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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

An Ode to Fancy. By the Same.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1978

Visual Library

An ODE to FANCY.

By the Same.

O Parent of each lovely Muſe,
Thy ſpirit o'er my ſoul diffuſe,
O'er all my artleſs ſongs preſide,
My footſteps to thy temple guide,
To offer at thy turf-built ſhrine,
In golden cups no coſtly wine,
No murder'd fat'ling of the flock,
But flowers and honey from the rock.
O Nymph with looſely-flowing hair,
With buſkin'd leg, and boſom bare,
Thy waiſt with myrtle-girdle bound,
Thy brows with Indian feathers crown'd,
Waving in thy ſnowy hand
An all-commanding magick wand,
Of pow'r to bid freſh gardens blow
'Mid chearleſs Lapland's barren ſnow,
Whoſe rapid wings thy flight convey
Thro' air, and over earth and ſea,
While the vaſt various landſcape lies
Conſpicuous to thy piercing eyes.

O lover

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O lover of the deſart, hail!
Say, in what deep and pathleſs vale,
Or on what hoary mountain's ſide,
'Midſt falls of water you reſide,
'Midſt broken rocks, a rugged ſcene,
With green and graſſy dales between,
'Midſt foreſts dark of aged oak,
Ne'er echoing with the woodman's ſtroke,
Where never human art appear'd,
Nor ev'n one ſtraw-roof'd cott was rear'd,
Where NATURE ſeems to ſit alone,
Majeſtick on a craggy throne;
Tell me the path, ſweet wand'rer, tell,
To thy unknown ſequeſter'd cell,
Where woodbines cluſter round the door,
Where ſhells and moſs o'erlay the floor,
And on whoſe top an hawthorn blows,
Amid whoſe thickly-woven boughs
Some nightingale ſtill builds her neſt,
Each evening warbling thee to reſt:
Then lay me by the haunted ſtream,
Rapt in ſome wild, poetick dream,
In converſe while methinks I rove
With SPENSER thro' a fairy grove;
Till ſuddenly awak'd, I hear
Strange whiſper'd muſick in my ear,
And my glad ſoul in bliſs is drown'd,
By the ſweetly-ſoothing ſound!

Me,

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Me, Goddeſs, by the right-hand lead,
Sometimes thro' the yellow mead,
Where JOY and white-rob'd PEACE reſort,
And VENUS keeps her feſtive court,
Where MIRTH and YOUTH each evening meet,
And lightly trip with nimble feet,
Nodding their lilly-crowned heads,
Where LAUGHTER roſe-lip'd HEBE leads;
Where ECHO walks ſteep hills among,
Liſt'ning to the ſhepherd's ſong:
Yet not theſe flowery fields of joy
Can long my penſive mind employ,
Haſte, FANCY, from the ſcenes of folly
To meet the matron MELANCHOLY,
Goddeſs of the tearful eye,
That loves to fold her arms and ſigh!
Let us with ſilent footſteps go
To charnels and the houſe of woe,
To Gothick churches, vaults, and tombs,
Where each ſad night ſome virgin comes,
With throbbing breaſt, and faded cheek,
Her promis'd bridegroom's urn to ſeek;
Or to ſome Abbey's mould'ring tow'rs,
Where, to avoid cold wintry ſhow'rs,
The naked beggar ſhivering lies,
While whiſtling tempeſts round her riſe,
And trembles leſt the tottering wall
Should on her ſleeping infants fall.

Now

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Now let us louder ſtrike the lyre,
For my heart glows with martial fire,
I feel, I feel, with ſudden heat,
My big tumultuous boſom beat ;
The trumpet's clangors pierce my ear,
A thouſand widows' ſhrieks I hear,
Give me another horſe, I cry,
Lo! the baſe GALLIC ſquadrons fly ;
Whence is this rage ?—what ſpirit, ſay,
To battle hurries me away ?
'Tis FANCY, in her fiery car,
Tranſports me to the thickeſt war,
There whirls me o'er the hills of ſlain,
Where Tumult and Deſtruction reign ;
Where mad with pain, the wounded ſteed
Tramples the dying and the dead :
Where giant Terror ſtalks around,
With ſullen joy ſurveys the ground,
And pointing to th' enſanguin'd field,
Shakes his dreadful Gorgon-ſhield !

O guide me from this horrid ſcene
To high-arch'd walks and alleys green,
Which lovely LURA ſeeks, to ſhun
The fervors of the mid-day ſun ;
The pangs of abſence, O remove,
For thou can'ſt place me near my love,
Can'ſt fold in viſionary bliſs,
And let me think I ſteal a kiſs,

While

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While her ruby lips dispense
Luscious nectar's quintessence!
When young-ey'd SPRING profusely throws
From her green lap the pink and rose,
When the soft turtle of the dale
To SUMMER tells her tender tale,
When AUTUMN cooling caverns seeks,
And stains with wine his jolly cheeks,
When WINTER, like poor pilgrim old,
Shakes his silver beard with cold,
At every season let my ear
Thy solemn whispers, FANCY, hear.
O warm, enthusiastick maid,
Without thy powerful, vital aid,
That breathes an energy divine,
That gives a soul to every line,
Ne'er may I strive with lips profane
To utter an unhallow'd strain,
Nor dare to touch the sacred string,
Save when with smiles thou bid'st me sing.
O hear our prayer, O hither come
From thy lamented SHAKESPEAR's tomb,
On which thou lov'st to sit at eve,
Musing o'er thy darling's grave;
O queen of numbers, once again
Animate some chosen swain,
Who fill'd with unexhausted fire,
May boldly smite the sounding lyre,

May rise above the rhyming throng,
Who with some new, unequall'd song
O'er all our list'ning passions reign,
O'erwhelm our souls with joy and pain;
With terror shake, with pity move,
Rouze with revenge, or melt with love.
O deign t' attend his evening walk,
With him in groves and grottos talk:
Teach him to scorn with frigid art
Feebly to touch th' unraptur'd heart;
Like lightning, let his mighty verse
The bosom's inmost foldings pierce:
With native beauties win applause,
Beyond cold criticks' studied laws:
O let each Muse's fame increase,
O bid BRITANNIA rival GREECE!

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