

## The Text of “Farewell to Love”

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*Farewell to Loue.*

Whilst yet to proue  
I thought there was some Deity in Loue  
    So did I reuerence, and gaue  
Worship as atheists at their dyinge houre  
Call, what they cannot name, an vnknowne powre     5  
    As ignorantly did I craue:  
    Thus when  
Things not yet knowne, are coueted by men  
    Our desires giue them fashion; and soe  
As they waxe lesser, fall, as they rise, Growe     10  
  
    But from last Faire  
His highnes sittinge in a Golden Chaire  
    Is not lesse cared for after three Dayes  
By Children: then the thinge which Louers soe  
Blindly admire, and with such worship woe     15  
    Being had, inioyinge, it decayes  
    And thence  
What before pleasd them all takes but one Sence  
    And that so lamely as it leaues behinde  
A kinde of sorrowinge dullnes to the minde     20

Oh; Cannot wee  
 As well as Cocks and Lions iocunde bee  
 After such pleasures: vnles wise  
 Nature decree'd (since each such act they say  
 Diminishes the lengthe of Life a day) 25

This: as she woulde Man should despise  
 The Sporte  
 Because that other curse, of being short  
 And only for a minute made to bee  
 Eager, desires to raise Posteritie. 30

Since soe: my minde  
 Shall not desire what no man else can finde  
 Ile no more doate, and runne  
 To pursue thinges, which had, indamage me  
 And when I come where mouinge Beauties bee 35

As men doe when the Summers Sun  
 Growes great  
 Though I admire their greatnes, shun their heate  
 Each place can afforde shadowes; if all faile  
 T'is but applyinge worme-seede to the tayle. 40

Finis

**Copy-text:** B46. **Texts Collated:** B46 (ff. 72r-v); B47 (ff. 190v-91); H6 (pp. 311-12); H8 (ff. 35v-36); B (pp. 63-64); C (pp. 63-64); D (pp. 60-62); G (pp. 58-59).

**Emendations of the copy-text:** Heading Loue.] ~: 9 fashion] fashion 19 And] and 25 lengthe] lenghe 26 should] shoud 27 The Sporte] ~ ' ~ 30 Posteritie.] ~.l 40 tayle.] ~.l

# Historical Collation

**Headings:** Farewell to Loue. B46 B47 H6(ffarwell) B-G. Farewell to Loue. Mr An: Saintleg.<sup>er</sup> H8.

1 proue] ~, B

2 Loue] loue B47 H6 B C; loue, H8 D G.

3 did I] I did H8. gaue] ~, H6.

4 Worship] ~, B47 H6 B-G. atheists] B46; Athist, B47; Atheists Σ.

5 Call,] ~<sub>^</sub> B47 H6 H8. name,] ~<sub>^</sub> B47 H6 H8 powre] ~, H8 B-G.

6 craue:] ~<sub>^</sub> H6.

7 Thus] ~, B47.

8 knowne,] B46; ~<sub>^</sub> Σ. men] ~, H8 B-G.

9 fashion;] fashon; B46; ~, Σ.

10 fall,] ~; B47. rise,] seize, B47; size, H6 H8 B; sise<sub>^</sub> C-G. Growe] ~. B47 H8 B-G.

11 But] ~, B47 H6 B-D. last] late H6 B-G.

12 highnes] Highnesse H6; highnesse B(hignessee)-D; Highness G. sittinge] (~ D G. Chaire] ~, B C; ~,) D G.

13 cared] car'd B47 H6 H8. for] ~, B47.

14 Children:] B46; ~, Σ. thinge] things H8. which] (~ B47.

15 woe] woee) B47; woee H6; woee, H8; woee; B C; woee: D G.

16 had,] ~: B47. inioying,] B46; ~<sub>Λ</sub> Σ. decayes] ~, B47; ~: B-G.

17 thence] ~, B-G.

18 all] ~, B47 B-G; well H8. Sence] ~, B47 B-G.

19 that] ~, B47. so lamely] solely, B47; ~ ~, H6 B-G.

20 minde] ~. H8 B-G.

21 Oh,] B46; Ah! B47; Ah<sub>Λ</sub> Σ. wee] ~, B-D; ~. Σ.

22 bee] ~, B-G.

23 pleasures:] B46; ~? B47 H8; ~, Σ.

24 decree'd] B46; decreed Σ. act] ~, H8 G; Act, H6 B-D. say] B46 B47; ~, Σ.

25 Diminishes] ~, B47; Diminisheth H6 B-G. life] ~, B47.

26 This:] B46; ~, H8; ~; Σ. she] Shee H6. woulde] ~, B47.

27 The Spote] ~'~ B46; ~ ~, H8 B-G.

28 that] the B47 H8. curse,] B46; Curse<sub>Λ</sub> B47; ~<sub>Λ</sub> Σ. short] ~, B47 B-G.

29 minute] ~, B47 H8.

30 Eager,] Eager<sub>Λ</sub> H8. Posteritie.] ~.l B46; ~<sub>Λ</sub> B47 H6.

31 soe:] ~! B47; ~. H6; ~, H8 B-G.

32 finde] ~, H8 B-G.

33 doate,] ~<sub>Λ</sub> H6 B-G.

34 thinges,] B46 H8; ~<sub>Λ</sub> Σ. had,] B46 H8; ~<sub>Λ</sub> Σ. indamage]  
endaūger B47; endamag'd H6 B-G. me] ~: B47; ~, H8; ~. B-  
G.

35 bee] ~, B-G.

36 Summers] summer D G. Sun] sonn B47.

37 great] ~, H8 B-G.

38 theire] there B47. greatnes,] brightnes<sub>Λ</sub> H8. theire] there  
B47; y<sup>r</sup>. H8. heate] ~; B-G.

39 shadowes;] ~: B47; ~. H6 B-G; ~, H8. if] If H6 B-G. faile]  
~, B-G.

40 but] ~ but B47. worme-seede] wormeseede B47 H6 H8 G.  
tayle.] ~.l B46.

**Subscription:** Finis B46. om Σ.

Complete manuscript texts of "Farewell to Love" survive in four early artifacts—B46 (British Library ms. Stowe 961), B47 (British Library ms. Stowe 962), H6 (Harvard University ms. Eng. 966.5—the O'Flahertie ms.), and H8 (Harvard University ms. Eng. 966.7—the Utterson ms.)—and a copy of lines 35-40 only appears in R9 (Rosenbach

Library ms. 1083/16—the Bishop ms.). The poem first entered print in B (the 1635 edition of Donne's collected *Poems*) and was included in all later 17th-century editions—C (1639), D (1649), E (1650), F (1654), and G (1669). As an accepted part of the canon, of course, it has subsequently appeared in all significant collected editions of the poetry, as well as in Theodore Redpath's 1956 edition of *The Songs and Sonets* (V) and its 1983 revision (CC). In preparing the present edition, I have collated from microfilm the four manuscript copies of the complete poem (the Rosenbach declines to microfilm its holdings) and B, C, D, and G (E and F are reissues of the pages of D, so including them would have added nothing). In addition to examining Redpath's two editions of the poem, moreover, I have also traced its textual history through all the collected editions from Tonson's in 1719 (H) through Patrides's in 1985 (DD). Before discussing the results of this search, I need to register two caveats: (1) even though the microfilms are fairly clear, these transcriptions cannot be regarded as definitive until they have been verified against the original artifacts. (2) This is *not* the Variorum text of "Farewell to Love": it's essentially a diplomatic transcription of the copy in B46 (I've corrected three misspellings and made a handful of other cosmetic changes) intended to illuminate the major textual and interpretive problems that this poem presents.

H6 was apparently the source of the text set into type in 1635, as is shown by B's (1635's) sharing with H6 the distinctive readings "late fayre" (l. 11), "Diminisheth" (l. 25), and "endammag'd" (l. 34), where the other three manuscripts (B46, B47, and H8) read "last Faire," "Diminishes," and "indamage" (B46 and H8) or "endaūger" (B47). As the collation above shows, the compositor of B introduces a good bit of (especially end-of-line) punctuation—in stanza one, e.g., he inserts commas at the ends of line 5 and 8, a colon at the end of line 6, and a period at the end of line 10—but gets all the words exactly as H6 has them. C-G then transmit this text with almost no variation—D introduces the parentheses around the phrase "sitting in a golden Chaire" in line 12 and changes C's concluding semicolon in line 15 to a colon, but D's alteration of the received "summers Sunne" to "summer

Sunne" in line 36 constitutes the only verbal variant in the 17th-century prints (D passes these changes on to G).

All of the pre-20th-century editions except Lowell's in 1895 and Chambers's in 1896 present a text ultimately based on G. And none of these editors records any problems with the text except Grosart (1872-73), who—though he declares G as his copy-text and indeed leaves the non-possessive "summer" in line 36—calls attention to his reduction to a comma of the semicolon that G gives after "This" in line 26 and prints the following bizarre version of lines 28-30:

Because that other curse of being short,  
And—only-for-a-minute-made-to-be—  
Eager desires to raise posterity.

Lowell (O) and Chambers (P) revert to the text of B, but Chambers records not a single textual note, and Lowell cites only the D-G reading "summer" as a variant to B's "summer's" in line 36.

With his edition of 1912 (Q), however, Grierson begins to complicate the situation. In addition to the 17th-century prints, Grierson cites manuscript copies of the poem in B46 and H6, though he appears not to have collated either very carefully. Of manuscript variants, he cites only B46's "rise" (for "sise") in line 10. Further, he adds a question mark after "pleasures" in line 23, unaware that this exact mark appears in B47 and H8 (and also apparently unaware that B46 gives a colon at that point). In line 26, moreover, without acknowledging Grosart's identical choice, he reduces the received semicolon after "This" to a comma, not knowing that a comma appears there in H8. Grierson's signal achievement, however, perhaps prompted by an impenetrable paraphrase of stanza three offered by Grosart (Grierson calls it "Abra-cadabra!") is the emendation of line 30's "Eager, desires" to "Eagers desire"—a change that in 1929 Hayward (S)—Grierson's immediate successor—labels "brilliant" even as he rejects it in favor of moving the comma after "Eager" in line 30 to follow "desires." Hayward's only manuscript reference is to B46, but he cites nothing from it; and he

proposes a construction of the repunctuated version of the stanza that makes Grosart's seem pellucid by comparison. Editing the poem for his collected edition of 1942 (T), Bennett declares 1635 as his copy-text, but lists only a single variant, adding a comma at the end of line 2 and noting that the text in B-G is unpunctuated at that point. Bennett also, without comment or precedent, encloses the entirety of lines 28-30 in parentheses.

Designed specifically for students needing "notes on every point likely to cause difficulty to a reader of normal intelligence" (vii), Redpath's 1956 edition of the *Songs and Sonets* (V) contains little textual information. Redpath generally adopts Grierson's text (including the "Eagers desire" emendation in line 30), but repunctuates line 22 by moving the comma that Grierson had included at the end of the line to follow "lions" and—without explanation—encloses the line-5 phrase "what they cannot name" in parentheses. Of textual variants Redpath cites only B46's "rise" in line 10, noting that "[p]aleographically, 'r' and 's' are easily confused." Redpath's accompanying notes and his "Appendix IV" thoroughly survey the interpretive controversy surrounding lines 23-30.

Textually, Gardner's edition of 1965 (X) advances little beyond that published by Grierson 53 years earlier. In her notes Gardner lists all four manuscripts that contain full copies of the poem, but thinks B47 and H8 "probably took it from print" (212)—an impossibility, as I shall show below—and from these two witnesses cites only the name "Mr. An: Saintleg'" that appears beside the title in H8. Indeed, Gardner's bottom-of-the-page collation, like Grierson's before her, lists only B46, H6, and the early prints as source texts, and her only verbal variants are B46's "rise" (l. 10) and "had, indamage me" (l. 34), which she adopts as an emendation. Her eclecticism further manifests itself in, for example, the adoption of D-G's comma after "love" in line 2, where B records no punctuation; and, apparently following Grierson, she prints "pleasures? Unless" in line 23 (for B's "pleasures, unless") without allusion to the existence of this reading in B47 and H8. In handling lines 29-30, Gardner cites Grierson's "Eager desires" emendation, but believes that the received version of the lines can be rendered intelligible by inserting



a comma after “minute” in line 29 and prints the line in this form, unaware that B47 and H8 evince a comma at exactly this point. I find Gardner’s explanation of lines 28-30 as hopeless as those of Grosart and Hayward before her.

Shawcross’s edition of 1967 (Z) is the first to note the existence of the R9 snippet of the poem. Shawcross lists all five manuscript textual sources, but collates only B46 and H6. His apparatus, however, records more B46 readings than that of any predecessor, including not only the customary “rise” (for “size”) in line 10, but also “Oh” (for “Ah”) in line 21, “Diminishes” (for “Diminisheth”) in line 25, and “indamage” (for “indammag’d”) in line 34. Though he corrects B’s misprint “hignesse” in line 12 and cites the D-G variant “summer” (for “summer’s”) in line 36, Shawcross otherwise refuses to tinker with the print-based text, adhering closely to the wording and punctuation of B.

Generally an eclecticist, Smith (AA) appears to use B as his copy-text for the poem. Though he names none specifically, he notes that four manuscripts contain the poem and, apparently following Gardner, avers that “one of them ascribes it to a ‘Mr An. Saintleger.’” Smith cites the “summer” (for “summer’s”) variant in D-G, and the previously recorded B46 variants “Oh” (l. 21) and “had, endamage” (l. 34). Smith seems not merely to have relied on the collation of B46 carried out by his predecessors, however, noting the B46 readings “last” (for “late”) in line 11, “curse, of” (for “curse of”) in line 28, and “short / And” (for “short, / And”) in lines 28-29. Moreover, Smith appears to have examined, at least cursorily, B47, citing that manuscript’s “endanger” (for “endamage” or “endammag’d”) in line 34 and “minute, made” (for “minute made”) in line 29. Smith also notes that the line-11 “late” occurs in “several M S S,” and thus may intend B47 as well as B46.

The notes in Redpath’s revised edition of 1983 (CC) reflect the most thorough examination of the relevant textual sources that had so far been carried out. In addition to all the prints from B through H, Redpath has now “collated” B46, H6, and B47; and to what his predecessors had previously listed, Redpath adds B47’s “seize” (for “size/rise”) in line 10 and “the” (for “that”) in line 28. He revises his earlier “which had endammag’d me” (l. 34) to “which, had, endamage me” (very nearly the

B46 reading, which he cites), and retains his previous emendation of line 22 and his unexplainable parentheses in line 5. He now rejects, however, the Griersonian “Eagers desire” in favor of the received “Eager, desires”—detailing the handling of this crux in all the manuscripts and early prints (through H), as well as in Grierson, Hayward, and Gardner. Though Redpath notes the “Mr. An: Saintleg” written “beside the title” in H8, he lists none of this artifact’s variants and must have picked up this bit of information from Gardner or Smith.

Finally, in his *Everyman* edition of 1985 (DD), Patrides presents a text based on B, of textual matters saying only that “one MS” records “rise” in line 10 and that he has preserved the “much amended” stanza comprising lines 21-30 “in its original state.” He then refers readers to CC for a review of the controversy surrounding this crux.

I have reviewed the transmissional history of “Farewell to Love” in such detail in order to highlight the salient feature of the scholarship on this poem: to something like a unique degree in Donne studies, every expositor of “Farewell to Love” has had consciously to confront the indeterminacies of the text; correspondingly, every editor since (at least) Grierson has had to construct/present a text with an eye at least partly on the interpretive possibilities that it would enable. The regrettable truth is that editors could have broken this cycle of reciprocal uncertainty long ago had they been able or willing to gather the information needed to complete their task. As the survey above shows, however, none has thoroughly examined all the manuscript copies of the poem; indeed, though every editor at least since Gardner has known of its existence, none has collated H8 at all. In essential respects, however, the additional information provided by an examination of H8 enables us finally to understand the poem’s early transmissional history and to dispel the doubts that linger about its text.

The above-cited verbal variants in lines 11, 25, and 34 divide the surviving manuscript copies of the poem into two distinct lines of transmission. Reading “last,” “Diminishes,” and “had, endamage/endauger,” B46, B47, and H8 form one lineage; reading “late,” “Diminisheth,” and “had endamag’d,” H6 (from which the prints derive) constitutes the other. Our problem is to determine whether all

four of these are likely to have descended from a single authorial prototype or whether, instead, two equally authoritative urtexts stand behind the competing textual traditions. And in either case, we must also try to assign priority to one line of transmission or the other.

The presence of unique variants in each member of the first lineage—e.g., B46's "rise" (for the normative "size") in line 10, B47's "solemly" (for the normative "so lamely") in line 19, and H8's "well" (for the normative "all") in line 18—indicates that none can be the parent of the other two and that all must ultimately descend from a now-missing manuscript that contained the readings "last," "Diminishes," and "had, indamage." And that B47 and H8 evince these defining family readings shows that they cannot, *pace* Gardner, derive from one of the prints, which give the H6 readings in those places. Apart from the three orthographic slips of the pen that I have emended in the text presented above, B46 contains only two verbal errors—the oft-noted "rise" in line 10 and "Oh" (for the otherwise universal "Ah") in line 21, both probably the result of misreading. The text in B47, on the other hand, is notably more corrupt, reflecting either an unusual degree of scribal ineptitude or this copy's considerable remoteness from the ancestral urtext. Its verbal blunders include not only the line-19 "solemly," but also "Athist" (for "Atheists") in line 4, "seize" (for "size") in line 10, "the" (for "that") in line 28, "endaüger" (for "indamage") in line 34, "sonn" (for "Sunne") in l. 36, "there" (for "their")—twice!—in line 38, and a redundant "but" in line 40. Finally, the copy in H8, though cleaner than that in B47, also evinces the verbal errors "thinges" (for "thinge") in line 14, "well" (for "all") in line 18, and "the [for the normative *that*] curse" in line 28—misreadings that vitiate the appeal of H8's "brightness" (for "greatnes") in line 38 and make it seem rather a scribal sophistication—Andrew Saintleger's, for all I know—than a variant authorial reading.

That the H6 text preserves normative readings in places—those noted above, amongst others—where B46, B47, and H8 are individually anomalous indicates that it cannot derive from any of those other manuscripts and must, like them, descend independently from a missing ancestor. In my judgment, that lost manuscript was almost certainly

a slightly revised holograph that recorded the authorial changes “late,” “Diminisheth,” and “had endamag’d.” This judgement is complex, of course, involving questions of both agency and priority, and both must be examined together. To begin with, one can scarcely imagine that any copyist would alter the text at just these three—and only these three—particular points. A scribe *might* unthinkingly trivialize “Diminisheth” to “Diminishes” and misread “late” as “last,” but that he/she would alter the perfectly intelligible “had endamag’d” to the relatively more difficult “had, indamage” is much more unlikely. As the above roster of corruptions in the B46, B47, and H8 texts shows, the errors that scribes introduce in transcribing a poem of this complexity and length tend to be easily recognizable and/or predictable.

To take the other case, the likelihood that a scribe—even the assiduous and frequently interventionist compiler of H6—would start out with a clean “last”-“Diminishes”-“had, indamage” copy of the text and alter only “last” to “late,” “Diminishes” to “Diminisheth,” and “had, indamage” to “had endamag’d” is virtually nil. None of the original lections is in obvious need of correction (indeed, at least two modern editors have found the manuscripts’ “had, indamage” preferable to the reading received from print), and none of the alterations seems either obvious (To what amanuensis would it occur to change “last” to “late” or “Diminishes” to “Diminisheth”?) or erroneous (“had endamag’d” makes perfectly good, if different, sense). And what officious scribe determined to save Donne from his own mistakes would pass by stanza three in silence? In the upshot, the nature of these particular variants and their relative scarcity combine to persuade me that the stream of textual change here flows from B46 towards H6 and that the agent of that change is Donne.

Because of its “rarity in manuscript and the obscurity and harshness of the syntax,” Gardner suggested that “Farewell to Love” might be “a draft and not a finished poem” (213). What the evidence suggests is in fact quite the opposite: *there is no bibliographical problem with the text of “Farewell to Love.”* Two authoritative versions of the poem have come down to us, and they are almost exactly alike. As I have shown, the only three instances of verbal variation worthy of critical attention

are those in lines 11, 25, and 34, and the interpretive differences they entail are slight. Because it is confirmed in two distinct textual traditions, moreover, significant aspects of the punctuation in the poem must also be regarded as authorial. In the much-controverted stanza three, for instance, every artifact encloses the “since each . . . a day” clause in parentheses, all except H8 evince either a semicolon or a colon after “This” in line 26, none records any punctuation at all at the end of line 29, and all except H8 follow “Eager” in line 30 with a comma. This and other pointing in the poem—the colon at the end of line 6, for instance—I think we may confidently regard as Donne’s and trust it as a guide to interpretation.

The surety of knowing that the text we have of “Farewell to Love” is the text Donne intended us to have stands to invigorate and redirect the critical enterprise. Even interpretations resembling those advanced in the past can be argued with increased rigor and nuance because grounded on a stabilized text. But even more intriguing possibilities—which may modify not only our perspective on this particular poem, but also our broader sense of what kind of poet Donne is—lie in the recognition that such an opaque predication as “curse . . . desires to raise posterity” is neither a solecism abandoned by a helpless author nor the blunder of a maladroit scribe, but precisely the sentence Donne meant us to confront.

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