

Classic Poetry Series

Christopher Marlowe
- poems -

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Christopher Marlowe(26 February 1564 - 30 May 1593)

Christopher Marlowe (baptised 26 February 1564; died 30 May 1593) was an English dramatist, poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. As the foremost Elizabethan tragedian, next to William Shakespeare, he is known for his blank verse, his overreaching protagonists, and his mysterious death.

A warrant was issued for Marlowe's arrest on 18 May 1593. No reason for it was given, though it was thought to be connected to allegations of blasphemy—a manuscript believed to have been written by Marlowe was said to contain "vile heretical conceits". On 20 May he was brought to the court to attend upon the Privy Council for questioning. There is no record of their having met that day, however, and he was commanded to attend upon them each day thereafter until "licensed to the contrary." Ten days later, he was stabbed to death by Ingram Frizer. Whether the stabbing was connected to his arrest has never been resolved.

Early Life

Marlowe was born in Canterbury to shoemaker John Marlowe and his wife Catherine. His date of birth is not known, but he was baptised on 26 February 1564, and is likely to have been born a few days before. Thus he was just two months older than his contemporary Shakespeare, who was baptised on 26 April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Marlowe attended The King's School in Canterbury (where a house is now named after him) and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he studied on a scholarship and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1584. In 1587 the university hesitated to award him his Master of Arts degree because of a rumour that he had converted to Roman Catholicism and intended to go to the English college at Rheims to prepare for the priesthood. However, his degree was awarded on schedule when the Privy Council intervened on his behalf, commending him for his "faithful dealing" and "good service" to the Queen. The nature of Marlowe's service was not specified by the Council, but its letter to the Cambridge authorities has provoked much speculation, notably the theory that Marlowe was operating as a secret agent working for Sir Francis Walsingham's intelligence service. No direct evidence supports this theory, although the Council's letter is evidence that Marlowe had served the government in some

secret capacity.

Literary Career

Of the dramas attributed to Marlowe *Dido, Queen of Carthage* is believed to have been his first, and performed by the Children of the Chapel, a company of boy actors, between 1587 and 1593. The play was first published in 1594; the title page attributes the play to Marlowe and Thomas Nashe.

Marlowe's first play performed on the regular stage in London, in 1587, was *Tamburlaine the Great*, about the conqueror Timur, who rises from shepherd to warrior. It is among the first English plays in blank verse, and, with Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, generally is considered the beginning of the mature phase of the Elizabethan theatre. *Tamburlaine* was a success, and was followed with *Tamburlaine the Great, Part II*.

The two parts of *Tamburlaine* were published in 1590; all Marlowe's other works were published posthumously. The sequence of the writing of his other four plays is unknown; all deal with controversial themes.

The Jew of Malta, about a Maltese Jew's barbarous revenge against the city authorities, has a prologue delivered by a character representing Machiavelli. It was probably written in 1589 or 1590, and was first performed in 1592. It was a success, and remained popular for the next fifty years. The play was entered in the Stationers' Register on 17 May 1594, but the earliest surviving printed edition is from 1633.

Edward the Second is an English history play about the deposition of King Edward II by his barons and the Queen, who resent the undue influence the king's favourites have in court and state affairs. The play was entered into the Stationers' Register on 6 July 1593, five weeks after Marlowe's death. The full title of the earliest extant edition, of 1594, is "*The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England, with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer.*" The play was first acted in 1592 or 1593.

The Massacre at Paris is a short and luridly written work, the only surviving text of which was probably a reconstruction from memory of the original performance text, portraying the events of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, which English Protestants invoked as the blackest example of Catholic treachery. It features the silent "English Agent", whom subsequent tradition has identified with Marlowe himself and his connections to the secret service. *The Massacre at Paris* is considered his most dangerous play, as agitators in London seized on its

theme to advocate the murders of refugees from the low countries and, indeed, it warns Elizabeth I of this possibility in its last scene.

The Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, based on the German Faustbuch, was the first dramatised version of the Faust legend of a scholar's dealing with the devil. While versions of "The Devil's Pact" can be traced back to the 4th century, Marlowe deviates significantly by having his hero unable to "burn his books" or repent to a merciful God in order to have his contract annulled at the end of the play. Marlowe's protagonist is instead torn apart by demons and dragged off screaming to hell. Dr Faustus is a textual problem for scholars as it was highly edited (and possibly censored) and rewritten after Marlowe's death. Two versions of the play exist: the 1604 quarto, also known as the A text, and the 1616 quarto or B text. Many scholars believe that the A text is more representative of Marlowe's original because it contains irregular character names and idiosyncratic spelling: the hallmarks of a text that used the author's handwritten manuscript, or "foul papers", as a major source.

Marlowe's plays were enormously successful, thanks in part, no doubt, to the imposing stage presence of Edward Alleyn. Alleyn was unusually tall for the time, and the haughty roles of Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas were probably written especially for him. Marlowe's plays were the foundation of the repertoire of Alleyn's company, the Admiral's Men, throughout the 1590s.

Marlowe also wrote the poem Hero and Leander (published with a continuation by George Chapman in 1598), the popular lyric "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love", and translations of Ovid's Amores and the first book of Lucan's Pharsalia. In 1599, his translation of Ovid was banned and copies publicly burned as part of Archbishop Whitgift's crackdown on offensive material.

The Legend

As with other writers of the period, little is known about Marlowe. What evidence there is can be found in legal records and other official documents. This has not stopped writers of both fiction and non-fiction from speculating about his activities and character. Marlowe has often been described as a spy, a brawler, a heretic and a homosexual, as well as a "magician", "duellist", "tobacco-user", "counterfeiter" and "rakehell". J. A. Downie and Constance Kuriyama have argued against the more lurid speculation, but J.B. Steane remarked, "it seems absurd to dismiss all of these Elizabethan rumours and accusations as 'the Marlowe myth'".

Spying

Marlowe is often alleged to have been a government spy (Park Honan's 2005 biography even had "Spy" in its title) The author Charles Nicholl speculates this was the case and suggests that Marlowe's recruitment took place when he was at Cambridge. As noted above, in 1587 the Privy Council ordered the University of Cambridge to award Marlowe his degree of Master of Arts, denying rumours that he intended to go to the English Catholic college in Rheims, saying instead that he had been engaged in unspecified "affaires" on "matters touching the benefit of his country". Surviving college records from the period also indicate that Marlowe had had a series of unusually lengthy absences from the university – much longer than permitted by university regulations – that began in the academic year 1584–1585. Surviving college buttery (dining room) accounts indicate he began spending lavishly on food and drink during the periods he was in attendance – more than he could have afforded on his known scholarship income.

It has sometimes been theorised that Marlowe was the "Morley" who was tutor to Arbella Stuart in 1589. This possibility was first raised in a TLS letter by E. St John Brooks in 1937; in a letter to Notes and Queries, John Baker has added that only Marlowe could be Arbella's tutor due to the absence of any other known "Morley" from the period with an MA and not otherwise occupied. If Marlowe was Arbella's tutor, (and some biographers think that the "Morley" in question may have been a brother of the musician Thomas Morley) it might indicate that he was a spy, since Arbella, niece of Mary, Queen of Scots, and cousin of James VI of Scotland, later James I of England, was at the time a strong candidate for the succession to Elizabeth's throne.

In 1592 Marlowe was arrested in the town of Flushing in the Netherlands for his alleged involvement in the counterfeiting of coins, presumably related to the activities of seditious Catholics. He was sent to be dealt with by the Lord Treasurer (Burghley) but no charge or imprisonment resulted. This arrest may have disrupted another of Marlowe's spying missions: perhaps by giving the resulting coinage to the Catholic cause he was to infiltrate the followers of the active Catholic plotter William Stanley and report back to Burghley.

Arrest and Death

In early May 1593 several bills were posted about London threatening Protestant refugees from France and the Netherlands who had settled in the city. One of these, the "Dutch church libel," written in blank verse, contained allusions to several of Marlowe's plays and was signed, "Tamburlaine". On 11 May the Privy Council ordered the arrest of those responsible for the libels. The next day,

Marlowe's colleague Thomas Kyd was arrested. Kyd's lodgings were searched and a fragment of a heretical tract was found. Kyd asserted that it had belonged to Marlowe, with whom he had been writing "in one chamber" some two years that time they had both been working for an aristocratic patron, probably Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange. A warrant for Marlowe's arrest was issued on 18 May, when the Privy Council apparently knew that he might be found staying with Thomas Walsingham, whose father was a first cousin of the late Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's principal secretary in the 1580s and a man more deeply involved in state espionage than any other member of the Privy Council. Marlowe duly presented himself on 20 May but, there apparently being no Privy Council meeting on that day, was instructed to "give his daily attendance on their Lordships, until he shall be licensed to the contrary". On Wednesday 30 May, Marlowe was killed.

Various accounts of Marlowe's death were current over the next few years. In his *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, Francis Meres says Marlowe was "stabbed to death by a bawdy serving-man, a rival of his in his lewd love" as punishment for his "epicurism and atheism." In 1917, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Sir Sidney Lee wrote that Marlowe was killed in a drunken fight, and this is still often stated as fact today.

The official account came to light only in 1925 when the scholar Leslie Hotson discovered the coroner's report of the inquest on Marlowe's death, held two days later on Friday 1 June 1593. Marlowe had spent all day in a house in Deptford, owned by the widow Eleanor Bull, and together with three men: Ingram Frizer, Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley. All three had been employed by one or other of the Walsinghams. Skeres and Poley had helped snare the conspirators in the Babington plot and Frizer would later describe Thomas Walsingham as his "master" at that time although his role was probably more that of a financial or business agent as he was for Walsingham's wife Audrey a few years later. These witnesses testified that Frizer and Marlowe had argued over the bill (now famously known as the 'Reckoning') exchanging "divers malicious words" while Frizer was sitting at a table between the other two and Marlowe was lying behind him on a couch. Marlowe snatched Frizer's dagger and wounded him on the head. In the ensuing struggle, according to the coroner's report, Marlowe was stabbed above the right eye, killing him instantly. The jury concluded that Frizer acted in self-defence, and within a month he was pardoned. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Deptford immediately after the inquest, on 1 June 1593.

Marlowe's death is alleged by some to be an assassination for the following reasons:

The three men who were in the room with him when he died were all connected both to the state secret service and to the London underworld. Frizer and Skeres also had a long record as loan sharks and con-men, as shown by court records. Bull's house also had "links to the government's spy network".

Their story that they were on a day's pleasure outing to Deptford is alleged to be implausible. In fact, they spent the whole day together. Also, Robert Poley was carrying urgent and confidential despatches to the Queen, who was at her residence Nonsuch Palace in Surrey, but instead of delivering them, he spent the day with Marlowe and the other two, and didn't in fact hand them in until well over a week later, on 8 June.

It seems too much of a coincidence that Marlowe's death occurred only a few days after his arrest, apparently for heresy.

The manner of Marlowe's arrest is alleged to suggest causes more tangled than a simple charge of heresy would generally indicate. He was released in spite of prima facie evidence, and even though other accusations about him received within a few days, as described below, implicitly connected Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Northumberland with the heresy. Thus, some contend it to be probable that the investigation was meant primarily as a warning to the politicians in the "School of Night", or that it was connected with a power struggle within the Privy Council itself.

The various incidents that hint at a relationship with the Privy Council (see above), and by the fact that his patron was Thomas Walsingham, Sir Francis's second cousin once removed, who had been actively involved in intelligence work.

For these reasons and others, Charles Nicholl (in his book *The Reckoning* on Marlowe's death) argues there was more to Marlowe's death than emerged at the inquest. There are various hypotheses with different degrees of probability as to what really happened and who was behind it, one theory even being that Marlowe's death was faked to save him from trial and execution for subversive atheism. Since there are only written documents on which to base any conclusions, and since it is probable that the most crucial information about his death was never committed to writing at all, it is unlikely that the full circumstances of Marlowe's death will ever be known.

Atheism

Marlowe was reputed to be an atheist, which, at that time, held the dangerous implication of being an enemy of God. Some modern historians, however, consider that his professed atheism, as with his supposed Catholicism, may have been no more than an elaborate and sustained pretence adopted to further his work as a government spy. Contemporary evidence comes from Marlowe's accuser in Flushing, an informer called Richard Baines. The governor of Flushing had reported that each of the men had "of malice" accused the other of instigating the counterfeiting, and of intending to go over to the Catholic "enemy"; such an action was considered atheistic by the Protestants, who constituted the dominant religious faction in England at that time. Following Marlowe's arrest in 1593, Baines submitted to the authorities a "note containing the opinion of one Christopher Marly concerning his damnable judgment of religion, and scorn of God's word." Baines attributes to Marlowe a total of eighteen items which "scoff at the pretensions of the Old and New Testament" such as, "Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest [unchaste]", "the woman of Samaria and her sister were whores and that Christ knew them dishonestly", and, "St John the Evangelist was bedfellow to Christ and leaned always in his bosom" (cf. John 13:23–25), and, "that he used him as the sinners of Sodom". He also implies that Marlowe had Catholic sympathies. Other passages are merely sceptical in tone: "he persuades men to atheism, willing them not to be afraid of bugbears and hobgoblins". The final paragraph of Baines' document reads:

These thinges, with many other shall by good & honest witnes be aproved to be his opinions and Comon Speeches, and that this Marlow doth not only hould them himself, but almost into every Company he Cometh he perswades men to Atheism willing them not to be afeard of bugbeares and hobgoblins, and vtterly scorning both god and his ministers as I Richard Baines will Justify & approue both by mine oth and the testimony of many honest men, and almost al men with whome he hath Conversed any time will testify the same, and as I think all men in Cristianity ought to indevor that the mouth of so dangerous a member may be stopped, he saith likewise that he hath quoted a number of Contrarieties oute of the Scripture which he hath giuen to some great men who in Convenient time shalbe named. When these thinges shalbe Called in question the witnes shalbe produced.

Similar examples of Marlowe's statements were given by Thomas Kyd after his imprisonment and possible torture (see above); both Kyd and Baines connect Marlowe with the mathematician Thomas Harriot and Walter Raleigh's circle. Another document claimed at around the same time that "one Marlowe is able to show more sound reasons for Atheism than any divine in England is able to give to prove divinity, and that ... he hath read the Atheist lecture to Sir Walter

Raleigh and others."

Some critics believe that Marlowe sought to disseminate these views in his work and that he identified with his rebellious and iconoclastic protagonists. However, plays had to be approved by the Master of the Revels before they could be performed, and the censorship of publications was under the control of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Presumably these authorities did not consider any of Marlowe's works to be unacceptable (apart from the Amores).

Sexuality

Like his contemporary William Shakespeare, Marlowe is sometimes described today as homosexual. Others argue that the question of whether an Elizabethan was gay or homosexual in a modern sense is anachronistic; for the Elizabethans, what is often today termed homosexual or bisexual was more likely to be recognised as a sexual act, rather than an exclusive sexual orientation and identity. Some scholars argue that the evidence is inconclusive and that the reports of Marlowe's homosexuality may simply be exaggerated rumours produced after his death. Richard Baines reported Marlowe as saying: "All they that love not Tobacco and Boys are fools". David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen describe Baines's evidence as "unreliable testimony" and make the comment: "These and other testimonials need to be discounted for their exaggeration and for their having been produced under legal circumstances we would regard as a witch-hunt". One critic, J.B. Steane, remarked that he considers there to be "no evidence for Marlowe's homosexuality at all." Other scholars, however, point to homosexual themes in Marlowe's writing: in *Hero and Leander*, Marlowe writes of the male youth Leander, "in his looks were all that men desire" and that when the youth swims to visit Hero at Sestos, the sea god Neptune becomes sexually excited, "imagining that Ganymede, displeas'd ... the lusty god embrac'd him, call'd him love ... and steal a kiss ... upon his breast, his thighs, and every limb ... [a]nd talk of love", while the boy, naive and unaware of Greek love practices, said that, "You are deceiv'd, I am no woman, I ... Thereat smil'd Neptune."

Reputation Among Contemporary Writers

Whatever the particular focus of modern critics, biographers and novelists, for his contemporaries in the literary world, Marlowe was above all an admired and influential artist. Within weeks of his death, George Peele remembered him as "Marley, the Muses' darling"; Michael Drayton noted that he "Had in him those brave translunary things / That the first poets had", and Ben Jonson wrote of "Marlowe's mighty line". Thomas Nashe wrote warmly of his friend, "poor deceased Kit Marlowe". So too did the publisher Edward Blount, in the dedication

of Hero and Leander to Sir Thomas Walsingham.

Among the few contemporary dramatists to say anything negative about Marlowe was the anonymous author of the Cambridge University play *The Return From Parnassus* (1598) who wrote, "Pity it is that wit so ill should dwell, / Wit lent from heaven, but vices sent from hell."

The most famous tribute to Marlowe was paid by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, where he not only quotes a line from *Hero and Leander* (Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, "Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?") but also gives to the clown Touchstone the words "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room." This appears to be a reference to Marlowe's murder which involved a fight over the "reckoning", the bill, as well as to a line in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* – "Infinite riches in a little room".

Shakespeare was heavily influenced by Marlowe in his work, as can be seen in the re-using of Marlovian themes in *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, and *Macbeth* (*Dido*, *Jew of Malta*, *Edward II* and *Dr Faustus* respectively). In *Hamlet*, after meeting with the travelling actors, Hamlet requests the Player perform a speech about the Trojan War, which at 2.2.429–32 has an echo of Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare brings on a character "Marcade" (three syllables) in conscious acknowledgement of Marlowe's character "Mercury", also attending the King of Navarre, in *Massacre at Paris*. The significance, to those of Shakespeare's audience who had read *Hero and Leander*, was Marlowe's identification of himself with the god Mercury.

As Shakespeare

Given the murky inconsistencies concerning the account of Marlowe's death, a theory has arisen centred on the notion that Marlowe may have faked his death and then continued to write under the assumed name of William Shakespeare. However, orthodox academic consensus rejects alternative candidates for authorship, including Marlowe.

Accurs'D Be He That First Invented War

Accurs'd be he that first invented war!
They knew not, ah, they knew not, simple men,
How those were hit by pelting cannon-shot
Stand staggering like a quivering aspen-leaf
Fearing the force of Boreas' boisterous blasts!
In what a lamentable case where I,
If nature had not given me wisdom's lore!
For kings are clouts that every man shoots at,
Our crown the pin that thousands seek to cleave:
Therefore in policy I think it good
To hide it close; a goodly stratagem,
And far from any man that is a fool:
So shall not I be known; or if I be,
They cannot take away my crown from me.
Here will I hide it in this simple hole.

Christopher Marlowe

Dialogue In Verse

Jack. Seest thou not yon farmer's son?
He hath stoln my love from me, alas!
What shall I do? I am undone;
My heart will ne'er be as it was.
O, but he gives her gay gold rings,
And tufted gloves [for] holiday,
And many other goodly things,
That hath stoln my love away.

Friend. Let him give her gay gold rings
Or tufted gloves, were they ne'er so [gay];
[F]or were her lovers lords or kings,
They should not carry the wench away.

Jack. But 'a dances wonders well,
And with his dances stole her love from me:
Yet she wont to say, I bore the bell
For dancing and for courtesy.

Dick. Fie, lusty younker, what do you here,
Not dancing on the green to-day?
For Pierce, the farmer's son, I fear,
Is like to carry your wench away.

Jack. Good Dick, bid them all come hither,
And tell Pierce from me beside,
That, if he thinks to have the wench,
Here he stands shall lie with the bride.

Dick. Fie, Nan, why use thy old lover so,
For any other new-come guest?
Thou long time his love did know;
Why shouldst thou not use him best?

Nan. Bonny Dick, I will not forsake
My bonny Rowland for any gold:
If he can dance as well as Pierce,
He shall have my heart in hold.

Pierce. Why, then, my hearts, let's to this gear;
And by dancing I may won
My Nan, whose love I hold so dear
As any realm under the sun.

Gentleman. Then, gentles, ere I speed from hence,
I will be so bold to dance
A turn or two without offence;
For, as I was walking along by chance,
I was told you did agree.

Friend. 'Tis true, good sir; and this is she
Hopes your worship comes not to crave her;
For she hath lovers two or three,
And he that dances best must have her.

Gentleman. How say you, sweet, will you dance with me?
And you [shall] have both land and [hill];
My love shall want nor gold nor fee.

Nan. I thank you, sir, for your good will;
But one of these my love must be:
I'm but a homely country maid,
And far unfit for your degree;
[To dance with you I am afraid.]

Friend. Take her, good sir, by the hand,
As she is fairest: were she fairer,
By this dance, you shall understand,
He that can win her is like to wear her.

Fool. And saw you not [my] Nan to-day,
My mother's maid have you not seen?
My pretty Nan is gone away
To seek her love upon the green.
[I cannot see her 'mong so many:]
She shall have me, if she have any.

Nan. Welcome, sweetheart, and welcome here,
Welcome, my [true] love, now to me.
This is my love [and my darling dear],
And that my husband [soon] must be.

And, boy, when thou com'st home, thou'lt see
Thou art as welcome home as he.

Gentleman. Why, how now, sweet Nan! I hope you jest.

Nan. No, by my troth, I love the fool the best:
And, if you be jealous, God give you good-night!
I fear you're a gelding, you caper so light.

Gentleman. I thought she had jested and meant but a fable,
But now do I see she hath play['d] with his bable.
I wish all my friends by me to take heed,
That a fool come not near you when you mean to speed.

Christopher Marlowe

Elegies, Book One, 5

In summer's heat and mid-time of the day
To rest my limbs upon a bed I lay,
One window shut, the other open stood,
Which gave such light as twinkles in a wood,
Like twilight glimpse at setting of the sun
Or night being past, and yet not day begun.
Such light to shamefaced maidens must be shown,
Where they may sport, and seem to be unknown.
Then came Corinna in a long loose gown,
Her white neck hid with tresses hanging down:
Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed
Or Laïs of a thousand wooers sped.
I snatched her gown, being thin, the harm was small,
Yet strived she to be covered therewithal.
And striving thus as one that would be cast,
Betrayed herself, and yielded at the last.
Stark naked as she stood before mine eye,
Not one wen in her body could I spy.

What arms and shoulders did I touch and see,
How apt her breasts were to be pressed by me?
How smooth a belly under her waist saw I?
How large a leg, and what a lusty thigh?
To leave the rest, all liked me passing well,
I clinged her naked body, down she fell,
Judge you the rest: being tired she bad me kiss,
Jove send me more such afternoons as this

Christopher Marlowe

Fragment

I WALK'D along a stream, for pureness rare,
Brighter than sun-shine; for it did acquaint
The dullest sight with all the glorious prey
That in the pebble-paved channel lay.

No molten crystal, but a richer mine,
Even Nature's rarest alchymy ran there,--
Diamonds resolv'd, and substance more divine,
Through whose bright-gliding current might appear
A thousand naked nymphs, whose ivory shine,
Enamelling the banks, made them more dear
Than ever was that glorious palace' gate
Where the day-shining Sun in triumph sate.

Upon this brim the eglantine and rose,
The tamarisk, olive, and the almond tree,
As kind companions, in one union grows,
Folding their twining arms, as oft we see
Turtle-taught lovers either other close,
Lending to dulness feeling sympathy;
And as a costly valance o'er a bed,
So did their garland-tops the brook o'erspread.

Their leaves, that differ'd both in shape and show,
Though all were green, yet difference such in green,
Like to the checker'd bent of Iris' bow,
Prided the running main, as it had been--

Christopher Marlowe

Hero And Leander

It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is over-rul'd by fate.
When two are stript long ere the course begin,
We wish that one should lose, the other win;
And one especially do we affect
Of two gold ingots, like in each respect:
The reason no man knows; let it suffice,
What we behold is censur'd by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight.

Christopher Marlowe

Hero And Leander: The First Sestiad

On Hellespont, guilty of true-love's blood,
In view and opposite two cities stood,
Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might;
The one Abydos, the other Sestos high.
At Sestos Hero dwelt; Hero the fair,
Whom young Apollo courted for her hair,
And offered as a dower his burning throne,
Where she should sit for men to gaze upon.
The outside of her garments were of lawn,
The lining purple silk, with gilt stars drawn;
Her wide sleeves green, and bordered with a grove,
Where Venus in her naked glory strove
To please the careless and disdainful eyes
Of proud Adonis, that before her lies.
Her kirtle blue, whereon was many a stain,
Made with the blood of wretched lovers slain.
Upon her head she wore a myrtle wreath,
From whence her veil reached to the ground beneath.
Her veil was artificial flowers and leaves
Whose workmanship both man and beast deceives.
Many would praise the sweet smell as she passed,
When 'twas the odour which her breath forth cast;
And there for honey bees have sought in vain,
And, beat from thence, have lighted there again.
About her neck hung chains of pebblestone,
Which, lightened by her neck, like diamonds shone.
She wore no gloves; for neither sun nor wind
Would burn or parch her hands, but to her mind,
Or warm or cool them, for they took delight
To play upon those hands, they were so white.
Buskins of shells, all silvered used she,
And branched with blushing coral to the knee;
Where sparrows perched of hollow pearl and gold,
Such as the world would wonder to behold.
Those with sweet water oft her handmaid fills,
Which, as she went, would chirrup through the bills.
Some say for her the fairest Cupid pined
And looking in her face was strooken blind.
But this is true: so like was one the other,

As he imagined Hero was his mother.
And oftentimes into her bosom flew,
About her naked neck his bare arms threw,
And laid his childish head upon her breast,
And, with still panting rocked, there took his rest.
So lovely fair was Hero, Venus' nun,
As Nature wept, thinking she was undone,
Because she took more from her than she left,
And of such wondrous beauty her bereft.
Therefore, in sign her treasure suffered wrack,
Since Hero's time hath half the world been black.
Amorous Leander, beautiful and young,
(whose tragedy divine Musaeus sung,)
Dwelt at Abydos; since him dwelt there none
For whom succeeding times make greater moan.
His dangling tresses, that were never shorn,
Had they been cut, and unto Colchos borne,
Would have allured the vent'rous youth of Greece
To hazard more than for the golden fleece.
Fair Cynthia wished his arms might be her sphere;
Grief makes her pale, because she moves not there.
His body was as straight as Circe's wand;
Jove might have sipped out nectar from his hand.
Even as delicious meat is to the taste,
So was his neck in touching, and surpassed
The white of Pelop's shoulder. I could tell ye
How smooth his breast was and how white his belly;
And whose immortal fingers did imprint
That heavenly path with many a curious dint
That runs along his back, but my rude pen
Can hardly blazon forth the loves of men,
Much less of powerful gods. Let it suffice
That my slack Muse sings of Leander's eyes,
Those orient cheeks and lips, exceeding his
That leaped into the water for a kiss
Of his own shadow and, despising many,
Died ere he could enjoy the love of any.
Had wild Hippolytus Leander seen
Enamoured of his beauty had he been.
His presence made the rudest peasant melt
That in the vast uplandish country dwelt.
The barbarous Thracian soldier, moved with nought,

Was moved with him and for his favour sought.
Some swore he was a maid in man's attire,
For in his looks were all that men desire,
A pleasant smiling cheek, a speaking eye,
A brow for love to banquet royally;
And such as knew he was a man, would say,
'Leander, thou art made for amorous play.
Why art thou not in love, and loved of all?
Though thou be fair, yet be not thine own thrall.'
The men of wealthy Sestos every year,
(For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,
Rose-cheeked Adonis) kept a solemn feast.
Thither resorted many a wandering guest
To meet their loves.
Such as had none at all,
Came lovers home from this great festival.
For every street like to a firmament
Glistened with breathing stars who, where they went,
Frighted the melancholy earth which deemed
Eternal heaven to burn, for so it seemed,
As if another Phaeton had got
The guidance of the sun's rich chariot.
But far above the loveliest Hero shined
And stole away th' enchanted gazer's mind,
For like sea nymphs' enveigling Harmony,
So was her beauty to the standers by.
Nor that night-wandering, pale, and wat'ry star
(When yawning dragons draw her thirling car
From Latmus' mount up to the gloomy sky
Where, crowned with blazing light and majesty,
She proudly sits) more overrules the flood
Than she the hearts of those that near her stood.
Even as, when gaudy nymphs pursue the chase,
Wretched Ixion's shaggy footed race,
Incensed with savage heat, gallop amain
From steep pine-bearing mountains to the plain.
So ran the people forth to gaze upon her,
And all that viewed her were enamoured on her.
And as in fury of a dreadful fight,
Their fellows being slain or put to flight,
Poor soldiers stand with fear of death dead strooken,
So at her presence all surprised and taken,

Await the sentence of her scornful eyes.
He whom she favours lives, the other dies.
There might you see one sigh, another rage;
And some, (their violent passions to assuage)
Compile sharp satires, but alas too late,
For faithful love will never turn to hate.
And many seeing great princes were denied
Pin'd as they went, and thinking on her died.
On this feast day, O cursed day and hour,
Went Hero thorough Sestos from her tower
To Venus' temple, where unhappily
As after chanced, they did each other spy.
So fair a church as this had Venus none.
The walls were of discoloured jasper stone
Wherein was Proteus carved, and o'erhead
A lively vine of green sea agate spread,
Where by one hand lightheaded Bacchus hung,
And, with the other, wine from grapes out wrung.
Of crystal shining fair the pavement was.
The town of Sestos called it Venus' glass.
There might you see the gods in sundry shapes
Committing heady riots, incest, rapes.
For know, that underneath this radiant floor
Was Danae's statue in a brazen tower,
Jove slyly stealing from his sister's bed,
To dally with Idalian Ganymede,
And for his love Europa bellowing loud,
And tumbling with the Rainbow in a cloud;
Blood quaffing Mars heaving the iron net
Which limping Vulcan and his Cyclops set;
Love kindling fire to burn such towns as Troy;
Sylvanus weeping for the lovely boy
That now is turned into a cypress tree,
Under whose shade the wood gods love to be.
And in the midst a silver altar stood.
There Hero, sacrificing turtle's blood,
Vailed to the ground, vailing her eyelids close,
And modestly they opened as she rose.
Thence flew Love's arrow with the golden head,
And thus Leander was enamoured.
Stone still he stood, and evermore he gazed
Till with the fire that from his countenance blazed

Relenting Hero's gentle heart was strook.
Such force and virtue hath an amorous look.
It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is overruled by fate.
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin
We wish that one should lose, the other win.
And one especially do we affect
Of two gold ingots like in each respect.
The reason no man knows; let it suffice
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?
He kneeled, but unto her devoutly prayed.
Chaste Hero to herself thus softly said,
'Were I the saint he worships, I would hear him; '
And, as she spake those words, came somewhat near him.
He started up, she blushed as one ashamed,
Wherewith Leander much more was inflamed.
He touched her hand; in touching it she trembled.
Love deeply grounded, hardly is dissembled.
These lovers parleyed by the touch of hands;
True love is mute, and oft amazed stands.
Thus while dumb signs their yielding hearts entangled,
The air with sparks of living fire was spangled,
And night, deep drenched in misty Acheron,
Heaved up her head, and half the world upon
Breathed darkness forth (dark night is Cupid's day) .
And now begins Leander to display
Love's holy fire, with words, with sighs, and tears,
Which like sweet music entered Hero's ears,
And yet at every word she turned aside,
And always cut him off as he replied.
At last, like to a bold sharp sophister,
With cheerful hope thus he accosted her.
'Fair creature, let me speak without offence.
I would my rude words had the influence
To lead thy thoughts as thy fair looks do mine,
Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine.
Be not unkind and fair; misshapen stuff
Are of behaviour boisterous and rough.
O shun me not, but hear me ere you go.
God knows I cannot force love as you do.

My words shall be as spotless as my youth,
Full of simplicity and naked truth.
This sacrifice, (whose sweet perfume descending
From Venus' altar, to your footsteps bending)
Doth testify that you exceed her far,
To whom you offer, and whose nun you are.
Why should you worship her? Her you surpass
As much as sparkling diamonds flaring glass.
A diamond set in lead his worth retains;
A heavenly nymph, beloved of human swains,
Receives no blemish, but oftentimes more grace;
Which makes me hope, although I am but base:
Base in respect of thee, divine and pure,
Dutiful service may thy love procure.
And I in duty will excel all other,
As thou in beauty dost exceed Love's mother.
Nor heaven, nor thou, were made to gaze upon,
As heaven preserves all things, so save thou one.
A stately builded ship, well rigged and tall,
The ocean maketh more majestic.
Why vowest thou then to live in Sestos here
Who on Love's seas more glorious wouldst appear?
Like untuned golden strings all women are,
Which long time lie untouched, will harshly jar.
Vessels of brass, oft handled, brightly shine.
What difference betwixt the richest mine
And basest mould, but use? For both, not used,
Are of like worth. Then treasure is abused
When misers keep it; being put to loan,
In time it will return us two for one.
Rich robes themselves and others do adorn;
Neither themselves nor others, if not worn.
Who builds a palace and rams up the gate
Shall see it ruinous and desolate.
Ah, simple Hero, learn thyself to cherish.
Lone women like to empty houses perish.
Less sins the poor rich man that starves himself
In heaping up a mass of drossy pelf,
Than such as you. His golden earth remains
Which, after his decease, some other gains.
But this fair gem, sweet in the loss alone,
When you fleet hence, can be bequeathed to none.

Or, if it could, down from th'enameled sky
All heaven would come to claim this legacy,
And with intestine broils the world destroy,
And quite confound nature's sweet harmony.
Well therefore by the gods decreed it is
We human creatures should enjoy that bliss.
One is no number; maids are nothing then
Without the sweet society of men.
Wilt thou live single still? One shalt thou be,
Though never singling Hymen couple thee.
Wild savages, that drink of running springs,
Think water far excels all earthly things,
But they that daily taste neat wine despise it.
Virginity, albeit some highly prize it,
Compared with marriage, had you tried them both,
Differs as much as wine and water doth.
Base bullion for the stamp's sake we allow;
Even so for men's impression do we you,
By which alone, our reverend fathers say,
Women receive perfection every way.
This idol which you term virginity
Is neither essence subject to the eye
No, nor to any one exterior sense,
Nor hath it any place of residence,
Nor is't of earth or mould celestial,
Or capable of any form at all.
Of that which hath no being do not boast;
Things that are not at all are never lost.
Men foolishly do call it virtuous;
What virtue is it that is born with us?
Much less can honour be ascribed thereto;
Honour is purchased by the deeds we do.
Believe me, Hero, honour is not won
Until some honourable deed be done.
Seek you for chastity, immortal fame,
And know that some have wronged Diana's name?
Whose name is it, if she be false or not
So she be fair, but some vile tongues will blot?
But you are fair, (ay me) so wondrous fair,
So young, so gentle, and so debonair,
As Greece will think if thus you live alone
Some one or other keeps you as his own.

Then, Hero, hate me not nor from me fly
To follow swiftly blasting infamy.
Perhaps thy sacred priesthood makes thee loath.
Tell me, to whom mad'st thou that heedless oath? '
'To Venus,' answered she and, as she spake,
Forth from those two tralucet cisterns brake
A stream of liquid pearl, which down her face
Made milk-white paths, whereon the gods might trace
To Jove's high court.
He thus replied: 'The rites
In which love's beauteous empress most delights
Are banquets, Doric music, midnight revel,
Plays, masks, and all that stern age counteth evil.
Thee as a holy idiot doth she scorn
For thou in vowing chastity hast sworn
To rob her name and honour, and thereby
Committ'st a sin far worse than perjury,
Even sacrilege against her deity,
Through regular and formal purity.
To expiate which sin, kiss and shake hands.
Such sacrifice as this Venus demands.'
Thereat she smiled and did deny him so,
As put thereby, yet might he hope for moe.
Which makes him quickly re-enforce his speech,
And her in humble manner thus beseech.
'Though neither gods nor men may thee deserve,
Yet for her sake, whom you have vowed to serve,
Abandon fruitless cold virginity,
The gentle queen of love's sole enemy.
Then shall you most resemble Venus' nun,
When Venus' sweet rites are performed and done.
Flint-breasted Pallas joys in single life,
But Pallas and your mistress are at strife.
Love, Hero, then, and be not tyrannous,
But heal the heart that thou hast wounded thus,
Nor stain thy youthful years with avarice.
Fair fools delight to be accounted nice.
The richest corn dies, if it be not reaped;
Beauty alone is lost, too warily kept.'
These arguments he used, and many more,
Wherewith she yielded, that was won before.
Hero's looks yielded but her words made war.

Women are won when they begin to jar.
Thus, having swallowed Cupid's golden hook,
The more she strived, the deeper was she strook.
Yet, evilly feigning anger, strove she still
And would be thought to grant against her will.
So having paused a while at last she said,
'Who taught thee rhetoric to deceive a maid?
Ay me, such words as these should I abhor
And yet I like them for the orator.'
With that Leander stooped to have embraced her
But from his spreading arms away she cast her,
And thus bespake him: 'Gentle youth, forbear
To touch the sacred garments which I wear.
Upon a rock and underneath a hill
Far from the town (where all is whist and still,
Save that the sea, playing on yellow sand,
Sends forth a rattling murmur to the land,
Whose sound allures the golden Morpheus
In silence of the night to visit us)
My turret stands and there, God knows, I play.
With Venus' swans and sparrows all the day.
A dwarfish beldam bears me company,
That hops about the chamber where I lie,
And spends the night (that might be better spent)
In vain discourse and apish merriment.
Come thither.' As she spake this, her tongue tripped,
For unawares 'come thither' from her slipped.
And suddenly her former colour changed,
And here and there her eyes through anger ranged.
And like a planet, moving several ways,
At one self instant she, poor soul, assays,
Loving, not to love at all, and every part
Strove to resist the motions of her heart.
And hands so pure, so innocent, nay, such
As might have made heaven stoop to have a touch,
Did she uphold to Venus, and again
Vowed spotless chastity, but all in vain.
Cupid beats down her prayers with his wings,
Her vows above the empty air he flings,
All deep enraged, his sinewy bow he bent,
And shot a shaft that burning from him went,
Wherewith she strooken, looked so dolefully,

As made love sigh to see his tyranny.
And as she wept her tears to pearl he turned,
And wound them on his arm and for her mourned.
Then towards the palace of the destinies
Laden with languishment and grief he flies,
And to those stern nymphs humbly made request
Both might enjoy each other, and be blest.
But with a ghastly dreadful countenance,
Threatening a thousand deaths at every glance,
They answered Love, nor would vouchsafe so much
As one poor word, their hate to him was such.
Hearken a while and I will tell you why.
Heaven's winged herald, Jove-borne Mercury,
The selfsame day that he asleep had laid
Enchanted Argus, spied a country maid
Whose careless hair instead of pearl t'adorn it
Glistered with dew, as one that seemed to scorn it;
Her breath as fragrant as the morning rose,
Her mind pure, and her tongue untaught to gloze.
Yet proud she was (for lofty pride that dwells
In towered courts is oft in shepherds' cells.)
And too too well the fair vermilion knew,
And silver tincture of her cheeks, that drew
The love of every swain. On her this god
Enamoured was, and with his snaky rod
Did charm her nimble feet, and made her stay,
The while upon a hillock down he lay
And sweetly on his pipe began to play,
And with smooth speech her fancy to assay,
Till in his twining arms he locked her fast
And then he wooed with kisses; and at last,
As shepherds do, her on the ground he laid
And, tumbling in the grass, he often strayed
Beyond the bounds of shame, in being bold
To eye those parts which no eye should behold.
And, like an insolent commanding lover
Boasting his parentage, would needs discover
The way to new Elysium, but she,
Whose only dower was her chastity,
Having striv'n in vain was now about to cry
And crave the help of shepherds that were nigh.
Herewith he stayed his fury, and began

To give her leave to rise. Away she ran;
After went Mercury who used such cunning
As she, to hear his tale, left off her running.
Maids are not won by brutish force and might,
But speeches full of pleasure, and delight.
And, knowing Hermes courted her, was glad
That she such loveliness and beauty had
As could provoke his liking, yet was mute
And neither would deny nor grant his suit.
Still vowed he love. She, wanting no excuse
To feed him with delays, as women use,
Or thirsting after immortality, -
All women are ambitious naturally -
Imposed upon her lover such a task
As he ought not perform nor yet she ask.
A draught of flowing nectar she requested,
Wherewith the king of gods and men is feasted.
He, ready to accomplish what she willed,
Stole some from Hebe (Hebe Jove's cup filled)
And gave it to his simple rustic love.
Which being known (as what is hid from Jove?)
He inly stormed and waxed more furious
Than for the fire filched by Prometheus,
And thrusts him down from heaven. He, wandering here,
In mournful terms, with sad and heavy cheer,
Complained to Cupid. Cupid for his sake,
To be revenged on Jove did undertake.
And those on whom heaven, earth, and hell relies,
I mean the adamant Destinies,
He wounds with love, and forced them equally
To dote upon deceitful Mercury.
They offered him the deadly fatal knife
That shears the slender threads of human life.
At his fair feathered feet the engines laid
Which th' earth from ugly Chaos' den upweighed.
These he regarded not but did entreat
That Jove, usurper of his father's seat,
Might presently be banished into hell,
And aged Saturn in Olympus dwell.
They granted what he craved, and once again
Saturn and Ops began their golden reign.
Murder, rape, war, lust, and treachery,

Were with Jove closed in Stygian empery.
But long this blessed time continued not.
As soon as he his wished purpose got
He reckless of his promise did despise
The love of th' everlasting Destinies.
They seeing it both love and him abhorred
And Jupiter unto his place restored.
And but that Learning in despite of Fate
Will mount aloft and enter heaven gate
And to the seat of Jove itself advance,
Hermes had slept in hell with Ignorance.
Yet as a punishment they added this,
That he and Poverty should always kiss.
And to this day is every scholar poor;
Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor.
Likewise the angry Sisters thus deluded,
To venge themselves on Hermes, have concluded
That Midas' brood shall sit in honour's chair,
To which the Muses' sons are only heir;
And fruitful wits, that in aspiring are,
Shall discontent run into regions far;
And few great lords in virtuous deeds shall joy
But be surprised with every garish toy,
And still enrich the lofty servile clown,
Who with encroaching guile keeps learning down.
Then Muse not Cupid's suit no better sped,
Seeing in their loves the Fates were injured.

Christopher Marlowe

Hero And Leander: The Second Sestiad

By this, sad Hero, with love unacquainted,
Viewing Leander's face, fell down and fainted.
He kissed her and breathed life into her lips,
Wherewith as one displeas'd away she trips.
Yet, as she went, full often looked behind,
And many poor excuses did she find
To linger by the way, and once she stay'd,
And would have turn'd again, but was afraid,
In offering parley, to be counted light.
So on she goes and in her idle flight
Her painted fan of cur'd plumes let fall,
Thinking to train Leander therewithal.
He, being a novice, knew not what she meant
But stay'd, and after her a letter sent,
Which joyful Hero answer'd in such sort,
As he had hope to scale the beauteous fort
Wherein the liberal Graces lock'd their wealth,
And therefore to her tower he got by stealth.
Wide open stood the door, he need not climb,
And she herself before the pointed time
Had spread the board, with roses strow'd the room,
And oft look'd out, and mused he did not come.
At last he came.
O who can tell the greeting
These greedy lovers had at their first meeting.
He ask'd, she gave, and nothing was denied.
Both to each other quickly were affied.
Look how their hands, so were their hearts united,
And what he did she willingly requited.
(Sweet are the kisses, the embracements sweet,
When like desires and affections meet,
For from the earth to heaven is Cupid rais'd,
Where fancy is in equal balance peis'd.)
Yet she this rashness suddenly repented
And turn'd aside, and to herself lamented
As if her name and honour had been wrong'd
By being possess'd of him for whom she long'd.
Ay, and she wish'd, albeit not from her heart
That he would leave her turret and depart.

The mirthful god of amorous pleasure smiled
To see how he this captive nymph beguiled.
For hitherto he did but fan the fire,
And kept it down that it might mount the higher.
Now waxed she jealous lest his love abated,
Fearing her own thoughts made her to be hated.
Therefore unto him hastily she goes
And, like light Salmacis, her body throws
Upon his bosom where with yielding eyes
She offers up herself a sacrifice
To slake his anger if he were displeased.
O, what god would not therewith be appeased?
Like Aesop's cock this jewel he enjoyed
And as a brother with his sister toyed
Supposing nothing else was to be done,
Now he her favour and good will had won.
But know you not that creatures wanting sense
By nature have a mutual appetite,
And, wanting organs to advance a step,
Moved by love's force unto each other leap?
Much more in subjects having intellect
Some hidden influence breeds like effect.
Albeit Leander rude in love and raw,
Long dallying with Hero, nothing saw
That might delight him more, yet he suspected
Some amorous rites or other were neglected.
Therefore unto his body hers he clung.
She, fearing on the rushes to be flung,
Strived with redoubled strength; the more she strived
The more a gentle pleasing heat revived,
Which taught him all that elder lovers know.
And now the same gan so to scorch and glow
As in plain terms (yet cunningly) he craved it.
Love always makes those eloquent that have it.
She, with a kind of granting, put him by it
And ever, as he thought himself most nigh it,
Like to the tree of Tantalus, she fled
And, seeming lavish, saved her maidenhead.
Ne'er king more sought to keep his diadem,
Than Hero this inestimable gem.
Above our life we love a steadfast friend,
Yet when a token of great worth we send,

We often kiss it, often look thereon,
And stay the messenger that would be gone.
No marvel then, though Hero would not yield
So soon to part from that she dearly held.
Jewels being lost are found again, this never;
'Tis lost but once, and once lost, lost forever.
Now had the morn espied her lover's steeds,
Whereat she starts, puts on her purple weeds,
And red for anger that he stayed so long
All headlong throws herself the clouds among.
And now Leander, fearing to be missed,
Embraced her suddenly, took leave, and kissed.
Long was he taking leave, and loath to go,
And kissed again as lovers use to do.
Sad Hero wrung him by the hand and wept
Saying, 'Let your vows and promises be kept.'
Then standing at the door she turned about
As loath to see Leander going out.
And now the sun that through th' horizon peeps,
As pitying these lovers, downward creeps,
So that in silence of the cloudy night,
Though it was morning, did he take his flight.
But what the secret trusty night concealed
Leander's amorous habit soon revealed.
With Cupid's myrtle was his bonnet crowned,
About his arms the purple riband wound
Wherewith she wreathed her largely spreading hair.
Nor could the youth abstain, but he must wear
The sacred ring wherewith she was endowed
When first religious chastity she vowed.
Which made his love through Sestos to be known,
And thence unto Abydos sooner blown
Than he could sail; for incorporeal fame
Whose weight consists in nothing but her name,
Is swifter than the wind, whose tardy plumes
Are reeking water and dull earthly fumes.
Home when he came, he seemed not to be there,
But, like exiled air thrust from his sphere,
Set in a foreign place; and straight from thence,
Alcides like, by mighty violence
He would have chased away the swelling main
That him from her unjustly did detain.

Like as the sun in a diameter
Fires and inflames objects removed far,
And heateth kindly, shining laterally,
So beauty sweetly quickens when 'tis nigh,
But being separated and removed,
Burns where it cherished, murders where it loved.
Therefore even as an index to a book,
So to his mind was young Leander's look.
O, none but gods have power their love to hide,
Affection by the countenance is descried.
The light of hidden fire itself discovers,
And love that is concealed betrays poor lovers,
His secret flame apparently was seen.
Leander's father knew where he had been
And for the same mildly rebuked his son,
Thinking to quench the sparkles new begun.
But love resisted once grows passionate,
And nothing more than counsel lovers hate.
For as a hot proud horse highly disdains
To have his head controlled, but breaks the reins,
Spits forth the ringled bit, and with his hooves
Checks the submissive ground; so he that loves,
The more he is restrained, the worse he fares.
What is it now, but mad Leander dares?
'O Hero, Hero!' thus he cried full oft;
And then he got him to a rock aloft,
Where having spied her tower, long stared he on't,
And prayed the narrow toiling Hellespont
To part in twain, that he might come and go;
But still the rising billows answered, 'No.'
With that he stripped him to the ivory skin
And, crying 'Love, I come,' leaped lively in.
Whereat the sapphire visaged god grew proud,
And made his capering Triton sound aloud,
Imagining that Ganymede, displeased,
Had left the heavens; therefore on him he seized.
Leander strived; the waves about him wound,
And pulled him to the bottom, where the ground
Was strewed with pearl, and in low coral groves
Sweet singing mermaids sported with their loves
On heaps of heavy gold, and took great pleasure
To spurn in careless sort the shipwrack treasure.

For here the stately azure palace stood
Where kingly Neptune and his train abode.
The lusty god embraced him, called him 'Love,'
And swore he never should return to Jove.
But when he knew it was not Ganymede,
For under water he was almost dead,
He heaved him up and, looking on his face,
Beat down the bold waves with his triple mace,
Which mounted up, intending to have kissed him,
And fell in drops like tears because they missed him.
Leander, being up, began to swim
And, looking back, saw Neptune follow him,
Whereat aghast, the poor soul 'gan to cry
'O, let me visit Hero ere I die! '
The god put Helle's bracelet on his arm,
And swore the sea should never do him harm.
He clapped his plump cheeks, with his tresses played
And, smiling wantonly, his love bewrayed.
He watched his arms and, as they opened wide
At every stroke, betwixt them would he slide
And steal a kiss, and then run out and dance,
And, as he turned, cast many a lustful glance,
And threw him gaudy toys to please his eye,
And dive into the water, and there pry
Upon his breast, his thighs, and every limb,
And up again, and close beside him swim,
And talk of love.
Leander made reply,
'You are deceived; I am no woman, I.'
Thereat smiled Neptune, and then told a tale,
How that a shepherd, sitting in a vale,
Played with a boy so fair and kind,
As for his love both earth and heaven pined;
That of the cooling river durst not drink,
Lest water nymphs should pull him from the brink.
And when he sported in the fragrant lawns,
Goat footed satyrs and upstaring fauns
Would steal him thence. Ere half this tale was done,
'Ay me,' Leander cried, 'th' enamoured sun
That now should shine on Thetis' glassy bower,
Descends upon my radiant Hero's tower.
O, that these tardy arms of mine were wings! '

And, as he spake, upon the waves he springs.
Neptune was angry that he gave no ear,
And in his heart revenging malice bare.
He flung at him his mace but, as it went,
He called it in, for love made him repent.
The mace, returning back, his own hand hit
As meaning to be venged for darting it.
When this fresh bleeding wound Leander viewed,
His colour went and came, as if he rued
The grief which Neptune felt. In gentle breasts
Relenting thoughts, remorse, and pity rests.
And who have hard hearts and obdurate minds,
But vicious, harebrained, and illiterate hinds?
The god, seeing him with pity to be moved,
Thereon concluded that he was beloved.
(Love is too full of faith, too credulous,
With folly and false hope deluding us.)
Wherefore, Leander's fancy to surprise,
To the rich Ocean for gifts he flies.
'tis wisdom to give much; a gift prevails
When deep persuading oratory fails.
By this Leander, being near the land,
Cast down his weary feet and felt the sand.
Breathless albeit he were he rested not
Till to the solitary tower he got,
And knocked and called. At which celestial noise
The longing heart of Hero much more joys
Than nymphs and shepherds when the timbrel rings,
Or crooked dolphin when the sailor sings.
She stayed not for her robes but straight arose
And, drunk with gladness, to the door she goes,
Where seeing a naked man, she screeched for fear
(Such sights as this to tender maids are rare)
And ran into the dark herself to hide.
(Rich jewels in the dark are soonest spied) .
Unto her was he led, or rather drawn
By those white limbs which sparkled through the lawn.
The nearer that he came, the more she fled,
And, seeking refuge, slipped into her bed.
Whereon Leander sitting thus began,
Through numbing cold, all feeble, faint, and wan.
'If not for love, yet, love, for pity sake,

Me in thy bed and maiden bosom take.
At least vouchsafe these arms some little room,
Who, hoping to embrace thee, cheerly swum.
This head was beat with many a churlish billow,
And therefore let it rest upon thy pillow.'
Herewith affrighted, Hero shrunk away,
And in her lukewarm place Leander lay,
Whose lively heat, like fire from heaven fet,
Would animate gross clay and higher set
The drooping thoughts of base declining souls
Than dreary Mars carousing nectar bowls.
His hands he cast upon her like a snare.
She, overcome with shame and sallow fear,
Like chaste Diana when Actaeon spied her,
Being suddenly betrayed, dived down to hide her.
And, as her silver body downward went,
With both her hands she made the bed a tent,
And in her own mind thought herself secure,
O'er cast with dim and darksome coverture.
And now she lets him whisper in her ear,
Flatter, entreat, promise, protest and swear;
Yet ever, as he greedily assayed
To touch those dainties, she the harpy played,
And every limb did, as a soldier stout,
Defend the fort, and keep the foeman out.
For though the rising ivory mount he scaled,
Which is with azure circling lines empaled,
Much like a globe (a globe may I term this,
By which love sails to regions full of bliss)
Yet there with Sisyphus he toiled in vain,
Till gentle parley did the truce obtain.
Wherein Leander on her quivering breast
Breathless spoke something, and sighed out the rest;
Which so prevailed, as he with small ado
Enclosed her in his arms and kissed her too.
And every kiss to her was as a charm,
And to Leander as a fresh alarm,
So that the truce was broke and she, alas,
(Poor silly maiden) at his mercy was.
Love is not full of pity (as men say)
But deaf and cruel where he means to prey.
Even as a bird, which in our hands we wring,

Forth plungeth and oft flutters with her wing,
She trembling strove.
This strife of hers (like that
Which made the world) another world begat
Of unknown joy. Treason was in her thought,
And cunningly to yield herself she sought.
Seeming not won, yet won she was at length.
In such wars women use but half their strength.
Leander now, like Theban Hercules,
Entered the orchard of th' Hesperides;
Whose fruit none rightly can describe but he
That pulls or shakes it from the golden tree.
And now she wished this night were never done,
And sighed to think upon th' approaching sun;
For much it grieved her that the bright daylight
Should know the pleasure of this blessed night,
And them, like Mars and Erycine, display
Both in each other's arms chained as they lay.
Again, she knew not how to frame her look,
Or speak to him, who in a moment took
That which so long so charily she kept,
And fain by stealth away she would have crept,
And to some corner secretly have gone,
Leaving Leander in the bed alone.
But as her naked feet were whipping out,
He on the sudden clinged her so about,
That, mermaid-like, unto the floor she slid.
One half appeared, the other half was hid.
Thus near the bed she blushing stood upright,
And from her countenance behold ye might
A kind of twilight break, which through the hair,
As from an orient cloud, glimpsed here and there,
And round about the chamber this false morn
Brought forth the day before the day was born.
So Hero's ruddy cheek Hero betrayed,
And her all naked to his sight displayed,
Whence his admiring eyes more pleasure took
Than Dis, on heaps of gold fixing his look.
By this, Apollo's golden harp began
To sound forth music to the ocean,
Which watchful Hesperus no sooner heard
But he the bright day-bearing car prepared

And ran before, as harbinger of light,
And with his flaring beams mocked ugly night,
Till she, o'ercome with anguish, shame, and rage,
Danged down to hell her loathsome carriage.

Christopher Marlowe

I Must Have Wanton Poets

MUST have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please:
Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay;
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there, hard by,
One like Actæon, peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transform'd,
And running in the likeness of an hart,
By yelping hounds pull'd down, shall seem to die:
Such things as these best please his majesty.

Christopher Marlowe

Ignoto

I love thee not for sacred chastity.
Who loves for that? nor for thy sprightly wit:
I love thee not for thy sweet modesty,
Which makes thee in perfection's throne to sit.
I love thee not for thy enchanting eye,
Thy beauty, ravishing perfection:
I love thee not for that my soul doth dance,
And leap with pleasure when those lips of thine,
Give musical and graceful utterance,
To some (by thee made happy) poet's line.
I love thee not for voice or slender small,
But wilt thou know wherefore? Fair sweet, for all.

'Faith, wench! I cannot court thy sprightly eyes,
With the base viol placed between my thighs:
I cannot lisp, nor to some fiddle sing,
Nor run upon a high stretching minikin.
I cannot whine in puling elegies.
Entombing Cupid with sad obsequies:
I am not fashioned for these amorous times,
To court thy beauty with lascivious rhymes:
I cannot dally, caper, dance and sing,
Oiling my saint with supple sonneting:
I cannot cross my arms, or sigh 'Ah me,'
'Ah me forlorn!' egregious foppery!
I cannot buss thy fill, play with thy hair,
Swearing by Jove, 'Thou art most debonnaire!'
Not I, by cock! but I shall tell thee roundly,
Hark in thine ear, zounds I can _____ thee soundly.

Sweet wench, I love thee; yet I will not sue,
Or show my love as musky courtiers do;
I'll not carouse a health to honour thee,
In this same bezzling drunken courtesy:
And when all's quaffed, eat up my bousinglass,
In glory that I am thy servile ass.
Nor will I wear a rotten Bourbon lock,
As some sworn peasant to a female mock.
Well-featured lass, thou know'st I love thee dear,

Yet for thy sake I will not bore mine ear,
To hang thy dirty silken shoe-tires there:
Not for thy love will I once gnash a brick,
Or some pied colours in my bonnet stick.
But by the chaps of hell, to do thee good,
I'll freely spend my thrice decocted blood.

Christopher Marlowe

In Obitum Honoratissimi Viri, Rogeri Manwood, Militis, Quaestorii Reginalis Capitalis Bareonis

NOCTIVAGI terror, ganeonis triste flagellum,
Et Jovis Alcides, rigido vulturque latroni,
Urna subtegitur. Scelerum, gaudete, nepotes!
Insons, luctifica sparsis cervice capillis,
Plange! fori lumen, venerandae gloria legis,
Occidit: heu, secum effoetas Acherontis ad oras
Multa abiit virtus. Pro tot virtutibus uni,
Livor, parce viro; non audacissimus esto
Illius in cineres, cujus tot millia vultus
Mortalium attonuit: sic cum te nuntia Ditis
Vulneret exsanguis, feliciter ossa quiescant,
Famaque marmorei superet monumenta sepulcri.

Christopher Marlowe

Lament For Zenocrate

Black is the beauty of the brightest day,
The golden belle of heaven's eternal fire,
That danced with glory on the silver waves,
Now wants the fuel that inflamed his beams:
And all with faintness and for foul disgrace,
He binds his temples with a frowning cloud,
Ready to darken earth with endless night:
Zenocrate that gave him light and life,
Whose eyes shot fire from their ivory bowers,
And tempered every soul with lively heat,
Now by the malice of the angry skies,
Whose jealousy admits no second mate,
Draws in the comfort of her latest breath
All dazzled with the hellish mists of death.
Now walk the angels on the walls of heaven,
As sentinels to warn th'immortal souls,
To entertain divine Zenocrate.
Apollo, Cynthia, and the ceaseless lamps
That gently looked upon this loathsome earth,
Shine downwards now no more, but deck the heavens
To entertain divine Zenocrate.
The crystal springs whose taste illuminates
Refined eyes with an eternal sight,
Like tried silver runs through Paradise
To entertain divine Zenocrate.
The Cherubins and holy Seraphins
That sing and play before the King of Kings,
Use all their voices and their instruments
To entertain divine Zenocrate.
And in this sweet and curious harmony,
The God that tunes this music to our souls,
Holds out his hand in highest majesty
To entertain divine Zenocrate.
Then let some holy trance convey my thoughts,
Up to the palace of th'imperial heaven:
That this my life may be as short to me
As are the days of sweet Zenocrate.

Our Conquering Swords

Our conquering swords shall marshall us the way
We use to march upon the slaughter'd foe,
Trampling their bowels with our horses' hoofs,
Brave horses bred on the white Tartarian hills.
My camp is like to Julius Caesar's host,
That never fought but had the victory;
Nor in Pharsalia was there such hot war
As these, my followers, willingly would have.
Legions of spirits, fleeting in the air,
Direct our bullets and our weapons' points,
And make your strokes to wound the senseless light;
And when she sees our bloody colours spread,
Then Victory begins to take her flight,
Resting herself upon my milk-white tent--
But come, my lords, to weapons let us fall;
The field is ours, the Turk, his wife, and all.

Christopher Marlowe

The Face That Launch'd A Thousand Ships

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!

Christopher Marlowe

The Passionate Shepherd To His Love

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.
And we will sit upon rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant poises,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds's swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Christopher Marlowe

Who Ever Loved That Loved Not At First Sight?

It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is overruled by fate.
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin,
We wish that one should love, the other win;

And one especially do we affect
Of two gold ingots, like in each respect:
The reason no man knows; let it suffice
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?

Christopher Marlowe