

*Mary, Lady Chudleigh*

**Other titles in the *Shearsman Classics* series:**

1. Poets of Devon and Cornwall, *from Barclay to Coleridge*
2. Robert Herrick: *Selected Poems*
3. Spanish Poetry of the Golden Age, *in contemporary English translations*

**Forthcoming in the same series:**

5. William Strode: *Selected Poems*
6. Sir Thomas Wyatt: *Selected Poems*

**MARY, LADY CHUDLEIGH**

**Selected Poems**

Edited by Julie Sampson

Shearsman Books  
Exeter

Published in the United Kingdom in 2009 by  
Shearsman Books Ltd  
58 Velwell Road  
Exeter EX4 4LD

ISBN 978-1-84861-048-4  
First Edition

Selection, introduction and notes  
copyright © Julie Sampson, 2009.

The right of Julie Sampson to be identified as the author of the  
introduction and the notes to this work has been  
asserted by her in accordance with the  
Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.  
All rights reserved.

## CONTENTS

Introduction	6
<i>To the Queens Most Excellent Majesty</i>	21
On the Death of his Highness the Duke of Gloucester	22
On the Vanities of this Life	33
To Almystrea	39
To Clorissa	40
To Mr Dryden, on his excellent Translation of Virgil	43
Song	45
To Eugenia	46
The Wish	48
Elevation	48
Friendship	49
The Happy Man	50
To the Ladies	51
To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty	52
The Resolution	56
A Pindarick Ode	74
To the Learn'd and Ingenious Dr. Musgrave of Exeter	77
The Observation	80
Solitude	82
On the Death of my Honoured Mother Mrs. Lee	85
On the Death of my dear Daughter Eliza Maria Chudleigh	91
The Offering	95
The Resolve	99
One of Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead Paraphras'd	100
To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty	104
<i>from</i> The Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd	108
<i>from</i> The Ladies Defence	111
Notes on Text and Sources	123
Notes to the Poems	123
Selected Bibliography	143

## Introduction

If Mary, Lady Chudleigh, who died in 1710, had known of the exploits of her granddaughter Elizabeth, 39 years later, she might have turned in her grave. For Chudleigh's work had an imperative moral intent, particularly directed at other women, who she advocated should become skilled in the realms of self-discipline and inner containment; not for her the C18 cult of celebrity in which, by contrast, Elizabeth seemed to wish to immerse herself. Chudleigh's poetry embodied the spirit of the poetical age in its eliciting of the pastoral or retreat style, spiced with a dose of classicism and academic rigour. Elizabeth, on the other hand, apparently revelled in flaunting the very qualities her grandmother had so deplored and despised—three centuries later there is more documentation to be found about her than her more conventionally talented grandmother.

In 1749, Elizabeth—then a maid of honour to the Princess of Wales—made her first startling appearance before the C18 media circus, which duly reported how she had presented herself at Court as though “undressed for sacrifice . . . she wore a smile, some foliage rather low round her middle and a covering of the flimsiest flesh-coloured gauze”. Correspondents noted how Princess Augusta had thrown her veil over the girl after, disguised as Ipighenia, she had appeared at a court masquerade in transparent muslin and apparently topless. A few years later, after she had become the Duchess of Kingston, Elizabeth's notoriety increased when she became the first and only woman to be tried for bigamy. Infamy followed her after her death when several writers—including Thackeray—introduced her as a character in their novels.

Perhaps then Mary, Lady Chudleigh's reactions to her wayward granddaughter would have been tempered by a certain admiration, for, if nothing else, Elizabeth seems to have inherited her ancestor's commitment to women's self-determination, in the face of a patriarchal cultural climate. Interestingly, although Elizabeth was said to be too impatient to apply herself to study and education, she seems to have written an account of her own life, even mentioning her grandmother.

Elizabeth was the daughter of Lady Chudleigh's second son, Thomas. What is known directly of Mary Chudleigh's life comes from another branch of her family and other granddaughters, who were offspring of George, her eldest son and the fourth Baron. They must have been rather more conventional women than their cousin, as there is scant information to be found on their lives; one of them however did write a kind of memoir of her grandmother for the C18 biographer George Ballard, which was published in 1752, in his *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*.

Recent trends in literary criticism tend to abandon interest in a writer's life, preferring instead textual and contextual analysis; in the case of Mary Chudleigh, however, some awareness of archival records does enhance an interpretative understanding of the poems, even if the facts need to be considered with an open mind. Until recently the apparent solitariness of the poet's life—her supposedly unhappy marriage and reclusive style of living—attracted critical attention, but these assumptions are now being questioned. Some of her letters and essays do seem to confirm the isolated nature of her life; for instance, writing to her friend Elizabeth Thomas, in 1703, Chudleigh tells her that “The greatest Part of my time is spent in my Closet” and that there “I find my Books and my Thoughts to be the most agreeable Companions”. This could indicate that, as she grew older, and increasingly disabled with the rheumatic condition that eventually killed her, the poet withdrew from the vibrant social and familial circles that had sustained her, into the self-containment of an absorbing inner world; perhaps it was from this apparently solitary period that she drew material for her poems and essays. Her so-called seclusion did not in any case detract from the growing fame and acclaim that Chudleigh began to receive after the publication of her first volume, in 1701. Her letters show that she travelled to London towards the end of her life, suggesting that, until her illness, she had been an active member of society. Also, during these last years, she spent the winters in Exeter because, as she wrote to Thomas, “Ashton is healthy enough in the Summer but I cannot be here in the Winter without hazarding my life”.

Chudleigh's tendency to withdraw from the world would in any case be unsurprising for, from a very early age, she had lost a

number of loved family members. Even in a time when deaths of close family members were always to be expected, the losses she suffered do seem excessive, and perhaps provide an explanation for the often melancholic and meditative tone of her work. After the poet's own birth in 1656, the oldest, and longest-surviving child of Richard and Maria Lee, Mary (or Maria), would have been painfully aware of the death of her five-year-old brother William when she was eleven, and her baby sister Martha, when she was sixteen. Mary's other brother Richard did live to be an adult, but was twenty years her junior and died at the age of twenty-five. After the writer married and had a family, the bereavements continued. Of her own children, only two survived to adulthood: George, born 1683, and Thomas, born 1687. Her daughter, also Mary, born two years after the writer's marriage in 1674, died before she was a year old; her son Richard, born 1685, died at the age of three. The cruellest of all the losses was perhaps that of her second daughter Eliza, at the age of 9 or 10, in 1701/2, probably of smallpox; the agony of this experience is described—as is the death of the poet's own mother—in the moving poems *On the Death of my Honoured Mother, Mrs Lee*, *On the Death of my dear Daughter Eliza Maria Chudleigh* and *To the Learn'd and Ingenious Dr Musgrave of Exeter*.

Counterbalancing and perhaps relieving the traumas of these deaths, Mary Chudleigh did have extensive and complicated family networks, as well as extended social and literary contacts within which to interact and foster her writing career—first as a writer of manuscripts which could be shared and exchanged with others within a coterie or group, and in later life as a well-known and respected poet and essayist.

Both sides of the poet's family had strong West-country roots. The Sydenhams, her mother Mary's family, were active Parliamentarians and puritans from Wynford Eagle in Dorset. Several of Mary Sydenham's nine siblings gained public acclaim. Col. William Sydenham, later Governor of the Isle of Wight, fought for Parliament in the Civil War and became a member of Oliver Cromwell's council; after the Restoration he was considered to be one of the twelve most dangerous men in the kingdom. Dr Thomas Sydenham also fought for Cromwell and gained respect



and recognition for his medical works. His friends included several men who are likely to have been fruitful contacts for his niece: these included the philosopher John Locke and the scientist Richard Boyle. The most notorious event that affected the Sydenhams in Mary's mother's lifetime was however the brutal murder of her own mother (the poet's grandmother—another Mary), at her home in Wynford Eagle, by a troop of Royalists during the Civil War. Mary Chudleigh's own fated encounters with death followed closely that of her mother, who had been only twelve at the time.

Chudleigh's bond with her mother seems to have been close; such is suggested by the poem about her. A similar attachment is suggested with Richard Lee, her father, who was probably responsible for his daughter's thorough education. He apparently accompanied her on social visits; one of these was to her cousins in Dorset, just after her marriage. Richard was son of William Lee of Pinhoe, who had married Jane Michell of Topsham; the Lees were men of property with an estate at Winslade, in the parish of Clyst St George, near Exeter. Richard was elected M.P. for Barnstaple several times; he was also actively involved in local puritan circles.

With her marriage at Clyst St George, in March 1674, Mary Lee was introduced into another extended circle of cultured West-country people: the Chudleighs from Ashton, and their cousins the Cliffords from nearby Ugbrooke Park. The Chudleigh family had held Place Barton at Ashton since the C14 and were patrons and benefactors of Ashton church. George, Mary's husband, who became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet in 1691 upon the death of his father (also George), seems to have been some twenty years older than his wife. According to one source he had matriculated at Oxford in 1653, just three years before her birth and in 1656, the year she was born, was admitted into the Inner Temple. Little more is known of him or his life and until recently all the writings on the poet present him as a difficult man; however the inference that the Chudleighs' marriage was unhappy has no basis in fact, but has been assumed from her poem 'The Ladies Defence' and from the content of one or two letters.

Although his father and grandfather seem to have been esteemed men, the Chudleigh family's involvements in the

tempestuous religious and political affairs of the mid-1600s were more chequered and complicated than those of either the Lees or the Sydenhams. During the early years of the Civil War George Chudleigh, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet, (grandfather to Mary's husband) was an active Parliamentarian; his son James however (her husband's uncle), a Parliamentarian major-general, seems to have brought disgrace upon his family: he was accused of treachery after being defeated and captured in 1643, at the Battle of Stratton, where he had reputedly gone over to the Royalists. Consequently, his father also came under suspicion and that may be the reason that he changed his allegiance to the Royalists during the same year. Place, at Ashton, the Chudleigh home, where Mary moved with her family in 1688, had been garrisoned by the King, but was afterwards taken by Fairfax as a Parliamentarian outpost.

After her marriage, and especially after the move to the family seat, Mary Chudleigh was introduced into a rich literary network. Some of her sisters-in-law may have been participants in her coteries, and it is likely that the poet was surrounded by a community of culturally interested women, for several in this extended family network lived in the vicinity. These included George's sister Elizabeth Hunt, who lived at Hams, a manor-house near Chudleigh: she died in 1708, and her memorial at Ashton church suggests that she remained close to her birth family. Several people in the Chudleigh family had literary inclinations, including George's uncle, John Chudleigh, who was a poet—he wrote an 'Elegy' on Donne, published in 1635. Through his aunt (also Mary Chudleigh), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet was first cousin to Sir Thomas Clifford, High Treasurer to Charles II, member of the Cabal and 1<sup>st</sup> Baron of Ugbrooke; the many cousins of that family would have been within reach of Ashton for social and cultural occasions. Thomas Clifford had died in 1673, a year before the Chudleighs' marriage, but his large family of over 15 children were the same generation as Mary Chudleigh and the Cliffords were known for their artistic interests. Hugh Clifford, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron (born 1663), married Anne Preston who seems to have had some literary skills, for she compiled a *Pharmacopæia* in 1690.

The most famous and influential of the literary contacts that Mary developed through her Ugbrooke associations was that with

Dryden, who was a frequent visitor to the estate as a friend of Lord Clifford and who, legend has it, translated his volume of Virgil whilst seated at his favourite spot there—now called Dryden’s Seat. His translations of Virgil and other classical writers were essential reading for Mary Chudleigh, his protégée, whose poems display a sophisticated understanding and knowledge of the classics. Dryden became the most important of Chudleigh’s male supporters or patrons; others included the Platonist John Norris.

Chudleigh’s work would have circulated in manuscript form amongst local family and literary circles before the publication of the first volumes of poetry—*The Ladies Defence* (1701), which was printed anonymously, and *Poems on Several Occasions* (1703). After these publications Chudleigh’s work attracted a much wider audience, and she drew attention and acclaim from a broader network of women writers, including Elizabeth Thomas and Mary Astell. Several of her female acquaintances are embedded within the classical and pastoral pen-names used in some of the poems. Some of these names have been identified: Chudleigh employed the name *Marissa* for herself; *Corinna* was Elizabeth Thomas; *Philinda* was Chudleigh’s mother, and *Almystrea* was Mary Astell. Others remain unknown: as yet, for instance, no one has identified *Cleanthe*, *Clorissa*, *Lucinda* or *Eugenia*.

Because of the intimacy and intensity of some of the poems that are explicitly directed to individual—but secretly encoded—friends, some have written of Chudleigh as the “English Sappho”. This tribute was ascribed to her shortly soon after she died, for there is at least one dedication to her as “Sappho Anglicana”, by the Exeter scholar John Reynolds, who dedicated a map of Europe to her in 1711. At present there is no evidence of any connections she may have had with other women writing in the South-West, apart from those provided by her family and acquaintances, but it is possible that she may have known—or known of—the following writers: Elizabeth Polwhele (writer of the comedy *The Frolics*) who probably came from Cornwall or Devon; Delarivière Manley, who as a young woman lived in Devon and retired to Exeter in 1696, and Priscilla Cotton, who wrote the first female defence of women’s preaching when she was imprisoned in Exeter, in 1656.

Mary, Lady Chudleigh was one of a network of women who were feeling their way into the climate of post-Restoration engagement with gender issues: exploration (of concerns related to gender difference) and experimentation (with genres and modes of writing) were typical; the poet-essayist's proto-feminist writings have naturally brought her to the attention of recent critics. The emphasis on Chudleigh's apparent preoccupation with women's affairs is due to the popularity of her most anthologised poem 'To the Ladies' and to the privileging of her first publication, *The Ladies Defence* (which appears in several anthologies). However, the reading of Chudleigh's work that I would like to encourage goes beyond her proto-feminist issues—although it implicitly assimilates these—and stresses instead her wider philosophical ambition to endorse and encourage an integration of mind, body and spirit, which transcends any specific or narrow concern with contemporary gender issues. Hers is a much broader remit: as well as re-thinking women's affairs it takes on current religious debates and, beyond that, meditates on and questions the responsibilities of the individual self and soul in the context of a rapidly changing society. Chudleigh is quite radical in a quiet way, but it is easy to miss this and be taken in by the surface conventionality: she has been read as a conforming Tory and as a dedicated Royalist, but there are hidden agendas to be found below and beyond the smoke-screen of the outer text. Her choice of form and genre may also seem predictable. She uses forms such as the lyric, the prose meditation, or the ode then in vogue and wraps them up in the language of the pastoral or retreat mode—a literary tradition with classical origins, in which writers focused on idealised rural subjects. C17 and early C18 women writers made use of the pastoral genre as a vehicle that could express a feminised poetics. Chudleigh richly contextualises her poetry with classical references: the total effect is of predictable themes and subjects, which disguise more challenging content bubbling beneath the surface.

In 'The Resolution' for example there are frequent references to male exemplars from the C17 writing canon: they rampage through the poem; but a careful reading will then begin to take in the—at first insipid and infrequent—allusions to particular women

in history, and then notice that these female-figures are meticulously positioned in the poem so that they function as a sub-text, a hidden foregrounding beneath the conventional canonical listings of the upper text. The poem seems to profess deference towards the more famous and influential male writers, but Chudleigh's documentation of commendable characters from ancient history implicitly emphasises female, rather than male personalities. Although the list of men is more numerous, the women who appear tend to evoke a more charged and detailed, even persona-identified narrative; for example, Arria and especially Lucretia are quintessential in their goodness, courage and consummate greatness: thus the poet subverts the norm and encodes a privileging of female her-story.

Admittedly, it is tempting to skim over the dense textual allusions, yet without the assimilation of at least some of these, the richer tapestry of the poems may not be revealed. Take for example the first poem in *Poems*, 'On the Death of the Duke of Gloucester': after a lengthy preamble about the speaker's decision to leave the corrupted outer world, the poet/persona begins by establishing her idyllic Arcadian world, her "little safe Retreat", using the linguistic conventions of the retreat mode; she is in ecstasy, choosing to "my Books and Thoughts entirely live", stating her poetic commitment and a pledge to inner serenity. Her choice of ideal site is supported by her own muse: "The Muse well pleas'd, my choice approv'd". At this height of pastoral bliss the first classical reference appears, as "Sad Philomela sung her Pains". "Philomela" encodes several interrelated meanings, all of which enhance and complicate the interpretation of the surface text: "nightingale" was often used to figure specifically the woman poet; that was probably the inherent meaning of the name (embodying sweetness and reclusiveness) as used for a pseudonym by the poet Elizabeth Singer-Rowe, whose poems were published in 1696. Possibly Chudleigh's Philomela is intended to refer directly to Rowe. In Ovid's myth Philomela was raped by her sister Procne's husband Tereus and after he imprisoned her and cut out her tongue she wove her story into a tapestry; her eventual fate was to be transformed into a nightingale. Given the density and specificity of Chudleigh's later classical allusions Philomela's significance (as the first mythological reference of the

collection) carries with it the weight, darkness and transformative healing of its mythological connotations.

There is a suggestion of the persona's self-identification with Philomela in lines 92–5 and there are several meeting points between poem, poet and Philomela's story—from the enclosed forest-retreat of Philomela's prison and site of the poet's idyll, to the state of impasse brought about by intense pain. Indeed the opening poem matches, in miniature, the movement of the whole collection of poems, progressing from a statement of deep personal affect (pain, loss, hidden torments, past wrongs) to a reckoning, release of song (poetry) and acceptance, towards a mode of inner-reconciliation and affirmation. The poet-persona, as wounded Philomela, is “weaving” her “story”, as lyric-poetry, to present a completed “tapestry” to take to her “sister”, the Queen, as one of a community of like-minded female sisters.

As well as voicing the writer's concerns on the position of women in her society, the poetry encodes Chudleigh's views on the religious debates of her day. Whereas she has until recently been understood as a conforming Anglican—agreeing with the Royalist and conformist proclivities of her husband's family—one critic, Barbara Olive, has suggested that the poet's work expresses what she calls a “conforming dissent”: whilst claiming allegiance to the Protestant church, the poet's writings promote a hidden agenda, which foregrounds further reforming changes from within the texts. Olive's insights about ‘Song of the Three Children Paraphras'd’, from the perspective of its “Restoration Puritanism”, are particularly insightful. Of course as a West-country poet, with her own complicated familial relationship to the church, and the several notable events of her day, Chudleigh's tendency to be covert about her own underlying faith is understandable. (Such events would include the Popish Plot and Monmouth's Rebellion, both in the 1680s, as well as the Glorious Revolution, 1688.) It was a time when local people learned to be duplicitous in their response to frequent changes.

The writer's sources are many and varied, and match her extensive education. Although her reading of the classics was always in translation, she was—according to her granddaughter's memoir—

“addicted to reading”, and kept up with contemporary theories in philosophy, science, ancient history, natural history and archaeology; the memoir notes that her “beloved studies” were “poetry and history”. Not only familiar with many of the current writers of poetry, verse translation and drama, Chudleigh’s prose and poetry engages with Neoplatonism, as well as with recent discoveries in science, which developed in part from the Neoplatonic interest in natural theology. For example, she is familiar with the work of Thomas Burnet, whose writings instigated a flurry of discussion amongst C17 philosophers regarding the integration of theological understanding with theories of natural phenomena. Chudleigh’s fascination with natural scientific observations can be seen in such poems as ‘Solitude’ and ‘The Offering’, which contain images of the “dancing atoms” derived from Epicurean thought about the atomic structure of matter: her poems indicate her attempt to synchronise scientific, philosophical and theological understandings and to create what Ezell labels a “rational theology” or “song of science”.

The overarching theme in Mary Chudleigh’s poetry however is not indebted to any one branch of knowledge; instead it concentrates on the individual’s responsibility to learn to control conflicting emotions. She is instructing women “for whom they [the poems] are chiefly design’d”—though her comments imply that men are also in her thoughts—as to their need and ability to find interior resources of strength and resolution. In her preface to the *Poems on Several Occasions*, the poet recommends a reconciliation between inner and outer conflicts, a turning away from bodily and sensual experiences towards heightened spiritual awareness, thus moving the individual beyond pain and torment; the ultimate aim is to reach a state of complete self-sufficiency: “The way to be truly easie, to be always serene, to have our Passions under a due Government, to be wholly our own . . . is to retire into our selves, to live upon our own Stock”.

The poems reach toward religious acceptance and tolerance in the face of difference and conflict; they remark universally on how individuals can live harmoniously in a dissolute society; they advise how a woman can use her intelligence and reading as a means of self-instruction and transformation to allow her progress towards

independent resolution and moral self-government. Rather than feeling repressed, suppressed and submissive, the woman's renewed sense of ethical integrity will allow a relationship towards others that will be directed from an inner position of serenity and calm self-control. Chudleigh calls this state a "happy disposition of mind".

If this sounds familiar to C21 readers it is not surprising. Once the reader has adapted to the C17 verbal differences, several of these poems resonate with modern self-improvement books that promote the individual's need to self-determine one's life. This is because the traditions of self-governance advocated by such behavioural therapies as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) are developed from the classical Stoics—especially Epictetus, whose *Enchiridion* exemplifies methods of internalising the rules of individual self-control. Chudleigh's work is peppered with Epictetan concepts. She makes at least two explicit references to him—in the preface to *The Ladies Defence* and in 'The Resolution'. Her directives to women make use of his principles of moral corrective, emphasising both their ability to train their own emotions towards a state of inner containment and also their ambition to improve their intellectual abilities through reading. She says: "the Books I would chiefly recommend, next to the Sacred Scriptures and Devotional Discourses, are Seneca's *Morals*, together with those of Plutarch and the Philosophy of Epictetus". A dose of Mary Chudleigh's poetry may perhaps be as beneficial as reading the latest self-help manual.

Chudleigh appears to have found for herself the inner place of solace and self-containment which she recommends to her readers; in one letter to Elizabeth Thomas in 1701, she refers to a local event which could have caused her anxiety and concern: "there was seen here very lately a great circle round the Sun, which frighted the people of Exeter . . . but things of this kind never disturb me", and in a letter two years later she tells her friend that when alone in her closet "I meet with nothing to disturb me, nothing to render me uneasy".

As well as poetry Chudleigh wrote a series of meditative *Essays on Several Subjects* which were dedicated to Sophia, Electress of Hanover and published in 1710, shortly before the poet's death in December that year. The essays complemented and extended



her poetic *oeuvre* and are worth seeking out for their meditative philosophical explorations of varying states of inner awareness (including Pride, Humility and Fear) and examinations of human relationships (including Friendship, Love and Justice); they are especially useful for the detailed reading lists which the writer recommends for her female readership.

It is not known when Chudleigh wrote individual poems, but Margaret Ezell considers that she probably began writing early in her life, as this is suggested in one or two family letters. It is possible that the poems published in the present collection were written at various times; notwithstanding this, my reading of *Poems on Several Occasions* chimes with Ezell's comment that they "constitute ... a continuous philosophical exploration of human passions". Whatever the chronology of individual poems, it is likely that the poet ordered and placed them within the volume so as to trace a process. *Poems on Several Occasions* is dedicated to Queen Anne and three panegyrics structure the collection, marking its beginning, middle and end; in the centre, a place of focus, is the long and complex 'The Resolution'; finally, the emotional tone of the collection reads as though marking a progression, from a persona speaking from an objective stance, towards a climax of deeply emotive and personal poems; this concludes with a sequence expressing a state of reconciliation and resolution.

It is felicitous to finish here with an image of Mary, Lady Chudleigh seated in a rose-scented arbour at her private retreat at Place Barton, and penning her poems away from the hustle and bustle of C17 London. In her preface to the poems the poet remarks that her readers will "find a Picture of my Mind, my sentiments all laid open to their View". The pastoral idyll established at the beginning of the first poem has already been noted: how "cool was the place and quiet was the mind". At that period "Place was an outstanding house—a very extensive courtyard mansion with gatehouse and arch and large deer park of about 300 acres"; not only did it have "two large fishponds" but a "C17 formal garden", laid out in a "number of terraces". According to recent evidence, this was a rare survival. Perhaps then, this Devonian writer had a real countryside location in which to write; her poems, with their

emphasis on the delights and contentment of pastoral retreat, are not just to be read within that mode of poetic rhetoric, but also as representations of an idyllic rural situation, which we, from our C21 perspective, can recreate in our minds. The scene brings home the personal, that poetic intimacy and immediacy which can so easily be destroyed in the face of intense analysis and is a reminder that, as with contemporary C21—and indeed any—poetry, it is good to just read, imagine, contemplate.

Julie Sampson  
January 2009





## TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

MADAM,

'Tis not without awful Thoughts and a trembling Hand that these Poems are laid at your Royal Feet. The Address has too much Confidence; the Ambition is too aspiring; But to whom should a Woman unknown to the World, and who has not Merit enough to defend her from the Censure of Criticks, fly for Protection, but to Your *Majesty*? The Greatest, the Best, and the most Illustrious Person of Your Sex and Age.

That wonderful Condescension, that surprizing Humility, and admirable Sweetness of Temper, which induc'd Your *Majesty* to accept a Congratulatory Ode on Your happy Accession to the Crown, give Ground to hope that from a Goodness and Generosity boundless as Yours, I may promise my self both Pardon and Protection, who am, with the profoundest Veneration,

MADAM, Your Majesty's most Loyal, most Humble, and most Obedient Servant,

MARY CHUDLEIGH.

## On the Death of his Highness the Duke of Gloucester

1.

I'll take my Leave of Business, Noise and Care,  
And trust this stormy Sea no more:  
Condemn'd to Toil, and fed with Air,  
I've often sighing look'd towards the Shore:  
And when the boistrous Winds did cease, 5  
And all was still, and all was Peace,  
Afraid of Calms, and flatt'ring Skies,  
On the deceitful Waves I fixt my Eyes,  
And on a sudden saw the threatning Billows rise:  
Then trembling beg'd the Pow'rs Divine, 10  
Some little safe Retreat might be for ever mine:  
O give, I cry'd, where e'er you please,  
Those Gifts which Mortals prize,  
Grown fond of Privacy and Ease,  
I now the gaudy Poms of Life despise. 15  
Still let the Greedy strive with Pain,  
T'augment their shining Heaps of Clay;  
And punish'd with the Thirst of Gain,  
Their Honour lose, their Conscience stain:  
Let th'ambitious Thrones desire 20  
And still with guilty hast aspire;  
Thro' Blood and Dangers force their Way,  
And o'er the World extend their Sway,  
While I my time to nobler Uses give,  
And to my Books, and Thoughts entirely live; 25  
Those dear Delights, in which I still shall find  
Ten thousand Joys to feast my Mind,  
Joys, great as Sense can bear, from all its Dross refin'd.

2.

The Muse well pleas'd, my choice approv'd,  
And led me to the Shades she lov'd: 30  
To Shades, like those first fam'd Abodes  
Of happy Men, and rural Gods;

Where, in the World's blest Infant State,  
 When all in Friendship were combin'd  
 And all were just, and all were kind; 35  
 E're glitt'ring Show'rs, dispers'd by *Jove*,  
 And Gold were made the Price of Love,  
 The Nymphs and Swains did bless their Fate,  
 And all their mutual Joys relate,  
 Danc'd and sung, and void of Strife. 40  
 Enjoy'd all Harmless Sweets of Life;  
 While on their tuneful Reeds their Poets play'd,  
 And their chast Loves to future Times convey'd.

3.

Cool was the place, and quiet as my Mind,  
 The Sun cou'd there no Entrance find: 45  
 No ruffling Winds the Boughs did move:  
 The Waters gently crept along,  
 As with their flowry Banks in Love:  
 The Birds with soft harmonious Strains,  
 Did entertain my Ear; 50  
 Sad *Philomela* sung her Pains,  
 Express'd her Wrongs, and her Despair;  
 I listen'd to her mournful Song,  
 The charming Warbler pleas'd,  
 And I, me thought, with new Delight was seiz'd: 55  
 Her Voice with tender'st Passions fill'd my Breast,  
 And I felt Raptures not to be express'd;  
 Raptures, till that soft Hour unknown,  
 My Soul seem'd from my Body flown:  
 Vain World, said I, take, take my last adieu, 60  
 I'le to my self, and to my Muse be true,  
 And never more phantastick Forms pursue:  
 Such glorious Nothings let the Great adore,  
 Let them their airy *Juno's* court,  
 I'le be deceiv'd no more, 65  
 Nor to the Marts of Fame resort:  
 From this dear Solitude no more remove,  
 But here confine my Joy, my Hope, my Love.

## 4.

Thus were my Hours in Extasies employ'd,  
 And I the secret Sweets of Life enjoy'd: 70  
 Serene, and calm, from every Pressure free,  
 Inslav'd alone by flatt'ring Poesie:  
 But Oh! how pleasing did her Fetters prove!  
 How much did I, th' endearing Charmer Love!  
 No former Cares durst once my Soul molest, 75  
 No past Unkindness discompos'd my Breast;  
 All was forgot, as if in *Lethe's* Stream  
 I'd quench'd my Thirst, the past was all a Dream:  
 But as I pleas'd my self with this unenvy'd state,  
     Behold! a wondrous Turn of Fate! 80  
     A hollow Melancholy Sound  
     Dispers'd an awful Horror round,  
 And hideous Groans thro' all the Grove resound  
     Nature the dismal Noise did hear,  
     Nature her self did seem to fear: 85  
 The bleating Flocks lay trembling on the Plains;  
     The Brooks ran murmuring by,  
 And Echo to their Murmurs made reply:  
 The lofty Trees their verdant Honours shake;  
 The frighted Birds with hast their Boughs forsake, 90  
 And for securer Seats to distant Groves repair.  
 The much wrong'd *Philomel* durst now no more  
     Her former Injuries deplore;  
     Forgot were all her moving Strains  
     Forgot each sweet melodious Air; 95  
 The weaker Passion, Grief, surrendered to her Fear.

## 5.

A sudden Gloom its dusky Empire spread,  
 And I was seiz'd with an unusual dread:  
 Where e'er I look'd, each Object brought affright:  
 And I cou'd only mournful Accents hear, 100  
 Which from th'adjacent Hills did wound my Ear;  
 Th'adjacent Hills the gen'ral Horror share:



Amaz'd I sat, depriv'd of all Delight,  
The Muse was fled, fled ev'ry pleasing Thought,  
And in their Room were black Ideas brought, 105  
By busie Fear, and active Fancy wrought.

At length the doleful Sound drew near,  
And lo, the British Genius did appear!  
Solemn his Pace,  
Dejected were his Eyes, 110  
And from his Breast thick thronging Sighs arise:  
The Tears ran down his venerable Face,  
And he with Lamentations loud fill'd all the sacred Place.

6.

He's Dead he cry'd! the young, the much belov'd!  
From us too soon, Ah! much too soon remov'd! 115  
Snatch'd hence in his first Dawn, his Infant Bloom!  
So fell *Marcellus* by a rigorous Doom.

The Good, the Great, the Joy, the Pride of *Rome!*  
But Oh! he wants like him a *Maro* to rehearse  
His early worth in never dying Verse: 120

To sing those rising Wonders which in him were seen;  
That Morning light which did itself display,  
Presaging earnest of a glorious Day;  
His Face was Charming, and his Make Divine,  
As if in him assembl'd did combine 125

The num'rous Graces of his Royal Line:  
Such was *Ascanius*, when from flaming *Troy*  
Pious *Aeneas* led the lovely Boy,  
And such the God when to the *Tyrian* Queen  
A welcom Guest he came; 130

And in his Shape caress'd th' illustrious Dame  
And kindled in her Breast the inauspicious Flame.

7.

But this, alas! was but th' exterior part;  
For the chief Beauties were within:  
There Nature shew'd her greatest Art, 135

And did a Master-piece begin:  
 But ah! the Strokes were much too fine,  
     Too delicate to last:  
 Sweet was his Temper, generous his Mind,  
 And much beyond his Years, to Martial Arts inclin'd: 140  
 Averse to Softness, and for one so young,  
 His Sense was manly, and his Reason strong:  
 What e'er was taught him he would learn so fast  
     As if 'twas his design  
 When he to full Maturity was grown, 145  
     Th'applauding World amaz'd should find  
     What e'er was worthy to be known,  
 He with the noblest Toil had early made his own.

8.

Such, such was he, whose Loss I now lament;  
 O Heav'n! why was this matchless Blessing sent! 150  
 Why but just shewn, and then, our Grief to raise,  
 Cut off in the beginning of his Days!  
 Had you beheld th'afflicted Royal Pair  
 Stand by that Bed, where the dear Suff'rer lay  
     To his Disease a helpless Prey, 155  
 And seen them gaze on the sad doubtful Strife,  
 Between contending Death, and struggling Life,  
 Observ'd those Passions which their Souls did move,  
     Those kind Effects of tender'st Love;  
     Seen how their Joys a while did strive 160  
     To keep their fainty Hopes alive,  
     But soon alas! were forc'd to yield  
         To Grief and dire Despair,  
         The short contested Field:  
     And them in that curst Moment view'd, 165  
     When by prevailing Death subdu'd,  
 Breathless and pale, the beauteous Victim lay,  
 When his unwilling Soul was forc'd away  
     From that lov'd Body which it lately blest,  
 That Mansion worthy so divine a Guest, 170

You must have own'd, no Age could ever show  
A sadder Sight, a Scene of vaster Woe.

9.

Sorrow like theirs, what Language can express!  
Their All was lost, their only Happiness!  
The good *Ægeus* could not more be griev'd 175  
    When he the Sable Flag perceiv'd,  
Than was the Prince; but we this difference find,  
    The last was calmer, more resign'd,  
And had the stronger, more Majestick Mind:  
He knew Complaints could give him no Relief, 180  
And therefore cast a Veil upon his sullen Grief;  
Th'afflicted Princess could not thus controul  
The tender Motions of her troubled Soul:  
Unable to resist, she gave her Sorrows way,  
    And did the Dictates of her Grief obey: 185  
Maternal Kindness still does preference claim,  
And always burns with a more ardent Flame:  
But sure no Heart was ever thus opprest,  
    The Load is much too great to bear;  
In sad Complaints are all her Minutes spent, 190  
    And she lives only to lament:  
All soft Delights are Strangers to her Breast:  
His unexpected Fate does all her Thoughts ingross,  
And she speaks nothing but her mighty Loss.  
So mourn'd *Andromache* when she beheld 195  
    *Astyanax* expos'd to lawless Pow'r,  
    Precipitated from a lofty Tow'r:  
Depriv'd of Life the Royal Youth remain'd  
And with the richest *Trojan* Blood the Pavement stain'd:  
Speechless she gaz'd, and by her Grief impell'd, 200  
Fearless amidst the *Grecian* Troops she run,  
And to her panting Bosom clasp'd her mangl'd Son.