

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-67319-9 - An Anthology of the Poetry of the Age of Shakespeare  
 Chosen and Arranged by W. T. Young  
 Excerpt  
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## LYRIC POEMS

*From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557*

*Complaint for true love unrequited*

What 'vaileth truth, or by it to take pain?  
 To strive by steadfastness for to attain  
 How to be just, and flee from doubleness?  
 Since all alike, where ruleth craftiness,  
 Rewarded is, both crafty, false, and plain.  
 Soonest he speedeth that most can lie and feign;  
 True meaning heart is had in high disdain.  
 Against deceit, and cloaked doubleness,  
 What 'vaileth truth, or perfect steadfastness?  
 Deceived is he, by false and crafty train,  
 That means no guile, and faithful doth remain  
 Within the trap, without help or redress;  
 But for to love, lo, such a stern mistress,  
 Where cruelty dwells, alas, it were in vain.

SIR T. WYATT

*From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557*

*The lover complaineth the unkindness of his love*

My lute, awake! perform the last  
 Labour, that thou and I shall waste,  
 And end that I have now begun;  
 And when this song is sung and past,  
 My lute be still! for I have done.

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### SIR THOMAS WYATT

As to be heard where ear is none,  
As lead to grave in marble stone,  
My song may pierce her heart as soon.  
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan?  
No, no, my lute! for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly  
Repulse the waves continually,  
As she my suit and affection;  
So that I am past remedy,  
Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got  
Of simple hearts through love's shot,  
By whom unkind thou hast them won;  
Think not he hath his bow forgot,  
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,  
That makest but game on earnest pain.  
Think not alone under the sun  
Unquit to cause thy lover's plain;  
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie withered and old  
In winter nights, that are so cold,  
Plaining in vain unto the moon;  
Thy wishes then dare not be told;  
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent  
The time that thou hast lost and spent  
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon;  
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,  
And wish and want as I have done.

Now cease, my lute! this is the last  
Labour that thou and I shall waste,  
And ended is that we begun:  
Now is this song both sung and past;  
My lute be still! for I have done.

SIR T. WYATT

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## SIR THOMAS WYATT

*From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557**The lover sheweth how he is forsaken of such as  
he sometime enjoyed*

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek,  
 With naked foot stalking within my chamber.  
 Once have I seen them gentle, tame, and meek,  
 That now are wild, and do not once remember,  
 That sometime they have put themselves in danger  
 To take bread at my hand; and now they range  
 Busily seeking in continual change.

Thanked be fortune, it hath been otherwise  
 Twenty times better; but once especial,  
 In thin array, after a pleasant guise,  
 When her loose gown did from her shoulders fall,  
 And she me caught in her arms long and small,  
 And therewithal so sweetly did me kiss,  
 And softly said, Dear heart, how like you this?

It was no dream, for I lay broad awaking;  
 But all is turn'd now, through my gentleness,  
 Into a bitter fashion of forsaking;  
 And I have leave to go of her goodness;  
 And she also to use newfangledness.  
 But, since that I unkindly so am served,  
 How like you this, what hath she now deserved?

SIR T. WYATT

*From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557**He ruleth not, though he reign over realms,  
that is subject to his own lusts*

If thou wilt mighty be, flee from the rage  
 Of cruel will; and see thou keep thee free  
 From the foul yoke of sensual bondage.  
 For though thy empire stretch to Indian sea,  
 And for thy fear trembleth the farthest Thule,  
 If thy desire have over thee the power,  
 Subject then art thou, and no governor.

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### SIR THOMAS WYATT

If to be noble and high thy mind be moved,  
Consider well thy ground and thy beginning;  
For he that hath each star in heaven fixed,  
And gives the moon her horns, and her eclipsing,  
Alike hath made thee noble in his working;  
So that wretched no way may thou be,  
Except foul lust and vice do conquer thee.

All were it so thou had a flood of gold,  
Unto thy thirst yet should it not suffice;  
And though with Indian stones, a thousand fold  
More precious than can thyself devise,  
Ycharged were thy back; thy covetise  
And busy biting yet should never let  
Thy wretched life, ne do thy death profet.

SIR T. WYATT

*From Devonshire MS (Nott)*

*The lover's lute cannot be blamed though it sing  
of his lady's unkindness*

Blame not my Lute! for he must sound  
Of this or that as liketh me;  
For lack of wit the Lute is bound  
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;  
Though my songs be somewhat strange,  
And speak such words as touch thy change,  
Blame not my Lute!

My Lute, alas! doth not offend,  
Though that perforce he must agree  
To sound such tunes as I intend  
To sing to them that heareth me;  
Then though my songs be somewhat plain,  
And toucheth some that use to feign,  
Blame not my Lute!

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## SIR THOMAS WYATT

My Lute and strings may not deny,  
 But as I strike they must obey;  
 Break not them then so wrongfully,  
 But wreak thyself some other way;  
 And though the songs which I indite  
 Do quit thy change with rightful spite,  
 Blame not my Lute!

Spite asketh spite, and changing change,  
 And falsed faith must needs be known;  
 The faults so great, the case so strange,  
 Of right it must abroad be blown;  
 Then since that by thine own desert  
 My songs do tell how true thou art,  
 Blame not my Lute!

Blame but thyself that hast misdone,  
 And well deserved to have blame;  
 Change thou thy way, so evil begun,  
 And then my Lute shall sound that same;  
 But if till then my fingers play  
 By thy desert their wonted way,  
 Blame not my Lute!

Farewell! unknown; for though thou break  
 My strings in spite with great disdain,  
 Yet have I found out, for thy sake,  
 Strings for to string my Lute again:  
 And if, perchance, this sely rhyme  
 Do make thee blush, at any time,  
 Blame not my Lute!

SIR T. WYATT

*From Devonshire MS**An earnest suit to his unkind mistress not to forsake him*

And wilt thou leave me thus?  
 Say Nay! say Nay! for shame!  
 To save thee from the blame  
 Of all my grief and grame.  
 And wilt thou leave me thus?  
 Say Nay! say Nay!

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[More information](#)**SIR THOMAS WYATT**

And wilt thou leave me thus,  
That hath loved thee so long,  
In wealth and woe among?  
And is thy heart so strong  
As for to leave me thus?  
Say Nay! say Nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,  
That hath given thee my heart  
Never for to depart,  
Neither for pain nor smart?  
And wilt thou leave me thus?  
Say Nay! say Nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,  
And have no more pity  
Of him that loveth thee?  
Helas! thy cruelty!  
And wilt thou leave me thus?  
Say Nay! say Nay!

SIR T. WYATT

*From Devonshire MS*

*The lover beseecheth his mistress not to forget his  
steadfast faith and true intent*

Forget not yet the tried intent  
Of such a truth as I have meant;  
My great travail so gladly spent;  
Forget not yet!

Forget not yet when first began  
The weary life ye know, since when  
The suit, the service none tell can;  
Forget not yet!

Forget not yet the great assays,  
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,  
The painful patience in denays;  
Forget not yet!

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[More information](#)**SIR T WYATT and LORD VAUX**

Forget not yet, forget not this,  
 How long ago hath been, and is  
 The mind that never meant amiss;  
   Forget not yet!

Forget not then thine own approved,  
 The which so long hath thee so loved,  
 Whose steadfast faith yet never moved;  
   Forget not this!

SIR T. WYATT

*From The Paradise of Dainty Devices, 1576—1578**No pleasure without some pain*

How can the tree but waste, and wither away,  
 That hath not sometime comfort of the Sun:  
 How can that flower but fade, and soon decay,  
 That always is with dark clouds run.  
 Is this a life? nay death you may it call,  
 That feels each pain, and knoweth no joy at all.

What foodless beast can live long in good plight?  
 Or is it life where senses there be none?  
 Or what availeth eyes without their light?  
 Or else a tongue to him that is alone?  
 Is this a life? nay death you may it call,  
 That feels each pain, and knows no joy at all.

Whereto serve ears, if that there be no sound,  
 Or such a head, where no devise doth grow,  
 But all of plaints, since sorrow is the ground  
 Whereby the heart doth pine in deadly woe.  
 Is this a life? nay death you may it call,  
 That feels each pain, and knows no joy at all.

THOMAS LORD VAUX

THOMAS LORD VAUX

*From The Paradise of Dainty Devices, 1576—1578*

*Of a contented mind*

When all is done and said,  
 In the end thus shall you find,  
 He most of all doth bathe in bliss  
 That hath a quiet mind:  
 And, clear from worldly cares,  
 To deem can be content  
 The sweetest time in all this life  
 In thinking to be spent.

The body subject is  
 To fickle Fortune's power,  
 And to a million of mishaps  
 Is casual every hour:  
 And death in time doth change  
 It to a clod of clay;  
 When as the mind, which is divine,  
 Runs never to decay.

Companion none is like  
 Unto the mind alone;  
 For many have been harm'd by speech,  
 Through thinking few or none.  
 Fear oftentimes restraineth words,  
 But makes not thoughts to cease;  
 And he speaks best, that hath the skill  
 When for to hold his peace.

Our wealth leaves us at death;  
 Our kinsmen at the grave;  
 But virtues of the mind unto  
 The heavens with us have.  
 Wherefore, for virtue's sake,  
 I can be well content  
 The sweetest time of all my life  
 To deem in thinking spent.

THOMAS LORD VAUX



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## HENRY HOWARD EARL OF SURREY

*From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557*

### *A praise of his love*

Give place, ye lovers, here before  
That spent your boasts and brags in vain;  
My Lady's beauty passeth more  
The best of yours, I dare well sayen,  
Than doth the sun the candle light,  
Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just,  
As had Penelope the fair;  
For what she saith, ye may it trust,  
As it by writing sealed were.  
And virtues hath she many moe  
Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I would,  
The whole effect of Nature's plaint,  
When she had lost the perfect mould,  
The like to whom she could not paint;  
With wringing hands how she did cry,  
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind,  
Her kingdom only set apart,  
There was no loss, by law of kind,  
That could have gone so near her heart;  
And this was chiefly all her pain,  
She could not make the like again.

Sith Nature thus gave her the praise,  
To be the chiefest work she wrought;  
In faith, methink! some better ways  
On your behalf might well be sought,  
Than to compare, as ye have done,  
To match the candle with the sun.

HENRY HOWARD EARL OF SURREY

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[More information](#)**EARL OF SURREY and RICHARD EDWARDES***From Tottel's Songs and Sonnets, 1557**The means to attain happy life*

Martial, the things that do attain  
 The happy life, be these, I find :  
 The riches left, not got with pain ;  
 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind ;  
 The equal friend ; no grudge, no strife ;  
 No charge of rule, nor governance ;  
 Without disease, the healthful life ;  
 The household of continuance ;  
 The mean diet, no delicate fare ;  
 True wisdom joined with simpleness ;  
 The night discharged of all care,  
 Where wine the wit may not oppress :  
 The faithful wife, without debate ;  
 Such sleeps as may beguile the night.  
 Contented with thine own estate,  
 Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

HENRY HOWARD EARL OF SURREY

*From The Paradise of Dainty Devices, 1576—1578**Amantium Iræ*

In going to my naked bed, as one that would have slept,  
 I heard a wife sing to her child that long before had wept :  
 She sighed sore, and sang full sweet, to bring the babe to rest,  
 That would not cease, but cried still, in sucking at her breast.  
 She was full weary of her watch, and grieved with her child ;  
 She rocked it and rated it, till that on her it smiled :  
 Then did she say, Now have I found this proverb true to  
 prove,  
 The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.

Then took I paper, pen, and ink, this proverb for to write,  
 In register for to remain of such a worthy wight ;  
 As she proceeded thus in song, unto her little brat,  
 Much matter utter'd she of weight, in place whereas she sat ;

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