John Donne Journal
Vol. 17 (1998)

Using the Variorum Edition of John Donne's Poetry

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Editors of the Variorum Edition of John Donne's Poetry have presented sessions at the Modern Language Association Convention on the use of this important scholarly tool. Stress has been placed on the contents of the volumes and the ways in which the texts and the commentaries have been determined. What a user will find has been a main point and that is important for people to know. For in many ways this Variorum is different from others we have all probably used—the Shakespeare variora of the nineteenth century which have been and are being updated, the Spenser volumes of the 1930s, and the still on-going Milton Variorum Commentary. The latter is particularly in sharp contrast with its unyielding circumspection of annotation and its subjectivity of inclusion, of omission, and of comment; it does not tackle the problem of Milton's texts, although there are many cruxes that I suspect not many people are aware of. The Donne Variorum volumes that have appeared—Volume 6, the Anniversaries with "A Funeral Elegy," and the Epicedes and Obsequies, and Volume 8, the epigrams, epithalamia, inscriptions, and epitaphs—offer texts that have been restudied, based upon all known printed and manuscripts versions, with little or no editorial emendation to the copy-text selected, and with extensive variants from all versions, all of which are recorded, and commentaries that eschew the subjective, being dedicated to reportage of criticism of all kinds. We find glosses, general critical statements and specific critical statements for whole poems, for parts of poems or for a group of poems, and interfacings among individual works—and all of that reportage in a chronological presentation starting in the seventeenth century and coming up to the end of the 1980s, thus allowing us to determine when (and by whom) certain critical ideas or interpreta-

tions entered Donne scholarship. Such a variorum supplies us with answers or at least some suggested answers to many cruxes that emerge from our reading, and it behooves a scholar working on Donne's poetry to check out what has been already written. Or it may reveal to the astute questions that have not been answered, at least not satisfactorily or completely, and ideas for further thought about the poem or particularly about its contexts, both in terms of our contemporary world and the contemporary world when it was written.

There have been those who have been negative toward the issuance of variora of any nature. Are they not a monument to dead ideas (to conjure up Sir Walter Raleigh's remark on *Paradise Lost*)? are they not the superannuation of stupid statements that some ignoramus somehow got into print in, perhaps, *Notes & Queries* or a vanity press's contribution to doctoral advancement? And who cares anyway since the way the individual reads the poem is the only thing that's important: One doesn't need to know all that stuff about scholasticism or Galileo or that "travail" may be a pun, let alone "die," or that Donne read Ovid and the Bible and Spenser. I like to hope that students of Donne's work do not feel that way at all, much as we may champion reader-response approaches (as I do) or deconstructive concepts (as I do) or methodologies involving the political or the feminine or the psychological (as I do, as long as they do not become "agendaized").

Still, there has been a feeling among attendants at the numerous conferences held today offering numerous papers that paper-givers very often do not use variora, or as I'm told I always say, "they haven't done their homework." One reason may be that false one that a variorum is a monument to dead ideas but more likely, I think, is that the paper-giver does not know how to use such reference works. If some can ignore the Donne Variorum volumes though they write a great deal about one of his poems, perhaps I can be excused, in trying to deflect such a situation, to be somewhat arrogant and to suggest a few ways in which these volumes can be employed to advantage, taking an example from each of the published volumes, and offering some preliminary remarks that anticipate a forthcoming Variorum volume. It is, of course, difficult for me to attempt this since, having been an editor of the poems,

I so frequently appear in the volumes. But I shall try to look at the issues objectively and not push for "my" interpretations. In one way that will not be too difficult, for basically I see Donne's poems as ambiguous (in all the positive meanings of that word), multivoiced, susceptible of and encouraging numerous approaches—including the personal or biographical but also the externally contextual, philosophically yet also literarily concerned. I shall look at "Pyramus and Thisbe," "A Hymne to the Saynts and To the Marquesse Hamilton," and "Elegie: The Bracelet."

The epigram "Pyramus and Thisbe" offers little for discussion textually, it seems. The editors of the Variorum place it in the second arrangement of epigrams; presumably it is thus of at least slightly later composition than some others, along with the two other poems on "classical" subjects with which it travels, "Hero and Leander" and "Niobe." It appears only in full manuscripts of Donne's poems or in one case (Malone MS 19, an eighteenth-century manuscript) with a number of others; it was not popular, that is, for incidental inclusion in people's commonplace books or miscellanies. The lack of verbal textual variation (with the exception of two instances in William Drummond's copybook, who examination shows was not scrupulous about any material as far as accidentals and spelling and the like are concerned) suggests that the epigram was merely copied from text to text and with only minimal accidental differences. That lack of attention is borne out by the commentary: only six editors and two commentators are cited. It is mentioned in the general introduction to the epigrams only a few times in conjunction with its two fellow "mythological epigrams based on Petrarchan conceits" (as Robert Ellrodt expressed it). It is one of the epigrams demonstrating Donne's skill in the Greek manner, according to M. Thomas Hester, and one "attempting only a clever point," according to Geoffrey Bullough, that is, "terse wit," according to Richard Willmott. The underlying riddle genre of the poem, and others, is pointed out by Alison Rieke, the title rather than the words themselves anchoring our reading; and, as Hester remarked in another article, such titles for some of the epigrams "are essential, for omitting them modifies the reader's experience."

What is here that a current critical reader finds to aid reading or to question past reading and suggest revision or to impel one into further study involving this poem? The text:

> Two, by themselues, each other, Love and Feare
> Slayne, cruell frinds, by parting haue ioynd here.

This is the text the editors give in the intermediate sequence (that is, the version given in the Westmoreland MS); there are differences in what they call the late sequence (that is, the version given in the Dolau Cothi MS). But it is the text in the intermediate sequence that is employed as the copy-text in the collation! Clearly this is confusing. Attached here is the text of the late sequence, which one might assume would be the "best" text and the text to be employed in the collation. Questions are thus raised about editorial implications, methodologies, and conclusions, which I shall not pursue. (This example demonstrates that the "last" text may not necessarily be the "best" text, a point some critics have argued for poems by Walt Whitman or by William Butler Yeats.)

To turn to the text itself: the cryptic arrangement of words suggests bifurcations for each element: the paraphrases cited from Grierson and Smith and Daniels indicate the ways in which the different words and ideas can be associated—"by themselues" and by "cruell frinds" who may be their parents as in the legend or they themselves, and thus they have been slain because of their love (with the blame being placed on the parents or others contesting their union) but also because of their fear (with the blame being placed on Pyramus' belief that Thisbe has been killed but also their fear that they would not be allowed to continue as lovers). They have been parted in the past by the parents (and friends) but have now parted themselves through death though they were joined before, except that they are now joined in death as a result of the parting effected by the parents (and friends). What the commentary summary points us to, I think, is that the poem can be read in many ways with various syntactical assignments of words, and that those paraphrases should not be delimited to one or another only.

The poem may offer a student of the rhetoric of Donne's poems evidence of witty expression, the use of the oxymoron that Hester

discusses for the poem, the use of capitalization, and the significance of punctuation. This last matter is particularly provocative, for it directs meaning and at the same time may raise questions about the specific text we are using. If the three commas in the first line, or any one of them, are omitted, as they are in numerous manuscripts (and that after "other" in the 1635-1669 printed texts as well), the meaning is potentially altered by delimiting the ambiguities of meaning. Even more obvious is the importance of a lack of a comma at the end of the first line although four manuscripts have a comma: with a comma it is implied that they love and fear and that now slain they are joined through their parting; without a comma it is implied additionally that love and fear have caused the slaying. The effect of the capitalized Love and Fear, of course, is that they are now also made into concepts, not just emotions and not construed as verbs as they have been.

The use of the Variorum textual and commentary materials will not only help the reader in understanding the poem but, I think more importantly, will aid in complicating the reading of the poem, pointing to the wittiness of Donne, the possibilities of a coterie for whom it may have been intended, and the significance (along with other poems) of the riddle. But of most importance, surely, is that we should acknowledge that criticism of a Donne poem based only upon any modernized text may be suspect of narrowness and perhaps even error.

Those three "classical" or "mythological" epigrams--"Hero and Leander," "Pyramus and Thisbe," "Niobe"—have been glanced at as a group, but that is all. If they are part of an intermediate sequence as the variorum textual editors propose, joining five others that have generally been associated with the expeditions in 1596 and 1597, and the epigrams of the early sequence and some others, their date of composition may possibly be around 1595 or early 1596, when Donne seems to have been at Lincoln's Inn. The context of the everyday world for him at that time, if indeed we can place these epigrams then, would be intellectual activity and social activity in London. Does this perhaps account for the choice of these three subjects? Grierson called Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IV, 55-165, the source for the "Pyramus and Thisbe" epigram, noted also by Milgate, and Carey refers to "A Midsummer

Night's Dream." No one, it seems, has noted Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" in talking about that epigram, nor any source. Milgate references the memorable image in Hamlet's speech (I, ii, 149) to cite the paradox of Donne's comment that Niobe is "dry." "Sources" for the subjects have probably not been generally remarked because those subjects are so well known and were so well known in the 1590s.

For Donne to use these three subjects seems perhaps a bit strange, however, when we think of Thomas Carew's "goodly exiled train / Of gods and goddesses, which in thy just reign / Was banished nobler poems; now with these, / The silenced tales i' th' *Metamorphoses, /* Shall stuff their lines, and swell the windy page." The contrast of using these three subjects and the lack of similar images in other poems, as Carew remarks, should have given people pause, it seems to me, directing us to a parodic possibility and leading us to recognize the frequency and popularity of those and such figures particularly in the mid-nineties. Aside from Marlowe's poem, which was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1593 although the first publication we have is 1598, Hero and Leander were included in Ovid's *Heroides*, epistles 18 and 19, translated by George Turberville in 1567 and following. Aside from Shakespeare's image of Niobe (the play keeps being pushed back into the sixteenth century), she appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in VI, 182-83. And as Milgate pointed out, Pyramus and Thisbe emerge in the subplot of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," perhaps performed in 1595, but even more significantly as Grierson wrote, the story is in Ovid, IV, 55 ff. The fifteen books of the *Metamorphoses,* translated by Arthur Golding, were published in 1567 and often in ensuing years. This tragic story is told by Dunstan Gale in a poem around 1596 or 1597 (although it was not printed until 1617), and *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584) has five poems telling the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. In other words, these stories and characters often emerged in popular literature and on the stage around the time that Donne may have written his epigrams.

"Sources" is not the right word here: but influence from popularity of such material that was in the air in London when he is a student-around-town is certainly suggested. The influence of Ovidian materials

at this time, in opposition to what Carew would seem to suggest, may also relate to his Ovidian love elegies. I have previously remarked that the elegies may have been "written during his days at Lincoln's Inn as a part of the schoolboy rivalry for virtuosity in verse and before his employ by Egerton: 1593?-1596?". For Donne, we may be on quite safe ground seeing these epigrams as ridicule or parody of what so many other writers were doing, and such parody in "Pyramus and Thisbe" could even stretch to Shakespeare's adaptation of the story for his "Romeo and Juliet" (published in 1597 but on the boards well before that). The satire of "Niobe" is particularly notable: the very "wet" Niobe of usual fame has been dried up by her giving birth so often (a quite unpleasant sexual thought with all amniotic waters gone) and now she is a desiccated *tomb* (not just a stone) rather than a living *womb* (womb certainly being implied here).

While these conclusions can be drawn from the commentary that is given in the Variorum and, by omission, from what commentary could have been but apparently never was printed earlier, their real upshot is an awareness of the creative Donne deciding on subject, on treatment, on literary devices, and showing an intentionality. It contributes to our understanding of Donne the person and poet, and it tells something about him in his world in the mid-nineties. It may also give some credence to Sir Richard Baker's saying he was "a great frequenter of Playes."

"A Hymne to the Saynts and To the Marquesse Hamilton" offers a subtle but definite example of the significance of what text one employs in analysis of a poem. As the textual editors of the Variorum point out, there are two families of textual transmission, but these do not seem to account for certain variants. The 1633 first edition of the poems records a text not based upon the family of the copy-text of the Variorum, the O'Flahertie MS, but the 1635 edition has frequently followed a manuscript of that family. (It used to be thought that O'Flahertie was the copy-text for 1635, but apparently its source was a copy of 1633 altered by a manuscript in the O'Flahertie family.) Illustrating the differences between these two texts, lines 11 and 12 read: "The name of Father,

Master, frind, the name / Of Subiect and of prince in one [is? are?] lame." The point to observe is a question: was Donne thinking of one set of names rhetorically separated as to type or was he thinking of two sets, one personal, one political? He is playing with "name," which he has used also in lines 3 and 4, and the names of "Orders," cited in line 17, which Wesley Milgate glossed as "especially orders of nobility, since Hamilton was duke, marquess, earl, and knight." There seems to be no general comment in the Variorum and no gloss attending lines 11 and 12, however.

The two following lines iterate the "friend" ("Fayre Mirth is dampd, and conversation black") and "Father . . . master" ("The Houshold widdowd") and "Subject . . . prince" ("the Garter slack"). The period at the end of line 14 in O'Flahertie and its cognate Luttrell may corroborate the "is" found only in O'Flahertie and Luttrell, emphasizing the apposition of the two couplets. The semicolon at the end of line 14 in the other manuscripts, which give "are" or a different verb, seems to be part of the listing of orders begun in line 7 and ended in line 18, and thus, I think, indicating a different concept for the passage. Questionably, I believe, the Variorum text also puts periods at the end of lines 8, 10, and 18 since the copy-text does, although other manuscripts give no punctuation or a semicolon. Interestingly, there is no punctuation at the end of line 12 although something would seem needed; a comma, a period, or a semicolon appears in all other texts. Clearly, there is room for argument with any and all of these witnesses on matters like punctuation, and particularly so because some subtle meanings are created by the specific punctuation or its lack. In all, the choice of O'Flahertie as copy-text appears to be an indefensible choice. The weight of numbers does not support that choice, and the interpretation that is thus created does not support that choice.

Further verbal differences within these few lines are "wants" or "lacks" in line 16 ("Story a theame, and Musick [wants / lacks] a song") and "loose" or "lost" in line 18 ("Gangreend all Orders here, all [loose lost] a Lymb"); the latter is one of the readings that creates the two families of texts discussed by the editors. Again, it is *only* O'Flahertie and its cognate Luttrell against all the rest. At first, the difference in

"wants / lacks" seems not very significant as to meaning, but "wants" had been used in the immediately preceding line and one must wonder whether Donne meant this as deliberate echo (strange though that would be) or had actually written the more varied (therefore "more artistic"?) "lacks." On the other hand, "loose" carries on the present tenses of "wants" and "wants" and "hath"; "lost" both iterates the preterite of "Gangreend" and puts closure on the passage. The following lines also indicate that closure: "Never made Body such hast to confesse / What a Soule was." Are we understanding the significance of this Variorum in raising questions like meaning, Donne's punctuation practices, Donne's poetic artistry or some lack thereof? The text we are given is suspect for all these concerns, and I might add that I think the poem does not exhibit the lack of unity and artistic achievement that has been heaped on it by critics in the past. One example is pertinent.

No one has glossed "lame" in line 12, except that my note on "Garter" implies its meaning: "knighthood has been weakened and made imperfect by Hamilton's death." The word is part of an image pattern: *lame, eare, tongue, gangreend, limbe*, all relating to a main concern of much of the criticism—the body, and thence the contrast of body and soul, as in the line just quoted: "Never made Body such hast to confesse / What a Soule was." The affinities and disjunction of body and soul continue through the poem (as Elizabeth Wiggins wrote, "Donne uses 'the idea of the body as *material cause* of man and the soul as *formal cause*' "), with the concept of soul redominating and moving to the prayerful thought that Hamilton will "give assurance that physical and spiritual needs of community will continue to be met," in Terry Sherwood's words, making the repentant male a David, the repentant female a Magdalene. David and Magdalene offer strong bodily images, but they are also repentents, and thus possible saints or souls in heaven.

The criticism, what there is, talks of the word play of orders and of "monstrous and disgusting hyperboles," and we learn from the variorum commentary that there is a decided schism in its evaluation, as well as concern over the title, the purported disbandonment of the saints part way through, and its genre as epicede or as divine poem. I think that not until such possible puns as the "garter" on one's limb and the Order of

the Garter are recognized; not until we can be sure what words and what punctuation may possibly have been in Donne's mind; not until we accept the poem as a sincere effort (as he says in the accompanying letter to Sir Robert Ker, "In this present case there is so much truth as it defeats all Poetry") and look at it whole can we be in a position to speak of its success and meaning. The Variorum commentary makes us quite aware of the things we should consider in reaching that place better than we otherwise might have. But it is clear that the Variorum does not put an end to literary investigation, instead enhancing it and pointing to more avenues for study.

A question on the Donne internet a while ago concerning line 12 of "Song: Sweetest love, I do not goe" might have been at least partially answered had the Variorum for the *Songs and Sonets* been available. Has someone suggested an interpretation involving the passage of daily time? Have there been any suggestions of numerical structuring in the poem, making 12 significant? How has the line been read? Or, another uncertainty, did Donne really write "that is not catch'd thereby" in "The Baite" or was this a scribal error picked up in one lemma of the text? What basis is there for calling the poem "Communitie"? Has anyone cited Revelation xxi:4 in connection with "Death be not proud," especially its last line, "And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die," or for that matter, the passages in Revelation that talk of a second death, that which comes with being cast into the lake of fire after Judgment? Those who "overcome" shall not die according to the biblical text. One could, I propose, offer a reading of the Holy Sonnet that we all know so well as response to Revelation, to the concept of Apocalypse, and argue its preceding sonnet, "If poysonous mineralls," on the one hand sets up a poetic voice who hopes that he has "overcome" by his admission and rejection of his black sins and so will not experience a second death, "Death be not proud" being a statement of that assurance. Or, on the other hand, "If poysonous mineralls" sets up a poetic voice who knows he has not truly "overcome" his sins but hopes that God will forgive and thus extend mercy, and under that condition he can rationalize that, for him, Death itself will die. Who is the psychological poetic voice of these poems? The variora presenting

the *Songs and Sonets* and the Divine Poems will help us answer these questions, or at least give us ammunition to pursue our argument that Donne wrote "caught," that had he titled his poem it would have been something like "Women, Neither Good nor Bad," and that Revelation has decided or little or no direct signification for those two holy sonnets according to commentators who have analyzed the poems, suggesting we go on with our thought or just forget it.

What we will find in the Elegies Variorum should raise similar questions to those I've mentioned, yield some suggestions for further criticism or study or analysis, help us in reading a difficult line or passage, and perhaps iterate how ill criticism has treated Donne's poems by ignoring them or by offering indefensible glosses or by missing what to us seems valid. "The Bracelet" is a longish poem of 114 lines, with some lines, for some people, less closely related to the bracelet and its loss than a good, unified poem should exhibit. Therefore, the frequent excision of lines in the manuscripts can be understood, although the extraction of some lines—primarily 27-28—can be chalked up to their epigrammatic feel and their obscene nature.

What will immediately strike users of the Variorum for this poem is that it has been frequently dismissed as only an extended witty play on the word "angel," the coin and the spirit. Its "sheer" demonstration of wit has led to arguments of the rejection or revision of Petrarchan and Spenserian conventions, to labels of "slight thing" and "clever but trivial," and to the view that that play of the trivial is set contrastively and unwisely against an important historical event. In turn analyses to counter such negative readings stress the logical arrangement of thought (its "stringent logic" and its "logical coherence") and moral issues to balance its dismissal on the grounds that it is only concerned with the monetary (for many people a crass concern that should not be the basis of a poem by a good poet). Is it thus about the loss of a mistress to a wealthier person, the poetic voice being but a "materialist"? Or does that unquoted but female voice establish a battle of wills? Or is it a dramatic performance influenced by Thomas Kyd's "Solimon and Perseda," presenting a mock-serious persona or is it Donne himself who

is represented? And what is its Ovidian relationships, which have been both denied and countered as showing in the curse, an elegiac convention perfected by Ovid, as well as showing a persona like Ovid's "paradoxical arguers"?

The discussions of the poem by Arthur Marotti and by Julia Walker, who are each cited at meaningful length, offer a poem that is unified, that is literarily artistic and illustrative of various devices such as numerologically metaphorical structure, and that purposefully presents another incisive focus on human beings and human activities. Nonetheless, a review of the Variorum commentary should evoke defense in most of us against those earlier incompetent readers of the poem and impugners of Donne's poetic ability. Its frequency in manuscripts—fifty-nine are cited, thirty of which are full texts and only about eleven that give only brief excerpts—and the report that Ben Jonson had committed the poem to memory should make us realize that, at least for some readers, this is a significant and "good" poem. The glosses may suggest to users of the Variorum that further statement might meaningfully explore the discrepancy between the crassness of money and the hoped-for "righteousness" which the spiritual "angels" connote, between the gold as restorative and the silver of Judas Iscariot's reward and the "sodder" that Jim Smith associates with the angels corrupted by Satan. The glosses pose the differences between the poem's alleged triviality and the religious symbolism that Julia Walker finds in some of the numerological metaphors, yielding a most serious poem that is mock-serious in order to pinion humankind and its self-indulgence. Or the differences between the sexual implications in the language and images and what should not be a perversion of true love (both heterosexual and divine). I find particullarly significant the alchemical underpinnings of the poem. In a recent book by Stanton Linden, of course not therefore covered in the Variorum, we read, "Yet even as he speaks contemptuously of 'alchemists' gold,' of the squalor and self-deception that mark attempts to produce it, and of alchemists' deserved damnation, the elegy incorporates other more positive—or at least neutral—references to alchemy and allied topics" (p. 158), such as the physical properties of gold and its powers, its incorruptibility and the

impossibility of changing its essence, and its supposed medicinal abilities. Linden remarks a point that should be well heeded by commentators on the poem, "While gold is 'cordial' or 'of the heart' . . . Donne's concluding phrase, 'would twere *at* thy heart' . . ., has sinister overtones, suggesting, perhaps, the desired death of the finder through the well-known toxicity of gold" (p. 159). That word "at" appears in all texts. Thurnboo has read the last phrase to say, "the gold will, metaphorically speaking, be in the finder's heart and thus restore him to moral health." Walker sees it differently, calling this phrase a curse that the finder's heart "too, become chained to the love of gold." But Gardner anticipates Linden by a paraphrase: "if you aren't willing to give it up I hope it poisons you." That little word "at" sets up the ambiguities of the line: because the gold of the bracelet is cordial (restorative, like an elixir, heart-related as opposed to being crass), he wishes that the heart of the finder would relent and return the bracelet and thus its life be prolonged rather than melted down for its monetary use, or he wishes that the heart of the finder would be affected toxically and death ensue. More recent scholarship like Gardner's, Marotti's, and Walker's has encompassed many of the strata of meanings in the poem, even while advancing a specific thesis, yet there are elements—like the dramatic, the sexual and divine, the contemporary—that indicate the poem still has much to offer for analysis and perspective discussion. And this may lead to further glossing, for example, of lines 79-82, which some commentary such as Roma Gill's obliquely relates to "the obedience of Christ in the Garden" and "the agony of the Virgin of the Deposition," but which otherwise, the Variorum shows, has not been seen as part of a stratum of imagery such as I subtly implied for lines 87-88, "One which would suffer hunger, nakednes / Yea deathe eare he would make your number les": "alluding to Jesus' temptation, ascent to Golgotha, and crucifixion." And no one has pointed out the possibility of a pun in line 79: "thy will be donne" (DONNE).

In all then, the Variorum edition of Donne's poems amply provides its users with not only earlier readings and criticisms, but should suggest how many of those readings and criticisms can lead to fuller, more perspective readings of certain poems, to corrections and particularly

deflection of former critical agendas, to items that have not had attention or at least not adequate attention in the past, and to a still greater awareness of the importance of text.

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Variorum Texts

Pyramis and Thisbe.

Two, by themselues, each other, Love and Feare
Slayne, cruell frinds, by parting haue ioynd here.

A Hymne to the Saynts and
To the Marquesse HAMILTON.

Whether the soule that now comes vp to you
Fill any former ranke, or make a new
Whether it take a name namd there before
Or bee a name it selfe, and Order more
Then was in Heauen till now (for may not hee
Bee so if every severall Angel bee
A kind alone) What ever Order growe
Greater by him in Heauen, wee do not so.
One of your Orders growes by his Accesse
But by his losse growe all our Orders lesse.
The name of Father, Master, frind, the name
Of Subiect and of prince in one is lame
Fayre Mirth is dampd, and conversation black
The Houshold widdowd, and the Garter slack.
The Chappell wants an Eare, Counsell a tongue
Story a theame, and Musick wants a song.
Blest Order that hath him, the losse of him
Gangreend all Orders heere, all loose a Lymb.
Never made Body such hast to confesse
What a Soule was. All former comelynesse
Fledd in a minute when the Soule was gon
And hauing lost that beauty would haue none

So fell our Monasteryes in an instant growne
Not to lesse houses, but to heapes of stone;
So sent his body that fayre forme it wore
Vnto the Spheare of formes, and doth (before
His body fill vp his Sepulchrall stone)
Anticipate a Resurrection.
For as, in his fame, now, his Soule is heere:
So in the forme thereof his bodye's there.
And if (fayre Soule) not with first Innocents
Thy Station bee, but with the Penitents
(And who shall dare to aske then when I am
Dy'd Scarlet in the bloud of that pure Lamb
Whether that colour which is Scarlet then
Were black or white before in th'eyes of men)
When thou remembrest what Sinns thou didst find
Amongst those many frinds now left behind
And seest such Sinners as they are, with thee,
(Got thither by repentance) let it bee
Thy wish to wish all there, to wish them cleane
Wish Him a Dauid, Her a Magdalene.

"Elegy I."

Not that in color it was like thy haire
For armelets of that thou maist let me weare;
Nor that thy hand it ofte embrac'd and kist,
For so it had that good, which ofte I mist,
Nor for that sely old moralitee
That as those Lincks are tyed our Loue should bee
Mourne I: that I thy seuenfold chayne haue lost
Nor for the lucks sake but the bitter cost.
Oh shall twelve righteous Angels which as yet
No leauen of vile sodder did admitt;
Nor yet by any taint haue stray'd or gone
From the first State of their Creation;

Angels which heauen commanded to prouide
All things to me, and be my faythfull guide
To gayne new frinds, to'appease great enemyes
To comfort my Soule when I ly or rise;
Shall these twelue innocents, by thy seuere
Sentence, dradd ludge, my sins great burden beare?
Shall they be damn'd and in the furnace throwne
And punisht for offenses, not their owne.
They saue not me, they do not ease my paynes
When in that hell they'are burn'd and tyed in chaynes.
Weare they but crownes of France, I cared not
For most of them their naturall cuntry rott
I thinke possesseth, they come here to vs
So leane, so pale, so lame, so ruinous,
And howsoere french kings most Christian bee
Their crownes are circumcis'd most Iewishly.
Or weare they Spanish Stampes, still trauailing
That are become as Catholique as their king
Those vnlick'd beare-whelps, vnfil'd pistolets,
That more then Canon shott auayles or letts,
Which negligently lefte vnrounded looke
Like many angled figures in the booke
Of some great coniuror, which would enforce
Nature, as these do iustice from her course,
Which, as the Soule quickens head, feete and hart
As streames like vaynes, run through th'earths euery part
Visit all Cuntryes, and haue slily made
Georgeous France ragged, ruynd and decayd,
Scotland which knew no State proud in one day
And mangled seuentene headed Belgia;
Or weare it such gold as that, wherwithall
Allmighty Chimicks from each Minerall
Hauing by subtile fyre a soule out pull'd
Are durtely and desperatly gulld,
I would not spitt to quench the fyre they'weare in
For they are guilty of much haynous sin.
But shall my harmeless Angels perish? shall
I loose my guard, my ease, my food, my all?

Much hope which they should nourish wilbe dead
Much of my able Youth and Lustihead
Will vanish, if thou Loue let them alone
For thou wilt loue me lesse, when they are gone:
Oh be content that some lowd squeaking Crier
Well pleas'd with one leane thredbare groat for hyer
May like a deuill rore through euery Street
And gall the finders conscience if they meet.
Or let me creepe to some dradd Coniurer
Which with fantastique Scheames fullfills much paper,
Which hath deuided heauen in tenements
And with whores, theves, and Murderers stuffd his rents
So full, that though he passe them all in Sin
He leaues himselfe no roome to enter in,
And if when all his art and time is spent
He say, t'will ne're be found, Oh be content.
Receaue the doome from him vngrudgingly
Because he is the Mouthe of destiny.
Thou sayst, alas the gold doth still remayne
Though it be changd and put into a Chayne.
So in those first falne Angels resteth still
Wisdom and knowledg; but t'is turnd to ill,
As these should do good works and should prouide
Necessityes, but now must nource thy pride.
And they are still bad Angels, myne are none
For forme giues beeing, and their forme is gone.
Pity these Angels yet, their dignityes
Passe Vertues, Powers, and Principalityes.
But thou art resolute, thy will be donne
Yet with such anguish, as her only Sonne
The Mother in the hungry graue doth Lay
Vnto the fyre these Martyrs I betray.
Good Soules, for you giue Life to euery thing,
Good Angels, for good Messages you bring,
Destin'd you might haue been to such a one
As would haue Lou'd, and worshipd you alone,
One which would suffer hunger, nakednes
Yea deathe eare he would make your number les.

But I ame guilty of your sad decay
May your few fellows longer with me stay.
But oh thou wretched finder whom I hate
So much, as I allmost pity thy state;
God beeing the heauiest metall amongst all
May my most heauy curse vpon thee fall.
Here fetterd, mannacled, and hangd in Chaines
First maist thou be, then chaind to hellish paynes.
Or be with forraign gold bribd to betray
Thy Cuntry, and fayle both of that and thy pay.
May the next thing thou stoopst to reach, containe
Poyson, whose nimble fume rott thy moist braine:
Or Libells, or some interdicted thing
Which negligently kept, thy ruyne bring:
Lust bred diseases rott thee'and dwell with thee
Itchy desyre, and no abilitee.
May all the hurt which euer gold hath wrought,
All Mischiefs which all deuills euer thought,
Want after plenty, poore and gowty age
The plagues of trauailers, Loue and mariage
Afflict thee, and at thy lifes latest moment
May thy swolne sinnes themselues to thee present.
But I forgiue; repent then honest man
Gold is restoratiue, restore it than.
Or if with it thou beest loth to depart
Because t'is cordial, would t'weare at thy hart.