



A SHORT SELECTION OF THE WORKS OF  
THOMAS CAMPION

EDITING, FOOTNOTES, AND  
INTRODUCTION BY  
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A Short Selection of the Works of  
T H O M A S C A M P I O N



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# INTRODUCTION

Poetry, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, is, “Imaginative or creative literature.” This definition does not give complete justice to what poetry really is. Poetry cannot be defined in so few words – it almost cannot be defined at all. It seems that to understand poetry, we must read it.

The poems that I have selected for this short edition were written by a single poet, but were written in a variety of forms, on a variety of different topics, with various different messages. The language is simple enough for casual reading so many readers on different levels will be able to understand these poems. In this edition, there is really something for everyone.

The poems in this short edition were written by Thomas Campion. He was born in 1567 and died in 1620, most likely as a result of the plague. He attended several universities before finally earning a degree in medicine from the University of Caen. Unlike many other poets of his day, Campion did not have a strong religious background, so there are not many religious references within his works. He is considered to be the musical poet of his time – many of his poems were set to music.

This edition of poetry gives the reader a small taste of Renaissance poetry and the poetry of Thomas Campion. Please refer to the book *The Lyric Poems of Thomas Campion* for more poems by this poet.



## GIVE BEAUTY ALL HER RIGHT

Give beauty all her right,  
She's not to one form tyed;  
Each shape yeelds faire delight,  
Where her perfections bide. 5  
Hellen<sup>1</sup>, I grant, might pleasing be;  
And Ros'mond<sup>2</sup> was as sweet as she.

Some, the quicke eye commends;  
Some, swelling lips and red;  
Pale looks have many friends,  
Through sacred sweetnesse bred, 10  
Medowes have flowers that pleasure move,  
Though Roses are the flowers of love.

Free beauty is not bound  
To one unmoved clime:  
She visits ev'ry ground,  
And favours ev'ry time. 15  
Let the old loves with mine compare,  
My Sov'raigne is as sweet and fair.

<sup>1</sup>A legend in Greek Mythology – she was carried off by the prince of Troy, which caused the start of the Trojan War (Oxford Reference)

<sup>2</sup>A character in a long French poem about love (Oxford Reference)



## COME, CHEERFUL DAY

Come, cheerful day, part of my life, to mee:  
For while thou view'st me with thy fading light,  
Part of my life doth still depart with thee,  
And I still onward haste to my last night.

Time's fatal wings doe ever forward flye: 5  
So ev'ry day we live, a day we dye.

But, O yee nights, ordained<sup>1</sup> for barren rest,  
How are my days depriv'd of life in you  
When heavy sleepe my soul has dispossest,<sup>2</sup>  
By fayned<sup>3</sup> death life sweetly to renew! 10

Part of my life in that you life denye:  
So ev'ry day we live, a day we dye.

<sup>1</sup>arranged in an order (OED)

<sup>2</sup>rid itself of the evil spirit; to exorcise (OED)

<sup>3</sup>imaginary or false (OED)



## THE MAN OF LIFE UPRIGHT

The man of life upright,  
Whose guiltlesse hart is free  
From all dishonest deedes,  
Or thought of vanitie;

The man whose silent days, 5  
In harmles joys are spent,  
Whome hopes cannot delude  
Nor sorrow discontent;

The man needs neyther towers 10  
Nor armour for defence,  
Nor secret vautes<sup>1</sup> to flie  
From thunder's violence;

Hee onely can behold  
With unafrighted eyes  
The horrors of the deepe 15  
And terrours of the Skies.

Thus, scorning all the cares  
That fate or fortune brings,  
He makes the heav'n his booke,  
His wisdom heav'nly things; 20

Good thoughts his onely friendes,  
His wealth a well-spent age,  
The earth his sober Inne  
And quiet Pilgrimage.

<sup>1</sup> The concave surface formed by the sky (OED)



## MISTRIS, SINCE YOU SO MUCH DESIRE

Mistris, since you so much desire  
To know the place of Cupid's fire,  
In your faire shrine that flame doth rest,  
Yet never harbour<sup>1</sup> in your brest.  
It bides not in your lips so sweete, 5  
Nor where the rose and lilies meete;  
But a little higher, but a little higher  
There, there, O there lies Cupid's fire.

Even in those starrie pearcing eyes,  
There Cupid's sacred fire lyes. 10  
Those eyes strive not to enjoy,  
For they have power to destroy;  
Nor woe I for a smile or kisse,  
So meaningly triumphs not my blisse;  
But a little higher, but a little higher, 15  
I climbe to crowne my chaste desire.

<sup>1</sup>Sheltered (OED)







If all things in life present, 25

Why die my comforts them?

Why suffers my content?

Am I the worst of men?

O beautie, be not thou accus'd

Too justly in this case! 30

Unkindly if true love be us'd,

Twill yield thee little grace.



## W H E T H E R M E N D O E L A U G H O R W E E P E

Whether men doe laugh or weepe,  
Whether they doe wake or sleepe,  
Whether they die young or olde,  
Whether they feele heate or colde;  
There is, underneath the sunne, 5  
Nothing in true earnest done.

All our pride is but a jest,<sup>1</sup>  
None are worst, and none are best,  
Griefe, and joy, and hope, and feare,  
Play their Pageant everywhere: 10  
Vaine opinion all doth sway,  
And the world is but a play.

Powers above it cloudes do sit,  
Mocking our poore apish<sup>2</sup> wit;  
That so lamely, with such state, 15  
Their high glorie imitate:  
No ill can be felt but paine,  
And that happie men disdaine.

<sup>1</sup>Joke (OED)

<sup>2</sup>Foolish; Ape-like (OED)



# NEVER LOVE UNLESSE YOU CAN

Never love unlesse you can  
Beare with all the faults of man:  
Men sometimes will jealous bee,  
Though but little cause they see;  
And hang the head, as discontent, 5  
And speake what straight they will repent.

Men that but one saint adore,  
Make a show of love to more:  
Beauty must be scorn'd in none,  
Though but truly serv'd in one: 10  
For what is courtship but disguise?  
True Hearts may have dissembling eyes.

Men when their affaires require,  
Must a while themselves retire:  
Sometimes hunt, and sometimes hawke, 15  
And not ever sit and talke.  
If these, and such like you can beare,  
Then like, and love, and never feare!



## COME ASHORE, COME

I.

Come ashore, come, merry mates,  
With your nimble heels and pates:  
Summon ev'ry man his knight,  
Enough honoured is this night.  
Now, let your sea-born goddess come, 5  
Quench these lights, and make all dumb.  
Some sleep; others let her call:  
And so good-night to all, good-night to all.

II.

Haste aboard, haste now away!  
Hymen<sup>1</sup> frowns at your delay. 10  
Hymen doth long nights affect;  
Yield him then his due respect,  
The sea-born goddess straight will come,  
Quench these lights, and make all dumb.  
Some sleep; others she will call: 15  
And so good-night to all, good-night to all.

<sup>1</sup>The God of Marriage in Greek and Roman mythology



THOUGH YOU  
ARE YOONG

Though you are yoong, and I am olde,  
Though your vaines hot, and my bloud colde,  
Though youth is moist, and age is drie;  
    Yet embers live, when flames doe die.

The tender graft<sup>1</sup> is easy broke, 5  
But who shall shake the sturdie Oke?  
You are more fresh and fair than I;  
    Yet stubs doe live, when flowers doe die.

Thou, that thy youth doest vainely boast, 10  
Know buds are soonest nipt with frost:  
Thinke that thy fortune still doth crie,  
    Thou foole, to-morrow thou must die!

<sup>1</sup>slim branch or twig



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