

## BYRON'S EARLY POEMS OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND LONDON

*edited by Peter Cochran*

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This section contains all Byron's poems relating to his life in Nottinghamshire which are not contained in his four earliest volumes. They are best seen as those he didn't care to publish – for a variety of reasons.

I have not used discreet anonymous dashes for titles, but have filled in with what seem the correct names. Where there is no title, I have used the poem's first line, in inverted commas.

BLJ: *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, John Murray 1973-94

Boyes: Megan Boyes, *Love without Wings* a biography of Elizabeth Pigot, 1988

CPW I: *Lord Byron the Complete Poetical Works*, ed. J.J. McGann, Oxford, Clarendon, 1980

Pratt: Willis W. Pratt, *Byron at Southwell, the Making of a Poet*, Austin 1948.

### EARLIEST POEMS

#### Byron's two earliest surviving poems

In Nottingham county there lives at Swine Green,  
As curst an old lady as ever was seen;  
And when she does die, which I hope will be soon,  
She firmly believes she will go the moon.<sup>1</sup>

#### "Then peace to thy spirit, my earliest Friend"

Then peace to thy spirit, my earliest Friend,<sup>2</sup>  
Beloved in thy life, and deplored in thine end;  
Yet happy art thou to escape from the woe  
Which awaits the survivors of friendship below.

I should not lament thee because thou art free 5  
From the pangs that assail human nature and me;  
Yet still I deplore thee in whom I have lost  
The companion of childhood I valued the most.

Oh, if there is heaven thou surely art blest, 10  
If death is eternal, at least then at rest.  
Then away with the tears which we fruitlessly shed –  
Let us mourn for the *living*, not weep for the dead.

Yet to think of the days we together have seen,  
Of what thou now art, and of what we have been.

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1: B.'s first surviving poem (written perhaps when he was ten), combines misogyny and scepticism in a way which will become familiar.

2: The addressee of this poem is not known.

**To a Lady who presented the Author with the velvet Band which bound her  
Tresses<sup>3</sup>**

1.

This Band, which bound thy yellow hair  
Is mine, sweet girl! thy pledge of love;  
It claims my warmest, dearest care,  
Like relics left of saints above.

2.

Oh! I will wear it next my heart; 5  
'Twill bind my soul in bonds to thee;  
From me again 'twill ne'er depart,  
But mingle in the grave with me.

3.

The dew I gather from thy lip 10  
Is not so dear to me as this;  
*That* I but for a moment sip,  
And banquet on a transient bliss:

4.

*This* will recall each youthful scene, 15  
E'en when our lives are on the wane;  
The leaves of Love will still be green  
When Memory bids them bud again.

Byron, 1806

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**3:** The addressee of this poem is not known. She may be the "Mary" of *To Mary, upon receiving her Picture*, in the four Newark volumes.

## POEMS TO MARY CHAWORTH

Byron's love for Mary Chaworth, who was two years his senior, took up the end of 1803 – his fifteenth year. Her family owned Annesley Hall, not far from Byron's ancestral seat, Newstead Abbey, and his great-uncle had killed her grandfather in a duel. She did not care for him, and, being unable to dance because of his lame leg, he had to endure the jealous anguish of watching her dance with other young men who could. She married Jack Musters, a local squire, and had children by him. He was unfaithful, and Mary underwent severe emotional trouble. When Byron became famous she tried to contact him again, but they never met.



*Mary Chaworth*

### To My Dear Mary Anne

1.

Adieu to sweet Mary forever –  
 From her I must quickly depart;  
 Though the fates us from each other sever,  
 Still her image will dwell in my heart.

2.

The flame that within my breast burns,                     5  
 Is unlike what in lovers' hearts glows;  
 The love which for Mary I feel,  
 Is far purer than Cupid bestows.

3.

I wish not your peace to disturb,  
 I wish not your joys to molest;                     10  
 Mistake not my passion for love –  
 'Tis your friendship alone I request.

4.

Not ten thousand Lovers could feel  
 The friendship my bosom contains;  
 It will ever within my Heart dwell,                     15  
 While the warm blood flows through my veins.

5.

May the Ruler of Heaven look down,  
 And my Mary from evil defend;  
 May she ne'er know Adversity's frown,  
 May her Happiness ne'er have an end. 20

6.

Once more my sweet Girl, Adieu!  
 Farewell, I with anguish repeat,  
 For ever I'll think upon you,  
 While the Heart in my bosom shall beat.

**“Since the feuds of our fathers”**

Since the feuds of our fathers descend on their race<sup>4</sup>  
 And the children must part – till the parents embrace,  
 Though the tie that commands has dissevered our fate,  
 Oh, let not our bosoms inherit their hate. –

**Written shortly after the marriage of Miss Chaworth<sup>5</sup>**

Hills of Annesley, Bleak and Barren,  
 Where my thoughtless Childhood strayed,  
 How the northern Tempests, warring,  
 Howl above thy tufted Shade!

Now no more, the Hours beguiling, 5  
 Former favourite Haunts I see;  
 Now no more my Mary smiling  
 Makes ye seem Heaven to Me.

**Remembrance**

'Tis done! – I saw it in my dreams:  
 No more with Hope the future beams;  
 My days of happiness are few:  
 Chilled by misfortune's wintry blast,  
 My dawn of life is overcast, 5  
 Love, Hope, and joy, alike adieu!  
 Would I could add Remembrance too!

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4: In 1765 B.'s great uncle, the fifth lord, had killed M.C.'s grandfather, in a duel in London.

5: M.C. and Jack Musters were married at Colwick, Notts, on August 17th 1805. Elizabeth Pigot wrote in 1859, "We were reading Burns' *Farewell to Ayrshire* ... when he [B.] said, "I like that metre; let me try it," and taking up a pencil, wrote those on the other side in an instant. I read them to Moore, and ... copied them for him".

**“Well! Thou Art Happy”<sup>6</sup>**

- 1.
- Well! thou art happy, and I feel  
That I should thus be happy too;  
For still my heart regards thy weal  
Warmly, as it was wont to do.
- 2.
- Thy husband’s blest – and ’twill impart                   5  
Some pangs to view his happier lot:  
But let them pass – Oh! how my heart  
Would hate him if he loved thee not!
- 3.
- When late I saw thy favourite child,  
I thought my jealous heart would break;                   10  
But when the unconscious infant smiled,  
I kissed it for its mother’s sake.
- 4.
- I kissed it – and repressed my sighs  
Its father in its face to see;  
But then it had its mother’s eyes,                         15  
And they were all to love and me.
- 5.
- Mary, adieu! I must away:  
While thou art blest I’ll not repine;  
But near thee I can never stay;                             20  
My heart would soon again be thine.
- 6.
- I deemed that Time, I deemed that Pride,  
Had quenched at length my boyish flame;  
Nor knew, till seated by thy side  
My heart in all – save hope – the same.                   25
- 7.
- Yet was I calm: I knew the time  
My breast would thrill before thy look;  
But now to tremble were a crime –  
We met – and not a nerve was shook.

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**6:** See BLJ I 173-4 (letter from Newstead to Francis Hodgson, November 3rd 1808), for B.’s description of the dinner-party at the Musters to which he and Hobhouse went, which inspired this poem: “... the other day ... I was seated near a woman, to whom when a boy I was as much attached as boys generally are, and more than a man should be. I knew this before I went, and was determined to be valiant, and converse with ‘sang froid,’ but instead I forgot my valour and my nonchalance, and never opened my lips even to laugh, far less to speak, & the Lady was almost as absurd as myself, which made both the object of more observation, than if we had conducted ourselves with easy indifference. – You will think all this great nonsense, if you had seen it you would have thought it still more ridiculous. – What fools we! ...” *and so on.*

8.  
 I saw thee gaze upon my face, 30  
     Yet meet with no confusion there:  
 One only feeling couldst thou trace;  
     The sullen calmness of despair.

9.  
 Away! away! my early dream –  
     Remembrance never must awake: 35  
 Oh! where is Lethe's fabled stream?  
     My foolish heart, be still, or break. – **November 2nd 1808**

### **Stanzas to a Lady on Leaving England<sup>7</sup>**

1.  
 'Tis done – and shivering in the gale  
 The bark unfurls her snowy sail;  
 And whistling o'er the bending mast,  
 Loud sings on high the fresh'ning blast;  
 And I must from this land be gone, 5  
 Because I cannot love but one.

2.  
 But could I be what I have been,  
 And could I see what I have seen –  
 Could I repose upon the breast  
 Which once my warmest wishes blest – 10  
 I should not seek another zone,  
 Because I cannot love but one.

3.  
 'Tis long since I beheld that eye  
 Which gave me bliss or misery;  
 And I have striven, but in vain, 15  
 Never to think of it again:  
 For though I fly from Albion,  
 I still can only love but one.

4.  
 As some lone bird, without a mate,  
 My weary heart is desolate; 20  
 I look around, and cannot trace  
 One friendly smile or welcome face,  
 And ev'n in crowds am still alone,  
 Because I cannot love but one.

5.  
 And I will cross the whitening foam, 25  
 And I will seek a foreign home;  
 Till I forget a false fair face,  
 I ne'er shall find a resting-place;  
 My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,  
 But ever love, and love but one. 30

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7: This poem is addressed to M.C. It also starts the section on this website entitled *Mediterranean Poems*.

## 6.

The poorest, veriest wretch on earth  
 Still finds some hospitable hearth,  
 Where Friendship's or Love's softer glow  
 May smile in joy or soothe in woe;  
 But friend or leman<sup>8</sup> I have none, 35  
 Because I cannot love but one.

## 7.

I go – but wheresoe'er I flee  
 There's not an eye will weep for me;  
 There's not a kind congenial heart,  
 Where I can claim the meanest part; 40  
 Nor thou, who hast my hopes undone,  
 Wilt sigh, although I love but one.

## 8.

To think of every early scene,  
 Of what we are, and what we've been,  
 Would whelm some softer hearts with woe – 45  
 But mine, alas! has stood the blow;  
 Yet still beats on as it begun,  
 And never truly loves but one.

## 9.

And who that dear loved one may be,  
 Is not for vulgar eyes to see; 50  
 And why that early love was crossed,  
 Thou know'st the best, I feel the most;  
 But few that dwell beneath the sun  
 Have loved so long, and loved but one.

## 10.

I've tried another's fetters too,<sup>9</sup> 55  
 With charms perchance as fair to view;  
 And I would fain have loved as well,  
 But some unconquerable spell  
 Forbade my bleeding breast to own  
 A kindred care for aught but one. 60

## 11.

'Twould soothe to take one lingering view,  
 And bless thee in my last adieu;  
 Yet wish I not those eyes to weep  
 For him that wanders o'er the deep;<sup>10</sup>  
 His home, his hope, his youth are gone, 65  
 Yet still he loves, and loves but one. – 1809

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**8:** *leman* – woman, girlfriend, mistress: compare *CHP* I, 9, 5: *Yea! none did love him – not his lemans dear ...*

**9:** B.'s principal liaison – it does not seem to have been a love-affair – had been with Caroline Cameron.

**10:** Looks back to the *Ancient Mariner*, and forward to the *Flying Dutchman*.

## SOUTHWELL POEMS (1)

Mrs Byron moved with her son into Burgage Manor, on The Green, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, in July 1803. Byron used Southwell as a refuge from both Harrow and from Cambridge, and though he affected to detest it because of its dull provincialism, had an interesting social life there. It was from there that he published – via Ridge, the Newark printer – his first four books of poetry (see *Fugitive Pieces* and *Hours of Idleness* on this website).



*Burgage Manor, Southwell (today)*

### **To those Ladies who have so kindly defended the Author from the attacks of unprovoked Malignity<sup>11</sup>**

1.

What pity speaks in Beauty's Sigh!  
 When heartless Critics chide the Lay,<sup>12</sup>  
 How dear the Beams of Beauty's Eye  
 Which chase the Clouds of hate away.

2.

In words from woman's Lip divine, 5  
 What heavenly Consolation flows,  
 Since woman's words and Smiles are mine,  
 I shall not fear a thousand Foes.

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**11:** B. refers to those who accused some of the poems in *Fugitive Pieces* ("To Mary", for instance), of being too erotic, and to the Southwell ladies who defended them.

**12:** *the Lay* – the poem – *Fugitive Pieces*.



- 3.
- Oh, I forgive the lying Throng –  
 From you alone I claim the Bays,                   10  
 Since you approve my simple Song,  
 Their censure is my warmest praise.
- 4.
- 'Twas not to soothe the Captious Fool,  
 My youthful Lyre attuned its String,  
 To Matrons of the prudish School                   15  
 Let venal Rhymers coldly sing.
- 5.
- My Strains in glowing Stanzas roll,  
 No withered Leaves my head Entwine;  
 The votive offering of my Soul  
 Was placed on Beauty's hallowed Shrine.       20
- 6.
- And Beauty scanned the amorous page,  
 And Beauty smiled her soft Applause,  
 Bade me despise the factious Rage,  
 And Spurn despotic Envy's Laws.
- 7.
- Shall I repress my Bosom's fire                   25  
 Lest prudes should pine for envied Bliss,  
 Lest Age should wake to young Desire,  
 And fault'ring try the tasteless kiss?
- 8.
- Must I unstring the Harp of Love,  
 Lest hands depraved should sweep the Chords?       30  
 Why should my verse to Sinning move?  
 Temptation's something more than words.
- 9.
- Frail must the Virgin be who falls  
 Seduced by artless Songs like these,  
 Internal Shame her Soul appalls                   35  
 Whom artless Songs of youth displease.
- 10.
- The Minds of fair untainted Maids  
 From Verse will still remain the Same;  
 Where Vice the burning Breast pervades,  
 No Verse can quench the Subtle Flame.<sup>13</sup>       40

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**13:** B. anticipates his defence of *Don Juan*: "No Girl will ever be seduced by reading D[on] J[uan] – no – no – she will go to Little's poems – & Rousseau's romans – for that – or even to the immaculate De Stael – – they will encourage her – & not the Don – who laughs at that – and – and – most other things. – But never mind – 'Ca ira!'" (letter to Murray, October 25 1822; BLJ X 68).

11.

Then will I strike my Harp to Love,  
 His Numbers are forever new,  
 To Me with fresh Delight they move,  
 When gently breathed for nymphs like you.

12.

Your Laurels will my Toils repay, 45  
 Your frowns would check the tender Strain;  
 Then cheer with Smiles my Lyric Lay,  
 I'll think I have not sung in vain. – 1806

### To a Knot of ungenerous Critics

Rail on, Rail on, ye heartless crew!  
 My strains were never meant for you;  
 Remorseless Rancour still reveal,  
 And damn the verse you cannot feel.  
 Invoke those kindred passions' aid! 5  
 Whose baleful stings your breasts pervade.  
 Crush, if you can, the hopes of youth,  
 Trampling regardless on the Truth!  
 Truth's Records you consult in vain,  
 She will not blast her native strain; 10  
 She will assist her votary's cause,  
 His will at least be her applause,  
 Your prayer the gentle Power will spurn.  
 To Fiction's motley altar turn,  
 Who joyful in the fond address 15  
 Her favoured worshippers will bless!  
 And lo! she holds a magic glass,  
 Where Images reflected pass.  
 Bent on your knees the Boon receive!  
 This will assist you to deceive 20  
 The glittering gift was made for you,  
 Now hold it up to public view.  
 Lest evil unforeseen betide,  
 A Mask each cankered brow shall hide  
 (Whilst Truth my sole Defence is nigh, 25  
 Prepared the danger to defy).  
 "There see the Maid's perverted name,  
 And there the Poet's guilty Flame,  
 Gloaming a deep phosphoric fire,  
 Threatening – but ere it spreads, retire!" 30  
 Says Truth, "Ye Virgins, do not fear!  
 No Comet rolls its Influence here;  
 'Tis Scandal's Mirror you perceive,  
 Her dazzling Meteors but deceive  
 Approach and touch – Nay, do not turn! 35  
 It blazes there, but will not burn."  
 At once the shivering Mirror flies,  
 Teeming no more with varnished Lies;  
 The baffled friends of Fictions start,  
 Too late desiring to depart. 40

Truth poisoning high Ithuriel's spear  
 Bids every Fiend unmasked appear,  
 The vizard tears from every face,  
 And dooms them to a dire disgrace.<sup>14</sup>  
 For e'er they compass their escape, 45  
 Each takes perforce a native shape  
 The Leader of the wrathful Band,  
 Behold a portly Female stand!  
 She raves, impelled by private pique,  
 This mean unjust revenge to seek; 50  
 From vice to save this virtuous Age,  
 Thus does she vent indecent rage!  
 What child has she of promise fair,  
 Who claims a fostering Mother's care?  
 Whose Innocence requires defence, 55  
 Or forms at least a smooth pretence,  
 Thus to disturb a harmless Boy,  
 His humble hope, and peace annoy?  
 She need not fear the amorous rhyme,  
 Love will not tempt her future time, 60  
 For her his wings have ceased to spread,  
 No more he flutters round her head;  
 Her day's Meridian now is past,  
 The clouds of Age her Sun  
 To her the strain was never sent, 65  
 For feeling Souls alone 'twas meant  
 The verse she seized, unasked, unbade,  
 And damned, ere yet the whole was read!  
 Yes! for one single erring verse,  
 Pronounced an unrelenting Curse; 70  
 Yes! at a first and transient view,  
 Condemned a heart she never knew.  
 Can such a verdict then decide,  
 Which springs from disappointed pride?  
 Without a wondrous share of Wit, 75  
 To judge is such a Matron fit?  
 The rest of the censorious throng  
 Who to this zealous Band belong,  
 To her a general homage pay,  
 And right or wrong her wish obey: 80  
 Why should I point my pen of steel  
 To break "such flies upon the wheel?"<sup>15</sup>  
 With minds to Truth and Sense unknown,  
 Who dare not call their words their own.  
 Rail on, Rail on, ye heartless Crew! 85  
 Your Leader's grand design pursue:  
 Secure behind her ample shield,  
 Yours is the harvest of the field.  
 My path with thorns you cannot strew,  
 Nay more, my warmest thanks are due; 90  
 When such as you revile my Name,  
 Bright beams the rising Sun of Fame,

14: B. refers to the angel Ithuriel, discovering Satan at *Paradise Lost* IV, 797-814.

15: B. quotes Pope, *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 308: "Who breaks a Butterfly upon a Wheel?"

Chasing the shades of envious night,  
 Outshining every critic Light.  
 Such, such as you will serve to show 95  
 Each radiant tint with higher glow.  
 Vain is the feeble cheerless toil,  
 Your efforts on yourselves recoil;  
 New Glory still for me you raise,  
 Yours is the Censure, mine the Praise. 100  
 – December 1st 1806

**Soliloquy of a Bard in the Country, in an Imitation of Lyttleton's Soliloquy of a Beauty<sup>16</sup>**

'Twas now the noon of night, and all was still,  
 Except a hapless Rhymer and his quill.  
 In vain he calls each Muse in order down,  
 Like other females, these will sometimes frown;  
 He frets, he fumes, and ceasing to invoke 5  
 The Nine, in anguish'd accents thus he spoke:  
 "Ah what avails it thus to waste my time,  
 To roll in Epic, or to rave in Rhyme?  
 What worth is some few partial readers' praise,  
 If ancient Virgins croaking *censures* raise? 10  
 Where few attend, 'tis useless to indite;  
 Where few can read, 'tis folly sure to write;  
 Where none but girls and striplings dare admire,  
 And Critics rise in every country Squire.  
 But yet this last my candid Muse admits, 15  
 When Peers are Poets, Squires may well be Wits;  
 When schoolboys vent their amorous flames in verse,  
 Matrons may sure their characters asperse;  
 Or if a little parson joins the train,  
 And echoes back his Patron's voice again 20

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**16:** George Lyttleton, first Baron Lyttleton (1709-73), dedicatee of *Tom Jones*. SOLILOQUY / OF / A BEAUTY IN THE COUNTRY. / (WRITTEN AT ETON SCHOOL.):

'Twas night; and Flavia to her room retired,  
 With evening chat and sober reading tired;  
 There, melancholy, pensive, and alone,  
 She meditates on the forsaken town;  
 On her raised arm reclined her drooping head,  
 She sigh'd, and thus in plaintive accents said –  
 'Ah! what avails it to be young and fair,  
 To move with negligence, to dress with care?  
 What worth have all the charms our pride can boast,  
 If all in envious solitude are lost?  
 Where none admire, 'tis useless to excel;  
 Where none are beaux, 'tis vain to be a belle:  
 Beauty, like wit, to judges should be shown;  
 Both most are valued where they best are known.  
 With every grace of nature or of art,  
 We cannot break one stubborn country heart:  
 The brutes, insensible, our power defy:  
 To love, exceeds a squire's capacity.

Though not delighted, yet I must forgive –  
 Parsons as well as other folks must live.<sup>17</sup>  
 From rage he rails not, rather say from dread,  
 He does not speak for Virtue, but for bread;  
 And this we know, is in his Patron's giving, 25  
 For Parsons cannot eat without a *Living*.  
 The Matron knows I love the Sex too well,  
 Even unprovoked aggression to repel.  
 What though from private pique her anger grew,  
 And bade her blast a heart she never knew? 30  
 What though, she said, for one light heedless line,  
 That Wilmot's verse was far more pure than mine!<sup>18</sup>  
 In wars like these, I neither fight nor fly,  
 When *dames* accuse 'tis bootless to deny;  
 Hers be the harvest of the martial field, 35  
 I can't attack, where Beauty forms the shield.  
 But when a pert Physician loudly cries,  
 Who hunts for scandal, and who lives by lies,  
 A walking register of daily news,  
 Train'd to invent, and skilful to abuse, – 40  
 For arts like these at bounteous tables fed,  
 When S[mith] condemns a book he never read,  
 Declaring with a coxcomb's native air,  
 The *moral's* shocking, though the *rhymes* are fair,  
 Ah! must he rise unpunish'd from the feast, 45  
 Nor lash'd by vengeance into truth at least?  
 Such lenity were more than Man's indeed!  
 Those who condemn, should surely deign to read.  
 Yet must I spare – nor thus my pen degrade,  
 I quite forgot that scandal was his trade. 50  
 For food and raiment thus the coxcomb rails,  
 For those who fear his physic, like his *tales*.  
 Why should his harmless censure seem offence?  
 Still let him eat, although at my expense,  
 And join the herd to Sense and Truth unknown, 55  
 Who dare not call their very thoughts their own,  
 And share with these applause, a godlike bribe,  
 In short, do anything, except *prescribe*:  
 For though in garb of Galen he appears,  
 His practice is not equal to his years.<sup>19</sup> 60

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17:                   The town, the court, is beauty's proper sphere;  
                           That is our heaven, and we are angels there:  
                           In that gay circle thousand Cupids rove;  
                           The court of Britain is the court of Love:  
                           How has my conscious heart with triumph glow'd,  
                           How have my sparkling eyes their transport show'd,  
                           At each distinguish'd birth-night ball to see  
                           The homage, due to empire, paid to me!  
                           When every eye was fix'd on me alone,  
                           And dreaded mine more than the monarch's frown;  
                           When rival statesmen for my favour strove,  
                           Less jealous in their power than in their love.  
                           Changed is the scene, and all my glories die,  
                           Like flowers transplanted to a colder sky;  
                           Lost is the dear delight of giving pain,  
                           The tyrant joy of hearing slaves complain.

18: Wilmot: John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-80), Restoration poet.

Without improvement since he first began,  
 A young Physician, though an ancient Man.  
 Now let me cease – Physician, Parson, Dame,  
 Still urge your task, and if you can, defame.  
 The humble offerings of my Muse destroy, 65  
 And crush, oh! noble conquest! crush a Boy.  
 What though some silly girls have loved the strain,  
 And kindly bade me tune my Lyre again;  
 What though some feeling, or some partial few,  
 Nay, Men of Taste and Reputation too, 70  
 Have deign'd to praise the firstlings of my Muse –  
 If *you* your sanction to the theme refuse,  
 If *you* your great protection still withdraw,  
 Whose Praise is Glory, and whose Voice is law!  
 Soon must I fall an unresisting foe, 75  
 A hapless victim yielding to the blow.  
 Thus Pope by Curl and Dennis was destroyed,  
 Thus Gray and Mason yield to furious Loyd;  
 From Dryden, Milbourne tears the palm away,<sup>20</sup>  
 And thus I fall, though meaner far than they, 80  
 As in the field of combat, side by side,  
 A Fabius and some nameless Roman died.<sup>21</sup>

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**19:** In stupid indolence my life is spent,  
 Supinely calm, and dully innocent:  
 Unbless'd I wear my useless time away,  
 Sleep, wretched maid! all night, and dream all day;  
 Go at set hours to dinner and to prayer,  
 For dulness must be ever regular:  
 Now with mamma at tedious whist I play,  
 Now with scandal drink insipid tea,  
 Or in the garden breathe the country air,  
 Secure from meeting any tempter there;  
 From books to work, to work to books to work, I rove,  
 And am, alas! at leisure to improve. –  
 Is this the life a beauty ought to lead?  
 Were eyes so radiant only made to read?  
 These fingers, at whose touch e'en age would glow,  
 Are these of use for nothing but to sew?  
 Sure erring Nature never could design  
 To form a housewife in a mould like mine?  
 O Venus! queen and guardian of the fair,  
 Attend propitious to thy votary's prayer;  
 Let me revisit the dear town again,  
 Let me be seen! – Could I that wish obtain,  
 All other wishes my own power would gain.

From *The British Poets in one hundred volumes* (1822), LVI pp.23-4.

**20:** B. alludes to the way previous great poets such as Pope, Dryden and Gray provoked envy, rivalry, and abuse.

**21:** Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrococus (275-03 BC), Roman general famous for delaying tactics.

**Harriet!**<sup>22</sup>

1.

Harriet! to see such Circumspection,  
 In Ladies I have no objection  
     Concerning what they read;  
 An Ancient Maid's a sage Adviser,  
 Like her, you will be much the wiser,                     5  
     In word, as well as Deed.

2.

But Harriet, I don't wish to flatter,  
 And really think 'twould make the Matter  
     More perfect if not quite,  
 If certain Ladies when they preach,                     10  
 Would certain Damsels also teach  
     More cautiously to write. –

**To the author of a Sonnet beginning thus, "Sad is my verse" you cry & yet no  
 tear, &c. &c.**<sup>23</sup>

1.

Thy Verse is "sad" enough, no doubt,  
     A devilish Deal more sad than witty,  
 Why we should weep I can't find out,  
     Unless for *thee* we weep in pity.

2.

Yet there is one I pity more,                     5  
     And much, alas! I think he needs it,  
 For he, I'm sure, will suffer sore,  
     Who (to his own misfortune) reads it.

3.

Thy Rhymes, without the aid of Magic,  
     May *once* be read – but never after,                     10  
 Yet their effect's by no means tragic,  
     Although by far too dull for Laughter.

4.

But would you make our Bosoms bleed,  
     And of no common pang complain –  
 If *you* would make us *weep* indeed,                     15  
     Tell us, you'll read them o'er *again!* – **March 8<sup>th</sup> 1807**

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22: "Harriet" becomes "Marion" in *Hours of Idleness*.

23: Pratt (p.77) thinks "the author" is E.P.; McGann (CPW I p.388), says it is "not ... John Pigot".

## POEMS TO MARY ANN BRISTOE

In October 1806, Byron and his Southwell friends did some amateur dramatics. They performed two plays – a gloomy melodrama called *The Wheel of Fortune*, and a farce called *The Weathercock*. Mary Ann Bristoe played Mrs Woodville, the hero's former beloved, in the first; and in the second, she was the female lead – a shape-changing, disguise-addicted girl called Variella (at one point she disguises herself as A Beautiful Quaker). She copied out *The Edinburgh Ladies' Petition* (see below), and later wrote an account of the drama event for Thomas Moore's *Life*.<sup>24</sup>

These three poems, in which Byron mocks her for her age and her lack of attractions, are among the most reprehensible of his productions. But the first is an extremely clever parody.

### A parody upon "The Little Grey Man" in Lewis' *Tales of Wonder*<sup>25</sup>

Mary Ann was a spinster in Southwell well known,<sup>26</sup>  
 The darling was she of her parents alone,  
 The plague of her fellows by day and by night,  
 So few in her presence could e'er find delight;  
 For no maiden surpassed or perhaps ever can 5  
 In prudish demeanor the prim Mary Ann.

Her dark sparkling eyes a gay boldness bedecked,  
 But a stiff education their glances had checked.  
 On her mien her staymaker bestowed his best grace,  
 And her mind stood confessed in the shape of her face; 10  
 Her form was *not* faultless, though aided by art,  
 Her carriage was stately, though melting her heart.

Few suitors had she, yet one Lover she knew;  
 Till a second appeared, to the first she was true.  
 So fearless to Tuxford<sup>27</sup> he went, while the maid 15  
 Her fears of remaining so often betrayed,  
 Full oft to the walks in the Churchyard she went,  
 And thus to the Tempest her Sorrows found vent.

"Ah me!" would she sigh in a tone that would melt  
 The Bachelor near, could he ever have felt, 20  
 "Ah me!" would she sigh, "past and gone is the Day  
 When I hoped that my father would give me away;  
 My fancy what sad gloomy presage appalls,  
 Since the Captain<sup>28</sup> no longer appears at our Balls".<sup>29</sup>

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**24:** See Boyes, Ch.III.

**25:** The poem being parodied here is *The Little Grey Man* by H. Bunbury, which appeared in an anthology edited by Matthew Lewis, called *Tales of Wonder* (1801, pp.107-115). B.'s parody is often close; he himself plays the role of the Little Grey Man: in the original, a bringer of death, in the parody, the heroine's fantasy-fiancée.

**26:** Elizabeth Pigot wrote, "This report it was conjectured to have been spread by the lady herself. It is a true tale, even the description of the lady's dress being accurate" (Pratt, p.53).

**27:** Tuxford is a village north-west of Newark.

**28:** For "the Captain", see below, *To ... an Ancient Virgin*, l.14, and *A Valentine*, l.13.

**29:**  
 – "Ah me!" – would she sigh, in a tone that would melt  
 The heart that one spark of true love ever felt;  
 – "Ah me!" – would she sigh – "past and gone is the day,  
 "When my father was plighted to give me away!  
 "My fancy, what sad gloomy presage appalls!  
 "Ah! sure on the Danube my Leopold falls!" – (*Tales of Wonder*, p.108)



In Southwell there happened to be at this Time, 25  
 A singular Creature, a Dealer in Rhyme;<sup>30</sup>  
 No very great praise of this Youth we afford,  
 His merit consisted in being a Lord.  
 A mighty aversion had he to a wife,  
 And he spoke to this nymph just three times in his life. 30

One evening so gloomy when only the owl  
 (A tempest impending) would venture to prowl,  
 Mary Ann who by chance had walked out in the gloom,  
 By a newly made grave squatted down on a tomb.  
 On the stone she reclined by the long sighing grass, 35  
 When who but his Lordship should suddenly pass.

His form it was stout, and his shoulders were broad,  
 He sang as he quietly passed on the road,  
 He bowed a low bow, nor affrighted was she,  
 She curtsied as if she would sink on her knee. 40  
 In a voice which had nothing surprising or new,  
 He cried to the maid, "Madam, how do ye do."<sup>31</sup>

Near the Damsel the Youth for a time did remain,  
 She curtsied once more, and then sat down again.  
 His Lordship then said, at a loss for discourse, 45  
 "Would the weather were better, I fear 'twill be worse.  
 Such clouds are impending as darken the heaven,  
 'Twill be rain, so Miss Bristoe I wish you good even."

A smile dimpled her cheek, as the maid looked around,  
 The raindrops began to besprinkle the ground; 50  
 With a smile looked the maid, though it scarcely was light,  
 And His Lordship had quite disappeared from her sight.  
 In dread of a ducking, she quickened her tread,  
 Reached her home, eat her supper, and went to bed.

"Woe is me," did she cry, "Oh Lord what shall I do, 55  
 No Lover, no Suitor is coming to woo;  
 To be married I'm sure I do all that I can,  
 Nor care I to whom, so he is but a man.  
 Shall I wait for a husband much longer? Ah no!  
 In search of a spouse then tomorrow I go." 60

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30: B. himself.

31:  
 His hue it was deadly, his eyes they were ghast;  
 Long and pale were his fingers, that held her arm fast; –  
 She shriek'd a loud shriek, so affrighted was she;  
 And grimly he scowl'd, as he jump'd on her knee.  
 With a voice that dismay'd her – "The Danube!" he cried;  
 "There Leopold bleeds! Mary-Ann is my bride!" (*Tales of Wonder*, p.108)

A redspotted gown she put on the next morn,  
 A platted straw bonnet her head did adorn,  
 Her closely laced stays from the maker were new,  
 Her shoes were pea green, and her stockings were blue,  
 Her earrings the gift of Mamma, and at last, 65  
 A pelisse bound with velvet to guard from the blast.<sup>32</sup>

The morning was cloudy, the sun shunned the day,  
 Her journey was short, but most dirty the way.  
 She wished for her Pattens, alas! 'twas too late,  
 She sighed as she cast a last look at the gate. 70  
 She listened, shrill rung on its wire the door bell,  
 And she thought that it sounded her funeral knell.

With caution she measured her steps through the street  
 And in crossing almost faced about to retreat. 75  
 For mounting the pavement her step was too high,  
 She slipped, and, to help her, no Hero was nigh.  
 As she rested the stone of the causeway upon,  
 She paused in surprise to be left quite alone.

For from thence though red groups (by the Chapter imposed)  
 Of raised brick and mortar are daily exposed, 80  
 In hods and in carts, and on ladders and trowels,  
 With a charge to the passing to guard their own poles;  
 To dinner retired had the workmen long been,  
 And Mary Ann tumbled, unhelped and unseen.<sup>33</sup>

Sore fatigued the maid rising, just said a short prayer, 85  
 Tied the string of her bonnet, which flowed in the air.  
 Again she set out and sped slowly along,  
 And for want of amusement, she hummed a short song.  
 But in thought the fair virgin digested a plan  
 To bring into notice the prim Mary Ann. 90

Arrived at the Major's she knocked at the door,  
 Not opening, she lifted the knocker once more;  
 A servant then ushered her into the house,  
 The Major was out, but at home was his Spouse.  
 To her with complaint of ill usage began 95  
 In querulous anger the prim Mary Ann.

- 
- 32: Then up rose the maiden, so sore woe-begone,  
 And her Sunday's apparel in haste she put on;  
 Her close studded bodice of velvet so new;  
 Her coat of fine scarlet, and kirtle of blue;  
 Her ear-rings of jet, all so costly; and last,  
 Her long coat of linsey, to guard from the blast. (*Tales of Wonder*, p.109)
- 33: For there, in black groups (by the law 'tis imposed),  
 Are the bodies of fell malefactors exposed,  
 On wheels and on gibbets, on crosses and poles,  
 With a charge to the passing, to pray for their souls:  
 But a spot of such terror no robbers infest,  
 And there the faint pilgrim securely may rest. (*Tales of Wonder*, p.111)

Says she, "Mrs. Wylde, I am greatly enraged,  
 For a dreadful report has all Southwell engaged,  
 A report which I never can pardon, not I,  
 With vexation I really am ready to die. 100  
 And they say, Mrs. Wylde, but I hope 'tis not true,  
 That this dreadful report has arisen from you."

In a well-acted rage, she continued to rail  
 (For Mary Ann's tongue hardly ever can fail).  
 At length Mrs. Wylde cut this eloquence short 105  
 By begging her merely to state the report.  
 "Then hear," she replied, "Mrs. Wylde, in a word,  
 They say I'm to marry this terrible Lord.

"The Creature is quite my aversion I swear,  
 Perhaps he may love, yet he still shall despair. 110  
 Indeed I suspect, he has formed some design,  
 To proffer himself as a suitor of mine.  
 At a party last night his attentions increased,  
 And he stood by my chair for ten minutes at least.

At this my Mamma was so greatly provoked, 115  
 No less than three times in one deal she revoked.  
 However, at once I will crush every hope,  
 Though the desperate wretch may remove by a rope.  
 And do you Mrs. Wylde, contradict, I demand,  
 This shocking report, at my final command." 120

The Lady whom thus in this style she addressed,  
 Replied, with a smile which could not be repressed,  
 That she never had heard this most scandalous tale,  
 And wondered that such a report should prevail,  
 Or a stripling aspire to the hand of a maid 125  
 Who was seven years older, as people had said.

At hearing this speech, Mary Ann gave a yell  
 Like the Little Grey Man, of fair Aix la Chapelle;  
 She raised up her bonnet, she raised up her chin,  
 And her mouth was distended displaying a grin, 130  
 On hearing this truth which she could not deny,  
 Though she almost was tempted to call it a lie.<sup>34</sup>

Away then she went, and my tale must conclude.  
 Oh may such reports maids no longer delude,  
 Some people will laugh at such legends I fear, 135  
 For we must not believe every word which we hear;  
 And girls still giggle behind the light fan  
 At the tale of His Lordship and prim Mary Ann. – 1806

34:

The Little Grey Man now he set up a yell,  
 Which was heard in the halls of fair Aix-la-Chapelle,  
 He raised up his head, and he raised up his chin;  
 And he grinn'd, and he shouted a horrible grin;  
 And he laugh'd a loud laugh, and his cap up he cast,  
 Exulting, as breath'd the fair lovers their last (*Tales of Wonder*, p.114).

**To Miss B[?], an ancient Virgin who tormented the Author to write something on  
her *sweet* self<sup>35</sup>**

1.

You ask me so oft, & so warmly to write,  
That I willingly would I declare,  
But the Muses refuse with my Wish to unite,  
So I think I had better forbear. –

2.

My Strains as the heedless Effusions of Youth,     5  
Can never be pleasing to Age,  
And I fear that the simple Relation of Truth,  
Might astonish a Spinster so sage. –

3.

Was my Poem in praise of your Beauty or Wit,  
How absurd it would seem e'en to you,     10  
The Perusal for Strangers alone would be fit,  
Who else could believe it was true? –

4.

Did I sing of that “*Balm Breathing*” Bondage of Love,  
Which in *Sighs* for the *Captain*<sup>36</sup> appears,  
The Recital Contempt and Derision would move,     15  
That Folly should grow with your Years. –

5.

Then pray, my dear Maiden, torment me no more,  
Oh Cease, if you're studious of Ease;  
Desist for your *own* sake at least, I implore,  
For I fear that my Song would displease.     20  
– **November 15th 1806**

**A Valentine**

1.

When Beauty lends her aid to Youth,  
And varied charms in one combine,  
Then Love is praise, and praise is truth,  
To mark the virgin Valentine.

2.

But Youth once gone, and Beauty fled     5  
Ah! maids no longer seem divine,  
But ugliness and spleen instead  
Surround the aged Valentine.

---

**35:** This poem is assumed by Pratt (Pratt p.51) and McGann (CPW I p.358) to be addressed to Ann Houson, but its cutting tone fits in much better if the “H” is read as a “B”, making it addressed to Mary Anne Bristoe. See illustration at Pratt p.52.

**36:** For “the Captain”, see above, *Parody on The Little Grey Man*, l.24, and below, *A Valentine*, l.13.

3.  
Such are the trophies thou dost wear,  
Fit offering on ill nature's shrine, 10  
The winds to thee no raptures bear  
For thou art not my Valentine.

4.  
Perhaps the captain,<sup>37</sup> Dearest name!  
Inspired by Jones's<sup>38</sup> generous wine,  
May love, or feign – 'tis *all the same* – 15  
And hail thee for his Valentine.

5.  
Say, didst thou not prepare a dart  
On which the Swain might sup, or dine,  
Of Apricots, to will the heart  
Of him, thy Martial Valentine? 20

6.  
Didst thou with culinary taste  
Adorn this dish with emblems fine,  
Cupids and Doves engraved on paste,  
To win thy winsome Valentine?

7.  
Who kisses thee no Nectar sips, 25  
Such kisses taste like Neptune's wine;  
May those who sigh for arid Lips  
Choose such as thee for Valentine.

8.  
Not that I e'er those lips have tried –  
Heaven shield me back from Lips like thine! 30  
Let fiends with lips in sulphur fried  
Claim *such*, from *such* a Valentine.

9.  
And yet report most strongly tells  
That they possess a smack saline;  
Such as in Ocean's bosom dwells 35  
Embues thy lips, Oh Valentine!

10.  
Tho' flattery flies my humble Muse  
Yet truth presides o'er every line;  
Then do not with a frown refuse  
This tribute 'stead of Valentine. 40

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**37:** For other references to "the Captain", see above, *Parody on The Little Grey Man*, l.24, and *To ... an Ancient Virgin*, l.14.

**38:** Pratt and McGann believe this is Thomas Jones, B.'s tutor at Trinity, Cambridge. It is hard to believe that a Cambridge tutor would have followed one of his errant students into Nottinghamshire. "Jones" is the second most common name in English.

11.  
To waste the words of love on thee  
Were surely casting pearls to swine –  
When words of love are sent by me,  
May I have such a Valentine.
12. 45  
When ancient Maids affect such airs  
May they *for ever maids* repine  
When folly crowns such silvery hairs  
Youth laughs at such a Valentine.
13. 50  
But hold! I know thou wear'st a wig!  
A *Chestnut Wig* of gay design –  
Each curl appears an artful twig  
To catch some heedless Valentine.
14. 55  
Venus from thee has parted long,  
No flowers for thee the Loves entwine,  
By me they send this warning Song,  
And seek some younger Valentine.
15. 60  
Now from myself a fond Adieu,  
May no such ancient maid be mine  
Thy Years are many, mine are few,  
Farewell, thou hoary Valentine.
- 1807

### The Edinburgh Ladies' Petition to Doctor Moyes, and his Reply<sup>39</sup>

#### *The Petition*

Dear Doctor,<sup>40</sup> let it not transpire,  
How much y<sup>r</sup> Lectures we admire,  
How at your Eloquence we wonder,  
When you explain the cause of Thunder;  
Of Lightning & of Electricity, 5  
With so much plainness & simplicity,  
The origin of Rocks & Mountains,  
Of seas & rivers, Lakes & Fountains,  
Of Rain & Hail, of Frost & snow,  
And all the Winds & Storms that blow; 10  
Besides an hundred wonders more,  
Of which we never heard before.  
But now, dear Doctor, not to flatter,

<sup>39</sup>: Only the lines in Bookman Old Style exist in B.'s hand: the rest is in a fair copy by Ann Bristoe. Controversy rages over whether or not B. wrote the *Petition*: it may have been the work of John Pigot, Elizabeth's brother, who studied medicine at Edinburgh. See CPW I 386-7, and Andrew M. Stauffer, *Redressing the "Edinburgh Ladies' Petition"*, BJ 2003, pp.61-5. The Mss. are at Alice Levine and Jerome J. McGann (eds). *Lord Byron, vol IV. Miscellaneous Poems*, in *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics*, (Garland, 1988), pp.81-104.

<sup>40</sup>: Dr Henry Moyes (1750-1807), was a Scots lecturer in popular science. He was blind, a potentially comical fact of which neither part of the poem makes any use. He lectured in America, too.

There is a most important matter,  
 A matter which you never touch on, 15  
 A matter which our thoughts run much on,  
 A Subject, if we right conjecture,  
 Which well deserves a long, long lecture,  
 Which all the ladies would approve,  
 The Natural History of Love! 20  
 Oh! list to our united voice,  
 Deny us not, dear Doctor Moyes;  
 Tell us why our poor tender hearts  
 So willingly admit Love's darts;  
 Teach us the marks of Love's beginning, 25  
 What is it makes a Beau so winning;  
 What is it makes a Coxcomb witty,  
 A Dotard wise, a red Coat pretty;  
 Why we believe such horrid lies,  
 That we are Angels from the skies, 30  
 Our Teeth are pearl, our Cheeks are Roses,  
 Our Eyes are Stars, such charming Noses;  
 Explain our Dreams waking & sleeping,  
 Explain our laughing & our weeping;  
 Explain our hoping & our doubting, 35  
 Our blushing, simpering & pouting;  
 Teach us all the enchanting arts,  
 Of winning & of keeping hearts;  
 Teach us, dear Doctor, if you can,  
 To humble that proud creature Man, 40  
 To turn the wise ones into fools,  
 The proud and insolent to Tools;  
 To make them all run helter skelter,  
 Their necks into the Marriage halter;  
 Then leave us to ourselves with these – 45  
 We'll rule & turn them as we please.  
 Dear Doctor, if you grant our wishes,  
 We promise you five hundred kisses;  
 And rather than the affair be blundered,  
 We'll give you *six score to the hundred.* 50

*Approved by 300 Ladies.*

To explain The Natural History of Love. – This “Petition”, a sprightly little Poem, was put into my hands by a Lady for whom I entertain very *great respect*, accompanied by a wish that I would reply in the D<sup>r</sup>'s name; Though by no means adequate to the task I have endeavoured in the following lines to give such answers to the questions in my own *trifling* experience suggested, more from my dislike to refuse *any* request of a *female*, than the most distant hope of affording a perspicuous or Satisfactory *Solution* of the different *queries*.

*Reply –*

In all the arts without Exception,  
 The Moderns shew a vast perception.  
 From morbid symptoms diagnostic  
 Each Doctor draws a sage prognostic,  
 Whilst each professor forms a project 5  
 From Diagrams, or subtle Logic.

	Herschell <sup>41</sup> improves us in Astronomy, Lavater <sup>42</sup> writes on Physionomy; The Principles of Nature's history, To Man appear no more a Mystery; 10 Monboddo says that once a tail huge <i>Adorned</i> poor man before the Deluge, <sup>43</sup> And that at length Mankind got rid of 'em, Because they stood no more in need of 'em. <sup>44</sup>	
	Since <i>we</i> on <i>fours</i> no longer went all, 15 <i>Clothes</i> <sup>45</sup> were declared more <i>ornamental</i> . – Religion split in many a Schism, Lectures commence on Galvanism, <sup>46</sup> The marvellous phantasmagoria, <sup>47</sup> Work on the optics, and <i>Sensoria</i> . <sup>48</sup> 20	
BYRON'S SCRIPT:	But not content with common things, Behold some daily wonder springs, An Infant Billington, or Banti, <sup>49</sup> Squalls out Adagio, or Andante. The Town, to view the veteran Kemble, <sup>50</sup> 25 In nightly crowds no more assemble; The House is crammed in every place full To see the <i>Boy</i> , of action Graceful; While Roscius lends his name to Betty, <sup>51</sup> Tully <sup>52</sup> must yield the palm to Petty; <sup>53</sup> 30 And last, though not the least in Crime, A sucking <i>Peer</i> pretends to rhyme – <sup>54</sup> Though many think the noble Fool Had better far return to School, And there improve in Learning faster, 35 Instead of <i>libelling</i> his Master. <sup>55</sup> Such Trifles now amuse the Age, Infant Attempts are all the Rage, Knowledge is daily more prolific, And <i>Babes</i> will soon be scientific. <sup>56</sup> 40	B'S SCRIPT STOPS
	Yet in the midst of general Science <i>One theme</i> to <i>Sophists</i> bids defiance, Which <i>some</i> condemn, but most approve – The <i>Natural History of Love</i> . That Love exists! – sure none can doubt it, 45	

41: William Herschell (1738-1822), Astronomer Royal. He discovered Uranus.

42: Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), Swiss poet and physiognomist.

43: I've added "poor" for the scansion – P.C.

44: James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-99), judge, linguist and investigator of evolution. B. shows here the beginnings of the curiosity about the earth's history which led to *Cain* (1821).

45: **BYRON'S NOTE: For this ingenious Hypothesis vidi Monboddo's works.**

46: Galvanism: compare *Don Juan* I, 130, 2: *Galvanism has set some Corpses grinning ...*

47: Phantasmagoria: compare *TVOJ*, 77, 7. It was a psychedelic light-show.

48: Sensoria: the nervous system (plural of sensorium).

49: Billington ... Banti: famous sopranos.

50: John Philip Kemble (1757-1823), famous Shakespearean actor. Brother of Sarah Siddons.

51: Roscius: famous Roman actor. Betty: William Betty (1791-1874) famous English child actor.

52: Four American magazine texts have "Sully" here, making it a reference not to Cicero, but to the American portrait painter Thomas Sully. See Stauffer, op.cit.

53: Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, third Marquis of Lansdowne (1780-1863). Champion of Catholic Emancipation, friend of Moore, Crabbe, and of Madame de Staël.

54: B. refers to himself.

55: B. refers to his passages on Dr Butler ("Pomposus") in *Childish Recollections* and elsewhere.

56: CPW omits "And".



*Indeed, where should we be without it?*  
 'Tis in the Catalogue of Sins,  
 But *when*, or *where*, this Love begins,  
 Is perfectly incomprehensible,  
 Though *all* to its approach are sensible. 50  
 'Tis pleasure, pain, 'tis *old*, 'tis *new*,  
 'Tis *Alpha & Omega* too,  
 'Tis subject to no jurisdiction,  
 But burns the fiercer for restriction.  
 Some call it *Passive*, others active, 55  
 We all agree, that 'tis attractive;  
 Others declare, when first this World,  
 In dark promiscuous Chaos hurled,  
 Through Elements yet undigested,  
 Of shape & sense lay quite divested, 60  
 That *Form* and *Matter* joined in Marriage,<sup>57</sup>  
 And happily without Miscarriage,  
 In blissful Bonds at once uniting,  
 Produced this *Earth* we draw the light in;  
 And hence in fable allegorical, 65  
 The Bards of Yore most Metaphorical,  
 Have drawn (the simile must strike Ye)  
 The Pretty Tale Of *Love* and *Psyche*.<sup>58</sup>  
 Thus *Form* is the first I e'er heard of,<sup>59</sup>  
 (Or rather ever *read* a word of) 70  
*If he*, as I *have stated*, be Male,  
 Who talked on Love, or kiss'd a Female.  
 We'll therefore call *him Love*, or rather,  
 Of *Love* at least the mighty Father;  
 For this to *Matrons* must appear, 75  
 And *Husbands* also very clear,  
 That we are under obligation,  
 To *those*, who first produced *Creation*,  
 For had they never given Birth,  
 To this our general parent Earth, 80  
 We might have trod some other Sphere,  
 Or been, just now, *the Lord knows where!* –  
 This Origin we'll take for granted,  
 Because *some Origin* was wanted;  
 Yet still I shall be much the Debtor 85  
 Of any one who finds a better;  
 Though *Love* be Sprung of very *great* degree,  
 I know but little of his *Pedigree*.

BYRON'S SCRIPT: In Water, fire, earth, or Air,<sup>60</sup>  
 Love holds his general empire there; 90  
 The Birds who cleave yon azure Sky  
 Breathe amorous warblings as they fly;  
 In water even the very Fishes  
 Are periodically vicious;

57: BYRON'S NOTE: Timaeus has written on this idea, & on this foundation, I have taken the liberty of personifying *Form*, & *Matter*. –

58: BYRON'S NOTE: Vide Ovid. – The Story of Cupid & Psyche is also in Apuleius. See his "Golden Ass". [In fact the story of Cupid and Psyche is only in *The Golden Ass*.]

59: "Ever" is added by an American printer to improve the scansion. See Stauffer, op.cit. I have contracted it.

60: I have placed ll.89-114 in the position suggested by Andrew Stauffer.

And fire all elements above 95  
 Is emblematical of Love;  
 On Earth, since first the Earth begun,  
 We know the miracles he's done.  
 But why should I Romances tell,  
 Which every damsel knows so well. 100  
 To these just now I shan't recall 'em  
 But may the very same befall 'em!  
 And this I think, with all due Deference,  
 In fact with maids would have the preference,  
 Because the best detailed Narration 105  
 Palls very short of Demonstration. –  
 This truth requires no great Rehearsal –  
 That Love indeed is universal,  
 From things with animation Rife,  
 To things of vegetable life. 110  
 Shells and their inmates also feel it,  
 There's not an Oyster can conceal it.<sup>61</sup>  
 The Loves of plants are all the Fashion,<sup>62</sup>  
 And Cabbage tastes the tender *passion*. – **B'S SCRIPT STOPS**<sup>63</sup>  
 Yet as his *Family* was *thought* about, 115  
 A Circumstance which I knew nought about,  
 To settle this I have been *bold* enough  
 To give *him*, one at least, that's *old* enough. –  
 Why Ladies' Young & tender hearts,  
 So readily admit Love's darts, 120  
 Requires no Seraph from on high  
 To make at once an apt reply.  
 This faith is *orthodox* forever –  
 A Damsel's *Heart* is *Cupid's Quiver*,  
 For never placed *he there* an Arrow, 125  
 Which found its residence too narrow,  
 But gently was at once admitted –  
 The Shaft and all most nicely fitted.  
 Why they Suppose a Coxcomb witty,  
 A Dotard wise, a Red coat<sup>64</sup> pretty, 130  
 Are questions that would pose the Sages  
 Of these, or any former Ages.  
 Some wicked wretches who peruse  
 The Patriarchs' Lives but to abuse,  
 Have said that very ancient Story, 135  
 Concerning *Eve*, is *Allegory*,  
 That Satan was no fiery Dragon,  
 But a *fine Youth*, without a *rag* on,  
 And held as good a claim as Adam  
 To be the *Spouse of Eve*, a sad Dame! 140  
 And consequently 'tis pretended  
*Some* are from *Lucifer* descended. –  
 This parentage I shan't dispute,  
 Or what was the *forbidden Fruit*;  
 The ancient Texts have all agree'd, 145

**61:** See Tilburina in Sheridan's *The Critic*: "An oyster may be crossed in love".

**62:** A reference to Erasmus Darwin's poem *The Loves of the Plants* (1789).

**63: Elizabeth Pigot's note:** The above is in Ld B's own writing, & is intended to be put into the "Reply to the Edinburg[h] Ladies Petition" in addition to what which [sic: for "that which"] L.B. already proposes. March 1807.

**64:** a *Red coat* – a soldier.

The *Devil* was of *Reptile Breed*.  
 Proceeding on their grave decision,  
 We'll form from *thence* this Supposition,  
 As *Serpents* it is often *said*,  
 Are caught with any thing that's *red*, 150  
 Perchance *some females* may inherit  
 A *Secret Sympathetic Spirit*,  
 Which binds them to this predilection,<sup>65</sup>  
 And *Scarlet* is to them *perfection*.  
 Why *Wit* in *Coxcombs* they discern 155  
 Is hardly worth our while to learn,  
 Why *fools* are oft preferred to wise men  
*I know*, but *never* shall advise them;  
 We really *can't* explain the reason,  
 Because to *mention* it, were *Treason*. 160  
 Why? all the charming easy creatures  
 Believe that heaven, to deck their features,  
 Has lent her *Stars*, that Earth has given  
 Her *noses*, to *outrival* Heaven;  
 Or why the *Sea*, to please the *Girl*, 165  
 Bids *oysters* mourn their absent *Pearl*,<sup>66</sup>  
 Requires but little Explanation,  
 Their own *mistakes*, are the *occasion*,  
 While *Vanity* shall hold the Glass,  
 All this will daily come to pass. – 170  
 To cure their laughing, and their weeping,  
 Their *wandering* Dreams, or *ev'n* their *Sleeping*,  
 'Tis known by Men of nice precision  
 That *Hymen* is the best *Physician*.  
 He will unravel hopes and doubting, 175  
 And put an end to fits of Pouting;  
 But how to tame the other Sex  
 Would any Saint, or *Sage* perplex.  
 Ladies! I think you can't complain,  
 You hold a wide extensive reign; 180  
 First learn to rule *Yourselves*, and then,  
 Perhaps, you'll quite subdue *the Men*.  
 As for that word, the "*Marriage Halter*",  
 The very mention makes me falter,  
 The Texture is so monstrous coarse, 185  
 It drags us into *Heaven* by *Force*.  
 Though much disposed to sin in Rhyming,  
 The *Muses* never *speak* of Hymen.  
 I'm therefore almost doubtful whether  
 I'd best be silent altogether, 190  
 Or with a Compliment conclude,  
 Since all *before* is downright *rude*;  
 But when I read the blest reward  
 Awaits the *Doctor*, or his Bard,  
 "*Five hundred Kisses*"! Oh ye Gods, 195  
 For *half* I'd dare all Mortal odds;  
 Though I can never be victorious,

65: Ann Bristoe spells it "prediliction".

66: *The Critic* again. See above, 112n.

To fall in such a *Cause* is *glorious*.  
 I'll therefore, since I've made beginning,  
 Conclude with scarce a hope of Winning. – 200  
 To make my Deities propitious,  
 I'll *wish*, what *each* in secret *wishes*,  
 Though much I fear that ev'n veracity  
 Can ne'er atone for such Audacity:  
 "May each amongst you find a Mate 205  
 Content at home in peace to wait,  
 Grateful for each connubial Blessing  
 And *quite* enough in Spouse possessing,  
 A Cheerful, Constant, kind and free one,  
 But Heaven forbid, that *I* Should *be One*." 210  
 – **March 1807**

## POEMS TO ANNE HOUSON

Anne Houson was daughter to the Rev. Henry Houson; she was another young Southwell female who tried to catch Byron's fancy but failed, as they were all doomed to: though Byron appears to have been more taken with her than with Mary Anne Bristoe:

I am in love, also with a Lady of your Acquaintance, & all the *ancient* Gentlewomen of *Southwell*, shake *their heads*, at the *flirtation* of the *fair Anne* with your *humble Servant*.<sup>67</sup>

Byron's poems *To M*— (POVO, HOI, POAT), and *As the Author was discharging his Pistols ...* (FP, POVO), are addressed to her. Indeed, *To M*— (“Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire”) is one of the few to appear in all four of his first books.

Anne Houson died on Christmas Day 1821, aged thirty.

### On the Eyes of Miss Anne Houson

1.

Anne's Eye is likened to the *Sun*,<sup>68</sup>  
 From it such Beams of Beauty fall;  
 And *this* can be denied by none,  
 For like the *Sun*, it shines on *All*. –

2.

Then do not admiration smother, 5  
 Or say these glances don't become her;  
 To *you*, or *I*, or *any other*  
 Her *Sun*, displays perpetual Summer. – **January 14th 1807**

### On finding a fan of Miss Anne Houson

IN one who felt as once he felt,  
 This might, perhaps, have fanned the flame;  
 But now his heart no more will melt,  
 Because that heart is not the same.  
 As when the ebbing flames are low, 5  
 The aid which once improved their light,  
 And bade them burn with fiercer glow,  
 Now quenches all their blaze in night.  
 Thus has it been with Passion's fires –  
 As many a boy and girl remembers 10  
 While every hope of love expires,  
 Extinguished with the dying embers.  
 The *first*, though not a spark survive,  
 Some careful hand may teach to burn;  
 The *last*, alas I can ne'er survive; 15  
 No touch can bid its warmth return.  
 Or, if it chance to wake again,  
 Not always doomed its heat to smother,  
 It sheds (so wayward fates ordain)  
 Its former warmth around another. 20  
– 1807

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**67:** BLJ I 104.

**68:** Compare Shakespeare, Sonnet 130: *My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun ...*

### To Anne

1.

Oh! Anne, your offences to me have been grievous:  
 I thought from my wrath no atonement could save you:  
 But Woman is made to command and deceive us,  
 I look'd in your face, and I almost forgave you.

2.

I vowed I could ne'er for a moment respect you,       5  
 Yet thought that a day's separation was long;  
 When we met, I determined again to suspect you –  
 Your smile soon convinced me *suspicion* was wrong.

3.

I swore, in a transport of young indignation,  
 With fervent contempt evermore to disdain you;   10  
 I saw you – my *anger* became *admiration*;  
 And now, all my wish, all my hope's to regain you.

4.

With beauty like yours, oh, how vain the contention!  
 Thus lowly I sue for forgiveness before you;  
 At once to conclude such a fruitless dissension,       15  
 Be false, my sweet Anne, when I cease to adore you.  
 – January 16th, 1807

### To the same

1.

Oh, say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed  
 The heart which adores you should wish to dissever;  
 Such Fates were to me most unkind ones indeed,  
 To bear me from Love and from Beauty for ever.

2.

Your frowns, lovely girl, are the Fates which alone   5  
 Could bid me from fond admiration refrain;  
 By these, every hope, every wish were o'erthrown,  
 Till smiles should restore me to rapture again.

3.

As the ivy and oak, in the forest entwined,  
 The rage of the tempest united must weather;       10  
 My love and my life were by nature designed  
 To flourish alike, or to perish together.

4.

Then say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed  
 Your lover should bid you a lasting adieu;  
 Till Fate can ordain that his bosom shall bleed,       15  
 His soul, his existence, are centred in you.

**“Ah, heedless girl!”<sup>69</sup>**

1.	Ah, heedless girl! why thus disclose What ne'er was meant for other ears? Why thus destroy thine own repose And dig the source of future tears?	
2.	Oh, thou wilt weep, imprudent maid, While lurking envious foes will smile, For all the follies thou hast said Of those who spoke but to beguile.	5
3.	Vain girl! thy ling'ring woes are nigh, If thou believ'st what striplings say: Oh, from the deep temptation fly, Nor fall the specious spoiler's prey.	10
4.	Dost thou repeat, in childish boast, The words man utters to deceive? Thy peace, thy hope, thy all is lost, If thou can'st venture to believe.	15
5.	While now amongst thy female peers Thou tell'st again the soothing tale, Can'st thou not mark the rising sneers Duplicity in vain would veil?	20
6.	These tales in secret silence hush, Nor make thyself the public gaze: What modest maid without a blush Recounts a flattering coxcomb's praise?	
7.	Will not the laughing boy despise Her who relates each fond conceit – Who, thinking Heaven is in her eyes, Yet cannot see the slight deceit?	25
8.	For she who takes a soft delight These amorous nothings in revealing, Must credit all we say or write, While vanity prevents concealing.	30
9.	Cease, if you prize your Beauty's reign! No jealousy bids me reprove: One, who is thus from nature vain, I pity, but I cannot love. – <b>January 15th 1807</b>	35

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**69:** E.H.Coleridge quotes a manuscript note to this poem: “To A Young Lady (Miss Anne Houson) whose vanity induced her to repeat the compliments paid her by some young men of her acquaintance”.

## NEWSTEAD POEMS

Newstead Abbey had been founded by Henry II in approximately 1170, as part, it is said, of his penance for the death of Becket, for a chapter of Black Augustinian Canons. Henry VIII sold it to Sir John Byron (“Sir John Byron the Little, with the great beard”), in 1540: and it was because of their service to Charles I during the Civil War that the Byrons were ennobled. Sir John Byron, a Royalist general, was created Baron Byron of Rochdale in 1643. He went abroad with Charles II, and his wife, Eleanor, was rumoured by Pepys and others to have been the Merry Monarch’s seventeenth mistress. Byron came into possession of it in 1798 on the death of his great-uncle: but his great-uncle had cut down the trees, and sold most of the furniture. Cattle were stabled in the entrance hall. For most of the period covered by these poems Newstead was too damp for Byron and his mother to live in, and the inhabitable parts were let.

His mother died there in August 1811.



*Newstead Abbey*

### **Epitaph on Mrs. Byron**

Prone to take Fire, yet not of melting Stuff,  
 Here lies what once was woman – that’s enough.  
 Such were her vocal powers, her temper such,  
 That all who knew them both exclaimed “too much!”  
 Till tired with clamours worse than Ocean’s roar,  
 Death kindly stept between and cried “no more.”

5



**Lines inscribed upon a Cup formed from a Skull<sup>70</sup>**

1.

Start not! nor deem my spirit fled:  
 In me behold the only skull,  
 From which, unlike a living' head,  
 Whatever flows is never dull.

2.

I lived – I loved – I quaffed like thee;           5  
 I died – let earth my bones resign.  
 Fill up – thou canst not injure me;  
 The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

3.

Better to hold the sparkling grape  
 Than nurse the earth-worm's slimy brood;           10  
 And circle in the goblet's shape  
 The drink of Gods, than reptile's food.

4.

Where once my wit, Perchance, hath shone,  
 In aid of others' let me shine;  
 And when, alas! our brains are gone,           15  
 What nobler substitute than wine!

5.

Quaff while thou canst – another race,  
 When thou and thine like me are sped,  
 May rescue thee from earth's embrace,  
 And rhyme and revel with the dead.           20

6.

Why not? since though life's little day  
 Our heads' such sad effects produce;  
 Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,  
 This chance is theirs to be of use.

– **Newstead Abbey, 1808**

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**70:** C.S. Matthews to his sister, Miss I.M., May 22nd 1809: "I must not omit the custom of handing round, after dinner, on the removal of the cloth, a human skull filled with burgundy. After revelling on choice viands, and the finest wines of France, we adjourned to tea, where we amused ourselves with reading, or improving conversation, – each, according to his fancy, – and, after sandwiches, &c. retired to rest".



*Bosun*

### Inscription on the Monument of a Newfoundland Dog<sup>71</sup>

When some proud son of man returns to earth,  
 Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,  
 The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,  
 And storied urns record who rests below;  
 When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,                     5  
 Not what he was, but what he should have been:  
 But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,  
 The first to welcome, foremost to defend,  
 Whose honest heart is still his master's own,  
 Who labours, lights, lives, breathes for him alone,   10  
 Unhonoured falls, unnoticed all his worth,  
 Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:  
 While Man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,  
 And claims himself a sole exclusive Heaven.  
 Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,                     15  
 Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,  
 Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,  
 Degraded mass of animated dust!  
 Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,  
 Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!                     20  
 By nature vile, ennobled but by name,  
 Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.  
 Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,  
 Pass on – it honours none you wish to mourn:  
 To mark a Friend's remains these stones arise,             25  
 I never knew but one, and here he lies.

– Newstead Abbey, November 30th, 1808

<sup>71</sup>: Elizabeth Pigot on B.'s dogs of Southwell and Newstead, July 3rd 1807: "I am Sorry to hear of the fate of your Bull dog – Bose'n Bran & Fan are all very well, & Charles Monk takes great care of them, indeed he [is] so attentive that if they were Princes of the Blood they could not be more run after, Bose'n came the day after your exit and put his head into our Window & look'd about very Inquisitively, as if he expected to find *you*, & then walk'd melancholy away, he seems disconsolate, I think *he* & *I* though we are *silent* on the subject felt your loss deeply – Henry has *this instant* brought him into the room and I am writing with his great head lean'd against me – as to *Bran* he is always happy when he can get over to us, as soon as he is at liberty in the morning he comes in *his Sinuous way* ..."

**To an Oak in the Garden of Newstead Abbey,  
planted by the Author in the 9<sup>th</sup> Year of his age; this tree at his last visit was in a state of  
decay, though perhaps not irrecoverable.**

1.

Young Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground,  
I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine;  
That thy dark-waving branches would flourish around,  
And ivy thy trunk with her mantle entwine.

2.

Such, such was my hope, when, in Infancy's years,           5  
On the land of my Fathers I reared thee with pride:  
They are past, and I water thy stem with my tears,  
Thy decay, not the *weeds* that surround thee can hide.

3.

I left thee, my Oak, and since that fatal hour,  
A stranger has dwelt in the hall of my Sire;           10  
Till Manhood shall crown me, not mine is the power,  
But his, whose neglect may have bade thee expire.

4.

Oh! hardy thou wert – even now little care  
Might revive thy young head, and thy wounds gently heal:  
But thou wert not fated affection to share –           15  
For who could suppose that a Stranger would feel?

5.

Ah, droop not, my Oak! lift thy head for a while;  
Ere twice round yon Glory, this planet shall run,  
The hand of thy Master will teach thee to smile,  
When Infancy's years of probation are done.           20

6.

Oh, live then, my Oak! tower aloft from the weeds,  
That clog thy young growth, and assist thy decay,  
For still in thy bosom are Life's early seeds,  
And still may thy branches their beauty display.

7.

Oh! yet, if Maturity's years may be thine,           25  
Though *I* shall lie low in the cavern of Death,  
On thy leaves yet the day-beam for ages may shine,  
Uninjured by time, or the rude Winter's Breath.

8.

For centuries still may thy boughs lightly wave  
O'er the corse of thy Lord, in the canopy laid;           30  
While the branches thus gratefully shelter his grave,  
The chief who survives may recline in thy shade.

9.

As he, with his boys, shall revisit the spot,  
He will tell them in whispers more softly to tread,

Oh! surely, by these I shall ne'er be forgot: 35  
 Remembrance still hallows the dust of the Dead.

10.

“And here,” will they say, “when in life’s glowing prime,  
 Perhaps he has poured forth his young simple lay,  
 And here must he sleep, till the moments of Time  
 Are lost in the hours of Eternity’s day.” – **15th March 1807**

### To my Son<sup>72</sup>

1.

Those flaxen locks, those eyes of blue,  
 Bright as thy mother’s in their hue;  
 Those rosy lips, whose dimples play  
 And smile to steal the heart away,  
 Recall a scene of former joy, 5  
 And touch thy father’s heart, my Boy!

2.

And thou canst lisp a father’s name –  
 Ah, William, were thine own the same,  
 No self-reproach – but, let me cease –  
 My care for thee shall purchase peace; 10  
 Thy mother’s shade shall smile in joy,  
 And pardon all the past, my Boy!

3.

Her lowly grave the turf has prest,  
 And thou hast known a stranger’s breast.  
 Derision sneers upon thy birth, 15  
 And yields thee scarce a name on earth;  
 Yet shall not these one hope destroy –  
 A Father’s heart is thine, my Boy!

4.

Why, let the world unfeeling frown,  
 Must I fond Nature’s claim disown? 20  
 Ah, no – though moralists reprove,  
 I hail thee, dearest child of Love,  
 Fair cherub, pledge of youth and joy –  
 A Father guards thy birth, my Boy!

5.

Oh, ’twill be sweet in thee to trace, 25  
 Ere Age has wrinkled o’er my face,  
 Ere half my glass of life is run,  
 At once a brother and a son;  
 And all my wane of years employ  
 In justice done to thee, my Boy! 30

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**72:** This “son” is a mystery. The son to whom B. refers in his letters seems to have been born either late in 1808 or early in 1809. His mother was Lucinda or Lucy, a servant at Newstead (BLJ I 187 and 189; letters of January 16 and 17 1809.) E.H.Coleridge (I 260n) says, on no evidence, that B. told Lady Byron he had fathered two children before Augusta Ada. Nothing is known of the fate of either child. Compare *Hints from Horace*, 247-50.

6.

Although so young thy heedless sire,  
 Youth will not damp parental fire;  
 And, wert thou still less dear to me,  
 While Helen's form revives in thee,  
 The breast, which beat to former joy, 35  
 Will ne'er desert its pledge, my Boy! – 1807

### Fill the Goblet Again!

*A Song*

1.

Fill the goblet again! for I never before  
 Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core;  
 Let us drink! – who would not? – since, through life's varied round,  
 In the goblet alone no deception is found.

2.

I have tried in its turn all that life can supply; 5  
 I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling eye;  
 I have loved! – who has not? – but what heart can declare  
 That Pleasure existed while Passion was there?

3.

In the days of my youth, when the heart's in its spring, 10  
 And dreams that Affection can never take wing,  
 I had friends! – who has not? – but what tongue will avow,  
 That friends, rosy wine! are so faithful as thou?

4.

The heart of a mistress some boy may estrange,  
 Friendship shifts with the sunbeam – thou never canst change;  
 Thou grow'st old – who does not? – but on earth what appears, 15  
 Whose virtues, like thine, still increase with its years?

5.

Yet if blest to the utmost that Love can bestow,  
 Should a rival bow down to our idol below,  
 We are jealous! – who is not? – thou hast no such alloy;  
 For the more that enjoy thee, the more we enjoy. 20

6.

Then the season of youth and its vanities past,  
 For refuge we fly to the goblet at last;  
 There we find – do we not? – in the flow of the soul,  
 That truth, as of yore, is confined to the bowl.

7.

When the box of Pandora was opened on earth, 25  
 And Misery's triumph commenced over Mirth,  
 Hope was left – was she not? – but the goblet we kiss,  
 And care not for Hope, who are certain of bliss.

8.

Long life to the grape! for when summer is flown,  
 The age of our nectar shall gladden our own: 30  
 We must die – who shall not? – May our sins be forgiven,  
 And Hebe shall never be idle in heaven.

**“As relics left of saints above”**

As relics left of saints above  
 Are said to guard from danger’s blow,  
 And those who wear them safely move  
 Through fields of blood and scenes of woe,

Oh then bestow one look of thine 5  
 To shield me from some battle blade,  
 Since thou hast been the only shrine  
 Where all my vows were fondly made.

If faith can save in danger’s hour,  
 No votary ever bent the knee, 10  
 Who felt devotion’s warmest power  
 So warmly as I feel for thee.

And if their faith be blind as mine,  
 And mine be as sincere as theirs,  
 Thy look will not be less divine 15  
 If thou wilt deign to hear my prayers.

Then yield that relic to my care,  
 All saintly relics mount above  
 And prove in miracles how far  
 Devotion ever yields to love. 20

**Impromptu, on seeing a Wedding**

A woman’s vow is far too long,  
 Upon the Marriage Day;  
 For surely when a woman loves  
 She’ll honour and obey.

**“Women, ’tis said, when once found doubting”**

Women, ’tis said, when once found doubting  
 Are ruined spite of sighs and pouting;  
 But men in gowns are much acuter  
 When they doubt, woe betide the Suitor.

**To these fox hunters in a long frost**

Of unlearned men Lord Falkland did say  
 “I pity ’em much on a long rainy day.”  
 Ye Fox-hunters too are quite as much lost  
 When winter the ground has clothed in frost.

## POEMS TO ELIZABETH PIGOT

Elizabeth Pigot lived across the Green from Burgage Manor, and was Byron's closest friend in Southwell. She was his amanuensis, and assisted him with copying-out and proof-reading. She seems to have been in love with him, but her sharp wit probably put him off, for he had not at so early an age discovered his predilection for the critical, satirical, maternal type.

Elizabeth Pigot's two surviving letters to Byron appear as Appendix 3 of the edition of *Fugitive Pieces* on this website. Several of his published early poems are addressed to her.



*Silhouette of Elizabeth Pigot*

### **“Oh! little lock of golden hue”<sup>73</sup>**

Oh! little lock of golden hue  
 In gently waving ringlet curl'd,  
 By the dear head on which you grew,  
 I would not lose you for *a world*.

Not though a thousand more adorn  
 The polish'd brow where once you shone;  
 Like rays which gild a cloudless morn  
 Beneath Columbia's fervid Zone.

5

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<sup>73</sup>: This poem was written by B. in 1806 into a volume of Burns's poems which E.P. owned. See also *Hills of Annesley*, n.

**L’Amitié est L’Amour sans Ailes<sup>74</sup>**

1.

Why should my anxious breast repine,  
 Because my Youth is fled?  
 Days of delight may still be mine;  
 Affection is not dead.  
 In tracing back the years of Youth, 5  
 One firm record, one lasting truth,  
 Celestial consolation brings;  
 Bear it, ye breezes, to the seat,  
 Where first my heart responsive beat,  
 “Friendship is Love without his Wings.” – 10

2.

Through few, but deeply chequered years,  
 What moments have been mine!  
 Now half obscured by clouds of tears,  
 Now bright in rays divine;  
 Howe’er my future doom be cast, 15  
 My Soul, enraptured with the past,  
 To one idea fondly clings;  
 Friendship! that thought is all thine own,  
 Worth worlds of bliss, that thought alone –  
 “Friendship is Love without his Wings.” – 20

3.

Where yonder yew trees lightly wave  
 Their branches on the gale,  
 Unheeded heaves a simple grave,  
 Which tells the common tale;  
 Round this unconscious school boys stray, 25  
 Till the dull knell of childish play  
 From yonder studious mansion rings;  
 But here whene’er my footsteps move,  
 My silent tears too plainly prove,  
 “Friendship is Love without his Wings.” – 30

4.

Oh Love! before thy glowing shrine,  
 My early vows were paid;  
 My hopes, my dreams, my heart, was thine,  
 But these are now decayed;  
 For thine are pinions like the wind, 35  
 No trace of thee remains behind,  
 Except, alas! thy jealous stings.  
 Away, Away! delusive power,  
 Thou shalt not haunt my coming hour;  
 “Unless, indeed, without thy Wings.” – 40

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74: “Friendship is Love without Wings”.



## 5.

Seat of my youth! thy distant spire  
 Recalls each scene of joy;<sup>75</sup>  
 My bosom glows with former fire,  
 In mind again a boy,  
 Thy grove of elms, thy verdant hill, 45  
 Thy every path delights me still,  
 Each flower a double fragrance flings;  
 Again, as once, in converse gay,  
 Each dear associate seems to say  
 "Friendship is Love without his Wings." – 50

## 6.

My Lycus,<sup>76</sup> wherefore dost thou weep?  
 Thy falling tears restrain!  
 Affection for a time may sleep,  
 But, oh! 'twill wake again.  
 Think, think, my friend, when next we meet, 55  
 Our long-wished interview, how sweet;  
 From this my hope of rapture springs;  
 While youthful hearts thus fondly swell,  
 Absence, my friend can only tell,  
 "Friendship is Love without his Wings." – 60

## 7.

In one, and one alone, deceived,<sup>77</sup>  
 Did I my error mourn?  
 No, from oppressive bonds relieved,  
 I left the wretch to scorn.  
 I turned to those my childhood knew, 65  
 With feelings warm, with bosoms true,  
 Twined with my heart's according strings;  
 And till those vital chords shall break,  
 For none but these my breast shall wake  
 "Friendship, the Power deprived of Wings." – 70

## 8.

Ye few! my soul, my life is yours,  
 My memory, and my hope;  
 Your worth a lasting love ensures,  
 Unfettered in its scope;  
 From smooth Deceit and Terror sprung, 75  
 With aspect fair and honeyed tongue,  
 Let Adulation wait on Kings;  
 With joy elate, by snares beset,  
 We, we, my friends, can ne'er forget  
 "Friendship is Love without his Wings." – 80

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75: B. refers to Harrow School.

76: Lycus is the Earl of Clare: see *Childish Recollections*, 1.287.

77: Refers to George, fifth Earl Delawarr (1788-1869), a Harrow friend, the exact cause of whose quarrel with B. is nowhere recorded; though see BLJ I 106, 134, and 143&n, and the poem addressed to him in *Hol*.

9.  
 Fictions and dreams inspire the bard,  
     Who rolls the epic song;  
 Friendship and truth be my reward  
     To me no bays belong;  
 If laurelled Fame but dwells with lies,                   85  
 Me the Enchantress ever flies,  
     Whose heart, and not whose fancy sings;  
 Simple and young, I dare not feign;  
 Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain,  
     “Friendship is Love without his Wings.” –           90  
**Byron December 1806**

**Impromptu reply to some very elegant stanzas from a Lady on “Friendship”<sup>78</sup>**

Your motto is L’Amitié  
 At least, Eliza, so you say;  
 But should the Equinoctial Gales  
 Impel to Europe Indian Sails,  
 And should the happy Bark contain                   5  
 Your absent Hall,<sup>79</sup> that faithful Swain,  
 I think ’twould not be long before,  
 You changed that Motto, to L’Amour.

**“And wilt thou weep when I am low?”<sup>80</sup>**

1.  
 And wilt thou weep when I am low?  
     Sweet lady! speak those words again;  
 Yet if they grieve thee, say not so –  
     I would not give that bosom pain.

2.  
 My heart is sad, my hopes are gone,                   5  
     My blood runs coldly through my breast;  
 And when I perish, thou alone  
     Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

3.  
 And yet methinks a gleam of peace  
     Doth through my cloud of anguish shine,    10  
 And for awhile my sorrows cease,  
     To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

<sup>78</sup>: Text from Boyes p.47. The verses by E.P. to which this is an answer do not seem to have survived.

<sup>79</sup>: McGann (CPW I 357), citing LJ IV 252-3, identifies this as Captain Basil Hall, though the passage in LJ has no reference to E.P. or Southwell.

<sup>80</sup>: Pratt (p.103) writes that this poem is copied by E.P. on to the fly-leaf of her copy of *Poems on Various Occasions* (January 1807).

4.

Oh, lady! blessed be that tear,  
 It falls for one who cannot weep;  
 Such precious drops are doubly dear       15  
 To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

5.

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm,  
 With every feeling soft as thine,  
 But Beauty's self hath ceased to charm       20  
 A wretch created to repine.

6.

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low?  
 Sweet lady! speak those words again;  
 Yet if they grieve thee, say not so –  
 I would not give that bosom pain. – **August 12th 1808**



*Elizabeth Pigot aged about forty. She is buried within the precincts of Southwell Minster, with, writes Pratt (p.117), "a packet of Byron's letters".*



4.

Yet shall you never bind me fast,  
 Long to adore such brittle toys,  
 I'll rove along, from first, to last, 15  
 And change whene'er my fancy cloys.

5.

Oh, should I be a *baby* fool,  
 To sigh the dupe of female art –  
 Woman! perhaps thou hast a *Soul*,  
 But where have *Demons hid thy Heart?* 20  
 – January 1807

**“Just half a Pedagogue, and half a Fop”<sup>83</sup>**

Just half a Pedagogue, and half a Fop,  
 Not formed to grace the Pulpit, but the shop;  
 The *Counter*, not the *Desk*, should be his place,  
 Who deals out precepts, as if dealing lace;  
 Servile in mind, from Elevation proud, 5  
 In argument, less sensible than loud,  
 Through half the Continent, the Coxcomb's been,  
 And stuns you with the Wonders he has seen:  
 “*How* in Pompeii's vault he found the page  
 Of some long lost, and long lamented Sage, 10  
 And doubtless he the *Letters* would have traced,  
 Had they not been by age and dust effaced”:  
 This single specimen will serve to show,  
 The mighty lessons of this reknowned Beau,  
 Bombast in vain would want of Genius cloke, 15  
 For feeble fires evaporating in smoke,  
 A Boy, o'er boys he holds a trembling reign,  
 More fit than they to seek some School again.

**“Oblivion should ever be Pedantry's lot”<sup>84</sup>**

Oblivion should ever be Pedantry's lot;  
 So the faults of Pomposus rehearse –  
 As I wish that his name should at once be forgot  
 I give it a place in my verse”.  
 Says Edward to George, “poor Pomposus forgive, 5  
 Or else in your lines his remembrance will live”;  
 Says George, “it is just the reverse.”

<sup>83</sup>: The portrait is of Dr Butler, the new Headmaster of Harrow, to whom B. had objections. See the poem *On a Change of Masters, at a Great Public School* in *FP*, and *Childish Recollections* in *Hol*, II.90, 115-20.

<sup>84</sup>: “Edward” is Edward Noel Long; “George” is B.

**“Ah, why should hoary age complain”**

Ah, why should hoary age complain  
Of ills he cannot suffer long,  
While youth must hide each secret pain  
Which years but threaten to prolong?

Delight is sure the gift of Age, 5  
He smiles on pangs which scarce can last,  
While Memory unfolds her page,  
And soothes the present, by the past. –

**“As by the fixed decrees of Heaven”**

1.  
As by the fixed decrees of Heaven,  
'Tis vain to hope that joy will last;  
The dearest boon that Life has given,  
To me is – visions of the past.

2. 5  
For these this toy of blushing hue<sup>85</sup>  
I prize with zeal before unknown,  
It tells me of a Friend I knew,  
Who loved me for myself alone,

3. 10  
It tells me what how few can say  
Though all the social tie commend;  
Recorded in my heart 'twill lay,  
It tells me mine was once a Friend.

4. 15  
Through many a weary day gone by,  
With Time the gift is dearer grown;  
And still I view in Memory's eye  
That teardrop sparkle through my own.

5. 20  
And heartless Age perhaps will smile,  
Or wonder whence these feelings sprung;  
Yet let not sterner souls revile,  
For Both were open, Both were young.

6.  
And Youth is sure the only time,  
When Pleasure blends no base alloy;  
When Life is blest without a crime,  
And Innocence resides with joy.

---

**85:** The “toy” is the cornelian given to B. by John Edlestone. See *The Cornelian* in *Fugitive Pieces*, a poem excluded from *HoI*.



## 4.

Hall of my Sires!<sup>91</sup> a long farewell –  
 Yet why to thee adieu?  
 Thy vaults will echo back my knell,  
 Thy towers my tomb will view:  
 The faltering tongue which sung thy fall, 35  
 And former glories of thy Hall,  
 Forgets its wonted simple note,  
 But yet the Lyre retains the strings,  
 And sometimes, on Æolian wings,  
 In dying strains may float. 40

## 5.

Fields, which surround yon rustic cot,<sup>92</sup>  
 While yet I linger here,  
 Adieu! you are not now forgot,  
 To retrospection dear.  
 Streamlet! along whose rippling surge,<sup>93</sup> 45  
 My youthful limbs were wont to urge<sup>94</sup>  
 At noontide heat their pliant course;  
 Plunging with ardour from the shore,  
 Thy springs will lave these limbs no more,  
 Deprived of active force. 50

## 6.

And shall I here forget the scene,  
 Still nearest to my breast?  
 Rocks rise, and rivers roll between  
 The spot which passion blest;  
 Yet, Mary,<sup>95</sup> all thy beauties seem 55  
 Fresh as in Love's bewitching dream,  
 To me in smiles displayed:<sup>96</sup>  
 Till slow disease resigns his prey  
 To Death, the parent of decay,  
 Thine image cannot fade. 60

---

**90:** An English home.

**91:** Newstead Abbey.

**92:** Elizabeth Pigot annotates this line (see CPW I 465) with “Miss Pigot’s cottage”.

**93:** E.P. notes, “River Greet”.

**94:** Compare *Don Juan* II 105, 1-4:

But in his native Stream, the Guadalquivir,  
 Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;  
 And having learnt to swim in that sweet River,  
 Had often turned the Art to some Account;

**95:** E.P. notes, “Mary Duff”; but see next note.

**96:** “When I was fifteen years of age, it happened that, in a cavern in Derbyshire, I had to cross in a boat (in which two people only could lie down) a stream which flows under a rock, with the rock so close upon the water as to admit the boat only to be pushed on by a ferryman (a sort of Charon) who wades at the stern, stooping all the time. The companion of my transit was M[ary].A[nn].C[haworth]., with whom I had been long in love, and never told it, though she had discovered it without. I recollect my sensations, but cannot describe them, and it is as well” (Moore’s Life, I, pp.54-5).



## 7.

And thou, my Friend! whose gentle love  
 Yet thrills my bosom's chords,<sup>97</sup>  
 How much thy friendship was above  
 Description's power of words!  
 Still near my breast the gift I wear,<sup>98</sup> 65  
 Which sparkled once with Feeling's tear,  
 Of Love the pure, the sacred gem;  
 Our souls were equal, and our lot  
 In that dear moment quite forgot –  
 Let Pride alone condemn! 70

## 8.

All, all, is dark and cheerless now!  
 No smile of Love's deceit,  
 Can wake my veins with wonted glow,  
 Can bid Life's pulses beat –  
 Not e'en the hope of future fame 75  
 Can shake my faint, exhausted frame,  
 Or crown with fancied wreaths my head.  
 Mine is a short inglorious race,  
 To humble in the dust my face,  
 And mingle with the dead. 80

## 9.

Oh Fame! thou goddess of my heart;  
 On him who gains thy praise,  
 Pointless must fall the Spectre's dart,  
 Consumed in Glory's blaze;  
 But me she beckons from the earth, 85  
 My name obscure, unmarked my birth,  
 My life, a short and vulgar dream:  
 Lost in the dull, ignoble crowd,  
 My hopes recline within a shroud,  
 My fate in Lethe's stream. 90

## 10.

When I repose beneath the sod,  
 Unheeded in the clay,  
 Where once my playful footsteps trod,  
 Where now my head must lay;  
 The meed of Pity will be shed 95  
 In dew-drops o'er my narrow bed,  
 By nightly skies, and storms alone;  
 No mortal eye will deign to steep  
 With tears the dark sepulchral deep  
 Which hides a name unknown. 100

---

97: E.P. notes, "Edleston[e]".

98: The cornelian given him by Edlestone.

## 11.

Forget this world, my restless sprite,  
 Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heaven:  
 There must thou soon direct thy flight,  
 If errors are forgiven.  
 To bigots and to sects unknown, 105  
 Bow down beneath th'Almighty's Throne;  
 To Him address thy trembling prayer:  
 He, who is merciful and just,  
 Will not reject a child of dust,  
 Although His meanest care. 110

## 12.

Father of Light! to Thee I call,  
 My soul is dark within:  
 Thou, who canst mark the sparrow's fall,  
 Avert the death of sin.  
 Thou, who canst guide the wandering star, 115  
 Who calm'st the elemental war,  
 Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,  
 My thoughts, my words, my crimes forgive;  
 And, since I must forbear to live,  
 Instruct me how to die. 120

**Egotism – Έαυτόν Βύρων αείδει<sup>99</sup>**

## 1.

If Fate should seal my Death tomorrow,  
 (Though much *I* hope she will *postpone* it,)  
 I've held a share of *Joy* and *Sorrow*,  
 Enough for *Ten*; and *here* I own it.

## 2.

I've lived, as many other men live, 5  
 And yet, I think, with more enjoyment;  
 For could I through my days again live,  
 I'd pass them in the *same* employment,

## 3.

That *is to say*, with *some exception*,  
 For though I will not make confession, 10  
 I've seen too much of man's deception  
 Ever again to trust profession.

## 4.

Some sage *Mammas* with gesture haughty,  
 Pronounce me quite a youthful Sinner –  
 But *Daughters* say, “although he's naughty, 15  
 You must not check a *young Beginner!*”

<sup>99</sup>: The Greek is supposed to mean “Byron sings of himself” but in fact reads “Vyron sings of himself”. The poem is addressed to the Rev. John Becher, who had chid B. for the excessive warmth of some verses in *Fugitive Pieces*.

5.  
 I've loved, and many damsels know it –  
 But whom I don't intend to mention,  
 As *certain stanzas* also show it,  
*Some say deserving Reprehension.* 20

6.  
 Some ancient Dames, of virtue fiery,  
 (Unless Report does much belie them,)  
 Have lately made a sharp Enquiry,  
 And much it *grieves* me to *deny* them.

7.  
 Two whom I loved had *eyes of Blue*,  
 To which I hope *you've* no objection; 25  
 The *Rest* had eyes of *darker Hue* –  
 Each Nymph, of course, was *all perfection*.

8.  
 But here I'll close my *chaste* Description,  
 Nor say the deeds of Animosity, 30  
 For *silence* is the best prescription,  
 To *physic* idle Curiosity.

9.  
 Of *Friends*, I've known a *goodly Hundred* –  
 For finding *one* in each acquaintance,  
 By *some deceived*, by others plundered, 35  
*Friendship*, to me, was but *Repentance*.<sup>100</sup>

10.  
 At *School* I thought like other *Children*,  
 Instead of *Brains*; a fine Ingredient!  
*Romance* my *youthful Head* *bewildering*,  
 To *Sense* had made me disobedient. 40

11.  
 A victim, *nearly* from affection,  
 To certain *very precious scheming*,<sup>101</sup>  
 The still recurring recollection,  
 Has *cured* my *boyish soul* of *Dreaming*.

12.  
 By Heaven! I rather would foreswear 45  
 This Earth, and all the joys reserved me,  
 Than dare again the *specious Snare*,  
 From which *my Fate* and *Heaven* *preserved* me.

**100:** This verse belies the assertions elsewhere in B.'s youthful poetry, that most of his school friendships were eternal.

**101:** The Leacroft family of Southwell had tried to compromise B. into marrying their daughter Julia.

13.

Still I possess some Friends who love me,  
 In each a much esteemed and true one, 50  
 The Wealth of Worlds shall never move me,  
 To quit their Friendship, for a new one.

14.

But Becher! you're a *reverend pastor*,  
 Now take it in consideration,  
 Whether for penance I should fast, or 55  
 Pray for my *sins* in expiation.

15.

I own myself the child of *Folly*,  
 But not so wicked as they make me –  
 I soon must die of melancholy,  
 If *Female* smiles should e'er forsake me. 60

16.

*Philosophers* have never doubted,  
 That *Ladies' Lips* were made for *Kisses!*  
 For *Love!* I could not live without it,  
 In such a *cursed* place as *This is*.

17.

Say, Becher, I shall be forgiven! 65  
 If *you* don't warrant my salvation,  
 I must resign all *Hopes of Heaven!*  
 For, *Faith*, I can't withstand *Temptation*.

– **Byron. February 25<sup>th</sup> 1807.**

PS. These were written between one and two after *Midnight*, I have not *corrected* or *revised*,  
 Yours, *Byron*.

**Verses, written in compliance with a Lady's request to contribute to her Album**

1.  
They say that Love had once a book,  
    (The urchin loves to copy you)  
Where all who came a pencil took,  
    And wrote, perhaps, a word or two.
  
2.  
'Twas Innocence, that maid divine,                     5  
    Who kept this volume bright and fair,  
And watched that no unhallowed line  
    Should ever find admittance there.
  
3.  
And sweetly did the pages fill  
    With fond device of loving lore,                     10  
Till every line she wrote was still  
    More bright than that she wrote before.
  
4.  
Beneath the touch of Hope how soft,  
    Flow swift the magic pencil ran,  
Till Fear would come, alas! as oft,                     15  
    And, trembling, close what Hope began.
  
5.  
A tear or two had dropped from Grief,  
    And Jealousy would now and then  
Ruffle in haste a snowy leaf,  
    Which Love had still to smooth again.                     20
  
6.  
But oh! there was a blooming boy  
    Who sometimes turn'd the pages o'er,  
And wrote therein such lines of joy,  
    That all who read them wished for more.
  
7.  
And Pleasure was the spirit's name;                     25  
    And tho' so soft his voice and look,  
Yet Innocence, whene'er he came,  
    Would tremble for her spotless book.
  
8.  
For well she knew his rosy fingers  
    Were filled with sweet and wanton joys,                     30  
And well she knew the stain that lingers  
    After sweets from wanton boys.

9.

And so it happ'd – one luckless night  
 He let his honeyed goblet fall  
 O'er the poor book, so fair and white, 35  
 And sullied lines, and marge, and all.

10.

In vain he strove, with eager lip,  
 The honey from the hook to drink,  
 But oh! the more the boy would sip,  
 The deeper still the blot would sink. 40

11.

Oh! it would make you weep to see  
 The progress of the honeyed flood  
 Steal o'er a page where Modesty  
 Had freshly drawn a rose's bud.

12.

And Fancy's emblems lost their hue, 45  
 And Hope's sweet lines were all defaced,  
 And Love himself now scarcely knew  
 The lines that he had lately traced.

13.

The index now alone remains  
 Of all the pages spoilt by Pleasure, 50  
 And though it bears some honey stains,  
 Yet Memory counts this leaf a treasure.

14.

And oft, they say, she scans it o'er;  
 And oft, by this memorial aided,  
 Recalls those scenes, alas! no more 55  
 And brings back lines which long had faded.

15.

I know not if the tale be true,  
 But thus the simple facts are stated,  
 And I refer the truth to you,  
 For *Love* and *you* are near related. 60

## Adieu to the Muse

1.

Thou Power! who hast ruled me through Infancy's days,  
 Young offspring of Fancy, 'tis time we should part;  
 Then rise on the gale this the last of my lays,  
 The coldest effusion which springs from my heart.

2.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no more,                   5  
 Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore thee to sing;  
 The feelings of childhood, which taught thee to soar,  
 Are wafted far distant on Apathy's wing.

3.

Though simple the themes of my rude-flowing Lyre,  
 Yet even these themes are departed for ever;                   10  
 No more beam the eyes which my dream could inspire,  
 My visions are flown, to return – alas, never!

4.

When drained is the nectar which gladdened the bowl,  
 How vain is the effort delight to prolong!  
 When cold is the beauty which dwelt in my soul,                   15  
 What magic of Fancy can lengthen my song?

5.

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert alone,  
 Of kisses and smiles which they now must resign?  
 Or dwell with delight on the hours that are flown?  
 Ah, no! for those hours can no longer be mine.                   20

6.

Can they speak of the friends whom I lived but to love?  
 Ah, surely Affection ennobles the strain!  
 Put how can my numbers in sympathy move,  
 When I scarcely can hope to behold them again?

7.

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers have done,                   25  
 And raise my loud harp to the fame of my Sires?  
 For glories like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!  
 For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

8.

Untouched, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast –  
 'Tis hushed; and my feeble endeavours are o'er;                   30  
 And those who have heard it will pardon the past,  
 When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

9.

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,  
 Since early affection and love is o'er-cast:  
 Ah! blest had my Fate been, and happy my lot,                   35  
 Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

10.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;  
 If our songs have been languid, they surely are few:  
 Let us hope that the Present at Last will be sweet –  
 The Present, which seals our eternal Adieu.<sup>102</sup>                      40

### The Farewell to a Lady<sup>103</sup>

1.

When Man, expelled from Eden's bowers,  
 A moment lingered near the gate,  
 Each scene recalled the vanished hours,  
 And bade him curse his future fate.

2.

But wandering on through distant climes,                      5  
 He learnt to bear his load of grief;  
 Just gave a sigh to other times,  
 And found in busier scenes relief.

3.

Thus, Lady! will it be with me,  
 And I must view thy charms no more;                      10  
 For while I linger near to thee  
 I sigh for all I knew before.

4.

In flight I shall be surely wise,  
 Escaping from temptation's snare;  
 I cannot view my Paradise                      15  
 Without the wish of dwelling there. – **December 2nd 1809**

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**102:** Pratt writes (p.79) that the last stanza originally went,

Farewell, my young Muse, our offences are over,  
 If our efforts are feeble at least they are few,  
 We will own that our Song is more simple than sweet  
 And repent of our Sins in a lasting Adieu.

... though this cannot quite be derived from the apparatus at CPW I 208.

**103:** B. to Francis Hodgson, November 27 1808: "... on the opposite page I send you some stanzas I wrote off on being questioned by a former flame on my motives for quitting this country. You are the first reader. Hobhouse hates everything of the kind, therefore I do not show them to him" (BLJ I 179)



## LOVE POEMS WHOSE ADDRESSEES ARE UNKNOWN

Byron had, while at Cambridge, fallen in love with a Trinity choirboy called John Edlestone.<sup>104</sup> He left Cambridge at Christmas 1807. By February 1808 he was enjoying an exhausting heterosexual relationship with a sixteen-year-old girl called Caroline Cameron.<sup>105</sup> He could not write frankly about the former without using pseudonyms, names of ambiguous gender, or remote implication. Of the latter, he might write more frankly. These problems, plus the contiguity and possible overlapping of the two relationships, sometimes makes attributing these remaining poems hard. But they contain a depth of tenderness and passion which is absent from the Nottinghamshire poems.

### Stanzas to Jessy<sup>106</sup>

1.

There is a mystic thread of life  
 So dearly wreathed with mine alone,  
 That Destiny's relentless knife  
 At once must sever both, or none.

2.

There is a Form on which these eyes                    5  
 Have fondly gazed with such delight –  
 By day, that Form their joy supplies,  
 And Dreams restore it, through the night.

3.

There is a Voice whose tones inspire  
 Such softened feelings in my breast,                    10  
 I would not hear a Seraph Choir,  
 Unless that voice could join the rest.<sup>107</sup>

4.

There is a Face whose Blushes tell  
 Affection's tale upon the Cheek,  
 But pallid at our fond farewell                    15  
 Proclaims more love than words can speak.

5.

There is a Lip which mine has prest,  
 But none had ever prest before;  
 It vowed to make me sweetly blest,  
 That mine alone should press it more.                    20

6.

There is a Bosom all my own,  
 Has pillowed oft this aching head,  
 A Mouth, which smiles on me alone,  
 An Eye, whose tears with mine are shed.

---

**104:** BLJ I 124-5.

**105:** BLJ I 157.

**106:** The name "Jessy" could be male or female.

**107:** Edlestone was a fine singer.

7.

There are two Hearts whose movements thrill 25  
 In unison so closely sweet,  
 That Pulse to Pulse responsive still,  
 They Both must heave, or cease to beat.

8.

There are two Souls, whose equal flow  
 In gentle stream so calmly run, 30  
 That when they part – they part? – ah no!  
 They cannot part – those Souls are One.

**“Here once engaged the Stranger’s view”<sup>108</sup>**

1.

Here once engaged the Stranger’s view  
 Young Friendship’s record simply traced;  
 Few were her words – but yet though few,  
 Resentment’s hand the line defaced.

2.

Deeply she cut – but, not erased, 5  
 The characters were still so plain,  
 That Friendship once returned, and gazed,  
 Till Memory hailed the words again.

3.

Repentance placed them as before;  
 Forgiveness joined her gentle name; 10  
 So fair the inscription seemed once more,  
 That Friendship thought it still the same.

4.

Thus might the Record now have been;  
 But, ah, in spite of Hope’s endeavour,  
 Or Friendship’s tear, Pride rushed between, 15  
 And blotted out the line for ever! – **September 1807**

**“There was a time, I need not name”**

1.

There was a time, I need not name,  
 Since it will ne’er forgotten be,  
 When all our feelings were the same,  
 As still my soul hath been to thee.

2.

And from that hour when first thy tongue 5  
 Confessed a love which equalled mine,  
 Though many a grief my heart hath wrung,  
 Unknown, and thus unfelt, by thine:

---

**108:** This poem seems to about two names carved in some public place.

3.

None, none, hath sunk so deep as this,  
 To think how all that love hath flown;                   10  
 Transient as every faithless kiss,  
 But transient in thy breast alone.

4.

And yet my heart some solace knew,  
 When late I heard thy lips declare,  
 In accents once imagined true,                               15  
 Remembrance of the days that were.

5.

Yes! my adored, yet most unkind!  
 Though thou wilt never love again,  
 To me 'tis doubly sweet to find  
 Remembrance of that love remain.                           20

6.

Yes! 'tis a glorious thought to me,  
 Nor longer shall my soul repine,  
 Whate'er thou art, or e'er shalt be,  
 Thou hast been dearly, solely mine. – **June 10th 1809**

**Song: "Breeze of the night"**

1.

Breeze of the night! in gentler sighs  
 More gently murmur o'er the billow;  
 For Slumber seals my Fanny's eyes,  
 And Peace must never shun her pillow.

2.

Oh breathe those sweet Æolian strains                       5  
 Stolen from celestial spheres above,  
 To charm her ear while sense remains,  
 And soothe her soul to dreams of love.

3.

But, Breeze of Night! again forbear,  
 In softest murmurs only sigh;                               10  
 Let not a Zephyr's pinion dare  
 To lift those auburn locks on high.

4.

Chill is thy Breath, thou breeze of night!  
 Oh! ruffle not those lids of Snow;  
 For only Morning's cheering light                               15  
 May wake the beam that lurks below.

5.

Blest be that lip and azure eye!  
 Sweet Fanny, hallowed be thy Sleep!  
 Those lips shall never vent a sigh,  
 Those eyes may never wake to weep.                       20 – **Februay 23rd 1808**

**“Remind me not, remind me not”**

1.

Remind me not, remind me not,  
 Of those beloved, those vanished hours,  
 When all my soul was given to thee;  
 Hours that may never be forgot  
 Till time unnerves our vital powers,           5  
 And thou and I shall cease to be.

2.

Call I forget? canst thou forget?  
 When playing with thy golden hair  
 How quick thy fluttering heart did move?  
 Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet,           10  
 With eyes so languid, breast so fair,  
 And lips, though silent, breathing love.

3.

When thus reclining on my breast  
 Those eyes threw hack a glance so sweet,  
 As half reproached, yet raised desire,           15  
 And still we near, and nearer prest,  
 And still our glowing lips would meet,  
 As if in kisses to expire.

4.

And then those pensive eyes would close,  
 And bid their lids each other seek,           20  
 Veiling the azure orbs below;  
 While their long lashes' darkening gloss  
 Seemed stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,  
 Like raven's plumage smoothed on snow.

5.

I dreamt last night our love returned,           25  
 And sooth to say that very dream  
 Was sweeter in its phantasy  
 Than if for other hearts I burned,  
 For eyes that ne'er like thine could beam  
 In rapture's wild reality.           30

6.

Then tell me not, remind me not  
 Of hours which, though for ever gone,  
 Can still a pleasing dream restore,  
 Till thou and I shall be forgot;  
 And senseless as the mouldering stone,           35  
 Which tells that we shall be no more. – **August 13th 1809**

### To a Youthful Friend<sup>109</sup>

1.  
 Few years have passed since thou and I  
     Were firmest friends, at least in name,  
 And Childhood's gay sincerity  
     Preserved our feelings long the same.
2.  
 But now, like me, too well thou know'st      5  
     What trifles oft the heart recall;  
 And those who once have loved the most  
     Too soon forget they loved at all.
3.  
 And such the change the heart displays,  
     So frail is early friendship's reign,      10  
 A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,  
     Will view thy mind estranged again.
4.  
 If so, never it shall be mine  
     To mourn the loss of such a heart;  
 The fault was Nature's fault, not thine,      15  
     Which made thee fickle as thou art.
5.  
 As rolls the Ocean's changing tide,  
     So human feelings ebb and flow;  
 And who would in a breast confide  
     Where stormy passions ever glow?      20
6.  
 It boots not, that together bred,  
     Our childish days were days of joy;  
 My spring of life has quickly fled;  
     Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.
7.  
 And when we bid adieu to youth,      25  
     Slaves to the specious World's controul,  
 We sigh a long farewell to truth;  
     That World corrupts the noblest soul.
8.  
 Ah, joyous season! when the mind  
     Dares all things boldly but to lie;      30  
 When thought ere spoke is unconfined,  
     And sparkles in the placid eye.

---

**109:** This poem mingles echoes of Gray's *Ode ... on Eton College* with memories of B.'s quarrel with George, fifth Earl Delawarr (see poem to him in *HoI*).

9.  
 Not so in Man's maturer years,  
     When Man himself is but a tool,  
 When Interest sways our hopes and fears,      35  
     And all must love and hate by rule.

10.  
 With fools in kindred vice the same,  
     We learn at length our faults to blend,  
 And those, and those alone may claim  
     The prostituted name of friend.      40

11.  
 Such is the common lot of man:  
     Can we then 'scape from folly free?  
 Can we reverse the general plan,  
     Nor be what all in turn must be?

12.  
 No; for myself so dark my fate      45  
     Through every turn of life hath been;  
 Man and the World I so much hate,  
     I care not when I quit the scene.

13.  
 But thou, with spirit frail and light,  
     Wilt shine awhile and pass away,      50  
 As glow-worms sparkle through the night,  
     But dare not stand the test of day.

14.  
 Alas! whenever folly calls  
     Where parasites and princes meet,  
 (For cherished first in royal halls,      55  
     The welcome vices kindly greet),

15.  
 Ev'n now thou'rt nightly seen to add  
     One insect to the fluttering crowd;  
 And still thy trifling heart is glad,  
     To join the vain, and court the proud.      60

16.  
 There dost thou hide from fair to fair,  
     Still simpering on with eager haste,  
 As flies along the gay parterre,  
     That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

17.  
 But say, what nymph will prize the flame      65  
     Which seems, as marshy vapours move,  
 To flit along from dame to dame,  
     An ignis-fatuus gleam of love?

18.

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,  
Will deign to own a kindred care? 70  
Who will debase his manly mind,  
For friendship every fool may share?

19.

In time forbear; amidst the throng  
No more so base a thing be seen;  
No more so idly pass along; 75  
Be something, any thing, but – mean.

## POEMS TO SUSAN VAUGHAN

On his return from the Mediterranean, in December 1811 and January 1812, Byron had a passionate affair with Susan Vaughan, a Welsh servant-girl at Newstead Abbey. We have several of her letters to him, including a poem of her own:

My dearest friend, I have hitherto given you every proof of my affection, – I only fear your Love for me will not be so lasting as mine – <I> {will be} for you, I have been in your library all this day I have neither thought of *eating or drinking* since you Left I want nothing but to be alone looking over your Books And any thing that belongs to you be assured Nothing shall be injured. I mean my looking at them I will be very Careful And put them in the Same place again. – My dear Lord Byron you accused Me yesterday of not being hurt at your departure 'Tis true Bessy shed more tears than I did in your sight. I believe she was extremely sorry you Were going – but oh Heavens if you knew what I Felt you would have pityed me, I was past crying I cannot tell how I was the real truth is my – Heart was ready to break the moment you left the Court yard I immidiately left the {Hall} And with the greatest Reluctance upon Such an Occation I ascended the top of The house but still more reluctantly I descended after Seeing you out of Sight. – I sat down on the stairs And Said to myself the following verses – –

The fatal moment I beheld,  
Your eyes so fondly fixed on me,  
Some Magic Sense my heart Compell,d,  
To place its Dearest hopes in thee,  
And my true faith can Alter Never  
Though you are gone perhaps for *ever*  
Nor what is past nor woes to come  
<Thy image> {Your} image from my Soul <part> {can} part,  
Through years of Anguish to the tomb,  
I,will follow this Devoted heart,  
And my true faith can *alter never*,  
Though you are gone perhaps forever.<sup>110</sup>

Susan seems to have dominated Byron's thoughts at the time – and to have been unfaithful to him with of all people Robert Rushton, his page, and, according to the estimates of some, his lover also. He found them out, gave Susan the sack, but forgave Rushton. The following poems express his disillusion with her.

### “Again deceived! again betrayed!”

*I pull in resolution and begin  
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend  
That lies like truth. – Macbeth.*

1.

Again deceived! again betrayed!  
In manhood as in youth,  
The dupe of every smiling maid  
That ever “lied like truth”.

2.

Well, dearly was the lesson bought, 5  
The present and the past,  
What Love some twenty times has taught  
We needs must learn at last.

---

**110:** Susan Vaughan, letter to B., January 12 1812 (John Murray Archive / National Library of Scotland).



3.

In turn deceiving or deceived  
 The wayward Passion roves, 10  
 Beguiled by her we most believed,  
 Or leaving her who loves.

4.

Oh thou! for whom my heart must bleed,  
 From whom this anguish springs,  
 Thy Love was genuine Love indeed, 15  
 And showed it in his wings.

5.

His pinions, had he deigned to stay,  
 I only meant to borrow;  
 I wish thy love remained today  
 To fly with mine tomorrow. 20

**“There is no more for me to hope”**

1.

There is no more for me to hope,  
 There is no more for thee to fear;  
 And, if I give my Sorrow scope,  
 That Sorrow thou shalt never hear.  
 Why did I hold thy love so dear? 5  
 Why shed for such a heart one tear?  
 Let deep and dreary silence be  
 My only memory of thee!

2.

When all are fled who flatter now,  
 Save thoughts which will not flatter then; 10  
 And thou recall'st the broken vow  
 To him who must not love again.  
 Each hour of now forgotten years  
 Thou, then, shalt number with thy tears;  
 And every drop of grief shall be 15  
 A vain remembrancer of me!

**“And thy true faith can alter never?”<sup>111</sup>**

And thy true faith can alter never?  
 Indeed it lasted for a – week!  
 I knew the length of Love's forever,  
 And just expected such a freak. 5  
 In peace we met, in peace we parted,  
 In peace we vowed to meet again,  
 And though I find thee fickle-hearted  
 No pang of mine shall make thee vain.

---

**111:** This poem answers S.V.'s poem, quoted in the letter above.

## 2.

One gone – 'twas time to seek a second;  
 In sooth 'twere hard to blame thy haste. 10  
 And whatsoe'er thy love be reckoned,  
 At least thou hast improved in taste;  
 Though one was young, the next was younger,  
 His love was new, mine too well known –  
 And what might make the charm still stronger, 15  
 The youth was present, I was flown.

## 3.

Seven days and nights of single sorrow!  
 Too much for human constancy!  
 A fortnight past, why then tomorrow,  
 His turn is come to follow me: 20  
 And if each week you change a lover,  
 And so have acted heretofore,  
 Before a year or two is over  
 We'll form a very pretty corps.

## 4.

Adieu, fair thing! without upbraiding 25  
 I fain would take a decent leave;  
 Thy beauty still survives unfading,  
 And undeceived may long deceive.  
 With him unto thy bosom dearer  
 Enjoy the moments as they flee; 30  
 I only wish his love sincerer  
 Than thy young heart has been to me.