), University of Oregon Libraries. Supervise four classified staff and up to 28 Library Student Assistants. Oversee documents processing, circulation, maintenance of paper and microfilm collections, equipment maintenance, and patron assistance. Manage physical aspects of four major collections, including planning collection shifts and ensuring proper care and housing of materials. These materials comprise 2.25 million items in a variety of formats and call number systems. Develop and maintain departmental intranet, forms, and schedules. Oversee personnel budgets. Develop and maintain documentation for all procedures. Develop and carry out [online conversions of card indexes](#) of newspapers. Carry out technical functions related to the Library's automated system, including regular communication and cooperation with Library Systems, Preservation, and Access Services staff. Hear and adjudicate appeals on fines and other charges.

- 1998-2004. Concurrently with Library positions: editor and webmaster of [CultureWork](#) (ISSN 1531-983X), an online advisory from the [Institute for Community Arts Studies](#) at the University of Oregon. This was a courtesy faculty arrangement, with stipend.
- 1997-2000. Microforms Coordinator, [University of Oregon Libraries](#). Maintain microfilm, microfiche, and microprint collections. Maintain computer network and microform viewing and printing equipment. Assist patrons, in person, by phone, fax, and email. Assist the Government Documents and Microforms Librarian in special projects. Design, build, and maintain the Microforms [website](#) and [listserv](#). Develop finding aids and inventories for uncatalogued sets. Develop and carry out the [preservation plan](#) for the Collection. Publish 110 Oregon newspapers on microfilm, maintaining contact with the customers (newspaper offices, libraries, and historical societies) for these titles.
- 1989-97. Evaluator, [University of Oregon Admissions](#). Evaluate and process student applications for admission to the University. Determine admission eligibility, transfer course work equivalence, and general university requirements completed. Create and maintain student records. Respond to telephone and in-person inquiries on University requirements. Interpret State Board of Higher Education and University admission policies, requirements, and standards.
- 1987-89. Manuscript processor, University of Oregon Knight Library, [Special Collections & University Archives](#). Organize and inventory collections of manuscripts, personal records, photographs, and artwork. Specialize in children's authors and illustrators. Prepare exhibits for display cases in the Oregon Room.

### **Personal Interests**

Journeyman letterpress printer, compositor, Linotype and bindery operator, and owner/operator of Stony Run Press, Pleasant Hill, Oregon. Kayaking, hiking, mountaineering, homemaking, interiors, gardening, subsistence farming, music, poetry.



# The Teares of the Muses.

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *The Teares of the Muses* was prepared from Alexander B. Grosart's *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* [1882] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). Grosart's text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, February 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

THE  
*TEARES OF THE MU-*  
*ses.*

BY ED. Sp.

+  
++  
+

LONDON.  
Imprinted for *VWilliam*  
*Ponsonbie*, dwelling in Paules  
Churchyard at the signe of  
*the Bishops head.*

1591.

---

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
The Ladie *Strange*.

**M**OST braue and noble Ladie, the things that make ye so much honored of the world as ye bee, are such, as (without my simple lines testimonie) are throughlie knowen to all men; namely, your excellent beautie, your vertuous behauior, & your noble match with that most honourable Lord the verie Paterne of right Nobilitie: But the causes for which ye haue thus deserued of me to me honoured (if honour it be at al) are, both your particular bounties, and also some priuate bands of affinitie, which it hath pleased your Ladiship to acknowledge. Of which whenas I found my selfe in no part worthie, I deuised this last slender meanes, both to intimate my humble affection to your Ladiship and also to make the same vniuersallie knowen to the world; that by honouring you they might know me, and by knowing me they might honor you. Vouchsafe noble Lady to accept this simple reme[m]brance, thogh not worthy of your self, yet such, as perhaps by good acceptance thereof, ye may hereafter cull out a more meet & memorable euidence of your own excellent deserts. So recommending the same to your Ladiships good liking, I humbly take leaue.

Your La: humbly euer,

Ed.Sp.

THE

TEARES OF THE MUSES.



REHEARSE to me ye sacred Sisters nine:  
The golden brood of great *Apolloes* wit,  
Those piteous plaints and sorrowful sad tine,  
Which late ye powred forth as ye did sit  
Beside the siluer Springs of *Helicone*,  
Making your musick of hart-breaking mone.

For since the time that *Phoebus* foolish sonne  
Ythundered through *Ioues* auengefull wrath,  
For trauersing the charret of the Sunne

Beyond the compasse of his pointed path,  
Of you his mournfull Sisters was lamented,

Such mournfull tunes were neuer since inuented.

Nor since that faire *Calliope* did lose  
Her loued Twinnes, the dearlings of her ioy,  
Her *Palici*, whom her vnkindly foes  
The fatall Sisters, did for spight destroy,  
Whom all the Muses did bewaile long space;  
Was euer heard such wayling in this place.

For all their groues, which with the heauenly noyses,

Of their sweete instruments were wont to sound, 20  
And th' hollow hills, from which their siluer voyces  
Were wont redoubled Echoes to rebound,  
Did now rebound with nought but ruffull cries,  
And yelling shrieks throwne vp into the skies.

The trembling streames, which wont in chanel cleare  
To romble gently downe with murmur soft,  
And were by them right tunefull taught to beare  
A Bases part amongst their consorts oft;  
Now forst to ouerflowe with brackish teares,

With troublous noyse did dull their daintie eares. 30

The ioyous Nymphes and lightfoote Faeries  
Which thether came to heare their musick sweet,  
And to the measure of their melodies  
Did learne to moue their nimble shifting feete;  
Now hearing them so heauily lament,  
Like heauily lamenting from them went.

And all that els was wont to worke delight  
Through the diuine infusion of their skill,  
And all that els seemd faire and fresh in sight,

So made by nature for to serue their will, 40  
Was turned now to dismall heauinesse,  
Was turned now to dreadfull vglinesse.

Ay me, what thing on earth that all thing breeds,  
Might be the cause of so impatient plight?

What furie, or what feend with felon deeds  
Hath stirred vp so mischieuous despight?  
Can grieffe then enter into heauenly harts,  
And pierce immortall breasts with mortall smarts?

Vouchsafe ye then, whom onely it concernes,

To me those secret causes to display; 50  
For none but you, or who of you it learns  
Can rightfully aread so dolefull lay.  
Begin thou eldest Sister of the crew,  
And let the rest in order thee ensew.

*Clio.*

HEARE thou great Father of the Gods on hie  
That most art dreaded for thy thunder darts  
And thou our Syre that raignst in *Castalie*  
And mount *Parnasse*, the God of goodly Arts:  
Heare and behold the miserable state  
Of vs thy daughters, dolefull desolate. 60

Behold the fowle reproach and open shame,  
The which is day by day vnto vs wrought  
By such as hate the honour of our name,  
The foes of learning, and each gentle thought;  
They not contented vs themselues to scorne,  
Doo seeke to make vs of the world forlorne.

Ne onely they that dwell in lowly dust,  
The sonnes of darknes and of ignoraunce;  
But they whom thou, great Ioue, by doome vniust

Didst to the type of honour earst aduaunce; 70  
They now puft vp with sdeignfull insolence,  
Despite the brood of blessed Sapience.

The sectaries of my celestiall skill,  
That wont to be the worlds cheife ornament,  
And learned Impes that wont to shoot vp still,  
And grow to hight of kingdomes gouernment  
They vnderkeep, and with their spredding armes  
Do beat their buds, that perish through their harmes.

It most behoues the honorable race

Of mightie Peeres, true wisdomes to sustaine, 80  
And with their noble countenance to grace  
The learned forheads, without gifts or gaine:  
Or rather learnd themselues behoooues to bee;  
That is the girlond of Nobilitie.

But (ah) all otherwise they doo esteeme  
Of th'heauenly gift of wisdomes influence,  
And to be learned it a base thing deeme;  
Base minded they that want intelligence:  
For God himselfe for wisdomes most is praised,

And men to God thereby are nighest raised. 90

But they doo onely striue themselues to raise  
Through pompous pride, and foolish vanitie;  
In th'eyes of people they put all their praise,  
And onely boast of Armes and Auncestrie:  
But vertuous deeds, which did those Armes first giue  
To their Grandsyres, they care not to atchiue.

So I, that doo all noble feates professe,  
To register, and sound in trump of gold;

Through their bad dooings, or base slothfulnesse, 100  
Finde nothing worthie to be writ, or told:  
For better farre it were to hide their names,  
Than telling them to blazon out their blames.

So shall succeeding ages haue no light  
Of things forepast, nor moniments of time,  
And all that in this world is worthie hight  
Shall die in darknesse, and lie hid in slime:  
Therefore I mourne with deep harts sorrowing,  
Because I nothing noble haue to sing.

With that she raynd such store of streaming teares,

That could haue made a stonie heart to weep, 110

And all her Sisters rent their golden heares,  
And their faire faces with salt humour steep.  
So ended shee: and then the next [in rew],  
Began her greiuous plaint as doth ensew.

*Melpomene*

O WHO shall powre into my swollen eyes  
A sea of teares that neuer may be dryde,  
A brasen voice that many with shrilling cryes  
Pierce the dull heauens and fill the ayer wide,  
And yron sides that sighing may endure,  
To waile the wretchednes of world impure? 120

Ah, wretched world the den of wickednesse,  
Deformd with filth and fowle iniquitie;  
Ah wretched world the house of heauinesse,  
Fild with the wreaks of mortall miserie:  
Ah wretched world, and all that is therein,  
The vassals of Gods wrath, amd slaues of sin.

Most miserable creature vnder sky  
Man without vnderstanding doth appeare;  
For all this worlds affliction he thereby,

And Fortunes freakes is wisely taught to beare: 130  
Of wretched life the onely ioy shee is,  
And th'only comfort in calamities.

She armes the brest with constant patience  
Against the bitter throwes of dolours darts,  
She solaceth with rules of Sapience  
The gentle minds, in midst of worldlie smarts:  
When he is sad, shee seeks to make him merie,  
And doth refresh his sprights when they be werie.

But he that is of reasons skill bereft,

And wants the staffe of wisdom him to stay, 140  
Is like a ship in midst of tempest left  
Withouten helme or Pilot her to sway,  
Full sad and dreadfull is that ships euent:  
So is the man that wants intendiment.

Whie then doo foolish men so much despize  
The precious store of this celestiall riches?  
Why doo they banish vs, that patronize  
The name of learning? Most vnhappie wretches,  
The which lie drowned in deep wretchednes,

Yet doo not see their owne vnhappines.

150

My part it is and my professed skill  
The Stage with Tragick buskin to adorne,  
And fill the Scene with plaint, and outcries shrill  
Of wretched persons, to misfortune borne:  
But none more tragick matter I can finde  
Then this, of men depriu'd of sense and minde.

For all mans life me seemes a Tragedy,  
Full of sad sights and sore Catastrophees;  
First comming to the world with weeping eye,

Where all his dayes like dolorous Trophees,  
Are heapt with spyles of fortune and of feare,  
And he at last laid forth on balefull beare.

160

So all with ruffull spectacles is fild,  
Fit for *Megara* or *Persephone*;  
But I, that in true Tragedies am skild,  
The flowre of wit, finde nought to busie me:  
Therefore I mourne, and pitifully mone,  
Because that mourning matter I haue none.

Then gan she wofully to waile, and wring

Her wretched hands in lamentable wise:  
And all her Sisters thereto answering,  
Threw forth lowd shrieks and drerie dolefull cries.  
So rested she: and then the next in rew,  
Began her grieuous plaint as doth ensew.

170

*Thalia.*

WHERE be the sweete delights of learnings treasure,

That wont with Comick sock to beautefie  
The painted Theaters, and fill with pleasure  
The listners eyes, and eares with melodie;  
In which I late was wont to raine as Queene,  
And maske in mirth with Graces well beseene? 180

O all is gone, and all that goodly glee,  
Which wont to be the glorie of gay wits,  
Is layd abed, and no where now to see;  
And in her roome vnseemly Sorrow sits,  
With hollow browes and greisly countenance,  
Marring my ioyous gentle dalliaunce.

And him beside sits ugly Barbarisme,  
And brutish Ignorance, ycrept of late  
Out of dredd darknes of the deepe Abysme,

Where being bredd, he light and heauen does hate: 190  
They in the mindes of men now tyrannize,  
And the faire Scene with rudenes foule disguise.

All places they with follie haue possest,  
And with vaine toyes the vulgare entertaine;  
But me haue banished, with all the rest  
That whilome wont to wait vpon my traine,  
Fine Counterfesaunce, and vnhurtfull Sport,  
Delight, and Laughter deckt in seemly sort.

All these and all that els the Comick Stage

With season'd wit and goodly pleasance graced; 200  
By which mans life in his likest image  
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;  
And those sweete wits which wont the like to frame,  
Are now despizd, and made a laughing game.

And he the man, whom Nature selfe had made  
To mock her selfe, and Truth to imitate,  
With kindly counter vnder Mimick shade,  
Our pleasant *Willy*, ah is dead of late:  
With whom all ioy and iolly meriment

Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.



In stead thereof scoffing Scurrilitie,  
 And scornfull Follie with Contempt is crept,  
 Rolling in rymes of shameles ribaudrie  
 Without regard, or due Decorum kept,  
 Each idle wit at will presumes to make,  
 And doth the Learneds taske vpon him take.

But that same gentle Spirit, from whose pen  
 Large streames of honnie and sweete Nectar flowe,  
 Scorning the boldnes of such base-borne men,

Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe;  
 Doth rather choose to sit in idle Cell,  
 Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell.

220

So am I made the seruant of the manie,  
 And laughing stocke of all that list to scorne,  
 Not honored nor cared for of anie;  
 But loath'd of losels as a thing forlorne:  
 Therefore I mourne and sorrow with the rest,  
 Vntill my cause of sorrow be redrest.

There with she lowdly did lament and shrike,

Pouring forth stremes of teares abundantly,  
 And all her Sisters with compassion like,  
 The breaches of her singul[t]s did supply.  
 So rested she: and then the next in rew  
 Began her grieuous plaint, as doth ensew.

230

*Euterpe.*

LIKE as the Dearling of the Summers pryde,  
 Faire *Philomele*, when winters stormie wrath  
 The goodly fields, that earst so gay were dyde  
 In colours diuers, quite despoyled hath,  
 All comfortlesse doth hide her chearlesse head  
 During the time of that her widowhead:

240

So we, that earst were wont in sweet accord  
 All places with our pleasant notes to fill,

Whilest fauourable times did vs afford  
Free libertie to chaunt our charmes at will:  
All comfortlesse vpon the bared bow,  
Like wofull Culuers doo sit wayling now.

For far more bitter storme than winters stowre  
The beautie of the world hath lately wasted,  
And those fresh buds, which wont so faire to flowre,

Hath marred quite, and all their blossoms blasted: 250  
And those yong plants, which wont with fruit t' abound,  
Now without fruite or leaues are to be found.

A stonie coldnesse hath benumbd the sence  
And liuelie spirits of each liuing wight,  
And dimd with darknesse their intelligence,  
Darknesse more than *Cymerians* daylie night?  
And monstrous error flying in the ayre,  
Hath mard the face of all that semed fayre.

Image of hellish horroure Ignorance,

Borne in the bosome of the black *Abysses*, 260  
And fed with furies milke, for sustenance  
Of his weake infancie, begot amisse  
By yawning Sloth on his owne mother Night;  
So hee his sonnes both Syre and brother hight.

Her armd with blindnesse and with boldnes stout,  
(For blind is bold) hath our fayre light defaced;  
And, gathering vnto him a ragged rout  
Of *Faunes* and *Satyres*, hath our dwellings raced  
And our chast bowers, in which all vertue rained,

With brutishnesse and beastlie filth hath stained. 270

The sacred springs of horsefoot *Helicon*,  
So oft bedewed with our learned layes,  
And speaking streames of pure *Castalion*,  
The famous wisse of our wonted praise,  
They trampled haue their fowle footings trade,  
And like to troubled puddles haue them made.

Our pleasant groues, which planted were with paines,  
That with our musick wont so oft to ring,  
And arbors sweet, in which the Shepherds swaines

Were wont so oft their Pastoralls to sing, 280  
They haue cut downe, and all their pleasaunce mard,  
That now no pastorall is to bee hard.

In stead of them fowle Goblins and Shreikowles  
With fearfull howling do all places fill;  
And feeble *Eccho* now laments and howles,  
The dreadfull accents of their outcries shrill.  
So all is turned into wildernesse,  
Whilest Ignorance the Muses doth oppresse.

And I whose ioy was earst with Spirit full

To teach the warbling pipe to sound aloft, 290  
My spirits now dismayd with sorrow dull,  
Doo mone my miserie with silence soft.  
Therefore I mourne and waile incessantly,  
Till please the heauens afford me remedy.

Therewith she wayled with exceeding woe,  
And piteous lamentation did make,  
And all her sisters seeing her doo soe,  
With equall plaints her sorrowe did partake.  
So rested shee: and then the next in rew,

Began her grieuous plaint, as doth ensew. 300

*Terpsichore.*

WHO so hath in the lap of soft delight  
Beene long time luld, and fed with pleasures sweet,  
Feareles through his owne fault or Fortunes spight,  
To tumble into sorrow and regret,  
Yf chance him fall into calamitie,  
Finds greater burthen of his miserie.

So wee that earst in ioyance did abound  
And in the bosome of all blis did sit,

Like virgin Queenes with laurell garlands cround

For vertues meed and ornament of wit, 310  
Sith ignorance our kingdome did confound,  
Bee now become most wretched wightes on ground:

And in our royall thrones which lately stood  
In th' hearts of men to rule them carefully,  
He now hath placed his accursed brood,  
By him begotten of fowle infamy;  
Blind Error, scornefull Follie, and base Spight,  
Who hold by wrong, that wee should haue by right.

They to the vulgar sort now pipe and sing,

And make them merrie with their fooleries, 320  
They cherelie chaunt and rymes at randon fling,  
The fruitfull spawne of their ranke fantasies:  
They feede the eares of fooles with flattery,  
And good men blame, and losels magnify:

All places they doo with their toyes possesse,  
And raigne in liking of the multitude,  
The schooles they fill with fond new fanglenesse,  
And sway in Court with pride and rashnes rude;  
Mongst simple shepherds they do boast their skill,

And say their musicke matches *Phoebus* quill. 330

The noble hearts to pleasures they allure,  
And tell their Prince that learning is but vaine,  
Faire Ladies loues they spot with thoughts impure,  
And gentle mindes with lewd delights distaine:  
Clerks they to loathly idlenes entice,  
And fill their bookes with discipline of vice.

So euery where they rule and tyrannize,  
For their vsurped kingdomes maintenaunce,  
The whiles we silly Maides, whom they dispize,

And with reproachfull scorne discountenance, 340  
From our owne natie heritage exilde,  
Walk through the world of euery one reuilde.

Nor anie one doth care to call vs in,  
Or once vouchsafeth vs to entertaine,  
Vnlesse some one perhaps of gentle kin,  
For pitties sake compassion our paine:  
And yeeld vs some reliefe in this distresse:  
Yet to be so relieu'd is wretchednesse.

So wander we all carefull comfortlesse,

Yet none doth care to comfort vs at all; 350  
So seeke we helpe our sorrow to redresse,  
Yet none vouchsafes to answere to our call:  
Therefore we mourne and pittillesse complaine,  
Because none liuing pittietieth our paine.

With that she wept and wofullie waymented,  
That naught on earth her grieffe might pacifie;  
And all the rest her dolefull din augmented  
With shrikes and goanes and grieuous agonie.  
So ended shee: and then the next in rew,

Began her piteous plaint as doth ensew. 360

*Erato.*

YE gentle Spirits breathing from aboue,  
Where ye in *Venus* siluer bowre were bred,  
Thoughts halfe deuine, full of the fire of loue,  
With beawtie kindled and with pleasure fed,  
Which ye now in securitie possesse,  
Forgetfull of your former heauinesse:

Now change the tenor of your ioyous layes,  
With which ye vse your loues to deifie,  
And blazon foorth an earthlie beauties praise,

About the compasse of the arched skie: 370  
Now change your praises into piteous cries,  
And Eulogies turne into Elegies:

Such as ye wont whenas those bitter stounds

Of raging loue first gan you to torment,  
And launch your hearts with lamentable wounds  
Of secret sorrow and sad languishment,  
Before your Loues did take you vnto grace;  
Those now renew as fitter for this place.

For I that rule in measure moderate

The tempest of that stormie passion, 380  
And vse to paint in rimes the troublous state  
Of Louers life in likest fashion,  
Am put from practise of my kindlie skill,  
Banisht by those that Loue with leawdnes fill.

Loue wont to be schoolmaster of my skill,  
And the sweet deuicefull matter of my song;  
Sweete Loue deuoyd of villanie or ill,  
But pure and spotles, as at first he sprong  
Out of th'Almighties bosome, where he nests;

From thence infused into mortall breasts. 390

Such high conceipt of that celstially fire,  
The base-borne brood of blindnes cannot gesse,  
Ne euer dare their dunghill thoughts aspire  
Vnto so loftie pitch of perfectnesse,  
But rime at riot, and doo rage in loue;  
Yet little wot what doth thereto behoue.

Faire *Cytheree* the Mother of delight,  
And Queene of beautie, now thou maist go pack;  
For lo thy Kingdome is defaced quight,

Thy scepter rent, and power put to wrack; 400  
And thy gay Sonne, that winged God of Loue,  
May now goe prune his plumes like ruffed Doue.

And ye three Twins to light by *Venus* brought,  
The sweete companions of the Muses late,  
From whom what euer thing is goodly thought  
Doth borrow grace, the fancie to aggrate;  
Go beg with vs, and be companions still  
As heretofore of good, so now of ill.

For neither you nor we shall anie more

Find entertainment, or in Court or Schoole: 410  
For that which was accounted heretofore  
The learneds meed, is now lent to the foole,  
He sings of loue, and maketh louing layes,  
And they him heare, and they him highly prayse.

With that she powred foorth a brackish flood  
Of bitter teares, and made exceeding mone;  
And all her Sisters seeing her sad mood,  
With lowd laments her answered all at one.  
So ended she: and then the next in rew

Began her grieuous plaint, as doth ensew. 420

*Calliope.*

TO whom shall I my euill case complaine,  
Or tell the anguish of my inward smart,  
Sith none is left to remedie my paine,  
Or deignes to pitie a perplexed hart;  
But rather seekes my sorrow to augment  
With fowle reproach, and cruell banishment.

For they, to whom I vsed to applie  
The faithfull seruice of my learned skill,  
The goodly off-spring of *Ioues* progenie,

That wont the world with famous acts to fill; 430  
Whose liuing praises in heroick style,  
It is my cheife possession to compyle.

They, all corrupted through the rust of time,  
That doth all fairest things on earth deface,  
Or through vnnoble sloth, or sinfull crime,  
That doth degenerate the noble race;  
Haue both desire of worthie deeds forlorne,  
And name of learning vtterly doo scorne.

Ne doo they care to haue the auncestrie

Of th' old Heroës memorizde anew, 440  
 Ne doo they care that late posteritie  
 Should know their names, or speak their praises dew:  
 But die forgot from whence at first they sprong,  
 As they themselues shalbe forgot ere long.

What bootes it then to come from glorious  
 Forefathers, or to haue been nobly bredd?  
 What oddes twixt *Irus* and old *Inachus*,  
 Twixt best and worst, when both alike are dedd;  
 If none of neither mention should make,

Nor out of dust their memories awake? 450

Or who would euer care to doo braue deed,  
 Or striue in vertue others to excell;  
 If none should yeeld him his deserued meed,  
 Due praise, that is the spur of dooing well?  
 For if good were not praised more than ill,  
 None would choose goodnes of his owne freewill.

Therefore the nurse of vertue I am hight,  
 And golden Trompet of eternitie,  
 That lowly thoughts lift vp to heauens hight,

And mortall men haue powre to deifie: 460  
*Bacchus* and *Hercules* I raisd to heauen,  
 And *Charlemaine*, amongst the Starris seauen.

But now I will my golden Clarion rend,  
 And will henceforth immortalize no more:  
 Sith I no more find worthie to commend  
 For prize of value, or for learned lore:  
 For noble Peeres whom I was wont to raise,  
 Now onely seeke for pleasure, nought for praise.

Their great reuenues all in sumptuous pride

They spend, that nought to learning they may spare; 470  
 And the rich fee which Poets wont diuide,  
 Now Parasites and Sycophants doo share:  
 Therefore I mourne and endlesse sorrow make,



Both for my selfe and for my Sisters sake.

With that she lowdly gan to waile and shrike,  
And from her eyes a sea of teares did powre,  
And all her sisters with compassion like,  
Did more increase the sharpnes of her showre.  
So ended she: and then the next in rew

Began her plaint, as doth herein ensew.

480

*Urania.*

What wrath of Gods, or wicked influence  
Of Starres conspiring wretched men t' afflict,  
Hath powrd on earth this noyous pestilence,  
That mortall mindes doth inwardly infect  
With loue of blindnesse and of ignorance,  
To dwell in darknesse without souerance?

What difference twixt man and beast is left,  
When th' heauenlie light of knowledge is put out,  
And th' ornaments of wisdom are bereft?

Then wandreth he in error and in doubt,  
Vnweeting of the danger hee is in,  
Through fleshes frailtie, and deceit of sin.

490

In this wide world in which they wretches stray,  
It is the onelie comfort which they haue,  
It is their light, their loadstarre and their day;  
But hell, and darknesse and the grislie graue,  
Is ignorance, the enemie of grace,  
That mindes of men borne heauenlie doth debace.

Through knowledge we behold the worlds creation,

How in his cradle first he fostred was:  
And iudge of Natures cunning operation,  
How things she formed of a formlesse mas:  
By knowledge wee doo learne our selues to knowe,  
And what to man, and what to God wee owe.

500

From hence wee mount aloft vnto the skie,  
And looke into the Christall firmament,  
There we behold the heauens great *Hierarchie*,  
The Starres pure light, the Spheres swift mouement,  
The Spirites and Intelligences fayre,

And Angels waighting on th' Almightyes chayre. 510

And there with humble minde and high insight,  
Th'eternall Makers maiestie wee viewe,  
His loue, his truth, his glorie, and his might,  
And mercie more than mortall men can vew.  
O soueraigne Lord, ô soueraigne happinesse  
To see thee, and thy mercie measurelesse:

Such happiness haue they, that do embrace  
The precepts of my heauenlie discipline;  
But shame and sorrow and accursed case

Haue they, that scorne the schoole of arts diuine, 520  
And banish me, which do professe the skill  
To make men heauenly wise, through humbled will.

How euer yet they mee despise and spight,  
I feede on sweet contentment of my thought,  
And please my selfe with mine owne selfe-delight,  
In contemplation of things heauenlie wrought:  
So loathing earth, I looke vp to the sky,  
And being driuen hence I tether fly.

Thence I behold the miserie of men,

Which want the blis that wisdom would them breed, 530  
And like brute beasts doo lie in loathsome den,  
Of ghostly darkenes, and of gastlie dread:  
For whom I mourne and for my selfe complaine,  
And for my Sisters eake whom they disdaine.

With that shee wept and waild so pityouslie,  
As if her eyes had been two springing wells:  
And all the rest her sorrow to supplie,  
Did throw forth shrieks and cries and dreery yells.  
So ended shee, and then the next in rew,

Began her mournfull plaint as doth ensew.

*Polyhymnia.*

A DOLEFULL case desires a dolefull song,  
Without vaine art or curious complements,  
And squallid Fortune into basenes flong,  
Doth scorne the pride of wonted ornaments.  
Then fittest are these ragged rimes for mee,  
To tell my sorrowes that exceeding bee:

For the sweet numbers and melodious measures,  
With which I wont the winged words to tie,  
And make a tuneful Diapase of pleasures,

Now being let to runne at libertie 550  
By those which haue no skill to rule them right,  
Haue now quite lost their naturall delight.

Heapes of huge words vphoorded hideously,  
With horrid sound though hauing little sence,  
They thinke to be chiefe praise of Poëtry:  
And thereby wanting due intelligence,  
Haue mard the face of goodly Poësie,  
And made a monster of their fantasie:

Whilom in ages past none might professe

But Princes and high Priests that secret skill, 560  
The sacred lawes therein they wont expresse,  
And with deepe Oracles their verses fill:  
Then was shee held in soueraigne dignitie,  
And made the noursling of Nobilitie.

But now nor Prince nor Priest doth her maintayne,  
But suffer her prophaned for to bee  
Of the base vulgar, that with hands vncleane  
Dares to pollute her hidden mysterie,  
And treadeth vnder foote hir holie things,

Which was the care of Kesars and of Kings. 570

One onelie liues, her ages ornament,  
And myrroure of her Makers maiestie;  
That with rich bountie and deare cherishment,  
Supports the praise of noble Poësie:  
Ne onelie faouours them which it professe,  
But is herselfe a peereles Poëtresse.

Most peereles Prince, most peereles Poëtresse,  
The true *Pandora* of all heauenly graces,  
Diuine *Elisa*, sacred Emperesse:

Liue she for euer, and her royall P'laces 580  
Be fild with praises of diuine wits,  
That her eternize with their heauenlie writs.

Some few beside, this sacred skill esteme,  
Admirers of her glorious excellence,  
Which being lightned with her beawties beme,  
Are thereby fild with happie influence:  
And lifted vp aboue the worldes gaze,  
To sing with Angels her immortall praize.

But all the rest as borne of saluage brood,

And hauing beene with Acorns alwaies fed; 590  
Can no whit fauour this celestiall food,  
But with base thoughts are into blindnesse led,  
And kept from looking on the lightsome day:  
For whome I waile and weepe all that I may.

Eftsoones such store of teares she forth did powre,  
As if shee all to water would haue gone;  
And all her sisters seeing her sad stowre,  
Did weep and waile and make exceeding mone,  
And all their learned instruments did breake:

The rest vntold no louing tongue can speake. 600

FINIS.

Continue on to Virgils Gnat.



Renaissance Editions

# Virgils Gnat.

## Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the Renascence Editions text:

This html etext of *Virgils Gnat* was prepared from Alexander B. Grosart's *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* [1882] by Richard Bear at the University of Oregon. Grosart's text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

# *Virgils Gnat.*

Long since dedicated

*To the most noble and excellent Lord,*

THE EARLE OF LEICESTER.

late deceased.

---

**W**RONG'D, yet not daring to expresse my paine,

*To you (great Lord) the causer of my care,  
In cloudie teares my case I thus complaine  
Vnto yourselfe, that onely priuie are:  
But if that any Oedipus vnware  
Shall chaunce, through power of some diuining spright,  
To reade the secrete of this riddle rare,  
And know the purporte of my euill plight,  
Let him rest pleased with his owne insight,  
Ne further seeke to glose vpon the text:*

*For grieffe enough it is to griued wight  
 To feele his fault, and not be further vex.  
 But what so by my selfe may not be showen,  
 May by this Gnatts complaint be easily knowen.*

---

## VIRGILS GNAT.

We now haue playde (*Augustus*) wantonly,  
 Tuning our song vnto a tender Muse,  
 And like a cobweb weauing slenderly,  
 Haue onely playde: let thus much then excuse  
 This Gnats small Poeme, that th' whole history  
 Is but a jest, though envie it abuse:  
 But who such sports and sweet delights doth blame,  
 Shall lighter seeme than this Gnats idle name.

Hereafter, when as season more secure

Shall bring forth fruit, this Muse shall speak to thee  
 In bigger notes, that may thy sense allure,  
 And for thy worth frame some fit Poesie,  
 The golden offspring of *Latona* pure,  
 And ornament of great *Ioues* progenie,  
*Phoebus* shall be the author of my song,  
 Playing on iuorie harp with siluer strong.

10

He shall inspire my verse with gentle mood  
 Of Poets Prince, whether he woon beside  
 Faire *Xanthus* sprinckled with *Chimæras* blood;

Or in the woods of *Astery* abide;  
 Or whereas mount *Parnasse*, the Muses brood,  
 Doth his broad forehead like two hornes diuide  
 , And the sweete waues of sounding *Castaly*  
 With liquid foote doth slide downe easily.

20

Wherefore ye Sisters which the glorie bee  
 Of the *Pierian* streames, fayre *Naiades*,  
 Go too, and dauncing all in companie,  
 Adorne that God: and thou holie *Pales*,

To whome the honest care of husbandrie

Returneth by continuall successe,  
 Haue care for to pursue his footing light;  
 Throgh the wide woods, & groues, with green leaues dight.

30

Professing thee I lifted am aloft  
 Betwixt the forrest wide and starrie sky:  
 And thou most dread (*Octavius*) which oft  
 To learned wits giuest courage worthily,  
 O come (thou sacred childe) come sliding soft,  
 And fauour my beginnings graciously:  
 For not these leaues do sing that dreadfull stound,

When Giants bloud did staine *Phlegræan* ground.

40

Nor how th' halfe horsy people, *Centaures* hight,  
 Fought with the bloudie *Lapithaes* at bord,  
 Nor how the East with tyranous despight  
 Burnt th *Attick* towres, and people slew with sword;  
 Was digged downe, nor yron bands aboard  
 The *Pontick* sea by their huge Nauy cast,  
 My volume shall renowne, so long since past.

Nor *Hellespont* trampled with horses feete,

When flocking *Persians* did the *Greeks* affray;  
 But my soft Muse, as for her power more meete,  
 Delights (with *Phoebus* friendly leaue) to play  
 An easie running verse with tender feete.  
 And thou (dread sacred child) to thee alway,  
 Let euerlasting lightsome glory striue,  
 Through the worlds endles ages to suruiue.

50

And let an happie roome remaine for thee  
 Mongst heauenly ranks, where blessed soules do rest;  
 And let long lasting life with ioyous glee,

As thy due meede that thou deseruest best,  
 Hereafter many yeares remembred be  
 Amongst good men, of whom thou oft are blest;  
 Liue thou for euer in all happinesse:  
 But let us turne to our first businesse.

60



The fiery sun was mounted now on high  
 Vp to the heauenly towers, and shot each where  
 Out of his golden Charet glistering light;  
 And fayre *Aurora* with her rosie heare,  
 The hatefull darknes now had put to flight,

When as the shepheard seeing day appeare,  
 His little Goats gan driue out of their stalls,  
 To feede abroad, where pasture best befalls.

70

To an high mountaines top he with them went,  
 Where thickest grasse did cloath the open hills:  
 They now amongst the woods and thickets ment,  
 Now in the valleies wandring at their wills,  
 Spread themselues farre abroad through each descent;  
 Some on the soft greene grasse feeding their fills;  
 Some clambring through the hollow cliffes on hy,

Nibble the bushie shrubs, which growe thereby.

80

Others the vtmost boughs of trees doe crop,  
 And brouze the woodbine twigges, that freshly bud  
 This with full bit doth catch the vtmost top  
 Of some soft Willow, or new growen stud;  
 This with sharpe teeth the brambles leaues doth lop,  
 And chaw the tender prickles in her Cud;  
 The whiles another high doth ouerlooke  
 Her owne like image in christall brooke.

O the great happines, which shepherds haue,

Who so loathes not too much the poor estate,  
 With minde that ill vse doth before depraue,  
 Ne measures all things by the costly rate  
 Of riotise, and semblants outward braue;  
 No such sad cares, as wont to macerate  
 And rend the greedie mindes of couetous men,  
 Do euer creepe into the shepherds den.

90

Ne cares he if the fleece, which him arayes,  
 Be not twice steeped in Assyrian dye,  
 Ne glistering of golde, which vnderlayes

The summer beames, doe blinde his gazing eye. 100  
 Ne pictures beautie, nor the glauncing rayes  
 Of precious stones, whence no good commeth by;  
 Of *Bætus* or of *Alcons* vanity.

Ne ought the whelky pearles esteemeth hee,  
 Which are from Indian seas brought far away:  
 But with pure brest from carefull sorrow free,  
 On the soft grasse his limbs doth oft display,  
 In sweete spring time, when flowres varietie

With sundrie colours paints the sprinckled lay; 110  
 There lyin all at ease, from guile or spight,  
 With pype of fennie reedes doth him delight.

There he, Lord of himselfe, with palme bedight,  
 His looser locks doth wrap in wreath of vine:  
 There his milk dropping Goats be his delight,  
 And fruitful *Pales*, and the forrest greene,  
 And darkesome caues in pleasaunt vallies pight,  
 Whereas continuall shade is to be seene,  
 And where fresh springing wells, as christall neate,

Do alwayes flow, to quench his thirstie heate. 120

O who can lead them to a more happie life,  
 Than he, that with cleane minde and heart sincere,  
 No greedy riches knowes nor bloudie strife,  
 No deadly fight of warlick fleete doth feare,  
 Ne runs in perill of foes cruell knife,  
 That in the sacred temples he may reare,  
 A trophee of his glittering spoyels and treasure,  
 Or may abound in riches aboue measure.

Of him his God is worshipt with his sythe,

And not with skill of craftsman polished: 130  
 He ioyes in groues, and makes himselfe full blythe,  
 With sundrie flowers in wilde fieldes gathered;  
 Ne frankincens he from *Panchæa* buyth,  
 Sweete quiet harbours in his harmeles head,  
 And perfect pleasure builds her iouyous bowre,

Free from sad cares, that rich mens hearts deuowre.

This all his care, this all his whole indeuour,  
To this his minde and senses he doth bend,  
How he may flow in quiets matchles treasour,

Content with any food that God doth send; 140  
And how his limbs, resolu'd through idle leisour,  
Vnto sweete sleepe he may securely lend,  
In some coole shadow from the scorching heate,  
The whiles his flock their chawed cuds do eate.

O flocks, O Faunes, and O ye pleasaunt springs  
Of *Tempe*, where the countrey Nymphs are rife,  
Through whose not costly care each shepheard sings  
As merrie notes vpon his rusticke Fife,  
As that *Ascræan* bard, whose fame now rings

Through the wide world, and leads as ioyfull life. 150  
Free from all troubles and from worldly toyle,  
In which fond men doe all their dayes turmoyle.

In such delights whilst thus his carelesse time  
This shepheard driues, vpleaning on his batt,  
And on shrill reedes chaunting his rustick rime,  
*Hyperion* throwing foorth his beames full hott,  
Into the highest top of heauen gan clime,  
And the world parting by an equall lott,  
Did shed his whirling flames on either side,

As the great *Ocean* doth himselfe diuide. 160

Then gan the shepheard gather into one  
His stragling Goates, and draue them to a foord,  
Whose cærule streame, rombling in Pible stone,  
Crept vnder mosse as greene as any goord.  
Now had the Sun halfe heauen ouergone,  
When he heard back from that water foord,  
Draue from the force of *Phoebus* boyling ray,  
Into thick shadowes, there themselues to lay.

Soone as he them plac'd in thy sacred wood

(O *Delian* Goddess) saw, to which of yore  
 Came the bad daughter of old *Cadmus* brood,  
 Cruell *Agauē*, flying vengeance sore  
 Of king *Nictilus* for the guiltie blood,  
 Which she with cursed hands had shed before;  
 There she halfe frantick hauing slaine her sonne,  
 Did shrowd her selfe like punishment to shonne.

170

Here also playing on the grassy greene,  
 Woodgods, and Satyres, and swift Dryades,  
 With many Fairies oft were dauncing seene.

Not so much did Dan *Orpheus* repressē,  
 The streames of *Hebrus* with his songs I weene,  
 As that faire troupe of woodie Goddesses  
 Staied thee, (O *Peneus*) powring foorth to thee,  
 From cheereful lookes great mirth & gladsome glee.

180

The verie nature of the place, resounding  
 With gentle murmure of the breathing ayre,  
 A pleasant bowre with all delight abounding  
 In the fresh shadowe did for them prepayre,  
 To rest their limbs with wearines redounding.

For first the high Plaine trees with braunches faire,  
 Out of the lowly vallies did arise,  
 And high shoote vp their heads into the skyes.

190

And them amongst the wicked Lotos grew,  
 Wicked, for holding guilefully away  
*Vlysses* men, whom rapt with sweetnes new,  
 Taking to hoste, it quite from him did stay,  
 And eke those trees, in whose transformed hew  
 The Sunnes sad daughters waylde the rash decay  
 Of *Phaeton*, whose limbs with lightning rent,

They gathering vp, with sweete teares did lament.

200

And that same tree, in which *Demophon*,  
 By his disloyalty lamented sore,  
 Eternall hurte left vnto many one:  
 Whom als accompanied the Oke, of yore  
 Through fatall charmes transformd to such an one:

The Oke, whose Acornes were our foode, before  
That *Ceres* seede of mortall men were knowne,  
Which first *Triptoleme* taught how to be sowne.

Here also grew the rougher rinded Pine, 210  
The great *Argoan* ships braue ornament  
Whom golden Fleece did make an heauenly signe;  
Which coueting, with his high tops extent,  
To make the mountaines touch the starres diuine,  
Decks all the forrest with embellishment,  
And the blacke Holme that loues the watrie vale,  
And the sweete Cypresse signe of deadly bale.

Emongst the rest the clambring Yuie grew,  
Knitting his wanton armes with grasping hold,  
Least that the Poplar happely should rew

Her brothers strokes, whose boughes she doth enfold 220  
With her lythe twigs, till they the top suruew,  
And paint with pallid greene her buds of gold.  
Next did the Myrtle tree to her approach,  
Not yet vnmindfull of her olde reproach.

But the small Birds in their wide boughs embowring,  
Chaunted their sundrie tunes with sweete consent,  
And vnder them a siluer Spring forth powring  
His trickling streames, a gentle murmure sent;  
Thereto the frogs, bred in the slimie scowring

Of the moist moores, their iarring voyces bent; 230  
And shrill grashoppers chirped them around:  
All which the ayrie Echo did resound.

In this so pleasant place this Shepherds flocke  
Lay euerie where, their wearie limbs to rest,  
On euerie bush, and euerie hollow rocke  
Where breathe on them the whistling wind mote best;  
The whiles the Shepherd self tending his stocke,  
Sate by the fountaine side, in shade to rest,  
Where gentle slumbring sleep oppressed him,

Displaid on ground, and seized euerie lim. 240

Of trecherie or traines nought tooke he keep,  
 But looslie on the grassie greene dispredd,  
 His dearest life did trust to careles sleep;  
 Which weighing down his drouping drowsie hedd,  
 In quiet rest his molten heart did steep,  
 Deuoid of care, and feare of all falsehedd:  
 Had not inconstant fortune, bent to ill,  
 Bid strange mischance his quietnes to spill.

For at his wonted time in that same place

An huge great Serpent all with speckles pide, 250  
 To drench himselfe in moorish slime did trace,  
 There from the boyling heate himselfe to hide:  
 He passing by with rolling wreathed pace,  
 With brandisht tongue the emptie aire did gride,  
 And wrapt his scalie boughts with fell despight,  
 That all things seem'd appalled at his sight.

Now more and more hauing himself enrolde,  
 His glittering breast he lifteth vp on hie,  
 And with proud vaunt his head aloft doth holde;

His creste aboue spotted with purple die, 260  
 On euerie side did shine like scalie golde,  
 And his bright eyes glauncing full dreadfullie,  
 Did seeme to flame out flakes of flashing fyre,  
 And with sterne lookes to threaten kindled yre.

Thus wise long time he did himselfe dispace  
 There round about, when as at last he spide  
 Lying along before him in that place,  
 That flocks grand Captaine, and most trustie guide:  
 Eftsoones more fierce in visage, and in pace,

Throwing his firie eyes on euerie side, 270  
 He commeth on, and all things in his way  
 Full stearnly rends, that might his passage stay.

Much he disdaines, that anie one should dare  
 To come vnto his haunt; for which intent  
 He inly burns, and gins straight to prepare  
 The weapons, which Nature to him hath lent:

Fellie he hisseth, and doth fiercely stare,  
 And hath his iawes with angrie spirits rent,  
 That all his tract with bloudie drops is stained,

And all his foldes are now in length outstrained.

280

Whom thus at point prepared, to preuent,  
 A little noursling of the humid ayre,  
 A Gnat vnto the sleepeie Shepheard went,  
 And marking where his ey-lids twinckling rare,  
 Shewd the two pearles, which sight vnto him lent,  
 Through their thin couerings appearing fayre,  
 His little needle there infixing deep,  
 Warnd him awake, from death himselfe to keep.

Wherewith enrag'd, he fiecely gan vpstart,

And with his hand him rashly bruizing, slewe  
 As in auengement of his heedles smart,  
 That streight the sprite out of his senses flew,  
 And life out of his members did depart:  
 When suddenly casting aside his vew,  
 He spide his foe with felonous intent,  
 And feruent eyes to his destruction bent.

290

All suddenly dismaid, and hartles quight,  
 He fled abacke, and catching hastie holde  
 Of a yong alder hard beside him pight,

It rent, and streight about him gan beholde,  
 What God or Fortune would assist his might.  
 But whether God or Fortune made him bold  
 Its hard to read: yet hardie will he had  
 To ouercome, that made him lesse adrad.

300

The scalie backe of that most hideous snake  
 Enwrapped round, oft faining to retire,  
 And oft him to assaile, he fiercely strake  
 Whereas his temples did his creast front tyre;  
 And for he was but slowe, did slowth off shake,

And gazing ghastly on (for feare and yre  
 Had blent so much his sense, that lesse he feard:)

310

Yet when he saw him slaine, himself he cheard.

By this the night forth from the darksome bowre  
 Of *Herebus* her teemed steedes gan call,  
 And laesie *Vesper* in his timelie howre  
 From golden *Oeta* gan proceede withall;  
 Whenas the Shepheard after this sharpe stowre,  
 Seeing the doubled shadowes low to fall,  
 Gathering his straying flocke, does homeward fare,

And vnto rest his wearie ioyns prepare.

320

Into whose sense so soone as lighter sleepe  
 Was entered, and now loosing euerie lim,  
 Sweete slumbring deaw in carelessnesse did steepe,  
 The Image of that Gnat appeard to him,  
 And in sad tearmes gan sorrowfully weepe,  
 With greislie countenance and visage grim,  
 Wailing the wrong which he had done of late,  
 In steed of good hastning his cruell fate.

Said he, what haue I wretch deseru'd, that thus

Into this bitter bale I am outcast,  
 Whilest that thy life more deare and precious  
 Was than mine owne, so long as it did last?  
 I now in lieu of paines so gracious,  
 am tost in th' ayre with euerie windie blast:  
 Thou safe deliuered from sad decay,  
 Thy careles limbs in loose sleep dost display.

330

So liuest thou, but my poore wretched ghost  
 Is forst to ferrie ouer *Lethes* Riuer,  
 And spoyld of *Charon* too and fro am tost.

Seest thou, how all places quake and quiuer  
 Lightned with deadly lamps on euerie post?  
*Tisiphone* each where doth shake and shiuer  
 Her flaming fire brond, encountring me,  
 Whose lockes vncombed cruell adders be.

340

And *Cerberus*, whose many mouthes doo bay,  
 And barke out flames, as if on fire he fed;



Adowne whose necke in terrible array,  
 Ten thousand snakes cralling about his hed  
 Doo hang in heapes, that horribly affray,

And bloodie eyes do glister firie red;  
 He oftentimes me dreadfullie doth threaten,  
 With painfull torments to be sorely beaten.

350

Ay me, that thanks so much should faile of meed,  
 For that I thee restor'd to life againe,  
 Euen from the doore of death and deadlie dreed.  
 Where then is now the guerdon of my paine?  
 Where the reward of my so piteous deed?  
 The praise of pitie vanisht is in vaine,  
 And th' antique faith of Iustice long agone

Out of the land is fled away and gone.

360

I saw anothers fate approaching fast,  
 And left mine owne his safetie to tender;  
 Into the same mishap I now am cast,  
 And shun'd destruction doth destruction render;  
 Not vnto him that neuer hath trespass,  
 But punishment is due to the offender.  
 Yet long destruction be the punishment,  
 So long as thankfull will may it relent.

I carried am into waste wildernesse,

Waste wildernes, amongst *Cymerian* shades,  
 Where endles paines and hideous heauinesse  
 Is round about me heapt in darksome glades.  
 For there huge *Othos* sits in sad distresse,  
 Fast bound with serpents that him oft inuades;  
 Far of beholding *Ephialtes* tide,  
 Which once assai'd to burne this world so wide.

370

And there is mournfull *Tityus* mindefull yet  
 Of thy displeasure, O *Latona* faire;  
 Displeasure too implacable was it,

That made him meat for wild foules of the ayre:  
 Much do I feare among such fiends to sit;

380

Much do I feare back to them to repayre,  
 To the black shadowes of the *Stygian* shore,  
 Where wretched ghosts sit wailing euermore.

There next the vtmost brinck doth he abide,  
 That did the bankets of the Gods bewray,  
 Whose throat through thirst to nought nigh being dride  
 His sense to seeke for ease turnes euery way:  
 And he that in auengement of his pride,

For scorning to the sacred Gods to pray,  
 Against a mountaine rolls a mighty stone,  
 Calling in vaine for rest, and can haue none.

390

Go ye with them, go cursed damosells,  
 Whose bridale torches foule *Erynnis* tynde,  
 And *Hymen* at your Spousalls sad, foretells  
 Tydings of death and massacre vnkinde:  
 With them that cruell *Colchid* mother dwells,  
 The which conceiu'd in her reuengefull minde,  
 With bitter woundes her owne deere babes to slay

And murdred troupes vpon great heapes to lay.

400

There also those two *Pandionian* maides,  
 Calling on *Itis*, *Itis* euermore,  
 Whom wretched boy they slew with guiltie blades;  
 For whome the *Thracian* king lamenting sore,  
 Turn'd to a Lapwing, fowlie them vpbraydes,  
 And fluttering round about them still does sore;  
 There now they all eternally complaine  
 Of others wrong, and suffer endles paine.

But the two brethren borne of *Cadmus* blood,

Whilst each does for the Soueraignty contend,  
 Blinde through ambition, and with vengeance wood  
 Each doth against the others bodie bend  
 His cursed steele, of neither well withstood,  
 And with wide wounds their carcasses doth rend;  
 That yet they both doe mortall foes remaine,  
 Sith each with brothers bloudie hands was slaine.

410

Ah (waladay) there is no end of paine,  
 Nor change of labour may intreated bee:  
 Yet I beyond all these am carried faine,

Where others powers farre different I see,  
 And must passe ouer to th' *Elisian* plaine:  
 There grim *Persephone* encountring mee,  
 Doth vrge her fellowFuries earnestly,  
 With their bright firebronds me to terrifie.

420

There chast *Alceste* liues inuiolate,  
 Free from all care, for that her husbands daies  
 She did prolong by changing fate for fate,  
 Lo there liues also the immortall praise  
 Of womankinde, most faithfull to her mate,

*Penelope*: and from her farre awayes  
 A rulesse rout of yongmen, which her woo'd  
 All slaine with darts, lie wallowed in their blood.

430

And sad *Eurydice* thence now no more  
 Must turne to life, but there detained bee,  
 For looking back, being forbid before:  
 Yet was the guilt thereof, *Orpheus*, in thee.  
 Bold sure he was, and worthie spirite bore,  
 That durst those lowest shadowes goe to see,  
 And could beleue that anie thing could please

Fell *Cerberus*, or Stygian powres appease.

440

Ne feard the burning waues of *Phlegeton*,  
 Nor those same mournfull kingdomes compassed  
 With rustie horroure and fowle fashion,  
 And deep digd vawtes, and Tartar couered  
 With bloodie night, and darke confusion,  
 And iudgement seates, whose Iudge is deadlie dred,  
 A iudge, that after death doth punish sore  
 The faults, which life hath trespassed before.

But valiant fortune made *Dan Orpheus* bolde:

For the swift running riuers still did stand,

And the wilde beasts their furie did withhold, 450  
 To follow *Orpheus* musicke through the land:  
 And th' Okes deep grounded in the earthly molde  
 Did moue, as if they could him vnderstand;  
 And the shrill woods, which were of sense bereau'd,  
 Through their hard barke his siluer sound receau'd.

And eke the Moone her hastie steedes did stay,  
 Drawing in teemes along the starrie skie,  
 And didst (ô monthly Virgin) thou delay

Thy nightly course, to heare his melodie? 460  
 The same was able with like louely lay  
 The Queene of hell to moue as easily,  
 To yeeld *Eurydice* vnto her fere,  
 Backe to be borne, though it vnlawfull were.

She (Ladie) hauing well before approoued,  
 The feends to be too cruell and seuerer,  
 Obseru'd th' appointed way, as her behooued,  
 Ne euer did her ey-sight turne arere,  
 Ne euer spake, ne cause of speaking moued:

But cruell *Orpheus* thou much crueller, 470  
 Seeking to kisse her, brok'st the Gods decree,  
 And thereby mad'st her euer damn'd to be.

Ah but sweete loue of pardon worthie is,  
 And doth deserue to haue small faults remitted;  
 If Hell at least things lightly done amis  
 Knew how to pardon, when ought is omitted:  
 Yet are ye both receiued into blis,  
 And to the seates of happie soules admitted.  
 And you, beside the honourable band

Of great heroës doo in order stand. 480

There be the two stout sonnes of *Aeacus*,  
 Fierce *Peleus*, and the hardie *Telamon*.  
 Both seeming now full glad and ioyeous  
 Through their Syres dreadfull iurisdiction,  
 Being the Iudge of all that horrid hous:  
 And both of them by strange occasion,

Renown'd in choyce of happie marriage  
Through *Venus* grace, and vertues cariage.

For th'one was rausht of his owne bondmaide,

The faire *Ixione* captiu'd from *Troy*:  
But th' other was with *Thetis* loue assaid,  
Great *Nereus* his daughter, and his ioy.  
On this side them there is a yongman layd,  
Their match in glorie, mightie, fierce and coy;  
That from th' Argolick ships, with furious yre,  
Bett back the furie of the Troian fyre.

490

O who would not recount the strong diuorces  
Of that great warre, which Troianes oft behelde,  
And oft beheld the warlike Greekish forces,

When *Teucrian* soyle with bloodie riuers swelde,  
And wide *Sigæan* shores were spred with corses,  
And *Simois* and *Xanthus* blood out welde,  
Whilst *Hector* raged with outrageous minde,  
Flames, weapons, wounds, in *Greeks* fleete to haue tynde.

500

For *Ida* selfe, in ayde of that fierce fight,  
Out of her mountaines ministred supplies,  
And like a kindly nourse, did yeeld (for spight)  
Store of firebronds out of her nourseries,  
Vnto her foster children that they might

Inflame the Nauie of their enemies,  
And all the *Rhætean* shore to ashes turne,  
Where lay the ships, which they did seeke to burne.

510

Gainst which the noble sonne of *Telamon*  
Opposd' himselfe, and thwarting his huge shield,  
Them battell bad, gainst whom appeard anon  
*Hector*, the glorie of the *Troian* field:  
Both fierce and furious in contention  
Encountred, that their mightie strokes so shrild,  
As the great clap of thunder, which doth ryue

The ratling heauens, and cloudes asunder dryue.

520

So th' one with fire and weapons did contend  
 To cut the ships, from turning home againe  
 To *Argos*, th' other stroue for to defend  
 The force of *Vulcane* with his might and maine.  
 Thus th'one *Aecide* did his fame extend:  
 But th' other ioy'd, that on the *Phrygian* playne  
 Hauling the blood of vanquisht *Hector* shedd,  
 He compast *Troy* thrice with his bodie dedd.

Againe great dole on either partie grewe,

That him to death vnfaithfull *Paris* sent, 530  
 And also him that false *Vlysses* slewe,  
 Drawne into danger through close ambushment:  
 Therefore from him *Laërtes* sonne his vewe  
 Doth turne aside, and boasts his good euent  
 In working of *Strymonian Rhæsus* fall,  
 And efte in *Dolons*slye surprysall.

Againe the dreadfull *Cycones* him dismay,  
 And blacke *Læstrigones*, a people stout:  
 Then greedie *Scilla*, vnder whom there bay

Manie great bandogs, which her gird about: 530  
 Then doo the *Aetnean* Cyclops him affray,  
 And deep *Charybdis* gulphing in and out:  
 Lastly the squalid lakes of *Tartarie*,  
 And griesly Feends of hell him terrifie.

There also goodly *Agamemnon* bosts,  
 The glorie of the stock of *Tantalus*,  
 And famous light of all the Greekish hosts,  
 Vnder whose conduct most victorious,  
 The *Dorick* flames consum'd the *Iliack* posts.

Ah but the *Greekes* themselues more dolorous, 550  
 To thee, ô *Troy*, paid penaunce for thy fall,  
 In th' *Hellespont* being nigh drowned all.

Well may appeare by prooffe of their mischaunce,  
 The changefull turning of mens slipperie state,  
 That none, whom fortune freely doth aduaunce,  
 Himselfe therefore to heauen should eleuate:

For loftie type of honour through the glaunce  
 Of enuies dart, is downe in dust prostrate;  
 And all that vaunts in worldly vanitie,

Shall fall through fortunes mutabilitie.

560

Th' *Argolicke* power returning home againe,  
 Enricht with spoyes of th' *Erichthian* towre,  
 Did happie winde and weather entertaine,  
 And with good speed the fomie billowes scowre:  
 No signe of storme, no feare of future paine,  
 Which soone ensued them with heauie stowre.  
*Nereis* to the Seas a token gaue,  
 The whiles their crooked keeles the surges claue.

Suddenly, whether through the Gods decree,

Or haplesse rising of some froward starre,  
 The heauens on euerie side enclowded bee:  
 Black stormes and fogs are blowen vp from farre,  
 That now the Pylote can no loadstarre see,  
 But skies and seas doo make most dreadfull warre;  
 The billowes striuing to the heauens to reach,  
 And th' heauens striuing them for to impeach.

570

And in auengement of their bold attempt,  
 Both Sun and starres and all the heauenly powres  
 Conspire in one to wreake their rash contempt,

And downe on them to fall from highest towres:  
 The skie in pieces seeming to be rent,  
 Throwes lightning forth, & haile, & harmful showres  
 That death on euerie side to them appears  
 In thousand formes, to worke more ghastly feares.

580

Some in the greedie flouds are sunke and drent,  
 Some on the rocks of *Caphareus* are throwne;  
 Some on th' *Euboick* Cliffs in pieces rent;  
 Some scattred on the *Hercæan* shores vnknowne;  
 And manie lost, of whom no monument  
 Remaines,

nor memorie is to be showne:

Whilst all the purchase of the *Phrigian* pray  
Tost on salt billowes, round about doth stray.

590

Here manie other like Heroës bee,  
Equall in honour to the former crue,  
Whom ye in goodly seates may placed see,  
Descended all from *Rome* by lineage due,  
From *Rome*, that holds the world in souereigntie,  
And doth all Nations vnto her subdue:  
Here *Fabij* and *Decij* doo dwell,

*Horatij* that in vertue did excell.

600

And here the antique fame of stout *Camill*  
Doth euer liue, and constant *Curtius*,  
Who stifly bent his vowed life to spill  
For Countreyes health, a gulph most hideous  
Amidst the Towne with his owne corps did fill,  
T' appease the powers; and prudent *Mutius*,  
Who in his flesh endur'd the scorching flame,  
To daunt his foe by ensample of the same.

And here wise *Curius*, companion

Of noble vertues, liues in endles rest;  
And stout *Flaminius*, whose deuotion  
Taught him the fires scorn'd furie to detest;  
And here the praise of either *Scipion*  
Abides in highest place aboue the best,  
To whom the ruin'd walls of *Carthage* vow'd,  
Trembling their forces, sound their praises lowd.

610

Liue they for euer through their lasting praise:  
But I poore wretch am forced to retourne  
To the sad lakes, that *Phoebus* sunnie rayes

Doo neuer see, where soules doo alwaies mourne,  
And by the wayling shores to waste my dayes,  
Where *Phlegeton* with quenchles flames doth burne;  
By which iust *Minos* righteous soules doth seuer  
From wicked ones, to liue in blisse for euer.

620

Me therefore thus the cruell fiends of hell



Girt with long snakes, and thousand yron chaynes,  
 Through doome of that their cruell Iudge, compell  
 With bitter torture and impatient paines,  
 Cause of my death, and iust complaint to tell.

For thou art he, whom my poore ghost complaines  
 To be the author of her ill vnwares,  
 That careles hear'st my intollerable cares.

630

Them therefore as bequeathing to the winde,  
 I now depart, returning to thee neuer,  
 And leaue this lamentable plaint behinde.  
 But doo thou haunt the soft downe rolling riuer,  
 And wilde greene woods, and fruitful pastures minde,  
 And let the flitting aire my vaine words seuer.  
 Thus hauing said, he heauily departed

With piteous crie, that anie would haue smarted.

640

Now, when the sloathful fit of lifes sweete rest  
 Had left the heauie Shepheard, wondrous cares  
 His inly grieved minde full sore opprest;  
 That balefull sorrow he no longer beares,  
 For that Gnats death, which deeply was imprest:  
 But bends what euer power his aged yeares  
 Him lent, yet being such, as through their might  
 He lately slue his dreadfull foe in fight.

By that same Riuer lurking vnder greene,

Eftsoones he gins to fashion forth a place,  
 And squaring it in compasse well beseene,  
 There plotteth out a tombe by measured space:  
 His yron headed spade tho making cleene,  
 To dig vp sods out of the flowrie grasse,  
 His worke he shortly to good purpose brought,  
 Like as he had conceiu'd it in his thought.

650

An heape of earth he hoorded vp on hie,  
 Enclosing it with banks on euerie side,  
 And thereupon did raise full busily

A little mount, of greene turffs edifide;

And on the top of all, that passers by  
 Might it behold, the toomb he did provide  
 Of smoothest marble stone in order set,  
 That neuer might his luckie scape forget.

660

And round about he taught sweete flowres to growe,  
 The Rose engrained in pure scarlet die,  
 The Lilly fresh, and Violet belowe,  
 The Marigolde, and cherefull Rosemarie,  
 The *Spartan* Mirtle, whence sweet gumb does flowe,

The purple Hyacinthe, and fresh Costmarie,  
 And Saffron sought for in *Cilician* soyle,  
 And Lawrell th' ornament of *Phoebus* toyle.

670

Fresh *Rhododaphne*, and the *Sabine* flowre  
 Matching the wealth of th' auncient Frankincence,  
 And pallid Yuie, building of his owne bowre,  
 And Box yet mindfull of his olde offence,  
 Red *Amaranthus*, lucklesse Paramour,  
 Oxeye still greene, and bitter Patience;  
 Ne wants there pale *Narcisse*, that in a well

Seeing his beautie, in loue with it fell,

680

And whatsoever other flowre of worth,  
 And whatso other hearb of louely hew  
 The iouyous Spring out of the ground brings forth,  
 To cloath her selfe in colours fresh and new;  
 He planted there, and reard a mount of earth,  
 In whose high front was writ as doth ensue.

*To thee, small Gnat, in lieu of his life saued,  
 The Shepheard hath thy deaths record engraued.*

FINIS.

---

Continue on to [Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberds Tale.](#)



# Mother Hubberds Tale

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberds Tale* was prepared from Ernest de Sélincourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [Oxford, 1910] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## PROSOPOPOIA.

*Or*

*Mother Hubberds Tale.*

By ED. SP.

Dedicated to the right Honorable  
the Ladie *Compton* and  
*Mountegle.*

+  
+ +  
+

LONDON.

Imprinted for *VWilliam*  
*Ponsonbie*, dwelling in Paules

Churchyard at the signe of  
*the Bishops head.*

1591.

To the right Honorable

the Ladie *Compton* and

*Mountegle.*

**M***ost faire and vertuous Ladie; hauing often sought opportunitie by some good meanes to make knownen to your Ladiship, the humble affection and faithfull duetie, which I haue alwaies professed, and am bound to beare to that House, from whence yee spring, I haue at length found occasion to remember the same, by making a simple present to you of these my idle labours; which hauing long sithens composed in the raw conceipt of my youth, I lately amongst other papers lighted vpon, and was by others, wich liked the same, mooued to set them foorth. Simple in the deuce, and the composition meane, yet carrieth some delight, euen the rather because of the simplicitie and meannesse thus personated. The same I beseech your Ladiship take in good part, as a pledge of that profession which I haue made to you, and keepe with you vntill with some other worthie labour, I do redeeme it out of your hands, and discharge my vtmost dutie. Till then wishing your Ladiship all increase of honour and happinesse, I humblie take leaue.*

Your La: euer

humbly;

*Ed. Sp.*

---

*Prosopopoia: or*

*Mother Hubberds Tale.*



**L***T was the month, in which the righteous Maide,  
That for disdaine of sinfull worlds vpbraide,  
Fled back to heauen, whence she was first conceiued,  
Into her siluer bowre the Sunne receiued;  
And the hot Syrian Dog on him awayting,  
After the chased Lyons cruell bayting,*

Corrupted had th' ayre with his noysome breath,  
 And powr'd on th' earth plague, pestilence, and death.  
 Emongst the rest a wicked maladie  
 Raign'd emongst men, that manie did to die, 10  
 Depriu'd of sense and ordinarie reason;  
 That it to Leaches seemed strange and geason.  
 My fortune was mongst manie others moe,  
 To be partaker of their common woe;  
 And my weake bodie set on fire with griefe,  
 Was rob'd of rest, and naturall reliefe.  
 In this ill plight, there came to visit mee  
 Some friends, who sorie my sad case to see,  
 Began to comfort me in chearfull wise,  
 And meanes of gladsome solace to deuise. 20  
 But seeing kindly sleep refuse to doe  
 His office, and my feeble eyes forgoe,  
 They sought my troubled sense how to deceaue  
 With talke, that might vnquiet fancies reauie;  
 And sitting all in seates about me round,  
 With pleasant tales (fit for that idle stound)  
 They cast in course to waste the wearie howres:  
 Some told of Ladies, and their Paramoures;  
 Some of braue Knights, and their renowned Squires;  
 Some of the Faeries and their strange attires; 30  
 And some of Giaunts hard to be beleued,  
 That the delight thereof me much releued.  
 Amongst the rest a good old woman was,  
 Hight Mother *Hubberd*, who did farre surpas  
 The rest in honest mirth, that seem'd her well:  
 She when her turne was come her tale to tell,  
 Tolde of a strange aduenture, that betided  
 Betwixt the Foxe and th' Ape by him misguided;  
 The which for that my sense it greatly pleased,  
 All were my spirite heauie and diseased, 40  
 Ile write in termes, as she the same did say,  
 So well as I her words remember may.  
 No Muses aide me needs heretoo to call;  
 Base is the style, and matter meane withall.  
 ¶Whilome (said she) before the world was ciuill,  
 The Fox and th' Ape disliking of their euill  
 And hard estate, determined to seeke  
 Their fortunes farre abroad, lyeke with his lyeke:  
 For both were craftie and vnhappie witted;  
 Two fellowes might no where be better fitted.

The Foxe, that first this cause of grieffe did finde, 50  
 Gan first thus plaine his case with words vnkinde.  
 Neighbour Ape, and my Gossip eke beside,  
 (Both two sure bands in friendship to be tide,)  
 To whom may I more trustely complaine  
 The euill plight, that doth me sore constraine,  
 And hope thereof to finde due remedie?  
 Heare then my paine and inward agonie.  
 Thus manie yeares I now haue spent and worne,  
 In meane regard, and basest fortunes scorne, 60  
 Dooing my Countrey seruice as I might,  
 No lesse I dare saie than the prowdest wight;  
 And still I hoped to be vp aduaunced,  
 For my good parts; but still it hath mischaunced.  
 Now therefore that no lenger hope I see,  
 But froward fortune still to follow mee,  
 And losels lifted high, where I did looke,  
 I meane to turne the next leafe of the booke.  
 Yet ere that anie way I doo betake,  
 I meane my Gossip priuie first to make. 70  
 Ah my deare Gossip, (answer'd then the Ape,)  
 Deeply doo your sad words my wits awhape,  
 Both for because your grieffe doth great appeare,  
 And eke because my selfe am touched neare:  
 For I likewise haue wasted much good time,  
 Still wayting to preferment vp to clime,  
 Whilest others alwayes haue before me stept,  
 And from my beard the fat away haue swept;  
 That now vnto despaire I gin to growe,  
 And meane for better winde about to throwe. 80  
 Therefore to me, my trustie friend, aread  
 Thy councill: two is better than one head.  
 Certes (said he) I meane me to disguise  
 In some straunge habit after vncouth wize,  
 Or like a Pilgrime, or a Lymiter,  
 Or like a *Gipsen*, or a Iuggeler,  
 And so to wander to the worlds ende,  
 To seeke my fortune, where I may it mend:  
 For worse than that I haue, I cannot meete.  
 Wide is the world I wote and euerie streete 90  
 Is full of fortunes, and aduentures straunge,  
 Continuallie subiect vnto change.  
 Say my faire brother now, if this deuice  
 Doth like you, or may you to like entice.

Surely (said th' Ape) it likes me wondrous well;  
And would ye not poore fellowship expell,  
My selfe would offer you t' accompanie  
In this aduentures chauncefull ieopardie.  
For to wexe olde at home in idlenesse,  
Is disaduentrous, and quite fortunelesse:  
Abroad where change is, good may gotten bee.  
The Foxe was glad, and quickly did agree:  
So both resolu'd, the morrow next ensuing,  
So soone as day appeared to peoples vewing,  
On their intended iourney to proceede;  
And ouer night, whatso theretoo did neede,  
Each did prepare, in readines to bee.  
The morrow next, so soone as one might see  
Light out of heauens windowes forth to looke,  
Both their habiliments vnto them tooke,  
And put themselues (a Gods name) on their way.  
Whenas the Ape beginning well to wey  
This hard aduenture, thus began t'aduise;  
Now read Sir Reynold, as ye be right wise,  
What course ye weene is best for vs to take,  
That for our selues we may a liuing make.  
Whether shall we professe some trade or skill?  
Or shall we varie our deuce at will,  
Euen as new occasion appeares?  
Or shall we tie our selues for certaine yeares  
To anie seruice, Or to anie place?  
For it behoues ere that into the race  
We enter, to resolue first herevpon.  
Now surely brother (said the Foxe anon)  
Ye haue this matter motioned in season:  
For euerie thing that is begun with reason  
Will come by readie meanes vnto his end;  
But things miscounselled must needs miswend.  
Thus therefore I aduize vpon the case,  
That not to anie certaine trade or place,  
Nor anie man we should our selues applie:  
For why should he that is at libertie  
Make himselfe bond? sith then we are free borne,  
Let vs all seruile base subiection scorne;  
And as we bee sonnes of the world so wide,  
Let vs our fathers heritage diuide,  
And challenge to our selues our portions dew  
Of all the patrimonie, which a few



Now hold in hugger mugger in their hand,  
 And all the rest doo rob of good and land.  
 For now a few haue all and all haue nought,  
 Yet all be brethren ylike dearly bought:  
 There is no right in this partition,  
 Ne was it so by institution  
 Ordained first, ne by the law of Nature,  
 But that she gaue like blessing to each creture  
 As well of worldly liuelode as of life,  
 That there might be no difference nor strife,  
 Nor ought cald mine or thine: thrice happie then  
 Was the condition of mortall men.  
 That was the golden age of *Saturne* old,  
 But this might better be the world of gold:  
 For without golde now nothing wilbe got.  
 Therefore (if please you) this shalbe our plot,  
 We will not be of anie occupation,  
 Let such vile vassals borne to base vocation  
 Drudge in the world, and for thier liuing droyle  
 Which haue no wit to liue withouten toyle.  
 But we will walk about the world at pleasure  
 Like two free men, and make our ease a treasure.  
 Free men some beggers call, but they be free,  
 And they which call them so more beggers bee:  
 For they doo swinke and sweate to feed the other,  
 Who liue like Lords of that which they doo gather,  
 And yet doo neuer thanke them for the same,  
 But as their due by Nature doo it clame.  
 Such will we fashion both our selues to bee,  
 Lords of the world, and so will wander free  
 Where so vs listeth, vncontrol'd of anie:  
 Hard is our hap, if we (amongst so manie)  
 Light not on some that may our state amend;  
 Sildome but some good commeth ere the end.  
 Well seemd the Ape to like this ordinaunce:  
 Yet well considering of the circumstaunce,  
 As pausing in great doubt awhile he staid,  
 And afterwards with grave aduizement said;  
 I cannot my lief brother like but well  
 The purpose of the complot which ye tell:  
 For well I wot (compar'd to all the rest  
 Of each degree) that Beggers life is best:  
 And they that thinke themselues the best of all,  
 Oft-times to begging are content to fall.

But this I wot withall that we shall ronne  
 Into great daunger like to bee vndonne,  
 Thus wildly to wander in the worlds eye,  
 Without pasport or good warrantie,  
 For fear least we like rogues should be reputed,  
 And for eare marked beasts abroad be bruted:  
 Therefore I read, that we our counsells call,  
 How to preuent this mischiefe ere it fall,  
 And haow we may with most securitie,  
 Beg amongst those that beggers doo defie.  
 Right well deere Gossip ye aduised haue,  
 (Said then the Foxe) but I this doubt will saue:  
 For ere we farther passe, I will deuise  
 A pasport for vs both in fittest wize,  
 And by the name of Souldiers vs protect;  
 That now is thought a ciuile begging sect.  
 Be you the Souldier, for you likest are  
 For manly semblance, and small skill in warre:  
 I will but wayte on you, and as occasion  
 Falls out, my selfe fit for the same will fashion.  
 The Pasport ended, both they forward went,  
 The Ape clad Souldierlike, fit for th' intent,  
 In a blew iacket with a crosse of redd  
 And manie slits, as if that he had shedd  
 Much blood through may wounds therin receaued,  
 Which had the vse of his right arme bereaued;  
 Vpon his head an old Scotch cap he wore,  
 With a plume feather all to peeces tore:  
 His breeches were made after the new cut,  
*Al Portugese*, loose like an emptie gut;  
 And his hose broken high aboue the heeling,  
 And his shooes beaten out with traueling.  
 But neither sword nor dagger he did beare,  
 Seemes that no foes reuengement he did feare;  
 In stead of them a handsome bat he held,  
 On which he leaned, as one farre in elde.  
 Shame light on him, that through so false illusion,  
 Doth turne the name of Souldiers to abusion,  
 And that, which is the noblest mysterie,  
 Brings to reproach and common infamie.  
 Long they thus trauailed, yet neuer met  
 Aduenture, which might them a working set:  
 Yet manie waies they sought, and manie tryed:  
 Yet for their purposes none fit espyed.

At last they chaunst to meete vpon the way  
 A simple husbandman in garments gray;  
 Yet though his vesture were but meane and bace,  
 A good yeoman he was of honest place,  
 And more for thrift did care than for gay clothing:  
 Gay without good, is good hearts greatest loathing.  
 The Foxe him spying, bad the Ape him dight  
 To play his part, for loe he was in sight,  
 That (if her er'd not) should them entertaine,  
 And yeeld them timely profite for their paine.  
 Eftsoones the Ape himselfe gan vp to reare,  
 And on his shoulders high his bat to beare,  
 As if good seruice her were fit to doo;  
 But little thrift for him he did it too:  
 And stoutly fprward he his steps did straine,  
 That like a handsome swaine it him became:  
 When as they nigh approached, that good man  
 Seeing them wander loosly, first began  
 T' enquire of custome, what and whence they were?  
 To whom the Ape, I am a Souldiere,  
 That late in warres haue spent my deerest blood,  
 And in long seruice lost both limbs and good,  
 And now constrain'd that trade to ouergiue,  
 I driuen am to seeke some meanes to liue:  
 Which might it you in pitie please t' afford,  
 I would be readie both in deed and word,  
 To doo you faithfull seruice all my dayes.  
 This yron world (that same he weeping sayes)  
 Brings downe the stowtest hearts to lowest state:  
 For miserie doth brauest mindes abate,  
 And make them seeke for that they wont to scorne,  
 Of fortune and of hope at once forlorne.  
 The honest man, that heard him thus complaine,  
 Was griu'd, as he had felt part of his paine;  
 And well dispos'd him some reliefe to showe,  
 Askt if in husbandrie he ought did knowe,  
 To plough, to plant, to reap, to rake, to sowe,  
 To hedge, to ditch, to thrash, to thetch, to mowe;  
 Or to what labour els he was prepar'd?  
 For husbands life is labourous and hard.  
 Whenas the Ape him hard so much to talke  
 Of labour, that did from his liking balke,  
 He would haue slipt the coller handsomly,  
 And to him said; good Sir, full glad am I,

To take what paines may anie liuing wight:  
 But my late maymed limbs lack wonted might  
 To doo their kindly seruices, as needeth:  
 Scarce this right hand the mouth with diet feedeth,  
 So that it may no painfull worke endure,  
 Ne to strong labour can it selfe enure.  
 But if that anie other place you haue,  
 Which askes small paines, but thriftines to saue,  
 Or care to ouerlooke, or trust to gather,  
 Ye may me trust as your owne ghostly father.  
 With that the husbandman gan him auize  
 That it for him were fittest exercise  
 Cattell to keep, or grounds to ouersee;  
 And asked him, if he could willing bee  
 To keep his sheep, or to attend his swyne,  
 Or watch his mares, or take his charge of kyne?  
 Gladly (said he) what euer such like paine  
 Ye put on me, I will the same sustaine:  
 But gladliest I of your fleecie sheepe  
 (Might it you please) would take on me the keep.  
 For ere that vnto armes I me betooke,  
 Vnto my fathers sheepe I vsde to looke,  
 That yet the skill thereof I haue not loste:  
 Thereto right well this Curdog by my coste  
 (meaning the Foxe) will serue, my sheepe to gather,  
 And driue to follow after their Belwether.  
 The Husbandman was meanly well content,  
 Triall to make of his endeauourment,  
 And home him leading, lent to him the charge  
 Of all his flocke, with libertie full large,  
 Giuing accompt of th' annuall increace  
 Both of their lambes, and of their woolley fleece.  
 Thus is this Ape become a shepheard swaine  
 And the false Foxe his dog (God giue them paine)  
 For ere the yeare haue halfe his course out-run,  
 And doo returne from whence he first begun,  
 They shall him make an ill accompt of thrift.  
 Now whenas Time flying with winges swift,  
 Expired had the terme, that these two iauels  
 Should render vp a reckning of their trauels  
 Vnto their master, which it of them sought,  
 Exceedingly they troubled were in thought,  
 Ne wist what answer vnto him to frame,  
 Ne how to scape great punishment, or shame,

For their false treason and vile theuerie.  
For not a lambe of all their flockes supply  
Had they to shew: but euer as they bred,  
They slue them, and vpon their fleshes fed:  
For that disguised Dog lou'd blood to spill,  
And drew the wicked Shepheard to his will.  
So twixt them both they not a lambkin left,  
And when lambes fail'd, the old sheepes liues they reft;  
That how t' acquite themselues vnto their Lord,  
They were in doubt, and flatly set aboard.  
The Foxe then counsel'd th' Ape, for to require  
Respite till morrow, t' answeere his desire:  
For times delay new hope of helpe still breeds.  
The goodman granted, doubting nought their deeds,  
And bad, next day, that all should readie be.  
But they more subtill meaning had than he:  
For the next morrowes meed they closely ment,  
For feare of afterclaps for to preuent.  
And that same euening, when all shrowded were  
In careles sleep, they without care or feare,  
Cruelly fell vpon their flock in folde,  
And of them slew at pleasure what they wolde:  
Of which whenas they feasted had their fill,  
For a full complement of all their ill,  
They stole away, and tooke their hastie flight,  
Carried in clowdes of all-concealing night.  
So was the husbandman left to his losse,  
And they vnto their fortunes change to tosse.  
After which sort they wandered long while,  
Abusing manie through their cloaked guile;  
That at the last they gan to be descryed  
Of euerie one, and all their slights espyed.  
So as their begging now them failed quyte;  
For none would giue, but all men would them wyte:  
Yet would they take no paines to get their liuing,  
But seeke some other way to gaine by giuing,  
Much like to begging but much better named;  
For manie beg, which are thereof ashamed.  
And now the Foxe had gotten him a gowne,  
And th' Ape a cassocke sidelong hanging downe;  
For they their occupation meant to change,  
And now in other state abroad to range:  
For since their souldiers pas no better spedd,  
They forg'd another, as for Clerkes booke-redd.

Who passing foorth, as their aduentures fell,  
 Through manie haps, which needs not here to tell;  
 At length chaunst with a formall Priest to meete,  
 Whom they in ciuill manner first did greete,  
 And after askt an almes for Gods deare loue.  
 The man straight way his choler vp did moue,  
 And with reproachfull tearmes gan them reuile,  
 For following that trade so base and vile;  
 And askt what license, or what Pas they had?  
 Ah (said the Ape as sighing wondrous sad)  
 Its an hard case, when men of good deseruing  
 Must either driuen be perforce to steruing,  
 Or asked for their pas by euerie squib,  
 That list at will them to reuile or snib:  
 And yet (God wote) small oddes I often see  
 Twixt them that aske, and them that asked bee.  
 Natheles because you shall not vs misdeeme,  
 But that we are as honest as we seeme,  
 Yee shall our pasport at your pleasure see,  
 And then ye will (I hope) well mooued bee.  
 Which when the Priest beheld, he vew'd it nere,  
 As if therein some text he studying were,  
 But little els (God wote) could thereof skill:  
 For read he could not euidence, nor will,  
 Ne tell a written word, ne write a letter,  
 Ne make one title worse, ne make one better:  
 Of such deep learning little had he neede,  
 Ne yet of Latine, ne of Greeke, that breede  
 Doubts mongst Diuines, and difference of texts,  
 From whence arise diuersitie of sects,  
 And hatefull heresies, of God abhor'd:  
 But this good Sir did follow the plaine word,  
 Ne medled with their controuersies vaine.  
 All his care was, his seruice well to saine,  
 And to read Homelies vpon holidayes:  
 When that was done, he might attend his playes;  
 An easie life, and fit high God to please.  
 He hauing ouerlookt their pas at ease,  
 Gan at the length them to rebuke againe,  
 That no good trade of life did entertaine,  
 But lost their time in wandring loose abroad,  
 Seeing the world, in which they bootles boad,  
 Had wayes enough for all therein to liue;  
 Such grace did God vnto his creatures giue.

Said then the Foxe; who hath the world not tride,  
 From the right way full eath may wander wide.  
 We are but Nouices, new come abroad,  
 We haue not yet the tract of anie troad,  
 Nor on vs taken anie state of life,  
 But readie are of anie to make preife.  
 Therefore might please you, which the world haue proued,  
 Vs to aduise, which forth but lately moued,  
 Of some good course, that we might vndertake;  
 Ye shall for euer vs your bondmen make.  
 The Priest gan wexe halfe proud to be so praide,  
 And thereby willing to affoord them aide;  
 It seemes (said he) right well that ye be Clerks,  
 Both by your wittie words, and by your werks.  
 Is not that name enough to make a liuing  
 To him that hath a whit of Natures giuing?  
 How manie honest men see ye arize  
 Daylie thereby, and grow to goodly prize?  
 To Deanes, to Archdeacons, to Commissaries,  
 To Lords, to Principalls, to Prebendaries;  
 All iolly Prelates, worthie rule to beare,  
 Who euer them enuie: yet spite bites neare.  
 Why should ye doubt then, but that ye likewise  
 Might vnto some of those in time arise?  
 In the meane time to liue in good estate,  
 Louing that loue, and hating those that hate;  
 Being some honest Curate, or some Vicker  
 Content with little in condition sicker.  
 Ah but (said th' Ape) the charge is wondrous great,  
 To feed mens soules, and hath an heauie threat.  
 To feede mens soules (quoth he) is not in man:  
 For they must feed themselues, doo what we can.  
 We are but charg'd to lay the meate before:  
 Eate they that list, we need to doo no more.  
 But God it is that feedes them with his grace,  
 The bread of life powr'd downe from heauenly place.  
 Therefore, said he, that with the budding rod  
 Did rule the Iewes, *All shalbe taught of God.*  
 That same hath Iesus Christ now to him raught,  
 By whom the flock is rightly fed, and taught:  
 He is the Shepherd, and the Priest is hee;  
 We but his shepheard swaines ordain'd to bee.  
 Therefore herewith doo not your selfe dismay;  
 Ne is the paines so great, but beare ye may;

For not so great as it was wont of yore,  
 It's now a dayes, ne halfe so streight and sore:  
 They whilome vsed duly euerie day  
 Their seruice and their holie things to say,  
 At morne and euen, besides their Anthemes sweete,  
 Their penie Masses, and their Complynes meete,  
 Their Diriges, their Trentals, and their shrifts,  
 Their memories, their singings, and their gifts.  
 Now all those needlesse works are laid away:  
 Now once a weeke vpon the Sabbath day,  
 It is enough to doo our small deuotion,  
 And then to follow any merrie motion.  
 Ne are we tyde to fast, but when we list,  
 Ne to weare garments base of wollen twist,  
 But with the finest silkes vs to aray,  
 That before God we may appeare more gay,  
 Resembling *Aarons* glorie in his place:  
 For farre vnfit it is, that person bace  
 Should with vile cloaths approach Gods maiestie,  
 Whom no vncleannes may approachen nie:  
 Or that all men, which anie master serue,  
 Good garments for their seruice should deserue;  
 But he that serues the Lord of hoasts most high,  
 And that in highest place, t' approach him nigh,  
 And all the peoples prayers to present  
 Before his throne, as on ambassage sent  
 Both too and fro, should not deserue to weare  
 A garment better, than of wooll or heare.  
 Beside we may haue lying by our sides  
 Our louely Lasses, or bright shining Brides:  
 We be not tyde to wilful chastitie,  
 But haue the Gospell of free libertie.  
 By that he ended had his ghostly sermon,  
 The Foxe was well induc'd to be a Parson;  
 And of the Priest eftsoones gan to enquire,  
 How to a Benefice he might aspire.  
 Marie there (said the Priest) is arte indeed.  
 Much good deep learning one thereout may reed,  
 For that the ground worke is, and end of all,  
 How to obtaine a Beneficiall.  
 First therefore, when ye haue in handsome wise  
 Your selfe attyred, as you can deuise,  
 Then to some Noble man your selfe applye,  
 Or other great one in the worldes eye,



That hath a zealous disposition  
 To God, and so to his religion:  
 There must thou fashion eke a godly zeale,  
 Such as no carpers may contrarye reueale:  
 For each thing fained, ought more warie bee.  
 There thou must walke in sober grauitee,  
 And seeme as Saintlike as Saint *Radegund*:  
 Fast much, pray oft, looke lowly on the ground,  
 And vnto euerie one doo curtesie meeke:  
 These lookes (nought saying) doo a benefice seeke,  
 And be thou sure one not to lacke or long.  
 But if thee list vnto the Court to throng,  
 And there to hunt after the hoped pray,  
 Then must thou thee dispose another way:  
 For there thou needs must learne, to laugh, to lie,  
 To face, to forge, to scoffe, to companie,  
 To crouche, to please, to be a beetle stock  
 Of thy great Masters will, to scorne, or mock:  
 So maist thou chaunce mock out a Benfice,  
 Vnlesse thou canst one coniure by deuce,  
 Or cast a figure for a Bishoprick:  
 And if one could, it were but a schoole-trick.  
 These be the wayes, by which without reward  
 Liuing in Court be gotten, though full hard.  
 For nothing there is done without a fee:  
 The Courtier needes must recompenced bee  
 With a Beneuolence, or haue in gage  
 The *Primitias* of your parsonage:  
 Scarse can a Bishoprick forpas them by,  
 But that it must be gelt in priuitie.  
 Doo not therefore seeke a liuing there,  
 But of more priuate persons seeke elsewhere,  
 Whereas thou maist compound a better penie,  
 Ne let thy learning question'd be of anie.  
 For some good Gentleman that hath the right  
 Vnto his Church for to present a wight,  
 Will cope with thee in reasonable wise;  
 That if the liuing yerely doo arise  
 To fortie pound, that then his yongest sonne  
 Shall twentie haue, and twentie thou hast wonne:  
 Thou hast it wonne, for it is of franke gift,  
 And he will care for all the rest to shift;  
 Both that the Bishop may admit of thee,  
 And that therein thou maist maintained bee.

This is the way for one that is vnlern'd  
 Liuing to get, and not to be discern'd.  
 But they that are great Clerkes, haue nearer wayes,  
 For learning sake to liuing them to raise:  
 Yet manie eke of them (God wote) are driuen,  
 T'accept a Benefice in peeces riuen.  
 How saist thou (friend) haue I not well discourst  
 Vpon this Common place (though plaine, not wourst)?  
 Better a short tale, than a bad long shriuing.  
 Needes anie more to learne to get a liuing?  
 Now sure and by my hallidome (quoth he)  
 Ye a great master are in your degree:  
 Great thanks I yeeld you for your discipline,  
 And doo not doubt, but duly to encline  
 My wits theretoo, as ye shall shortly heare.  
 The Priest him wisht good speed, and well to fare.  
 So parted they, as eithers way them led.  
 But th' Ape and Foxe ere long so well them sped,  
 Through the Priests holesome counsell lately tought,  
 And through their own faire handling wisely wrought,  
 That they a Benefice twixt them obtained;  
 And craftie Reynold was a Priest ordained;  
 And th' Ape his Parish Clarke procur'd to bee.  
 Then made they reuell route and goodly glee.  
 But ere long time had passed, they so ill  
 Did order their affaires, that th' euill will  
 Of all their Parishners they had constraind;  
 Who to the Ordinarie of them complain'd,  
 How fowlie they their offices abus'd,  
 And them of crimes and heresies accus'd;  
 That Pursiuants he often for them sent:  
 But they neglected his commaundement.  
 So long persisted obstinate and bolde,  
 Till at the length he published to holde  
 A Visitation, and them cyted thether:  
 Then was high time their wits about to geather;  
 What did they then, but made a composition  
 With their next neighbor Priest for light condition,  
 To whom their liuing they resigned quight  
 For a few pence, and ran away by night.  
 So passing through the Countrey in disguise,  
 They fled farre off, where none might them surprize,  
 And after that long straid here and there,  
 Through euerie field and forrest farre and nere;

Yet neuer found occasion for their tourne,  
 But almost steru'd, did much lament and mourne.  
 At last they chaunst to meete vpon the way  
 The Mule, all deckt in goodly rich aray,  
 With bells and bosses, that full lowdly rung,  
 And costly trappings, that to ground downe hung.  
 Lowly they him saluted in meeke wise,  
 But he through pride and fatnes gan despise  
 Their meanesse; scarce vouchsafte them to requite.  
 Whereat the Foxe deep groning in his sprite,  
 Said, Ah sir Mule, now blessed be the day,  
 That I see you so goodly and so gay  
 In your attyres, and eke your silken hyde  
 Fil'd with round flesh, that euerie bone doth hide.  
 Seemes that in fruitfull pastures ye doo liue,  
 Or fortune doth you secret fauour giue.  
 Foolish Foxe (said the Mule) thy wretched need  
 Praiseth the thing that doth thy sorrow breed.  
 For well I weene, thou canst not but enuie  
 My wealth, compar'd to thine owne miserie,  
 That art so leane and meagre waxen late,  
 That scarce thy legs vphold thy feeble gate.  
 Ay me (said then the Foxe) whom euill hap  
 Vnworthy in such wretchednes doth wrap,  
 And makes the scorne of other beasts to bee:  
 But read (faire Sir, of grace) from whence come yee?  
 Or what of tidings you abroad doo heare?  
 Newes may perhaps some good vnweeting beare.  
 From royall Court I lately came (said he)  
 Where all the brauerie that eye may see,  
 And all the happinesse that heart desire,  
 Is to be found; he nothing can admire,  
 That hath not seene that heauens portrature:  
 But tidings there is none I you assure,  
 Saue that which common is, and knowne to all,  
 That Courtiers as the tide doo rise and fall.  
 But tell vs (said the Ape) we doo you pray,  
 Who now in Court doth beare the greatest sway.  
 That if such fortune doo to vs befall,  
 We may seeke fauour of the best of all.  
 Marie (said he) the highest now in grace,  
 Be the wild beasts, that swiftest are in chace;  
 For in their speedie course and nimble flight  
 The Lyon now doth take the most delight:

But cheiflie, ioyes on foote them to beholde,  
 Enchaste with chaine and circulet of golde:  
 So wilde a beast so tame ytaught to bee,  
 And buxome to his bands, is ioy to see.  
 So well his golden Circler him beseemeth:  
 But his late chayne his Leige vnmeete esteemeth;  
 For so braue beasts she loueth best to see,  
 In the wilde forrest raunging fresh and free.  
 Therefore if fortune thee in Court to liue,  
 In case thou euer there wilt hope to thriue,  
 To some of these thou must thy selfe apply:  
 Els as a thistle-downe in th' ayre doth flie,  
 So vainly shalt thou too and fro be tost,  
 And loose thy labour and thy fruitles cost.  
 And yet full few, which follow them I see,  
 For vertues bare regard aduanced bee,  
 But either for some gainfull benefit,  
 Or that they may for their owne turnes be fit.  
 Nath'les perhaps ye things may handle soe,  
 That ye may better thriue than thousands moe.  
 But (said the Ape) how shall we first come in,  
 That after we may fauour seeke to win?  
 How els (said he) but with a good bold face,  
 And with big words, and with a stately pace,  
 That men may thinke of you in generall,  
 That to be in you, which is not all:  
 For not by that which is, the world now deemeth,  
 (as it was wont) but by that same that seemeth.  
 Ne do I doubt, but that ye well can fashion  
 Your selues theretoo, according to occasion:  
 So fare ye well, good Courtiers may ye bee;  
 So proudlie neighing from them parted hee.  
 Then gan this creftie couple to deuize,  
 How for the Court themselues they might aguize:  
 For thither they themselues meant to addresse,  
 In hope to finde there happier successe;  
 So well they shifted, that the Ape anon  
 Himselfe had cloathed like a Gentleman,  
 And the slie Foxe, as like to be his groome,  
 That to the Court in seemly sort they come.  
 Where the fond Ape himselfe vpreparing hy  
 Vpon his tipoes, stalketh stately by,  
 As if he were some great *Magnifico*,  
 And boldlie doth amongst the boldest go.

And his man Reynold with fine counterfesaunce  
 Supports his credite and his countenance.  
 Then gan the Courtiers gaze on euerie side,  
 And stare on him, with big lookes basen wide,  
 Wondring what mister wight he was, and whence:  
 For he was clad in strange accoustrements,  
 Fashion'd with queint deuises neuer seene  
 In Court before, yet there all fashions beene:  
 Yet he them in newfanglenesse did pas:  
 But his behaiour altogether was  
*Alla Turchesca* much the more admyr'd,  
 And his lookes loftie, as if he aspyr'd  
 To dignitie, and sdeign'd the low degree;  
 That all which did such strangenesse in him see,  
 By secrete meanes gan of his state enquire,  
 And priuily his seruant thereto hire:  
 Who throughly arm'd against such couerture,  
 Reported vnto all, that he was sure  
 A noble Gentleman of high regard,  
 Which through the world had with long trauel far'd,  
 And seene the manners of all beasts on ground;  
 Now here arriu'd, to see if like he found.  
 Thus did the Ape at first him credit gaine,  
 Which afterwards he wisely did maintaine  
 With gallant showe, and daylie more augment  
 Through his fine feates and Courtly complement;  
 For he could play, and daunce, and vaute, and spring,  
 And al that els pertaines to reveling,  
 Onely through kindly aptnes of his ioynts.  
 Besides he could doo manie other poynts,  
 The which in Court him serued to good stead:  
 For he mongst Ladies could their fortunes read  
 Out of their hands, and merie leasings tell,  
 And iuggle finely, that became him well:  
 But he so light was at legier demaine,  
 That what he toucht, came not to light againe;  
 Yet would he laugh it out, and proudly looke,  
 And tell them, that they greatly him mistooke.  
 So would he scoffe them out with mockerie,  
 For he therein had great felicitie;  
 And with sharp quips ioy'd others to deface,  
 Thinking that their disgracing did him grace:  
 So whilst that other like vaine wits he pleased,  
 And made to laugh, his heart was greatly eased.

But the right gentle minde would bite his lip,  
 To heare the Iauell so good men to nip:  
 For though the vulgar yeeld an open eare,  
 And common Courtiers loue to gybe and fleare  
 At euerie thing, which they heare spoken ill,  
 And the best speaches with ill meaning spill;  
 Yet the braue Courtier, in whose beauteous thought  
 Regard of honour harbours more than ought,  
 Doth loath such base condition, to backbite  
 Anies good name for enuie or despite:  
 He stands on tearmes of honourable minde,  
 Ne will be carried with the common winde  
 Of Courts inconstant mutabilitie,  
 Ne after euerie tattling fable flie;  
 But heares, and sees the follies of the rest,  
 And thereof gathers for himselfe the best:  
 He will not creepe, nor crouche with fained face,  
 But walkes vpright with comely stedfast pace,  
 And vnto all doth yeeld due curtesie;  
 But not with kissed hand belowe the knee,  
 As that same Apish crue is wont to doo:  
 For he disdaines himselfe t' embase theretoo.  
 He hates fowle leasings, and vile flatterie,  
 Two filthie blots in noble Gentry;  
 And lothefull idlenes he doth detest,  
 The canker worme of euerie gentle brest;  
 The which to banish with faire exercise  
 Of knightly feates, he daylie doth devise:  
 Now menaging the mouthes of stubborne steedes,  
 Now practising the prooffe of warlike deedes,  
 Now his bright armes assaying, now his speare,  
 Now the nigh aymed ring away to beare;  
 At other times he casts to sew the chace  
 Of swift wilde beasts, or runne on foote a race,  
 T' enlarge his breath (large breath in armes most needfull)  
 Or els by wrestling to wex strong and heedfull,  
 Or his stiff armes to stretch with Eughen bowe,  
 And manly legs, still passing too and fro,  
 Without a gowned beast him fast beside;  
 A vaine ensample of the *Persian* pride,  
 Who after he had wonne th' *Assyrian* foe,  
 Did euer after scorne on foote to goe.  
 Thus when this Courtly Gentleman with toyle  
 Himselfe hath wearied, he doth recoyle

Vnto his rest, and there with sweete delight  
 Of Musicks skill reuiues his toyled spright,  
 Or els with Loues, and Ladies gentle sports,  
 The ioy of youth, himselfe he recomforts:  
 Or lastly, when the bodie list to pause,  
 His minde vnto the Muses he withdrawes;  
 Sweete Ladie Muses, Ladies of delight,  
 Delights of life, and ornaments of light:  
 With whom he close confers with wise discourse,  
 Of Natures workes, of heauens continuall course,  
 Of forreine lands, of people different,  
 Of kingdomes change, of diuers gouernment,  
 Of dreadfull battailes of renowned Knights;  
 With which he kindleth his ambitious sprights  
 To like desire and praise of noble fame,  
 The onely vpshot whereto he doth ayme:  
 For all his minde on honour fixed is,  
 To which he leuels all his purposis,  
 And in his Princes seruice spends his dayes,  
 Not so much for to gaine, or for to raise  
 Himselfe to high degree, as for his grace,  
 And in his liking to winne worthie place;  
 Through due deserts and comely carriage,  
 In whatso please employ his personage,  
 That may be matter meete to gaine him praise;  
 For he is fit to vse in all assayes,  
 Whether fro Armes and warlike amenaunce,  
 Or else for wise and ciuill gouernaunce.  
 For he is practiz'd well in policie,  
 And thereto doth his Courting most applie:  
 To learne the enterdeale of Princes strange,  
 To marke th' intent of Counsells, and the change  
 Of states, and eke of priuate men sometime,  
 Supplanted by fine falshood and faire guile;  
 Of all the which he gathereth, what is fit  
 T'enrich the storehouse of his powerfull wit,  
 Which through wise speaches, and graue conference  
 He daylie eekes, and brings to excellence.  
 Such is the rightfull Courtier in his kinde:  
 But vnto such the Ape lent not his minde;  
 Such were for him no fit companions,  
 Such would descrie his lewd conditions:  
 But the yong lustie gallants he did chose  
 To follow, meete to whom he might disclose

His witlesse pleasance, and ill pleasing vaine.  
 A thousand wayes he them could entertaine,  
 With all the thriftles games, that may be found  
 With mumming and with masking all around,  
 With dice, with cards, with balliards farre vnfit,  
 With shuttlecocks, misseeming manlie wit,  
 With courtizans, and costly riotize,  
 Whereof still somewhat to his share did rize:  
 Ne, them to pleasure, would he sometimes scorne  
 A Pandares coate (so basely was he borne);  
 Thereto he could fine louing verses frame,  
 And play the Poet oft. But ah, for shame  
 Let not sweete Poets praise, whose onely pride  
 Is vertue to aduaunce, and vice deride,  
 Be with the worke of losels wit defamed,  
 Ne let such verses Poetrie be named:  
 Yet he the name on him would rashly take,  
 Maugre the sacred Muses, and it make  
 A seruant to the vile affection  
 Of such, as he depended most vpon,  
 And with the sugrie sweete thereof allure  
 Chast Ladies eares to fantasies impure.  
 To such delights the noble wits he led  
 Which him relieu'd, and their vaine humours fed  
 With fruitles follies, and vnsound delights.  
 But if perhaps into their noble sprights  
 Desire of honor, or braue thoughts of armes  
 Did euer creepe, then with his wicked charmes  
 And strong concepts he would it driue away,  
 Ne suffer it to house there halfe a day.  
 And whenso loue of letters did inspire  
 Their gentle wits, and kindly wise desire,  
 That chiefly doth each noble minde adorne,  
 Then he would scoffe at learning, and eke scorne  
 The Sectaries thereof, as people base  
 And simple men, which neuer came in place  
 Of worlds affaires, but in darke corners mewd,  
 Muttred of matters, as their bookes them shewd,  
 Ne other knowledge euer did attaine,  
 But with their gownes their grauitie maintaine.  
 From them he would his impudent lewde speach  
 Against Gods holie Ministers oft reach,  
 And mocke Diuines and their profession:  
 What els then did he by progression,



But mocke high God himselfe, whom they professe?  
 But what car'd he for God, or godlinesse?  
 All his care was himselfe, how to aduaunce,  
 And to vphold his courtly countenance  
 By all the cunning meanes he could devise;  
 Were it by honest wayes, or otherwise,  
 He made small choyce: yet sure his honestie  
 Got him small gaines, but shameles flatterie,  
 And filthie brocage, and vnseemly shifts,  
 And borowe base, and some good Ladies gifts:  
 But the best helpe, which chiefly him sustain'd,  
 Was his man Reynolds purchase which he gain'd.  
 For he was school'd by kinde in all the skill  
 Of close conueyance, and each practise ill  
 Of coosinage and cleanly knauerie,  
 Which oft maintain'd his masters brauerie.  
 Besides he vsde another slipprie slight,  
 In taking on himselfe in common sight,  
 False personages, fit for euerie sted,  
 With which he thousands cleanly coosined:  
 Now like a Merchant, Merchants to deceaue,  
 With whom his credite he did often leaue  
 In gage, for his gay Masters hopelesse dett:  
 Now like a Lawyer, when he land would lett,  
 Or sell fee-simples in his Masters name,  
 Which he had neuer, nor ought like the same:  
 Then would he be a Broker, and draw in  
 Both wares and money, by exchange to win:  
 Then would he seeme a Farmer, that would sell  
 Bargaines of woods, which he did lately fell,  
 Or corne, or cattle, or such other ware,  
 Thereby to coosin men not well aware;  
 Of all the which there came a secret fee  
 To th' Ape, that his countenance might bee.  
 Besides all this, he vs'd oft to beguile  
 Poore suters, that in Court did haunt some while:  
 For he would learne their busines secretly,  
 And then informe his Master hastely,  
 That he by meanes might cast them to preuent,  
 And beg the sute, the which the other ment.  
 Or otherwise false Reynold would abuse  
 The simple Suter, and wish him to chuse  
 His Master, being one of great regard  
 In Court, to compas anie sute not hard,

In case his paines were recompenst with reason:  
 So would he worke this silly man by treason  
 To buy his Masters friuolous good will,  
 That had not power to doo him good or ill.  
 So pitifull a thing is Suters state.  
 Most miserable man, whom wicked fate  
 Hath brought to Court, to sue for had ywist,  
 That few haue found, and manie one hath mist;  
 Full little knowest thou that hast not tride,  
 What hell it is, in suing long to bide:  
 To loose good dayes, that might be better spent;  
 To wast long nights in pensiue discontent;  
 To speed to day, to be put back to morrow;  
 To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;  
 To haue thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres;  
 To haue thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres;  
 To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares;  
 To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dispaire;  
 To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,  
 To spend, to giue, to want, to be vndonne.  
 Vnhappie wight, borne to desastrous end,  
 That doth his life in so long tendance spend.  
 Who euer leaues sweete home, where meane estate  
 In safe assurance, without strife or hate,  
 Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke;  
 And will to Court for shadowes vaine to seeke,  
 Or hope to gaine, himselfe will a daw trie:  
 That curse God send vnto mine enemye.  
 For none but such as this bold Ape vnblest,  
 Can euer thriue in that vnluckie quest;  
 Or such as hath a Reynold to his man,  
 That by his shifts his Master furnish can.  
 But yet this Foxe could not so closely hide  
 His craftie feates, but that they were descride  
 At length, by such as sate in iustice seate,  
 Who for the same him fowlie did entreate;  
 And hauing worthily him punished,  
 Out of the Court for euer banished.  
 And now the Ape wanting his huckster man,  
 That wont prouide his necessaries, gan  
 To growe into great lacke, ne could vpholde  
 His countanaunce in those his garments olde:  
 Ne new ones could he easily prouide,  
 Though all men him vncased gan deride,

Like as a Puppit placed in a play,  
 Whose part once past all men bid take away:  
 So that he driuen was to great distresse,  
 And shortly brought to hopelesse wretchednesse.  
 The closely as he might, he cast to leaue  
 The Court, not asking any passe or leaue;  
 But ran away in his rent rags by night,  
 Ne euer satyd in place, ne spake to wight,  
 Till that the Foxe his copesmate he had found,  
 To whome complayning his vnhappy stound,  
 At last againe with him in trauell ioynd,  
 And with him far'd some better chaunce to fynde.  
 So in the world long time they wandered,  
 And mickle want and hardnesse suffered;  
 That them repented much so foolishly  
 To come so farre to seeke for misery,  
 And leaue the sweetnes of contented home,  
 Though eating hipps, and drinking watry fome.  
 Thus as they them complayned too and fro,  
 Whilst through the forest rechlesse they did goe,  
 Lo where they spide, how in a gloomy glade,  
 The Lyon sleeping lay in secret shade,  
 His Crowne and Scepter lying him beside,  
 And hauing doft for heate his dreadfull hide:  
 Which when they sawe, the Ape was sore afrayde,  
 And would haue fled with terror all dismayde.  
 But him the Foxe with hardy words did stay,  
 And bad him put all cowardize away:  
 For now was time (if euer they would hope)  
 To ayme their counsels to the fairest scope,  
 And them for euer highly to aduaunce,  
 In case the good which their owne happie chaunce  
 Them freely offred, they would wisely take.  
 Scarse could the Ape yet speake, so did he quake,  
 Yet as he could, he askt how good might growe,  
 Where nought but dread and death do seeme in show.  
 Now (sayd he) whiles the Lyon sleepeth sound,  
 May we his Crowne and Mace take from the ground,  
 And eke his skinne the terror of the wood,  
 Wherewith we may our selues (if we thinke good)  
 Make Kings of Beasts, and Lords of forests all,  
 Subiect vnto that powre imperiall.  
 Ah but (sayd the Ape) who is so bold a wretch,  
 That dare his hardy hand to those outstretch:

When as he knowes his meede, if he be spide,  
 To be a thousand deathes, and shame beside?  
 Fond Ape (sayd then the Foxe) into whose brest  
 Neuer crept thought of honor, nor braue gest,  
 Who will not venture life a King to be,  
 And rather rule and raigne in soueraign see,  
 Than dwell in dust inglorious and bace,  
 Where none shall name the number of his place?  
 One ioyous houre in blisfull happines,  
 I chose before a life of wretchednes.  
 Be therefore counselled herein by me,  
 And shake off this vile harted cowardree.  
 If he awake, yet is not death the next,  
 For we may colour it with some pretext  
 Of this, or that, that may excuse the cryme:  
 Else we may flye; thou to a tree mayst clyme,  
 And I creepe vnder ground; both from his reach:  
 Therefore be rul'd to doo as I doo teach.  
 The Ape, that easrt did nought but chill and quake,  
 Now gan some courage vnto him to take,  
 And was content to attempt that enterprise,  
 Tickled with glorie and rash couetise.  
 But first gan question, whether should assay  
 Those royall ornaments to steale away?  
 Marie that shall your selfe(quothe he theretoo)  
 For ye be fine and nimble it to doo;  
 Of all the beasts which in the forrests bee,  
 Is not a fitter for this turne than yee:  
 Therefore, mine owne deare brother take good hart,  
 And euer thinke a Kingdome is your part.  
 Loath was the Ape, though prasied, to aduenter,  
 Yet faintly gan into his worke to enter,  
 Afraid of euerie leafe, that stir'd him by,  
 And euerie stick, that vnderneath did ly;  
 Vpon his tiptoes nicely he vp went,  
 For making noyse, and still his eare he lent  
 To euerie sound, that vnder heauen blew,  
 Now went, now stept, now crept, now backward drew,  
 That it good sport had been him to haue eyde:  
 Yet at the last (so well he him applyde,)  
 Through his fine handling, and cleanly play,  
 He all those royall signes had stolne away,  
 And with the Foxes helpe them borne aside,  
 Into a secret corner vnespide.

Whither whenas they came they fell at words,  
 Whether of them should be the Lord of Lords:  
 For th' Ape was stryfull, and ambicious;  
 And the Foxe guilefull, and most couetous,  
 That neither pleased was, to haue the rayne  
 Twixt them diuided into euen twaine,  
 But either (algates) would be Lords alone:  
 For Loue and Lordship bide no paragone.  
 I am most worthie (said the Ape) sith I  
 For it did put my life in iopardie:  
 Thereto I am in person and in stature  
 Most like a man, the Lord of euerie creature,  
 So that it seemeth I was made to raigne,  
 And borne to be a Kingly soueraigne.  
 Nay (said the Foxe) Sir Ape you are astray:  
 For though to steale the Diademe away  
 Were the worke of your nimble hand, yet I  
 Did first deuise the plot by pollicie;  
 So that it wholly springeth from my wit:  
 For which also I claime my selfe more fit  
 Than you, to rule: for gouernment of state  
 Will without wisdomes soone be ruinate.  
 And where ye claime your selfe for outward shape  
 Most like a man, Man is not like an Ape  
 In his chiefe parts, that is, in wit and spirite:  
 But I therein most like to him doo merite  
 For my slie wyles and subtill craftinesse,  
 The title of the Kingdome to possesse.  
 Nath'les (my brother) since we passed are  
 Vnto this point, we will appease our iarre,  
 And I with reason meete will rest content,  
 That ye shall haue both crowne and gouernment,  
 Vpon condition, that ye ruled bee  
 In all affaires, and counselled by mee;  
 And that ye let none other euer drawe  
 Your minde from me, but keepe this as a lawe:  
 And herevpon an oath vnto me plight.  
 The Ape was glad to end the strife so light,  
 And thereto swore: for who would not oft sweare,  
 And oft vnsweare, a Diademe to beare?  
 Then freely vp those royall spoyles he tooke,  
 Yet at the Lyons skin he inly quooke;  
 But it dissembled, and vpon his head  
 The Crowne, and on his backe the skin he did,

And the false Fox him helped to array.  
Then when he was dight he tooke his way  
Into the forest, that he might be seene  
Of the wilde beasts in his new glory sheene.  
There the two first, whome he encountred, were  
The sheep and th' Asse, who striken both with feare  
At sight of him, gan fast away to flye,  
But vnto them the Foxe alowd did cry,  
And in the Kings name bad them both to stay,  
Vpon the payne that thereof follow may.  
Hardly naythles were they restrayned so,  
Till that the Foxe forth toward them did goe,  
And there disswaded them from needlesse feare,  
For that the King did fauour to them beare;  
And therefore dreadles bad them come to Corte:  
For no wild beasts should do them any torte  
There or abroad, ne would his maiestye  
Vse them but well, with gracious clemencye,  
As whome he knew to him both fast and true;  
So he perswaded them, with homage due  
Themselues to humble to the Ape prostrate,  
Who gently to them bowing in his gate,  
Recyued them with chearefull entertayne.  
Thenceforth proceeding with his princely trayne,  
He shortly met the Tygre, and the Bore,  
Which with the simple Camell raged sore  
In bitter words, seeking to take occasion,  
Vpon his fleshly corpse to make inuasion:  
But soone as they this mock-King did espy,  
Their troublous strife they stinted by and by,  
Thinking indeed that it the Lyon was:  
He then to proue, whether his powre would pas  
As currant, sent the Foxe to them streight way,  
Commaunding them their cause of strife bewray;  
And if that wrong on eyther side there were,  
That he should warne the wronger to appeare  
The morrow next at Court, it to defend;  
In the meane time vpon the King t' attend.  
The subtile Foxe so well his message sayd,  
That the proud beasts him readily obayd:  
Whereby the Ape in wondrous stomack woxe,  
Strongly encorag'd by the crafty Foxe;  
That King indeed himselfe he shortly thought,  
And all the Beasts him feared as they ought:

And followed vnto his palaice hye,  
Where taking Conge, each one by and by  
Departed to his home in dreadfull awe,  
Full of the feared sight, which late they sawe.  
The Ape thus seized of the Regall throne,  
Eftsones by counsell of the Foxe alone,  
Gan to prouide for all things in assurance,  
That so his rule might lenger haue endurance.  
First to his Gate he pointed a strong gard,  
That none might enter but with issue hard:  
Then for the safegard of his personage,  
He did appoint a warlike equipage  
Of forreine beasts not in the forest bred,  
But part by land, and part by water fed;  
For tyrannie is with strange ayde supported.  
Then vnto him all monstrous beasts resorted  
Bred of two kindes, as Griffons, Minotaures,  
Crocodiles, Dragons, Beauers, and Centaures:  
With those himselfe he strengthned mightelie,  
That feare he neede no force of enemie.  
Then gan he rule and tyrannize at will,  
Like as the Foxe did guide his graceles skill,  
And all wylde beasts made vassals of his pleasures,  
And with their spoyles enlarg'd his priuate treasures.  
No care of iustice, nor no rule of reason,  
No temperance, nor no regard of season  
Did thenceforth euer enter in his minde,  
But crueltie, the signe of currish kinde,  
And sdeignfull pride, and wilfull arrogaunce;  
Such followes those whom fortune doth aduaunce.  
But the false Foxe most knidly plaid his part:  
For whatsoever mother wit, or arte  
Could worke, he put in prooffe: no practise slie,  
No counterpoint of cunning policie,  
No reach, no breach, that might him profit bring,  
But he the same did to his purpose wring.  
Nought suffered he the Ape to giue or graunt,  
But through his hand must passe the Fiaunt.  
All offices, all leases by him lept,  
And of them all whatso he likte, he kept.  
Iustice he solde iniustice for to buy,  
And for to purchase for his progeny.  
Ill might it prosper, that ill gotten was,  
But so he got it, little did he pas.

He fed his cubs with fat of all the soyle,  
 And with the sweete of others sweating toyle,  
 He crammed them with crumbs of Benefices,  
 And fild their mouthes with meeds of malefices,  
 He cloathed them with all colours saue white,  
 And loded them with lordships and with might,  
 So much as they were able well to beare,  
 That with the weight their backs nigh broken were;  
 He chaffred Chayres in which Churchmen were set,  
 And breach of lawes to priuie ferme did let;  
 No statute so established might bee,  
 Nor ordinaunce so needfull, but that hee  
 Would violate, though not with violence,  
 Yet vnder colour of the confidence  
 The which the Ape repos'd in him alone,  
 And reckned him the kingdomes coener stone.  
 And euer when he ought would bring to pas,  
 His long experience the platforme was:  
 And when he ought not pleasing would put by,  
 The cloke was care of thrift, and husbandry,  
 For to encrease the common treasures store;  
 But his owne tresure he encreased more  
 And lifted vp his loftie towres thereby,  
 That they began to threat the neighbour sky;  
 The whiles the Princes pallaces fell fast  
 To ruine: (for what thing can euer last?)  
 And whilest the other Peeres for pouertie  
 Were forst their auncient houses to let lie,  
 And their olde Castles to the ground to fall,  
 Which their forefathers famous ouer all  
 Had founded for the Kingdomes ornament,  
 And for their memories long monument.  
 But he no count made of Nobilitie,  
 Nor the wilde beasts whom armes did glorifie,  
 The Realmes chiefe strength and girlond of the crowne,  
 All these through fained crimes he thrust adowne,  
 Or made them dwell in darknes of disgrace:  
 For none, but whom he list might come in place.  
 Of men of armes he had but small regard,  
 But kept them lowe, and streigned verie hard.  
 For men of learning little he esteemed;  
 His wisdom he aboue their learning deemed.  
 As for the rascall Commons least he cared;  
 For not so common was his bountie shared;



Let God (said he) if please, care for the manie,  
 I for my selfe must care before els anie:  
 So did he good to none, to manie ill,  
 So did he all the kingdome rob and pill,  
 Yet none durst speake, ne none durst of him plaine;  
 So great he was in grace, and rich through gaine.  
 Ne would he anie let to haue accesse  
 Vnto the Prince, but by his owne adresse:  
 For all that els did come, were sure to faile,  
 Yet would he further none but for auaile.  
 For on a time the Sheepe, to whom of yore  
 The Foxe had promised of friendship store,  
 What time the Ape the kingdome first did gaine,  
 Came to the Court, her case there to complaine,  
 How that the Wolfe her mortall enemie  
 Had sithence slaine her Lambe most cruellie;  
 And therefore crau'd to come vnto the King,  
 To let him knowe the order of the thing.  
 Soft Gooddie Sheepe (then said the Foxe) not soe:  
 Vnto the King so rash ye may not goe,  
 He is with greater matter busied,  
 Than a Lambe, or the Lambes owne mothers hed.  
 Ne certes may I take it well in part,  
 That ye my cousin Wolfe so fowly thwart,  
 And seeke with slaunder his good name to blot:  
 For there was cause, els doo it he would not.  
 Therefore surcease good Dame, and hence depart.  
 So went the Sheepe away with heauie hart.  
 So manie moe, so euerie one was vsed,  
 That to giue largely to the boxe refused.  
 Now when high *Ioue*, in whose almightie hand  
 The care of Kings, and power of Empires stand,  
 Sitting one day within his turret hye,  
 From whence he vewes with his backlidded eye,  
 Whatso the heauen in his wide vawte containes,  
 And all that in the deepest earth remaines,  
 The troubled kingdome of wilde beasts behelde,  
 Whom not their kindly Souereigne did welde,  
 But an vsurping Ape with guile suborn'd,  
 Had all subuerst, he sdeignfully it scorn'd  
 In his great heart, and hardly did refraine,  
 But that with thunder bolts he had him slaine,  
 And driuen downe to hell, his dewest meed:  
 But him auizing, he that dreadfull deed

Forbore, and rather chose with scornfull shame  
 Him to auenge, and blot his brutish name  
 Vnto the world, that neuer after anie  
 Should of his race be voyd of infamie:  
 And his false counsellor, the cause of all,  
 To damne to death, or dole perpetuall,  
 From whence he neuer should be quit, nor stal'd.  
 Forthwith he *Mercurie* vnto him cal'd,  
 And bad him flie with neuer resting speed  
 Vnto the forrest, where wilde beasts doo breed,  
 And there enquiring priuily, to learne,  
 What did of late chaunce to the Lyon stearne,  
 That he rul'd not the Empire, as he ought;  
 And whence were all those plaints vnto him brought  
 Of wrongs and spoyles, by saluage beasts committed;  
 Which done, he bad the Lyon be remitted  
 Into his seate, and those same treachours vile  
 Be punished for their presumptuous guile.  
 The Sonne of *Maia* soone as he receiu'd  
 That word, streight with his azure wings he cleau'd  
 The liquid cloudes, and lucid firmament;  
 Ne staid, till that he came with steep descent  
 Vnto the place, where his prescript did showe.  
 There stouping like an arrowe from a bowe,  
 He soft arriued on the grassie plaine,  
 And fairly paced forth with easie paine,  
 Till that vnto the Pallace nigh he came.  
 Then gan he to himselfe new shape to frame,  
 And that faire face, and that Ambrosiall hew,  
 Which wons to decke the Gods immortall crew,  
 And beautifie the shinie firmament,  
 He doft, vnfit for that rude rabblement.  
 So standing by the gates in strange disguise,  
 He gan enquire of some in secret wize,  
 Both of the King, and of his gouernment,  
 And of the Foxe, and his false blandishment:  
 And euermore he heard each one complaine  
 Of foule abuses both in realm and raine.  
 Which yet to proue more true he meant to see,  
 And an ey-witnes of each thing to bee.  
 Tho on his head his dreadfull hat he dight,  
 Which maketh him inuisible in sight,  
 And mocketh th' eyes of all the lookers on,  
 Making them thinke it but a vision.

Through power of that, he runnes though enemies swords;  
 Through power of that, he passeth through the herds  
 Of rauenous wilde beasts, and doth beguile  
 Their greedie mouthes of the expected spoyle;  
 Through power of that, his cunning theeueries  
 He wons to worke, that none the same espies;  
 And through the power of that, he putteth on  
 What shape he list in apparition.  
 That on his head he wore, and in his hand  
 He tooke *Caduceus* his snakie wand,  
 With which the damned ghosts he gouerneth,  
 And furies rules, and Tartare tempereth.  
 With that he causeth sleep to seize the eyes,  
 And feare the harts of all his enemyes;  
 And when him list, an vniversall night  
 Throughout the world he makes on euerie wight;  
 As when his Syre with *Alcumena* lay.  
 Thus dight, into the Court he tooke his way,  
 Both through the gard, which neuer did descride,  
 And through the watchmen, who him neuer spide:  
 Thenceforth he past into each secrete part,  
 Whereas he saw, that sorely grieu'd his hart,  
 Each place abounding with fowle iniuries,  
 And filld with treasure rackt with robberies:  
 Each place defilde with blood of guiltles beasts,  
 Which had been slaine, to serue the Apes beheasts;  
 Gluttonie, malice, pride, and couetize,  
 And lawlesnes raigning with riotize;  
 Besides the infinite extortions,  
 Done through the Foxes great oppressions,  
 That the complaints thereof could not be tolde.  
 Which when he did with lothfull eyes beholde,  
 He would no more endure, but came his way,  
 And cast to seeke the Lion, where he may,  
 That he might worke the auengement for this shame,  
 On those two caytiues, which had bred him blame.  
 And seeking all the forrest busily,  
 At last he found, where sleeping he did ly:  
 The wicked weed, which there the Foxe did lay,  
 From vnderneath his head he tooke away,  
 And then him waking, forced vp to rize.  
 The Lion looking vp gan him auize,  
 As one late in a traunce, what had of long  
 Become of him: for fantasie is strong.

Arise (said *Mercurie*) thou sluggish beast,  
 That here liest senseles, like the corpse deceast,  
 The whilste thy kingdome from thy head is rent,  
 And thy throne royall with dishonour blent:  
 Arise, and doo thy selfe redeeme from shame,  
 And be aueng'd on those that breed thy blame.  
 Thereat enraged, soone he gan vpstart,  
 Grinding his teeth, and grating his great hart,  
 And rouzing vp himselfe, for his rough hide  
 He gan to reach, but no where it espide.  
 Therewith he gan full terribly to rore,  
 And chafte at that indignitie right sore.  
 But when his Crowne and scepter both he wanted,  
 Lord how he fum'd, and sweld, and rag'd, and panted;  
 And threatned death, and thousand deadly dolours  
 To them that had purloyn'd his Princely honours.  
 With that in hast, disroabed as he was,  
 He toward his owne Pallace forth did pas;  
 And all the way he roared as he went,  
 That all the forrest with astonishment  
 Thereof did tremble, and the beasts therein  
 Fled fast away from that so dreadfull din.  
 At last he came vnto his mansion,  
 Where all the gates he found fast lockt anon,  
 And manie warders round about them stood:  
 With that he roar'd alowd, as he were wood,  
 That all the Pallace quaked at the stound,  
 As if it quite were riuen from the ground,  
 And all within were dead and hartles left;  
 And th' Ape himselfe, as one whose wits were reft,  
 Fled here and there, and euerie corner sought,  
 To hide himselfe from his owne feared thought.  
 But the false Foxe when he the Lion heard,  
 Fled closely forth, streightway of death afeard,  
 And to the Lion cmae, full lowly creeping,  
 With fained face, and watrie eyne halfe weeping,  
 T' excuse his former treason and abusion,  
 And turning all vnto the Apes confusion:  
 Nath'les the royall Beast forbore beleeuing,  
 But bad him stay at ease till further preeuing.  
 Then when he saw no entrance to him graunted,  
 Roaring yet lowder that all harts it daunted,  
 Vpon those gates with force he fiercely flewe,  
 And rending them in pieces, felly slewe

Those warders strange, and all that els he met.  
But th'Ape still flying, he no where might get:  
From rowme to rowme, from beame to beame he fled  
All breathles, and for feare now almost ded:  
Yet him at last the Lyon spide, and caught,  
And forth with shame vnto his iudgement brought.  
Then all the beasts he caus'd assembled bee,  
To heare their doome, and sad ensample see:  
The Foxe, first Author of that treacherie,  
He did vncase, and then away let flie.  
But th' Apes long taile (which then he had) he quight  
Cut off, and both eares pared of their hight;  
Since which, all Apes but halfe their eares haue left,  
And of their tailes are vtterlie bereft.

So Mother *Hubberd*her discourse did end:  
Which pardon me, If I amisse haue pend;  
For weake was my remembrance it to hold,  
And bad her tongue that it so bluntly told.

FINIS.

---

Continue on to [The Ruines of Rome: by Bellay.](#)



# The Ruines of Rome

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *The Ruines of Rome* was prepared from Ernest de Sélincourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [Oxford, 1910] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## *Ruines of Rome: by Bellay.*

1



E heauenly spirites, whose ashie cinders lie  
Vnder deep ruines, with huge walls opprest,  
But not your praise, the which shall neuer die  
Through your faire verses, ne in ashes rest;  
If so be shrilling voyce of wight aliue  
May reach from hence to depth of darkest hell,

Then let those deep Abysses open riue,  
That ye may vnderstand my shreiking yell.  
Thrice hauing seene vnder the heauens veale  
Your toombs deuoted compasse ouer all,  
Thrice vnto you with lowd voyce I appeale,  
And for your antique furie here doo call,  
The whiles that I with sacred horror sing  
Your glorie, fairest of all earthly thing.

2

Great *Babylon* her haughtie walls will praise,  
And sharped steeples high shot vp in ayre;  
*Greece* will the olde *Ephesian* buildings blaze;  
And *Nylus* nurslings their Pyramides faire;

The same yet vaunting *Greece* will tell the storie  
Of *Ioues* great Image in *Olympus* placed,  
*Mausolus* worke will be the *Carians* glorie,  
And *Crete* will boast the Labyrinth, now raced;  
The antique *Rhodian* will likewise set forth  
The great Colosse, erect to Memorie;  
And what els in the world is of like worth,  
Some greater learned wit will magnifie.  
But I will sing aboue all monuments  
Seuen *Romane* Hils, the worlds 7. wonderments.

3

Thou stranger, which for *Rome* in *Rome* here seekest,  
And nought of *Rome* in *Rome* perceiu'st at all,  
These same olde walls, olde arches, which thou seest,  
Olde Palaces, is that which *Rome* men call.  
Behold what wreake, what ruine, and what wast,  
And how that she, which with her mightie powre  
Tam'd all the world, hath tam'd herselfe at last,  
The pray of time, which all things doth deuowre.  
*Rome* now of *Rome* is th' onely funerall,  
And onely *Rome* of *Rome* hath victorie;  
Ne ought saue *Tyber* hastning to his fall  
Remaines of all: O worlds inconstancie.  
That which is firme doth flit and fall away,  
And that is flitting, doth abide and stay.

4

She, whose high top aboue the starres did sore,  
One foote on *Thetis*, th' other on the Morning,  
One hand on *Scythia*, th' other on the *More*,  
Both heauen and earth in roundnesse compassing,  
*Ioue* fearing, least if she should greater growe,  
The old Giants should once againe vprise,  
Her whelm'd with hills, these 7. hils, which be nowe  
Tombe of her greatnes, which did threate the skies:  
Vpon her head he heapt Mount *Saturnal*,  
Vpon her bellie th' antique *Palatine*,  
Vpon her stomacke laid Mount *Quirinal*,  
On her left hand the noysome *Esquiline*,  
And *Cælian* on the right; but both her feete

Mount *Viminall* and *Auentine* doo meete.

5

Who lists to see, what euer nature, arte,  
And heauen could doo, O *Rome*, thee let him see,  
In case thy greatnes he can gesse in harte,  
By that which but the picture is of thee.  
*Rome* is no more: but if the shade of *Rome*  
May of the bodie yeeld a seeming sight,  
It's like a corse drawne forth out of the tombe  
By Magicke skill out of eternall night:  
The corpses of *Rome* in ashes is entombed,  
And her great spirite reioyned to the spirite  
Of this great masse, is in the same enwombed;  
But her braue writings, which her famous merite  
In spight of time, out of the dust doth reare,  
Doo make her Idole through the world appeare.

6

Such as the *Berecynthian* Goddesse bright  
In her swift charret with high turrets crownde,  
Proud that so manie Gods she brought to light;  
Such was this Citie in her good daies fownd:  
This Citie, more than that great *Phrygian* mother  
Renowm'd for fruite of famous progenie,  
Whose greatnes by the greatnes of none other,  
But by her selfe her equall match could see:  
*Rome* onely might to *Rome* compared bee,  
And onely *Rome* could make great *Rome* to tremble:  
So did the Gods by heauenly doome decree,  
That other earthlie power should not resemble  
Her that did match the whole earths puissance,  
And did her courage to the heuens aduaunce.

7

Ye sacred ruines, and ye tragick sights,  
Which onely doo the name of *Rome* retaine,  
Olde moniments, which of so famous sprights  
The honour yet in ashes doo maintaine:  
Triumphant Arcks, spyres neighbours to the skie,



That you to see doth th' heauen it selfe appall,  
Alas, by little ye to nothing flie,  
The peoples fable, and the spoyle of all:  
And though your frames do for a time make warre  
Gainst time, yet time in time shall ruinate  
Your workes and names, and your last reliques marre.  
My sad desires, rest therefore moderate:  
For if that time make ende of things so sure,  
It als will end the paine, which I endure.

8

Through armes and vassals *Rome* the world subdu'd,  
That one would weene, that one sole Cities strength  
Both land and sea in roundnes had suruew'd,  
To be the measure of her bredth and length:  
This peoples vertue yet so fruitfull was  
Of vertuous nephewes, that posteritie  
Striuing in pwer their grandfathers to passe,  
The lowest earth ion'd to the heauen hie;  
To th' end that hauing all parts in their power,  
Nought from the Romane Empire might be quight,  
And that though time doth Commonwealths deuowre,  
Yet no time should so low embase their hight,  
That her head earth'd in her foundations deep,  
Should not her name and endles honour keep.

9

Ye cruell starres, and eke ye Gods vnkinde,  
Heauen enuious, and bitter stepdame Nature,  
Be it by fortune, or by course of kinde  
That ye doo weld th' affaires of earthlie creature;  
Why haue your hands long sithence traueiled  
To frame this world, that doth endure so long?  
Or why were not the Romane palaces  
Made of some matter no lesse firme and strong?  
I say not, as the common voyce doth say,  
That all things which beneath the Moone have being  
Are temporall, and subiect to decay:  
But I say rather, though not all agreeing  
With some, that weene the contrarie in thought;  
That all this whole shall one day come to nought.

## 10

As that braue sonne of *Aeson*, which by charmes  
 Atcheiu'd the golden Fleece in *Colchid* land,  
 Out of the earth engendred men of armes  
 Of Dragons teeth, sowne in the sacred sand;  
 So this braue Towne, that in her youthlie daies  
 An *Hydra* was of warrious glourious,  
 Did fill with her renowned nourslings praise  
 The firie sunnes both one and other hous:  
 But they at last, there being then not liuing  
 An *Hercules*, so ranke seed to repressse;  
 Emongst themselues with cruell furie striuing,  
 Mow'd downe themselues with slaughter mercilesse;  
 Renewing in themselues that rage vnkinde,  
 Which whilom did those earthborn brethren blinde.

## 11

*Mars* shaming to haue giuen so great head  
 To his off-spring, that mortall puissaunce  
 Puft vp with pride of Romane hardie head,  
 Seem'd aboue heauens powre it selfe to aduaunce;  
 Cooling againe his former kindled heate,  
 With which he had those Romane spirits fild;  
 Did blowe new fire, and with enflamed breath,  
 Into the Gothicke colde hot rage instil'd:  
 Then gan that Nation, th' earths new Giant brood,  
 To dart abroad the thunder bolts of warre,  
 And beating downe these walls with furious mood  
 Into her mothers bosome, all did marre;  
 To th' end that none, all were it *Ioue* his sire  
 Should boast himselfe of the Romane Empire.

## 12

Like as whilome the children of the earth  
 Heapt hils on hils, to scale the starrie skie,  
 And fight against the Gods of heauenly berth,  
 Whiles *Ioue* at them his thunderbolts let flie;  
 All suddenly with lightning ouerthrowne,  
 The furious squadrons downe to ground did fall,

That th' earth vnder her childrens weight did grone,  
And th' heauens in glorie triumpht ouer all:  
So did that haughtie front which heaped was  
on those seuen Romane hils, it selfe vpreare  
Ouer the world, and lift her loftie face  
Against the heauen, that gan her force to feare.  
But now these scorned fields bemone her fall,  
And Gods secure feare not her force at all.

13

Nor the swift furie of the flames aspiring,  
Nor the deep wounds of victours raging blade  
, Nor ruthlesse spoyle of souldiers blood-desiring,  
The which so oft thee (*Rome*) their conquest made;  
Ne stroke on stroke of fortune variable,  
Ne rust of age hating continuance,  
Nor wrath of Gods, nor spight of men vnstable,  
Nor thou opposd' against thine owne puissance;  
Nor th' horrible vprore of windes high blowing,  
Nor swelling stremes of that God snakie-paced,  
Which hath so often with his ouerflowing  
Thee drenched, haue thy pride so much abaced;  
But that this nothing, which they haue thee left,  
Makes the world wonder, what they haue from thee reft.

14

As men in Summer fearles passe the foord,  
Which is in Winter lord of all the plaine,  
And with his tumbling streames doth beare aboard  
The ploughmans hope, and shepherds labour vaine:  
And as the coward beasts vse to despise  
The noble Lion after his liues end,  
Whetting their teeth, and with vaine foolhardise  
Daring the foe, that cannot him defend:  
And as at *Troy* most dastards of the Greekes  
Did braue about the corpes of *Hector* colde;  
So those which whilome wont with pallid cheekes  
The Romane triumphs glorie to behold,  
Now on these ashie tombes shew boldnesse vaine,  
And conquer'd dare the Conquerour disdaine.

## 15

Ye pallid spirits, and ye ashie ghoasts,  
 Which ioying in the brightnes of your day,  
 Brought foorth those signes of your presumptuous boasts  
 Which now their dusty reliques do bewray;  
 Tell me ye spirits (sith the darksome riuier  
 Of *Styx*, not passable to soules returning,  
 Enclosing you in thrice three wards for euer,  
 Doo not restraine your images still mourning)  
 Tell me then (for perhaps some one of you  
 Yet here aboute him secretly doth hide)  
 Doo ye not feele your torments to accrewe,  
 When ye sometimes behold the ruin'd pride  
 Of these old *Romane* works built with your hands,  
 Now to become nought els, but heaped sands?

## 16

Like as ye see the wrathfull Sea from farre,  
 In a great mountaine heap't with hideous noyse,  
 Eftsoones of thousand billowes shouldred narre,  
 Against a Rocke to breake with dreadfull poyse:  
 Like as ye see fell *Boreas* with sharpe blast,  
 Tossing huge tempests through the troubled skie,  
 Eftsoones hauing his wide wings spent in wast,  
 To stop his wearie cariere suddenly:  
 And as ye see huge flames spred diuerslie,  
 Gathered in one vp to the heauens to spyre,  
 Eftsoones consum'd to fall downe feebily:  
 So whilom did this Monarchie aspyre  
 As waues, as winde, as fire spred ouer all,  
 Till it by fatall doome adowne did fall.

## 17

So long as *Ioues* great Bird did make his flight,  
 Bearing the fire with which heauen doth vs fray,  
 Heauen had not feare of that presumptuous might,  
 With which the Giaunts did the Gods assay.  
 But all so soone, as scortching Sunne had brent  
 His wings, which wont the earth to ouerspredd,  
 The earth out of her massie wombe forth sent

That antique horror, which made heauen adredd.  
Then was the Germane Rauen in disguise  
That Romane Eagle seene to cleaue asunder,  
And towards heauen freshly to arise  
Out of these mountaines, now consum'd to powder.  
In which the foule that serues to beare the lightning,  
Is now no more seen flying, nor alighting.

18

These heapes of stones, these old wals which ye see,  
Were first enclosures but of saluage soyle;  
And these braue Pallaces which maystred bee  
Of time, were shepherds cottages somewhile.  
Then tooke the shepherds Kingly ornaments  
And the stout hynde arm'd his right hand with steele:  
Eftsoones their rule of yearely Presidents  
Grew great, and sixe months greater a great deele;  
Which made perpetuall, rose to so great might,  
That thence th' Imperiall Eagle rooting tooke,  
Till th'heauen it selfe opposing gainst her might,  
Her power to *Peters* successor betooke;  
Who shepherdlike, (as fates the same foreseeing)  
Doth shew, that all things turne to their first being.

19

All that is perfect, which th' heauen beautifies;  
All that's imperfect, borne belowe the Moone;  
All that doth feede our spirits and our eies;  
And all that doth consume our pleasures soone;  
All the mishap, the which our daies outweares,  
All the good hap of th' oldest times afore,  
*Rome* in the time of her great ancesters,  
Like a *Pandora*, locked long in store.  
But destinie this huge *Chaos* turmoyling,  
In which all good and euill was enclosed,  
Their heauenly vertues from these woes assoyling,  
Caried to heauen, from sinfull bondage losed:  
But their great sinnes, the causers of their paine,  
Vnder these antique ruines yet remaine.

20

No otherwise than raynie cloud, first fed  
 With earthly vapours gathered in the ayre  
 , Eftsoones in compas arch't, to steepe his hed,  
 Doth plonge himselfe in *Tethys* bosome faire;  
 And mounting vp againe, from whence he came,  
 With his great bellie spreads the dimmed world,  
 Till at the last dissolving his moist frame,  
 In raine, or snowe, or haile he forth is horld;  
 This Citie, which was first but shepherds shade,  
 Vprising by degrees, grewe to such height,  
 That Queene of land and sea her selfe she made.  
 At last not able to beare so great weight,  
 Her power disperst, through all the world did vade;  
 To shew that all in th' end to nought shall fade.

## 21

The same which *Pyrrhus*, and the puissaunce  
 Of *Afrike* could not tame, that same braue Citie,  
 Which with stout courage arm'd against mischaunce,  
 Sustain'd the shocke of common enmitie;  
 Long as her ship tost with so manie freakes,  
 Had all the world in armes against her bent,  
 Was neuer seene, that anie fortunes wreaques  
 Could breake her course begun with braue intent.  
 But when the obiect of her vertue failed,  
 Her power it selfe against it selfe did arme;  
 As he that hauing long in tempest sailed,  
 Faine would ariue, but cannot for the storme,  
 If too great winde against the port him driue,  
 Doth in the port it selfe his vessell riue.

## 22

When that braue honour of the Latine name,  
 Which mear'd her rule with *Africa*, and *Byze*,  
 With *Thames* inhabitants of noble fame,  
 And they which see the dawning day arize;  
 Her nourslings did with mutinous vprore  
 Harten against her selfe, her conquer'd spoile,  
 Which she had wonne from all the world afore,  
 Of all the world was spoyl'd within a while.

So when the compast course of the vniuerse  
In sixe and thirtie thousand yeares is ronne,  
The bands of th' elements shall backe reuerse  
To their first discord, and be quite vndonne:  
The seedes, of which all things at first were bred,  
Shall in great *Chaos* wombe againe be hid.

23

O warie wisdom of the man, that would  
That *Carthage* towres from spoile should be forborne,  
To th' end that his victorious people should  
With cancring laisure not be ouerworne;  
He well foresaw, how that the Romane courage,  
Impatient of pleasures faint desires,  
Through idlenes would turne to ciuill rage,  
And be her selfe the matter of her fires.  
For in a people giuen all to ease,  
Ambition is engendred easily;  
As in a vicious bodie, grose disease  
Soone growes through humours superfluitie.  
That came to passe, when swolne with plenties pride,  
Nor prince, nor peere, nor kin they would abide.

24

If the blinde furie, which warres breedeth oft,  
Wonts not t'enrage the hearts of equall beasts,  
Whether they fare on foote, or flie aloft,  
Or armed be with clawes, or scalie creasts;  
What fell *Erynnis* with hot burning tongs,  
Did grype your hearts, with noysome rage imbew'd,  
That each to other working cruell wrongs,  
Your blades in your owne bowels you embrew'd?  
Was this (ye *Romanes*) your hard destinie?  
Or some old sinne, whose vnappesed guilt  
Powr'd vengeance forth on you eternallie?  
Or brothers blood, the which at first was spilt  
Vpon your walls, that God might not endure,  
Vpon the same to set foundation sure?

25

O that I had the *Thracian* Poets harpe,  
For to awake out of th' infernall shade  
Those antique *Cæsars*, sleeping long in darke,  
The which this auncient Citie whilome made:  
Or that I had *Amphions* instrument,  
To quicken with his vitall notes accord,  
The stonie ioynts of these old walls now rent,  
By which th' *Ausonian* light might be restor'd:  
Or that at least I could with pencill fine,  
Fashion the pourtraicts of these Palacis,  
By paterne of great *Virgils* spirit diuine;  
I would assay with that which in me is,  
To builde with leuell of my loftie style,  
That which no hands can euermore compyle.

26

Who list the Romanes greatnes forth to figure,  
Him needeth not to seeke for vsage right  
Of line, or lead, or rule, or squaire, to measure  
Her length, her breadth, her deepnes, or her hight:  
But him behooues to vew in compasse round  
All that the Ocean graspes in his long armes;  
Be it where the yerely starre doth scotch the ground,  
Or where colde *Boreas* blowes his bitter stormes.  
*Rome* was th' whole world, and al the world was *Rome*,  
And if things nam'd their names doo equalize,  
When land and sea ye name, then name ye *Rome*;  
And naming *Rome* ye land and sea comprize:  
For th' auncient Plot of *Rome* displayed plaine,  
The map of all the wide world doth containe.

27

Thou that at *Rome* astonisht dost behold  
The antique pride, which menaced the skie,  
These haughtie heapes, these palaces of olde,  
These wals, these arcks, these baths, these temples hie;  
Iudge by these ample ruines vew, the rest  
The which inurious time hath quite outworne,  
Since of all workmen helde in reckning best,  
Yet these olde fragments are for paternes borne:  
Then also marke, how *Rome* from day to day,



Repayring her decayed fashion,  
Renewes herselfe with buildings rich and gay;  
That one would iudge, that the *Romaine Dæmon*  
Doth yet himselfe with fatall hand enforce,  
Againe on foote to reare her pouldred corse.

28

He that hath seene a great Oke drie and dead,  
Yet clad with reliques of some Trophees olde,  
Lifting to heauen her aged hoarie head,  
Whose foote in ground hath left but feeble holde;  
But halfe disbowel'd lies aboute the ground,  
Shewing her wreathed rootes, and naked armes,  
And on her trunke all rotten and vnsound  
Onely supports herselfe for meate of wormes;  
And though she owe her fall to the first winde,  
Yet of the deuout people is ador'd,  
And manie yong plants spring out of her rinde;  
Who such an Oke hath seene let him record  
That such this Cities honour was of yore,  
And mongst all Cities florished much more.

29

All that which *Aegypt* whilome did deuise,  
All that which *Greece* their temples to embraue,  
After th' Ionicke, Atticke, Doricke guise,  
Or *Corinth* skil'd in curious workes to graue;  
All that *Lysippus* practike arte could forme,  
*Apelles* wit, or *Phidias* his skill,  
Was wont this auncient Citie to adorne,  
And the the heauen it selfe with her wide wonders fill;  
All that which *Athens* euer brought forth wise,  
All that which *Afrike* euer brought forth strange,  
All that which *Asie* euer had of prise,  
Was here to see. O meruelous great change:  
*Rome* liuing, was the worlds sole ornament,  
And dead, is now the worlds sole moniment.

30

Like as the seeded field greene grasse first showes,

Then from greene grasse into a stalke doth spring,  
And from a stalke into an eare forth-growes,  
Which eare the frutefull graine doth shortly bring;  
And as in season due the husband mowes  
The wauing lockes of those faire yeallow heares,  
Which bound in sheaues, and layd in comely rowes,  
Vpon the naked fields in stackes he reares:  
So grew the Romane Empire by degree,  
Till that Barbarian hands it quite did spill,  
And left of it but these olde markes to see,  
Of which all passers by doo somewhat pill:  
As they which gleane, the reliques vse to gather,  
Which th' husbandman behind him chanst to scater.

31

That same is now nought buta champian wide,  
Where all this worlds pride once was situate.  
No blame to thee, whosoeuer dost abide  
By *Nile*, or *Gange*, or *Tygre*, or *Euphrate*,  
Ne *Afrike* therof guiltie is, nor *Spaine*,  
Nor the bolde people by the *Thamis* brincks,  
Nor the braue warlicke brood of *Alemaine*,  
Nor the borne Souldier which *Rhine* running drinks:  
Thou onely cause, O Ciuill furie, art  
Which sowing in the *Aemathian* fields thy spight,  
Didst arme thy hand against thy proper hart;  
To th'end that when thou wast in greatest hight  
To greatnes growne, through long prosperitie,  
Thou the adowne might'st fall more horriblie.

32

Hope ye my verses that posteritie  
Of age ensuing shall you euer read?  
Hope ye that euer immortalitie  
So meane Harpes worke may challenge for her meed?  
If vnder heauen anie endurance were,  
These monuments, which not in paper writ,  
But in Porphyre and Marble doo appeare,  
Might well haue hop'd to haue obtained it.  
Nath'les my Lute, whom *Phoebus* deign'd to giue,  
Cease not to sound these olde antiquities:

For if that time doo let thy glorie liue,  
Well maist thou boast, how euer base thou bee,  
That thou art first, which of thy Nation song  
Th'olde honour of the people gowned long.

*L'Enuoy.*

*Bellay*, first garland of free Poësie  
That *France* brought forth, though fruitfull of braue wits,  
Well worthie thou of immortalitie,  
That long hast traueled by thy learned writs,  
Olde *Rome* out of her ashes to reuiue,  
And giue a second life to dead decayes:  
Needes must he all eternitie suruiue,  
That can to other giue eternall dayes.  
Thy dayes therefore are endles, and thy prayse  
Excelling all, that euer went before;  
And after thee, gins *Bartas* hie to rayse  
His heauenly Muse, th' Almighty to adore.  
Liue happie spirits, th' honour of your name,  
And fill the world with neuer dying fame.

---

*FINIS.*

---

Continue on to [Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterflie.](#)



# Muiopotmos

## Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renssance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *Muiopotmos, or The Fate of the Butterflie* was prepared from Alexander B. Grosart's *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* [1882] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). Grosart's text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

M V I O P O T M O S,

OR

*The Fate of the Butterflie.*

By ED. SP.

Dedicated to the Most faire and

vertuous Ladie: the Ladie

*Carey*

+

++

+

L O N D O N.

Imprinted for *VWilliam*  
*Ponsonbie*, dwelling in Paules  
Churchyard at the signe of  
*the Bishops head.*

---

TO THE RIGHT WORTHY AND VERTUOUS LADIE;

*THE LA: CAREY.*

*M*OST braue and bountifull La: for so excellent fauours as I haue receiued at your sweet handes, to offer these fewe leaues as in recompence, should be as to offer flowers to the Gods for their diuine benefites. Therefore I haue determind to giue my selfe wholly to you, as quite abandoned from my selfe, and absolutely vowed to your seruices: which in all right is euer held for full recompence of debt or damage to haue the person yeelded. My person I wot wel how little worth it is. But the faithfull minde & humble zeale which I beare vnto your La: may perhaps be more of price, as may please you to account and use the poore seruice therof; which taketh glory to aduance your excellent partes and noble vertues, and to spend it selfe in honouring you: not so much for your great bounty to my self, which yet may not be vnminde; nor for name or kindreds sake by you vouchsafed, being also regardable; as for that honorable name, which yee haue by your braue deserts purchast to your self, & spred in the mouths of all men: with which I haue also presumed to grace my verses, & vnder your name to commend to the world this small poëme, the which beseching your La: to take in worth, and of all things therein according to your wonted graciousnes to make a milde construction, I humbly pray for your happines.

Your La: euer humbly;

E. S.

---

MUIOPOTMOS:

OR

THE FATE OF THE BUTTERFLIE.



LING of deadly dolorous debate,  
 Stir'd vp through wrathfull *Nemesis* despight,  
 Betwixt two mightie ones of great estate,  
 Drawne into armes, and prooffe of mortall fight,  
 Through proud ambition, and hartswelling hate,

Whilest neither could the others greater might  
 And sdeignfull scorne endure; that from small iarre  
 Their wraths at length broke into open warre.

The rote whereof and tragicall effect,

Vouchsafe, O thou the mournfulst Muse of nyne, 10  
 That wontst the tragick stage for to direct,  
 In funerall complaints and wayfull tyne,  
 Reueale to me, and all the meanes detect,  
 Through which sad *Clarion* did at last declyne  
 To lowest wretchednes; And is there then  
 Such rancor in the harts of mightie men?

Of all the race of siluer-winged Flies  
 Which doo possesse the Empire of the aire,  
 Betwixt the centred earth, and azure skies,

Was none more fauourable, nor more faire, 20  
 Whilst heauen did fauour his felicities,  
 Then *Clarion*, the eldest sonne and haire  
 Of *Muscaroll*, and in his fathers sight  
 Of all aliue did seeme the fairest wight.

With fruitfull hope his aged breast he fed  
 Of future good, which his young toward yeares,  
 Full of braue courage and bold hardyhed,  
 Aboue th' ensample of his equall peares,  
 Did largely promise, and to him forered,

(Whilst oft his heart did melt in tender teares) 30  
 That he in time would sure proue such an one,  
 As should be worthie of his fathers throne.

The fresh young flie, in whom the kindly fire  
 Of lustfull yong[th] began to kindle fast,  
 Did much disdaine to subject his desire  
 To loathsome sloth, or houres in ease to wast,  
 But ioy'd to range abroad in fresh attire;  
 Through the wide compas of the ayrie coast,  
 And with vnwearied wings each part t'inquire

Of the wide rule of his renowned sire.

For he so swift and nimble was of flight,  
 That from this lower tract he dar'd to stie  
 Vp to the clowdes, and thence with pineons light,  
 To mount aloft vnto the Christall skie,  
 To vew the workmanship of heauens hight:  
 Whence downe descending he along would flie  
 Vpon the streaming riuers, sport to finde;  
 And oft would dare to tempt the troublous winde.

So on a Summers day, when season milde

With gentle calme the world had quieted, 50  
 And high in heauen *Hyperions* fierie childe  
 Ascending, did his beames abroad dispred,  
 Whiles all the heauens on lower creatures smilde;  
 Yong *Clarion* with vaunted lustie head,  
 After his guize did cast abroad to fare;  
 And theretoo gan his furnitures prepare.

His breastplate first, that was of substance pure,  
 Before his noble heart he firmly bound,  
 That mought his life from yron death assure,

And ward his gentle corpes from cruell wound: 60  
 For it by arte was framed to endure  
 The bit of balefull steele and bitter stownd,  
 No lesse then that, which *Vulcane* made to sheild  
*Achilles* life from fate of *Troyan* field.

And then about his shoulders broad he threw  
 An hairie hide of some wild beast, whom hee  
 In saluage forrest by aduenture slew,  
 And rest the spoyle his ornament to bee:  
 Which spreading all his backe with dreadfull vew,

Made all that him so horrible did see, 70  
 Thinke him *Alcides* with the Lyons skin,  
 When the *Næmean* Conquest he did win.

Vpon his head his glistering Burganet,  
 The which was wrought by wonderous deuice,  
 And curiously engrauen, he did set:

The mettall was of rare and passing price;  
 Not *Bilbo* steele, nor brasse from *Corinth* fet,  
 Nor costly *Oricalche* from strange *Phoenice*;  
 But such as could both *Phoebus* arrowes ward,

And th' hayling darts of heauen beating hard.

80

Therein two deadly weapons fixt he bore,  
 Strongly outlaunced towards either side,  
 Like two sharpe speares, his enemies to gore:  
 Like as a warlike Brigandine, applyde  
 To fight, layes forth her threatfull pikes afore,  
 The engines which in them sad death doo hyde:  
 So did this flie outstretch his fearefull hornes,  
 Yet so as him their terrour more adornes.

Lastly his shinie wings as siluer bright,

Painted with thousand colours, passing farre  
 All Painters skill, he did about him dight:  
 Not halfe so manie sundrie colours arre  
 In *Iris* bowe, ne heauen doth shine so bright,  
 Distinguished with manie a twinckling starre,  
 Nor *Iuno*es Bird in her ey-spotted traine  
 So many goodly colours doth containe.

90

Ne (may it be withouten perill spoken)  
 The Archer God, the son of *Cytheree*,  
 That ioyes on wretched louers to be wroken,

And heaped spoyles of bleeding harts to see,  
 Beares in his wings so manie a changefull token.  
 Ah my liege Lord, forgiue it vnto mee,  
 If ought against thine honour I haue tolde;  
 Yet sure those wings were fairer manifolde.

100

Full manie a Ladie faire, in Court full oft  
 Beholding them, him secretly enuide,  
 And wisht that two such fannes, so silken soft,  
 And golden faire, her Loue would her prouide;  
 Or that when them the gorgeous Flie had doft,

Some one that would with grace be gratifide,



From him would steale them priuily away, 100  
 And bring to her so precious a pray.

Report is that dame *Venus* on a day  
 In spring when flowres doo clothe the fruitfull ground,  
 Walking abroad with all her Nymphes to play,  
 Bad her faire damzels flocking her arownd,  
 To gather flowres, her forehead to array:  
 Emongst the rest a gentle Nymph was found,  
 Hight *Astery*, excelling all the crewe

In curteous vsage, and vnstained hewe 120

Who beeing nimbler ioynted than the rest,  
 And more industrious, gathered more store  
 Of the fields honour, than the others best;  
 Which they in secret harts enuying sore,  
 Tolde *Venus*, when her as the worthiest  
 She praisd, that *Cupide* (as they heard before)  
 Did lend her secret aide, in gathering  
 Into her lap the children of the spring.

Wherof the Goddesse gathering iealous feare,

Not yet vnmindfull how not long agoe 130  
 Her sonne to *Psyche* secrete loue did beare,  
 And long it close conceal'd, till mickle woe  
 Thereof arose, and manie a ruffull teare;  
 Reason with sudden rage did ouergoe,  
 And giuing hastie credit to th'accuser,  
 Was led away of them that did abuse her.

Eftsoones that Damzell by her heauenly might,  
 She turn'd into a winged Butterflie,  
 In the wide aire to make her wandring flight;

And all those flowres, with which so plenteouslie 140  
 Her lap she filled had, that bred her spright,  
 She placed in her wings, for memorie  
 Of her pretended crime, though crime none were:  
 Since which that flie them in her wings doth beare.

Thus the fresh *Clarion* being readie dight,

Vnto his iourney did himselfe addresse,  
 And with good speed began to take his flight:  
 Ouer the fields in his franke lustinesse,

And all the countrey wide he did possesse, 150  
 Feeding vpon their pleasures bounteouslie,  
 That none gainsaid, nor none him did enuie.

The woods, the riuers, and the meadowes green,  
 With his aire-cutting wings he measur'd wide,  
 Ne did he leaue the mountaines bare vnseene,  
 Nor the ranke grassie fennes delights vntride.  
 But none of these, how euer sweete they beene,  
 Mote please his fancie, nor him cause t'abide:  
 His choicefull sense with euerie change doth flit.

No common things may please a wauering wit. 160

To the gay gardins his vnstaid desire  
 Him wholly caried, to refresh his sprights:  
 There lauish Nature in her best attire,  
 Powres forth sweete odors, and alluring sights;  
 And Arte with her contending, doth aspire  
 T'excell the naturall, with made delights:  
 And all that faire or pleasant may be found,  
 In riotous excesse doth there abound.

There he arriuing, round about doth flie,

From bed to bed, from one to other border, 170  
 And takes suruey with curious busie eye,  
 Of euerie flowre and herbe there set in order;  
 Now this, now that he tasteth tenderly,  
 Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,  
 Ne with his feete their silken leaues deface;  
 But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

And euermore with most varietie,  
 And change of sweetnesse (for all change is sweete)  
 He casts his glutton sense to satisfie,

Now sucking of the sap of herbe most meete, 180  
 Or of the deaw, which yet on them does lie,

Now in the same bathing his tender feete:  
 And then he pearcheth on some braunch thereby,  
 To weather him, and his moyst wings to dry.

And then againe he turneth to his play,  
 To spoyle the pleasure of that Paradise:  
 The wholsome Saluge, and Lauender still gray,  
 Ranke smelling Rue, and Cummin good for eyes,  
 The Roses rainging in the pride of May,

Sharpe Isope, good for greene wounds remedies, 190  
 Faire Marigoldes, and Bees alluring Thime,  
 Sweet Marioram, and Daysies decking prime.

Coole Violets, and Orpine growing still,  
 Embathed Balme, and chearfull Galingale,  
 Fresh Costmarie, and breathfull Camomill,  
 Red Poppie, and drink-quickning Setuale,  
 Veyne-healing Veruen, and hed-purging Dill,  
 Sound Sauorie, and Bazil hartie-hale,  
 Fat Colworts and comforting Perseline,

Colde Lettuce, and refreshing Rosmarine. 200

And whatso else of virtue good or ill  
 Grewe in the Gardin, fetcht from farre away,  
 Of euerie one he takes, and tastes at will,  
 And on their pleasures greedily doth pray.  
 Then when he hath both plaid, and fed his fill,  
 In the warme Sunne he doth himselfe embay,  
 And there him rests in riotous siffisaunce  
 Of all his gladfulness, and kingly ioyauunce.

What more felicitie can fall to creature

Than to enioy delight with libertie, 210  
 And to be Lord of all the workes of Nature,  
 To raine in th' aire from th' earth to highest skie,  
 To feed on flowres, and weeds of glorious feature,  
 To take what euer thing doth please the eie?  
 Who rests not pleased with such happines,  
 Well worthie he to taste of wretchednes.

But what on earth can long abide in state?  
 Or who can him assure of happie day;  
 Sith morning faire may bring fowle euening late,

And least mishap the most blisse alter may? 220  
 For thousand perills lie in close awaite  
 About vs daylie, to worke our decay;  
 That none, except a God, or God him guide,  
 May them auoyde, or remedie prouide.

And whatso heauens in their secrete doome  
 Ordained haue, how can fraile fleshly wight  
 Forecast, but it must needs to issue come?  
 The sea, the aire, the fire, the day, the night,  
 And th' armies of their creatures all and some

Do serue to them, and with importune might 230  
 Warre against vs the vassals of their will.  
 Who then can saue, what they dispose to spill?

Not thou, O *Clarion*, though fairest thou  
 Of all thy kinde, vnhappie happie Flie,  
 Whose cruell fate is wouen euen now  
 Of *Ioues* owne hand, to worke thy miserie:  
 Ne may thee helpe the manie hartie vow,  
 Which thy olde Sire with sacred pietie  
 Hath powred forth for thee, and th' altars sprent:

Nought may thee saue from heauens auengement. 240

It fortun'd (as heauens had behight)  
 That in this gardin, where yong *Clarion*  
 Was wont to solace him, a wicked wight,  
 The foe of faire things, th' author of confusion,  
 The shame of Nature, the bondslaue of spight,  
 Had lately built his hatefull mansion;  
 And, lurking closely, in awayte now lay  
 How he might anie in his trap betray.

But when he spide the ioyous Butterflie  
 In this faire plot displacing too and fro,

Fearles of foes and hidden ieopardie,

Lord how he gan for to bestirre him tho, 250  
 And to his wicked worke each part applie:  
 His heate did earne against his hated foe,  
 And bowels so with ranckling poyson swelde,  
 That scarce the skin the strong contagion helde.

The cause why he this Flie so maliced,  
 Was (as in stories it is written found)  
 For that his mother which him bore and bred,

The most fine-fingred workwoman on ground, 260  
*Arachne*, by his meanes was vanquished  
 Of *Pallas*, and in her owne skill confound,  
 When she with her for excellence contended,  
 That wrought her shame, and sorrow neuer ended.

For the *Tritonian* goddesse, hauing hard  
 Her blazed fame, which all the world had fil'd,  
 Came downe to proue the truth, and due reward  
 For her prais-worthie workmanship to yeild  
 But the presumptuous Damzel rashly dar'd

The Goddesse selfe to chalenge to the field, 270  
 And to compare with her in curious skill  
 Of workes with loome, with needle, and with quill.

*Minerua* did the chalenge not refuse,  
 But deign'd with her the paragon to make:  
 So to their worke they sit, and each doth chuse  
 What storie she will for her tapet take.  
*Arachne* figur'd how *Ioue* did abuse  
*Europa* like a Bull, and on his backe  
 Her through the sea did beare; so liuely seene,

That it true Sea, and true Bull ye would weene. 280

Shee seem'd still backe vnto the land to looke,  
 And her play-fellowes aide to call, and feare  
 The dashing of the waues, that vp she tooke  
 Her daintie feete, and garments gathered neare:  
 But (Lord) how she in euerie member shooke,  
 When as the land she saw no more appeare,  
 But a wilde wildernes of waters deepe:

Then gan she greatly to lament and weepe.

Before the Bull she pictur'd winged Loue,

With his yong brother Sport, light fluttering 290  
 Vpon the waues, as each had beene a Doue;  
 The one his bowe and shafts, the other Spring.  
 A burning Teade about his head did moue,  
 As in their Syres new loue both triumphing:  
 And manie Nymphes about them flocking round,  
 And manie *Tritons*, which did their hornes sound.

And round about, her worke she did empale  
 With a faire border wrought of sundrie flowres,  
 Enwouen with an Yuie winding trayle:

A goodly worke, full fit for Kingly bowres, 300  
 Such as Dame *Pallas*, such as Enuie pale,  
 That al good things with venemous tooth deuowres,  
 Could not accuse. Then gan the Goddesse bright  
 Her selfe likewise vnto her worke to dight.

She made the storie of the old debate  
 Which she with *Neptune* did for *Athens* trie:  
 Twelue Gods doo sit around in royall state,  
 And *Ioue* in midst with awfull Maiestie,  
 To iudge the strife betweene them stirred late:

Each of the Gods by his like visnomie 310  
 Eathe to be knowen; but *Ioue* about them all,  
 By his great lookes and power Imperiall.

Before them stands the God of Seas in place,  
 Clayming that sea-coast Citie as his right,  
 And strikes the rockes with his three-forked mace;  
 Whenceforth issues a warlike steed in sight,  
 The signe by which he chalengeth the place,  
 That all the Gods, which saw his wondrous might  
 Did surely deeme the victorie his due:

But seldome seene, foriudgement proueth true. 320

Then to her selfe she giues her *Aegide* shield,

And steelhed speare, and morion on her hedd,  
 Such as she oft is seene in warlicke field:  
 Then sets she forth, how with her weapon dredd  
 She smote the ground, the which streight foorth did yield  
 A fruitfull Olyue tree, with berries spredd,  
 That all the Gods admir'd; then all the storie  
 She compast with a wreathe of Olyues hoarie.

Emongst these leaues she made a Butterflie,

With excellent deuice and wondrous flight, 330  
 Fluttering among the Oliues wantonly,  
 That seem'd to liue, so like it was in sight:  
 The veluet nap which on his wings doth lie,  
 The siken downe with which his backe is dight,  
 His broad outstretched hornes, his [h]ayrie thies,  
 His glorious colours, and his glittering eies.

Which when *Arachne* saw, as ouerlaid  
 And mastered with workmanship so rare,  
 She stood astonied long, ne ought gainesaid,

And with fast fixed eyes on her did stare, 340  
 And by her silence, signe of one dismaid,  
 The victorie did yeeld her as her share:  
 Yet she did inly fret, and felly burne,  
 And all her blood to poysonous rancor turne:

That shortly from the shape of womanhed,  
 Such as she was, when *Pallas* she attempted  
 , She grew to hideous shape of dryrihed,  
 Pined with grieffe of folly late repented:  
 Eftsoones her white streight legs were altered

To crooked crawling shankes, of marrowe emptied, 350  
 And her faire face to fowle and loathsome hewe  
 And her fine corpses to a bag of venim grewe.

This cursed creature, mindfull of that olde  
 Enfested grudge, the which his mother felt,  
 So soone as *Clarion* he did beholde,  
 His heart with vengefull malice inly swelt;  
 And weauing straight a net with manie a folde

About the caue, in which he lurking dwelt,  
With fine small cords about it stretched wide,

So finely sponne, that scarce they could be spide. 360

Not anie damzell, which her vaunteth most  
In skilfull knitting of soft silken twyne;  
Nor anie skil'd in workmanship embost;  
Nor anie skil'd in loupes of fingring fine,  
Might in their diuers cunning euer dare,  
With this so curious networke to compare.

Ne doo I thinke, that that same subtil gin,

The which the *Lemnian* God framde craftilie, 370  
*Mars* sleeping with his wife to compasse in,  
That all the Gods with common mockerie  
Might laugh at them, and scorne their shamefull sin,  
Was like to this. This same he did applie  
For to entrap the careles *Clarion*,  
That ran'gd each where without suspition.

Suspition of friend, nor feare of foe,  
That hazarded his health, had he at all,  
But walkt at will, and wandred too and fro,

In the pride of his freedome principall: 380  
Litle wist he his fatall future woe,  
But was secure, the liker he to fall.  
He likest is to fall into mischaunce,  
That is regardles of his gouernaunce.

Yet still *Aragnoll* (so his foe was hight)  
Lay lurking couertly him to surprise,  
And all his gins that him entangle might,  
Drest in good order as he could devise.  
At length the foolish Flie without foresight,

As he that did all danger quite despise, 390  
Toward those parts came flying careleslie  
, Where hidden was his hatefullemie.

Who, seeing him, with secrete ioy therefore



Did tickle inwardly in euerie vaine,  
 And his false hart fraught with all treasons store,  
 Was fil'd with hope, his purpose to obtaine:  
 Himselfe he close vpgathered more and more  
 Into his den, that his deceiptfull traine  
 By his there being might not be bewraid,

Ne anie noyse, ne anie motion made.

400

Like as a wily Foxe, that hauing spide,  
 Where on a sunnie banke the Lambes doo play,  
 Full closely creeping by the hinder side,  
 Lyes in ambushment of his hoped pray,  
 Ne stirreth limbe, till seeing readie tide,  
 He rusheth forth, and snatcheth quite away  
 One of the little yonglings vnawares:  
 So to his worke *Aragnoll* him prepares.

Who now shall giue vnto my heauie eyes

A well of teares, that all may ouerflow?  
 Or where shall I finde lamentable cryes,  
 And mournfull tunes enough my grieffe to show?  
 Helpe O thou Tragick Muse, me to deuise  
 Notes sad enough t'expresse this bitter throw:  
 For loe, the dreerie stownd is now arriued,  
 That of all happines hath vs depriued.

410

The luckles *Clarion*, whether cruell Fate,  
 Or wicked Fortune faultles him misled,  
 Or some vngracious blast out of the gate

Of *Aeoles* raine perforce him droue on hed,  
 Was (O sad hap and howre vnfortunate)  
 With violent swift flight forth caried  
 Into the cursed cobweb, which his foe  
 Had framed for his finall ouerthroe.

420

There the fond Flie entangled, strugled long,  
 Himselfe to free thereout; but all in vaine.  
 For striuing more, the more in laces strong  
 Himselfe he tide, and wrapt his winges twine  
 In lymie snares the subtill loupes among;

That in the ende he breathlesse did remaine, 430  
And all his youghly forces idly spent,  
Him to the mercie of th' auenger lent.

Which when the greisly tyrant did espie,  
Like a grimme Lyon rushing with fierce might  
Out of his den, he seized greedilie  
On the resistles pray, and with fell spight,  
Vnder the left wing stroke his weapon slie  
Into his heart, that his deepe groning spright  
In bloodie streames foorth fled into the aire,

His bodie left the spectacle of care. 440

FINIS.

---

Continue on to [Visions of the Worlds Vanitie.](#)



# Visions of the worlds vanitie

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *Visions of the worlds vanitie* was prepared from Ernest de Sélincourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [Oxford, 1910] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## *Visions of the worlds vanitie.*

1



Ne day, whiles that my daylie cares did sleepe,  
My spirit, shaking off her earthly prison,  
Began to enter into meditation deepe  
Of things exceeding reach of common reason;  
Such as this age, in which all good is geason,  
And all that humble is and meane debaced,

Hath brought forth in her last declining season,  
Griefe of good mindes, to see goodnesse disgraced.  
On which when as my thought was throgly placed,  
Vnto my eyes strange shows presented were,  
Picturing that, which I in minde embraced,  
That yet those sights empassion me full nere.  
Such as they were (faire Ladie) take in worth,  
That when time serues, may bring things better forth.

2

In Summers day, when *Phoebus* fairly shone,  
I saw a Bull as white as driuen snowe,  
With gilden hornes embowed like the Moone,  
In a fresh flowring meadow lying lowe:

Vp to his eares the verdant grasse did growe,  
And the gay floures did offer to be eaten;  
But he with fatnes so did ouerflowe,  
That he all wallowed in the weedes downe beaten,  
Ne car'd with them his daintie lips to sweeten:  
Till that a Brize, a scorned little creature,  
Through his faire hide his angrie sting did threaten,  
And vext so sore, that all his goodly feature,  
And all his plenteous pasture nought him pleased:  
So by the small the great is oft diseased.

3

Beside the fruitfull shore of muddie *Nile*,  
Vpon a sunnie banke outstretched lay  
In monstrous length, a mightie Crocodile,  
That cram'd with guiltles blood, and greedie pray  
Of wretched people trauailing that way,  
Thought all things lesse than his disdainfull pride.  
I saw a little Bird, cal'd *Tedula*,  
The least of thousands which on earth abide,  
That forst this hideous beast to open wide  
The greisly gates of his deuouring hell,  
And let him feede, as Nature doth prouide,  
Vpon his iawes, that with blacke venime swell.  
Why then should greatest things the least disdaine,  
Sith that so small so mighty can constraine?

4

The kingly Bird, that beares *Ioues* thunder-clap,  
One day did scorne the simple Scarabee,  
Proud of his highest seruice, and good hap,  
That made all other Foules his thralls to bee:  
The silly Flie, that no other redresse did see,  
Spide where the Eagle built his towring nest,  
And kindling fire within the hollow tree,  
Burnt vp his yong ones, and himselfe distrest;  
Ne suffred him in anie place to rest,  
But droue in *Ioues* owne lap his eggs to lay;  
Where gathering also filth him to infest,  
Forst with the filth his eggs to fling away:  
For which when as the Foule was wroth, said *Ioue*,

Lo how the least the greatest may reprove.

5

Toward the sea turning my troubled eye,  
I saw the fish (if fish I may it cleepe)  
That makes the sea before his face to flye,  
And with his flaggie finnes doth seeme to sweepe  
The fomie waues out of the dreadfull deep,  
The huge *Leuiathan*, dame Natures wonder,  
Making his sport, that manie makes to weep:  
A sword-fish small him from the rest did sunder,  
That in his throat him pricking softly vnder,  
His wide Abyesse him forced forth to spewe,  
That all the sea did roare like heauens thunder,  
And all the waues were stain'd with filthie hewe.  
Hereby I learned haue, not to despise,  
What euer thing seemes small in common eyes.

6

An hideous Dragon, dreadfull to behold,  
Whose backe was arm'd against the dint of speare  
With shields of brasse, that shone like burnisht golde,  
And forkhed sting, that death in it did beare,  
Stroue with a Spider his vnequall peare:  
And bad defiance to his enemie.  
The subtill vermin creeping closely neare,  
Did in his drinke shed poyson priuily;  
Which through his entrailles spredding diuersly,  
Made him to swell, that nigh his bowells burst,  
And him enforst to yeeld the victorie,  
That did so much in his owne greatnesse trust.  
O how great vainnesse is it then to scorne  
The weake, that hath the strong so oft forlorne.

7

High on a hill a goodly Cedar grewe,  
Of wondrous length, and streight proportion,  
That farre abroad her daintie odours threwe;  
Mongst all the daughters of proud *Libanon*,  
Her match in beautie was not anie one.

Shortly within her inmost pith there bred  
 A litle wicked worme, perceiue'd of none,  
 That on her sap and vitall moysture fed:  
 Thenceforth her garland so much honoured  
 Began to die, (O great ruth for the same)  
 And her faire lockes fell from her loftie head,  
 That shortly balde, and bared she became.  
 I, which this sight beheld, was much dismayed,  
 To see so goodly thing so soone decayed.

8

Soone after this I saw an Elephant,  
 Adorn'd with bells and bosses gorgeously,  
 That on his backe did beare (as batteilant)  
 A gilden towre, which shone exceedingly;  
 That he himselfe through foolish vanitie,  
 Both for his rich attire, and goodly forme,  
 Was puffed vp with passing surquedrie,  
 And shortly gan all other beasts to scorne,  
 Till that a little Ant, a silly worme,  
 Into his nostrils creeping, so him pained,  
 That casting downe his towres, he did deforme  
 Both borrowed pride, and natiue beautie stained.  
 Let therefore nought that great is, therein glorie,  
 Sith so small thing his happines may varie.

9

Looking far forth into the Ocean wide,  
 A goodly ship with banners brauely dight,  
 And flag in her top-gallant I espide,  
 Through the maine sea making her merry flight:  
 Faire blew the winde into her bosome right;  
 And th' heauens looked louely all the while,  
 That she did seeme to daunce, as in delight,  
 And at her owne felicitie did smile.  
 All sodainely there cloue vnto her keele  
 A little fish, that men call *Remora*,  
 Which stopt her course, and held her by the heele,  
 That winde nor tide could moue her thence away.  
 Straunge thing me seemeth, that so small a thing  
 Should able be so great an one to wring.

## 10

A mighty Lyon, Lord of all the wood,  
 Hauing his hunger throughly satisfide,  
 With pray of beasts, and spoyle of liuing blood,  
 Safe in his dreadles den him thought to hide:  
 His sternesse was his prayse, his strength his pride,  
 And all his glory in his cruell clawes.  
 I saw a wasp, that fiecely him defide,  
 And bad him battaile euen to his iawes;  
 Sore he him stong, that it the blood forth drawes,  
 And his proude heart is fild with fretting ire:  
 In vaine he threats his teeth, his tayle, his pawes,  
 And from his bloodie eyes doth sparkle fire;  
 That dead himselfe he wisheth for despight.  
 So weakest may anoy the most of might.

## 11

What time the Romaine Empire bore the raine  
 Of all the world, and florisht most in might,  
 The nations gan their soueraigntie disdaine,  
 And cast to quitt them from their bondage quight:  
 So when all shrouded were in silent night,  
 The *Galles* were, by corrupting of a mayde,  
 Possest nigh of the Capitol through slight,  
 Had not a Goose the treachery bewrayde.  
 If then a Goose great *Rome* from ruine stayde,  
 And *Ioue* himselfe, the patron of the place,  
 Preserud from being to his foes betrayde,  
 Why do vaine men mean things so much deface,  
 And in their might repose their most assurance,  
 Sith nought on earth can chalenge long endurance?

## 12

When these sad sights were ouerpast and gone,  
 My spright was greatly moued in her rest,  
 With inward ruth and deare affection,  
 To see so great things by so small distrest:  
 Thenceforth I gan in my engrieued brest  
 To scorne all difference of great and small,

Sith that the greatest often are opprest,  
And vnawares doe into daunger fall.  
And ye, that read these ruines tragicall  
Learne by their losse to loue the low degree,  
And if that fortune chaunce you vp to call  
To honours seat, forget not what you be:  
For he that of himselfe is most secure,  
Shall finde his state most fickle and vn Timer.

---

*FINIS.*

---

Continue on to [Bellays Visions](#).





# The Visions of Bellay

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *The Visions of Bellay* was prepared from Ernest de Sélincourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [Oxford, 1910] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). Alexander Grosart's practice of including the illustrations from *A Theatre for Worldlings* has been followed here. The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions, corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## *The Visions of Bellay.*

1



T was the time, when rest soft sliding downe  
From heauens hight into mens heauy eyes,  
In the forgetfulnes of sleepe doth drowne  
The carefull thoughts of mortall miseries:  
Then did a Ghost before mine eyes appeare,  
On that great riuers banck, that runnes by *Rome*,  
Which calling me by name bad me to reare  
My lookes to heauen whence all good gifts do come,  
And crying lowd, loe now beholde (quoth hee)  
What vnder this great temple placed is:  
Lo all is nought but flying vanitee.  
So I that know this worlds inconstancies,  
Sith onely God surmounts all times decay,  
In God alone my confidence do stay.



2

On high hills top I saw a stately frame,  
An hundred cubits high by iust assize,  
With hundreth pillours fronting faire the same,  
All wrought with Diamond after Dorick wize:  
Nor brick, nor marble was the wall in view,  
But shining Christall, which from top to base  
Out of her womb a thousand rayons threw,  
On hundred steps of *Afrike* golde enchase:  
Golde was the parget, and the seeling bright  
Did shine all scaly with great plates of golde;  
The floore of *Iasp* and *Emeraude* was dight.  
O worlds vainesse. Whiles thus I did behold,  
An earthquake shooke the hill from lowest seat,  
And ouerthrew this frame with ruine great.



Then did a sharped spyre of Diamond bright,  
Ten feete each way in square, appeare to mee,  
Iustly proportion'd vp vnto his hight,  
So far as Archer might his leuel see:  
The top thereof a pot did seeme to beare,  
Made of the mettall, which we most do honour,  
And in this golden vessell couched weare  
The ashes of a mightie Emperour:  
Vpon foure corners of the base were pight  
To beare the frame, foure great Lyons of gold;  
A worthy tombe for such a worthy wight.  
Alas this world doth nought but grieuance hold.  
I saw a tempest from the heauen descend,  
Which this braue monument with flash did rend.



4

I saw raysde vp on yuorie pilloures tall,  
Whose bases were of richest mettalls warke,  
The chapters Alablaster, the fryses christall,  
The double front of a triumphal Arke:  
On each side purtraid was a Victorie,  
Clad like a Nimph, that wings of siluer weares,  
And in triumphant chayre was set on hie,  
The auncient glory of the Romaine Peares.  
No worke it seem'd of earthly craftsmans wit,  
But rather wrought by his owne industry,  
That thunder-dartes for *Ioue* his syre doth fit.  
Let me no more see faire thing vnder sky,  
Sith that mine eyes haue seene so faire a sight  
With sodain fall to dust consumed quight.



5

Then was the faire *Dodonian* tree far seene,  
Vpon seauen hills to spread his gladsome gleame,  
And conqurours bedecked with his greene,  
Along the bancks of the *Ausonian* streame:  
There many an auncient Trophee was addrest,  
And many a spoyle, and many a goodly show,  
Which that braue races greatnes did attest,  
That whilome from the *Trojan* blood did flow.  
Rauisht I was so rare a thing to vew,  
When lo a barbarous troupe of clownish fone  
The honour of the noble boughs down threw,  
Vnder the wedge I heard the tronck to grone;  
And since I saw the roote in great disdain  
A twinne of forked trees send forth againe.

6

I saw a Wolfe vnder a rockie caue  
Noursing two whelpes; I saw her litle ones  
In wanton dalliance the teate to craue,

While she her neck wreath'd from them for the nones:  
I saw her raunge abroad to seeke her food,  
And roming through the field with greedie rage  
T'embrew her teeth and clawes with lukewarm blood  
Of the small heards, her thirst for to asswage.  
I saw a thousand hunstmen, which descended  
Downe from the mountaines bordring *Lombardie*,  
That with an hundred speares her flank wide rended.  
I saw her on the plaine outstretched lie,  
Throwing out thousand throbs in her owne soyle:  
Soone on a tree vphang'd I saw her spoyle.



7

I saw the Bird that can the Sun endure,  
With feeble wings assay to mount on hight,  
By more and more she gan her wings t'assure,  
Following th' ensample of her mothers sight:  
I saw her rise, and with a larger flight  
Tp pierce the cloudes, and with wide pinneons  
To measure the most haughtie mountaines hight,  
Vntill she raught the Gods owne mansions:  
There was she lost, when suddaine I behelde,

Where tumbling through the ayre in firie fold;  
All flaming downe she on the plaine was felde,  
And soone her bodie turn'd to ashes colde.  
I saw the foule that doth the light dispise,  
Out of her dust like to a worme arise.

8

I saw a riuer swift, whose fomy billowes  
Did wash the ground work of an old great wall;  
I saw it couer'd all with griesly shadowes,  
That with black horror did the ayre appall:  
Thereout a strange beast with seuen heads arose,  
That townes and castles vnder her brest did coure,  
And seem'd both milder beasts and fiercer foes  
Alike with equall rauine to deuoure.  
Much was I mazde, to see this monsters kinde  
In hundred formes to change his fearfull hew,  
When as at length I saw the wrathfull winde,  
Which blows cold storms, burst out of *Scithian* mew,  
That sperst these cloudes, and in so short as thought,  
This dreadfull shape was vanished to nought.



9

Then all astonied with this mightie ghoast,  
An hideous bodie big and strong I sawe,  
With side long beard, and locks down hanging loast,  
Sterne face, and front full of Saturnlike awe;  
Who leaning on the belly of a pot,  
Pourd foorth a water, whose out gushing flood  
Ran bathing all the creakie shore afloat,  
Whereon the *Troyan* prince spilt *Turnus* blood;  
And at his feete a bitch wolfe suck did yeeld  
To two young babes: his left the *Palme* tree stout,  
His right hand did the peacefull *Oliue* wield,  
And head with Lawrell garnisht was about.  
Sudden both *Palme* and *Oliue* fell away,  
And faire green Lawrell branch did quite decay.





10

Hard by a riuers side a virgin faire,  
Folding her armes to heauen with a thousand throbs,  
And outraging her cheekes and golden haire,  
To falling riuers sound thus tun'd her sobs.  
Where is (quoth she) this whilom honour'd face?  
Where the great glorie and the auncient praise,  
In which all worlds felicitie had place,  
When Gods and men my honour vp did raise?  
Suffisd' it not that ciuill warres me made  
The whole worlds spoile, but that this Hydra new,  
Of hundred *Hercules* to be assaide,  
With seuen heads, budding monstrous crimes anew,  
So many *Neroes* and *Caligulaes*  
Out of these crooked shores must dayly rayse?



11

Vpon an hill a bright flame I did see,  
Wauing aloft with triple point to skie,  
Which like incense of precious Cedar tree,  
With balmie odours fil'd th' ayre farre and nie.  
A Bird all white, well feathered on each wing,  
Hereout vp to the throne of Gods did flie,  
And all the way most pleasant notes did sing,  
Whilst in the smoake she vnto heauen did stie.  
Of this faire fire the scattered rayes forth threw  
On euerie side a thousand shining beames:  
When sudden dropping of a siluer dew  
(O grieuous chance) gan quench those precious flames;  
That it which earst so pleasant sent did yeld,  
Of nothing now but noyous sulphure smeld.



I saw a spring out of a rocke forth rayle,  
As cleare as Christall gainst the Sunnie beames,  
The bottome yeallow, like the golden grayle  
That bright *Pactolus* washeth with his streames;  
It seem'd that Art and Nature had assembled  
All pleasure there, for which mans hart could long;  
And there a noyse alluring sleepe soft trembled,

Of manie accords more sweete than Mermaids song:  
The seates and benches shone as yuorie,  
And hundred Nymphes sate side by side about;  
When from nigh hills with hideous outcrie,  
A troupe of Satyres in the place did rout,  
Which with their villeine feete the streame did ray,  
Threw down the seats, and droue the Nymphs away.

13

Much richer then that vessell seem'd to bee,  
Which did to that sad *Florentine* appeare,  
Casting mine eyes farre off, I chaunst to see,  
Vpon the *Latine* Coast herself to reare:  
But suddenly arose a tempest great,  
Bearing close enuie to these riches rare,  
Which gan assaile this ship with dreadfull threat,  
This ship, to which none other might compare.  
And finally the storme impetuous  
Sunke vp these riches, second vnto none,  
Within the gulfe of greedie *Nereus*.  
I saw both ship and mariners each one,  
And all that treasure drowned in the main:  
But I the ship saw after raisd' againe.

14

Long hauing deeply gron'd these visions sad,  
I saw a Citie like vnto that same,  
Which saw the messenger of tidings glad;  
But that on sand was built of goodly frame:  
It seem'd her top the firmament did rayse,  
And no lesse rich than faire, right worthie sure  
(if ought here worthie) of immortall dayes,  
Of if ought vnder heauen might firme endure.  
Much wondred I to see so faire a wall:  
When from the Northerne coast a storme arose,

Which breathing furie from his inward gall  
On all, which did against his course oppose,  
Into a clowde of dust sperst in the aire  
The weake foundations of this Citie faire.



15

At length, euen at the time, when *Morpheus*  
Most trulie doth vnto our eyes appeare,  
Wearie to see the heauens still wauering thus,  
I saw *Typhæus* sister comming neare;  
Whose head full brauely with a morion hidd,  
Did seeme to match the Gods in Maiestie.  
She by a riuers bancke that swift down slidd,  
Ouer all the world did raise a Trophee hie;  
An hundred vanquisht Kings vnder her lay,  
With armes bound at their backs in shamefull wize;  
Whilst I thus mazed was with great affray,  
I saw the heauens in warre against her rize:  
Then down she stricken fell with clap of thonder,  
That with great noyse I wakte in sudden wonder.

*FINIS.*

---

Continue on to [Petrarches Visions.](#)



# The Visions of Petrarch

Edmund Spenser

---

Note on the [Renaissance Editions](#) text:

This html etext of *The Visions of Petrarch* was prepared from Ernest de Sélécourt's *Spenser's Minor Poems* [1910] by [Richard Bear](#) at the [University of Oregon](#). Alexander Grosart's practice of including the illustrations from the earlier *A Theatre for Worldings* has been followed here. The text is in the public domain. Coding is copyright © The University of Oregon, March 1996. Please refer additions , corrections, or comments to [rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:rbear@oregon.uoregon.edu).

---

## *THE VISIONS OF PETRARCH.*

formerly translated.

---





Being one day at my window all alone,  
So manie strange things happened me to see,  
As much it griueth me to thinke thereon.  
At my right hand a Hynde appear'd to mee,  
So faire as mote the greatest God delite;  
Two eager dogs did her pursue in chace,  
Of which the one was blacke, the other white:

With deadly force so in their cruell race  
They pincht the haunches of that gentle beast,  
That at the last, and in short time I spide,  
Vnder a Rocke where she alas opprest,  
Fell to the ground, and there vntimely dide.  
Cruell death vanquishing so noble beautie,  
Oft makes me wayle so hard a destinie.



After at sea a tall ship did appeare,  
Made all of Heben and white Yuorie,  
The sailes of golde, of silke the tackle were,  
Milde was the winde, calme seem'd the sea to bee,  
The skie eachwhere did show full bright and faire;  
With rich treasures this gay ship fraigted was:



But sudden storme did so turmoyle the aire,  
And tumbled vp the sea, that she (alas)  
Strake on a rock, that vnder water lay,  
And perished past all recouerie.  
O how great ruth and sorrowfull assay,  
Doth vex my sprite with perplexitie,  
Thus in a moment to see lost and drown'd,  
So great riches, as like cannot be found.



3

Then heauenly branches did I see arise  
Out of the fresh and lustie Lawrell tree,  
Amidst the yong greene wood: of Paradise  
Some noble plant I thought my selfe to see:  
Such store of birds therein yshrowded were,  
Chaunting in shade their sundrie melodie,  
That with their sweetnes I was rauish't nere.  
While on the Lawrell fixed was mine eie,  
The skie gan euerie where to ouercast,  
And darkned was the welkin all about,  
When sudden flash of heauens fire out brast,  
And rent this royall tree quite by the roote,

Which makes me much and euer to complaine:  
For no such shadow shalbe had againe.



4

Within this wood, out of a rocke did rise  
A spring of water, mildly tumbling downe,  
Whereto approched not in anie wise  
The homely shepheard, nor the ruder clowne;  
But manie Muses, and the Nymphes withall,  
That sweetly in accord did tune their voyce  
To the soft sounding of the waters fall,  
That my glad hart thereat did much reioyce.  
But while herein I tooke my chiefe delight,  
I saw (alas) the gaping earth deuoure  
The spring, the place, and all cleane out of sight.  
Which yet agreeues my hart euen to this houre,  
And wounds my soule with ruffull memorie,  
To see such pleasures gon so suddenly.



5

I saw a Phoenix in the wood alone,  
With purple wings, and crest of golden hewe;  
Strange bird he was, whereby I thought anone,  
That of some heauenly wight I had the vewe;  
Vntill he came vnto the broken tree,  
And to the spring, that late deuoured was.  
What say I more? each thing at last we see  
Doth passe away: the Phoenix there alas  
Spying the tree destroid, the water dride,  
Himself smote with his beake, as in disdain,  
And so foorthwith in great despight he dide:  
That yet my heart burnes in exceeding paine,  
For ruth and pitie of so haples plight.  
O let mine eyes no more see such a sight.



6

At last so faire a Ladie did I spie,  
That thinking yet on her I burne and quake;  
On hearbs and flowres she walked pensiuely,  
Milde, but yet loue she proudly did forsake:  
White seem'd her robes, yet wouen so they were,  
As snow and golde together had been wrought.  
Aboue the wast a darke clowde shrouded her,  
A stinging Serpent by the heele her caught;  
Wherewith she languisht as the gathered floure,  
And well assur'd she mounted vp to ioy.  
Alas, on earth so nothing doth endure,  
But bitter grieffe and sorrowfull annoy:  
Which make this life wretched and miserable,  
Tossed with stormes of fortune variable.

[7]

When I beheld this tickle trustles state  
Of vaine worlds glorie, flitting too and fro,  
And mortall men tossed by troublous fate  
In restles seas of wretchednes and woe,  
I wish I might this wearie life forgoe,  
And shortly turne vnto my happie rest,

Where my free spirite might not anie moe  
Be vext with sights, that doo her peace molest.  
And ye faire Ladie, in whose bounteous brest  
All heauenly grace and vertue shrined is,  
When ye these rythmes doo read, and vew the rest,  
Loath this base world, and thinke of heauens blis:  
And though ye be the fairest of Gods creatures,  
Yet thinke, that death shall spoyle your goodly features.

---

*FINIS.*

---

