

The Indifferent¹

I can love both fair and brown,²
 Her whom abundance melts, and her whom want betrays,
 Her who loves loneness best, and her who masks and plays,
 Her whom the country formed, and whom the town,
 5 Her who believes, and her who tries,⁰ *tests*
 Her who still⁰ weeps with spongy eyes, *always*
 And her who is dry cork, and never cries;
 I can love her, and her, and you, and you,
 I can love any, so she be not true.

 10 Will no other vice content you?
 Will it not serve your turn to do as did your mothers?
 Or have you all old vices spent, and now would find out others?
 Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?
 O we are not, be not you so;
 15 Let me, and do you, twenty know.
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go.
 Must I, who came to travail thorough³ you,
 Grow your fixed subject, because you are true?

 Venus heard me sigh this song,
 20 And by love's sweetest part, variety, she swore,
 She heard not this till now; and that it should be so no more.
 She went, examined, and returned ere long,
 And said, Alas, some two or three
 Poor heretics in love there be,
 25 Which think to stablish dangerous constancy.
 But I have told them, Since you will be true,
 You shall be true to them who are false to you.

1633

The Canonization¹

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
 Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
 My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune, flout,
 With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
 5 Take you a course, get you a place,²
 Observe His Honor, or His Grace,³
 Or the king's real, or his stamped face⁴
 Contemplate; what you will, approve,⁰ *try, test*
 So you will let me love.

1. Some lines of this poem recall Ovid, *Amores* 2.4.
 2. Both blonde and brunette.
 3. Through. "Travail": grief.
 1. The poem plays off against the Roman Catholic process of determining that certain persons are

saints, proper objects of veneration and prayer.
 2. An appointment, at court or elsewhere. "Take you a course": follow some career.
 3. Pay court to some lord or bishop.
 4. On coins; "real" (royal) refers also to a particular Spanish coin.

10 Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
 What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
 Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
 When did my colds a forward⁰ spring remove?⁵ *early*
 When did the heats which my veins fill
 15 Add one man to the plaguy bill?⁶
 Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
 Litigious men, which quarrels move,
 Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
 20 Call her one, me another fly,
 We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,⁷
 And we in us find the eagle and the dove.
 The phoenix riddle hath more wit
 By us: we two being one, are it.⁸

25 So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
 We die and rise the same, and prove
 Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
 And if unfit for tombs and hearse
 30 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
 And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
 We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;⁹
 As well a well-wrought urn becomes⁰ *befits*

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
 35 And by these hymns,¹ all shall approve⁰ *confirm*
 Us canonized for love:

And thus invoke us: You whom reverend love
 Made one another's hermitage;
 You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
 40 Who did the whole world's soul contract,² and drove
 Into the glasses of your eyes
 (So made such mirrors, and such spies, *spyglasses, telescopes*
 That they did all to you epitomize)
 Countries, towns, courts:³ Beg from above
 45 A pattern of your love!

1633

5. Petrarchan lovers traditionally sigh, weep, and are frozen because of their mistresses' neglect.

6. Deaths from the plague, which raged in summer, were recorded by parish in weekly lists.

7. Flies were emblems of transience and lustfulness; tapers (candles) attract flies to their death and also consume themselves. "Die" in the punning terminology of the period means to experience orgasm, and there was a superstition that intercourse shortened life.

8. The eagle signifies strength and vision; the dove, meekness and mercy. The phoenix was a mythic Arabian bird, only one of which existed at any one time. After living five hundred years, it was consumed by fire, then rose triumphantly from its

ashes a new bird. Thus it was a symbol of immortality and sometimes associated with Christ. "Eagle" and "dove" are also alchemical terms for processes leading to the rise of "phoenix," a stage in the transmutation of metals to gold.

9. "Rooms" (punning on the Italian meaning of "stanza") will contain their exploits, as prose chronicle histories contain great deeds done in the world.

1. The lover's own poems.

2. An alternative meaning is "extract."

3. "Countries, towns, courts" are objects of the verb "drove." The notion is that eyes both see and reflect the outside world, and so can contain all of it.

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