

1609

## **THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM**

**William Shakespeare**

*Shakespeare, William (1564-1616) - English dramatist and poet widely regarded as the greatest and most influential writer in all of world literature. The richness of Shakespeare's genius transcends time; his keen observation and psychological insight are, to this day, without rival. Passionate Pilgrim (1609) - A volume of twenty poems, only a few of which are now thought to be legitimate Shakespearean works.*

## THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

1 When my love swears that she is made of truth, I do believe her, though I know she lies, That she might think me some untutored youth, Unskilful in the world's false forgeries.

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young, Although I know my years be past the best, I smiling credit her false-speaking tongue, Outfacing faults in love with love's ill rest.

But wherefore says my love that she is young? And wherefore say not I that I am old? O, love's best habit's in a soothing tongue, And age in love loves not to have years told.

Therefore I'll lie with love, and love with me, Since that our faults in love thus smothered be.

2 Two loves I have, of comfort and despair, That like two spirits do suggest me still; My better angle is a man right fair, My worser spirit a woman coloured ill.

To win me soon to hell, my female evil Tempteth my better angel from my side, And would corrupt my saint to be a devil, Wooing his purity with her fair pride.

And whether that my angle be turned fiend, Suspect I may, yet not directly tell; For being both to me, both to each friend, I guess one angel in another's hell.

The truth I shall not know, but live in doubt, Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

3 Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye, 'Gainst whom the world could not hold argument, Persuade my heart to this false perjury? Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.

A woman I forswore; but I will prove, Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee: My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love; Thy grace being gained cures all disgrace in me.

My vow was breath, and breath a vapour is; Then, thou fair sun, that on this earth doth shine, Exhal'st this vapour vow; in thee it is: If broken, then it is no fault of mine.

### **If by me broke, what fool is not so wise To break an oath, to win a paradise?**

4 Sweet Cytherea, sitting by a brook With young Adonis, lovely, fresh and green, Did court the lad with many a lovely look, Such looks as none could look but beauty's queen.

She told him stories to delight his ear; She showed him favours to allure his eye;  
To win his heart, she touched him here and there; Touches so soft still conquer  
chastity.

But whether unripe years did want conceit, Or he refused to take her figured  
proffer, The tender nibbler would not touch the bait, But smile and jest at every  
gentle offer: Then fell she on her back, fair queen, and toward: He rose and ran  
away; ah, fool too froward.

5 If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love? O never faith could hold,  
if not to beauty vowed: Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll constant prove;  
Those thoughts, to me like oaks, to thee like osiers bowed.

Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes, Where all those pleasures  
live that art can comprehend.

If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice; Well learned is that tongue  
that well can thee commend: All ignorant that soul that sees thee without  
wonder; Which is to me some praise, that I thy parts admire.

Thine eye Jove's lightning seems, thy voice his dreadful thunder, Which, not to  
anger bent, is music and sweet fire.

Celestial as thou art, O do not love that wrong, To sing heaven's praise with such  
an earthly tongue.

6 Scarce had the sun dried up the dewy morn And scarce the herd gone to the  
hedge for shade, When Cytherea, all in love forlorn, A longing tarriance for  
Adonis made Under an osier growing by a brook, A brook where Adon used to  
cool his spleen.

Hot was the day; she hotter that did look For his approach, that often there had  
been.

Anon he comes, and throws his mantle by, And stood stark naked on the brook's  
green brim: The sun looked on the world with glorious eye, Yet not so wistly as  
this queen on him.

He, spying her, bounced in whereas he stood; 'O Jove,' quoth she, 'why was not  
I a flood!'

7 Fair is my love, but not so fair as fickle; Mild as a dove, but neither true nor  
trusty; Brighter than glass, and yet, as glass is, brittle; Softer than wax, and yet as  
iron rusty; A lily pale, with damask dye to grace her; None fairer, nor none  
falsar to deface her.

Her lips to mine how often hath she joined, Between each kiss her oaths of true  
love swearing!

How many tales to please me hath she coined, Dreading my love, the loss  
thereof still fearing!

Yet in the midst of all her pure protestings Her faith, her oaths, her tears, and all were jestings.

She burned with love, as straw with fire flameth; She burned out love, as soon as straw out-burneth; She framed the love, and yet she foiled the framing; She bade love last, and yet she fell a-turning.

Was this a lover, or a lecher whether? Bad in the best, though excellent in neither.

8 If music and sweet poetry agree, As they must needs, the sister and the brother, Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me, Because thou lov'st the one and I the other.

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch Upon the lute doth ravish human sense; Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such As passing all conceit needs no defence.

Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound That Phoebus' lute, the queen of music, makes; And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned When as himself to singing he betakes.

One god is god of both, as poets feign; One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

9 Fair was the morn, when the fair queen of love, Paler for sorrow than her milk-white dove, For Adon's sake, a youngster proud and wild, Her stand she takes upon a steep-up hill, Anon Adonis comes with horn and hounds; She, silly queen, with more than love's good will, Forbade the boy he should not pass those grounds.

'Once', quoth she, 'did I see a fair sweet youth Here in these brakes deep-wounded with a boar, Deep in the thigh, a spectacle of ruth!

See, in my thigh,' quoth she, 'here was the sore.' She showed hers; he saw more wounds than one, And blushing fled, and left her all alone.

10 Sweet rose, fair flower, untimely plucked, soon vaded, Plucked in the bud and vaded in the spring!

Bright orient pearl, alack, too timely shaded!

Fair creature, killed too soon by death's sharp sting!

Like a green plum that hangs upon a tree, And falls through wind before the fall should be.

I weep for thee and yet no cause I have; For why thou left'st me nothing in thy will.

And yet thou left'st me more than I did crave, For why I craved nothing of thee still: O yes, dear friend, I pardon crave of thee, Thy discontent thou didst bequeath to me.

11 Venus with young Adonis sitting by her Under a myrtle shade began to woo him; She told the youngling how god Mars did try her, And as he fell to her, so fell she to him.

'Even thus', quoth she, 'the warlike god embraced me', And then she clipped Adonis in her arms; 'Even thus', quoth she, 'the warlike god unlaced me', As if the boy should use like loving charms; 'Even thus', quoth she, 'he seized on my lips', And with her lips on his did act the seizure; And as she fetched breath, away he skips, And would not take her meaning nor her pleasure.

**Ah, that I had my lady at this bay, To kiss and clip me till I run away!**

12 Crabbed age and youth cannot live together: Youth is full of pleasance, age is full of care; Youth like summer morn, age like winter weather; Youth like summer brave, age like winter bare.

Youth is full of sport, age's breath is short; Youth is nimble, age is lame; Youth is hot and bold, age is weak and cold; Youth is wild and age is tame.

**Age, I do abhor thee; youth, I do adore thee; O, my love, my love is young!**

Age, I do defy thee. O, sweet shepherd, hie thee, For methinks thou stay too long.

13 Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good, A shining gloss that vadeth suddenly, A flower that dies when first it 'gins to bud, A brittle glass that's broken presently; A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower, Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.

And as goods lost are seld or never found, As vaded gloss no rubbing will refresh, As flowers dead lie witherid on the ground, As broken glass no cement can redress: So beauty blemished once, for ever lost, In spite of physic, painting, pain and cost.

14 Good night, good rest: ah, neither be my share; She bade good night that kept my rest away; And daffed me to a cabin hanged with care, To descant on the doubts of my decay.

'Farewell,' quoth she, 'and come again to-morrow'; Fare well I could not, for I supped with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile, In scorn or friendship nill I conster whether; 'T may be, she joyed to jest at my exile, 'T may be, again to make me wander thither: 'Wander', a word for shadows like myself, As take the pain, but cannot pluck the pelf.

**Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east!**

My heart doth charge the watch; the morning rise Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest, Not daring trust the office of mine eyes.

While Philomela sings, I sit and mark, And wish her lays were tuned like the lark.

For she doth welcome daylight with her ditty, And drives away dark dreaming night: The night so packed, I post unto my pretty; Heart hath his hope and eyes their wished sight; Sorrow changed to solace and solace mixed with sorrow; For why, she sighed, and bade me come to-morrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon, But now are minutes added to the hours; To spite me now, each minute seems a moon; Yet not for me, shine sun to succour flowers!

Pack night, peep day; good day, of night now borrow; Short night, to-night, and length thyself to-morrow.

15 It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three, That liked of her master as well as well might be, Till looking on an Englishman, the fairest that eye could see, Her fancy fell a-turning.

Long was the combat doubtful that love with love did fight, To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight; To put in practice either, alas, it was a spite Unto the silly damsel!

But one must be refused; more mickle was the pain That nothing could be used to turn them both to gain, For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with disdain: Alas, she could not help it!

Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day, Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away: Then, lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay; For now my song is ended.

### **16 On a day, alack the day!**

Love, whose month was ever May, Spied a blossom passing fair, Playing in the wanton air.

Through the velvet leaves the wind All unseen 'gan passage find, That the lover, sick to death, Wished himself the heaven's breath, 'Air', quoth he, 'thy cheeks may blow; Air, would I might triumph so!

But, alas! my hand hath sworn Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn; Vow, alack! for youth unmeet, Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.

Thou for whom Jove would swear Juno but an Ethiope were; And deny himself for Jove, Turning mortal for thy love.'

17 My flocks feed not, my ewes breed not, My rams speed not, all is amiss; Love is dying, faith's defying, Heart's denying, causer of this.

All my merry jigs are quite forgot, All my lady's love is lost, God wot; Where her faith was firmly fixed in love, There a nay is placed without remove.

**One silly cross wrought all my loss; O frowning Fortune, cursed fickle dame!**

For now I see inconstancy More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I, all fears scorn I, Love hath forlorn me, living in thrall: Heart is bleeding, all help needing, O cruel speeding, fraughted with gall.

My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal; My wether's bell rings doleful knell; My curtal dog that wont to have played, Plays not at all, but seems afraid; My sighs so deep procures to weep, In howling wise, to see my doleful plight.

How sighs resound through heartless ground, Like a thousand vanquished men in bloody fight!

Clear wells spring not, sweet birds sing not, Green plants bring not forth their dye; Herds stand weeping, flocks all sleeping, Nymphs back peeping fearfully.

All our pleasure known to us poor swains, All our merry meetings on the plains, All our evening sport from us is fled, All our love is lost, for Love is dead.

Farewell, sweet lass, thy like ne'er was For a sweet content, the cause of all my moan: Poor Corydon must live alone; Other help for him I see that there is none.

18 When as thine eye hath chose the dame, And stalled the deer that thou shouldst strike, Let reason rule things worthy blame, As well as fancy, partial might; Take counsel of some wiser head, Neither too young nor yet unwed.

And when thou com'st thy tale to tell, Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk, Lest she some subtle practice smell A cripple soon can find a halt But plainly say thou lov'st her well, And set thy person forth to sell.

And to her will frame all thy ways; Spare not to spend, and chiefly there Where thy desert may merit praise, By ringing in thy lady's ear: The strongest castle, tower and town, The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust, And in thy suit be humble true; Unless thy lady prove unjust, Press never thou to choose anew: When time shall serve, be thou not slack To proffer, though she put thee back.

What though her frowning brows be bent, Her cloudy looks will calm ere night, And then too late she will repent That thus dissembled her delight; And twice desire, ere it be day, That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength, And ban and brawl, and say thee nay, Her feeble force will yield at length, When craft hath taught her thus to say: 'Had women been so strong as men, In faith, you had not had it then,'

The wiles and guiles that women work, Dissembled with an outward show, The tricks and toys that in them lurk, The cock that treads them shall not know.

Have you not heard it said full oft, A woman's nay doth stand for nought? Think women still to strive with men, To sin and never for to saint: There is no heaven, by holy then, When time with age shall them attain.

Were kisses all the joys in bed, One woman would another wed.

But, soft, enough, too much I fear, Lest that my mistress hear my song; She will not stick to round me on th' ear, To teach my tongue to be so long, Yet will she blush, here be it said, To hear her secrets so bewrayed.

19 Live with me, and be my love, And we will all the pleasures prove That hills and valleys, dales and fields, And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks, And see the shepherds feed their flocks, By shallow rivers, by whose falls Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses, With a thousand fragrant posies, A cap of flowers, and a kirtle Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A belt of straw and ivy buds, With coral clasps and amber studs; And if these pleasures may thee move, Then live with me and be my love.

### **LOVE'S ANSWER**

If that the world and love were young, And truth in every shepherd's tongue, These pretty pleasures might me move To live with thee and be thy love.

20 As it fell upon a day In the merry month of May, Sitting in a pleasant shade Which a grove of myrtles made, Beasts did leap and birds did sing, Trees did grow and plants did spring; Every thing did banish moan, Save the nightingale alone: She, poor bird, as all forlorn, Leaned her breast up-till a thorn, And there sung the dolefull'st ditty, That to hear it was great pity: 'Fie, fie, fie', now would she cry; 'Tereu, Tereu!' by and by; That to hear her so complain, Scarce I could from tears refrain; For her griefs so lively shown Made me think upon mine own.

### **Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain!**

None takes pity on thy pain: Senseless trees they cannot hear thee; Ruthless beasts they will not cheer thee: King Pandion he is dead; All thy friends are lapped in lead; All thy fellow birds do sing, Careless of thy sorrowing.

Whilst as fickle Fortune smiled, Thou and I were both beguiled.

Every one that flatters thee Is no friend in misery.

Words are easy, like the wind; Faithful friends are hard to find: Every man will be thy friend Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend; But if store of crowns be scant, No man will supply thy want.

If that one be prodigal, Bountiful they will him call, And with such-like flattering, 'Pity but he were a king'; If he be addict to vice, Quickly him they will entice; If to women he be bent, They have at commandment.

But if Fortune once do frown, Then farewell his great renown; They that fawned on him before Use his company no more.

He that is thy friend indeed, He will help thee in thy need: If thou sorrow, he will weep; If thou wake, he cannot sleep; Thus of every grief in heart He with thee doth bear a part.

These are certain signs to know Faithful friend from flatt'ring foe.

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- **THE END-**