

Thomas Carew

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Collected Poems

Thomas Carew

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The Spring

Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or casts an icy cream
Upon the silver Lake or Crystal stream:
But the warm Sun thaws the benumbed Earth,
And makes it tender, gives a sacred birth
To the dead Swallow; wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy Cuckoo and the Humble-bee;
Now do a choir of chirping Minstrels bring
In triumph to the world, the youthful Spring.
The Valleys, hills, and woods in rich array,
Welcome the coming of the long'd for May.
Now all things smile; only my *Love* doth lour:
Nor hath the scalding Noonday Sun the power,
To melt that marble ice, which still doth hold
Her heart congeal'd, and makes her pity cold.
The Ox, which lately did for shelter fly
Into the stall, doth now securely lie
In open fields; and love no more is made
By the fire side; but in the cooler shade
Amyntas now doth with his *Cloris* sleep
Under a Sycamore, and all things keep
Time with the season, only she doth carry
June in her eyes, in her heart *January*.

To *A. L.*
Persuasions to love

Think not, 'cause men flatt'ring say
Y'are fresh as April sweet as May,
Bright as is the morning star,
That you are so, or though you are
Be not therefore proud, and deem
All men unworthy your esteem.
For being so, you lose the pleasure
Of being fair, since that rich treasure
Of rare beauty, and sweet feature
Was bestow'd on you by nature
To be enjoy'd, and 'twere a sin
There to be scarce, where she hath bin
So prodigal of her best graces;
Thus common beauties, and mean faces
Shall have more pastime, and enjoy
The sport you lose by being coy.
Did the thing for which I sue
Only concern my self, not you,
Were men so fram'd as they alone
Reap'd all the pleasure, women none,
Then had you reason to be scant;
But 'twere a madness not to grant
That which affords (if you consent)
To you the giver, more content
Than me, the beggar; Oh then be
Kind to your self if not to me;
Starve not your self, because you may
Thereby make me pine away;
Nor let brittle beauty make
You your wiser thoughts forsake;
For that lovely face will fail,

Beauty's sweet, but beauty's frail;
'Tis sooner past, 'tis sooner done
Than Summer's rain, or Winter's sun:
Most fleeting when it is most dear,
'Tis gone while we but say 'tis here.
These curious locks, so aptly twin'd,
Whose every hair a soul doth bind,
Will change their abourn hue, and grow
White, and cold as winter's snow.
That eye, which now is *Cupid's* nest
Will prove his grave, and all the rest
Will follow; in the cheek, chin, nose
Nor lily shall be found, nor rose.
And what will then become of all
Those, whom now you servants call?
Like swallows when their summer's done,
They'll fly and seek some warmer Sun.
Then wisely choose one to your friend,
Whose love may, when your beauties end,
Remain still firm: be provident
And think before the summer's spent,
Of following winter; like the Ant,
In plenty hoard for time of scant.
Cull out amongst the multitude
Of lovers, that seek to intrude
Into your favour, one that may
Love for an age, not for a day.
One that will quench your youthful fires,
And feed in age your hot desires.
For when the storms of time have mov'd
Waves on that cheek which was lov'd,
When a fair Lady's face is pin'd,
And yellow spread, where once red shin'd;
When beauty youth, and all sweets leave her,
Love may return, but lover never.

And old folks say there are no pains
Like itch of love in agèd veins.
Oh love me then, and now begin it,
Let us not lose this present minute:
For time and age will work that wrack
Which time or age shall ne'er call back.
The snake each year fresh skin resumes,
And eagles change their agèd plumes;
The faded Rose each spring, receives
A fresh red tincture on her leaves:
But if your beauties once decay,
You never know a second *May*.
Oh, then be wise, and whilst your season
Affords you days for sport do reason;
Spend not in vain your life's short hour,
But crop in time your beauty's flower:
Which will away, and doth together
Both bud, and fade, both blow and wither.

Lips and Eyes

In *Celia's* face a question did arise,
Which were more beautiful, her lips or eyes?
We (said the eyes,) send forth those pointed darts
Which pierce the hardest adamantine hearts.
From us (replied the lips,) proceed those blisses
Which lovers reap by kind words and sweet kisses.
Then wept the eyes, and from their springs did pour
Of liquid oriental pearl a shower.
Whereat the lips mov'd with delight and pleasure,
Through a sweet smile unlock'd their pearly treasure
And bade love judge, whether did add more grace:
Weeping or smiling pearls to *Celia's* face.

A divine Mistress

In nature's pieces still I see
Some error that might mended be;
Something my wish could still remove,
Alter or add; but my fair love
Was fram'd by hands far more divine;
For she hath every beauteous line:
Yet I had been far happier,
Had Nature, that made me, made her;
Then likeness, might (that love creates)
Have made her love what now she hates:
Yet, I confess, I cannot spare
From her just shape the smallest hair;
Nor need I beg from all the store
Of heaven for her one beauty more:
She hath too much divinity for me,
You Gods, teach her some more humanity.

SONG

A Beautiful Mistress

If when the sun at noon displays
His brighter rays,
Thou but appear,
He then, all pale with shame and fear,
Quencheth his light,
Hides his dark brow, flies from thy sight,
And grows more dim
Compar'd to thee, than stars to him.
If thou but show thy face again,
When darkness doth at midnight reign,

The darkness flies, and light is hurl'd
Round about the silent world:
So as alike thou driv'st away
Both light and darkness, night and day.

A cruel Mistress

W^e read of Kings and Gods that kindly took,
A pitcher fill'd with water from the brook;
But I have daily tender'd without thanks
Rivers of tears that overflow their banks.
A slaughter'd bull will appease angry *Jove*,
A horse the Sun, a Lamb the God of love,
But she disdains the spotless sacrifice
Of a pure heart that at her altar lies.
Vesta is not displeas'd, if her chaste urn
Do with repaired fuel ever burn;
But my Saint frowns though to her honour'd name
I consecrate a never-dying flame.
Th' Assyrian king did none i' th' furnace throw
But those that to his image did not bow;
With bended knees I daily worship her,
Yet she consumes her own idolater.
Of such a Goddess no times leave record,
That burnt the temple where she was ador'd.

SONG

Murdering Beauty

I'll gaze no more on her bewitching face,
Since ruin harbours there in every place:
For my enchanted soul alike she drowns
With calms and tempests of her smiles and frowns.
I'll love no more those cruel eyes of hers,
Which pleas'd or anger'd still are murderers:
For if she dart (like lightning) through the air
Her beams of wrath, she kills me with despair.
If she behold me with a pleasing eye,
I surfeit with excess of joy, and die.

My mistress commanding me to return her letters

So grieves th' adventurous Merchant, when he throws
All the long toil'd for treasure his ship stows
Into the angry main, to save from wrack
Himself and men, as I grieve to give back
These letters, yet so powerful is your sway,
As if you bid me die I must obey.
Go then blest papers, you shall kiss those hands
That gave you freedom, but hold me in bands,
Which with a touch did give you life, but I
Because I may not touch those hands, must die.
Me thinks, as if they knew they should be sent
Home to their native soil from banishment,
I see them smile, like dying Saints, that know
They are to leave the earth, and tow'rd heaven go.

When you return, pray tell your sovereign
And mine, I gave you courteous entertain;
Each line receiv'd a tear, and then a kiss,
First bath'd in that, it 'scaped unscorch'd from this:
I kiss'd it because your hand had been there
But, 'cause it was not now, I shed a tear.
Tell her no length of time, nor change of air,
No cruelty, disdain, absence, despair;
No nor her steadfast constancy, can deter
My vassal heart from ever hon'ring her.
Though these be powerful arguments to prove
I love in vain; yet I must ever love;
Say, if she frown when you that word rehearse,
Service in prose, is oft call'd love in verse:
Then pray her, since I send back on my part
Her papers, she will send me back my heart.
If she refuse, warn her to come before
The God of Love, whom thus I will implore.
Trav'ling thy country's road (*great God*) I spied
By chance this Lady, and walk'd by her side
From place, to place, fearing no violence,
For I was well arm'd, and had made defence
In former fights, 'gainst fiercer foes, than she
Did at our first encounter seem to be.
But, going farther, every step reveal'd
Some hidden weapon, till that time conceal'd;
Seeing those outward arms, I did begin
To fear, some greater strength was lodg'd within,
Looking into her mind, I might survey
An host of beauties that in ambush lay;
And won the day before they fought the field;
For I unable to resist, did yield.
But the insulting tyrant so destroys
My conquer'd mind, my ease, my peace, my joys
Breaks my sweet sleeps, invades my harmless rest,

Robs me of all the treasure of my breast,
Spares not my heart, nor yet a greater wrong;
For having stol'n my heart, she binds my tongue.
But at the last her melting eyes unseal'd,
My lips, enlarg'd, my tongue, then I reveal'd
To her own ears the story of my harms,
Wrought by her virtues and her beauty's charms;
Now hear (*just judge*) an act of savageness,
When I complain, in hope to find redress,
She bends her angry brow, and from her eye,
Shoots thousand darts, I then well hop'd to die,
But in such sovereign balm, love dips his shot,
That though they wound a heart, they kill it not;
She saw the blood gush forth from many a wound,
Yet fled, and left me bleeding on the ground,
Nor sought my cure, nor saw me since: 'tis true,
Absence, and time, (two cunning Leeches) drew
The flesh together, yet sure though the skin
Be clos'd without, the wound festers within.
Thus hath this cruel Lady, us'd a true
Servant, and subject to her self, and you,
Nor know I (great Love,) if my life be sent
To show thy mercy or my punishment;
Since by the only Magic of thy Art
A lover still may live that wants his heart.
If this indictment fright her, so as she
Seem willing to return my heart to me,
But cannot find it, (for perhaps it may;
'Mongst other trifling hearts, be out oth' way.)
If she repent and would make me amends
Bid her but send me hers, and we are friends.