

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF

POETRY

SIXTH EDITION

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W · W · NORTON & COMPANY
NEW YORK · LONDON

2018

50 Before true light!
 To live in grotts^o and caves, and hate the day *caverns*
 Because it shows the way,
 The way which from this dead and dark abode
 Leads up to God,
 55 A way where you might tread the sun and be
 More bright than he!"
 But as I did their madness so discuss,
 One whispered thus:
 "This ring the bridegroom did for none provide,
 60 But for his bride."⁸

John Chap. 2. ver. 16, 17

*All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world.
 And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth forever.*

1650

They Are All Gone into the World of Light!

They are all gone into the world of light!
 And I alone sit lingering here;
 Their very memory is fair and bright,
 And my sad thoughts doth clear.

5 It^o glows and glitters in my cloudy breast *the memory*
 Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
 Or those faint beams in which this hill is dressed
 After the sun's remove.

10 I see them walking in an air of glory,
 Whose light doth trample on my days;
 My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,^o *gray, ancient*
 Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy hope! and high humility,
 High as the heavens above!
 15 These are your walks, and you have showed them me
 To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death! the jewel of the just,
 Shining nowhere but in the dark;
 What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
 20 Could man outlook that mark!^o *boundary*

8. See Revelation 19.7–9 and 21 for the marriage of the Lamb and the bride (Christ and his Church).

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know⁹
 At first sight if the bird be flown;
 But what fair well^o or grove he sings in now,
 That is to him^o unknown. *spring*
the seeker

25 And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
 Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
 So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,¹
 And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,²
 30 Her captive flames must needs burn there;
 But when the hand that locked her up gives room,
 She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
 Created glories under Thee!
 35 Resume^o Thy spirit from this world of thrall^o *take back / slavery*
 Into true liberty!

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
 My perspective³ still as they pass;
 Or else remove me hence unto that hill
 40 Where I shall need no glass.⁴

1655

The Waterfall

With what deep murmurs through time's silent stealth
 Doth thy transparent, cool, and watery wealth
 Here flowing fall,
 And chide, and call,
 5 As if his liquid, loose retinue⁵ stayed
 Lingerin', and were of this steep place afraid,
 The common pass
 Where, clear as glass,
 All must descend—
 10 Not to an end,
 But quickened by this deep and rocky grave,
 Rise to a longer course more bright and brave.⁶

9. The bird often symbolizes the human soul: cf. George Herbert, "Easter Wings" (p. 389). *Fledged*: fit to fly.

1. I.e., accustomed ideas.

2. Probably a metaphor for the body, with the "star" as the soul.

3. Literally, telescope; more generally, ability to see into the distance.

4. Vaughan superimposes the modern image of the magnifying telescope onto the traditional Christian and Platonic image of life as an experience of distorted vision or darkness: "for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face"

(1 Corinthians 13.12). *Hill*: Sion hill; figuratively, heaven.

5. Those in service; i.e., the water that has not yet flowed over the edge is likened to time's ("his") followers or "retainers," with a probable bilingual pun on *retenu*, French for "held back."

6. I.e., elaborating on the central Christian paradox of resurrection, Vaughan imagines death as a quickening in the grave (a movement like that of a child in the womb) followed by a rising that defies the waterfall's apparently natural downward "course." *Brave*: splendid; cf. George Herbert, "Virtue," line 5 (p. 396).