Other titles in the Shearsman Classics series:

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

of

William Strode

Selected & edited by
Tony Frazer

Shearsman Books
Exeter
Contents

Introduction 8

Lyrics
Song: “When Orpheus sweetly did complayne” 11
Song: In commendation of Musick 12
Song: “Keepe on your maske” 13
Another version 14
Song: “O when will Cupid shew such arte” 15
Song: On a Sigh 16
Song: On the Baths 18
Song: “As I out of a casement sent” 20
Song: On a Friend’s Absence 22
Song: Melancholly 23
Song: Opposite to Melancholly 24

A Translation of the Nightingale out of Strada 25

Miscellaneous Poems
On Westwell Downes 28
On a great hollow Tree 30
On Fayrford Windowes 33
On a Gentlewoman’s blistered lipp 36
To a Gentlewoman for a Friend 37
For a Gentleman, who, kissing his Friend at his departure, left a sign of blood on her 39
On a Dissembler 40
On Gray Eyes 41
On a Gentlewoman’s Watch that wanted a key 43
A Watch sent home to Mrs. Eliz. King 44
On a watch made by a Blacksmith 44
On a Gentlewoman that sung and play’d upon a Lute 45
Upon the blush of a faire Ladie 45
On a Gentlewoman walking in the Snowe 46
On Chloris standing by the Fire 46
To a Valentine 47
A Superscription on Sir Philip Sidney’s Arcadia 47
On the Picture of two Dolphins in a Fountayne 48
Sonnet: “My love and I for kisses play’d” 48
To his Mistress “ In your sterne beauty I can see” 49
A Lover to his Mistress 49
A Riddle: on a Kiss 50
On a Gentlewoman that had had the small poxe 50
On Jealousy 51

Religious Poems
Of Death & Resurrection 52
On the Bible 53
On a Register for the Bible 54
Anthem for Good Fryday 54
An Antheme 55
Justification 55
On the Life of Man 56

Elegies
On the death of of Mrs. Mary Neudham 56
On the Death of Mistress Mary Prideaux 57
On the same M. M. P. 58
Consolatorium, Ad Parentes 59
Her Epitaph 60
On the Death of Sir Tho. Peltham 62
On the Death of a Twin 63
On the yong Baronett Portman 64
On the Death of Dr. Lancton 66
On the Death of Sir Thomas Lea 68
An Epitaph on Sr. John Walter 70
On the death of Sir Rowland Cotton . . . 71
To the Right Honourable the Lady Penelope,
    Dowager of the late Viscount Bayning 72
On the death of the Right Hon. the Lord Viscount Bayning 73
On the Death of the Ladie Caesar 75
An Epitaph on Mr. Fishborne 77
On the Death of Mr. James Van Otton 80
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Sir Thomas Savill dying of the small pox</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epitaph on Mr. Bridgman</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistles</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To his Sister</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Year’s Gift</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a Friend</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Letter</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Penne, Inke, and Paper to a distressed Friend</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks for a Welcome</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humorous Poems</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Paralell between Bowling and Preferment</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a good legg and foot</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On John Dawson (Butler of C.C.)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacke-on-both-sides</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chimney-Sweeper’s Song</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon the Sheriffs Beere</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a butcher Marrying a Tanner’s Daughter</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Devonshire Song</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love compared to a game of tables</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epitaphes on the Monument of Sir William Strode</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poems of Uncertain Attribution</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sonnet: “Mourne, mourne, yee lovers”</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sonnet: “Sing aloud, harmonious sphears”</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On his Mistresse</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upon a Gentlewoman’s Entertainment of Him</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The casual reader’s first response on seeing a volume of William Strode’s poems is more than likely to be: “Who’s that?”, for William Strode is an almost forgotten figure, except with those readers who pay careful attention to compendious anthologies of Jacobean and Caroline verse, where Strode is often represented by a poem or two. Anyone who had been interested by those few anthologised gems would have drawn a blank when looking for more of the poet’s work, because there has only ever been a single volume of his work, edited and published by the indefatigable Bertram Dobell, in London in 1907. I found a copy of this through the antiquarian book trade and it was instructive that the copy—at that point 99 years old—still had uncut pages. Having read the book, I came to the conclusion that Strode little deserved his oblivion. He is not a major poet, but nor should he be ignored. At a time when England was blessed with a large number of first-rank poets, a secondary figure such as Strode is easily forgotten, obscured by the shade cast by mightier figures. For readers in the West Country, in particular, Strode, a native of Devon, should be part of their heritage—although it must be admitted that his work has more to do with Oxford and London than it has with Devon, with the exception of the dialect poem, ‘A Devonshire Song’.

Strode did not go quite unpublished, however: his play, *The Floating Island*, was printed in London in 1655, but seems to have had little impact. The play itself, written for the visit of Charles II to Oxford, also appears to have had minimal impact in performance—although some recorded comments from its single performance suggest that it was not regarded as an exciting occasion. Strode’s poems, however, turned up frequently in commonplace books of the era and in printed miscellanies—indications that his work was held in some esteem by his contemporaries.

William Strode was born in the county of Devon in either 1600 or 1601, in the parish of Plympton St. Mary—then a separate
township, but today subsumed within the boundaries of Plympton, itself now a township on the very edge of greater Plymouth. His father was one Philip Strode, and William appears to have been the only son, although the address of one of his poems indicates that he had at least one sister. A successful and diligent scholar, Strode went up to Christ Church College, Oxford from Westminster School, probably in 1617, and there took his first degree in 1621. He became Master of Arts in 1624, after which he entered the Church, becoming a preacher with the University. In 1629 he was awarded the post of Proctor and also Public Orator, the latter no doubt a tribute to his verbal powers. In 1631, he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. It seems he was to stay in Oxford for the rest of his days. From 1628 to 1635 he also served as Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford, a post which would have brought him additional income, and in 1633 he became Rector of East Bradenham in Norfolk, although it would appear that he did not leave Oxford—he no doubt appointed a Chaplain to manage the living. From 1639 to 1642 he was Vicar of Badley, Northants, no doubt in a similar manner. Strode was married and had one daughter, but was to die in 1645 in Oxford, and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral.

Such are the bare bones of Strode’s life, and precious little more is to be had. We do have his poems, however. I have selected almost all of his lyric poems (leaving out only the minor ‘Posies’), as well as a large number of his elegies, although I elected against a more thorough survey of the latter, given the somewhat repetitive nature of these tribute poems. No selection has been made from The Floating Island, which seems to belong in another kind of book entirely.
Song

When Orpheus sweetly did complayne
Upon his lute with heavy strayne
How his Eurydice was slayne,
   The trees to heare
   Obtayn’d an eare,
And after left it off againe.

At every stroake and every stay
The boughs kept time, and nodding lay,
And listened bending all one way:
   The aspen tree
   As well as hee
Began to shake and learn’d to play.

If wood could speak, a tree might heare,
If wood could sound true greife so neare
A tree might dropp an amber teare:
   If wood so well
   Could ring a knell
The Cipres might condole the beare.

The standing nobles of the grove
Hearing dead wood so speak and move
The fatall axe begane to love:
   They envyde death
   That gave such breath
As men alive doe saints above.
**SONG: IN COMMENDATION OF MUSICK**

When whispering straynes doe softly steale
With creeping passion through the hart,
And when at every touch wee feele
Our pulses beate and beare a part;
  When thredds can make
  A hartstring shake
  Philosophie
  Can scarce deny
The soule consists of harmony.

When unto heavenly joy wee feyne
Whatere the soule affecteth most,
Which onely thus wee can explayne
By musick of the winged host,
  Whose layes wee think
  Make starres to winke,
  Philosophie
  Can scarce deny
Our soules consist of harmony.

O lull mee, lull mee, charming ayre,
My senses rock with wonder sweete;
Like snowe on wooll thy fallings are,
Soft, like a spiritts, are thy feete:
  Greife who need feare
  That hath an eare?
  Down lett him lye
  And slumbring dye,
And change his soule for harmony.
Song

Keepe on your maske, and hide your eye,
For with beholding you I dye:
Your fatall beauty, Gorgon-like,
Dead with astonishment will strike;
Your piercing eyes if them I see
Are worse than basilisks to mee.

Shutt from mine eyes those hills of snowe,
Their melting valleys doe not shewe;
Their azure paths lead to dispaire,
O vex me not, forbeare, forbeare;
For while I thus in torments dwell
The sight of heaven is worse than hell.

Your dayntie voice and warbling breath
Sound like a sentence pass’d for death;
Your dangling tresses are become
Like instruments of finall doome.
O if an Angell torture so,
When life is done where shall I goe?
Another version, to his Mistresse

Keepe on your mask and hide your eye
For in beholding you I dye.
Your fatall beauty Gorgon-like
Dead with astonishment doth strike.
Your piercing eyes that now I see
Are worse than Basilisks to me.
Shut from mine eyes those hills of snow,
Their melting vally do not shew:
Those azure paths lead to despaire,
O vex me not, forbear, forbear;
For while I thus in torments dwell
The sight of Heaven is worse than Hell.
In those faire cheeks two pits doe lye
To bury those slaine by your eye:
So this at length doth comfort me
That fairely buried I shall be:
My grave with Roses, Lillies, spread,
Methinks tis life for to be dead:
Come then and kill me with your eye,
For if you let me live I dye.

When I perceive your lips againe
Recover those your eyes have slaine,
With kisses that (like balsome pure)
Deep wounds as soon as made doe cure,
Methinks tis sicknesse to be sound,
And there’s no health to such a wound.
When in your bosome I behold
Two hills of snow yet never cold,
Which lovers, whom your beauty kills,
Revive by climing those your hills,
Methinks there’s life in such a death
That gives a hope of sweeter breath:
Then since one death prevails not where
So many antidotes are nere,
And your bright eyes doe but in vain
Kill those who live as fast as slaine;
That I no more such death survive
Your way’s to bury me alive
In place unknown, and so that I
Being dead may live and living dye.

**SONG**

O when will Cupid shew such arte
To strike two lovers with one darte?
I’m ice to him or hee to mee;
Two hearts alike there seldome bee.

If thrice ten thousand meete together
How scarce one face is like another!
If scarce two faces can agree
Two hearts alike there seldome bee.
SONG: ON A SIGH

O tell mee, tell, thou god of wynde,
In all thy cavernes canst thou finde
A vapour, fume, a gale or blast
Like to a sigh which love doth cast?
Can any whirlwynde in thy vault
Plough upp earth’s breast with like assault?
    Goe wynde and blow thou where thou please,
    Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.

If thou be wynde, O then refrayne
From wracking whiles I thus complayne:
If thou be wynde then light thou art,
Yet O! how heavy is my hart!
If thou be wynde then purge thy way,
Lett cares that clogge thy force obey.
    Goe wynde and blowe thou where thou please,
    Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.

Those blasts of sighing raised are
By influence of my bright starre;
Their Æolus from whom they came
Is love that straynes to blow his flame,
The powerfull sway of whose behest
Makes hearth and bellowes of my breast.
    Goe wynde and blow then where thou please,
    Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.

Know ’tis a wynde that longs to blowe
Upon my Saint wherere shee go,
And stealing through her fanne it beares
Soft errands to her lippes and eares,
And then perhapps a passage makes
Downe to her heart when breath shee takes.
Goe wynde and blowe then where thou please,
Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.

Yes, gentle gale, trye that againe,
O doe not passe from mee in vayne,
Goe mingle with her soul divine
Ingendring spiritts like to mine:
Yea take my soule along with thee
To worke a stronger sympathie:
    Go wynde and blowe thou where thou please,
    Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.

My soule, before my grosser part,
Thus to her heaven should departe,
And where the body cannott lye
On wings of wynde my soule shall flye:
If not one soul our bodies joyne,
One body shall our soules confine,
    Go wynde and blow thou where thou please,
    Yea breathles leave mee to my ease.
**Song: On the Baths**

What Angel stirrs this happy Well,  
Some Muse from thence come shew’t me,  
One of those naked Graces tell  
That Angels are for beauty:  
The Lame themselves that enter here  
Come Angels out againe,  
And Bodies turne to Soules all cleere,  
All made for joy, noe payne.  

Heate never was so sweetely mett  
With moist as in this shower:  
Old men are borne anew by swett  
Of its restoring pow’r:  
When crippl’d joynts we suppl’d see,  
And second lives new come,  
Who can deny this Font to be  
The Bodies Christendome?  

One Bath so fiery is you’l thinke  
The Water is all Spirit,  
Whose quick’ning streames are like the drink  
Whereby we Life inheritt:  
The second Poole of middle straine  
Can wive Virginity,  
Tempting the blood to such a vayne  
One sexe is He and She.  

The third where horses plunge may bring  
A Pegasus to reare us,  
And call for pens from Bladud’s wing  
For legging those that beare us.  
Why should Physitians thither fly  
Where Waters med’cines be,
Physitians come to cure thereby,
And are more cured than we