A Woman's World Through a Man's Pen

A Micro-Edition of the Poems of Thomas Campion

Edited and Introduction by Elizabeth Lox

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Introduction

Thomas Campion, a poet in the time of Queen Elizabeth I, was little known until quite recently. His poems are varied in both perspective and story, creating a diversified collection of poems. One of the most noticeable features is the uniqueness of many of his pieces, such as "Cherry Ripe." This collection explores a different aspect of Campion's poetry – his ability to transform his poetic voice into any number of characters, most specifically a feminine voice.

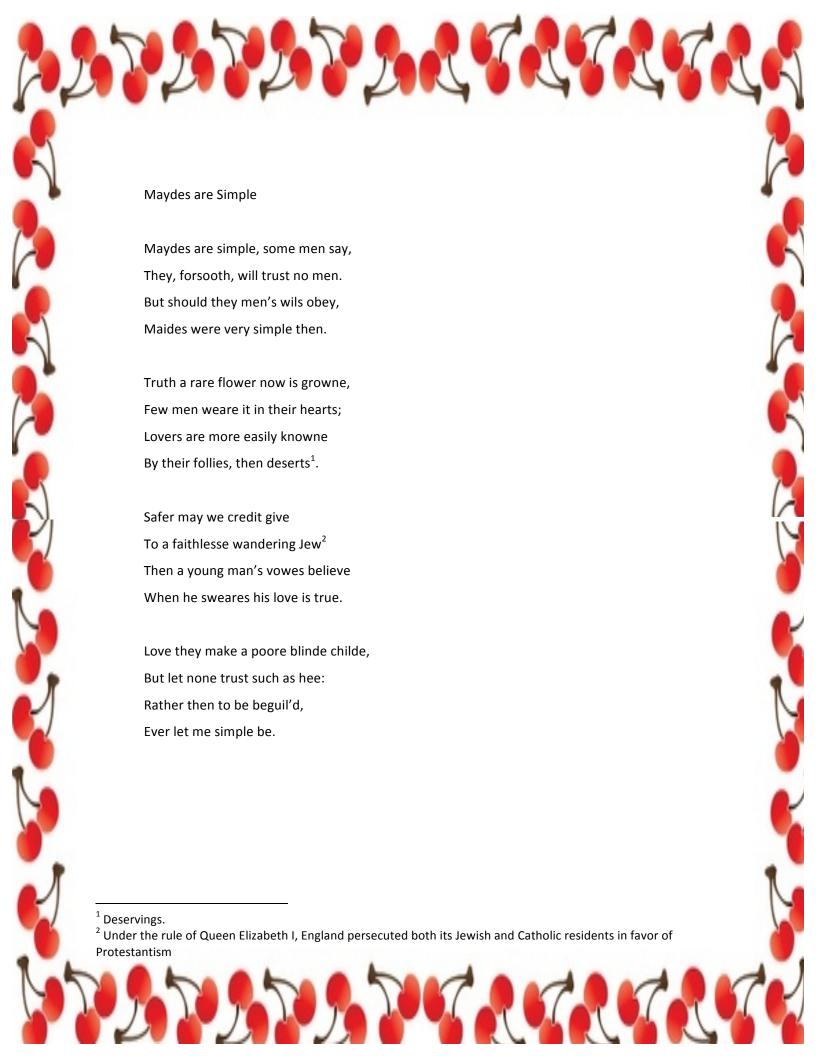
This micro-edition will explore the poems of Campion that are written from a female perspective. These poems comment on issues and thoughts that were relevant to the women in the 1500s, such as marriage and childbirth. Furthermore, the poems within are believable, in that these female poetic voices are concerned about their lives in a realistic way, such as the voice of "Fain Would I Wed." She desires a child, but does not want to relinquish her virtue to a man that she does not love and is found unworthy. The female poetic voice cautions against unworthy lovers in the poem "Never Love Unless You Can" as well, in which she comments harshly about the affections of men.

The poems found in this collection were chosen for a variety of reasons, the foremost being that they are all written from the female perspective. While some poems could be argued to be written from a man's perspective, such as "So Quick, So Hot," it is unlikely that a man would describe a female pursuer as "perverse," or that he would fear such things as getting a child with her. Many of the poems address a male subject directly, or else address the male sex as a whole, and these poems often comment on reproduction or marriage, two things that a

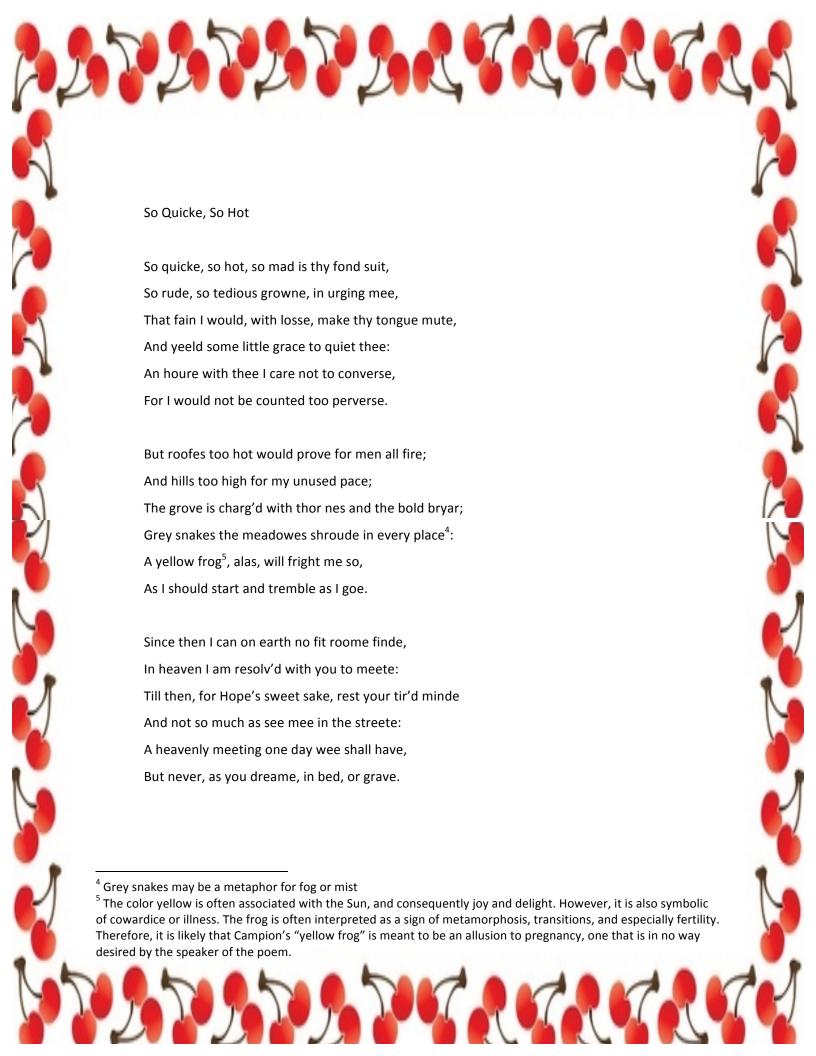
male poetic voice would not speak of to another male with any thoughts of personal gratification.

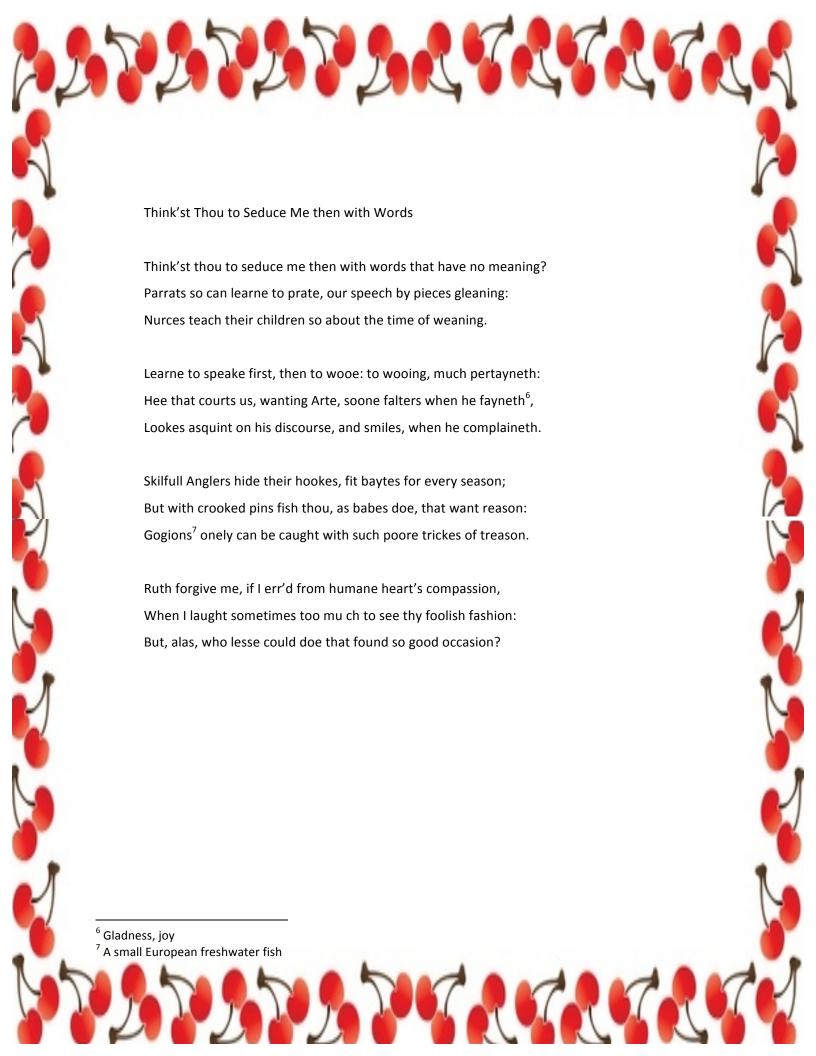
In this edition, I have arranged the poems in a very specific manner. It is my belief that all the poems written by a poetic voice are, in fact, one character telling her story. Therefore, I arranged the poems in such a manner as it created a complete story to me. The poems "Maydes are Simple" and "Never Love Unless You Can" demonstrate this woman's viewpoints on how men and women are viewed, revealing her jaded and mocking nature. The poems from "So Quicke, So Hot" through "If Thou Longest" comment on the woman's waning and submitting to a man's pursuit of her, despite her initial lack of desire for him. "Oft Have I Sigh'd" and "So Many Loves" reveal that the woman has lost not only one of her suitors, but all of them. Campion's poem "Fain Would I Wed" is when we see the woman as more than a lovecrazy child, but instead as a woman craving love and a child. The mournful poem "What Meanes This Folly" is her cry at the unfairness of her life; there are hints within the poem that suggest she is childless now not because of a lack of a suitor, but because she is barren, due either to age or some underlying medical issue. The final poem, "Give Beauty All Her Right," expresses the woman's views on her on situation throughout her life, stating that the idea of beauty, for her, is a universal one, in that all women are beautiful, no matter their situation in life.

Campion's poems from the woman's perspective are thoughtful and reflective of the situation of the time. His feminine poetic voice offers a unique insight into Campion's views on women, as well as a woman's views of the times. By telling a complete story, Campion has created a recognizable and universal story, one that is relevant even in today's world.



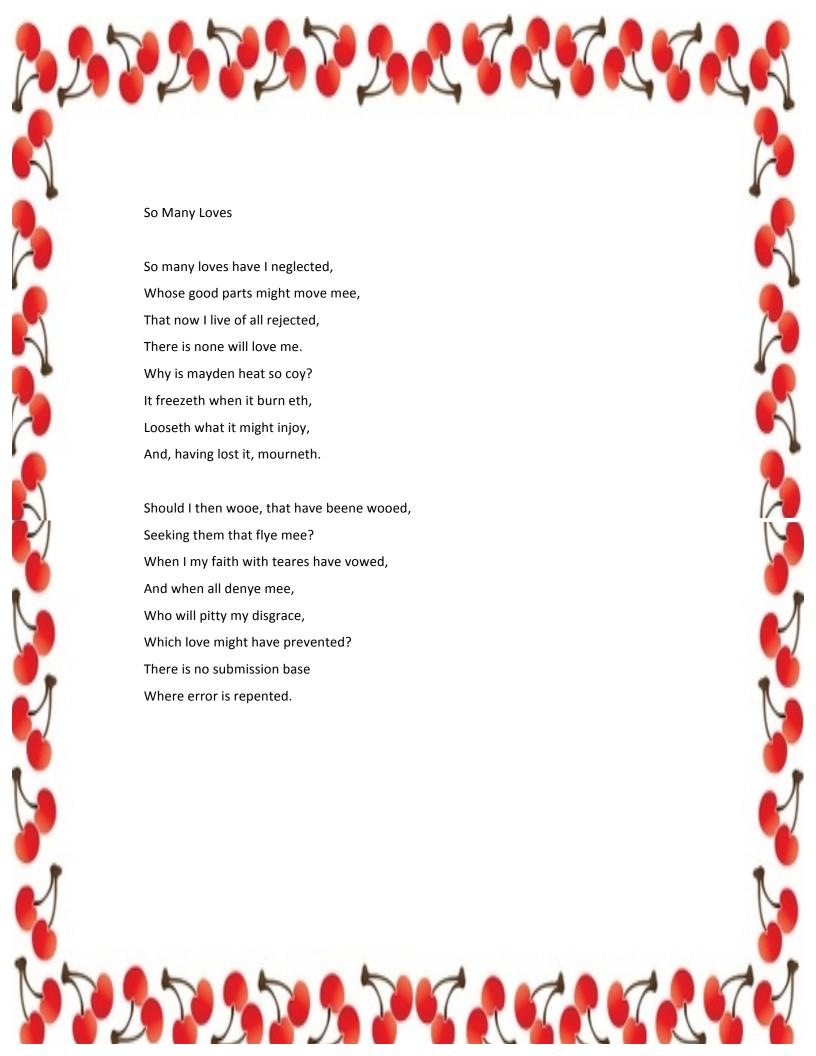


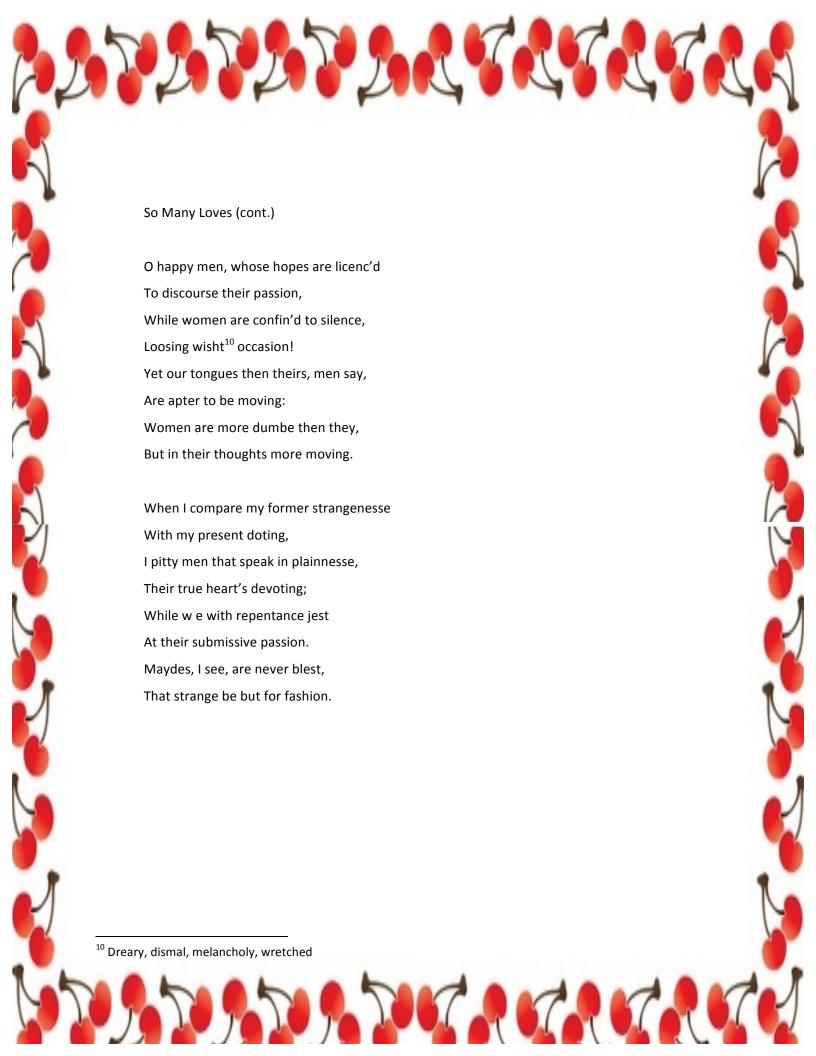


















Works Consulted

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Oxford English Dictionary.