

(Numerals in brackets refer to their original place in Spenser's collection.)

[1] (LXXX)

AFTER so long a race as I have runne
Through Faery land, which those six books compile,
Give leave to rest me being half fordonne,
And gather to my selfe new breath awhile.
Then as a Steed refreshéd after toil,
Out of my prison I will breake anew:
And stoutly will that second worke assoyle,
With strong endeavour and attention due.
Till then give leave to me in pleasant mew,
To sport my muse and sing my loves sweet praise:
The contemplation of whose heavenly hue,
My spirit to an higher pitch will raise.
But let her Praises yet be lowe and meane,
Fit for the handmayd of the Faery Queene.

[2] (I)

HAPPY ye leaves, when as those lilly hands,
Which hold my life in their dead-doing might:
Shall handle you, and hold in loves soft bands,
Like captives trembling at the victors sight.
And happy lines, on which with Starry light,
Those lamping eyes will deigne sometimes to looke
And reade the sorrows of my dying Spright,
Written with teares in heart's close bleeding booke.
And happy rhimes bath'd in the Sacred brooke,
Of HELICON, whence she derivéd is,
When ye behold that Angel's blesséd looke,
My Soules long lackéd foode, my heaven's blis.
Leaves, lines, and rimes, seek her to please alone,
Whom if ye Please, I care for other none.

[3] (VII)

FAIRE Eyes, the myrrou of my mazéd heart,
What wondrous vertue is contain'd in you,
The which both life and death forth from you dart
Into the object of your mightie view?
For when ye mildly looke with lovely hew,
Then is my Soule with life and love inspired
But when ye lowre, or look on me askew,
Then doe I die, as one with lightning fired.
But since that life is more than death desired,
Looke ever lovely, as becomes you best,
That your bright beams of my weak eies admired,
May kindle living fire within my brest.
Such life should be the honor of your light,
Such death the sad ensample of your might.

[4] (XV)

YE tradefull merchants, that with weary toyle,
Doe seek most precious things to make your gaine;
And both the Indias of their treasure spoile,
What needeth you to seeke so farre in vaine?
For loe, my love doth in herselfe containe
All this worlds riches that may farre be found,
If Saphyres, loe, her eyes be Saphyres plaine,
If Rubies, loe, her lips be Rubies found:
If Pearles, her teeth be pearles both pure and round;
If Ivorie, her forehead Ivorie weene;
If Gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
If Silver, her faire hands are silver Sheene.
But that which fairest is, but few behold,
Her mind adorn'd with vertues manifold.

[5] (XVIII)

THE rolling wheele that runneth often round,
The hardest steele in tract of time doth teare:
And drizzling drops that often doe redound,
The firmest flint doth in continuance weare:
Yet cannot I, with many a dropping teare,
And long intreatie, soften her hard hart:
That she will once vouchsafe my plaint to heare,
Or looke with pittie on my painefull Smarte.
But when I plead, she bids me play my part,
And when I weepe, she sayes, Teares are but water:
And when I sigh, she sayes, I knowe the art,
And when I waile, she turnes herselfe to laughter.
So do I weepe, and waile, and plead in vaine,
Whiles she as steele and flint doth still remain.

[6] (XIX)

THE merry Cuckow, messenger of Spring,
His trumpet shrill hath thrice already sounded:
That warnes all lovers waite upon their king,
Who now is comming forth with girland Crownéd.
With noyse whereof the quire of Birds resounded
Their anthems sweet devizéd of love's praise,
That all the woods their Ecchoes back rebounded,
As if they knew the meaning of their Layes.
But 'mongst them all, which did Loves honour raise,
No word was heard of her that most it ought,
But she his precept proudly disobeyes,
And doth his idle message set at nought:
Therefore, o Love, unless she turne to thee
Ere cuckow end, let her a Rebelle be.

[7] (XXV)

HOW long shall this like dying life endure,
And know no end of her own miserie?
But waste and weare away in termes unsure,
'Twixt feare and hope depending doubtfully:
Yet better were att once to let me die,
And shew the last ensample of your pride:
Then to torment me thus with crueltie,
To prove your powre, which I too well have tride.
But yet if in your hardned brest ye hide,
A close intent at last to shew me grace:
Then all the woes and wrecks which I abide,
As meanes of blis I gladly will embrace.
And wish that more and greater they might be,
That greater meed at last may turne to me.

[8] (XXVIII)

THE Laurell leafe, which you this day doe weare,
Gives me great hope of your relenting mind:
For since it is the badge which I doe beare,
Ye bearing it doe seem to me inclined:
The Powre thereof, which of in me I find,
Let in likewise your gentle brest inspire
With sweet infusion, and put you in mind
Of that proud mayd, whom now those leaves attyre:
Proud DAPHNE scorning Phoebus lovely fire,
On the Thessalian shore from him did flee:
For which the gods in their revengefull ire
Did her transforme into a Laurell tree.
Then flie no more faire love from Phoebus chace,
But in your brest his leafe and love embrace.

[9] (XXXIV)

LIKE a Ship that through the ocean wide,
By conduct of some Starre doth make her way,
Whenas a storme hath dimm'd her trustie guide,
Out of her course doth wander far astray.
So I, whose starre, that wont with her bright ray,
Me to direct, with Cloudes is over cast,
Doe wander now in darknesse and dismay,
Through hidden perils round about me plast.
Yet hope I well, that when this storme is past
My HELICE, the lodestar of my life
Will shine againe, and look on me at last,
With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grieffe.
Till then I wander carefull comfortless,
In secret sorrow and sad pensiveness.

[10] (XXXVII)

WHAT guile is this, that those her golden tresses,
She doth attyre under a net of gold:
And with slie skill so cunningly them dresses,
That which is gold or haire, 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,
Their weaker harts, which are not well aware?
Take heede therefore, mine eyes, how ye do stare
Henceforth too rashly on that guilefull net,
In which if ever ye entrappéd are,
Out of her bands ye by no means shall get.
Fondness it were for any being free,
To covet fetters, though they golden bee.

[11] (XXXVIII)

ARION, when through tempests cruell wrack,
He forth was throwne into the greedy Seas:
Through the sweet musick which his harp did make
Allur'd a Dolphin him from death to ease.
But my rude musick, which was wont to please
Some daintie ears, cannot with any skill,
The dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,
Nor move the Dolphin from her stubborn will.
But in her pride she doth persever still,
All carelesse how my life for her decayes:
Yet with one word she can in save or spill,
To spill were pittie, but to save were praise.
Chuse rather to be prays'd for dooing good,
Then to be blam'd for spilling guiltlesse blood.

[12] (XXXIX)

SWEET smile, the daughter of the Queene of Love,
Expressing all thy mothers powerfull art:
With which she wonts to temper angry JOVE,
When all the gods he threats with thund'ring dart.
Sweet is thy vertue as thy selfe sweet art,
For when on me thou shinedst late in sadnesse,
A melting pleasance ran through every part,
And me revivéd with heart robbing gladnesse.
Whilst rapt with joy resembling heavenly madnesse,
My soul was ravisht quite as in a trance:
And feeling thence no more her sorrowes sadnesse,
Fed on the fullnesse of that chearefull glaunce,
More sweet than Nectar or Ambrosial meat,
Seem'd every bit, which thenceforth I did eate.

[13] (XL)

MARKE when she smiles with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye liken it:
When on each eyelid sweetly doe appeare

An hundred Graces as in shade to sit.
Lickest it seemeth in my simple wit
Unto the faire sunshine in Sommers day:
That when a dreadfull storme away is flit,
Through the broad world doth spread 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 their drouping hed.
So my storme-beaten hart likewise is cheeréd,
With that sunshine when cloudy lookes are cleared.

[14] (XLII)

THE Love which me so cruelly tormenteth,
So pleasing is in my extreamest paine:
That all the more my sorrow it augmenteth,
The more I love and doe embrace my bane.
Ne do I wish (for wishing were but vaine)
To be acquit fro my continuall smart:
But joy her thrall for ever to remaine,
And yield for pledge my poore captivéd hart;
The which that it from her may never start,
Let her, if please her, bind with Adamant chain:
And from all wandring loves which mote pervart,
In safe assurance strongly it restraine.
Onely let her abstaine from crueltye,
And do me not before my time to die.

[15] (XLVII)

TRUST not the treason of those smiling lookes,
Untill ye have their guilefull traines well tride;
For they are like but unto golden hookes,
That from the foolish fish their bayts doe hide:
So she with flattrng smyles weake harts doth guide
Unto her love, and tempt to their decay,
Whom being caught she kills with cruell pride,
And feeds at pleasure on the wretched pray:
Yet even whilst her bloody hands them slay,
Her eyes look lovely and upon them smile:
That they take pleasure in her cruell play,
And dying doe themselves of paine beguile.
O mightie charme which makes men love their bane,
And think they die with pleasure, live with paine.

[16] (XLIX)

FAYRE cruell, why are you so fierce and cruell?
Is it because your eyes have powre to kill?
Then know, that mercy is the mighties jewell,
And greater glory think to save, than spill.
But if it be your pleasure and proud will,
To show the powre of your imperious eyes:
Then not on him that never thought you ill,
But bend your force against your Enemies.
Let them feel th'utmost of your cruelties,
And kill with lookes, as Cockatrices do:
But him that at your footstoole humbled lies,
With mercifull regard, give mercy to.
Such mercy shall you make admyr'd to be,
So shall you live by giving life to me.

[17] (LVI)

FAIRE yee be sure, but cruell and unkind,
As is the Tygre that with greediness
Hunts after blood, when he by chance doth find
A feeble beast, doth felly him oppresse.
Fair be ye sure, but proud and pittilesse,
As is a storme, that all things doth prostrate:
Finding a tree alone all comfortless,
Beats on it strongly it to ruinate.

Fair be ye sure, but hard and obstinate,
As is a rocke amidst the raging floods:
'Gainst which a ship of succour desolate,
Doth suffer wreck both of her selfe and goods.
That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I,
Whom ye do wreck, do ruine, and destroy.

[18] (LIX)

THRISE happy she, that is so well assur'd
Unto her selfe and settled so in hart:
That neither will for better be allur'd,
Ne fear'd with worse to any chance to start:
But like a stedy ship doth strongly part
The raging waves and keepe her course aright:
Ne ought for tempest doth from it depart,
Ne ought for fayrer weather false delight.
Such self assurance need not feare the spight
Of grudging foes, ne favour seeke of friends:
But in the stay of her own steadfast might,
Neither to one herselfe nor another bends.
Most happy she that most asur'd doth rest,
But he most happy who such one loves best.

[19] (LXIII)

AFTER long stormes and tempests sad assay,
Which hardly I endured heretofore:
In dread of death and dangerous dismay,
With which my silly barke was tosséd sore:
I doe at length descry the happy shore,
In which I hope ere long for to arrive;
Fair soyle it seems from far and fraught with store
Of all that deare and daintie is alive.
Most happy he that can at last atchive
The joyous safetie of so sweet a rest:
Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive
Remembrance of all pains which him oppresst.
All pains are nothing in respect of this,
All sorrowes short that gaine eternal blis.

[20] (LXVII)

LIKE as a huntsman after weary chace,
Seeing the game from him escape away,
Sits downe to rest him in some shadie place,
With panting Hounds beguiléd of their pray:
So after long pursute and vaine assay,
When I all wearie had the chace forsooke,
The gentle Deere return'd the selfe same way,
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brooke.
There she beholding me with milder looke,
Sought not to flie, but fearlesse still did bide:
Till I in hand her yet halfe trembling tooke,
And with her owne goodwill her firmly tyde.
Strange thing me seem'd to see a beast so wild,
So goodly wonne with her owne will beguil'd.

[21] (LXX)

FRESH Spring, the herald of loves mightie King,
In whose coat-armour richly are displayd
All sorts of flowres, the which on earth do spring
In goodly colours gloriously array'd.
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 wait 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 passéd time.

[22] (LXXV)

ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washéd it away:
Againe I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tyde, and made my paines his pray.
Vain man, said she, that doost in vaine assay,
A mortall thing so to immortalize,
For I myselfe shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wipéd out likewise.
No so, (quoth I) let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by Fame:
My verse, your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Out love shall live, and later life renew.

[23] (LXXVIII)

LACKING my love I goe from place to place,
Like a young fawne that late hath lost the hind:
And seeke each where, where last I saw her face,
Whose image yet I carry fresh in mind.
I seeke the fields with her late footing syn'd,
I seeke her bowre with her late presence deck't,
Yet nor in field nor bowre I her can find:
Yet field and bowre are full of her aspect.
But when mine eyes I thereunto direct,
They idly backe returne to me againe,
And when I hope to see their true object,
I find myselfe but fed with fancies vaine.
Cease then mine eyes, to seeke herselfe to see,
And let my thoughts behold herselfe in mee.

[24] (LXXXVII)

SINCE I did leave the presence of my love,
Many long wearie dayes have I outworne:
And many nights, that slowly seem'd to move
Their sad protract from evening until morne.
For when as day the heaven doth adorne,
I wish that night the noyous day would end:
And when as night hath us of light forlorne,
I wish that day would shortly reascend.
Thus I the time with expectation spend,
And faine my grieffe with changes to beguile,
That further seemes his terme still to extend,
And maketh every minute seeme a mile.
So sorrow still doth seeme too long to last,
But joyous houres do flie away too fast.

[25] (LXXXIX)

LIKE as the Culver* on the baréd bough,
Sits mourning for the absence of her mate,
And in her songs sends many a wishfull vow,
For his return that seems to linger late.
So I alone now left, disconsolate,
Mourn to myself the absence of my love:
And wand'ring here and there all desolate,
Seeke with my Plaints to match that mournfull Dove:
Ne joy of aught that under heav'n doth hove,
Can comfort me, but her own joyous sight:
Whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,
In her unspotted pleasauns to delight.
Darke is my day, whiles her faire light I mis,
And dead my life that wants such lively blis.

*synonymous with 'dove'

Hoadly, in the edition of 1739, gives
'An Explanation of the Old Words us'd in this Book':

Assay – [to] attack
Assoile – [to] try
Ameerst – fined
Felly – bitterly
Foredonne – undone (modern usage: ruined)
Forlorne – abandon'd
Guile – deceit
Hove – [to] heave, or breath
Ire – anger
Meed – reward
Ne – nor
Noyous – hurtful
Pleasauns – Pleasure
Sheene – shining
Thrall – Slave
Weene – to think, to be of [the] opinion