

Francesco Petrarch (July 1304 - July 1374)

from *Rime Sparse* , original Italian

1

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
in sul mio primo giovenile errore
quand'era in parte altr'uom da quel ch'ï sono,

del vario stile in ch'io piango et ragiono
fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore,
spero trovar pietà, nonché perdono.

Ma ben veggio or sí come al popol tutto
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
di me mesdesmo meco mi vergogno;

et del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
e 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

taken from:
<http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html>

English translation

1

You who hear the sound, in scattered rhymes,
of those sighs on which I fed my heart,
in my first vagrant youthfulness,
when I was partly other than I am,

I hope to find pity, and forgiveness,
for all the modes in which I talk and weep,
between vain hope and vain sadness,
in those who understand love through its trials.

Yet I see clearly now I have become
an old tale amongst all these people, so that
it often makes me ashamed of myself;

and shame is the fruit of my vanities,
and remorse, and the clearest knowledge
of how the world's delight is a brief dream.

trans: A.S. Kline

Francesco Petrarch

3

It was on that day when the sun's ray
was darkened in pity for its Maker,
that I was captured, and did not defend myself,
because your lovely eyes had bound me, Lady.

It did not seem to me to be a time to guard myself
against Love's blows: so I went on
confident, unsuspecting; from that, my troubles
started, amongst the public sorrows.

Love discovered me all weaponless,
and opened the way to the heart through the eyes,
which are made the passageways and doors of tears:

so that it seems to me it does him little honour
to wound me with his arrow, in that state,
he not showing his bow at all to you who are armed.

taken from:
<http://petrarch.petersadlon.com/canzoniere.html>

5

When I utter sighs, in calling out to you,
with the name that Love wrote on my heart,
the sound of its first sweet accents begin
to be heard within the word LAUdable.

Your REgal state, that I next encounter,
doubles my power for the high attempt;
but: 'TAcit', the ending cries, 'since to do her honour
is for other men's shoulders, not for yours'.

So, whenever one calls out to you,
the voice itself teaches us to LAUd, REvere,
you, O, lady worthy of all reverence and honour:

except perhaps that Apollo is disdainful
that morTAl tongue can be so presumptuous
as to speak of his eternally green branches.

trans: A.S. Kline

Henry Howard (1517 – 19 January 1547)

Complaint of the Lover Disdained

In Cyprus springs, whereas Dame Venus dwelt, **A 5**
A well so hot, that whoso tastes the same, **B 5**
Were he of stone, as thawed ice should melt, **A 4.5**
And kindled find his breast with fixed flame; **B 4.5**
Whose moist poison dissolved hath my hate. **C 4.5**
This creeping fire my cold limbs so opprest, **D 5**
That in the heart that harbour'd freedom, late: **C 5**
Endless despair long thraldom hath imprest. **D 5**
Another so cold in frozen ice is found, **E 5.5**
Whose chilling venom of repugnant kind, **F 5**
The fervent heat doth quench of Cupid's wound, **E 5**
And with the spot of change infects the mind; **F 5**
 Whereof my dear hath tasted to my pain: **G 5**
 My service thus is grown into disdain. **G 5**

Description of Spring, Wherein Every Thing Renews,

Save Only the Lover

The soote season, that bud and blome forth bringes, **A 5**
With grene hath clad the hill, and eke the vale: **B 5**
The nightingale with fethers new she singes: **A 5**
The turtle to her make hath tolde her tale: **B 5**
Somer is come, for every spray nowe springes: **A 5**
The hart hath hung his olde head on the pale: **B 5**
The buck in brake his winter cote he flings: **A 5**
The fishes flote with newe repaired scale: **B 5**
The adder all her sloughe away she slinges: **A 5**
The swift swallow pursueth the flyes smale: **B 5**
The busy bee her honye now she minges: **A 5**
Winter is worne that was the flowers bale: **B 5**
And thus I see among these pleasant things **A 5**
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs. **A 5**

1. *soote*: sweet

4. *turtle*: turtledove; make: mate

6. *his olde head*: i.e. his antlers; *pale*: fence post

7. *brake*: bushes

9. *sloughe*: skin

11. *minges*: mingles; mixes

12. *bale*: evil; harm; misfortune; woe; misery; sorrow

Edmund Spenser (1552 – 1599)

from *Amoretti*

IX

Long while I sought to what I might compare **A**
Those powerful eyes, which lighten my dark sight, **B**
Yet find I nought on earth to which I dare **A**
Resemble th' image of their goodly light. **B**
Not to the sun, for they do shine by night; **B**
Nor to the moon, for they are changed never; **C**
Nor to the stars, for they have purer sight; **B**
Nor to the fire, for they consume not ever; **C**
Nor to the lightning, for they still persever; **C**
Nor to the diamond, for they are more tender; **D**
Nor unto crystal, far nought may them sever; **C**
Nor unto glass, such baseness might offend her; **D**
Then to the Maker self they likest be, **E**
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see. **E**

Spencer, Edmund. *English Sixteenth-Century Verse: An Anthology*.
Richard S. Sylvester, ed. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974. Print.

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the strand, **A**
But came the waves and washed it away: **B**
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand, **A**
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray. **B**
“Vayne man,” sayd she, “that doest in vaine assay, **B**
A mortall thing so to immortalize, **C**
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay, **B**
And eek my name bee wypéd out lykewize.” **C**
“Not so,” quod I, “let baser things devize **C**
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame: **D**
My verse, your vertues rare shall eternize, **C**
And in the hevens wryte your glorious name. **D**
Where whenas death shall all the world subdew, **E**
Our love shall live, and later life renew.” **E**

Spencer, Edmund. *Edmund Spenser's Poetry*. Second edition.
Hugh MacLean, ed. W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1982. Print.

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

from *The Sonnets*

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? **A 5**
Thou art more lovely and more temperate; **B 5**
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, **A 5**
And summer's lease hath all too short a date; **B 5**
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, **C 5**
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; **D 5**
And every fair from fair sometime declines, **C 5**
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd; **D 5**
But thy eternal summer shall not fade, **E 5**
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; **F 5**
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, **E 5**
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st: **F 5**
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, **G 5**
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. **G 5**

29

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes, **A 5**
I all alone beweep my outcast state, **B 5**
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries, **A 5.5**
And look upon myself and curse my fate, **B 5**
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, **C 5**
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd, **D 5**
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope, **C 5**
With what I most enjoy contented least; **D 5**
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising, **E 5.5**
Haply I think on thee, and then my state, **B 5**
Like to the lark at break of day arising **E 5.5**
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate; **B 5**
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings **F 5**
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings. **F 5**

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

126

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power **A 5.5**
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his fickle hour; **A 5**
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st **B 5**
Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st. **B 5.5**
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack, **C 5**
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back, **C 5**
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill **D 5**
May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill. **D 5**
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure! **E 5.5**
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure: **E 5.5**
 Her audit (though delayed) answered must be, **F 5**
 And her quietus is to render thee. **F 5**

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; **A 5**
Coral is far more red than her lips' red; **B 5**
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; **A 5**
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. **B 5**
I have seen roses damask, red and white, **C 5**
But no such roses see I in her cheeks; **D 5**
And in some perfumes is there more delight **C 5**
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. **D 5**
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know **E 5**
That music hath a far more pleasing sound; **B 5**
I grant I never saw a goddess go; **E 5**
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground: **B 5**
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare **F 5.5**
 As any she belied with false compare. **F 5**

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Nov. 12, 1648/51 — April 17, 1695)

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Were the perils of the ocean fully weighed,
no man would voyage, or, could he but read
the hidden dangers, knowingly proceed
or dare to bait the bull to frenzied rage.

Were prudent rider overly dismayed,
should he contemplate the fury of his steed
or ponder where its headlong course might lead,
there'd be no reining hand to be obeyed.

But were there one so daring, one so bold
that, heedless of the danger, he might place,
upon Apollo's reins emboldened hand

To guide the fleeting chariot bathed in gold,
the diversity of life he would embrace
and never chose a state to last his span.

de la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. Margaret Sayers Peden, trans. NY: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilimgüe, 1985. Print.

Lady Mary Wroth (1587 — 1651/3)

from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

I

When night's blacke Mantle could most darknes prove,
And sleepe deaths Image did my senses hier,
From knowledg of my self, then thoughts did move
Swifter then those, most switnes need require:

In sleepe, a Chariot drawne by wind'd desire,

I sawe: wher sate bright Venus Queene of Love,
And att her feete her sonne, still adding fire
To burning hearts which she did hold above,

But one hart flaming more then all the rest,

The goddesse held, and put itt to my brest,

Dear sonne now shutt (shoot), sayd she: thus must we winne;

Hee her obay'd, and martir'd my poore hart.

I, waking hop'd as dreames itt would depart,

Yett since: O mee, a lover have I binn.

Wroth, Lady Mary. *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*. Josephine A. Roberts, ed. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1983. Print.

John Berryman (October 25, 1914 – January 7, 1972)

from *Berryman's Sonnets*

115

All we were going strong last night this time,
the *mots* were flying & the frozen daiquiris
were downing, supine on the floor lay Lise
listening to Schubert grievous & sublime,
my head was frantic with a following rime:
it was a good evening, an evening to please,
I kissed her in the kitchen—ecstasies—
among so much good we tamped down the crime.

The weather's changing. This morning was cold,
as I made for the grove, without expectation,
some hundred Sonnets in my pocket, old,
to read her if she came. Presently the sun
yellowed the pines & my lady came not
in blue jeans & a sweater. I sat down & wrote.

Berryman, John. *Berryman's Sonnets*. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968. Print.

Billy Collins (March 22, 1941 –)

Sonnet

All we need is fourteen lines, well, thirteen now,
and after this one just a dozen
to launch a little ship on love's storm-tossed seas,
then only ten more left like rows of beans.

How easily it goes unless you get Elizabethan
and insist the iambic bongos must be played
and rhymes positioned at the ends of lines,
one for every station of the cross.

But hang on here while we make the turn
into the final six where all will be resolved,
where longing and heartache will find an end,
where Laura will tell Petrarch to put down his pen,
take off those crazy medieval tights,
blow out the lights, and come at last to bed.

Collins, Billy. *Literature and the Writing Process, 8th Edition*. Elizabeth McMahan, et.al., eds. NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall. 2007. Print.

e. e. cummings

“i carry your heart with me(i carry it in”

i carry your heart with me(i carry it in **A 6**
my heart)i am never without it(anywhere **B 6**
i go you go,my dear;and whatever is done **A 6**
by only me is your doing,my darling)
i fear **B 6.5**
no fate(for you are my fate,my sweet)i want **C 5.5**
no world(for beautiful you are my world,my true) **D 6**
and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant **C 6.5**
and whatever a sun will always sing is you **D 6**
here is the deepest secret nobody knows **E 5.5**
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud **F 6.5**
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;which grows **E 6.5**
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide) **F 5**
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart **G 6.5**
i carry your heart(i carry it in my heart) **G 6**

Marilyn Hacker

“You did say, need me less and I'll want you more”

You did say, need me less and I'll want you more. **A**
I'm still shellshocked at needing anyone, **B**
used to being used to it on my own. **B**
It won't be me out on the tiles till four- **A**
thirty, while you're in bed, willing the door **A**
open with your need. You wanted her then, **C**
more. Because you need to, I woke alone **A/B - C**
in what's not yet our room, strewn, though, with your **A**
guitar, shoes, notebook, socks, trousers enjambed **D**
with mine. Half the world was sleeping it off **E**
in every other bed under my roof. **D/E**
I wish I had a roof over my bed **E/D**
to pull down on my head when I feel damned **D/D**
by wanting you so much it looks like need. **D**

cummings, e. e. *Complete Poems: 1913-1962*. NY: HBJ, 1963. Print.

Hacker, Marilyn. *Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons*
NY: Arbor House. 1986. Print.