

from *Elegies**Elegy 1. Jealousy*<sup>1</sup>

Fond<sup>o</sup> woman, which wouldst have thy  
 husband die, *foolish*  
 And yet complain'st of his great jealousy.  
 If swollen with poison, he lay in his last bed,  
 His body with a sere-bark<sup>o</sup> covered, *dry crust*  
 5 Drawing his breath as thick and short as can  
 The nimblest crocheting<sup>2</sup> musician,  
 Ready with loathsome vomiting to spew  
 His soul out of one hell into a new,  
 Made deaf with his poor kindred's howling cries,  
 10 Begging with few feigned tears great legacies,  
 Thou wouldst not weep, but jolly and frolic be,  
 As a slave which to-morrow should be free.  
 Yet weep'st thou when thou seest him hungerly  
 Swallow his own death, heart's-bane jealousy.  
 15 Oh give him many thanks, he's courteous,  
 That in suspecting kindly warneth us.  
 We must not, as we used, flout openly  
 In scoffing riddles his deformity;  
 Nor at his board, together being sat,  
 20 With words, nor touch, scarce looks, adulterate.  
 Nor when he, swol'n and pampered with great fare,  
 Sits down and snorts, caged in his basket chair,  
 Must we usurp his own bed any more,  
 Nor kiss and play in his house, as before.  
 25 Now I see many dangers; for that is  
 His realm, his castle, and his diocese.  
 But if, as envious men which would revile  
 Their prince, or coin his gold, themselves exile  
 Into another country, and do it there,  
 30 We play in another house, what should we fear?  
 There we will scorn his household policies,  
 His silly plots and pensionary spies,<sup>o</sup>  
 As the inhabitants of Thames' right side<sup>3</sup> *servants*

<sup>1</sup> *Elegy 1. Jealousy* Numbered "Elegy 4" in some modern editions.<sup>2</sup> *crocheting* Crotchets are grace notes; in effect, "quick-fingered."<sup>3</sup> *Thames' right side* Southwark, where the theaters were, was outside the jurisdiction of London authorities.Do London's mayor, or Germans, the Pope's pride.<sup>4</sup>  
—1633*Elegy 8. The Comparison*<sup>5</sup>

As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,  
 As that which from chafed musk cat's pores  
 doth trill,<sup>o</sup> *flow*  
 As the almighty balm<sup>o</sup> of the early East, *morning dew*  
 Such are the sweat drops of my mistress' breast,  
 5 And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,  
 They seem no sweat drops, but pearl carcanets.<sup>o</sup> *necklaces*  
 Rank sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles,  
 Like spermatic issue of ripe menstruous boils,  
 Or like that scum, which, by need's lawless law  
 10 Enforced, Sanserra's starved men did draw  
 From parboiled shoes, and boots, and all the rest  
 Which were with any sovereign fatness blest,<sup>6</sup>  
 And like vile lying stones in saffroned tin,<sup>7</sup>  
 Or warts, or weals, they hang upon her skin.  
 15 Round as the world's her head, on every side,  
 Like to that fatal ball which fell on Ide,<sup>8</sup>  
 Or that whereof God had such jealousy,  
 As, for the ravishing thereof we die.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Pope's pride* Germany was the birthplace of the Reformation, which challenged the authority of the Pope.<sup>5</sup> *Elegy 8. The Comparison* Numbered "Elegy 2" in some modern editions.<sup>6</sup> *From parboiled shoes ... fatness blest* The King's Catholic army laid siege to the Protestants of Sancerre, France, for nine months in 1573; the town's inhabitants were reduced to eating anything made out of leather.<sup>7</sup> *lying stones in saffroned tin* Artificial jewels set in false gold (gilded tin).<sup>8</sup> *fatal ball which fell on Ide* The golden apple inscribed "To the fairest" that Eris, goddess of discord, brought to a wedding in revenge for not being invited. Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite competed for the prize, and Paris, a herdsman on Mount Ida (near Troy), had to choose the winner. His choice of Aphrodite led to the Trojan war. The elegy invites the reader to compare that beauty competition with the one it offers.<sup>9</sup> *ravishing ... we die* The forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden.

Thy head<sup>1</sup> is like a rough-hewn statue of jet,<sup>o</sup> *black stone*  
 20 Where marks for eyes, nose, mouth, are yet scarce set;  
 Like the first Chaos, or flat seeming face  
 Of Cynthia,<sup>o</sup> where the earth's shadows her *the moon*  
 embrace.  
 Like Proserpine's white beauty-keeping chest,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or Jove's best fortune's urn,<sup>3</sup> is her fair breast.  
 25 Thine's like worm eaten trunks, clothed in seal's skin,  
 Or grave, that's dirt without, and stink within.  
 And like that slender stalk, at whose end stands  
 The woodbine quivering, are her arms and hands,  
 Like rough-barked elmboughs, or the russet skin  
 30 Of men late scourged for madness, or for sin,  
 Like sun-parched quarters on the city gate,<sup>4</sup>  
 Such is thy tanned skin's lamentable state.  
 And like a bunch of ragged carrots stand  
 The short swoll'n fingers of thy gouty hand.  
 35 Then like the chemic's masculine equal<sup>o</sup> fire, *evenly beating*  
 Which in the limbeck's<sup>5</sup> warm womb doth inspire  
 Into the earth's worthless dirt a soul of gold,  
 Such cherishing heat her best loved part doth hold.  
 Thine's like the dread mouth of a fired gun,  
 40 Or like hot liquid metals newly run  
 Into clay moulds, or like to that Aetna<sup>6</sup>  
 Where round about the grass is burnt away.  
 Are not your kisses then as filthy, and more,  
 As a worm sucking an envenomed sore?  
 45 Doth not thy fearful hand in feeling quake,  
 As one which gath'ring flowers, still fears a snake?  
 Is not your last act harsh, and violent,  
 As when a plough a stony ground doth rent?  
 So kiss good turtles,<sup>o</sup> so devoutly nice *turtledoves*

<sup>1</sup> *Thy head* That is, the head of thy mistress, as opposed to "her head" (the speaker's mistress) of line 15. The poem proceeds to contrast the qualities of the speaker's "her" with those of "thy" or "thine" mistress.

<sup>2</sup> *beauty-keeping chest* In classical story, Psyche was required to travel to the underworld and ask Prosperina (Persephone) to place in a box a gift of beauty for Venus.

<sup>3</sup> *Jove's best fortune's urn* From Homer, *Iliad*: Zeus (Jove) kept two urns in his palace, one filled with good gifts, the other with evil ones.

<sup>4</sup> *Like sun-parched ... city gate* The desiccated body parts of "quartered" criminals, impaled as warning to would-be offenders on city gates.

<sup>5</sup> *limbeck* Alchemical still or retort.

<sup>6</sup> *Aetna* Volcano in Sicily.

50 Are priests in handling reverent sacrifice,  
 And such in searching wounds the surgeon is  
 As we, when we embrace, or touch, or kiss.  
 Leave her, and I will leave comparing thus,  
 She, and comparisons are odious.  
 —1633

from *Satires*

*Satire 3*

Kind pity chokes my spleen; brave scorn forbids  
 Those tears to issue which swell my eye-lids;  
 I must not laugh, nor weep sins, and be wise,  
 Can railing then cure these worn maladies?  
 5 Is not our mistress, fair Religion,  
 As worthy of all our soul's devotion,  
 As virtue was to the first blinded age?  
 Are not heaven's joys as valiant to assuage  
 Lusts, as earth's honour was to them?<sup>7</sup> Alas,  
 10 As we do them in means, shall they surpass  
 Us in the end, and shall thy father's spirit  
 Meet blind philosophers in heaven, whose merit  
 Of strict life may be imputed faith,<sup>8</sup> and hear  
 Thee, whom he taught so easy ways and near  
 15 To follow, damned? Oh if thou dar'st, fear this;  
 This fear great courage, and high valour is.  
 Dar'st thou aid mutinous Dutch,<sup>9</sup> and dar'st thou lay  
 Thee in ships, wooden sepulchers, a prey  
 To leaders' rage, to storms, to shot, to dearth?  
 20 Dar'st thou dive seas, and dungeons of the earth?  
 Hast thou courageous fire to thaw the ice  
 Of frozen North discoveries? and thrice  
 Colder than salamanders,<sup>10</sup> like divine

<sup>7</sup> *them* The virtuous ancients who lived in the "blinded age" before the Christian revelation; their motive for virtue was earthly fame.

<sup>8</sup> *imputed faith* The speaker daringly uses a key term from Protestant theology to suggest that ancient philosophers might be "saved" as a result of their own merits, which might constitute an "imputed faith."

<sup>9</sup> *mutinous Dutch* The (Protestant) Dutch had been in revolt against their (Catholic) Spanish occupiers since 1568.

<sup>10</sup> *salamanders* Reputed to be so naturally cold that they could extinguish fires by contact.