

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

Poems On Several Occasions

Gay, John

London, 1745

Act I.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-1716



ACT I. SCENE I.

*A Plain, at the foot of a steep craggy
mountain.*

DIONE. LAURA.

LAURA.



HY dost thou fly me? stay, unhappy fair,
Seek not these horrid caverns of despair;
To trace thy steps the midnight air I bore,
Trode the brown desert, and unshelter'd

moor:

Three times the lark has sung his matin lay,
And rose on dewy wing to meet the day,
Since first I found thee, stretch'd in pensive mood,
Where laurels border *Ladon's* silver flood.

Vol. II.

H

DIONE.

D I O N E.

O let my soul with grateful thanks o'erflow !
 'Tis to thy hand my daily life I owe.
 Like the weak lamb you rais'd me from the plain,
 Too faint to bear bleak winds and beating rain ;
 Each day I share thy bowl and clean repast,
 Each night thy roof defends the chilly blast.
 But vain is all thy friendship, vain thy care :
 Forget a wretch abandon'd to despair.

L A U R A.

Despair will fly thee, when thou shalt impart
 The fatal secret that torments thy heart ;
 Disclose thy sorrows to my faithful ear,
 Instruct these eyes to give thee tear for tear.
 Love, love's the cause ; our forests speak thy flame,
 The rocks have learnt to sigh *Evander's* name.
 If faltering shame thy bashful tongue restrain,
 If thou hast look'd, and blush'd, and sigh'd in vain ;
 Say, in what grove thy lovely shepherd strays,
 Tell me what mountains warble with his lays ;
 Thither I'll speed me, and with moving art
 Draw soft confessions from his melting heart.

D I O N E.

D I O N E.

Thy gen'rous care has touch'd my secret woe.
 Love bids these scalding tears incessant flow,
 Ill-fated love ! O, say, ye sylvan maids,
 Who range wide forests and sequester'd shades,
 Say where *Evander* bled, point out the ground
 That yet is purple with the savage wound.
 Yonder he lies ; I hear the bird of prey ;
 High o'er those cliffs the raven wings his way ;
 Hark how he croaks ! he scents the murder near.
 O may no greedy beak his visage tear !
 Shield him, ye *Cupids* ; strip the *Paphian* grove,
 And strow unfading myrtle o'er my love !
 Down, heaving heart.

L A U R A.

————— The mournful tale disclose.

D I O N E.

Let not my tears intrude on thy repose.
 Yet if thy friendship still the cause request ;
 I'll speak ; though sorrow rend my lab'ring breast.

H 2

Know



Know then, fair shepherds; no honest swain
 Taught me the duties of the peaceful plain;
 Unus'd to sweet content, no flocks I keep,
 Nor browsing goats that overhang the steep.
 Born where *Orchomenos*' proud turrets shine,
 I trace my birth from long illustrious line,
 Why was I train'd amidst *Arcadia*'s Court?
 Love ever revels in that gay resort
 Whene'er *Evander* past, my smitten heart
 Heav'd frequent sighs, and felt unusual smart.
 Ah! hadst thou seen with what sweet grace he mov'd!
 Yet why that wish? for *Laura* then had lov'd.

L A U R A.

Disfrust me not; thy secret wrongs impart.

D I O N E.

Forgive the fallies of a breaking heart.
Evander's sighs his mutual flame confess,
 The growing passion labour'd in his breast;
 To me he came; my heart with rapture sprung,
 To see the blushes, when his falt'ring tongue
 First said, I love. My eyes consent reveal,
 And plighted vows our faithful passion seal.

Where's

Where's now the lovely youth? he's lost, he's slain,
And the pale corse lies breathless on the plain!

L A U R A.

Are thus the hopes of constant lovers paid?
If thus — ye Powers, from love defend the maid!

D I O N E.

Now have twelve mornings warm'd the purple east,
Since my dear hunter rous'd the tusky beast;
Swift flew the foaming monster through the wood,
Swift as the wind, his eager steps pursu'd:
'Twas then the savage turn'd; then fell the youth,
And his dear blood distain'd the barb'rous tooth.

L A U R A.

Was there none near? no ready succour found?
Nor healing herb to stanch the spouting wound?

D I O N E.

In vain through pathless wood the hunters cross,
And fought with anxious eye their master lost;
In vain their frequent hollows echo'd shrill,
And his lov'd name was sent from hill to hill;



Erwander hears you not. He's lost, he's slain,
And the pale corse lies breathless on the plain.

L A U R A.

Has yet no clown (who, wandering from the way,
Beats ev'ry bush to raise the lamb astray)
Observ'd the fatal spot?

D I O N E.

————— O, if ye pass
Where purple murder dies the wither'd grass,
With pious finger gently close his eyes,
And let his grave with decent verdure rise. [Weeps.

L A U R A.

Behold the turtle who has lost her mate:
Awhile with drooping wing she mourns his fate,
Sullen, awhile she seeks the darkest grove,
And cooing meditates the murder'd dove;
But time the rueful image wears away,
Again she's cheer'd, again she seeks the day.
Spare then thy beauty, and no longer pine.

D I O N E.

Yet sure some turtle's love has equal'd mine,

Who

Who, when the hawk has snatch'd her mate away,
Hath never known the glad return of day.

When my fond father saw my faded eye,
And on my livid cheek the roses dye ;
When catching sighs my wasted bosom mov'd,
My looks, my sighs confirm'd him that I lov'd.
He knew not that *Evander* was my flame,
Evander dead ! my passion still the same !
He came, he threatned ; with paternal sway
Cleantes nam'd, and fix'd the nuptial day :
O cruel kindness ! too severely prest !
I scorn his honours, and his wealth detest.

L A U R A.

How vain is force ! Love ne'er can be compell'd.

D I O N E.

Though bound by duty, yet my heart rebell'd.
One night, when sleep had hush'd all busy spies,
And the pale moon had journey'd half the skies ;
Softly I rose and dress'd ; with silent tread,
Unbarr'd the gates ; and to these mountains fled.
Here let me sooth the melancholy hours !
Close me, ye woods, within your twilight bow'rs !

H 4

Where



Where my calm soul may settled sorrow know,
And no *Cleantes* interrupt my woe

[*Melancholy musick is heard at a distance.*

With importuning love ——— On yonder plain
Advances slow a melancholy train ;
Black Cypres boughs their drooping heads adorn.

L A U R A.

Alas ! *Menalcas* to his grave is born.
Behold the victim of *Parthenia's* pride !
He saw, he sigh'd, he lov'd, was scorn'd and dy'd.

D I O N E.

Where dwells this beauteous tyrant of the plains ?
Where may I see her ?

L A U R A.

————— Ask the sighing swains.
They best can speak the conquests of her eyes,
Whoever sees her, loves ; who loves her, dies.

D I O N E.

Perhaps untimely fate her flame hath cross'd,
And she, like me, hath her *Evander* lost.

How

How my foul pities her !

L A U R A .

————— If pity move
 Your generous bosom, pity those who love.
 There late arriv'd among our sylvan race
 A stranger shepherd, who with lonely pace
 Visits those mountain pines at dawn of day,
 Where oft' *Parthenia* takes her early way
 To rouse the chafe ; mad with his am'rous pain,
 He stops and raves ; then fullen walks again.
Parthenia's name is born by passing gales,
 And talking hills repeat it to the dales.
 Come, let us from this vale of sorrow go,
 Nor let the mournful scene prolong thy woe.

[*Exeunt.*



H 5:

SCENE



* SCENE II.

Shepherds and Shepherdesses, (crown'd with garlands of Cypress and Yew) bearing the body of Menalcas.

1 SHEPHERD.

Here gently rest the corse — With faltring breath
Thus spake *Menalcas* on the verge of death.

- ' Belov'd *Palemon*; hear a dying friend;
- ' See, where yon hills with craggy brows ascend,
- ' Low in the valley where the mountain grows,
- ' There first I saw her, there began my woes.
- ' When I am cold, may there this clay be laid;
- ' There often strays the dear the cruel maid,
- ' There as she walks, perhaps you'll hear her say,
- ' (While a kind gushing tear shall force its way)
- ' How could my stubborn heart relentless prove?
- ' Ah poor *Menalcas* — all thy fault was love!

* *This and the following Scene are form'd upon the novel of Marcella in Don Quixote.*

2 SHEP-

2 SHEPHERD.

When pitying lions o'er a carcase groan,
 And hungry tigers bleeding kids bemoan ;
 When the lean wolf laments the mangled sheep ;
 Then shall *Parthenia* o'er *Menalcas* weep.

1 SHEPHERD.

When famish'd panthers seek their morning food,
 And monsters roar along the desert wood ;
 When hissing vipers ruffle through the brake,
 Or in the path-way rears the speckled snake ;
 The wary swain th' approaching peril spies,
 And through some distant road securely flies.
 Fly then, ye swains, from beauty's surer wound ;
 Such was the fate our poor *Menalcas* found !

2 SHEPHERD.

What shepherd does not mourn *Menalcas* slain ?
 Kill'd by a barbarous woman's proud disdain !
 Whoe'er attempts to bend her scornful mind,
 Cries to the deserts, and pursues the wind.

1 SHEP-



1 SHEPHERD.

With ev'ry grace *Menalcas* was endow'd,
 His merits dazled all the sylvan croud.
 If you would know his pipe's melodious sound,
 Ask all the echoes of these hills around,
 For they have learnt his strains; who shall rehearse
 The strength, the cadence of his tuneful verse?
 Go, read those lofty poplars; there you'll find
 Some tender sonnet grow on ev'ry rind.

2 SHEPHERD:

Yet what avails his skill? *Parthenia* flies.
 Can merit hope success in woman's eyes?

1 SHEPHERD:

Why was *Parthenia* form'd of softest mold?
 Why does her heart such savage nature hold?
 O ye kind gods! or all her charms efface,
 Or tame her heart ——— so spare the shepherd race.

2 SHEPHERD.

As fade the flowers which on the grave I cast;
 So may *Parthenia's* transient beauty waste!

1 SHEPHERD.

1 S H E P H E R D.

What woman ever counts the fleeting years,
 Or sees the wrinkle which her forehead wears?
 Thinking her feature never shall decay,
 This swain she scorns, from that she turns away.
 But know, as when the rose her bud unfolds,
 Awhile each breast the short-liv'd fragrance holds:
 When the dry stalk lets drop her shrivell'd pride,
 The lovely ruin's ever thrown aside.
 So shall *Parthedia* be.

2 S H E P H E R D.

————— See, she appears,
 To boast her spoils, and triumph in our tears.



S C E N E III.

Parthenia appears from the mountain.

PARTHENIA. SHEPHERDS.

1 S H E P H E R D.

Why this way dost thou turn thy baneful eyes,
 Pernicious Basilisk? Lo! there he lies,

There.

There lies the youth thy curf'd beauty flew ;
 See, at thy prefence, how he bleeds anew !
 Look down, enjoy thy murder.

P A R T H E N I A.

————— Spare my fame ;
 I come to clear a virgin's injur'd name.
 If I'm a Bafilisk, the danger fly,
 Shun the fwift glances of my venom'd eye ;
 If I'm a murd'rer, why approach ye near,
 And to the dagger lay your bofom bare ?

I S H E P H E R D.

What heart is proof againft that face divine ?
 Love is not in our power.

P A R T H E N I A.

————— Is love in mine ?
 If e'er I trifled with a fhepherd's pain,
 Or with falfe hope his paffion ftrve to gain ;
 Then might you juftly curfe my favage mind,
 Then might you rank me with the ferpent kind :

Rut

But I ne'er trifled with a shepherd's pain,
 Nor with false hopes his passion strove to gain ;
 'Tis to his rash pursuit he owes his fate,
 I was not cruel ; he was obstinate.

I S H E P H E R D.

Hear this, ye sighing shepherds, and despair.
 Unhappy *Lycidas*, thy hour is near !
 Since the same barb'rous hand hath signed thy doom,
 We'll lay thee in our lov'd *Menalcas* tomb.

P A R T H E N I A.

Why will intruding man my peace destroy ?
 Let me content, and solitude enjoy ;
 Free was I born, my freedom to maintain,
 Early I fought the unambitious plain.
 Most women's weak resolves like reeds will ply,
 Shake with each breath, and bend with ev'ry sigh ;
 Mine, like an oak, whose firm roots deep descend,
 No breath of love can shake, no sigh can bend,
 If ye unhappy *Lycidas* would save ;
 Go seek him, lead him to *Menalcas*' grave ;
 Forbid his eyes with flowing grief to rain,
 Like him *Menalcas* wept, but wept in vain ;

Bid



Bid him his heart consuming groans give o'er :
 Tell him, I heard such piercing groans before,
 And heard unmov'd. O *Lycidas*, be wise,
 Prevent thy fate.---Lo! there *Menalcas* lies.

1 S H E P H E R D.

Now all the melancholy rites are paid,
 And o'er his grave the weeping marble laid ;
 Let's seek our charge ; the flocks dispersing wide,
 Whiten with moving fleece the mountain's side.
 Trust not, ye swains, the lightning of her eye,
 Left ye, like him, should love, despair, and dye.

[*Exeunt* Shepherds, &c. *Parthenia* remains in a melancholy posture looking on the grave of *Menalcas*..

Enter *Lycidas*.



SCENE



SCENE IV.

LYCIDAS. PARTHENIA.

LYCIDAS.

When shall my steps have rest? through all the wood,
 And by the winding banks of *Ladon's* flood
 I fought my love. O say, ye skipping fawns,
 (Who range entangled shades and daisy'd lawns)
 If ye have seen her! say ye warbling race,
 (Who measure on swift wing th'aerial space,
 And view below hills, dales, and distant shores)
 Where shall I find her whom my soul adores!



SCENE V.

LYCIDAS. PARTHENIA. DIONE.

LAURA.

[Dione and Laura at a distance.]

LYCIDAS.

What do I see? no. Fancy mocks my eyes,
 And bids the dear deluding vision rise.

'Tis

'Tis she. My springing heart her presence feels.
See, prostrate *Lycidas* before thee kneels.

[*Kneeling to Parthenia.*

Why will *Parthenia* turn her face away?

P A R T H E N I A.

Who calls *Parthenia*? hah!

[*She starts from her melancholy; and seeing Lycidas,
flies into the wood.*

L Y C I D A S.

————— Stay, virgin, stay.
O wing my feet, kind Loves. See, see, the bounds,
Fleet as the mountain roe, when prest by hounds.

[*He pursues her. Dione faints in the arms of Laura.*

L A U R A.

What means this trembling? all her colour flies,
And life is quite unstrung, Ah! lift thy eyes,
And answer me; speak, speak, 'tis *Laura* calls.
Speech has forsook her lips.---She faints, she falls.
Fan her, ye Zephyrs, with your balmy breath,
And bring her quickly from the shades of death:

Blow,

Blow, ye cool gales. See, see, the forest shakes
With coming winds! she breathes, she moves, she wakes.

D I O N E.

Ah false *Evander*!

L A U R A.

————— Calm thy sobbing breast.
Say, what new sorrow has thy heart oppress.

D I O N E.

Didst thou not hear his sighs and suppliant tone?
Didst thou not hear the pitying mountain groan?
Didst thou not see him bend his suppliant knee?
Thus in my happy days he knelt to me,
And pour'd forth all his soul! see how he strains,
And lessens to the fight o'er yonder plains
To keep the fair in view! run, virgin, run,
Hear not his vows; I heard, and was undone!

L A U R A.

Let not imaginary terrors fright.
Some dark delusion swims before thy sight.
I saw *Parthenia* from the mountain's brow,
And *Lycidas* with prostrate duty bow;

Swift



Swift as on falcon's wing, I saw her fly,
 And heard the cavern to his groans reply.
 Why stream thy tears for sorrows not thy own?

D I O N E.

Oh! Where are honour, faith, and justice flown?
 Perjur'd *Evander*!

L A U R A.

————— ————— Death has laid him low.
 Touch not the mournful string that wakes thy woe.

D I O N E.

That am'rous swain, whom *Lycidas* you name,
 (Whose faithless bosom feels another flame)
 Is my once kind *Evander*---yes---'twas he,
 He lives.---but lives, alas! no more for me.

L A U R A.

Let not thy frantick words confess despair,

D I O N E.

What, know I not his voice, his mien, his air?

Yes,

Yes, I that treach'rous voice with joy believ'd,
 That voice, that mien, that air my soul deceiv'd,
 If my dear shepherd love the lawns and glades,
 With him I'll range the lawns and seek the shades,
 With him through solitary defarts rove.
 But could he leave me, for another love?
 O base ingratitude!

L A U R A.

————— Suspend thy grief,
 And let my friendly counsel bring relief
 To thy desponding soul. *Parthenia's* ear
 Is barr'd for ever to the lover's prayer;
Ewander courts disdain, he follows scorn,
 And in the passing winds his vows are born.
 Soon will he find that all in vain he strove
 To tame her bosom; then his former love
 Shall wake his soul, then will he sighing blame
 His heart inconstant and his perjur'd flame:
 Then shall he at *Dione's* feet implore,
 Lament his broken faith, and change no more.

D I O N E.

Perhaps this cruel nymph well knows to feign
 Forbidding speech, coy looks, and cold disdain,

To



To raise his passion. Such are female arts,
To hold in safer snares inconstant hearts!

L A U R A.

Parthenia's breast is steel'd with real scorn.

D I O N E.

And dost thou think *Evander* will return?

L A U R A.

Forgo thy sex, lay all thy robes aside,
Strip off these ornaments of female pride;
The shepherd's vest must hide thy graceful air,
With the bold manly step a swain appear;
Then with *Evander* may'st thou rove unknown,
Then let thy tender eloquence be shown;
Then the new fury of his heart controul,
And with *Dione's* sufferings touch his soul.

D I O N E.

Sweet as refreshing dews, or summer showers
To the long parching thirst of drooping flowers;
Grateful as fanning gales to fainting swains,
And soft as trickling balm to bleeding pains,

Such are thy words. The sex shall be resign'd,
 No more shall breaded gold these tresses bind ;
 The shepherd's garb the woman shall disguise,
 If he has lost all love, may friendship's eyes
 Unty me to his heart !

L A U R A.

————— Go, prosp'rous maid,
 May smiling love thy faithful wishes aid.
 Be now *Alexis* call'd. With thee I'll rove,
 And watch thy wand'rer through the mazy grove ;
 Let me be honour'd with a sister's name ;
 For thee, I feel a more than sister's flame.

D I O N E.

Perhaps my shepherd has outstript her haste.
 Think'st thou, when out of sight, she flew so fast ?
 One sudden glance might turn her savage mind ;
 May she like *Daphne* fly, nor look behind,
 Maintain her scorn, his eager flame despise,
 Nor view *Evander* with *Dione's* eyes !



A C T