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**A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands**

**Dodsley, Robert**

**London, 1758**

Solitude. An Ode.

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When the full wig thy visage shall enclose,  
 And only leave to view thy learned nose :  
 Safely may'tt thou defy beaux, wits, and scoffers ;  
 While tenants, in fee simple, stuff thy coffers.

S O L I T U D E .

An O D E .

I.

**O** Solitude, romantic Maid  
 Whether by nodding towers you tread,  
 Or haunt the desert's trackless gloom,  
 Or hover o'er the yawning tomb,  
 Or climb the Andes' clifted side,  
 Or by the Nile's coy source abide,  
 Or starting from your half-year's sleep  
 From Hecla view the thawing deep,  
 Or Tadmor's marble wastes survey,  
 Or in yon roofless cloyster stray ;  
 You, Recluse, again I woo,  
 And again your steps pursue.

II.

Plum'd Conceit himself surveying,  
 Folly with her shadow playing,  
 Purse-proud, elbowing Insolence,  
 Bloated empirick, puff'd Pretence,



Noise that thro' a trumpet speaks,  
 Laughter in loud peals that breaks,  
 Intrusion with a sopling's face,  
 (Ignorant of time and place)  
 Sparks of fire Dissention blowing,  
 Ductile, court-bred Flattery, bowing,  
 Restraint's stiff neck, Grimace's leer,  
 Squint-ey'd Censure's artful sneer,  
 Ambition's buskins steep'd in blood,  
 Fly thy presence, Solitude.

## III.

Sage Reflection bent with years,  
 Conscious Virtue void of fears,  
 Muffled Silence wood-nymph shy,  
 Meditation's piercing eye,  
 Halcyon Peace on moss reclin'd,  
 Retrospect that scans the mind,  
 Rapt earth-gazing Resvery,  
 Blushing artless Modesty,  
 Health that snuffs the morning air,  
 Full-ey'd Truth with bosom bare,  
 Inspiration, Nature's child,  
 Seek the solitary wild.

## IV.

You with the tragic Muse <sup>f</sup> retir'd  
 The wife Euripides inspir'd,

*f In the island Salamis.*

You taught the sadly-pleasing air  
 That  $\epsilon$  Athens sav'd from ruins bare.  
 You gave the Cean's tears to flow,  
 And  $h$  unlock'd the springs of woe;  
 You penn'd what exil'd Nafø thought,  
 And pour'd the melancholy note.  
 With Petrarch o'er Valcluse you stray'd,  
 When Death snatch'd his  $i$  long-lov'd maid;  
 You taught the rocks her loss to mourn,  
 You strew'd with flowers her virgin urn.  
 And late in  $k$  Hagley you were seen,  
 With bloodshed eyes, and sombre mien,  
 Hymen his yellow vestment tore,  
 And Dirge a wreath of cypress wore.  
 But chief your own the solemn lay  
 That wept Narcissa young and gay,  
 Darknes clap'd her sable wing,  
 While you touch'd the mournful string,  
 Anguish left the pathless wild,  
 Grim-fac'd Melancholy smil'd,  
 Drowsy Midnight ceas'd to yawn,  
 The starry host put back the dawn,  
 Aside their harps ev'n Seraphs flung  
 To hear thy sweet complaint, O Young.

$\epsilon$  See *Plutarch in the life of Lysander.*

$h$  *Simonides.*

$i$  *Laura, twenty years, and ten after her death.*

$k$  *Monody on the death of Mrs. Lyttleton.*



## V.

When all Nature's hush'd asleep,  
 Nor Love nor Guilt their vigils keep,  
 Soft you leave your cavern'd den,  
 And wander o'er the works of men,  
 But when Phosphor brings the dawn  
 By her dappled coursers drawn,  
 Again you to the wild retreat  
 And the early huntsman meet,  
 Where as you pensive pace along,  
 You catch the distant shepherd's song,  
 Or brush from herbs the pearly dew,  
 Or the rising primrose view.  
 Devotion lends her heaven-plum'd wings,  
 You mount, and Nature with you sings.  
 But when mid-day fervors glow  
 To upland airy shades you go,  
 Where never sunburnt woodman came,  
 Nor sportsman chas'd the timid game;  
 And there beneath an oak reclin'd,  
 With drowfy waterfalls behind,  
 You sink to rest,  
 Till the tuneful bird of night  
 From the neighb'ring poplars height  
 Wake you with her solemn strain,  
 And teach pleas'd Echo to complain.

## VI.

With you roses brighter bloom,  
 Sweeter every sweet perfume,

Purer every fountain flows  
Stronger every wilding grows.

## VII.

Let those toil for gold who please,  
Or for fame renounce their ease.  
What is fame? an empty bubble,  
Gold? a transient, shining trouble.  
Let them for their country bleed,  
What was Sidney's, Raleigh's meed?  
Man's not worth a moment's pain,  
Base, ungrateful, fickle, vain.  
Then let me, sequester'd fair,  
To your Sibyl grot repair,  
On yon hanging cliff it stands  
Scoop'd by Nature's salvage hands,  
Bosom'd in the gloomy shade  
Of cypress not with age decay'd.  
Where the owl still-hooting fits,  
Where the bat incessant flits,  
There in loftier strains I'll sing  
Whence the changing seasons spring,  
Tell how storms deform the skies,  
Whence the waves subside and rise,  
Trace the comet's blazing tail,  
Weigh the planets in a scale;  
Bend, great God, before thy shrine,  
The bournless macrocosm's thine.

Save

## VIII.

Save me ! what's yon shrouded shade ?  
 That wanders in the dark-brown glade.  
 It beckons me ! — vain fears adieu,  
 Mysterious ghost, I follow you.  
 Ah me ! too well that gait I know,  
 My youth's first friend, my manhood's woe !  
 Its breast it bares ! what ! stain'd with blood ?  
 Quick let me stanch the vital flood.  
 Oh spirit, whither art thou flown ?  
 Why left me comfortless alone ?  
 O Solitude on me bestow,  
 The heart-felt harmony of woe,  
 Such, such, as on th' Ausonian shore,  
 Sweet <sup>1</sup> Dorian Mofchus trill'd of yore :  
 No time should cancel thy desert,  
 More, more, than <sup>m</sup> Bion was, thou wert.

## IX.

O goddess of the tearful eye,  
 The never-ceasing stream supply.  
 Let us with Retirement go  
 To charnels, and the house of woe,  
 O'er Friendship's herse low-drooping mourn,  
 Where the sickly tapers burn,  
 Where Death and nun-clad Sorrow dwell,  
 And nightly ring the solemn knell.

<sup>1</sup> See *Idyll*.

<sup>m</sup> Alluding to the death of a friend.

The gloom dispels, the charnel smiles,  
 Light flashes thro' the vaulted ile.  
 Blow silky soft, thou western gale,  
 O goddess of the desert, hail !  
 She bursts from you cliff-riven cave,  
 Insulted by the wintry wave ;  
 Her brow an ivy garland binds,  
 Her tresses wanton with the winds,  
 A lion's spoils, without a zone,  
 Around her limbs are careless thrown ;  
 Her right hand wields a knotted mace,  
 Her eyes roll wild, a stride her pace ;  
 Her left a magic mirror holds,  
 In which she oft herself beholds.  
 O goddess of the desert, hail !

And softer blow, thou western gale !

Since in each scheme of life I've fail'd,  
 And disappointment seems entail'd ;

Since all on earth I valued most,  
 My guide, my stay, my friend is lost ;

You, only you, can make me blest,  
 And hush the tempest in my breast.

Then gently deign to guide my feet  
 To your hermit-trodden seat,

Where I may live at last my own,  
 Where I at last may die unknown.

I spoke, she twin'd her magic ray,  
 And thus she said, or seem'd to say.

Youth,



Youth, you're mistaken, if you think to find  
 In shades a medicine for a troubled mind ;  
 Wan Grief will haunt you wheresoe'er you go,  
 Sigh in the breeze, and in the streamlet flow,  
 There pale Inaction pines his life away,  
 And, fatiate, curses the return of day :  
 There naked Frenzy laughing wild with pain,  
 Or bares the blade, or plunges in the main :  
 There Superstition broods o'er all her fears,  
 And yells of dæmons in the Zephyr hears.  
 But if a hermit you're resolv'd to dwell,  
 And bid to social life a last farewell ;  
 'Tis impious.—

God never made an independent man,  
 'Twould jar the concord of his general plan :  
 See every part of that stupendous whole,  
 " Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;  
 To one great end, the general good, conspire,  
 From matter, brute, to man, to seraph, fire.  
 Should man thro' Nature solitary roam,  
 His will his sovereign, every where his home,  
 What force wou'd guard him from the lion's jaw ?  
 What swiftness wing him from the panther's paw ?  
 Or should Fate lead him to some safer shore,  
 Where panthers never prowl, nor lions roar ;  
 Where liberal Nature all her charms bestows,  
 Suns shine, birds sing, flowers bloom, and water flows,

Fool,

Fool, dost thou think he'd revel on the store,  
 Absolve the care of Heaven, nor ask for more ?  
 Tho' waters flow'd, flow'rs bloom'd, and Phœbus shone,  
 He'd sigh, he'd murmur that he was alone.  
 For know, the Maker on the human breast  
 A sense of kindred, country, man, imprest ;  
 And social life to better, aid, adorn,  
 With proper faculties each mortal's born.

Tho' Nature's works the ruling mind declare,  
 And well deserve enquiry's ferious care,  
 The God (whate'er Misanthrophy may say)  
 Shines, beams in man with most unclouded ray.  
 What boots it thee to fly from pole to pole ?  
 Hang o'er the sun, and with the planets roll ?  
 What boots thro' space's furthest bourns to roam ?  
 If thou, O man, a stranger art at home.  
 Then know thyself, the human mind survey,  
 The use, the pleasure will the toil repay.  
 Hence Inspiration plans his manner'd lays,  
 Hence Homer's crown, and Shakespear hence thy bays.  
 Hence he, the pride of Athens and the shame,  
 The best and wisest of mankind became.  
 Nor study only, practise what you know,  
 Your life, your knowledge, to mankind you owe.  
 With Plato's olive wreath the bays entwine ;  
 Those who in study, shou'd in practice shine.  
 Say, does the learned Lord of Hagley's shade,  
 Charm man so much by mossy fountains laid,



As when arouz'd, he stems Corruption's course,  
 And shakes the senate with a Tully's force ?  
 When Freedom gasp'd beneath a Cæsar's feet,  
 Then Publick Virtue might to shades retreat ;  
 But where she breathes, the least may useful be,  
 And Freedom, Britain, still belong to thee.  
 Tho' man's ungrateful, or tho' Fortune frown ;  
 Is the reward of worth a song, or crown ?  
 Nor yet unrecompens'd are Virtue's pains,  
 Good Allen lives, and bounteous Brunswick reigns,  
 On each condition disappoinments wait,  
 Enter the hut, and force the guarded gate.  
 Nor dare repine, tho' early Friendship bleed,  
 From love, the world, and all its cares he's freed.  
 But know, Adversity's the child of God ;  
 Whom Heaven approves of most, most feel her rod.  
 When smooth old Ocean and each storm's asleep,  
 Then Ignorance may plough the watery deep ;  
 But when the dæmons of the tempest rave,  
 Skill must conduct the vessel thro' the wave.  
 Sidney, what good man envies not thy blow ?  
 Who wou'd not wish <sup>b</sup> Anytus for a foe ?  
 Intrepid Virtue triumphs over Fate,  
 The good can never be unfortunate.  
 And be this maxim graven in thy mind,  
 The height of virtue is to serve mankind.

But when old age has silver'd o'er thy head,  
 When memory fails, and all thy vigour's fled,

<sup>b</sup> *One of the accusers of Socrates,*