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erable incest, when I must be married to my mother and my sister, beget, and bear that worm which is all that miserable penury; when my mouth shall be filled with dust, and the worm shall feed, and feed sweetly upon me,[4] when the ambitious man shall have no satisfaction, if the poorest alive tread upon him, nor the poorest receive any contentment in being made equal to princes, for they shall be equal but in dust. One dieth at his full strength, being wholly at ease and in quiet, and another dies in the bitterness of his soul, and never eats with pleasure, but they lie down alike in the dust, and the worm covers them.[5] The worm covers them in Job, and in Esay, it covers them and is spread under them, the worm is spread under thee, and the worm covers thee.[6] There's the mats and the carpets that lie under, and there's the State and the Canopy, that hangs over the greatest of the sons of men. Even those bodies that were the temple of the Holy Ghost, come to this dilapidation, to ruin, to rubbish, to dust: even the Israel of the Lord, and Jacob himself hath no other specification, no other denomination, but that *vermis Jacob*, thou worm of Jacob.[7] Truly the consideration of this posthume death, this death after burial, that after God (with whom are the issues of death) hath delivered me from the death of the womb, by bringing me into the world, and from the manifold deaths of the world, by laying me in the grave, I must die again in an incineration of this flesh, and in a dispersion of that dust. * * *

There we leave you in that blessed dependancy, to hang upon him that hangs upon the Cross, there bathe in his tears, there suck at his wounds, and lie down in peace in his grave, till he vouchsafe you a resurrection, and an ascension into that Kingdom, which he hath purchased for you, with the inestimable price of his incorruptible blood. Amen.

1632

4. Echoes Job 24.20.
5. Echoes Job 21.23–26.
6. Echoes Isaiah 14.11.
7. That epithet is used in Isaiah 41.14.

AEMILIA LANYER
1569–1645

Aemilia Lanyer was the first Englishwoman to publish a substantial volume of original poems and the first to make an overt bid for patronage, as previously only a male poet of the era might. She was daughter to an Italian-Jewish family of court musicians (the Bassanos), and for some years the mistress of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chamberlain, Henry Cary, Lord Hunsdon, forty-five years her senior and a notable patron of the arts, including Shakespeare's company. Apparently to cover a pregnancy by him that resulted in a son named Henry, she married into another family of gentlemen musicians attached to the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. Educated in the aristocratic household of the countess of Kent and supported in style by Hunsdon, her fortunes declined after her marriage to Alfonso Lanyer, and her efforts to find some niche at the Jacobean court came to nothing. The gossipy notebooks of the astrologer Simon Forman record some of these facts from information Lanyer provided when consulting him about her fortunes. She evidently resided for some time in the bookish and cultivated household of Margaret Clifford, countess of Cumberland, and Margaret's young daughter Anne Clifford, receiving there some encouragement in learning, piety, and poetry, as well as, perhaps, some support in the unusual venture of offering her poems for publication.

Lanyer's single volume of poems, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), has a decided feminist thrust. A series of dedicatory poems to former and would-be patronesses praises them as a community of contemporary good women. The title poem, a baroque meditation on Christ's Passion which at times invites some comparison with Donne and Crashaw, contrasts the good women who are part of the Passion story with the weak and evil men portrayed there and also incorporates a defense of Eve and all women. That defense and Lanyer's prose epistle "To the Virtuous Reader" are spirited contributions to the so-called *querelle des femmes*, a massive body of writings both serious and satiric that extends over several centuries and argues the issue of women's worthiness or faultiness in several genres and languages: some examples include Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, John Knox's denunciation of Mary Queen of Scots, and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. The final poem in Lanyer's volume, *The Description of Cooke-ham*, celebrates in elegiac mode the crown estate occasionally occupied by the countess of Cumberland, portraying it as an Edenic paradise of women, now lost. This poem may or may not have been written before Ben Jonson's *To Penshurst*—commonly thought to have inaugurated the "country-house" genre in English literature—but Lanyer's poem can claim priority in publication. These two poems offer an instructive comparison, constructing male and female conceptions of an idealized social order that respond in very different ways to contemporary gender ideology.

Her weakness did the serpent's words obey,
But you in malice God's dear Son betray,

Whom, if unjustly you condemn to die,
Her sin was small to what you do commit;
All mortal sins[5] that do for vengeance cry
Are not to be compared unto it.
If many worlds would altogether try
By all their sins the wrath of God to get,
This sin of yours surmounts them all as far
As doth the sun another little star.[6]

Then let us have our liberty again,
And challenge° to yourselves no sovereignty. *claim*
You came not in the world without our pain,
Make that a bar against your cruelty;
Your fault being greater, why should you disdain
Our being your equals, free from tyranny?
If one weak woman simply did offend,
This sin of yours hath no excuse nor end,

To which, poor souls, we never gave consent.
Witness, thy wife, O Pilate, speaks for all,
Who did but dream, and yet a message sent
That thou shouldest have nothing to do at all
With that just man[7] which, if thy heart relent,
Why wilt thou be a reprobate° with Saul[8] *damned*
To seek the death of him that is so good,
For thy soul's health to shed his dearest blood?

1611

The Description of Cooke-ham[1]

Farewell (sweet *Cooke-ham*) where I first obtained
Grace[2] from that grace where perfect grace remained;
And where the muses gave their full consent,
I should have power the virtuous to content;
Where princely palace[3] willed me to indite,
The sacred story of the soul's delight.

5. Sins punishable by damnation.
6. In the Ptolemaic system, the sun was larger than the other planets and the fixed stars.
7. Christ.
8. King of Israel who sought the death of God's annointed prophet-king, David. The parallel is with Pilate, who sought Christ's death.
1. The poem was written in honor of Margaret Clifford, countess of Cumberland, and celebrates a royal estate leased to her brother, at which the countess occasionally resided. The poem should be compared with Jonson's *To Penshurst*. Lanyer's poem is based on a familiar classical topic, the "Farewell to a Place," which had its most famous development in Virgil's *Eclogue* 1. Lanyer makes extensive use of the common pastoral motif of nature's active sympathy with and response to human emotion—which later came to be called the "pathetic fallacy."
2. Here, both God's grace and the favor of Her Grace, the Countess of Cumberland. Lanyer attributes both her religious conversion and her vocation as poet to a period of residence at Cookeham in the countess's household. We do not know how long or under what circumstances Lanyer resided there.
3. Apparently a reference to the countess as her patron, commissioning her Passion poem.

Farewell (sweet place) where virtue then did rest,
And all delights did harbor in her breast;
Never shall my sad eyes again behold
Those pleasures which my thoughts did then unfold.
Yet you (great Lady) Mistress of that place,
From whose desires did spring this work of grace;
Vouchsafe to think upon those pleasures past,
As fleeting worldly joys that could not last,
Or, as dim shadows of celestial pleasures,
Which are desired above all earthly treasures.
Oh how (methought) against° you thither came, *in preparation for*
Each part did seem some new delight to frame!
The house received all ornaments to grace it,
And would endure no foulness to deface it.
And walks put on their summer liveries,[4]
And all things else did hold like similes:[5]
The trees with leaves, with fruits, with flowers clad,
Embraced each other, seeming to be glad,
Turning themselves to beauteous Canopies,
To shade the bright sun from your brighter eyes;
The crystal streams with silver spangles graced,
While by the glorious sun they were embraced;
The little birds in chirping notes did sing,
To entertain both you and that sweet spring.
And *Philomela*[6] with her sundry lays,
Both you and that delightful place did praise.
Oh how me thought each plant, each flower, each tree
Set forth their beauties then to welcome thee!
The very hills right humbly did descend,
When you to tread on them did intend.
And as you set your feet, they still did rise,
Glad that they could receive so rich a prize.
The gentle winds did take delight to be
Among those woods that were so graced by thee,
And in sad murmur uttered pleasing sound,
That pleasure in that place might more abound.
The swelling banks delivered all their pride
When such a *Phoenix*[7] once they had espied.
Each arbor, bank, each seat, each stately tree,
Thought themselves honored in supporting thee.
The pretty birds would oft come to attend thee,
Yet fly away for fear they should offend thee;
The little creatures in the burrough by
Would come abroad to sport them in your eye,
Yet fearful of the bow in your fair hand,

4. Distinctive garments worn by persons in the service of great families, to indicate whose servants they were.
5. Behaved in similar fashion.
6. In myth, Philomela was raped by her brother-in-law Tereus, who also tore out her tongue; the gods transformed her into a nightingale. Here the bird's song is joyous but later mournful (line 189), associating her own woes with those of Cookeham at the women's departure.
7. Mythical bird that lived alone of its kind for five hundred years, then was consumed in flame and reborn from its own ashes; metaphorically, a person of rare excellence. "All their pride": fish (cf. *To Penshurst*, lines 31–36).

Would run away when you did make a stand.
Now let me come unto that stately tree,
Wherein such goodly prospects you did see;
That oak that did in height his fellows pass,
As much as lofty trees, low growing grass,
Much like a comely cedar straight and tall,
Whose beauteous stature far exceeded all.
How often did you visit this fair tree,
Which seeming joyful in receiving thee,
Would like a palm tree spread his arms abroad,
Desirous that you there should make abode;
Whose fair green leaves much like a comely veil,
Defended° *Phoebus* when he would assail; *defended against, resisted*
Whose pleasing boughs did yield a cool fresh air,
Joying° his happiness when you were there. *enjoying*
Where being seated, you might plainly see
Hills, vales, and woods, as if on bended knee
They had appeared, your honor to salute,
Or to prefer some strange unlooked-for suit;[8]
All interlaced with brooks and crystal springs,
A prospect fit to please the eyes of kings.
And thirteen shires appeared all in your sight,
Europe could not afford much more delight.
What was there then but gave you all content,
While you the time in meditation spent
Of their Creator's power, which there you saw,
In all his creatures held a perfect law;
And in their beauties did you plain descry° *perceive*
His beauty, wisdom, grace, love, majesty.
In these sweet woods how often did you walk,
With Christ and his Apostles there to talk;
Placing his holy Writ in some fair tree
To meditate what you therein did see.
With *Moses* you did mount his holy hill
To know his pleasure, and perform his will.[9]
With lowly *David* you did often sing
His holy hymns to Heaven's eternal King.[1]
And in sweet music did your soul delight
To sound his praises, morning, noon, and night.
With blessed *Joseph* you did often feed
Your pined brethren, when they stood in need.[2]
And that sweet Lady sprung from *Clifford's* race,
Of noble *Bedford's* blood, fair stem of grace,[3]
To honorable *Dorset* now espoused,[4]
In whose fair breast true virtue then was housed,

8. To urge some unexpected petition, as to a monarch.
9. You sought out and followed God's law, like Moses, who received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.
1. You often sang David's psalms.
2. Like Joseph, who fed the starving Israelites in Egypt, you fed the hungry.
3. Main line of the family tree. Anne Clifford, only surviving child of the seaman-adventurer George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland, and the countess, a Russell (of "Bedford's blood"). She was tutored by Samuel Daniel and her *Diary* offers interesting insights into this period.
4. Anne Clifford was married to Richard Sackville, third earl of Dorset, on February 25, 1609; the reference helps date Lanyer's poem.

Oh what delight did my weak spirits find
In those pure parts of her well framéd mind.
And yet it grieves me that I cannot be
Near unto her, whose virtues did agree
With those fair ornaments of outward beauty,
Which did enforce from all both love and duty.
Unconstant Fortune, thou art most to blame,
Who casts us down into so low a frame
Where our great friends we cannot daily see,
So great a difference is there in degree.[5]
Many are placed in those orbs of state,
Parters[6] in honor, so ordained by Fate,
Nearer in show, yet farther off in love,
In which, the lowest always are above.[7]
But whither am I carried in conceit,
My wit too weak to conster° of the great. construe
Why not? although we are but born of earth,
We may behold the heavens, despising death;
And loving heaven that is so far above,
May in the end vouchsafe us entire love.[8]
Therefore sweet memory do thou retain
Those pleasures past, which will not turn again:
Remember beauteous *Dorset's* former sports,[9]
So far from being touched by ill reports,
Wherein myself did always bear a part,
While reverend love presented my true heart.
Those recreations let me bear in mind,
Which her sweet youth and noble thoughts did find,
Whereof deprived, I evermore must grieve,
Hating blind Fortune, careless to relieve.
And you sweet Cooke-ham, whom these ladies leave,
I now must tell the grief you did conceive
At their departure, when they went away,
How everything retained a sad dismay.
Nay long before, when once an inkling came,
Methought each thing did unto sorrow frame:
The trees that were so glorious in our view,
Forsook both flowers and fruit, when once they knew
Of your depart, their very leaves did wither,
Changing their colors as they grew together.
But when they saw this had no power to stay you,
They often wept, though, speechless, could not pray you,
Letting their tears in your fair bosoms fall,
As if they said, Why will ye leave us all?
This being vain, they cast their leaves away
Hoping that pity would have made you stay:
Their frozen tops, like age's hoary hairs,

5. These lines and lines 117–25 probably exaggerate Lanyer's former familiarity with Anne Clifford.
6. Separators, i.e., the various honorific ranks "orbs of state" act to separate person from person.
7. An egalitarian sentiment playing on the Christian notion that in spiritual things—love and charity—the poor and lowly surpass the great ones.
8. I.e., we (lowly) may also love God and enjoy God's love, and hence are equal to anyone.
9. As was common, Anne Clifford is here referred to by her husband's title.

Shows their disasters, languishing in fears.
A swarthy riveled rind° all over spread, *bark*
Their dying bodies half alive, half dead.
But your occasions[1] called you so away
That nothing there had power to make you stay.
Yet did I see a noble grateful mind
Requiting each according to their kind,
Forgetting not to turn and take your leave
Of these sad creatures, powerless to receive
Your favor, when with grief you did depart,
Placing their former pleasures in your heart,
Giving great charge to noble memory
There to preserve their love continually.
But specially the love of that fair tree,
That first and last you did vouchsafe to see,
In which it pleased you oft to take the air
With noble *Dorset*, then a virgin fair,
Where many a learned book was read and scanned,
To this fair tree, taking me by the hand,
You did repeat the pleasures which had passed,
Seeming to grieve they could no longer last.
And with a chaste, yet loving kiss took leave,
Of which sweet kiss I did it soon bereave,° *take from it*
Scorning a senseless creature should possess
So rare a favor, so great happiness.
No other kiss it could receive from me,
For fear to give back what it took of thee,
So I ungrateful creature did deceive it
Of that which you in love vouchsafed to leave it.
And though it oft had given me much content,
Yet this great wrong I never could repent;
But of the happiest made it most forlorn,
To show that nothing's free from Fortune's scorne,
While all the rest with this most beauteous tree
Made their sad comfort sorrow's harmony.
The flowers that on the banks and walks did grow,
Crept in the ground, the grass did weep for woe.
The winds and waters seemed to chide together
Because you went away they knew not whither;
And those sweet brooks that ran so fair and clear,
With grief and trouble wrinkled did appear.
Those pretty birds that wonted were to sing,
Now neither sing, nor chirp, nor use their wing,
But with their tender feet on some bare spray,
Warble forth sorrow, and their own dismay.
Fair *Philomela* leaves her mournful ditty,
Drowned in deep sleep, yet can procure no pity.
Each arbor, bank, each seat, each stately tree
Looks bare and desolate now for want of thee,

1. After her husband's death (1605) Margaret Clifford chiefly resided in her dower properties in the north; Anne Clifford was married in 1609.

Turning green tresses into frosty gray,
While in cold grief they wither all away.
The sun grew weak, his beams no comfort gave,
While all green things did make the earth their grave.
Each brier, each bramble, when you went away
Caught fast your clothes, thinking to make you stay;
Delightful Echo wonted° to reply *was accustomed*
To our last words, did now for sorrow die;
The house cast off each garment that might grace it,
Putting on dust and cobwebs to deface it.
All desolation then there did appear,
When you were going whom they held so dear.
This last farewell to *Cooke-ham* here I give,
When I am dead thy name in this may live,
Wherein I have performed her noble hest° *commission*
Whose virtues lodge in my unworthy breast,
And ever shall, so long as life remains,
Tying my life to her by those rich chains.[2]

1611

2. Her virtues.

BEN JONSON
1572–1637

In 1616 Ben Jonson published his *Works*, earning howls of derision and incredulity from many who were astounded to see mere plays and poems collected under the same title the king gave to his political treatises. Many of Jonson's contemporaries shied away from publication, either because, like Donne, they wrote for small coterie audiences, or because, like Shakespeare, they wrote for theater companies which preferred not to let go of the scripts. Jonson knew and admired both Donne and Shakespeare, and more than any Jacobean belonged to both of their very different worlds, but in publishing his *Works* he broke with them and laid claim to an altogether higher literary status. He had risen from very humble beginnings to become England's unofficial poet laureate, with a pension from the king and honorary degrees from both universities. If he was not the first professional author in England, he was the first to invest that role with dignity and respectability. His published *Works*, over which he labored with painstaking and pedantic care, are designed to testify to an extraordinary feat of self-transformation.

Jonson's early life was tough and turbulent. The posthumous son of a London clergyman, he was educated at Westminster school under the great antiquarian scholar William Camden. There he developed his love of classical learning, but lacking the resources to continue his education, Jonson was forced to turn to his stepfather's trade of bricklaying, a life he "could not endure." He escaped by joining the English forces in Flanders, where, as he later boasted, he killed a man in single combat before the eyes of two armies. Back in London, his attempt to make a living as an actor and playwright almost ended in early disaster. He was imprisoned in 1597 for rated the small genre of the "country-house poem" in England. Jonson tried his hand, usually with success, at a wide range of poetic genres, including epitaph and epigram, love and funeral elegy, verse satire and verse letter, song and ode. More often than not he looked back to classical precedents. From the Roman poets Horace and Martial he derived not only generic models but an ideal vision of the artist and society against which he measured himself and the court he served. In many poems he adopted the persona of "bluff Ben," a witty, keenly perceptive, and scrupulously honest judge of men and women. The classical values Jonson most admired are enumerated in his longest epigram, *Inviting a Friend to Supper,* which describes a dinner party characterized by moderation, civility, graciousness, and pleasure that delights without enslaving—all contrasting sharply with the excess and licentiousness that marked the banquets and entertainments of imperial Rome and Stuart England. Yet the poet who produced this image of perfect moderation was notorious in his life as a drinker and a glutton with, as he puts it in *My Picture Left in Scotland,* a "mountain belly." Jonson was a man of immense appetites, which found expression in his art as well as in his life. His best works seethe with an almost uncontrollable imaginative energy and lust for abundance. Even his profound classical learning manifests this impulse. The notes and references to learned authorities which spill across the margins of his *Works* can be seen as the literary equivalent of food and drink piled high on the poet's table. Years of hardship had taught Jonson to seek his feasts in his imagination, and he could make the most mundane object the basis for flights of high fancy. As he told Drummond, he once "consumed a whole night in lying looking to his great toe, about which he had seen Tartars and Turks, Romans and Carthaginians fight in his imagination." In Drummond's view, Jonson was "oppressed with fantasy." Perhaps it was so—but Jonson's capacity for fantasy also produced a wide variety of plays, masques, and poems, in styles ranging from witty comedy to delicate lyricism.

Epitaph on S. P., a Child of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel[1]

Weep with me, all you that read
  This little story;
And know for whom a tear you shed,
  Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
  In grace and feature,
As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive
  Which owned the creature.
Years he numbered scarce thirteen
  When Fates turned cruel,
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
  The stage's jewel;[2]
And did act (what now we moan)
  Old men so duly,° *aptly*
As, sooth, the Parcae° thought him one, *Fates*
  He played so truly.
So, by error, to his fate
  They all consented;
But, viewing him since (alas, too late),
  They have repented,
And have sought (to give new birth)
  In baths[3] to steep him;
But, being so much too good for earth,
  Heaven vows to keep him.

1616

From The Forest[1]

To Penshurst[2]

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
  Of touch[3] or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
  Thou hast no lantern° whereof tales are told, *cupola*
Or stair, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
  And, these grudged at,[4] art reverenced the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,
  Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.

1. Salomon Pavy, a boy actor in the troupe known as the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, who had appeared in several of Jonson's plays; he died in 1602.
2. He had been on the stage for three seasons.
3. Perhaps such magic baths as that of Medea, which restored Jason's father to his first youth (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7).

1. In the 1616 *Works*, Jonson grouped some of his nonepigrammatic poems under the heading *The Forest*, a translation of the term *Sylvae*, meaning a poetic miscellany. *To Penshurst* and the two following poems are from that group.
2. Penshurst, in Kent, was the estate of Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle (later, earl of Leicester), a younger brother of the poet Sir Philip Sidney (see p. 909). Along with Lanyer's *The Description of Cooke-ham* (p. 1287), this poem inaugurated the small genre of English "country-house" poems, which includes Marvell's *Upon Appleton House* (p. 1704).
3. Touchstone, a fine black (and expensive) variety of basalt.
4. More pretentious houses attract envy.

Thou hast thy walks for health, as well as sport;
Thy mount, to which the dryads° do resort, *wood nymphs*
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade;
That taller tree, which of a nut was set
At his great birth where all the Muses met.[5]
There in the writhèd bark are cut the names
Of many a sylvan,° taken with his flames; *countryman*
And thence the ruddy satyrs[6] oft provoke
The lighter fauns to reach thy Lady's Oak.[7]
Thy copse° too, named of Gamage,[8] thou hast there, *little woods*
That never fails to serve thee seasoned deer
When thou wouldst feast or exercise thy friends.
The lower land, that to the river bends,
Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine,° and calves do feed; *cattle*
The middle grounds thy mares and horses breed.
Each bank doth yield thee conies;° and the tops,° *rabbits / high ground*
Fertile of wood, Ashore and Sidney's copse,
To crown thy open table, doth provide
The purpled pheasant with the speckled side;
The painted partridge lies in every field,
And for thy mess is willing to be killed.
And if the high-swollen Medway[9] fail thy dish,
Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish:
Fat agèd carps that run into thy net,
And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat,
As loath the second draught or cast to stay,
Officiously° at first themselves betray; *dutifully*
Bright eels that emulate them, and leap on land
Before the fisher, or into his hand.
Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours.
The early cherry, with the later plum,
Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come;
The blushing apricot and woolly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
And though thy walls be of the country stone,
They're reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan;
There's none that dwell about them wish them down;
But all come in, the farmer and the clown,° *peasant*
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no suit.° *request to make*
Some bring a capon, some a rural cake,
Some nuts, some apples; some that think they make
The better cheeses bring them, or else send
By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
This way to husbands, and whose baskets bear

5. Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst.
6. Satyrs and fauns were woodland spirits. Satyrs, with the body of a man and the legs (and horns) of a goat, were symbols of lechery. "Provokes": challenges to a race.
7. Named after a lady of the house who went into labor under its branches.
8. Lady Barbara (Gamage) Sidney, wife of Sir Robert.
9. The local river.

An emblem of themselves in plum or pear.
But what can this (more than express their love)
Add to thy free provisions, far above
The need of such? whose liberal board doth flow
With all that hospitality doth know;
Where comes no guest but is allowed to eat,
Without his fear, and of thy lord's own meat;
Where the same beer and bread, and selfsame wine,
That is his lordship's shall be also mine,
And I not fain to sit (as some this day
At great men's tables), and yet dine away.[1]
Here no man tells° my cups; nor, standing by, *counts*
A waiter doth my gluttony envy,
But gives me what I call, and lets me eat;
He knows below° he shall find plenty of meat. *in the servants' quarters*
Thy tables hoard not up for the next day;
Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
For fire, or lights, or livery; all is there,
As if thou then wert mine, or I reigned here:
There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay.° *wait*
That found King James when, hunting late this way
With his brave son, the Prince,[2] they saw thy fires
Shine bright on every hearth, as the desires
Of thy Penates° had been set on flame *Roman household gods*
To entertain them; or the country came
With all their zeal to warm their welcome here.
What (great I will not say, but) sudden cheer
Didst thou then make 'em! and what praise was heaped
On thy good lady then, who therein reaped
The just reward of her high housewifery;
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh,
When she was far; and not a room but dressed
As if it had expected such a guest!
These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all.
Thy lady's noble, fruitful, chaste withal.
His children thy great lord may call his own,
A fortune in this age but rarely known.
They are, and have been, taught religion; thence
Their gentler spirits have sucked innocence.
Each morn and even they are taught to pray,
With the whole household, and may, every day,
Read in their virtuous parents' noble parts
The mysteries of manners, arms, and arts.
Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion° thee *compare*
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

1616

1. Different courses might be served to different guests, depending on their social status. The lord would have the best food.

2. Prince Henry, the heir apparent, who died in November 1612.

And let the unconcernèd world alone,
  Who neither will, nor can, refreshment give.

An off'ring too for thy sad tomb I have,
  Too just a tribute to thy early hearse.
Receive these gasping numbers to thy grave,
  The last of thy unhappy mother's verse.[4]

1655 1667

4. This was not in fact Philips's last poem, but the sentiment is both true to human feeling and common in elegy. She had one other child, a year later—a daughter, Katherine, who survived her.

ANDREW MARVELL
1621–1678

Andrew Marvell's finest poems are second to none in this or any other period. He wrote less than Donne, Jonson, and Herbert did, but his range is in some ways greater, as he claimed both the private worlds of love and religion and the public worlds of political and satirical poetry and prose. His overriding concern with art, his elegant, well-crafted, limpid style, and the cool balance and reserve of some poems align him with Ben Jonson, but his paradoxes and complexities of tone, his use of dramatic monologue, and his witty, dialectical arguments associate him with Donne. Above all, he is a supremely original poet, so complex and elusive that it is often hard to know what he really thought about the subjects he treats. Many of his poems were published posthumously in 1681, some thirty years after they were written, by a woman who claimed to be his widow but was probably his housekeeper. So their date and order of composition is often in doubt, as is his authorship of some anonymous works.

The son of a Church of England clergyman, Marvell grew up in Yorkshire, attended Trinity College, Cambridge (perhaps deriving the persistant strain of Neoplatonism in his poetry from the academics known as the Cambridge Platonists), ran off to London, and converted to Roman Catholicism until his father put an end to both ventures. He returned to Cambridge, took his degree in 1639, and stayed on as a scholar until his father's death in 1641. During the years of the Civil Wars (1642–47), he traveled in France, Italy, Holland and Spain; much later he said of the Puritan "Good Old Cause" that it was "too good to have been fought for." While his earliest poems associate him with royalists, those after 1649 celebrate the Commonwealth and Cromwell, sometimes with ambivalence but recognizing divine providence in the political changes. From 1650 to 1652 he lived at Nunappleton as tutor to the twelve-year-old daughter of Thomas Fairfax, who had given over his command of the Parliamentary army to Cromwell because he was unwilling to invade Scotland. In these years of retirement and ease, Marvell probably wrote most of his love lyrics and pastorals as well as *Upon Appleton House*. Subsequently he was tutor to Cromwell's ward, William Dutton, and traveled with him on the Continent; in 1657 he joined the blind Milton, at Milton's request, in the post of Latin secretary to Cromwell's Council of State. Marvell accepted the Restoration but maintained his own independent vision and his abiding belief in religious toleration, a mixed state, and constitutional government. He helped his friend Milton avoid execution for his revolutionary polemics and helped negotiate Milton's release from a brief imprisonment. Elected a Member of Parliament in 1659 from his hometown, Hull in Yorkshire, he held that post until 1678, focusing his attention on the needs of his district; on two occasions he went on diplomatic missions—to Holland and Russia. His (necessarily anonymous) anti-royalist polemics of these years include his best-known prose work, *The Rehearsal Transprosed* (1672–73), which defends Puritan dissenters and denounces censorship with verve and wit, and several verse satires that ridicule Charles II and his ministers. He also wrote a brilliant poem of criticism and interpretation on Milton's *Paradise Lost* that was prefixed to the second edition (1674).

Many of Marvell's poems explore the human condition in terms of fundamental dichotomies that resist resolution. In religious or philosophical poems like *The Coronet* or *The Dialogue Between the Soul and Body*, the conflict is between nature and grace, or body and soul, or poetic creation and sacrifice. In love poems such as *The Definition of Love* or *To His Coy Mistress* it is often between flesh and spirit, or physical sex and platonic love, or idealizing courtship and the ravages of time. In pastorals like the Mower poems and *The Garden* the opposition is between nature and art, or the fallen and Edenic state, or violent passion and contentment. Marvell's most subtle and complex political poem, *An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, sets stable traditional order and ancient right against providential revolutionary change, and the goods and costs of retirement and peace against those of action and war. *Upon Appleton House* also opposes the attractions of various kinds of retirement to the duties of action and reformation.

Marvell's stylistic experiments and transformations of genres produce striking aesthetic effects. Many of his dramatic monologues are voiced by named, naive personas—the Mower, the Nymph complaining—who stand at some remove from the author. One of his most remarkable figures—the phrase "Like a green thought in a green shade" from *The Garden*—derives its power from the unanalyzable suggestiveness the entire poem invests in the term "green." *To His Coy Mistress,* perhaps the best known of the century's *carpe diem* poems, is voiced by a witty and urbane speaker in balanced and artful couplets, but its rapid shifts from the world of fantasy to the charnal house of reality raise questions as to whether this is a clever seduction poem or a probing of existential angst, and whether Marvell intends to endorse or critique this speaker's view of passion and sex. In *Upon Appleton House* Marvell transforms the static, mythic features of Jonson's country-house poem *To Penshurst* to create a poem of epic-like scope that incorporates history and the conflicts of contemporary society. It assimilates to the course of providential history the topographical features of the Fairfax estate, the myth of origin of the Fairfax family, the experiences of the poet-tutor on his progress around the estate, and the activities and projected future of the daughter of the house. In the poem's rich symbolism, biblical events—Eden, the first temptation, the Fall, the wilderness experience of the Israelites—find echoes in the experiences of the Fairfax family, the speaker, the history of the English Reformation, and the wanton destruction of the recent Civil Wars.

From Poems[1]

The Coronet[2]

When for the thorns with which I long, too long,
    With many a piercing wound,
    My Savior's head have crowned,

1. Marvell's lyrics were all published posthumously in 1681.

2. A floral wreath, also a garland of poems of praise.

And for the last effect,
Still keep thy sword erect;

Besides the force it has to fright
The spirits of the shady night,[8]
The same arts that did gain
A power must it maintain.[9]

1650

Upon Appleton House[1]

To My Lord Fairfax

1

Within this sober frame expect
Work of no foreign Architect,
That unto caves the quarries drew,
And forests did to pastures hew;
Who of his great design in pain
Did for a model vault his brain,[2]
Whose columns should so high be raised
To arch the brows that on them gazed.

2

Why should of all things man unruled
Such unproportioned dwellings build?
The beasts are by their dens exprest,
And birds contrive an equal[3] nest;
The low-roofed tortoises do dwell
In cases fit of tortoise-shell:
No creature loves an empty space;
Their bodies measure out their place.

3

But he, superfluously spread,
Demands more room alive than dead;

8. A sword carried with the blade upright evokes the classical tradition that underworld spirits (here, the slain king and his followers) are frightened off by raised weapons.
9. The maxim alludes to Machiavelli's advice that a kingdom won by force must for some time be maintained by force.
1. From 1651 to 1653, Marvell served as tutor to Mary Fairfax, daughter of Ann Vere and Thomas Fairfax, commander in chief of the parliamentary army throughout the civil wars. Fairfax opposed the regicide and in 1650 resigned his command rather than lead a preemptive strike against Scotland (which had declared for Charles II). Cromwell took over as Fairfax retired to his country estates in Yorkshire, especially Nunappleton, a comparatively simple brick structure on the site of a former Cistercian priory dissolved by Henry VIII along with all monasteries in 1542. The poem makes the house and its history figure the progress of the Reformation and the recent civil wars, played off against the Fall, the conflicts of the Israelites in the Wilderness, and other biblical moments. The poem is structured as a journey around the estate, intersected by a long passage of family history. It was apparently written in the summer of 1651, when Mary Fairfax was twelve.
2. Design in his brain its absurdly high vaulted ceilings. This poem invites comparison and contrast with other country-house poems and the houses, estates, and society they describe: Jonson's *To Penshurst* (p. 1399) and Lanyer's *Cooke-ham* (p. 1287).
3. I.e., a nest proportioned to their size.

And in his hollow palace goes
Where winds as he themselves may lose.
What need of all this marble crust
T' impark the wanton mote of dust,
That thinks by breadth the world t' unite
Though the first builders[4] failed in height?

4

But all things are composed here
Like Nature, orderly and near:
In which we the dimensions find
Of what more sober age and mind,
When larger sized men did stoop
To enter at a narrow loop;
As practicing, in doors so strait,
To strain themselves through Heaven's Gate.

5

And surely when the after age
Shall hither come in pilgrimage,
These sacred places to adore,
By Vere and Fairfax trod before,
Men will dispute how their extent
Within such dwarfish confines went;
And some will smile at this as well
As Romulus his bee-like cell.[5]

6

Humility alone designs
Those short but admirable lines,
By which, ungirt and unconstrained,
Things greater are in less contained.
Let other vainly strive t'immure
The circle in the quadrature![6]
These holy mathematics can
In ev'ry figure equal man.[7]

7

Yet thus the laden house does sweat,
And scarce endures the Master great:
But where he comes the swelling hall
Stirs, and the square grows spherical;[8]
More by his magnitude distressed,
Than he is by its straitness pressed;
And too officiously° it slights *overeagerly*
That in itself which him delights.

4. The proud builders of the Tower of Babel, who thought to make it reach to heaven (Genesis 11).
5. The thatched hut of the legendary founder of Rome.
6. To square the circle.
7. The circle symbolized perfection, the square variously virtue, justice, and prudence.
8. The square hall rises up into a domed cupola.

8

So honor better lowness bears,
Than that unwonted greatness wears.
Height with a certain grace does bend,
But low things clownishly ascend.
And yet what needs there here excuse,
Where ev'ry thing does answer use?
Where neatness nothing can condemn,
Nor pride invent° what to contemn? *find out*

9

A stately frontispiece of poor[9]
Adorns without the open door;
Nor less the rooms within commends
Daily new furniture of friends.
The house was built upon the place
Only as for a mark of grace;
And for an Inn to entertain
Its Lord a while, but not remain.[1]

10

Him Bishops-Hill, or Denton may,
Or Bilbrough, better hold than they;
But Nature here hath been so free
As if she said, Leave this to me.
Art would more neatly° have defaced *elegantly*
What she had laid so sweetly waste;
In fragrant gardens, shady woods,
Deep meadows, and transparent floods.

11

While with slow eyes we these survey,
And on each pleasant footstep stay,
We opportunely may relate
The progress of this house's fate.
A Nunnery first gave it birth
For Virgin Buildings oft brought forth.
And all that neighbor-ruin shows
The quarries whence this dwelling rose.

12

Near to this gloomy cloister's gates
There dwelt the blooming virgin Thwaites[2]
Fair beyond measure, and an heir
Which might deformity make fair.
And oft she spent the summer suns

9. Poor people awaiting Fairfax's alms.
1. The house is described as an inn, with an allusion to Hebrews 11.13–16 and the faithful who proclaim themselves "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" as they "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."
2. In 1518 the heiress Isabel Thwaites was to marry Thomas Fairfax's ancestor, William, but was confined by her guardian, the prioress of Nunappleton; William obtained an order for her release and then seized her by force and married her.

Discoursing with the subtle nuns.
Whence in these words one to her weaved
(As 'twere by chance) thoughts long conceived.

13

"Within this holy leisure we
Live innocently as you see.
These walls restrain the world without,
But hedge° our liberty about. *defend*
These bars inclose that wider den
Of those wild creatures, called men;
The cloister outward shuts its gates,
And, from us, locks on them the grates.

14

"Here we, in shining armor white,° *nun's habit*
Like Virgin Amazons do fight:
And our chaste lamps we hourly trim,
Lest the great Bridegroom find them dim.[3]
Our orient° breaths perfumed are *fresh*
With incense of incessant pray'r.
And holy-water of our tears
Most strangely our complexion clears:

15

"Not tears of grief; but such as those
With which calm pleasure overflows;
Or pity, when we look on you
That live without this happy vow.
How should we grieve that must be seen
Each one a Spouse, and each a Queen;
And can in Heaven hence behold
Our brighter robes and crowns of gold?

16

"When we have prayed all our beads,
Some one the holy Legend° reads; *a saint's life*
While all the rest with needles paint
The face and graces of the Saint.
But what the linen can't receive
They in their lives do interweave.
This work the Saints best represents;
That serves for Altar's ornaments.

17

"But much it to our work would add
If here your hand, your face we had.
By it we would our Lady touch;[4]

3. Matthew 25.1–13 contrasts the wise virgins who kept their lamps lit for the Bridegroom (Christ) and the foolish ones who did not and so were excluded from the marriage feast (heaven).
4. We could come close to representing the Virgin Mary in our designs, with you as model.

Yet thus she you resembles much.
Some of your features, as we sewed,
Through every Shrine should be bestowed:
And in one beauty we would take
Enough a thousand Saints to make.

18

"And (for I dare not quench the fire
That me does for your good inspire)
'Twere sacrilege a man t' admit
To holy things, for Heaven fit.
I see the angels in a crown
On you the lilies show'ring down;
And round about you glory breaks,
That something more than human speaks.

19

"All beauty, when at such a height,
Is so already consecrate.
Fairfax I know; and long ere this
Have marked the youth, and what he is.
But can he such a rival seem
For whom you Heav'n should disesteem?
Ah, no! and 'twould more honor prove
He your Devoto° were, than Love. *devotee*

20

"Here live beloved, and obeyed,
Each one your sister, each your maid.
And, if our Rule seem strictly penned,
The Rule itself to you shall bend.
Our Abbess too, now far in age,
Doth your succession near presage.
How soft the yoke on us would lie,
Might such fair hands as yours it tie!

21

"Your voice, the sweetest of the choir,
Shall draw Heav'n nearer, raise us higher:
And your example, if our head,
Will soon us to perfection lead.
Those virtues to us all so dear,
Will straight grow sanctity when here:
And that, once sprung, increase so fast
Till miracles it work at last.

22

"Nor is our Order yet so nice,° *precise*
Delight to banish as a vice.
Here pleasure piety doth meet,
One perfecting the other sweet.

So through the mortal fruit we boil
The sugar's uncorrupting oil;
And that which perished while we pull,
Is thus preserved clear and full.

23

"For such indeed are all our arts;
Still handling Nature's finest parts.
Flow'rs dress the altars; for the clothes,
The sea-born amber[5] we compose;
Balms for the grieved° we draw; and pastes *injured*
We mold, as baits for curious tastes.
What need is here of man? unless
These as sweet sins we should confess.

24

"Each night among us to your side
Appoint a fresh and virgin bride;
Whom if our Lord at midnight find,
Yet neither should be left behind.
Where you may lie as chaste in bed,
As pearls together billeted,
All night embracing arm in arm,
Like chrystal pure with cotton warm.

25

"But what is this to all the store
Of joys you see, and may make more!
Try but a while, if you be wise:
The trial neither costs, nor ties."
Now Fairfax seek her promised faith:° *promise to wed*
Religion that dispensed hath;
Which she henceforward does begin:[6]
The nun's smooth tongue has sucked her in.

26

Oft, though he knew it was in vain,
Yet would he valiantly complain:
"Is this that Sanctity so great,
An art by which you finelier cheat?
Hypocrite witches, hence avant,
Who though in prison yet enchant!
Death only can such thieves make fast,
As rob though in the dungeon cast.

27

"Were there but, when this house was made,
One stone that a just hand had laid,

5. Ambergris from the sperm whale supplies the rich perfume for our altarcloths.

6. She now begins her "religious" life in the convent.

It must have fall'n upon her head
Who first thee from thy faith misled.
And yet, how well soever meant,
With them 'twould soon grow fraudulent:
For like themselves they alter all,
And vice infects the very wall.

28

"But sure those buildings last not long,
Founded by folly, kept by wrong.
I know what fruit their gardens yield,
When they it think by night concealed.
Fly from their vices. 'Tis thy state,° *estate*
Not thee, that they would consecrate.
Fly from their ruin. How I fear
Though guiltless lest thou perish there!"

29

What should he do? He would respect
Religion, but not Right neglect;
For first Religion taught him Right,
And dazzled not but cleared his sight.
Sometimes resolved his sword he draws,
But reverenceth then the laws:
For Justice still that Courage led;
First from a judge, then soldier bred.[7]

30

Small honor would be in the storm.° *storming the priory*
The Court him grants the lawful form;
Which licensed either peace or force,
To hinder the unjust divorce.
Yet still the nuns his right debarred,
Standing upon their holy guard.
Ill-counseled women, do you know
Whom you resist, or what you do?

31

Is not this he whose offspring fierce
Shall fight through all the Universe;
And with successive valor try
France, Poland, either Germany;
Till one, as long since prophesied,
His horse through conquered Britain ride?
Yet, against Fate, his spouse they kept,
And the great race would intercept.[8]

7. His father was judge of the Common Pleas; his maternal grandfather was a heroic soldier.
8. Thomas Fairfax, son of William and Isabel Thwaites, fought in Italy and Germany; his descendants were also honored soldiers; the present Fairfax fulfilled the prophecy by his victories in the civil war.

32

Some to the breach against their foes
Their Wooden Saints in vain oppose.
Another bolder stands at push
With their old holy-water brush.
While the disjointed° Abbess threads distracted
The jingling chain-shot of her beads.
But their loud'st cannon were their lungs;
And sharpest weapons were their tongues.

33

But, waving these aside like flies,
Young Fairfax through the wall does rise.
Then th' unfrequented vault appeared,
And superstitions vainly feared.
The Relics false were set to view;
Only the jewels there were true—
But truly bright and holy Thwaites
That weeping at the altar waits.

34

But the glad youth away her bears
And to the Nuns bequeaths her tears:
Who guiltily their prize bemoan,
Like gypsies that a child had stol'n.
Thenceforth (as when th' enchantment ends
The castle vanishes or rends)
The wasting cloister with the rest
Was in one instant dispossesed.[9]

35

At the demolishing, this seat
To Fairfax fell as by escheat.[1]
And what both Nuns and Founders willed
'Tis likely better thus fulfilled:
For if the Virgin proved not theirs,
The Cloister yet remained hers;
Though many a Nun there made her vow,
'Twas no Religious House till now.

36

From that blest bed the hero came,
Whom France and Poland yet does fame;
Who, when retired here to peace,
His warlike studies could not cease;
But laid these gardens out in sport
In the just figure of a fort;

9. An allusion to Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.
1. Legally, in the absence of an heir, the property reverted to him as lord of the manor; Henry gave monastery lands to his nobles.

And with five bastions it did fence,
As aiming one for ev'ry sense.[2]

37

When in the East the morning ray
Hangs out the colors of the day,
The bee through these known alleys hums,
Beating the dian° with its drums. *reveille*
Then flow'rs their drowsy eyelids raise,
Their silken ensigns each displays,
And dries its pan[3] yet dank with dew,
And fills its flask° with odors new. *powder flask*

38

These, as their Governor goes by,
In fragrant volleys they let fly;
And to salute their Governess
Again as great a charge they press:
None for the Virgin Nymph;[4] for she
Seems with the flow'rs a flow'r to be.
And think so still! though not compare[5]
With breath so sweet, or cheek so fair.

39

Well shot ye firemen!° Oh how sweet, *shooters*
And round your equal fires do meet;
Whose shrill report no ear can tell,
But echoes to the eye and smell.
See how the flow'rs, as at Parade,
Under their Colors stand displayed:
Each Regiment in order grows,
That of the tulip, pink, and rose.

40

But when the vigilant patrol
Of stars walks round about the Pole,
Their leaves, that to the stalks are curled,
Seem to their staves the ensigns furled.
Then in some flow'r's beloved hut
Each bee as sentinel is shut;
And sleeps so too: but, if once stirred,
She runs you through, nor asks the word.° *password*

41

Oh thou,° that dear and happy isle *England*
The garden of the world ere while,
Thou Paradise of four[6] seas,

2. The garden's five (seeming) bulwarks or fortifications aim at the five senses.
3. Where the powder is kept in a musket.
4. Mary Fairfax (Maria)—Marvell's pupil at Nunappleton.
5. The imperatives are addressed to the flowers.
6. Pronounced with two syllables.

Which Heaven planted us to please,
But, to exclude the world, did guard
With wat'ry if not flaming sword;[7]
What luckless apple did we taste,
To make us mortal, and thee waste?

42

Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet Militia restore,
When gardens only had their tow'rs,
And all the garrisons were flow'rs;
When roses only arms might bear,
And men did rosy garlands wear?
Tulips, in several colors barred,
Were then the Switzers[8] of our Guard.

43

The gardener had the soldier's place,
And his more gentle forts did trace.
The nursery of all things green
Was then the only magazine.
The winter quarters were the stoves° — *hothouses*
Where he the tender plants removes.
But war all this doth overgrow;
We ordnance plant, and power sow.

44

And yet there walks one on the sod
Who, had it pleased him and God,
Might once have made our gardens spring
Fresh as his own and flourishing.
But he preferred to the Cinque Ports[9]
These five imaginary forts;
And, in those half-dry trenches, spanned° — *restrained*
Pow'r which the ocean might command.

45

For he did, with his utmost skill,
Ambition weed, but Conscience till.
Conscience, that Heaven-nursed plant,
Which most our earthly gardens want.° — *lack, need*
A prickling leaf it bears, and such
As that which shrinks at every touch;
But flow'rs eternal, and divine,
That in the crowns of saints do shine.

7. Eden after the Fall was guarded by angels with flaming swords.
8. The papal Swiss guards wore multicolored uniforms.
9. The Five Ports on the southeast coast of England, of which Fairfax was warden for a time; the "imaginary forts" are the five bastions of line 287.

46

The sight does from these bastions ply
Th' invisible Artillery;
And at proud Cawood Castle[1] seems
To point the Batt'ry of its beams,
As if it quarreled° in the seat — *found fault with*
Th' ambition of its Prelate great;
But o'er the meads below it plays,
Or innocently seems to gaze.

47

And now to the abyss I pass
Of that unfathomable grass,
Where men like grasshoppers appear,
But grasshoppers are giants[2] there:
They, in their squeaking laugh, contemn
Us as we walk more low than them:
And, from the precipices tall
Of the green spires, to us do call.

48

To see men through this meadow dive,
We wonder how they rise alive;
As, under water, none does know
Whether he fall through it or go;° — *move forward*
But as the mariners that sound
And show upon their lead the ground,[3]
They bring up flow'rs so to be seen,
And prove they've at the bottom been.

49

No scene° that turns with engines strange — *stage set*
Does oft'ner than these meadows change:
For when the sun the grass hath vexed,
The tawny mowers enter next;
Who seem like Israelites to be
Walking on foot through a green sea.
To them the grassy deeps divide
And crowd a lane to either side.[4]

50

With whistling scythe and elbow strong,
These massacre the grass along:
While one, unknowing, carves the rail,[5]
Whose yet unfeathered quills her fail.
The edge all bloody from its breast

1. Seat of the archbishop of York, two miles from Appleton House.
2. Cf. Numbers 13.33: "And there we saw the giants . . . and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."
3. Show the nature of the ground below.
4. The mowers produce a lane in the grassy meadow, like that formed when the Red Sea parted to allow the Israelites passage.
5. The corn crake (land rail), a field bird.

He draws, and does his stroke detest;
Fearing the flesh untimely mowed
To him a fate as black forebode.

51

But bloody Thestylis[6] that waits
To bring the mowing camp their cates,° *food*
Greedy as kites has trussed it up,
And forthwith means on it to sup;
When on another quick° she lights, *line*
And cries, he[7] called us Israelites;
But now, to make his saying true,[8]
Rains rain for quails, for manna dew.

52

Unhappy birds! what does it boot
To build below the grasses' root,
When lowness is unsafe as height,
And chance o'ertakes what scapeth spite?
And now your orphan parents' call
Sounds your untimely funeral.
Death-trumpets creak in such a note,
And 'tis the sourdine[9] in their throat.

53

Or° sooner hatch or higher build: *either*
The mower now commands the field;
In whose new traverse° seemeth wrought *track*
A camp of battle newly fought:
Where, as the meads with hay, the plain
Lies quilted o'er with bodies slain;
The women that with forks it fling,
Do represent the pillaging.

54

And now the careless victors play,
Dancing the triumphs of the Hay;[1]
Where every mower's wholesome heat
Smells like an Alexander's sweat,[2]
Their females fragrant as the mead
Which they in Fairy Circles tread:
When at their dance's end they kiss,
Their new-made hay not sweeter is.

6. A camp follower comically given the name of a classical shepherdess. The harvest activities allude at times to the civil war.
7. The author, at line 389. The Puritans constantly compared themselves and their revolution to the Israelites battling enemies and wandering in the wilderness en route to Canaan, the Promised Land.
8. Exodus 13–15 describes the quails and manna (left after the dew evaporated) with which the Israelites were miraculously fed after crossing the Red Sea.
9. A small pipe put into the mouth of a trumpet to produce a low sound.
1. A country dance (with a pun).
2. Plutarch wrote that Alexander the Great's sweat smelled sweet.

55

When after this 'tis piled in cocks,
Like a calm sea it shows the rocks:
We wond'ring in the river near
How boats among them safely steer.
Or, like the desert Memphis[3] sand,
Short Pyramids of hay do stand.
And such the Roman camps do rise[4]
In hills for soldiers' obsequies.

56

This Scene° again withdrawing brings *stage set*
A new and empty face of things;
A leveled space, as smooth and plain,
As cloths for Lely[5] stretched to stain.
The world when first created sure
Was such a table rase[6] and pure;
Or rather such is the toril
Ere the bulls enter at Madril.[7]

57

For to this naked equal flat,
Which Levellers[8] take pattern at,
The villagers in common° chase *common pasture*
Their cattle, which it closer rase;° *crops*
And what below the scythe increased° *grew*
Is pinched yet nearer by the beast.
Such, in the painted world, appeared,
Davenant with th' Universal Herd.[9]

58

They seem within the polished grass
A landskip drawn in looking glass;
And shrunk in the huge pasture show
As spots, so shaped, on faces do.[1]
Such fleas, ere they approach the eye,
In multiplying° glasses lie. *magnifying*
They feed so wide, so slowly move,
As Constellations do above.

59

Then, to conclude these pleasant Acts,
Denton sets ope' its cataracts;[2]

3. An ancient Egyptian city near the pyramids.
4. Hillocks that served as burial mounds; they were actually British in origin, not Roman.
5. Canvases for the Dutch portrait painter Sir Peter Lely, who came to England in 1643.
6. *Tabula rasa* (Latin): a clean or blank slate.
7. Madrid. "Toril": bull ring.
8. A radical faction (actually the Diggers or True Levellers) who sought social and economic equality. A group of Diggers began to put their tenets into practice by taking over and cultivating the land on St. George Hill, part of Fairfax's domain. See Gerrard Winstanley (p. 1739).
9. William D'Avenant, in his heroic poem *Gondibert* (2.6), describes a painting of creation, where on the sixth day "an universal herd" of animals appeared.
1. A landscape (or painted landscape) reflected in a mirror would be reduced in size.
2. Small waterfalls or dams. Denton, also a Fairfax estate (see line 73), was located on the Wharfe River thirty miles from Nunappleton.

And makes the meadow truly be
(What it but seemed before) a sea.
For, jealous of its Lord's long stay,
It tries t' invite him thus away.
The river in it self is drowned
And isles th' astonished cattle round.

60

Let others tell the Paradox,
How eels now bellow in the ox;[3]
How horses at their tails do kick,
Turned as they hang to leeches quick;[4]
How boats can over bridges sail,
And fishes do the stables scale;
How salmons trespassing are found,
And pikes are taken in the pound.° *cattle pen*

61

But I, retiring from the flood,
Take sanctuary in the wood;
And, while it lasts, my self embark
In this yet green, yet growing ark;
Where the first Carpenter[5] might best
Fit timber for his keel have pressed;° *obtained*
And where all creatures might have shares,
Although in armies, not in pairs.

62

The double wood of ancient stocks
Linked in so thick an union locks,
It like two Pedigrees[6] appears,
On one hand Fairfax, th' other Veres:
Of whom though many fell in war,
Yet more to Heaven shooting are:
And, as they Nature's cradle decked,
Will in green age her hearse expect.

63

When first the eye this forest sees
It seems indeed as Wood not Trees;
As if their neighborhood° so old *nearness*
To one great trunk them all did mold.
There the huge bulk takes place, as meant
To thrust up a Fifth Element;[7]
And stretches still so closely wedged
As if the Night within were hedged.

3. Because the ox swallowed them.
4. In popular superstition horse hairs in water become live leeches or eels.
5. Noah, who built an ark to escape a flood covering the earth (Genesis 6).
6. Genealogical trees, of the Fairfax and Vere families.
7. The so-called quintessence, beyond and superior to fire, air, water, and earth.

64

Dark all without it knits; within
It opens passable and thin;
And in as loose an order grows
As the Corinthian porticoes.[8]
The arching boughs unite between
The columns of the temple green;
And underneath the winged choirs
Echo about their tuned fires.

65

The Nightingale does here make choice
To sing the trials of her voice.
Low shrubs she sits in, and adorns
With music high the squatted thorns.
But highest oaks stoop down to hear,
And list'ning elders prick the ear.
The thorn, lest it should hurt her, draws
Within the skin its shrunken claws.

66

But I have for my music found
A sadder, yet more pleasing sound:
The stock doves,° whose fair necks are graced *turtledoves*
With nuptial rings, their ensigns chaste;
Yet always, for some cause unknown,
Sad pair, unto the elms they moan.
O why should such a couple mourn,
That in so equal flames do burn!

67

Then as I careless on the bed
Of gelid strawberries do tread,
And through the hazels thick espy
The hatching throstle's shining eye,
The heron from the ash's top
The eldest of its young lets drop,
As if it stork-like[9] did pretend
That tribute to its Lord to send.

68

But most the Hewel's° wonders are, *green woodpecker's*
Who here has the Holt-felster's° care. *woodcutter's*
He walks still upright from the root,
Meas'ring the timber with his foot;
And all the way, to keep it clean,
Doth from the bark the wood-moths glean.
He, with his beak, examines well
Which fit to stand and which to fell.

8. The most elaborate order of Greek columns.
9. The stork upon leaving a nest was believed to leave behind one of its young as a tribute to the householder.

69

The good he numbers up, and hacks;
As if he marked them with the ax.
But where he, tinkling with his beak,
Does find the hollow oak[1] to speak,
That for his building he designs,
And through the tainted side he mines.
Who could have thought the tallest Oak
Should fall by such a feeble stroke!

70

Nor would it, had the tree not fed
A Traitor-worm, within it bred.
(As first our Flesh corrupt within
Tempts impotent and bashful Sin)
And yet that Worm triumphs not long,
But serves to feed the Hewel's young;
While the oak seems to fall content,
Viewing the treason's punishment.

71

Thus I, easy Philosopher,
Among the Birds and Trees confer;
And little now to make me, wants° *lacks*
Or° of the Fowls, or of the Plants. *either*
Give me but wings as they, and I
Straight floating on the air shall fly:
Or turn me but, and you shall see
I was but an inverted tree.[2]

72

Already I begin to call
In their most learned original:
And where I language want, my signs
The bird upon the bough divines;
And more attentive there doth sit
Than if she were with lime twigs knit.
No leaf does tremble in the wind
Which I returning cannot find.

73

Out of these scattered Sibyl's Leaves[3]
Strange Prophecies my fancy weaves:
And in one history consumes,
Like Mexique paintings, all the Plumes.° *feathers*
What Rome, Greece, Palestine, ere said
I in this light Mosaic[4] read.

1. The "royal" oak was traditionally an emblem of monarchy.
2. Originally classical, this is a widely used metaphor in the Renaissance.
3. The Cumaean Sibyl, in Virgil, committed her prophecies to leaves which Aeneas fears might be scattered (*Aeneid* 6.77).
4. The pattern formed by the trembling leaves; also the books of Moses.

Thrice happy he who, not mistook,
Hath read in Nature's mystic Book.[5]

74

And see how chance's better wit
Could with a mask[6] my studies hit!
The oak-leaves me embroider all,
Between which caterpillars crawl;
And ivy, with familiar trails,
Me licks, and clasps, and curls, and hales.
Under this antic cope[7] I move
Like some great Prelate of the Grove.

75

Then, languishing with ease, I toss
On pallets swoln of velvet moss;
While the wind, cooling through the boughs,
Flatters with air my panting brows.
Thanks for my rest, ye mossy banks,
And unto you, cool Zephyrs,° thanks, *gentle west winds*
Who, as my hair, my thoughts too shed,° *part*
And winnow from the chaff my head.

76

How safe, methinks, and strong, behind
These trees have I encamped my mind;
Where Beauty, aiming at the heart,
Bends in some tree its useless° dart; *harmless*
And where the world no certain shot
Can make, or me it toucheth not.
But I on it securely play,
And gall its horsemen all the day.

77

Bind me ye Woodbines in your twines,
Curl me about ye gadding Vines,
And O so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place:
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O Brambles, chain me too,
And courteous Briars, nail me through.[8]

78

Here in the morning tie my chain,
Where the two woods have made a lane;
While, like a Guard on either side,
The trees before their Lord divide;

5. The book of the creatures, or the book of God's works.
6. Masque costume or disguise appropriate to the speaker's studies.
7. Comic ecclesiastical vestment.
8. The imagery evokes imprisonment and crucifixion.

This, like a long and equal thread,
Betwixt two Labyrinths does lead.
But, where the floods did lately drown,
There at the evening stake me down.

79

For now the waves are fall'n and dried,
And now the meadows fresher dyed;
Whose grass, with moister color dashed,
Seems as green silks but newly washed.
No Serpent new nor Crocodile
Remains behind our little Nile;[9]
Unless it self you will mistake,
Among these meads° the only snake. *meadows*

80

See in what wanton harmless folds
It ev'ry where the meadow holds;
And its yet muddy back doth lick,
Till as a crystal mirror slick;° *smooth*
Where all things gaze themselves, and doubt
If they be in it or without.
And for his shade° which therein shines, *shadow*
Narcissus like,[1] the Sun too pines.

81

Oh what a pleasure 'tis to hedge
My temples here with heavy sedge;
Abandoning my lazy side,
Stretched as a bank unto the tide;
Or to suspend my sliding foot
On th' osier's undermined root,
And in its branches tough to hang,
While at my lines the fishes twang!

82

But now away my hooks, my quills,° *floats*
And angles, idle utensils.
The young Maria walks tonight:
Hide trifling youth thy pleasures slight.
'Twere shame that such judicious eyes
Should with such toys a man surprise;
She that already is the Law
Of all her Sex, her Age's Awe.

83

See how loose Nature, in respect
To her, it self doth recollect;
And everything so whisht° and fine, *hushed*

9. Our river; serpents and crocodiles were thought to be bred by spontaneous generation from the mud of the Nile.

1. Narcissus lay beside water, staring at his reflection.

Starts forthwith to its Bonne Mine.° *good appearance*
The Sun himself, of Her aware,
Seems to descend with greater care;
And lest She see him go to bed,
In blushing clouds conceals his head.

84

So when the shadows laid asleep
From underneath these banks do creep,
And on the river as it flows
With ebon shuts° begin to close; *black shutters*
The modest halcyon[2] comes in sight,
Flying betwixt the day and night;
And such an horror calm and dumb,
Admiring Nature does benumb.

85

The viscous° air, wheresoe'r she fly, *thick*
Follows and sucks her azure dye;
The jellying stream compacts° below, *solidifies*
If it might fix her shadow so;
The stupid° fishes hang, as plain *stupefied*
As flies in crystal overta'en;
And men the silent Scene assist,° *attend*
Charmed with the Sapphire-winged Mist.[3]

86

Maria such, and so° doth hush *in like fashion*
The World, and through the Ev'ning rush.
No new-born Comet such a train
Draws through the sky, nor star new-slain.[4]
For straight those giddy rockets fail,
Which from the putrid earth exhale,[5]
But by her flames, in Heaven tried,
Nature is wholly vitrified.° *turned to glass*

87

'Tis she that to these gardens gave
That wondrous beauty which they have;
She straightness on the woods bestows;
To her the meadow sweetness owes;
Nothing could make the river be
So crystal-pure but only she;
She yet more pure, sweet, straight, and fair,
Than gardens, woods, meads, rivers are.

88

Therefore what first she on them spent,
They gratefully again present:

2. The kingfisher, who by nesting on the waves brought absolute calm to the sea.
3. The bird in its flight.
4. Meteor, or shooting star.
5. Vapors exhaled from the earth.

The meadow, carpets where to tread;
The garden, flow'rs to crown her head;
And for a glass, the limpid brook,
Where she may all her beauties look;
But, since she would not have them seen,
The wood about her draws a screen.

89

For she, to higher beauties raised,
Disdains to be for lesser praised.
She counts her beauty to converse
In all the languages as hers;
Nor yet in those her self employs
But for the Wisdom, not the Noise;
Nor yet that Wisdom would affect,
But as 'tis Heaven's Dialect.

90

Blest Nymph! that couldst so soon prevent
Those trains° by youth against thee meant: *artillery*
Tears (wat'ry shot that pierce the mind)
And sighs (Love's cannon charged with wind)
True praise (that breaks through all defense)
And feigned complying innocence;
But knowing where this ambush lay,
She scaped the safe, but roughest way.

91

This 'tis to have been from the first
In a domestic heaven nursed,
Under the discipline severe
Of Fairfax, and the starry Vere;
Where not one object can come nigh
But pure, and spotless as the eye;
And goodness doth itself entail
On females, if there want a male.[6]

92

Go now fond° sex that on your face *foolish*
Do all your useless study place,
Nor once at vice your brows dare knit
Lest the smooth forehead wrinkled sit;
Yet your own face shall at you grin,
Thorough° the black-bag° of your skin; *through/mask*
When knowledge only could have filled
And Virtue all those furrows tilled.

93

Hence she with graces more divine
Supplies beyond her sex the line;
And, like a sprig of mistletoe,

6. Maria was the only child and heir of the Fairfaxes.

On the Fairfacian Oak doth grow;
Whence, for some universal good,
The Priest shall cut the sacred bud;[7]
While her glad Parents most rejoice,
And make their Destiny their Choice.

94

Mean time ye fields, springs, bushes, flow'rs,
Where yet she leads her studious hours
(Till Fate her worthily translates,
And find a Fairfax for our Thwaites),
Employ the means you have by her,
And in your kind yourselves prefer;[8]
That, as all Virgins she precedes,
So you all Woods, Streams, Gardens, Meads.

95

For you Thessalian Tempe's[9] seat
Shall now be scorned as obsolete;
Aranjuez, as less, disdained;
The Bel-Retiro[1] as constrained;
But name not the Idalian Grove,[2]
For 'twas the seat of wanton Love;
Much less the dead's Elysian Fields,[3]
Yet nor to them your Beauty yields.

96

'Tis not, what once it was, the World,
But a rude heap together hurled;
All negligently overthrown,
Gulfs, deserts, precipices, stone.
Your lesser World[4] contains the same,
But in more decent order tame;
You Heaven's Center, Nature's Lap,
And Paradise's only Map.

97

But now the Salmon-Fishers moist
Their Leathern Boats begin to hoist;
And, like Antipodes in shoes,[5]
Have shod their heads in their canoes.
How Tortoise-like, but not so slow,
These rational Amphibii[6] go!
Let's in; for the dark Hemisphere
Does now like one of them appear.

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7. Maria is, of course, intended for marriage.
8. Make yourselves the best you can.
9. The Vale of Tempe, in Greece, was a kind of paradise.
1. Spanish palaces.
2. A favorite haunt of Aphrodite (Venus), goddess of love, on Cyprus.
3. The pleasant habitation of the good in the classical underworld.
4. Appleton House.
5. The men who dwell on the other side of the world are sometimes said to wear their shoes on their heads; these English fishermen transport their leathern boats on their heads.
6. As men, the fishermen are "rational"; and they live in two elements, land and water.