

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-41821-9 - Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century
 Edited by L. Birkett Marshall
 Excerpt
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RARE POEMS

OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ASHMORE

JOHN ASHMORE (*fl.* 1621). The only book which bears his name is *Certain Selected Odes of Horace, Englished . . . Whereunto are added sundry new Epigrammes, Anagrammes, Epitaphes*, 1621. Contents are interesting historically since they are some of the earliest translations of Horace's *Odes* into English. There is a certain charm about this original Epitaph. In spite of conventional subject-matter and language there is a sad sincerity. The plaintive burden is especially pleasing.

AN EPITAPH UPON THE
 DEATH OF ELISABETH BRIGGES, DAUGHTER TO
 THE DISCREET MATRON AND WIDOW,
 BETTRICE BRIGGES

COME, Virgins, come! why doe you linger so,
 With streams of tears that from your swol'n eyes
 show'r?

Her Grave with Roses and with Lillies strowe
 That of your Garland was the fairest flower.
 Lillies and Roses soon decay and perish,
 While bitter Worm-wood and sharp Nettles flourish.

Your Garlands break! henceforth no garlands bear;
 Their fading doth your fading state express.
 For Garlands, deadly Yeugh and Elder weare,
 And branches of the saddest Cypresse.
 Lillies and Roses etc.

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Ashmore Ye Holly-hocks, why hold you downe your heads?
 And violets, why pine you so away?
 Because (alas!) that shee from you is fled,
 That drest you and hath ta'ne her leave for aye?
 Lillies etc.

O Hymen, why didst thou pale Death permit,
 Within thy Right to set his hatefull feet,
 And take her, that for thy sweet Rites was fit,
 For Bridals that gave her a Winding sheet?
 Lillies etc.

When Death arrested her with his sad Mace,
 And cloudy Mists her Senses over-spread,
 Her native favour he could not disgrace,
 Which was compos'd of purest white and red.
 Lillies etc.

All that thy sweet conditions did know,
 Desired that their lives they so might spend:
 And all that from this life did see thee goe,
 Desired that their lives they so might end.
 Lillies and Roses soon decay and perish,
 While bitter Worm-wood and sharp Nettles flourish.

*Certain Selected Odes of Horace,
 Englished, 1621*

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EX M. ANTONIO FLAMINIO,
 AD AGELLUM SUUM. SIC INCIPIT,
 “UMBRAE FRIGIDULAE...”

Ashmore

COOL Shades, Air-fanning Groves,
 With your soft Whisperings,
 Where Pleasure smiling roves
 Through dewie Caves and Springs,
 And bathes her purple Wings:

With Flowrs-inamel'd Ground,
 (Nature's fair Tapestry),
 Where chattering Birds abound,
 Flickring from tree to tree
 With change of Melody:

Sweet Liberty and Leasures,
 Where still the Muses keep,
 O! if to those true Treasures
 That from your Bosome peep,
 I might securely creep:

If I might spend my dayes,
 (Remote from publicke brawls),
 Now tuning lovely Laies,
 Now light-foot Madrigals,
 N'er checkt with sudden calls:

Now follow Sleep that goes
 Rustling i'th green-wood Shade;
 Now milk my goat, that knowes,
 (With her young fearfull Cade),
 The pail i'th cooly Glade;

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Ashmore

And with Boals fill'd to th' Brims
 Of milky Moisture new,
 To water my dry'd Lims,
 And t'all the wrangling Crew
 Of Cares to bid Adew;

What life then should I lead!
 How like then would it bee
 Unto the Gods, that tread
 Ith' starry Gallery
 Of true Felicity!

But you, O Virgins sweet,
 In Helicon that dwell,
 That oft the Fountains greet,
 When you the Pleasures tell
 Ith' Country that excell:

If I my life, though dear,
 For your far dearer sake,
 To yeeld would nothing fear,
 From Citee's tumults take mee
 And free i'th Country make mee.

Ibid.

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BARKSDALE

CLEMENT BARKSDALE (1609–1687). Author of numerous religious works, translations from Grotius, sermons and a few verses. Like many other clerics of the century he published a solitary volume of verses. This was *Nympha Libethris; or the Cotswold Muse*, 1651.

DEDICATION OF
 PART THREE OF NYMPHA LIBETHRIS
 TO MY NEPHEW, J. B.

THE care thy Father once bestow'd on me,
 I very gladly would return to thee.
 What I to thee, (thus love in a blood runs),
 Do thou communicate unto my sons.
 I have no land to give, such is my chance,
 Take this poetical inheritance.
 A little here is best: because much more
 Of poetry, perhaps, would make you poor.

*Nympha Libethris; or the
 Cotswold Muse*, 1651

UPON THE DECEASE OF MY INFANT LADY

E'EN so, the nipping wind in May doth come,
 And blast the choicest fruit in the first bloom:
 Yet shall this Blossom of Nobility,
 Preserv'd by angels' care, immortal be.
 Such delicate bodies sleep, and are laid by
 In their repositories. They do not die.

Ibid.

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BARON

ROBERT BARON (*fl.* 1645). His first printed work, *Erotopaigion, or the Cyprian Academy*, is dated “from my chambers in Gray’s Inn”, 1647. It is dedicated to James Howell, who praised it in *Epistolae Ho-Eliaanae*. Many poems in it were stolen directly from Milton. His other volume of verses was entitled *Pocula Castalia*, 1650. He also wrote a tragedy, *Mirza*.

SONNET

TO ELIZA UPON MAY DAY MORNING, 1649

SEE, Fairest! Virgins gather dew;
 Wing’d Heralds blaze on every bough;
 May’s come; if you say so, ’tis true.
 For thus your Power’s ’bove his that seasons sway,
 He brings the Moneth, but you must make it May.
 Arise, Arise,
 Bright eyes,
 And silver over Beautie’s skies:
 You set, Noon’s Night: you up, each Day
 Turns jolly May.

Now Venus hatches her young Doves,
 This fruitful Moneth’s proper for Loves,
 Though Aprill sayes like her it moves
 Full of sad change; but you may chase away
 All showres with smiles, and make all our days May.
 Arise, Arise, etc.

All but you love, (though all love you),
 The Birds their song each morn renew,
 Even Earth has don’d her gaudy hue.

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Since all things else are blith, let your kind Ray
 Do more than Sol's, and make in me too May.
 Arise, Arise, etc.

Baron

May this Moneth last; when bald Time shall
 Climb your fair Hill of Youth, may all
 His steps be slip'rie, and he back fall
 To Beautie's Spring, that your cheek may alway
 That lustre weare that now adorneth May.
 Arise, Arise, etc.

Pocula Castalia, 1650

SONG

THE ROSE

FROM Eliza's Breast,
 (That sweet Nest
 Where my heart and Cupid rest),
 I took a Rose-bud, which flew thither
 For shelter from the droughty weather.

Whilst a place it held
 In that field
 Of Lillies with Violet Mazes rill'd,
 It gathered all its sweetnesse there
 And smells, not of it selfe, but Her.

I thought to kisse the
 Stalk, but see
 It, angry, raiz'd its fangs at me,
 And prickt my lips in poor revenge
 For making it its sweet bed change.

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Baron

Whilst it therein laid,
 In its shade
 Thousand Cupids frisk'd and plai'd
 With Fairy Graces thither come
 To prove her Breast Elizium.
 Whence had it this die?
 Did the skie
 Lend it her Ruby Livery?
 No, No, it only blusht to see
 Her cheeks excell its gallantry.
 See! so to be sham'd
 And be tane
 From her bosom, the poor wan
 Languishing floure its leaves hath spread
 For Griefe, and lies, (griefe's Martyr), dead.
 In it yet doth lie
 Fragrancy:
 Thus must choycest Beauties die;
 But, as this, after death shall be
 Still od'rous in their memory.

Ibid.

TO ELIZA,
 WITH A TULIP FASHION'D WATCH

LADY,
 This measure of Time accept with serene eye
 From him whose Love to you shall Time out-vie.
 See! what disguise this spie of Day doth wear;
 A Tulip! as the forge its Garden were.
 Indeed heat procreates even Flowers, but this
 A peece of an Egyptian Mysterie is.

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Time, by a Flower, denotes how suddenly
Earth's frailer crops bloom, flourish, fade and die.
In speciall Beauty, (that sweet Tulip), hasts
To waite on Time: then use it whilst it lasts.

Baron

When these small clicking orbs you busie hear
Panting in their round journey, like the Spheres,
Think so my constant heart doth palpitate
Towards you, and th'Pulse of my Affections beat,
N'er to stand till shee that each happy thing
Envies, (the peevish sister), cuts the string.

Ibid.

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BEEDOME

THOMAS BEEDOME (d. 1640?). Author of a single volume of verse, *Poems Divine and Humane*, which was published posthumously in 1641 by Henry Glapthorne, the minor dramatist and poet. Beedome is one of the most interesting and capable of the lesser poets of the century. There are lapses and grotesque “conceits”, but, as a close imitator of Donne, he sometimes reaches the heights. At moments he achieves violent, startling, impassioned utterance: often he finds a vigorous thought and vigorous words to express it.

LOVES APOSTASY TO HIS FRIEND MR E. D.

TUT, let her goe; can I endure all this,
 Yet dye to doate upon a Mayden's kisse?
 Is there such Magicke in her lookes that can,
 Into a foole transfigure a man?
 Didst thou not love her? true: and she disdain
 To meet thy vertue? let her meet her shame.
 Were she as faire as she herselfe would be,
 Adorn'd with all the cost of bravery;
 Could she melt hearts of flint, and from her eye
 Give her beholders powers to live or die;
 I'de rather begge she would pronounce my death,
 Then be her scorne, though that preserv'd my breath.
 Rise heart! and be not fool'd: s'foote, what a shame
 Were it for thee to re-incense one flame
 From the declining sparke! dost thou not know
 As shee's a woman, her whole sexe doth owe
 To thine all honour? her false heart and pride
 Dare not oppose thy faith? then turne high tyde,
 And let her, since her scorne doth so disease thee,
 By her repentance strive again to please thee.

Poems Divine and Humane, 1641