

Andrew Marvell

The Complete Poems

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BODY

O, who shall me deliver whole,
 From bonds of this tyrannic soul,
 Which, stretched upright, impales me so,
 That mine own precipice I go;
 And warms and moves this needless frame
 (A fever could but do the same),
 And, wanting where its spite to try,
 Has made me live to let me die,
 A body that could never rest,
 20 Since this ill spirit it possessed?

SOUL

What magic could me thus confine
 Within another's grief to pine,
 Where, whatsoever it complain,
 I feel, that cannot feel, the pain,
 And all my care itself employs,
 That to preserve, which me destroys:
 Constrained not only to endure
 Diseases, but, what's worse, the cure:
 And ready oft the port to gain,
 30 Am shipwrecked into health again?

BODY

But physic yet could never reach
 The maladies thou me dost teach:
 Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,
 And then the palsy shakes of fear;
 The pestilence of love does heat,
 Or hatred's hidden ulcer eat;
 Joy's cheerful madness does perplex,
 Or sorrow's other madness vex;
 Which knowledge forces me to know,
 40 And memory will not forgo.
 What but a soul could have the wit
 To build me up for sin so fit?
 So architects do square and hew,
 Green trees that in the forest grew.

The Mower against Gardens

Luxurious man, to bring his vice in use,
 Did after him the world seduce,
 And from the fields the flowers and plants allure,
 Where nature was most plain and pure.
 He first enclosed within the gardens square
 A dead and standing pool of air,
 And a more luscious earth for them did knead,
 Which stupified them while it fed.
 The pink grew then as double as his mind;
 0 The nutriment did change the kind.
 With strange perfumes he did the roses taint,
 And flowers themselves were taught to paint.
 The tulip, white, did for complexion seek,
 And learned to interline its cheek:
 Its onion root they then so high did hold,
 That one was for a meadow sold.
 Another world was searched, through oceans new,
 To find the *Marvel of Peru*.
 And yet these rarities might be allowed
 20 To man, that sovereign thing and proud,
 Had he not dealt between the bark and tree,
 Forbidden mixtures there to see.
 No plant now knew the stock from which it came;
 He grafts upon the wild the tame:
 That th' uncertain and adulterate fruit
 Might put the palate in dispute.
 His green seraglio has its eunuchs too,
 Lest any tyrant him outdo.
 And in the cherry he does nature vex,
 30 To procreate without a sex.
 'Tis all enforced, the fountain and the grot,
 While the sweet fields do lie forgot:
 Where willing nature does to all dispense
 A wild and fragrant innocence:
 And fauns and fairies do the meadows till,
 More by their presence than their skill.

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Their statues, polished by some ancient hand,
 May to adorn the gardens stand:
 But howsoe'er the figures do excel,
 The gods themselves with us do dwell.

Damon the Mower

1

Hark how the Mower Damon sung,
 With love of Juliana stung!
 While everything did seem to paint
 The scene more fit for his complaint.
 Like her fair eyes the day was fair,
 But scorching like his am'rous care.
 Sharp like his scythe his sorrow was,
 And withered like his hopes the grass.

2

'Oh what unusual heats are here,
 10 Which thus our sunburned meadows sear!
 The grasshopper its pipe gives o'er;
 And hamstringed frogs can dance no more.
 But in the brook the green frog wades;
 And grasshoppers seek out the shades.
 Only the snake, that kept within,
 Now glitters in its second skin.

3

'This heat the sun could never raise,
 Nor Dog Star so inflame the days.
 It from an higher beauty grow'th,
 20 Which burns the fields and mower both:
 Which mads the dog, and makes the sun
 Hotter than his own Phaëton.
 Not July causeth these extremes,
 But Juliana's scorching beams.

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4

'Tell me where I may pass the fires
 Of the hot day, or hot desires.
 To what cool cave shall I descend,
 Or to what gelid fountain bend?
 Alas! I look for ease in vain,
 30 When remedies themselves complain.
 No moisture but my tears do rest,
 Nor cold but in her icy breast.

5

'How long wilt thou, fair shepherdess,
 Esteem me, and my presents less?
 To thee the harmless snake I bring,
 Disarmèd of its teeth and sting;
 To thee chameleons, changing hue,
 And oak leaves tipped with honey dew.
 Yet thou, ungrateful, hast not sought
 40 Nor what they are, nor who them brought.

6

'I am the Mower Damon, known
 Through all the meadows I have mown.
 On me the morn her dew distills
 Before her darling daffodils.
 And, if at noon my toil me heat,
 The sun himself licks off my sweat.
 While, going home, the evening sweet
 In cowslip-water bathes my feet.

7

'What, though the piping shepherd stock
 50 The plains with an unnumbered flock,
 This scythe of mine discovers wide
 More ground than all his sheep do hide.
 With this the golden fleece I shear
 Of all these closes every year.
 And though in wool more poor than they,
 Yet am I richer far in hay.

8

'Nor am I so deformed to sight,
 If in my scythe I lookèd right;
 In which I see my picture done,
 60 As in a crescent moon the sun.
 The deathless fairies take me oft
 To lead them in their dances soft:
 And, when I tune myself to sing,
 About me they contract their ring.

9

'How happy might I still have mowed,
 Had not Love here his thistles sowed!
 But now I all the day complain,
 Joining my labour to my pain;
 And with my scythe cut down the grass,
 70 Yet still my grief is where it was:
 But, when the iron blunter grows,
 Sighing, I whet my scythe and woes.'

10

While thus he threw his elbow round,
 Depopulating all the ground,
 And, with his whistling scythe, does cut
 Each stroke between the earth and root,
 The edgèd steel by careless chance
 Did into his own ankle glance;
 And there among the grass fell down,
 80 By his own scythe, the Mower mown.

11

'Alas!' said he, 'these hurts are slight
 To those that die by love's despite.
 With shepherd's-purse, and clown's-all-heal,
 The blood I staunch, and wound I seal.
 Only for him no cure is found,
 Whom Juliana's eyes do wound.
 'Tis death alone that this must do:
 For Death thou art a Mower too.'

The Mower to the Glowworms

1

Ye living lamps, by whose dear light
 The nightingale does sit so late,
 And studying all the summer night,
 Her matchless songs does meditate;

2

Ye country comets, that portend
 No war, nor prince's funeral,
 Shining unto no higher end
 Than to presage the grass's fall;

3

Ye glowworms, whose officious flame
 10 To wandering mowers shows the way,
 That in the night have lost their aim,
 And after foolish fires do stray;

4

Your courteous lights in vain you waste,
 Since Juliana here is come,
 For she my mind hath so displaced
 That I shall never find my home.

The Mower's Song

1

My mind was once the true survey
 Of all these meadows fresh and gay,
 And in the greenness of the grass
 Did see its hopes as in a glass;
 When Juliana came, and she
 What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.

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2

But these, while I with sorrow pine,
Grew more luxuriant still and fine,
That not one blade of grass you spied,
10 But had a flower on either side;
When Juliana came, and she

What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.

3

Unthankful meadows, could you so
A fellowship so true forgo,
And in your gaudy May-games meet,
While I lay trodden under feet?
When Juliana came, and she

What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.

4

But what you in compassion ought,
20 Shall now by my revenge be wrought:
And flow'rs, and grass, and I and all,
Will in one common ruin fall.
For Juliana comes, and she

What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.

5

And thus, ye meadows, which have been
Companions of my thoughts more green,
Shall now the heraldry become
With which I will adorn my tomb;
For Juliana comes, and she

30 What I do to the grass, does to my thoughts and me.

111

Music's Empire

1

First was the world as one great cymbal made,
Where jarring winds to infant Nature played.
All music was a solitary sound,
To hollow rocks and murmuring fountains bound.

2

Jubal first made the wilder notes agree;
And Jubal tuned music's first jubilee:
He called the echoes from their sullen cell,
And built the organ's city where they dwell.

3

Each sought a consort in that lovely place;
10 And virgin trebles wed the manly base.
From whence the progeny of numbers new
Into harmonious colonies withdrew.

4

Some to the lute, some to the viol went,
And others chose the cornet eloquent,
These practising the wind, and those the wire,
To sing men's triumphs, or in heaven's choir.

5

Then music, the mosaic of the air,
Did of all these a solemn noise prepare:
With which she gained the empire of the ear,
20 Including all between the earth and sphere.

6

Victorious sounds! Yet here your homage do
Unto a gentler conqueror than you:
Who though he flies the music of his praise,
Would with you heaven's hallelujahs raise.

34 *And then the palsy shakes of fear* a bold (if awkward) inversion with the modifier separated from its noun; cf. 'cramp of hope does tear' and 'pestilence of love does heat'.

43-4 *So architects do square and hew, | Green trees* Cf. Marvell's use of similar diction in a passage of prose - 'men, instead of squaring their governments by the rule of Christianity, have shaped Christianity by the measure of their government . . . and bungling divine and human things together, have been always hacking and hewing one another, to frame an irregular figure of political incongruity' (*An Account of the Growth of Popery, and Arbitrary Government in England*, 1677, Grosart, IV, 281).

THE MOWER AGAINST GARDENS

The four Mower poems were first published in the Folio. While individually accenting different aspects of rural life, they are linked by milieu and the central figure and should perhaps be linked in time of composition, which is generally assumed to be during Marvell's tenure at Nun Appleton.

In treating the popular Renaissance topic of nature versus art (represented by horticulture as in Perdita's speech in *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 79-100), Marvell may have used as his point of departure a seduction lyric by Thomas Randolph entitled *Upon Love Fondly Refused for Conscience' Sake*, editions in 1638, 1640, 1645, and 1652 (Frank Kermode, 'Two notes on Marvell' *N & Q* CXCVII [1952], 136-8, who reads Marvell's poem as a refutation of Randolph's). Here are found several notions that reappear in *The Mower against Gardens*: enclosures represent the invention of man (cf. ll. 1-8); the issue of man's sovereignty (cf. ll. 19-20); and the gardener's practice of grafting and inoculation relating to the art of husbandry (cf. ll. 9-30). Further, both poems have the same pattern of rhymed couplets of ten and eight syllables, which is a pattern Marvell used only on this occasion, and both poems use a diction marked by sexual overtones.

- 1 *Luxurious* voluptuous;
bring his vice in use (a) bring into practice; (b) establish as a custom.
- 5 *gardens square* a characteristic inversion of noun and adjective. The use of the plural pronoun in l. 7 and the plural nouns in the title and l. 38 supports the plural reading here (contrary to some editors who print 'garden's square').
- 6 *standing pool of air* A phrase used by Sir Henry Wotton in *The Elements of Architecture*, 1624, reprinted 1651 (M. Allentuck, 'Marvell's "Pool of Air"', *MLN* LXXIV, 1959, 587-9) and by James Howell in *Instructions for Foreign Travel*, 1642, reprinted 1650 (K. Datta, 'Marvell and Wotton: A Reconsideration', *RES* XIX, 1968, 403-5).
- 7 *luscious* (a) cloying; (b) voluptuous.
- 9 *The pink . . . as double as his mind* a double bloom and a double-dealing mind. Cf. the 'double heart' in l. 10 of the *Dialogue between the Soul and Body*.

- 15 *onion root* bulb.
- 18 *Marvel of Peru* a flower of many colours from tropical America (*Mirabilis Jalapa*); the four o'clock.
- 21 *Had he not dealt between the bark and tree* proverbial for audacity and frequently applied in the seventeenth century to interference between man and wife (Tilley, H88).
- 22 *Forbidden mixtures* Legouis (*Andrew Marvell*, p. 43) refers this to the Mosaic law in Lev. xix 19 and Deut. xxii 9.
- 27 *seraglio* (a) enclosure and (b) Turkish palace.
- 30 *To procreate without a sex* vegetative propagation by grafting or budding (called inoculation as in *Hamlet*, Pelican, III, i, 117-18, '... virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it'; cf. Randolph's punning line, 'We may as well inoculate as plant').
- 31 *enforced* (a) constrained, in contrast with 'willing nature' in l. 33, and (b) ravished.

DAMON THE MOWER

Damon the Mower is in the ancient Theocritean tradition of the lovesick rustic represented by the complaint of the Cyclops Polyphemus for Galatea (*Idyl* XI) and its Virgilian derivative (*Ecl.* II). In the final stanzas Marvell adds sophisticated notions to the realistic scene.

- 9 *heats* in the plural, used for the hot season.
- 12 *hamstringed* disabled.
- 18 *Dog Star* Sirius in the constellation of the Greater Dog was supposed to cause excessive heat, giving rise to the 'dog-days'.
inflamm] *inflamm's F.*
- 21 *mads*] *Eng. poet. d. 49*; made *F.* (as in *Richard II* V. v. 61, 'This music mads me').
- 22 *Phaëton* Offspring of the sun-god Helios and the nymph Clymene Phaëton set the world on fire when driving the chariot of the sun.
- 48 *cowslip-water* decoction made from cowslips and used medicinally.
- 54 *closes* enclosed fields.
- 57 *Nor am I so deformed* a reminiscence of Vergil's *nec sum adeo informis* (*Ecl.* II, 25).
- 79 *And there among the grass fell down* a play on the Biblical assertion 'All flesh is grass' (Isa. xl 6).
- 80 *By his own scythe, the Mower mown* The self-inflicted psychic wound of the lover becomes a literal wound.

83 *shepherd's-purse and clown's-all-heal* the *capsella bursa pastoris* or shepherd's bag and the *stachys palustris* or clown's-wound wort. The latter was so named by the sixteenth-century herbalist John Gerard because of its efficacy in healing a mower who had wounded himself with a scythe.

THE MOWER TO THE GLOWWORMS

Consisting of one sentence with three stanzas of apostrophes, *The Mower to the Glowworms* may be indebted to Pliny's accounts of the glowworm, called 'the husbandman's star', and the nightingale (see the translation of the *Natural History* by Philemon Holland, 1635, bk. X, ch. 29; bk. XIX, ch. 27).

4 *Her matchless songs doth meditate* The verb *meditate* is perhaps intended to recall Vergil's *Musam meditari* (*Ecl.* I, 2), though Pliny comments (in Holland's translation) that 'the young nightingales study and meditate how to sing'. Cf. Milton's similar usage in *Lycidas*, l. 66: 'And strictly meditate the thankless Muse'.

9 *officious* (a) serving a useful office and (b) efficacious.

12 *foolish fires* (a) of love and (b) *ignes fatui* or will-o'-the-wisps.

THE MOWER'S SONG

The Mower's Song is the only instance of Marvell's use of a refrain, an alexandrine consisting entirely of monosyllables.

1 *survey* delineation.

3-4 *in the greenness . . . | Did see its hopes as in a glass* The colour green was symbolic of hope.

19 *ought owe*.

26 *my thoughts more green* Cf. 'a green thought in a green shade', *The Garden*, l. 48.

27-8 *the heraldry . . . | With which I will adorn my tomb* Cf. the use of heraldic depiction in *The Unfortunate Lover*, l. 64.

will] *Eng. poet. d.* 49; shall *F.*

MUSIC'S EMPIRE

As an example of the *laudes musicae* tradition, *Music's Empire* is an extended metaphor, presenting the origin and progress of music in terms of a developing social-political organization. First published in the Folio, its date of composition is uncertain. On the one hand, its subject matter links up with *The Fair Singer* (perhaps dating from 1648 or 49), while l. 22, referring to a 'gentler conqueror' echoes Marvell's tribute to the Lord General Fairfax in *Upon the*

Hill and Grove; this would suggest composition some time before 1652. On the other hand, in *The First Anniversary* (1654, printed 1655), Marvell presents the development of the Cromwellian state in terms of an extended musical conceit (ll. 45-74) which leads some critics to accept stanza 5 here as a tribute to the Protector rather than to Fairfax and a consequent later date of composition.

For accounts of the *laudes musicae* tradition, see James Hutton, 'Some English Poems in Praise of Music', *English Miscellany* II (1951), 1-63, and John Hollander, *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700* (Princeton, 1961).

5 *Jubal* the inventor of musical instruments according to Gen. iv 21.

6 *tuned music's first jubilee* *jubilee*, a year of emancipation, proclaimed by the blast of trumpets; perhaps a mock pun in *Jubal - jubilee*.

first] *Eng. poet. d.* 49; *not in F* (eds. compensate by making *tuned* disyllabic).

7 *sullen* gloomy.

9 *consort* (a) mate and (b) harmony.

15 *wire* stringed instruments.

18 *solemn* sacred.

20 *sphere* vault of heaven; Marvell thus excludes the music of the spheres so often invoked in the traditional *laus musicae* (see *The First Anniversary*, ll. 47-8).

23 *though he flies the music of his praise* Cf. 'That courage [Fairfax's] its own praises flies' (*Upon the Hill and Grove*, l. 76).

THE CHARACTER OF HOLLAND

Deane, Monck, and Blake (l. 150) served as Generals-at-Sea from November 1652 until the death of Deane in June 1653; Marvell's poem was written sometime during that period, probably, as Margoliouth suggested, a short time after 20 February 1653 when the English achieved a naval victory over the Dutch near Portland. Although it was anonymously published in part (ll. 1-100 plus an 8-line ending) in 1665, all copies of this edition seem to have disappeared; the satire becoming timely again, the same publisher brought out another edition in 1672. The full text appears in the Folio, though it is represented in variant states because of the cancellation of the following *Horatian Ode* from most copies.

2 *off-scouring* refuse.

5 *alluvion* inundation.

15 *those pills which sordid beetles roll* The tumble-dung beetle forms pills of dung about its eggs and rolls them into a hole.