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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

Cynthia, an Elegiac Poem. By the Same.

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Visual Library

O Nancy! can'ſt thou love ſo true,
Thro' perils keen with me to go,
Or when thy ſwain miſhap ſhall rue,
To ſhare with him the pang of woe?
Say ſhould diſeaſe or pain befal,
Wilt thou aſſume the nurſe's care,
Nor wiſtful thoſe gay ſcenes recall
Where thou wert faireſt of the fair?

And when at laſt thy love ſhall die,
Wilt thou receive his parting breath?
Wilt thou repreſs each ſtruggling ſigh,
And chear with ſmiles the bed of death?
And wilt thou o'er his breathleſs clay
Strew flow'rs, and drop the tender tear,
Nor *then* regret thoſe ſcenes ſo gay,
Where thou wert faireſt of the fair?

CYNTHIA, an Elegiac Poem.

By the Same.

—— *Libeat tibi Cynthia mecum*
Roſcida muſcoſis antra tenere jugis. PROPERT.

BENEATH an aged oak's embow'ring ſhade,
Whoſe ſpreading arms with gray moſs fringed were,
Around whoſe trunk the claſping ivy ſtray'd;
A love lorn youth oft penſive wou'd repair.

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Faſt by, a Naïd taught her ſtream to glide,
Which thro' the dale a winding channel wore
The ſilver willow deck'd its verdant ſide,
The whiſp'ring ſedges wav'd along the ſhore.

Here oft, when Morn peep'd o'er the duſky hill;
Here oft when Eve bedew'd the miſty vale;
Careleſs he laid him all beſide the rill,
And pour'd in ſtrains like theſe his artleſs tale.

Ah! would he ſay—and then a ſigh would heave:
Ah Cynthia! ſweeter then the breath of morn,
Soft as the gentle breath that fans at eve,
Of thee bereft how ſhall I live forlorn?

Ah! what avails this ſweetly ſolemn bow'r,
That ſilent ſtream where dimpling eddies play;
Yon thymy bank bedeck'd with many a flow'r,
Where maple-tufts exclude the beam of day.

Robb'd of my love, for how can theſe delight,
Tho' laviſh Spring her ſmiles around has caſt!
Deſpair, alas! that whelms the ſoul in night,
Dims the ſad eye and deadens every taſte.

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As droops the lilly at the blighting gale;
  Or * crimſon-ſpotted cowſlip of the mead,
Whoſe tender ſtalk (alas! their ſtalk ſo frail)
  Some haſty foot hath bruis'd with heedleſs tread:

As droops the woodbine, when ſome village hind
  Hath fell'd the ſapling elm it fondly bound;
No more it gadding dances in the wind,
  But trails its fading beauties on the ground:

So droops my ſoul, dear maid, downcaſt and ſad,
  For ever! ah! for ever torn from thee:
Bereft of each ſweet hope, which once it had,
  When love, when treacherous love firſt ſmil'd on me.

Return bleſt days, return ye laughing hours,
  Which led me up the roſeat ſteep of youth;
Which ſtrew'd my ſimple path with vernal flow'rs,
  And bade me court chaſte Science and fair Truth.

Ye know, the curling breeze, or gilded fly
  That idly wantons in the noon-tide air,
Was not ſo free, was not ſo gay as I,
  For ah! I knew not then or love, or care.

* —— *On her left breaſt*
A mole cinque-ſpotted: like the crimſon drops
I' th' bottom of a cowſlip.
Shakeſpear's Cymbeline, Act 3.

Witneſs

Witneſs ye winged daughters of the year,
  If e'er a ſigh had learnt to heave my breaſt!
If e'er my cheek was conſcious of a tear,
  'Till Cynthia came and rob'd my ſoul of reſt.

O have you ſeen, bath'd in the morning dew,
  The budding roſe its infant bloom diſplay;
When firſt its virgin tints unfold to view,
  It ſhrinks and ſcarcely truſts the blaze of day.

So ſoft, ſo delicate, ſo ſweet ſhe came,
  Youth's damaſk glow juſt dawning on her cheek:
I gaz'd, I ſigh'd, I caught the tender flame,
  Felt the fond pang, and droop'd with paſſion, weak.

Yet not unpitied was my pain the while;
  For oft beſide yon ſweet-briar in the dale,
With many a bluſh, with many a melting ſmile,
  She ſate and liſten'd to the plaintive tale.

Ah me! I fondly dreamt of pleaſures rare,
  Nor deem'd ſo ſweet a face with ſcorn cou'd glow;
How could you cruel then pronounce deſpair,
  Chill the warm hope, and plant the thorn of woe?

What tho' no treaſures canker in my cheſt,
  Nor crowds of ſuppliant vaſſals hail me lord!
What tho' my roof can boaſt no princely gueſt,
  Nor ſurfeits lurk beneath my frugal board!

Yet

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Yet ſhould Content, that ſhuns the gilded bed,
With ſmiling Peace, and Virtue there forgot,
And roſe-lip'd Health, which haunts the ſtraw-built ſhed,
With cherub Joy, frequent my little cot:

Led by chaſte Love, the decent band ſhould come,
O charmer would'ſt thou deign my roof to ſhare?
Nor ſhould the Muſes ſcorn our ſimple dome,
Or knit in myſtic dance, the Graces fair.

The wood-land nymphs, and gentle fays, at eve
Forth from the dripping cave and moſſy dell,
Should round our hearth fantaſtic meaſures weave,
And ſhield from miſchief by their guardian ſpell.

Come then bright maid, and quit the city throng,
Have rural joys no charm to win the ſoul?
——She proud, alas! derides my lowly ſong,
Scorns the fond vow, and ſpurns the ruſſet ſtole.

Then Love begone, thy thriftleſs empire yield,
In youthful toils I'll loſe the unmanly pain:
With echoing horns I'll rouſe the jocund field,
Urge the keen chace, and ſweep along the plain.

Or all in ſome lone moſs-grown tow'r ſublime
With midnight lamp I'll watch pale Cynthia round,
Explore the choiceſt rolls of ancient Time,
And heal with Wiſdom's balm my hapleſs wound.