

AMORETTI

Edmund Spenser (c. 1552-1599)

[5] Sonnet LXXVIII

Lackynge my love I go from place to place,
Like a young fawne that late hath lost the hynd;
And seek each where, where last I sawe her face,
Whose ymage yet I carry fresh in my mynd.
I seeke the fields with her late footing synd;
I seek her bowre with her late presence deckt.
Yet nor in field nor bowre I her can fynd;
Yet field and bowre are full of her aspecr.

But, when myne eyes I thereunto direct,
They ydly back returne to me agayne:
And, when I hope to see theyr trew object,
I fynd my selfe but fed with fancies vayne.
Ceasse then, myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see;
And let my thoughts behold her selfe in me.

[6] Sonnet LXX

Fresh Spring, the herald of loves mighty king,
In whose cote-armour richly are displayd
All sorts of flowers, the which on earth do spring,
In goodly colours gloriously arrayd;
Goe to my love, where she is carelesse layd,
Yet in her winters bowre not well awake
Tell her the joyous time will not be staid,
Unlesse she doe him by the forelock take;

Bid her therefore her selfe soone ready make,
To wayt on Love amongst his lovely crew;
Where every one, that misseth then her make,
Shall be by him amearst with penance dew.
Make hast, therefore, sweet love,
whilst it is prime;
For none can call againe the passed time.

[7] Sonnet LXXXIX

Lyke as the Culver, on the bared bough,
Sits mourning for the absense of her mate;
And, in her songs, sends many a wishfull vow
For his returne that seemes to linger late:
So I alone, now left disconsolate,
Mourne to my selfe the absence of my love;
And wandring here and there all desolate,
Seek with my playnts to match
that mourneful dove.

Ne joy of ought that under heaven doth hove
Can comfort me, but her owne joyous sight;
Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,
In her unspotted pleasauns to delight.
Dark is my day, whyles her fayre light I mis,
And dead my life that wants such lively blis.

[8] Sonnet XXXVII

What guyle is this, that those her golden tresses
She doth attire under a net of gold;
And with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,
That which is gold, or heare, may scarce be told?
Is it that mens frayle eyes, which gaze too bold,
She may entangle in that golden snare;
And, being caught, may craftily enfold
Theyr weaker harts, which are not wel aware?
Take heed, therefore, myne eyes, how ye doe stare
Henceforth too rashly on that guilefull net,

In which, if ever ye entrapped are,
Out of her bands ye by no means shall get.
Fondnesse it were for any, being free
To covet fetters, though they golden bee.

[9] Sonnet XL

Mark when she smiles with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye lyken it;
When on each eyelid sweetly doe appeare
An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Lykest it seemeth, in my simple wit,
Unto the fayre sunshine in a somers day;
That, when a dreadfull storme away is flit,
Through the broad world doth spred his goodly
ray;

At sight whereof, each bird that sits on spray,
And every beast that to his den was fled,
Comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,
And to the light lift up theyr drouping hed.
So my storme-beaten hart likewise is cheared
With that sunshine, when cloudy looks are
cleared.

AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA

[10] O my deir Hert

Anon.

O my Deir hert, young Jesus sweat,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee in my heart
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee ever moir
With sangis sweet unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt Balulalow!

[11] O excellent Virgin Princess

François Villon (trans. D.G. Rossetti)

O excellent Virgin Princess!
Thou didst bear King Jesus,
the most excellent comforter,
Who even of this our weakness craved a share
And for our sake stooped to us from on high,
Offering to death His young life sweet and fair.
Such as He is, Our Lord, I him declare,
And in this faith I choose to live and die.