Barker, Jane: [from Poetical Recreations (1688)]

Volume

Barker, Jane:
On the DEATH of my Brother. [from Poetical Recreations (1688)]

Come Sorrow, come, embrace my yielding heart,
For thou'rt alone, no Passion else a-part;
Since of my Dear by Death I am bereft,
Thou art the faithfull' st Lover I have left;
And so much inte'rest thou hast got in me,
All thoughts of him prove only Pimps to thee:
If any joy seem to accost my Soul,
One thought of him do's presently controle
Those fawning Rivals; all which steal away,
Like wand'ring Ghosts at the approach of day.
But hold, fond Grief, thou must forbear a while,
Thy too too kind Caresses, which beguile
Me of my Reason,---retire whilst I
Repeat the Life, the Death, the Elogy,

[Page 48]

Of him my Soul ador'd with so much pride,
As makes me slight all worldly things beside;
Of him who did by his fraternal Love,
More noble Passions in my Bosome move,
Than e'er cou'd be infused by Cupid's Darts,
Or any feign'd, adulterate, sordid Arts;
Of him whose blooming Youth pleas'd each Man's Eye,
And tempted Women to Idolatry;
Of him whose growing Art made Death afraid,
He shou'd be vanquish'd, and his Throne betray'd:
'Cause with success, and yet no less applause,
He rescu'd many from the Tyrant's jaws:
At last the Tyrant raging full with spight,
Assaults his Enemy with all his might;
And for his Second brings a Feavour too;
In this Attacque what could our Champion doe?
He bravely fights, but forc'd at last to yield,
Nature, his Second, having lost the Field:
Many bring in their Aid, but 'tis too late,
Grim Death had gotten a Decree from Fate;
Which retrograted all that great supply,
Whose pow'rfull Arms makes Death and Feavers fly.

But why, great Fate! would'st thou so cruel be,
Of Joy at once to rob the World and Me!
What joys so e'er we to our selves propose,
Fate still will frustrate, or at least oppose;
'Tis her Ambition sure to let us know,
She has the Regiment of all below.
If it be so, command some mournfull Muse
T' inspire my Soul, and then my Heart infuse
With Essence of some Dirges, that I may
His Matchless worth to all the World display.
Nor Fate, nor Muse will help us now, I find,
All flee the Wretched, ev'n as Ships the Wind.
My Dear, had'st thou to me bequeath'd thy Wit,
Thy Character had long ago been writ
I'th' most sublime and lasting Verse,
That e'er Adorn'd the greatest Hero's Herse.
But were thy great Entomium writ by me,
'Twou'd be the ready way to lessen thee:
Therefore I must desist from that design,
And the attempt to better hands resign;
Only repeat what mournfully was said,
As in thy cold and narrow Bed was't laid

By the Apollo's [Footnote: 1Kb] of thy noble Art,
(Who seem'd to grudge me in their grief a part)
Alas, he's gone who shou'd have liv'd to be
An honour to our Great Society.
"Alas, he's gone who shou'd supply the place
"Of some of us, when time has left no space
"Betwixt us and the Grave; but now we see
"How they're deceiv'd, who hold no vacancy:
"And all the Gallant *Esculapian* [Footnote: 1Kb] [Footnote: Crew,
"Whose great Example from Spectators drew
"Such floods of tears, that some mistook their aim,
"And thought a real show'r from Heav'n came.
But I, as if the Fountain of this Source,
With Handkerchiefs strive to retard the course;
But all in vain, my real loss was great,
As many thought, whose Words I here repeat:
"I cannot blame you for lamenting so,
"Since better friend no friend did e'er forego;
"A publick Sorrow for this loss is due,
"The Nation surely, Madam, mourns with you.

Send your suggestions, comments or questions to our Webmaster.
Copyright © 1996-2002 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All Rights Reserved.