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Poems On Several Occasions

Gay, John

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Act IV.

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ACT IV. SCENE I.

LYCIDAS. *PARTHENIA asleep in a bower.*

LYCIDAS.



AY no rude wind the rustling branches
move ;

Breathe soft, ye silent gales, nor wake
my Love.

Ye shepherds, piping homeward on the
way,

Let not the distant echoes learn your lay ;
Strain not, ye nightingales, your warbling throat,
May no loud shake prolong the shriller note,
Lest she awake ; O sleep, secure her eyes,
That I may gaze ; for if she wake, she flies.
While easy dreams compose her peaceful soul,
What anxious cares within my bosom roll !

If tir'd with sighs beneath the beech I lye,
And languid slumber close my weeping eye,
Her lovely vision rises to my view,
Swift flies the nymph, and swift would I pursue ;
I strive to call, my tongue has lost its found ;
Like rooted oaks, my feet benumb'd are bound ;
Struggling I wake. Again my sorrows flow,
And not one flatt'ring dream deludes my woe.
What innocence ! how meek is ev'ry grace !
How sweet the smile that dimples on her face,
Calm as the sleeping seas ! but should my sighs
Too rudely breathe, what angry storms would rise !
Though the fair rose with beauteous blush is crown'd,
Beneath her fragrant leaves the thorn is found ;
The peach, that with inviting crimson blooms,
Deep at the heart the cank'ring worm consumes ;
'Tis thus, alas ! those lovely features hide
Disdain and anger and resentful pride.



S C E N E



S C E N E II.

LYCIDAS. DIONE. PARTHENIA.

LYCIDAS.

Hath profer'd greatness yet o'ercome her hate?
 And does she languish for the glitt'ring bait?
 Against the swain she might her pride support.
 Can she subdue her sex, and scorn a Court?
 Perhaps in dreams the shining vision charms,
 And the rich bracelet sparkles on her arms;
 In fancy'd heaps the golden treasure glows:
Parthenia, wake, all this thy swain bestows.

DIONE.

Sleeps she in these close bowers?

LYCIDAS.

————— Lo! there she lies.

DIONE.

O may no startling sound unseal her eyes.

I

And

And drive her hence away. 'Till now, in vain
I trod the winding wood and weary plain.
Hence, *Lycidas*; beyond those shades repose,
While I thy fortune and thy birth disclose.

L Y C I D A S.

May I *Parthenia* to thy friendship owe!

D I O N E.

O rather think on lost *Dione's* woe!
Must she thy broken faith for ever mourn,
And will that juster passion ne'er return?

L Y C I D A S.

Upbraid me not; but go. Her slumbers chase;
And in her view the bright temptation place.

[*Exit.* Lycidas.]





S C E N E III.

D I O N E. P A R T H E N I A.

D I O N E.

Now flames the western sky with golden beams,
 And the ray kindles on the quiv'ring streams ;
 Long flights of crows, high-croaking from their food,
 Now seek the nightly covert of the wood ;
 The tender grass with dewy crystal bends,
 And gath'ring vapour from the heath ascends.
 Shake off this downy rest; wake, gentle maid,
 Trust not thy charms beneath the noxious shade.
Parthenia, rise.

P A R T H E N I A.

————— What voice alarms my ear?
 Away. Approach not. Hail! *Alexis* there!
 Let us together to the vales descend,
 And to the folds our bleating charge attend;
 But let me hear no more that shepherd's name,
 Vex not my quiet with his hateful flame.

D I.

D I O N E.

Can I behold him gasping on the ground,
 And seek no healing herb to staunch the wound?
 For thee continual sighs consume his heart,
 'Tis you alone can cure the bleeding smart.
 Once more I come the moving cause to plead,
 If still his suff'rings cannot intercede,
 Yet let my friendship do his passion right,
 And show thy lover in his native light.

P A R T H E N I A.

Why in dark myst'ry are thy words involv'd?
 If *Lycidas* you mean; know, I'm resolv'd.

D I O N E.

Let not thy kindling rage my words restrain.
 Know then; *Parthenia* flights no vulgar swain.
 For thee he bears the scrip and sylvan crook,
 For thee the glories of a Court forsook.
 May not thy heart the wealthy flame decline!
 His honours, his possessions, all are thine.



P A R T H E N I A.

If he's a Courtier, O ye Nymphs, beware;
 Those who most promise are the least sincere.
 The quick-ey'd hawk shoots headlong from above,
 And in his pounces bears the trembling dove;
 The pilf'ring wolf o'er-leaps the fold's defence,
 But the false Courtier preys on innocence.
 If he's a Courtier, O ye Nymphs, beware;
 Those who most promise are the least sincere.

D I O N E.

Alas! thou ne'er hast prov'd the sweets of State,
 Nor known that female pleasure, to be great.
 'Tis for the town ripe clusters load the poles,
 And all our Autumn crowns the Courtier's bowles;
 For him our woods the red-ey'd pheasant breed,
 And annual coveys in our harvest feed;
 For him with fruit the bending branch is stor'd,
 Plenty pours all her blessings on his board,
 If (when the market to the city calls)
 We chance to pass besides his palace walls,
 Does not his hall with musick's voice resound,
 And the floor tremble with the dancer's bound?

Such

Such are the pleasures *Lycidas* shall give,
When thy relenting bosom bids him live.

P A R T H E N I A.

See yon gay goldfinch hop from spray to spray,
Who sings a farewell to the parting day;
At large he flies o'er hill and dale and down:
Is not each bush, each spreading tree his own?
And canst thou think he'll quit his native brier,
For the bright cage o'er-arch'd with golden wire?
What then are honours, pomp and gold to me?
Are those a price to purchase liberty!

D I O N E.

Think, when the *Hymeneal* torch shall blaze,
And on the solemn rites the virgins gaze;
When thy fair locks with glitt'ring gems are grac'd,
And the bright zone shall sparkle round thy waste,
How will their hearts with envious sorrow pine,
When *Lycidas* shall join his hand to thine!

P A R T H E N I A.

And yet, *Alexis*, all that pomp and show
Are oft' the varnish of internal woe.

When the chaste lamb is from her sisters led,
 And interwoven garlands paint her head;
 The gazing flock, all envious of her pride,
 Behold her skipping by the Priests' side;
 Each hopes the flow'ry wreath with longing eyes;
 While she, alas! is led to sacrifice!
 Thus walks the bride in all her state array'd,
 The gaze and envy of each thoughtless maid.

D I O N E.

As yet her tongue resists the tempting snare,
 And guards my panting bosom from despair. [Aside.
 Can thy strong soul this noble flame forego?
 Must such a lover waste his life in woe?

P A R T H E N I A.

Tell him, his gifts I scorn; not all his art,
 Not all his flattery shall seduce my heart.
 Courtiers, I know, are disciplin'd to cheat,
 Their infant lips are taught to lisp deceit;
 To prey on easy nymphs they range the shade,
 And vainly boast of innocence betray'd;
 Chaste hearts, unlearn'd in falsehood, they assail,
 And think our ear will drink the grateful tale:

No.

No. *Lycidas* shall ne'er my peace destroy,
I'll guard my virtue, and content enjoy.

D I O N E.

So strong a passion in my bosom burns,
Whene'er his soul is griev'd, *Alexis* mourns!
Canst thou this importuning ardor blame?
Would not thy tongue for friendship urge the same?

P A R T H E N I A.

Yes, blooming swain. You show an honest mind;
I see it, with the purest flame refin'd.
Who shall compare love's mean and gross desire
To the chaste zeal of friendship's sacred fire?
By whining love our weakness is confess'd;
But stronger friendship shows a virtuous breast.
In Folly's heart the short-liv'd blaze may glow,
Wisdom alone can purer friendship know.
Love is a sudden blaze which soon decays,
Friendship is like the sun's eternal rays;
Not daily benefits exhaust the flame,
It still is giving, and still burns the same;
And could *Alexis* from his soul remove
All the low images of grosser love;

L 4

Such



Such mild, such gentle looks thy heart declare,
Fain would my breast thy faithful friendship share.

D I O N E.

How dare you in the diff'rent sex confide?
And seek a friendship which you ne'er have try'd?

P A R T H E N I A.

Yes, I to thee could give up all my heart.
From thy chaste eye no wanton glances dart;
Thy modest lips convey no thought impure,
With thee may strictest virtue walk secure.

D I O N E.

Yet can I safely on the nymph depend,
Whose unrelenting scorn can kill my friend?

P A R T H E N I A.

Accuse me not, who act a gen'rous part;
Had I, like city maids, a fraudulent heart,
Then had his proffers taught my soul to feign,
Then had I vilely stoopt to fordid gain,
Then had I sigh'd for honours, pomp and gold,
And for unhappy chains my freedom fold.

If

If you would save him, bid him leave the plain,
 And to his native city turn again ;
 There, shall his passion find a ready cure,
 There, not one dame resists the glitt'ring lure.

D I O N E.

All this I frequent urg'd, but urg'd in vain.
 Alas! thou only canst assuage his pain!



S C E N E IV.

D I O N E. P A R T H E N I A. L Y C I D A S.

D A S. [listening.

L Y C I D A S.

Why stays *Alexis*? can my bosom bear
 Thus long alternate storms of hope and fear?
 Yonder they walk; no frowns her brow disguise,
 But love consenting sparkles in her eyes;
 Here will I listen, here, impatient wait.
 Spare me, *Parthenia*, and resign thy hate. [Aside.

L 5

P A R.

P A R T H E N I A.

When *Lycidas* shall to the Court repair,
 Still let *Alexis* love his fleecy care ;
 Still let him choose cool grots and sylvan bowers,
 And let *Parthenia* share his peaceful hours.

L Y C I D A S.

What do I hear? my friendship is betray'd!
 The treach'rous rival has seduc'd the maid. [Aside.

P A R T H E N I A.

With thee, where bearded goats descend the steep,
 Or where, like winter's snow, the nibbling sheep
 Clothe the slope hills: I'll pass the cheerful day,
 And from thy reed my voice shall catch the lay.
 But see, still Ev'ning spreads her dusky wings,
 The flocks, slow-moving from the misty springs,
 Now seek their fold. Come, shepherd, lets away,
 To close the latest labours of the day.

[Exeunt hand in hand.



SCENE



S C E N E V.

LYCIDAS.

My troubled heart what dire difasters rend ?
A scornful mistress, and a treach'rous friend !
Would ye be couzen'd, more than woman can ;
Unlock your bosom to perfidious man.
One faithful woman have these eyes beheld,
And against her this perjur'd heart rebell'd :
But search as far as earth's wide bounds extend,
Where shall the wretched find one faithful friend ?



S C E N E VI.

*LYCIDAS. DIONE.**LYCIDAS.*

Why starts the swain ? why turn his eyes away,
As if amidst his path the viper lay ?

Did

Did I not to thy charge my heart confide?
 Did I not trust thee near *Parthenia's* side,
 As here she slept?

D I O N E.

————— She straight my call obey'd,
 And downy slumber left the lovely maid?
 As in the morn awakes the folded rose,
 And all around her breathing colour throws;
 So wak'd *Parthenia*.

L Y C I D A S.

————— Could thy guarded heart,
 When her full beauty glow'd, put by the dart?
 Yet on *Alexis* let my soul depend.
 'Tis most ungen'rous to suspect a friend;
 And thou, I hope, hast well that name profess.

D I O N E.

○ could thy piercing eye discern my breast!
 Couldst thou the secrets of my bosom see,
 There ev'ry thought is fill'd with cares for thee!

L Y C I.

L Y C I D A S.

Is there, against hypocrify, defence,
Who clothes her words and looks with innocence!

[*Aside.*]

Say, shepherd, when you profer'd wealth and state,
Did not her scorn and suppled pride abate?

D I O N E.

As sparkling di'monds to the feather'd train,
Who scrape the winnow'd chaff in search of grain;
Such to the shepherdes the Court appears:
Content she seeks, and spurns those glitt'ring cares.

L Y C I D A S.

'Tis not in woman grandeur to despise,
'Tis not from Courts, from me alone she flies,
Did not my passion suffer like disgrace,
While she believ'd me born of sylvan race?
Dost thou not think, this proudest of her kind
Has to some rival swain her heart resign'd?

D I O N E.

No rival shepherd her disdain can move;
Her frozen bosom is averse to love.

L Y C I.



L Y C I D A S.

Say, art thou sure, that this ungrateful fair
Scorns all alike, bids all alike despair?

D I O N E.

How can I know the secrets of her heart?

L Y C I D A S.

Answer sincere, nor from the question start,
Say, in her glance was never love confest,
And is no swain distinguish'd from the rest?

D I O N E.

O *Lycidas*, bid all thy troubles cease;
Let not a thought on her disturb thy peace.
May justice bid thy former passion wake;
Think how *Dione* suffers for thy sake:
Let not a broken oath thy honour stain,
Recall thy vows, and seek the town again.

L Y C I D A S.

What means *Alexis*? where's thy friendship flown?
Why am I banish'd to the hateful town?

Hath

Hath some new shepherd warm'd *Parthenia's* breast?
 And does my love his am'rous hours molest?
 Is it for this thou bid'st me quit the plain?
 Yes, yes, thou fondly lov'st this rival swain.
 When first my cheated soul thy friendship woo'd,
 To my warm heart I took the vip'rous brood.
 O false *Alexis!*

D I O N E.

————— Why am I accus'd?
 Thy jealous mind is by weak fears abus'd.

L Y C I D A S.

Was not thy bosom fraught with false design?
 Didst thou not plead his cause, and give up mine?
 Let not thy tongue evasive answer seek;
 The conscious crimson rises on thy cheek:
 Thy coward conscience, by thy guilt difmay'd,
 Shakes in each joint, and owns that I'm betray'd.

D I O N E.

How my poor heart is wrong'd! O spare thy friend!

L Y C I D A S.

Seek not detested falsehood to defend.

D I O N E.



D I O N E.

Beware ; left blind suspicion rashly blame.

L Y C I D A S.

Own thy self then the rival of my flame.
 If this be she for whom *Alexis* pin'd,
 She now no more is to thy vows unkind,
 Behind the thicket's twisted verdure laid,
 I witness'd ev'ry tender thing she said ;
 I saw bright pleasure kindle in her eyes,
 Love warm'd each feature at thy soft replies.

D I O N E.

Yet hear me speak.

L Y C I D A S.

————— In vain is all defence.
 Did not thy treach'rous hand conduct her hence ?
 Haste, from my sight, Rage burns in ev'ry vein ;
 Néver approach my just revenge again.

D I O N E.

O search my heart ; there injur'd truth thou'lt find.

L Y C I.

L Y C I D A S.

Talk not of Truth ; long since she left mankind.
 So smooth a tongue ! and yet so false a heart !
 Sure Courts first taught thee fawning friendship's art !
 No. Thou art false by nature.

D I O N E.

————— Let me clear
 This heavy charge, and prove my trust sincere.

L Y C I D A S.

Boast then her favours ; say, what happy hour
 Next calls to meet her in th'appointed bower ;
 Say when and where you met.

D I O N E.

————— Be rage suppress.
 In stabbing mine, you wound *Parthenia's* breast,
 She said, she still defy'd Love's keenest dart ;
 Yet purer friendship might divide her heart,
 Friendship's sincerer bands she wish'd to prove.

L Y C I.

L Y C I D A S.

A woman's friendship ever ends in love.
 Think not these foolish tales my faith command;
 Did not I see thee press her snowy hand?
 O may her passion like thy Friendship last!
 May she betray thee ere the day be past!
 Hence then. Away. Thou'rt hateful to my sight,
 And thus I spurn the fawning hypocrite. [Ex. Lycid.



S C E N E VII.

D I O N E.

Was ever grief like mine! O wretched maid!
 My friendship wrong'd! my constant love betray'd!
 Misfortune haunts my steps were-e'er I go,
 And all my days are over-cast with woe.
 Long have I strove th'increasing load to bear,
 Now faints my soul, and sinks into despair.
 O lead me to the hanging mountain's cell,
 In whose brown cliffs the fowls of darkness dwell:

Where

Where waters, trickling down the rifted wall,
 Shall lull my sorrows with the tinkling fall.
 There, seek thy grave. How canst thou bear the light,
 When banish'd ever from *Ewander's* sight!



S C E N E VIII.

D I O N E. L A U R A.

L A U R A.

Why hangs a cloud of grief upon thy brows?
 Does the proud nymph accept *Ewander's* vows?

D I O N E.

Can I bear life with these new pangs oppress!
 Again he tears me from his faithless breast:
 A perjurd Lover first he fought these plains,
 And now my friendship like my love disdains.
 As I new offers to *Parthenia* made,
 Conceal'd he stood behind the woodbine shade.
 He says, my treach'rous tongue his heart betray'd,
 That my false speeches have misled the maid;

With

With groundless fear he thus his soul deceives ;
 What frenzy dictates, jealousy believes.

L A U R A.

Resign thy crook, put off this manly vest,
 And let the wrong'd *Dione* stand confest ;
 When he shall learn what sorrows thou hast born,
 And find that naught relents *Parthenia's* scorn,
 Sure he will pity thee.

D I O N E.

————— No, *Laura*, no.
 Should I, alas ! the sylvan dress forego,
 Then might he think that I her pride foment,
 That injur'd love instructs me to resent ;
 Our secret enterprize might fatal prove :
 Man flies the plague of persecuting love.

L A U R A.

Avoid *Parthenia* ; lest his rage grow warm,
 And jealousy resolve some fatal harm.

D I O N E.

O *Laura*, if thou chance the youth to find,
 Tell him what torments vex my anxious mind ;

Should

Should I once more his awful presence seek,
 The silent tears would bath my glowing cheek;
 By rising sighs my falt'ring voice be stay'd,
 And trembling fear too soon confess the maid.
 Haste, *Laura*, then; his vengeful soul assuage,
 Tell him, I'm guiltless; cool his blinded rage;
 Tell him, that truth sincere my friendship brought.
 Let him not cherish one suspicious thought.
 Then to convince him, his distrust was vain,
 I'll never, never see that nymph again.
 This way he went.

L A U R A.

————— See, at the call of night,
 The star of ev'ning sheds his silver light
 High o'er yon western hill: the cooling gales
 Fresh odours breathe along the winding dales;
 Far from their home as yet our shepherds stray,
 To close with chearful walk the sultry day.
 Methinks from far I hear the piping swain;
 Hark, in the breeze now swells, now sinks the strain;
 Thither I'll seek him.

D I O N E.



D I O N E.

————— While this length of glade
Shall lead me penfive through the fable shade;
Where on the branches murmur rushing winds,
Grateful as falling floods to love-fick minds.
O may this path to Death's dark vale descend!
There only can the wretched hope a friend.

[Exeunt severally.]



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