

SPENSER, Edmund

**Amoretti I**

Happy ye leaves when as those lilly hands,

Which hold my life in their dead doing might

Shall handle you and hold in loves soft bands,

Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight.

And happy lines, on which with starry light,

Those lamping eyes will deigne sometimes to look

And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,

Written with teares in harts close bleeding book.

And happy rymes bath’d in the sacred brooke,

Of Helicon whence she derived is,

When ye behold that Angels blessed looke,

My soules long lacked foode, my heavens blis.

Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,

Whom if ye please, I care for other none.
 **Amoretti XXVI**

SWEET is the rose, but grows upon a brere;

 Sweet is the juniper, but sharp his bough;

 Sweet is the eglantine, but pricketh near;

 Sweet is the fir-bloom, but his branch rough;

 Sweet is the cypress, but his rind is tough;

 Sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill;

 Sweet is the broom-flower, but yet sour enough;

 And sweet is moly, but his root is ill.

 So every sweet with sour is tempered still,

 That maketh it be coveted the more:

 For easy things, that may be got at will,

 Most sorts of men do set but little store.

 Why then should I account of little pain,

 That endless pleasure shall unto me gain!
 **Amoretti LXII**

The weary year his race now having run,

 The new begins his compassed course anew:

 With shew of morning mild he hath begun,

 Betokening peace and plenty to ensue.

 So let us, which this change of weather view,

 Change each our minds and former lives amend,

The old year's sins forepast let us eschew,

 And fly the faults with which we did offend.

 Then shall the new year's joy forth freshly send,

 Into the glooming world his gladsome ray:

 And all these storms which now his beauty blend,

 Shall turn to calms and timely clear away.

 So likewise love cheer you and your heavy sprite,

 And change old year's annoy to new delight.

**The Bride**

LO! where she comes along with portly pace,

Like Phœbe from her chamber of the east,

Arising forth to run her mighty race,

Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.

So well it her beseems, that ye would ween

Some angel she had been.

Her long, loose yellow locks, like golden wire,

Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers atween,

Do like a golden mantle her attire;

And being crownèd with a garland green,

Seem like some maiden queen.

Her modest eyes abashèd to behold

So many gazers as on her do stare,

Upon the lowly ground affixèd are;

Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,

But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,

So far from being proud.

Nathless do ye still loud her praises sing,

That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Tell me, ye merchants’ daughters, did ye see

So fair a creature in your town before?

So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,

Adorned with Beauty’s grace and Virtue’s store?

Her goodly eyes like sapphires, shining bright,

Her forehead ivory white,

Her cheeks like apples which the sun hath rudded,

Her lips like cherries charming men to bite.

Her breast like to a bowl of cream uncrudded,

Her paps like lilies budded,

Her snowy neck like to a marble tower;

And all her body like a palace fair,

Ascending up with many a stately stair

To Honor’s seat and Chastity’s sweet bower.

Why stand ye still, ye virgins, in amaze,

Upon her so to gaze,

Whilst ye forget your former lay to sing,

To which the woods did answer, and your echo ring.

**The Faerie Queene**…..
Therewith she spewed out of her filthy maw

A flood of poison horrible and black,

Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw...

Her vomit full of books and papers was,

With loathly frogs and toads which Eyes did lack,

And creeping, sought way in the weedy Grass:

Her filthy Parbreake all the Place defiled has...
…..
And that which is for Ladies most befitting,

To stint all strife, and foster friendly peace,

Was from those Dames so far and so unfitting,

As that instead of praying them surcease,

They did much more their cruelty increase;

Bidding them fight for Honour of their Love,

And rather die than Lady's Cause release.

With which vain Terms so much they did them move,

That both resolved the last Extremities to prove.
…..
So well accorded, forth they rode together

In friendly sort, that lasted but awhile;

And of all old Dislikes they made fair Weather:
Yet all was forged and spread with golden foil,

That under it hid hate and hollow guile.

Ne certes can that friendship long endure,

However gay and goodly be the style,

That doth ill cause or evil end enure:

For virtue is the band, that bindeth harts most sure.
…..
Him so I sought, and so at last I found,

Where him that witch had thralled to her will,

In chains of lust and lewd desires bound,

And so transformed from his former skill,

That me he knew not, neither his own ill;
Till through wise handling and fair governance,

I him recured to a better will,

Purged from drugs of foul intemperance:

Then means I can devise for his deliverance.
…..
She there devized a wondrous work to frame,

Whose like on earth was never framed yet,

That even Nature self envide the same,

And grudged to see the counterfeit should shame

The thing itself. In hand she boldly took

To make another like the former Dame,

Another Florimell, in shape and look

So lively and so like, that many it mistook.

His name was Talus, made of iron mould,

Immoveable, resistless, without end,

Who in his hand an iron flail did hold,

With which he thrashed out falsehood, and did truth unfold.
…..
Thereto the Blatant beast by them set on

At him began aloud to bark and bay,

With bitter rage and fell contention,

That all the woods and rocks nigh to that way,

Began to quake and tremble with dismay;

And all the air rebellowed again.

So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray,

And evermore those hags themselves did pain,

To sharpen him, and their own cursed tongs did strain.
…..
Yet arms or weapon had he none to fight,

Ne knew the use of warlike instruments,

Save such as sudden rage him lent to smite,

But naked without needful vestiments,

To clad his corpse with meet habiliments,

He cared not for dint of sword nor speer,

No more than for the strokes of staves or bents:

For from his mother's womb, which him did bear

He was invulnerable made by Magic lear.
…..

**My Love Is Like To Ice**
My love is like to ice, and I to fire:

How comes it then that this her cold so great

Is not dissolved through my so hot desire,

But harder grows the more I her entreat?

Or how comes it that my exceeding heat

Is not allayed by her heart-frozen cold,

But that I burn much more in boiling sweat,

And feel my flames augmented manifold?

What more miraculous thing may be told,

That fire, which all things melts, should harden ice,

And ice, which is congeal's with senseless cold,

Should kindle fire by wonderful device?

Such is the power of love in gentle mind,

That it can alter all the course of kind.

**The Golden Hook**TRUST not the treason of those smiling looks,

Until ye have their guileful trains well tried:

For they are like but unto golden hooks,

That from the foolish fish their baits do hide:

So she with flattering smiles weak hearts doth guide

Unto her love, and tempt to their decay;

Whom, being caught, she kills with cruel pride,

And feeds at pleasure on the wretched prey:

Yet, even whilst her bloody hands them slay,

Her eyes look lovely, and upon them smile;

That they take pleasure in her cruel play,

And, dying, do themselves of pain beguile.

 O mighty charm! which makes men love their bane,

 And think they die with pleasure, live with pain.

**Epithalamion**…..

Open the temple gates unto my love,

Open them wide that she may enter in,

And all the posts adorn as doth behove,

And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,

For to receive this Saint with honour due,

That cometh in to you.

With trembling steps, and humble reverence,

She cometh in, before th’ Almighties view;

Of her ye virgins learn obedience,

When so ye come into those holy places,

To humble your proud faces:

Bring her up to th’ high altar, that she may

The sacred ceremonies there partake,

The which do endless matrimony make;

And let the roaring organs loudly play

The praises of the Lord in lively notes;

The whiles, with hollow throats,

The Choristers the joyous anthem sing,

That al the woods may answer, and their echo ring.

…..

Now al is done: bring home the bride again;

Bring home the triumph of our victory:

Bring home with you the glory of her gain;

With joyance bring her and with jollity.

Never had man more joyful day then this,

Whom heaven would heap with bliss,

Make feast therefore now all this live-long day;

This day for ever to me holy is.

Pour out the wine without restraint or stay,

Pour not by cups, but by the belly full,

Pour out to all that wull,

And sprinkle all the posts and walls with wine,

That they may sweat, and drunken be withal.

Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronal,

And Hymen also crown with wreathes of vine;

And let the Graces dance unto the rest,

For they can do it best:

The whiles the maidens doe their carol sing,

To which the woods shall answer, and their echo ring.

…..

**One Day I Wrote Her Name Upon the Strand**ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand,

But came the waves and washèd it away:

Again I wrote it with a second hand,

But came the tide and made my pains his prey.

Vain man (said she) that dost in vain assay

A mortal thing so to immortalise;

For I myself shall like to this decay,

And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.

Not so (quod I); let baser things devise

To die in dust, but you shall live by fame;

My verse your virtues rare shall eternise,

And in the heavens write your glorious name:

 Where, when as Death shall all the world subdue,

 Our love shall live, and later life renew.

**LIII. Prothalamion**CALM was the day, and through the trembling air

Sweet-breathing Zephyrus did softly play—

A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay

Hot Titan's beams, which then did glister fair;

When I, (whom sullen care,

Through discontent of my long fruitless stay

In princes' court, and expectation vain

Of idle hopes, which still do fly away

Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,)

Walk'd forth to ease my pain

Along the shore of silver-streaming Thames,

Whose rutty bank, the which his river hems,

Was painted all with variable flowers,

And all the meads adorn'd with dainty gems

Fit to deck maidens' bowers,

And crown their paramours

Against the bridal day, which is not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

here in a meadow by the river's side

A flock of nymphs I chancèd to espy,

All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,

With goodly greenish locks all loose untied

As each had been a bride;

And each one had a little wicker basket

Made of fine twigs, entrailèd curiously.

In which they gather'd flowers to fill their flasket,

And with fine fingers cropt full feateously

The tender stalks on high.

Of every sort which in that meadow grew

They gather'd some—the violet, pallid blue,

The little daisy that at evening closes,

The virgin lily and the primrose true,

With store of vermeil roses,

To deck their bridegrooms' posies

Against the bridal day, which was not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swans of goodly hue

Come softly swimming down along the Lee:

Two fairer birds I yet did never see;

The snow which doth the top of Pindus strow

Did never whiter show,

Nor Jove himself, when he a swan would be

For love of Leda, whiter did appear;

Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,

Yet not so white as these, nor nothing near;

So purely white they were

That even the gentle stream, the which them bare?

Seem'd foul to them, and bade his billows spare

To wet their silken feathers, lest they might

Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair,

And mar their beauties bright

That shone as Heaven's light

Against their bridal day, which was not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoons the nymphs, which now had flowers their fill?

Ran all in haste to see that silver brood

As they came floating on the crystal flood;

Whom when they saw, they stood amazèd still

Their wondering eyes to fill;

Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fair

Of fowls, so lovely, that they sure did deem

Them heavenly born, or to be that same pair

Which through the sky draw Venus' silver team;

For sure they did not seem

To be begot of any earthly seed,

But rather Angels, or of Angels' breed;

Yet were they bred of summer's heat, they say,

In sweetest season, when each flower and weed

The earth did fresh array;

So fresh they seem'd as day,

Ev'n as their bridal day, which was not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew

Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,

That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,

All which upon those goodly birds they threw

And all the waves did strew,

That like old Peneus' waters they did seem

When down along by pleasant Tempe's shore

Scatter'd with flowers, through Thessaly they stream,

That they appear, through lilies' plenteous store,

Like a bride's chamber-floor.

Two of those nymphs meanwhile two garlands bound

Of freshest flowers which in that mead they found,

The which presenting all in trim array,

Their snowy foreheads therewithal they crown'd;

Whilst one did sing this lay

Prepared against that day,

Against their bridal day, which was not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

"Ye gentle birds! the world's fair ornament,

And heaven's glory, whom this happy hour

Doth lead unto your lovers' blissful bower,

Joy may you have, and gentle heart's content

Of your love's couplement;

And let fair Venus, that is queen of love,

With her heart-quelling son upon you smile,

Whose smile, they say, hath virtue to remove

All love's dislike, and friendship's faulty guile

For ever to assoil.

Let endless peace your steadfast hearts accord,

And blessed plenty wait upon your board;

And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,

That fruitful issue may to you afford

Which may your foes confound,

And make your joys redound

Upon your bridal day, which is not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song."

So ended she; and all the rest around

To her redoubled that her undersong,

Which said their bridal day should not be long;

And gentle Echo from the neighbour ground

Their accents did resound.

So forth those joyous birds did pass along

Adown the Lee that to them murmur'd low,

As he would speak but that he lack'd a tongue;

Yet did by signs his glad affection show,

Making his stream run slow.

And all the fowl which in his flood did dwell

'Gan flock about these twain, that did excel

The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend

The lesser stars. So they, enrangèd well,

Did on those two attend,

And their best service lend

Against their wedding day, which was not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to merry London came,

To merry London, my most kindly nurse,

That to me gave this life's first native source,

Though from another place I take my name,

An house of ancient fame:

There when they came whereas those bricky towers

The which on Thames' broad aged back do ride,

Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,

There whilome wont the Templar-knights to bide,

Till they decay'd through pride;

Next whereunto there stands a stately place,

Where oft I gainèd gifts and goodly grace

Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,

Whose want too well now feels my friendless case:

But ah! here fits not well

Old woes, but joys to tell

Against the bridal day, which is not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,

Great England's glory and the world's wide wonder,

Whose dreadful name late through all Spain did thunder,

And Hercules' two pillars standing near

Did make to quake and fear:

Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry!

That fillest England with thy triumphs' fame

Joy have thou of thy noble victory,

And endless happiness of thine own name

That promiseth the same;

That through thy prowess and victorious arms

Thy country may be freed from foreign harms,

And great Elisa's glorious name may ring

Through all the world, fill'd with thy wide alarms,

Which some brave Muse may sing

To ages following:

Upon the bridal day, which is not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issúing

Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hair

In th' ocean billows he hath bathèd fair,

Descended to the river's open viewing

With a great train ensuing.

Above the rest were goodly to be seen

Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature,

Beseeming well the bower of any queen,

With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,

Fit for so goodly stature,

That like the twins of Jove they seem'd in sight

Which deck the baldric of the heavens bright;

They two, forth pacing to the river's side,

Received those two fair brides, their love's delight;

Which, at th' appointed tide,

Each one did make his bride

Against their bridal day, which is not long:

 Sweet Thames! run softly, till I end my song.