



# **ROMEUS AND JULIET**

**ARTHUR BROOKE**

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# ROMEUS AND JULIET

BY  
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*Romeus and Juliet By Arthur Brooke.*

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# CONTENTS

To The Reader

The Argument

Romeus And Juliet

## TO THE READER

The God of all Glory created, universally, all creatures to set forth His praise; both those which we esteem profitable in use and pleasure, and also those which we accompt noisome and loathsome. But principally He hath appointed man the chiefest instrument of His honour, not only for ministering matter thereof in man himself, but as well in gathering out of other the occasions of publishing God's goodness, wisdom, and power. And in like sort, every doing of man hath, by God's dispensation, something whereby God may and ought to be honoured. So the good doings of the good and the evil acts of the wicked, the happy success of the blessed and the woeful proceedings of the miserable, do in divers sort sound one praise of God. And as each flower yieldeth honey to the bee, so every example ministereth good lessons to the well-disposed mind. The glorious triumph of the continent man upon the lusts of wanton flesh, encourageth men to honest restraint of wild affections; the shameful and wretched ends of such as have yielded their liberty thrall to foul desires teach men to withhold themselves from the headlong fall of loose dishonesty. So, to like effect, by sundry means the good man's example biddeth men to be good, and the evil man's mischief warneth men not to be evil. To this good end serve all ill ends of ill beginnings. And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to dishonest desire; neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends; conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity); attempting all adventures of peril for th' attaining of their wished lust; using auricular confession the key of whoredom and treason, for furtherance of their purpose; abusing the honourable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally by all means of dishonest life hasting to most unhappy death. This precedent, good Reader, shall be to thee, as the slaves of Lacedemon, oppressed with excess of drink, deformed and altered from likeness of men both in mind and use of body, were to the free-born children, so shewed to them by their parents, to th' intent to raise in them an hateful loathing of so filthy beastliness. Hereunto, if you apply it, ye shall deliver my doing from offence and profit yourselves. Though I saw the same argument lately set forth on stage with more commendation than I can look for -- being there much better set forth than I have or can do -- yet the same matter penned as it is may serve to like good effect, if the readers do bring with them like good minds to consider it, which hath the more encouraged me to publish it, such as it is.

--Ar. Br.

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## THE ARGUMENT

Love hath inflaméd twain by sudden sight,  
And both do grant the thing that both desire  
They wed in shrift by counsel of a friar.  
Young Romeus climbs fair Juliet's bower by night.  
Three months he doth enjoy his chief delight.  
By Tybalt's rage provokéd unto ire,  
He payeth death to Tybalt for his hire.  
A banished man he 'scapes by secret flight.  
New marriage is offered to his wife.  
She drinks a drink that seems to reave her breath:  
They bury her that sleeping yet hath life.  
Her husband hears the tidings of her death.  
He drinks his bane. And she with Romeus' knife,  
When she awakes, herself, alas! she slay'th.

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## ROMEUS AND JULIET

There is beyond the Alps, a town of ancient fame,  
 Whose bright renown yet shineth clear: Verona men it name;  
 Built in a happy time, built on a fertile soil  
 Maintained by the heavenly fates, and by the townish toil  
 The fruitful hills above, the pleasant vales below,  
 The silver stream with channel deep, that thro' the town doth flow,  
 The store of springs that serve for use, and eke for ease,  
 And other more commodities, which profit may and please,--  
 Eke many certain signs of things betid of old,

To fill the hungry eyes of those that curiously behold,  
 Do make this town to be preferred above the rest  
 Of Lombard towns, or at the least, compared with the best.  
 In which while Escalus as prince alone did reign,  
 To reach reward unto the good, to pay the lewd with pain,  
 Alas, I rue to think, an heavy hap befell:  
 Which Boccace scant, not my rude tongue, were able forth to tell.  
 Within my trembling hand, my pen doth shake for fear,  
 And, on my cold amazed head, upright doth stand my hair.  
 But sith she doth command, whose hest I must obey,

In mourning verse, a woeful chance to tell I will assay.  
 Help, learned Pallas, help, ye Muses with your art,  
 Help, all ye damnéd fiends to tell of joys returned to smart.  
 Help eke, ye sisters three, my skillless pen t'indite:  
 For you it caused which I, alas, unable am to write.

There were two ancient stocks, which Fortune high did place  
 Above the rest, indued with wealth, and nobler of their race,  
 Loved of the common sort, loved of the prince alike,  
 And like unhappy were they both, when Fortune list to strike;  
 Whose praise, with equal blast, Fame in her trumpet blew;

The one was clepéd Capulet, and th'other Montague.  
 A wonted use it is, that men of likely sort,  
 (I wot not by what fury forced) envy each other's port.  
 So these, whose egall state bred envy pale of hue,

And then, of grudging envy's root, black hate and rancour grew  
 As, of a little spark, oft riseth mighty fire,  
 So of a kindled spark of grudge, in flames flash out their ire:  
 And then their deadly food, first hatched of trifling strife,  
 Did bathe in blood of smarting wounds; it reavéd breath and life,  
 No legend lie I tell, scarce yet their eyes be dry,

That did behold the grisly sight, with wet and weeping eye  
 But when the prudent prince, who there the sceptre held,  
 So great a new disorder in his commonweal beheld;  
 By gentle mean he sought, their choler to assuage;  
 And by persuasion to appease, their blameful furious rage.  
 But both his words and time, the prince hath spent in vain:  
 So rooted was the inward hate, he lost his busy pain.  
 When friendly sage advice, ne gentle words avail,  
 By thund'ring threats, and princely power their courage 'gan he quail  
 In hope that when he had the wasting flame suppress,

In time he should quite quench the sparks that burned within their breast.

Now whilst these kindreds do remain in this estate,  
 And each with outward friendly show doth hide his inward hate:  
 One Romeus, who was of race a Montague,  
 Upon whose tender chin, as yet, no manlike beard there grew,  
 Whose beauty and whose shape so far the rest did stain,  
 That from the chief of Verone youth he greatest fame did gain,  
 Hath found a maid so fair (he found so foul his hap),  
 Whose beauty, shape, and comely grace, did so his heart entrap  
 That from his own affairs, his thought she did remove;

Only he sought to honour her, to serve her and to love.  
 To her he writeth oft, oft messengers are sent,  
 At length, in hope of better speed, himself the lover went,  
 Present to plead for grace, which absent was not found:  
 And to discover to her eye his new received wound.  
 But she that from her youth was fostered evermore  
 With virtue's food, and taught in school of wisdom's skilful lore  
 By answer did cut off th'affections of his love,  
 That he no more occasion had so vain a suit to move.  
 So stern she was of cheer, for all the pain he took,

That, in reward of toil, she would not give a friendly look.  
 And yet how much she did with constant mind retire;  
 So much the more his fervent mind was pricked forth by desire.

But when he many months, hopeless of his recure,  
 Had servéd her, who forced not what pains he did endure  
 At length he thought to leave Verona, and to prove  
 If change of place might change away his ill-bestowéd love;  
 And speaking to himself, thus 'gan he make his moan:  
 "What booteth me to love and serve a fell, unthankful one,  
 Sith that my humble suit and labour sowed in vain,

Can reap none other fruit at all but scorn and proud disdain?  
 What way she seeks to go, the same I seek to run,  
 But she the path wherein I tread, with speedy flight doth shun.  
 I cannot live, except that near to her I be;  
 She is aye best content when she is farthest off from me.  
 Wherefore henceforth I will far from her take my flight;  
 Perhaps mine eye once banished by absence from her sight,  
 This fire of mine, that by her pleasant eyne is fed,  
 Shall little and little wear away, and quite at last be dead."

But whilst he did decree this purpose still to keep,

A contrary, repugnant thought sank in his breast so deep,  
 That doubtful is he now which of the twain is best:  
 In sighs, in tears, in plaint, in care, in sorrow and unrest,  
 He moans the day, he wakes the long and weary night;  
 So deep hath love with piercing hand, y-graved her beauty bright  
 Within his breast, and hath so mastered quite his heart,  
 That he of force must yield as thrall; -- no way is left to start.  
 He cannot stay his step, but forth still must he run;  
 He languisheth and melts away, as snow against the sun.  
 His kindred and allies do wonder what he ails,

And each of them in friendly wise his heavy hap bewails.  
 But one among the rest, the trustiest of his feres,  
 Far more than he with counsel filled, and riper of his years,  
 'Gan sharply him rebuke, such love to him he bare,  
 That he was fellow of his smart, and partner of his care.  
 "What mean'st thou, Romeus, quoth he, what dotting rage  
 Doth make thee thus consume away the best part of thine age,  
 In seeking her that scorns, and hides her from thy sight,  
 Not forcing all thy great expense, ne yet thy honour bright,  
 Thy tears, thy wretched life, ne thine unspotted truth,

Which are of force, I ween, to move the hardest heart to ruth?  
 Now for our friendship's sake, and for thy health, I pray,  
 That thou henceforth become thine own. -- Oh, give no more away

Unto a thankless wight thy precious free estate;  
 In that thou lovest such a one, thou seem'st thyself to hate.  
 For she doth love elsewhere, -- and then thy time is lorn,  
 Or else (what booteth thee to sue?) Love's court she hath forsworn.  
 Both young thou art of years, and high in Fortune's grace:  
 What man is better shaped than thou ? Who hath a sweeter face?  
 By painful studies' mean, great learning hast thou won;

Thy parents have none other heir, thou art their only son.  
 What greater grief, trowst thou, what woeful deadly smart  
 Should so be able to distraint thy seely father's heart,  
 As in his age to see thee plungéd deep in vice,  
 When greatest hope he hath to hear thy virtue's fame arise?  
 What shall thy kinsmen think, thou cause of all their ruth?  
 Thy deadly foes do laugh to scorn thy ill-employed youth.  
 Wherefore my counsel is, that thou henceforth begin  
 To know and fly the error which too long thou livedst in.  
 Remove the veil of love, that keeps thine eyes so blind,

That thou ne canst the ready path of thy forefathers find.  
 But if unto thy will so much in thrall thou art,  
 Yet in some other place bestow thy witless wand'ring heart.  
 Choose out some worthy dame, her honour thou and serve,  
 Who will give ear to thy complaint, and pity ere thou sterve.  
 But sow no more thy pains in such a barren soil,  
 As yields in harvest time no crop, in recompense of toil.  
 Ere long the townish dames together will resort;  
 Some one of beauty, favour, shape, and of so lovely port,  
 With so fast fixéd eye, perhaps thou mayst behold,

That thou shalt quite forget thy love, and passions past of old."

The young man's listening ear received the wholesome sound,  
 And reason's truth y-planted so, within his head had ground;  
 That now with healthy cool y-tempered is the heat,  
 And piecemeal wears away the grief that erst his heart did fret.  
 To his approved friend a solemn oath he plight,  
 At every feast y-kept by day, and banquet made by night,  
 At pardons in the church, at games in open street,  
 And everywhere he would resort where ladies wont to meet;  
 Eke should his savage heart like all indifferently,

For he would view and judge them all with unalluréd eye.  
 How happy had he been, had he not been forsworn;  
 But twice as happy had he been, had he been never born.

For ere the moon could thrice her wasted horns renew,  
False Fortune cast for him, poor wretch, a mischief new to brew.

The weary winter nights restore the Christmas games,  
And now the season doth invite to banquet townish dames.  
And first in Capel's house, the chief of all the kin  
Spar'th for no cost, the wonted use of banquets to begin.  
No lady fair or foul was in Verona town,

No knight or gentleman of high or low renown,  
But Capulet himself hath bid unto his feast,  
Or by his name in paper sent, appointed as a geast.  
Young damsels thither flock, of bachelors a rout,  
Not so much for the banquet's sake, as beauties to search out.  
But not a Montague would enter at his gate,  
(For as you heard, the Capulets and they were at debate)  
Save Romeus, and he, in mask with hidden face,  
The supper done, with other five did press into the place.  
When they had masked awhile, with dames in courtly wise,

All did unmask, the rest did show them to their ladies' eyes;  
But bashful Romeus with shamefast face forsook,  
The open press, and him withdrew into the chamber's nook.  
But brighter than the sun, the waxen torches shone,  
That maugre what he could, he was espied of everyone.  
But of the women chief, their gazing eyes that threw,  
To wonder at his sightly shape and beauty's spotless hue,  
With which the heavens him had and nature so bedecked,  
That ladies thought the fairest dames were foul in his respect.  
And in their head beside, another wonder rose,

How he durst put himself in throng among so many foes.  
Of courage stout they thought his coming to proceed:  
And women love an hardy heart, as I in stories read.  
The Capulets disdain the presence of their foe,  
Yet they suppress their stirréd ire, the cause I do not know:  
Perhaps t'offend their guests the courteous knights are loth,  
Perhaps they stay from sharp revenge, dreading the Prince's wroth.  
Perhaps for that they shamed to exercise their rage  
Within their house, 'gainst one alone, and him of tender age.  
They use no taunting talk, ne harm him by their deed;

They neither say, "What mak'st thou here?" ne yet they say, "God speed."  
So that he freely might the ladies view at ease;  
And they also beholding him, their change of fancies please;

Which Nature had him taught to do with such a grace,  
 That there was none but joyéd at his being there in place.  
 With upright beam he weighed the beauty of each dame,  
 And judged who best, and who next her, was wrought in Nature's frame.  
 At length he saw a maid, right fair, of perfect shape,  
 Which Theseus or Paris would have chosen to their rape.  
 Whom erst he never saw; of all she pleased him most;

Within himself he said to her, "Thou justly may'st thee boast  
 Of perfect shape's renown, and beauty's sounding praise,  
 Whose like ne hath, ne shall be seen, ne liveth in our days."  
 And whilst he fixed on her his partial piercéed eye,  
 His former love, for which of late he ready was to die,  
 Is now as quite forgot, as it had never been:  
 The proverb saith, "Unminded oft are they that are unseen."  
 And as out of a plank a nail a nail doth drive,  
 So novel love out of the mind the ancient love doth rive.  
 This sudden kindled fire in time is wox so great,

That only death and both their bloods might quench the fiery heat.  
 When Romeus saw himself in this new tempest tossed,  
 Where both was hope of pleasant port, and danger to be lost,  
 He doubtful, scarcely knew what countenance to keep;  
 In Lethe's flood his wonted flames were quenched and drenchéd deep.  
 Yea, he forgets himself, ne is the wretch so bold  
 To ask her name, that without force hath him in bondage fold.  
 Ne how t'unloose his bonds doth the poor fool devise,  
 But only seeketh by her sight to feed his hungry eyes:  
 Through them he swalloweth down love's sweet impoisoned bait:

How surely are the wareless wrapt by those that lie in wait!  
 So is the poison spread throughout his bones and veins,  
 That in a while, alas, the while, it hasteth deadly pains.  
 Whilst Juliet, for so this gentle damsel hight,  
 From side to side on every one did cast about her sight:  
 At last her floating eyes were anchored fast on him,  
 Who for her sake did banish health and freedom from each limb.  
 He in her sight did seem to pass the rest as far  
 As Phoebus' shining beams do pass the brightness of a star.  
 In wait lay warlike Love with golden bow and shaft,

And to his ear with steady hand the bowstring up he raft.  
 Till now she had escaped his sharp inflaming dart,  
 Till now he listed not assault her young and tender heart.  
 His whetted arrow loosed, so touched her to the quick,

That through the eye it strake the heart, and there the head did stick.  
 It booted not to strive, for why, she wanted strength;  
 The weaker aye unto the strong of force must yield, at length.  
 The poms now of the feast her heart 'gins to despise;  
 And only joyeth when her eyne meet with her lover's eyes.  
 When their new smitten hearts had fed on loving gleams,

Whilst, passing to and fro their eyes, y-mingled were their beams.  
 Each of these lovers 'gan by other's looks to know,  
 That friendship in their breast had root, and both would have it grow.  
 When thus in both their hearts had Cupid made his breach  
 And each of them had sought the mean to end the war by speech,  
 Dame Fortune did assent their purpose to advance,  
 With torch in hand a comely knight did fetch her forth to dance;  
 She quit herself so well, and with so trim a grace,  
 That she the chief praise won that night from all Verona race,  
 The whilst our Romeus a place had warely won,

Nigh to the seat where she must sit, the dance once being done.  
 Fair Juliet turned to her chair with pleasant cheer,  
 And glad she was her Romeus approachéd was so near.  
 At th' one side of her chair her lover Romeo,  
 And on the other side there sat one called Mercutio;  
 A courtier that each where was highly had in price,  
 For he was courteous of his speech, and pleasant of device.  
 Even as a lion would among the lambs be bold,  
 Such was among the bashful maids Mercutio to behold.  
 With friendly gripe he seized fair Juliet's snowish hand:

A gift he had that Nature gave him in his swathing band,  
 That frozen mountain ice was never half so cold,  
 As were his hands, though ne'er so near the fire he did them hold.  
 As soon as had the knight the virgin's right hand raught,  
 Within his trembling hand her left hath loving Romeus caught.  
 For he wist well himself for her abode most pain,  
 And well he wist she loved him best, unless she list to feign.  
 Then she with tender hand his tender palm hath pressed;  
 What joy, trow you, was grafféd so in Romeus' cloven breast  
 The sudden sweet delight hath stoppéd quite his tongue,

Ne can he claim of her his right, ne crave redress of wrong.  
 But she espied straightway, by changing of his hue  
 From pale to red, from red to pale, and so from pale anew,  
 That veh'ment love was cause, why so his tongue did stay,  
 And so much more she longed to hear what Love could teach him say.

When she had longéd long, and he long held his peace,  
 And her desire of hearing him, by silence did increase,  
 At last, with trembling voice and shamefast cheer, the maid  
 Unto her Romeus turned herself, and thus to him she said:  
 "O blessed be the time of thy arrival here":

But ere she could speak forth the rest, to her Love drew so near  
 And so within her mouth, her tongue he gluéd fast,  
 That no one word could 'scape her more than what already passed.  
 In great contented ease the young man straight is rapt:  
 "What chance," quoth he, "un'ware to me, O lady mine, is hapt,  
 That gives you worthy cause my coming here to bliss?"  
 Fair Juliet was come again unto herself by this:  
 First ruthfully she looked, then said with smiling cheer:  
 "Marvel no whit, my heart's delight, my only knight and fere,  
 Mercutio's icy hand had all-to frozen mine,

And of thy goodness thou again hast warmed it with thine."  
 Whereto with stayéd brow, 'gan Romeus to reply:  
 "If so the gods have granted me such favour from the sky,  
 That by my being here some service I have done  
 That pleaseth you, I am as glad, as I a realm had won.  
 O well-bestowed time, that hath the happy hire,  
 Which I would wish, if I might have, my wished heart's desire.  
 For I of God would crave, as price of pains forepast,  
 To serve, obey, and honour you, so long as life shall last;  
 As proof shall teach you plain, if that you like to try

His faultless truth, that nill for aught unto his lady lie.  
 But if my touched hand have warmed yours some deal,  
 Assure yourself the heat is cold, which in your hand you feel,  
 Compared to such quick sparks and glowing furious glead,  
 As from your beauty's pleasant eyne, Love causéd to proceed;  
 Which have so set on fire each feeling part of mine,  
 That lo, my mind doth melt away, my outward parts do pine.  
 And but you help, all whole, to ashes shall I turn;  
 Wherefore, alas, have ruth on him, whom you do force to burn."

Even with his ended tale, the torches' dance had end,

And Juliet of force must part from her new chosen friend.  
 His hand she clasped hard, and all her parts did shake,  
 When leisureless with whisp'ring voice thus did she answer make:  
 "You are no more your own, dear friend, than I am yours,  
 My honour savéd, prest t'obey your will, while life endures."

Lo, here the lucky lot that seld true lovers find,  
 Each takes away the other's heart, and leaves the own behind.  
 A happy life is love, if God grant from above,  
 That heart with heart by even weight do make exchange of love.  
 But Romeus gone from her, his heart for care is cold;

He hath forgot to ask her name that hath his heart in hold.  
 With forgéd careless cheer, of one he seeks to know,  
 Both how she hight, and whence she came, that him enchanted so.  
 So hath he learned her name, and know'th she is no geast,  
 Her father was a Capulet, and master of the feast.  
 Thus hath his foe in choice to give him life or death,  
 That scarcely can his woeful breast keep in the lively breath.  
 Wherefore with piteous plaint fierce Fortune doth he blame,  
 That in his ruth and wretched plight doth seek her laughing game.  
 And he reproveth Love, chief cause of his unrest,

Who ease and freedom hath exiled out of his youthful breast.  
 Twice hath he made him serve, hopeless of his reward;  
 Of both the ills to choose the less, I ween the choice were hard.  
 First to a ruthless one he made him sue for grace,  
 And now with spur he forceth him to run an endless race.  
 Amid these stormy seas one anchor doth him hold,  
 He serveth not a cruel one, as he had done of old.  
 And therefore is content, and chooseth still to serve,  
 Though hap should swear that guerdonless the wretched wight should sterve.  
 The lot of Tantalus is, Romeus, like to thine;

For want of food amid his food, the miser still doth pine.

As careful was the maid what way were best devise  
 To learn his name, that entertained her in so gentle wise,  
 Of whom her heart received so deep, so wide a wound.  
 An ancient dame she called to her, and in her ear 'gan round.  
 This old dame in her youth had nursed her with her milk,  
 With slender needle taught her sew, and how to spin with silk.  
 "What twain are those," quoth she, "which press unto the door,  
 Whose pages in their hand do bear two torches light before?"  
 And then as each of them had of his household name,

So she him named yet once again, the young and wily dame.  
 "And tell me, who is he with visor in his hand,  
 That yonder doth in masking weed beside the window stand?"  
 "His name is Romeus," said she, "a Montague,  
 Whose father's pride first stirred the strife which both your households rue."

The word of Montague her joys did overthrow,  
 And straight instead of happy hope, despair began to grow.  
 "What hap have I," quoth she, "to love my father's foe?  
 What, am I weary of my weal? What, do I wish my woe?"  
 But though her grievous pains distrained her tender heart,

Yet with an outward show of joy she cloakéd inward smart;  
 And of the courtlike dames her leave so courtly took,  
 That none did guess the sudden change by changing of her look.  
 Then at her mother's hest to chamber she her hied,  
 So well she feigned, mother ne nurse the hidden harm descried.  
 But when she should have slept, as wont she was, in bed,  
 Not half a wink of quiet sleep could harbour in her head.  
 For lo, an hugy heap of divers thoughts arise,  
 That rest have banished from her heart, and slumber from her eyes.  
 And now from side to side she tosseth and she turns,

And now for fear she shivereth, and now for love she burns.  
 And now she likes her choice, and now her choice she blames,  
 And now each hour within her head a thousand fancies frames.  
 Sometime in mind to stop amid her course begun,  
 Sometime she vows, what so betide, th'attempted race to run.  
 Thus danger's dread and love within the maiden fought:  
 The fight was fierce, continuing long by their contrary thought.  
 In turning maze of love she wand'reth to and fro,  
 Then standeth doubtful what to do, lost, overpressed with woe.  
 How so her fancies cease, her tears did never blin,

With heavy cheer and wringéd hands thus doth her plaint begin:  
 "Ah, silly fool," quoth she, "y-caught in subtle snare!  
 Ah, wretchéd wench, bewrapt in woe! Ah, caitiff clad with care!  
 Whence come these wand'ring thoughts to thy unconstant breast?  
 By straying thus from reason's law, that reave thy wonted rest.  
 What if his subtle brain to feign have taught his tongue,  
 And so the snake that lurks in grass thy tender heart hath stung?  
 What if with friendly speech the traitor lie in wait,  
 As oft the poisoned hook is hid, wrapt in the pleasant bait?  
 Oft under cloak of truth hath Falsehood served her lust;

And turned their honour into shame, that did so slightly trust.  
 What, was not Dido so, a crowned queen, defamed?  
 And eke, for such a heinous crime, have men not Theseus blamed?  
 A thousand stories more, to teach me to beware,  
 In Boccace and in Ovid's books too plainly written are.  
 Perhaps, the great revenge he cannot work by strength,

By subtle sleight, my honour stained, he hopes to work at length.  
 So shall I seek to find my father's foe his game;  
 So, I befild, Report shall take her trump of black defame,  
 Whence she with pufféd cheek shall blow a blast so shrill

Of my dispraise, that with the noise Verona shall she fill.  
 Then I, a laughing-stock through all the town become,  
 Shall hide myself, but not my shame, within an hollow tomb."  
 Straight underneath her foot she treadeth in the dust.  
 Her troublesome thought, as wholly vain, y-bred of fond distrust.  
 "No, no, by God above, I wot it well," quoth she,  
 "Although I rashly spake before, in no wise can it be  
 That where such perfect shape with pleasant beauty rests,  
 There crooked craft and treason black should be appointed guests.  
 Sage writers say, the thoughts are dwelling in the eyne;

Then sure I am, as Cupid reigns, that Romeus is mine.  
 The tongue the messenger eke call they of the mind;  
 So that I see he loveth me; shall I then be unkind?  
 His face's rosy hue I saw full oft to seek;  
 And straight again it flashéd forth, and spread in either cheek.  
 His fixé heavenly eyne, that through me quite did pierce  
 His thoughts unto my heart, my thought they seeméd to rehearse.  
 What meant his falt'ring tongue in telling of his tale?  
 The trembling of his joints, and eke his colour waxen pale?  
 And whilst I talked with him, himself he hath exiled

Out of himself, a seeméd me, ne was I sure beguiled.  
 Those arguments of love Craft wrate not in his face,  
 But Nature's hand, when all deceit was banished out of place.  
 What other certain signs seek I of his good will?  
 These do suffice; and steadfast I will love and serve him still.  
 Till Atropos shall cut my fatal thread of life,  
 So that he mind to make of me his lawful wedded wife.  
 For so perchance this new alliance may procure  
 Unto our houses such a peace as ever shall endure."

Oh, how we can persuade ourself to what we like,

And how we can dissuade our mind, if aught our mind mislike!  
 Weak arguments are strong, our fancies straight to frame  
 To pleasing things, and eke to shun if we mislike the same.  
 The maid had scarcely yet ended the weary war,  
 Kept in her heart by striving thoughts, when every shining star

Had paid his borrowed light, and Phoebus spread in skies  
 His golden rays, which seemed to say, now time it is to rise.  
 And Romeus had by this forsaken his weary bed,  
 Where restless he a thousand thoughts had forged in his head.  
 And while with ling'ring step by Juliet's house he passed,

And upwards to her windows high his greedy eyes did cast,  
 His love that looked for him there 'gan he straight espy.  
 With pleasant cheer each greeted is; she followeth with her eye  
 His parting steps, and he oft looketh back again  
 But not so oft as he desires; warely he doth refrain.  
 What life were like to love, if dread of jeopardy  
 Y-soured not the sweet, if love were free from jealousy!  
 But she more sure within, unseen of any wight,  
 When so he comes, looks after him till he be out of sight.  
 In often passing so, his busy eyes he threw,

That every pane and tooting hole the wily lover knew.  
 In happy hour he doth a garden plot espy,  
 From which, except he warely walk, men may his love descry;  
 For lo, it fronted full upon her leaning place,  
 Where she is wont to show her heart by cheerful friendly face.  
 And lest the arbours might their secret love bewray,  
 He doth keep back his forward foot from passing there by day;  
 But when on earth the Night her mantle black hath spread;  
 Well armed he walketh forth alone, ne dreadful foes doth dread.  
 Whom maketh Love not bold, nay, whom makes he not blind?

He reaveth danger's dread oft-times out of the lover's mind.  
 By night he passeth here, a week or two in vain;  
 And for the missing of his mark his grief hath him nigh slain.  
 And Juliet that now doth lack her heart's relief,  
 Her Romeus' pleasant eyne, I mean, is almost dead for grief.  
 Each day she changeth hours (for lovers keep an hour  
 When they are sure to see their love in passing by their bower).  
 Impatient of her woe, she happed to lean one night  
 Within her window, and anon the moon did shine so bright  
 That she espied her love: her heart revived sprang;

And now for joy she claps her hands, which erst for woe she wrang.  
 Eke Romeus, when he saw his long desired sight,  
 His mourning cloak of moan cast off, hath clad him with delight.  
 Yet dare I say, of both that she rejoiced more:  
 His care was great, hers twice as great was all the time before;

For whilst she knew not why he did himself absent,  
 Aye doubting both his health and life, his death she did lament  
 For love is fearful oft where is no cause of fear,  
 And what love fears, that love laments, as though it chanced were.  
 Of greater cause alway is greater work y-bred;

While he nought doubteth of her health, she dreads lest he be dead.  
 When only absence is the cause of Romeus' smart,  
 By happy hope of sight again he feeds his fainting heart.  
 What wonder then if he were wrapped in less annoy?  
 What marvel if by sudden sight she fed of greater joy  
 His smaller grief or joy no smaller love do prove;  
 Ne, for she passed him in both, did she him pass in love:  
 But each of them alike did burn in equal flame,  
 The well-beloving knight and eke the well-beloved dame.  
 Now whilst with bitter tears her eyes as fountains run,

With whispering voice, y-broke with sobs, thus is her tale begun:  
 "O Romeus, of your life too lavas sure you are,  
 That in this place, and at this time, to hazard it you dare.  
 What if your deadly foes, my kinsmen, saw you here?  
 Like lions wild, your tender parts asunder would they tear.  
 In ruth and in disdain, I, weary of my life,  
 With cruel hand my mourning heart would pierce with bloody knife.  
 For you, mine own, once dead, what joy should I have here?  
 And eke my honour stained, which I than life do hold more dear."  
 "Fair lady mine, dame Juliet, my life," quod he,

"Even from my birth committed was to fatal sisters three.  
 They may in spite of foes draw forth my lively thread;  
 And they also, whoso saith nay, asunder may it shred.  
 But who to reave my life, his rage and force would bend,  
 Perhaps should try unto his pain how I it could defend.  
 Ne yet I love it so, but always for your sake,  
 A sacrifice to death I would my wounded corpse betake.  
 If my mishap were such, that here before your sight,  
 I should restore again to death, of life, my borrowed light,  
 This one thing and no more my parting sprite would rue,

That part he should before that you by certain trial knew  
 The love I owe to you, the thrall I languish in,  
 And how I dread to lose the gain which I do hope to win;  
 And how I wish for life, not for my proper ease,  
 But that in it you might I love, you honour, serve and please,

Till deadly pangs the sprite out of the corpse shall send."  
And thereupon he sware an oath, and so his tale had end.

Now love and pity boil in Juliet's ruthful breast;  
In window on her leaning arm her weary head doth rest;  
Her bosom bathed in tears, to witness inward pain,

With dreary cheer to Romeus thus answered she again:  
"Ah, my dear Romeus, keep in these words," quod she,  
"For lo, the thought of such mischance already maketh me  
For pity and for dread well-nigh to yield up breath;  
In even balance peised are my life and eke my death.  
For so my heart is knit, yea, made one self with yours,  
That sure there is no grief so small, by which your mind endures,  
But as you suffer pain, so I do bear in part,  
Although it lessens not your grief, the half of all your smart.  
But these things overpast, if of your health and mine

You have respect, or pity aught my teary, weeping eyne,  
In few unfained words your hidden mind unfold,  
That as I see your pleasant face, your heart I may behold.  
For if you do intend my honour to defile,  
In error shall you wander still, as you have done this while;  
But if your thought be chaste, and have on virtue ground,  
If wedlock be the end and mark which your desire hath found,  
Obedience set aside, unto my parents due,  
The quarrel eke that long ago between our households grew,  
Both me and mine I will all whole to you betake,

And following you whereso you go, my father's house forsake.  
But if by wanton love and by unlawful suit  
You think in ripest years to pluck my maidenhood's dainty fruit,  
You are beguiled; and now your Juliet you beseeks  
To cease your suit, and suffer her to live among her likes."

Then Romeus, whose thought was free from foul desire,  
And to the top of virtue's height did worthily aspire,  
Was filled with greater joy than can my pen express,  
Or, till they have enjoyed the like, the hearer's heart can guess.  
And then with joined hands, heaved up into the skies,  
He thanks the Gods, and from the heavens for vengeance down he cries

If he have other thought but as his lady spake;  
 And then his look he turned to her, and thus did answer make:  
 "Since, lady, that you like to honour me so much  
 As to accept me for your spouse, I yield myself for such.  
 In true witness whereof, because I must depart,  
 Till that my deed do prove my word, I leave in pawn my heart.  
 To-morrow eke betimes before the sun arise,  
 To Friar Laurence will I wend, to learn his sage advice.  
 He is my ghostly sire, and oft he hath me taught

What I should do in things of weight, when I his aid have sought.  
 And at this self-same hour, I plight you here my faith,  
 I will be here, if you think good, to tell you what he saith."  
 She was contented well; else favour found he none  
 That night at lady Juliet's hand, save pleasant words alone.

This barefoot friar girt with cord his grayish weed,  
 For he of Francis' order was, a friar, as I rede.  
 Not as the most was he, a gross unlearned fool,  
 But doctor of divinity proceeded he in school.  
 The secrets eke he knew in Nature's works that lurk;  
 By magic's art most men supposed that he could wonders work.

Ne doth it ill beseem divines those skills to know,  
 If on no harmful deed they do such skilfulness bestow;  
 For justly of no art can men condemn the use,  
 But right and reason's lore cry out against the lewd abuse.  
 The bounty of the friar and wisdom hath so won  
 The townfolks' hearts, that well nigh all to Friar Laurence run  
 To shrive themselves; the old, the young, the great and small;  
 Of all he is beloved well, and honoured much of all.  
 And, for he did the rest in wisdom far exceed,  
 The prince by him, his counsel craved, was help at time of need.

Betwixt the Capulets and him great friendship grew,  
 A secret and assuréd friend unto the Montague.  
 Loved of this young man more than any other guest,  
 The friar eke of Verone youth aye likéd Romeus best;  
 For whom he ever hath in time of his distress,  
 As erst you heard, by skilful lore found out his harm's redress:  
 To him is Romeus gone, ne stay'th he till the morrow;  
 To him he painteth all his case, his passéd joy and sorrow.  
 How he hath her espied with other dames in dance,

And how that first to talk with her himself he did advance;  
 Their talk and change of looks he 'gan to him declare,  
 And how so fast by faith and troth they both y-coupléd are,  
 That neither hope of life, nor dread of cruel death,  
 Shall make him false his faith to her, while life shall lend him breath.  
 And then with weeping eyes he prays his ghostly sire  
 To further and accomplish all their honest hearts' desire.  
 A thousand doubts and mo in th'old man's head arose,  
 A thousand dangers like to come the old man doth disclose,  
 And from the spousal rites he redeth him refrain,

Perhaps he shall be bet advised within a week or twain.  
 Advice is banished quite from those that follow love,  
 Except advice to what they like their bending mind do move.  
 As well the father might have counselled him to stay  
 That from a mountain's top thrown down is falling half the way  
 As warn his friend to stop amid his race begun,  
 Whom Cupid with his smarting whip enforceth forth to run.  
 Part won by earnest suit, the friar doth grant at last;  
 And part, because he thinks the storms, so lately overpast,  
 Of both the households' wrath, this marriage might appease;

So that they should not rage again, but quite for ever cease  
 The respite of a day he asketh to devise  
 What way were best, unknown, to end so great an enterprise.  
 The wounded man that now doth deadly pains endure,  
 Scarce patient tarrieth whilst his leech doth make the salve to cure:  
 So Romeus hardly grants a short day and a night,  
 Yet needs he must, else must he want his only heart's delight.

You see that Romeus no time or pain doth spare;  
 Think that the whilst fair Juliet is not devoid of care.

Young Romeus poureth forth his hap and his mishap  
 Into the friar's breast; but where shall Juliet unwrap  
 The secrets of her heart? To whom shall she unfold  
 Her hidden burning love, and eke her thought and cares so cold?  
 The nurse of whom I spake, within her chamber lay,  
 Upon the maid she waiteth still; to her she doth bewray  
 Her new receivéd wound, and then her aid doth crave,  
 In her, she saith, it lies to spill, in her, her life to save.  
 Not easily she made the froward nurse to bow,  
 But won at length with promised hire, she made a solemn vow.  
 To do what she commands, as handmaid of her hest;

Her mistress' secrets hide she will within her covert breast.

To Romeus she goes; of him she doth desire  
 To know the mean of marriage, by counsel of the friar.  
 "On Saturday," quod he, "if Juliet come to shrift,  
 She shall be shrived and married; how like you, nurse, this drift?"  
 "Now by my truth," quod she, "God's blessing have your heart,  
 For yet in all my life I have not heard of such a part.  
 Lord, how you young men can such crafty wiles devise,  
 If that you love the daughter well, to blear the mother's eyes.  
 An easy thing it is with cloak of holiness

To mock the seely mother, that suspecteth nothing less.  
 But that it pleaséd you to tell me of the case,  
 For all my many years, perhaps, I should have found it scarce.  
 Now for the rest let me and Juliet alone;  
 To get her leave, some feat excuse I will devise anon;  
 For that her golden locks by sloth have been unkempt,  
 Or for unwares some wanton dream the youthful damsel drempt,  
 Or for in thoughts of love her idle time she spent,  
 Or otherwise within her heart deservéd to be shent.  
 I know her mother will in no case say her nay;

I warrant you, she shall not fail to come on Saturday."  
 And then she swears to him, the mother loves her well;  
 And how she gave her suck in youth, she leaveth not to tell.  
 "A pretty babe," quod she, "it was when it was young;  
 Lord, how it could full prettily have prated with it tongue!  
 A thousand times and more I laid her on my lap,  
 And clapped her on the buttock soft, and kissed where I did clap.  
 And gladder then was I of such a kiss, forsooth,  
 Than I had been to have a kiss of some old lecher's mouth."  
 And thus of Juliet's youth began this prating nurse,

And of her present state to make a tedious, long discourse.  
 For though he pleasure took in hearing of his love,  
 The message' answer seeméd him to be of more behove.  
 But when these beldames sit at ease upon their tail,  
 The day and eke the candle-light before their talk shall fail.  
 And part they say is true, and part they do devise,  
 Yet boldly do they chat of both, when no man checks their lies.  
 Then he six crowns of gold out of his pocket drew,  
 And gave them her; "A slight reward," quod he, "and so, adieu."  
 In seven years twice told she had not bowed so low

Her crooked knees, as now they bow; she swears she will bestow  
 Her crafty wit, her time, and all her busy pain,  
 To help him to his hopéd bliss; and, cow'ring down again,  
 She takes her leave, and home she hies with speedy pace;  
 The chamber door she shuts, and then she saith with smiling face:  
 "Good news for thee, my girl, good tidings I thee bring.  
 Leave off thy wonted song of care, and now of pleasure sing.  
 For thou may'st hold thyself the happiest under sun,  
 That in so little while, so well, so worthy a knight hast won.  
 The best y-shaped is he, and hath the fairest face

Of all this town, and there is none hath half so good a grace:  
 So gentle of his speech, and of his counsel wise":  
 And still with many praises more she heaved him to the skies.  
 "Tell me else what," quod she, "this evermore I thought;  
 But of our marriage, say at once, what answer have you brought"  
 "Nay, soft," quoth she, "I fear your hurt by sudden joy."  
 "I list not play," quod Juliet, "although thou list to toy."  
 How glad, trow you, was she, when she had heard her say,  
 No farther off than Saturday deferréd was the day!  
 Again the ancient nurse doth speak of Romeus,

"And then," said she, "he spake to me, and then I spake him thus."  
 Nothing was done or said that she hath left untold,  
 Save only one, that she forgot, the taking of the gold.  
 "There is no loss," quod she, "sweet wench, to loss of time,  
 Ne in thine age shalt thou repent so much of any crime.  
 For when I call to mind my former passéd youth,  
 One thing there is which most of all doth cause my endless ruth.  
 At sixteen years I first did choose my loving fere,  
 And I was fully ripe before, I dare well say, a year.  
 The pleasure that I lost, that year so overpast,

A thousand times I have bewept, and shall while life doth last.  
 In faith it were a shame, -- yea, sin it were, y-wis,  
 When thou may'st live in happy joy, to set light by thy bliss."  
 She that this morning could her mistress' mind dissuade,  
 Is now become an oratress, her lady to persuade.  
 If any man be here whom love hath clad with care,  
 To him I speak; if thou wilt speed, thy purse thou must not spare,  
 Two sorts of men there are, seld welcome in at door,  
 The wealthy sparing niggard, and the suitor that is poor.  
 For glitt'ring gold is wont by kind to move the heart;

And oftentimes a slight reward doth cause a more desart.  
 Y-written have I read, I wot not in what book,  
 There is no better way to fish than with a golden hook.  
 Of Romeus these two do sit and chat awhile,  
 And to themselves they laugh how they the mother shall beguile.  
 A feat excuse they find, but sure I know it not,  
 And leave for her to go to shrift on Saturday she got.  
 So well this Juliet, this wily wench did know  
 Her mother's angry hours, and eke the true bent of her bow.  
 The Saturday betimes, in sober weed y-clad,

She took her leave, and forth she went with visage grave and sad.  
 With her the nurse is sent, as bridle of her lust,  
 With her the mother sends a maid almost of equal trust.  
 Betwixt her teeth the bit the jennet now hath caught,  
 So warely eke the virgin walks, her maid perceiveth nought.  
 She gazeth not in church on young men of the town,  
 Ne wand'reth she from place to place, but straight she kneeleth down  
 Upon an altar's step, where she devoutly prays,  
 And there upon her tender knees the weary lady stays;  
 Whilst she doth send her maid the certain truth to know,

If Friar Laurence leisure had to hear her shrift, or no.  
 Out of his shriving place he comes with pleasant cheer;  
 The shamefast maid with bashful brow to himward draweth near.  
 "Some great offence," quoth he, "you have committed late,  
 Perhaps you have displeased your friend by giving him a mate."  
 Then turning to the nurse and to the other maid,  
 "Go, hear a mass or two," quod he, "which straightway shall be said.  
 For, her confession heard, I will unto you twain  
 The charge that I received of you restore to you again."  
 What, was not Juliet, trow you, right well apaid?

That for this trusty friar hath changed her young mistrusting maid?  
 I dare well say, there is in all Verona none,  
 But Romeus, with whom she would so gladly be alone.  
 Thus to the friar's cell they both forth walkéd bin;  
 He shuts the door as soon as he and Juliet were in.  
 But Romeus, her friend, was entered in before,  
 And there had waited for his love, two hours large and more.  
 Each minute seemed an hour, and every hour a day,  
 'Twixt hope he livéd and despair of coming or of stay.  
 Now wavering hope and fear are quite fled out of sight,

For what he hoped he hath at hand, his pleasant, chief delight.  
 And joyful Juliet is healed of all her smart,  
 For now the rest of all her parts have found her straying heart.  
 Both their confessions first the friar hath heard them make.  
 And then to her with louder voice thus Friar Laurence spake:  
 "Fair lady Juliet, my ghostly daughter dear,  
 As far as I of Romeus learn, who by you standeth here,  
 'Twixt you it is agreed, that you shall be his wife,  
 And he your spouse in steady truth, till death shall end your life.  
 Are you both fully bent to keep this great behest?"

And both the lovers said, it was their only heart's request.  
 When he did see their minds in links of love so fast,  
 When in the praise of wedlock's state some skilful talk was past,  
 When he had told at length the wife what was her due,  
 His duty eke by ghostly talk the youthful husband knew;  
 How that the wife in love must honour and obey,  
 What love and honour he doth owe, and debt that he must pay.  
 The words pronouncéd were which holy church of old  
 Appointed hath for marriage, and she a ring of gold  
 Received of Romeus; and then they both arose.

To whom the friar then said: "Perchance apart you will disclose,  
 Betwixt yourself alone, the bottom of your heart;  
 Say on at once, for time it is that hence you should depart."  
 Then Romeus said to her, both loth to part so soon,  
 "Fair lady, send to me again your nurse this afternoon.  
 Of cord I will bespeak a ladder by that time;  
 By which, this night, while others sleep, I will your window climb.  
 Then will we talk of love and of our old despairs,  
 And then, with longer leisure had, dispose our great affairs."

These said, they kiss, and then part to their fathers' house,  
  
 The joyful bride unto her home, to his eke go'th the spouse:  
 Contented both, and yet both uncontented still,  
 Till Night and Venus' child give leave the wedding to fulfil.  
 The painful soldier, sore y-beat with weary war,  
 The merchant eke that needful things doth dread to fetch from far,  
 The ploughman that for doubt of fierce invading foes,  
 Rather to sit in idle ease than sow his tilt hath chose,  
 Rejoice to hear proclaimed the tidings of the peace;  
 Not pleased with the sound so much; but, when the wars do cease,  
 Then ceased are the harms which cruel war brings forth:

The merchant then may boldly fetch his wares of precious worth;  
 Dreadless the husbandman doth till his fertile field.  
 For wealth, her mate, not for herself, is peace so precious held:  
 So lovers live in care, in dread, and in unrest,  
 And deadly war by striving thoughts they keep within their breast:  
 But wedlock is the peace whereby is freedom won  
 To do a thousand pleasant things that should not else be done.  
 The news of ended war these two have heard with joy,  
 But now they long the fruit of peace with pleasure to enjoy.  
 In stormy wind and wave, in danger to be lost,

Thy steerless ship, O Romeus, hath been long while betossed;  
 The seas are now appeased, and thou, by happy star,  
 Art come in sight of quiet haven; and, now the wrackful bar  
 Is hid with swelling tide, boldly thou may'st resort  
 Unto thy wedded lady's bed, thy long desired port.  
 God grant, no folly's mist so dim thy inward sight,  
 That thou do miss the channel that doth lead to thy delight.  
 God grant, no danger's rock, y-lurking in the dark,  
 Before thou win the happy port, wrack thy sea-beaten bark.  
 A servant Romeus had, of word and deed so just,

That with his life, if need required, his master would him trust.  
 His faithfulness had oft our Romeus proved of old;  
 And therefore all that yet was done unto his man he told,  
 Who straight, as he was charged, a corden ladder looks,  
 To which he hath made fast two strong and crooked iron hooks.  
 The bride to send the nurse at twilight faileth not,  
 To whom the bridegroom given hath the ladder that he got.  
 And then to watch for him appointeth her an hour;  
 For whether Fortune smile on him, or if she list to lower,  
 He will not miss to come to his appointed place,

Where wont he was to take by stealth the view of Juliet's face.  
 How long these lovers thought the lasting of the day,  
 Let other judge that wonted are like passions to assay:  
 For my part, I do guess each hour seems twenty year:  
 So that I deem, if they might have, as of Alcume we hear,  
 The sun bound to their will, if they the heavens might guide,  
 Black shade of night and doubled dark should straight all over hide.

Th'appointed hour is come; he, clad in rich array,  
 Walks toward his desired home: good fortune guide his way.  
 Approaching near the place from whence his heart had life,

So light he wox, he leapt the wall, and there he spied his wife,  
 Who in the window watched the coming of her lord;  
 Where she so surely had made fast the ladder made of cord,  
 That dangerless her spouse the chamber window climbs,  
 Where he ere then had wished himself above ten thousand times.  
 The windows close are shut; else look they for no guest;  
 To light the waxen quariers, the ancient nurse is pressed,  
 Which Juliet had before prepared to be light,  
 That she at pleasure might behold her husband's beauty bright.  
 A kerchief white as snow ware Juliet on her head,

Such as she wonted was to wear, attire meet for the bed.  
 As soon as she him spied, about his neck she clung,  
 And by her long and slender arms a great while there she hung.  
 A thousand times she kissed, and him unkissed again,  
 Ne could she speak a word to him, though would she ne'er so fain.  
 And like betwixt his arms to faint his lady is;  
 She fets a sigh and clappeth close her closéd mouth to his;  
 And ready then to sownd she lookéd ruthfully,  
 That lo, it made him both at once to live and eke to die.  
 These piteous painful pangs were haply overpast,

And she unto herself again returnéd home at last.  
 Then, through her troubled breast, even from the farthest part,  
 An hollow sigh, a messenger, she sendeth from her heart.  
 O Romeus, quoth she, in whom all virtues shine,  
 Welcome thou art into this place, where from these eyes of mine  
 Such teary streams did flow, that I suppose well-nigh  
 The source of all my bitter tears is altogether dry.  
 Absence so pined my heart, which on thy presence fed,  
 And of thy safety and thy health so much I stood in dread.  
 But now what is decreed by fatal destiny,

I force it not; let Fortune do, and death, their worst to me.  
 Full recompensed am I for all my passéd harms,  
 In that the Gods have granted me to clasp thee in mine arms.  
 The crystal tears began to stand in Romeus' eyes,  
 When he unto his lady's words 'gan answer in this wise:  
 "Though cruel Fortune be so much my deadly foe,  
 That I ne can by lively proof cause thee, fair dame, to know  
 How much I am by love enthralled unto thee,  
 Ne yet what mighty power thou hast, by thy desert, on me,  
 Ne torments that for thee I did ere this endure,

Yet of thus much, ne will I feign, I may thee well assure,  
 The least of many pains which of thy absence sprung,  
 More painfully than death itself my tender heart hath wrung.  
 Ere this, one death had reft a thousand deaths away,  
 But life prolongéd was by hope of this desiréd day,  
 Which so just tribute pays of all my passéd moan,  
 That I as well contented am as if myself alone  
 Did from the Ocean reign unto the sea of Ind.  
 Wherefore now let us wipe away old cares out of our mind.  
 For as the wretched state is now redressed at last,

So is it skill behind our back the curséd care to cast.  
 Since Fortune of her grace hath place and time assigned,  
 Where we with pleasure may content our uncontented mind,  
 In Lethes hide we deep all grief and all annoy,  
 Whilst we do bathe in bliss, and fill our hungry hearts with joy.  
 And, for the time to come, let be our busy care  
 So wisely to direct our love, as no wight else be ware;  
 Lest envious foes by force despoil our new delight,  
 And us throw back from happy state to more unhappy plight."  
 Fair Juliet began to answer what he said,

But forth in haste the old nurse stepped, and so her answer stayed.  
 "Who takes not time," quoth she, "when time well offeréd is,  
 Another time shall seek for time, and yet of time shall miss.  
 And when occasion serves, whoso doth let it slip,  
 Is worthy sure, if I might judge, of lashes with a whip.  
 Wherefore if each of you hath harmed the other so,  
 And each of you hath been the cause of other's wailéd woe,  
 Lo here a field" -- she showed a field-bed ready dight --  
 "Where you may, if you list, in arms revenge yourself by fight."  
 Whereto these lovers both 'gan easily assent,

And to the place of mild revenge with pleasant cheer they went,  
 Where they were left alone -- the nurse is gone to rest --  
 How can this be? They restless lie, ne yet they feel unrest.  
 I grant that I envy the bliss they livéd in;  
 Oh that I might have found the like, I wish it for no sin,  
 But that I might as well with pen their joys depaint,  
 As heretofore I have displayed their secret hidden plaint.  
 Of shivering care and dread I have felt many a fit,  
 But Fortune such delight as theirs did never grant me yet.  
 By proof no certain truth can I unhappy write,

But what I guess by likelihood, that dare I to indite.  
 The blindfold goddess that with frowning face doth fray,  
 And from their seat the mighty kings throws down with headlong sway.  
 Beginneth now to turn to these her smiling face;  
 Needs must they taste of great delight, so much in Fortune's grace.  
 If Cupid, god of love, be god of pleasant sport,  
 I think, O Romeus, Mars himself envies thy happy sort.  
 Ne Venus justly might, as I suppose, repent,  
 If in thy stead, O Juliet, this pleasant time she spent.

Thus pass they forth the night, in sport, in jolly game;

The hastiness of Phoebus' steeds in great despite they blame.  
 And now the virgin's fort hath warlike Romeus got,  
 In which as yet no breach was made by force of cannon shot,  
 And now in ease he doth possess the hoped place:  
 How glad was he, speak you that may your lover's parts embrace.  
 The marriage thus made up, and both the parties pleased,  
 The nigh approach of day's return these seely fools dis-eased.  
 And for they might no while in pleasure pass their time,  
 Ne leisure had they much to blame the hasty morning's crime,  
 With friendly kiss in arms of her his leave he takes,

And every other night, to come, a solemn oath he makes,  
 By one self mean, and eke to come at one self hour:  
 And so he doth, till Fortune list to sauce his sweet with sour.  
 But who is he that can his present state assure?  
 And say unto himself, thy joys shall yet a day endure?  
 So wavering Fortune's wheel, her changes be so strange;  
 And every wight y-thralléd is by Fate unto her change,  
 Who reigns so over all, that each man hath his part  
 (Although not aye, perchance, alike) of pleasure and of smart.  
 For after many joys some feel but little pain,

And from that little grief they turn to happy joy again.  
 But other some there are, that, living long in woe,  
 At length they be in quiet ease, but long abide not so;  
 Whose grief is much increased by mirth that went before,  
 Because the sudden change of things doth make it seem the more.  
 Of this unlucky sort our Romeus is one,  
 For all his hap turns to mishap, and all his mirth to moan.  
 And joyful Juliet another leaf must turn;  
 As wont she was, her joys bereft, she must begin to mourn.  
 The summer of their bliss doth last a month or twain,

But winter's blast with speedy foot doth bring the fall again.  
Whom glorious Fortune erst had heaved to the skies,  
By envious Fortune overthrown, on earth now grovelling lies.  
She paid their former grief with pleasure's doubled gain,  
But now for pleasure's usury, tenfold redoubleth pain.

The prince could never cause those households so agree,  
But that some sparkles of their wrath as yet remaining be;  
Which lie this while raked up in ashes pale and dead  
Till time do serve that they again in wasting flame may spread.  
At holiest times, men say, most heinous crimes are done;

The morrow after Easter day the mischief new begun.  
A band of Capulets did meet -- my heart it rues! --  
Within the walls, by Purser's gate, a band of Montagues.  
The Capulets, as chief, a young man have chose out,  
Best exercised in feats of arms, and noblest of the rout,  
Our Juliet's uncle's son, that clepéd was Tybalt;  
He was of body tall and strong, and of his courage halt.  
They need no trumpet sound to bid them give the charge,  
So loud he cried with strained voice and mouth outstretchéd large:  
"Now, now," quod he, "my friends, ourself so let us wreak,

That of this day's revenge and us our children's heirs may speak.  
Now once for all let us their swelling pride assuage;  
Let none of them escape alive." Then he, with furious rage,  
And they with him, gave charge upon their present foes,  
And then forthwith a skirmish great upon this fray arose.  
For, lo, the Montagues thought shame away to fly,  
And rather than to live with shame, with praise did choose to die.  
The words that Tybalt used to stir his folk to ire,  
Have in the breasts of Montagues kindled a furious fire.  
With lions' hearts they fight, warely themself defend;

To wound his foe, his present wit and force each one doth bend.  
This furious fray is long on each side stoutly fought,  
That whether part had got the worst, full doubtful were the thought.  
The noise hereof anon throughout the town doth fly,  
And parts are taken on every side; both kindreds thither hie.  
Here one doth gasp for breath, his friend bestrideth him;  
And he hath lost a hand, and he another maiméd limb,  
His leg is cut whilst he strikes at another full,  
And whom he would have thrust quite through, hath cleft his crackéd skull.  
Their valiant hearts forbode their foot to give the ground;

With unappalléd cheer they took full deep and doubtful wound.  
 Thus foot by foot long while, and shield to shield set fast,  
 One he doth make another faint, but makes him not aghast.  
 And whilst this noise is rife in every townsman's ear,  
 Eke, walking with his friends, the noise doth woeful Romeus hear.  
 With speedy foot he runs unto the fray apace;  
 With him, those few that were with him he leadeth to the place.  
 They pity much to see the slaughter made so great,  
 That wetshod they might stand in blood on either side the street.  
 "Part, friends," said he; "Part, friends -- help, friends, to part the fray,"

And to the rest, "Enough," he cries, "Now time it is to stay.  
 God's farther wrath you stir, beside the hurt you feel,  
 And with this new uproar confound all this our common weal."  
 But they so busy are in fight, so eager and fierce,  
 That through their ears his sage advice no leisure had to pierce.  
 Then leapt he in the throng, to part and bar the blows  
 As well of those that were his friends, as of his deadly foes.  
 As soon as Tybalt had our Romeus espied,  
 He threw a thrust at him that would have passed from side to side;  
 But Romeus ever went, doubting his foes, well armed,

So that the sword, kept out by mail, hath nothing Romeus harmed.  
 "Thou dost me wrong," quoth he, "for I but part the fray;  
 Not dread, but other weighty cause my hasty hand doth stay.  
 Thou art the chief of thine, the noblest eke thou art,  
 Wherefore leave off thy malice now, and help these folk to part.  
 Many are hurt, some slain, and some are like to die."  
 "No, coward, traitor boy," quoth he, "straightway I mind to try,  
 Whether thy sugared talk, and tongue so smoothly filed,  
 Against the force of this my sword shall serve thee for a shield.  
 And then at Romeus' head a blow he strake so hard,

That might have clove him to the brain but for his cunning ward.  
 It was but lent to him that could repay again,  
 And give him death for interest, a well forborne gain.  
 Right as a forest boar, that lodgéd in the thick,  
 Pinchéd with dog, or else with spear y-prickéd to the quick,  
 His bristles stiff upright upon his back doth set,  
 And in his foamy mouth his sharp and crooked tusks doth whet;  
 Or as a lion wild that rampeth in his rage,  
 His whelps bereft, whose fury can no weaker beast assuage;  
 Such seeméd Romeus in every other's sight,  
 When he him shope, of wrong received t'avenge himself by fight.  
 Even as two thunderbolts thrown down out of the sky,

That through the air, the massy earth, and seas, have power to fly;  
 So met these two, and while they change a blow or twain,  
 Our Romeus thrust him through the throat, and so is Tybalt slain.  
 Lo, here the end of those that stir a deadly strife:  
 Who thirsteth after other's death, himself hath lost his life.  
 The Capulets are quailed by Tybalt's overthrow,  
 The courage of the Montagues by Romeus' sight doth grow.  
 The townsmen waxen strong, the Prince doth send his force;

The fray hath end. The Capulets do bring the breathless corse  
 Before the Prince, and crave that cruel deadly pain  
 May be the guerdon of his fault, that hath their kinsman slain.  
 The Montagues do plead their Romeus void of fault;  
 The lookers-on do say, the fight begun was by Tybalt.  
 The Prince doth pause, and then gives sentence in a while,  
 That Romeus for slaying him should go into exile.  
 His foes would have him hanged, or sterve in prison strong;  
 His friends do think, but dare not say, that Romeus hath wrong.  
 Both households straight are charged on pain of losing life,

Their bloody weapons laid aside, to cease the stirréd strife.  
 This common plague is spread through all the town anon,  
 From side to side the town is filled with murmur and with moan,  
 For Tybalt's hasty death bewailéd was of some,  
 Both for his skill in feats of arms, and for, in time to come  
 He should, had this not chanced, been rich and of great power,  
 To help his friends, and serve the state; which hope within an hour  
 Was wasted quite, and he, thus yielding up his breath,  
 More than he holp the town in life, hath harmed it by his death.  
 And other some bewail, but ladies most of all,

The luckless lot by Fortune's guilt that is so late befall,  
 Without his fault, unto the seely Romeus;  
 For whilst that he from native land shall live exiléd thus,  
 From heavenly beauty's light and his well-shapéd parts,  
 The sight of which was wont, fair dames, to glad your youthful hearts,  
 Shall you be banished quite, and till he do return,  
 What hope have you to joy, what hope to cease to mourn?  
 This Romeus was born so much in heaven's grace,  
 Of Fortune and of Nature so beloved, that in his face,  
 Beside the heavenly beauty glist'ring aye so bright,

And seemly grace that wonted so to glad the seer's sight,  
 A certain charm was graved by Nature's secret art,  
 That virtue had to draw to it the love of many a heart.

So every one doth wish to bear a part of pain,  
 That he released of exile might straight return again.  
 But how doth mourn among the mourners Juliet!  
 How doth she bathe her breast in tears ! What deep sighs doth she fet!  
 How doth she tear her hair! Her weed how doth she rent!  
 How fares the lover hearing of her lover's banishment!  
 How wails she Tybalt's death, whom she had loved so well!

Her hearty grief and piteous plaint, cunning I want to tell.  
 For delving deeply now in depth of deep despair,  
 With wretched sorrow's cruel sound she fills the empty air;  
 And to the lowest hell down falls her heavy cry,  
 And up unto the heaven's height her piteous plaint doth fly.  
 The waters and the woods of sighs and sobs resound,  
 And from the hard resounding rocks her sorrows do rebound.  
 Eke from her teary eyne down rained many a shower,  
 That in the garden where she walked might water herb and flower.  
 But when at length she saw herself outraged so,

Unto her chamber straight she hied; there, overcharged with woe,  
 Upon her stately bed her painful parts she threw,  
 And in so wondrous wise began her sorrows to renew,  
 That sure no heart so hard, but it of flint had bin,  
 But would have rued the piteous plaint that she did languish in.  
 Then rapt out of herself, whilst she on every side  
 Did cast her restless eye, at length the window she espied,  
 Through which she had with joy seen Romeus many a time,  
 Which oft the vent'rous knight was wont for Juliet's sake to climb.  
 She cried, "O cursed window, accursed be every pane,

Through which, alas, too soon I raught the cause of life and bane;  
 If by thy mean I have some slight delight received,  
 Or else such fading pleasure as by Fortune straight was reaved,  
 Hast thou not made me pay a tribute rigorous  
 Of heapéd grief and lasting care, and sorrows dolorous,  
 That these my tender parts, which needful strength do lack  
 To bear so great unwieldy load upon so weak a back,  
 Oppressed with weight of cares and with these sorrows rife,  
 At length must open wide to death the gates of loathéd life;  
 That so my weary sprite may somewhere else unload

His deadly load, and free from thrall may seek elsewhere abode  
 For pleasant, quiet ease and for assuréd rest,  
 Which I as yet could never find but for my more unrest?  
 O Romeus, when first we both acquainted were,

When to thy painted promises I lent my list'ning ear,  
 Which to the brinks you filled with many a solemn oath,  
 And I them judged empty of guile, and fraughted full of troth,  
 I thought you rather would continue our good will,  
 And seek t'appease our fathers' strife, which daily groweth still.  
 I little weened you would have sought occasion how

By such an heinous act to break the peace and eke your vow;  
 Whereby your bright renown all whole y-clipséd is,  
 And I unhappy, husbandless, of comfort robbed and bliss.  
 But if you did so much the blood of Capels thirst,  
 Why have you often sparéd mine -- mine might have quenched it first.  
 Since that so many times and in so secret place,  
 Where you were wont with veil of love to hide your hatred's face.  
 My doubtful life hath happed by fatal doom to stand  
 In mercy of your cruel heart, and of your bloody hand.  
 What? -- seemed the conquest which you got of me so small?

What? -- seemed it not enough that I, poor wretch, was made your thrall?  
 But that you must increase it with that kinsman's blood,  
 Which for his worth and love to me, most in my favour stood  
 Well, go henceforth elsewhere, and seek another while  
 Some other as unhappy as I, by flattery to beguile.  
 And, where I come, see that you shun to show your face,  
 For your excuse within my heart shall find no resting place.  
 And I that now, too late, my former fault repent,  
 Will so the rest of weary life with many tears lament,  
 That soon my joiceless corpse shall yield up banished breath,  
 And where on earth it restless lived, in earth seek rest by death."

These said, her tender heart, by pain oppresséd sore,  
 Restrained her tears, and forced her tongue to keep her talk in store;  
 And then as still she was, as if in sownd she lay,  
 And then again, wroth with herself, with feeble voice 'gan say:  
 "Ah, cruel murdering tongue, murth'rer of others' fame,  
 How durst thou once attempt to touch the honour of his name?  
 Whose deadly foes do yield him due and earned praise;  
 For though his freedom be bereft, his honour not decays.  
 Why blam'st thou Romeus for slaying of Tybalt,

Since he is guiltless quite of all, and Tybalt bears the fault?  
 Whither shall he, alas, poor banished man, now fly?  
 What place of succour shall he seek beneath the starry sky?  
 Since she pursueth him, and him defames by wrong,

That in distress should be his fort, and only rampire strong.  
 Receive the recompense, O Romeus, of thy wife,  
 Who, for she was unkind herself, doth offer up her life,  
 In flames of ire, in sighs, in sorrow and in ruth,  
 So to revenge the crime she did commit against thy truth."  
 These said, she could no more; her senses all 'gan fail,

And deadly pangs began straightway her tender heart assail;  
 Her limbs she stretchéd forth, she drew no more her breath:  
 Who had been there might well have seen the signs of present death.  
 The nurse that knew no cause why she absented her,  
 Did doubt lest that some sudden grief too much tormented her.  
 Each where but where she was the careful beldam sought;  
 Last, of the chamber where she lay she haply her bethought;  
 Where she with piteous eye her nurse-child did behold,  
 Her limbs stretched out, her outward parts as any marble cold.  
 The nurse supposed that she had paid to death her debt,

And then, as she had lost her wits, she cried to Juliet:  
 "Ah, my dear heart," quoth she, "how grieveth me thy death!  
 Alas, what cause hast thou thus soon to yield up living breath?"  
 But while she handled her, and chaféd every part,  
 She knew there was some spark of life by beating of her heart,  
 So that a thousand times she called upon her name;  
 There is no way to help a trance but she hath tried the same:  
 She openeth wide her mouth, she stoppeth close her nose,  
 She bendeth down her breast, she wrings her fingers and her toes,  
 And on her bosom cold she layeth clothés hot;

A warméd and a wholesome juice she poureth down her throat.

At length doth Juliet heave faintly up her eyes,  
 And then she stretcheth forth her arm, and then her nurse she spies.  
 But when she was awaked from her unkindly trance,  
 "Why dost thou trouble me," quoth she, "what drave thee, with mischance,  
 To come to see my sprite forsake my breathless corse?  
 Go hence, and let me die, if thou have on my smart remorse.  
 For who would see her friend to live in deadly pain?  
 Alas, I see my grief begun for ever will remain.  
 Or who would seek to live, all pleasure being past?

My mirth is done, my mourning moan for aye is like to last.  
 Wherefore since that there is none other remedy,  
 Come, gentle death, and rive my heart at once, and let me die."  
 The nurse with trickling tears, to witness inward smart,

With hollow sigh fetched from the depth of her appalléd heart,  
Thus spake to Juliet, y-clad with ugly care:

"Good lady mine, I do not know what makes you thus to fare;  
Ne yet the cause of your unmeasured heaviness.  
But of this one I you assure, for care and sorrow's stress,  
This hour large and more I thought, so God me save,

That my dead corpse should wait on yours to your untimely grave."

"Alas, my tender nurse and trusty friend," quoth she,  
"Art thou so blind that with thine eye thou canst not easely see  
The lawful cause I have to sorrow and to mourn,  
Since those the which I held most dear, I have at once forlorn."  
Her nurse then answered thus: "Methinks it sits you ill  
To fall in these extremities that may you guiltless spill.  
For when the storms of care and troubles do arise,  
Then is the time for men to know the foolish from the wise.  
You are accounted wise, a fool am I your nurse;

But I see not how in like case I could behave me worse.  
Tybalt your friend is dead; what, ween you by your tears  
To call him back again? think you that he your crying hears?  
You shall perceive the fault, if it be justly tried,  
Of his so sudden death, was in his rashness and his pride.  
Would you that Romeus himself had wrongéd so,  
To suffer himself causeless to be outraged of his foe,  
To whom in no respect he ought a place to give?  
Let it suffice to thee, fair dame, that Romeus doth live,  
And that there is good hope that he, within a while,

With greater glory shall be called home from his hard exile.  
How well y-born he is, thyself, I know, canst tell,  
By kindred strong, and well allied, of all belovéd well.  
With patience arm thyself, for though that Fortune's crime,  
Without your fault, to both your griefs, depart you for a time'  
I dare say, for amends of all your present pain,  
She will restore your own to you, within a month or twain,  
With such contented ease as never erst you had;  
Wherefore rejoice a while in hope, and be ne more so sad.  
And that I may discharge your heart of heavy care,

A certain way I have found out, my pains ne will I spare,  
To learn his present state, and what in time to come  
He minds to do; which known by me, you shall know all and some.  
But that I dread the whilst your sorrows will you quell,  
Straight would I hie where he doth lurk, to Friar Laurence' cell.

But if you 'gin eftsoons, as erst you did, to mourn,  
 Whereto go I? you will be dead, before I thence return.  
 So I shall spend in waste my time and busy pain.  
 So unto you, your life once lost, good answer comes in vain;  
 So shall I rid myself with this sharp-pointed knife;

So shall you cause your parents dear wax weary of their life;  
 So shall your Romeus, despising lively breath,  
 With hasty foot, before his time, run to untimely death.  
 Where, if you can awhile, by reason, rage suppress,  
 I hope at my return to bring the salve of your distress.  
 Now choose to have me here a partner of your pain,  
 Or promise me to feed on hope till I return again."

Her mistress sends her forth, and makes a grave behest  
 With reason's reign to rule the thoughts that rage within her breast.  
 When huge heaps of harms are heaped before her eyes,

Then vanish they by hope of 'scape; and thus the lady lies  
 'Twixt well assuréd trust, and doubtful lewd despair:  
 Now black and ugly be her thoughts; now seem they white and fair.  
 As oft in summer tide black clouds do dim the sun,  
 And straight again in clearest sky his restless steeds do run,  
 So Juliet's wand'ring mind y-clouded is with woe,  
 And by and by her hasty thought the woes doth overgo.

But now is time to tell, whilst she was tosséd thus,  
 What winds did drive or haven did hold her lover, Romeus.  
 When he had slain his foe that 'gan this deadly strife,

And saw the furious fray had end by ending Tybalt's life,  
 He fled the sharp revenge of those that yet did live,  
 And doubting much what penal doom the troubled prince might give,  
 He sought somewhere unseen to lurk a little space,  
 And trusty Laurence' secret cell he thought the surest place.  
 In doubtful hap aye best a trusty friend is tried;  
 The friendly friar in this distress doth grant his friend to hide.  
 A secret place he hath, well sealed round about,  
 The mouth of which so close is shut, that none may find it out;  
 But room there is to walk, and place to sit and rest,

Beside a bed to sleep upon, full soft and trimly drest.  
 The floor is planked so, with mats it is so warm,  
 That neither wind nor smoky damps have power him aught to harm.  
 Where he was wont in youth his fair friends to bestow,  
 There now he hideth Romeus, whilst forth he goeth to know

Both what is said and done, and what appointed pain,  
Is published by trumpet's sound; then home he hies again.

By this, unto his cell the nurse with speedy pace  
Was come the nearest way; she sought no idle resting place.  
The friar sent home the news of Romeus' certain health,

And promise made, what so befell, he should that night by stealth  
Come to his wonted place, that they in needful wise  
Of their affairs in time to come might thoroughly devise.  
Those joyful news the nurse brought home with merry joy;  
And now our Juliet joys to think she shall her love enjoy.  
The friar shuts fast his door, and then to him beneath,  
That waits to hear the doubtful news of life or else of death,  
Thy hap," quoth he, "is good, danger of death is none,  
But thou shalt live, and do full well, in spite of spiteful fone.  
This only pain for thee was erst proclaimed aloud,

A banished man, thou may'st thee not within Verona shroud."  
These heavy tidings heard, his golden locks he tare,  
And like a frantic man hath torn the garments that he ware.  
And as the smitten deer in brakes is walt'ring found,  
So walt'reth he, and with his breast doth beat the trodden ground.  
He rises eft, and strikes his head against the walls,  
He falleth down again, and loud for hasty death he calls  
"Come speedy death," quoth he, "the readiest leech in love;  
Since nought can else beneath the sun the ground of grief remove,  
Of loathsome life break down the hated, staggering stays,

Destroy, destroy at once the life that faintly yet decays.  
But you, fair dame, in whom dame Nature did devise  
With cunning hand to work that might seem wondrous in our eyes,  
For you, I pray the Gods, your pleasures to increase,  
And all mishap, with this my death, for evermore to cease.  
And mighty Jove with speed of justice bring them low,  
Whose lofty pride, without our guilt, our bliss doth overblow.  
And Cupid grant to those their speedy wrongs' redress,  
That shall bewail my cruel death and pity her distress."  
Therewith a cloud of sighs he breathed into the skies,

And two great streams of bitter tears ran from his swollen eyes.  
These things the ancient friar with sorrow saw and heard,  
Of such beginning, eke the end, the wise man greatly feared.  
But lo, he was so weak, by reason of his age,  
That he ne could by force repress the rigour of his rage.  
His wise and friendly words he speaketh to the air,

For Romeus so vexéd is with care and with despair,  
 That no advice can pierce his close forestoppéd ears;  
 So now the friar doth take his part in shedding ruthful tears.  
 With colour pale and wan, with arms full hard y-fold,

With woeful cheer his wailing friend he standeth to behold.  
 And then our Romeus with tender hands y-wrung,  
 With voice with plaint made hoarse, with sobs, and with a falt'ring tongue,  
 Renewed with novel moan the dolours of his heart;  
 His outward dreary cheer bewrayed his store of inward smart.  
 First Nature did he blame, the author of his life,  
 In which his joys had been so scant, and sorrows aye so rife;  
 The time and place of birth he fiercely did reprove,  
 He cried out, with open mouth, against the stars above;  
 The fatal sisters three, he said, had done him wrong,

The thread that should not have been spun, they had drawn forth too long.  
 He wished that he had before this time been born,  
 Or that as soon as he wan light, his life he had forlorn.  
 His nurse he curséd, and the hand that gave him pap,  
 The midwife eke with tender grip that held him in her lap;  
 And then did he complain on Venus' cruel son,  
 Who led him first unto the rocks which he should warely shun:  
 By means whereof he lost both life and liberty,  
 And died a hundred times a day, and yet could never die.  
 Love's troubles lasten long, the joys he gives are short;

He forceth not a lover's pain, their earnest is his sport.  
 A thousand things and more I here let pass to write,  
 Which unto Love this woeful man did speak in great despite.  
 On Fortune eke he railed, he called her deaf and blind,  
 Unconstant, fond, deceitful, rash, unruthful, and unkind.  
 And to himself he laid a great part of the fault,  
 For that he slew and was not slain, in fighting with Tybalt.  
 He blamed all the world, and all he did defy,  
 But Juliet for whom he lived, for whom eke would he die.

When after raging fits appeaséd was his rage,

And when his passions, poured forth, 'gan partly to assuage,  
 So wisely did the friar unto his tale reply,  
 That he straight cared for his life, that erst had care to die.  
 "Art thou," quoth he, "a man? Thy shape saith, so thou art;  
 Thy crying, and thy weeping eyes denote a woman's heart.  
 For manly reason is quite from off thy mind outchased,

And in her stead affections lewd and fancies highly placed:  
 So that I stood in doubt, this hour, at the least,  
 If thou a man or woman wert, or else a brutish beast.  
 A wise man in the midst of troubles and distress

Still stands not wailing present harm, but seeks his harm's redress.  
 As when the winter flaws with dreadful noise arise,  
 And heave the foamy swelling waves up to the starry skies,  
 So that the bruised bark in cruel seas betost,  
 Despaireth of the happy haven, in danger to be lost,  
 The pilot bold at helm, cries, 'Mates, strike now your sail,'  
 And turns her stem into the waves that strongly her assail;  
 Then driven hard upon the bare and wrackful shore,  
 In greater danger to be wracked than he had been before,  
 He seeth his ship full right against the rock to run,

But yet he doth what lieth in him the perilous rock to shun:  
 Sometimes the beaten boat, by cunning government,  
 The anchors lost, the cables broke, and all the tackle spent,  
 The rudder smitten off, and overboard the mast,  
 Doth win the long desired port, the stormy danger past:  
 But if the master dread, and overpressed with woe  
 Begin to wring his hands, and lets the guiding rudder go,  
 The ship rents on the rock, or sinketh in the deep,  
 And eke the coward drenched is: So, if thou still bewEEP  
 And seek not how to help the changes that do chance,

Thy cause of sorrow shall increase, thou cause of thy mischance.  
 Other account thee wise, prove not thyself a fool;  
 Now put in practice lessons learned of old in wisdom's school.  
 The wise man saith, 'Beware thou double not thy pain,  
 For one perhaps thou may'st abide, but hardly suffer twain.'  
 As well we ought to seek things hurtful to decrease,  
 As to endeavour helping things by study to increase.  
 The praise of true freedom in wisdom's bondage lies,  
 He winneth blame whose deeds be fond, although his words be wise.  
 Sickness the body's gaol, grief gaol is of the mind,

If thou canst 'scape from heavy grief, true freedom shalt thou find.  
 Fortune can fill nothing so full of hearty grief,  
 But in the same a constant mind finds solace and relief.  
 Virtue is always thrall to troubles and annoy,  
 But wisdom in adversity finds cause of quiet joy.  
 And they most wretched are that know no wretchedness,  
 And after great extremity mishaps aye waxen less.

Like as there is no weal but wastes away sometime,  
 So every kind of wailéd woe will wear away in time.  
 If thou wilt master quite the troubles that thee spill,

Endeavour first by reason's help to master witless will.  
 A sundry med'cine hath each sundry faint disease,  
 But patience, a common salve, to every wound gives ease.  
 The world is alway full of chances and of change,  
 Wherefore the change of chance must not seem to a wise man strange.  
 For tickel Fortune doth, in changing, but her kind,  
 But all her changes cannot change a steady constant mind.  
 Though wavering Fortune turn from thee her smiling face,  
 And Sorrow seek to set himself in banished Pleasure's place,  
 Yet may thy marred state be mended in a while,

And she eftsoons that frowneth now, with p1easant cheer shall smile,  
 For as her happy state no long while standeth sure,  
 Even so the heavy plight she brings, not always doth endure.  
 What need so many words to thee that art so wise?  
 Thou better canst advise thyself, than I can thee advise.  
 Wisdom, I see, is vain, if thus in time of need  
 A wise man's wit unpractisé doth stand him in no stede.  
 I know thou hast some cause of sorrow and of care,  
 But well I wot thou hast no cause thus frantically to fare.  
 Affection's foggy mist thy feebled sight doth blind;

But if that reason's beams again might shine into thy mind,  
 If thou would'st view thy state with an indifferent eye,  
 I think thou would'st condemn thy plaint, thy sighing, and thy cry.  
 With valiant hand thou mad'st thy foe yield up his breath,  
 Thou hast escaped his sword and eke the laws that threaten death.  
 By thy escape thy friends are fraughted full of joy,  
 And by his death thy deadly foes are laden with annoy.  
 Wilt thou with trusty friends of pleasure take some part ?  
 Or else to please thy hateful foes be partner of their smart ?  
 Why cry'st thou out on love? Why dost thou blame thy fate?

Why dost thou so cry after death? Thy life why dost thou hate?  
 Dost thou repent the choice that thou so late didst choose?  
 Love is thy Lord; thou ought'st obey and not thy prince accuse.  
 For thou hast found, thou know'st, great favour in his sight.  
 He granted thee, at thy request, thy only heart's delight.  
 So that the gods envied the bliss thou lived'st in;  
 To give to such unthankful men is folly and a sin.  
 Methinks I hear thee say, the cruel banishment

Is only cause of thy unrest; only thou dost lament  
That from thy native land and friends thou must depart,

Enforced to fly from her that hath the keeping of thy heart:  
And so oppressed with weight of smart that thou dost feel,  
Thou dost complain of Cupid's brand, and Fortune's turning wheel.  
Unto a valiant heart there is no banishment,  
All countries are his native soil beneath the firmament.  
As to the fish the sea, as to the fowl the air,  
So is like pleasant to the wise each place of his repair.  
Though froward Fortune chase thee hence into exile,  
With doubled honour shall she call thee home within a while.  
Admit thou should'st abide abroad a year or twain,

Should so short absence cause so long and eke so grievous pain?  
Though thou ne may'st thy friends here in Verona see,  
They are not banished Mantua, where safely thou may'st be.  
Thither they may resort, though thou resort not hither,  
And there in surety may you talk of your affairs together.  
Yea, but this while, alas, thy Juliet must thou miss,  
The only pillar of thy health, and anchor of thy bliss.  
Thy heart thou leav'st with her, when thou dost hence depart,  
And in thy breast incloséd bear'st her tender friendly heart.  
But if thou rue so much to leave the rest behind,

With thought of passéd joys content thy discontented mind.  
So shall the moan decrease wherewith thy mind doth melt,  
Compared to the heavenly joys which thou hast often felt.  
He is too nice a weakling that shrinketh at a shower,  
And he unworthy of the sweet, that tasteth not the sour.  
Call now again to mind thy first consuming flame,  
How didst thou vainly burn in love of an unloving dame?  
Hadst thou not well nigh wept quite out thy swelling eyne  
Did not thy parts, fordone with pain, languish away and pine?  
Those griefs and others like were haply overpast,

And thou in height of Fortune's wheel well placéd at the last!  
From whence thou art now fall'n, that, raiséd up again,  
With greater joy a greater while in pleasure may'st thou reign.  
Compare the present while with times y-past before,  
And think that Fortune hath for thee great pleasure yet in store.  
The whilst, this little wrong receive thou patiently,  
And what of force must needs be done, that do thou willingly.  
Folly it is to fear that thou canst not avoid,

And madness to desire it much that cannot be enjoyed.  
 To give to Fortune place, not aye deserveth blame,  
 But skill it is, according to the times thyself to frame."

Whilst to this skilful lore he lent his list'ning ears,  
 His sighs are stopped and stoppéd are the conduits of his tears.  
 As blackest clouds are chased by winter's nimble wind,  
 So have his reasons chaséd care out of his careful mind.  
 As of a morning foul ensues an evening fair,  
 So banished hope returneth home to banish his despair.  
 Now is affection's veil removed from his eyes,  
 He seeth the path that he must walk, and reason makes him wise.  
 For very shame the blood doth flash in both his cheeks,

He thanks the father for his lore, and farther aid he seeks.  
 He saith, that skill-less youth for counsel is unfit,  
 And anger oft with hastiness are joined to want of wit;  
 But sound advice abounds in heads with hoarish hairs,  
 For wisdom is by practice won, and perfect made by years.  
 But aye from this time forth his ready bending will  
 Shall be in awe and governéd by Friar Laurence' skill.  
 The governor is now right careful of his charge,  
 To whom he doth wisely discourse of his affairs at large.  
 He tells him how he shall depart the town unknown,

Both mindful of his friend's safety, and careful of his own;  
 How he shall guide himself, how he shall seek to win  
 The friendship of the better sort, how warely to creep in  
 The favour of the Mantuan prince, and how he may  
 Appease the wrath of Escalus, and wipe the fault away;  
 The choler of his foes by gentle means t' assuage,  
 Or else by force and practices to bridle quite their rage:  
 And last he chargeth him at his appointed hour  
 To go with manly, merry cheer unto his lady's bower,  
 And there with wholesome words to salve her sorrow's smart,

And to revive, if need require, her faint and dying heart.

The old man's words have filled with joy our Romeus' breast,  
 And eke the old wife's talk hath set our Juliet's heart at rest.  
 Whereto may I compare, O lovers, this your day?  
 Like days the painful mariners are wonted to assay;  
 For, beat with tempest great, when they at length espy  
 Some little beam of Phoebus' light, that pierceth through the sky,  
 To clear the shadowed earth by clearness of his face,

They hope that dreadless they shall run the remnant of their race;  
Yea, they assure themselves, and quite behind their back

They cast all doubt, and thank the gods for scaping of the wrack;  
But straight the boisterous winds with greater fury blow,  
And overboard the broken mast the stormy blasts do throw;  
The heavens large are clad with clouds as dark as hell,  
And twice as high the striving waves begin to roar and swell;  
With greater dangers dread the men are vexéd more,  
In greater peril of their life than they had been before.

The golden sun was gone to lodge him in the west,  
The full moon eke in yonder south had sent most men to rest,  
When restless Romeus and restless Juliet

In wonted sort, by wonted mean, in Juliet's chamber met.  
And from the window's top down had he leapéd scarce,  
When she with arms outstretchéd wide so hard did him embrace,  
That well nigh had the sprite, not forced by deadly force,  
Flown unto death, before the time abandoning the corse,  
Thus muet stood they both the eighth part of an hour,  
And both would speak, but neither had of speaking any power;  
But on his breast her head doth joyless Juliet lay,  
And on her slender neck his chin doth ruthless Romeus stay.  
Their scalding sighs ascend, and by their cheeks down fall

Their trickling tears, as crystal clear, but bitterer far than gall.  
Then he, to end the grief which both they lived in,  
Did kiss his love, and wisely thus his tale he did begin:  
"My Juliet, my love, my only hope and care,  
To you I purpose not as now with length of word declare  
The diverseness and eke the accidents so strange  
Of frail unconstant Fortune, that delighteth still in change;  
Who in a moment heaves her friends up to the height  
Of her swift-turning slippery wheel, then fleets her friendship straight.  
O wondrous change, even with the twinkling of an eye

Whom erst herself had rashly set in pleasant place so high,  
The same in great despite down headlong doth she throw,  
And while she treads and spurneth at the lofty state laid low,  
More sorrow doth she shape within an hour's space,  
Than pleasure in an hundred years; so geason is her grace.  
The proof whereof in me, alas, too plain appears,  
Whom tenderly my careful friends have fostered with my feres,  
In prosperous high degree, maintained so by fate,

That, as yourself did see, my foes envied my noble state.  
One thing there was I did above the rest desire,

To which as to the sovereign good by hope I would aspire.  
That by our marriage mean we might within a while,  
To work our perfect happiness, our parents reconcile:  
That safely so we might, not stopped by sturdy strife,  
Unto the bounds that God hath set, guide forth our pleasant life.  
But now, alack, too soon my bliss is overblown,  
And upside down my purpose and my enterprise are thrown.  
And driven from my friends, of strangers must I crave;  
Oh, grant it God, from dangers dread that I may surety have.  
For lo, henceforth I must wander in lands unknown

(So hard I find the Prince's doom), exiléd from mine own.  
Which thing I have thought good to set before your eyes  
And to exhort you now to prove yourself a woman wise,  
That patiently you bear my absent long abode,  
For what above by fatal dooms decreéd is, that God"--  
And more than this to say, it seeméd, he was bent,  
But Juliet in deadly grief, with brackish tears besprent,  
Brake off his tale begun, and whilst his speech he stayed,  
These selfsame words, or like to these, with dreary cheer she said:  
"Why, Romeus, can it be thou hast so hard a heart;

So far removed from ruth; so far from thinking on my smart;  
To leave me thus alone, thou cause of my distress,  
Besiegéd with so great a camp of mortal wretchedness,  
That every hour now, and moment in a day,  
A thousand times Death brags, as he would reave my life away?  
Yet such is my mishap, O cruel destiny,  
That still I live, and wish for death, but yet can never die;  
So that just cause I have to think, as seemeth me,  
That froward Fortune did of late with cruel Death agree  
To lengthen loathéd life, to pleasure in my pain,

And triumph in my harm, as in the greatest hopéd gain.  
And thou, the instrument of Fortune's cruel will,  
Without whose aid she can no way her tyrannous lust fulfil,  
Art not a whit ashamed, as far as I can see,  
To cast me off, when thou hast culled the better part of me.  
Whereby, alas, too soon, I, seely wretch, do prove,  
That all the ancient sacred laws of friendship and of love  
Are quelled and quenched quite, since he, on whom alway

My chief hope and my steady trust was wonted still to stay,  
For whom I am become unto myself a foe,

Disdaineth me, his steadfast friend, and scorns my friendship so.  
Nay, Romeus, nay, thou may'st of two things choose the one,  
Either to see thy castaway, as soon as thou art gone,  
Headlong to throw herself down from the window's height,  
And so to break her slender neck with all the body's weight,  
Or suffer her to be companion of thy pain,  
Whereso thou go, Fortune thee guide, till thou return again.  
So wholly into thine transforméd is my heart,  
That even as oft as I do think that thou and I shall part,  
So oft, methinks, my life withdraws itself away,

Which I retain to no end else but to the end I may,  
In spite of all thy foes, thy present parts enjoy,  
And in distress to bear with thee the half of thine annoy.  
Wherefore, in humble sort, Romeus, I make request,  
If ever tender pity yet were lodged in gentle breast,  
Oh, let it now have place to rest within thy heart;  
Receive me as thy servant, and the fellow of thy smart.  
Thy absence is my death, thy sight shall give me life;  
But if perhaps thou stand in dread to lead me as a wife,  
Art thou all counsel-less? Canst thou no shift devise?

What letteth but in other weed I may myself disguise?  
What, shall I be the first? Hath none done so ere this,  
To 'scape the bondage of their friends? Thyself can answer, yes.  
Or dost thou stand in doubt that I thy wife ne can  
By service pleasure thee as much as may thy hired man?  
Or is my loyalty of both accompted less?  
Perhaps thou fear'st lest I for gain forsake thee in distress.  
What, hath my beauty now no power at all on you,  
Whose brightness, force, and praise, sometime up to the skies you blew?  
My tears, my friendship and my pleasures done of old,

Shall they be quite forgot indeed?" When Romeus did behold  
The wildness of her look, her colour pale and dead,  
The worst of all that might betide to her, he 'gan to dread;  
And once again he did in arms his Juliet take,  
And kissed her with a loving kiss, and thus to her he spake:  
"Ah, Juliet," quoth he, "the mistress of my heart,  
For whom, even now, thy servant doth abide in deadly smart,  
Even for the happy days which thou desir'st to see,

And for the fervent friendship's sake that thou dost owe to me,  
At once these fancies vain out of thy mind root out,

Except, perhaps, unto thy blame, thou fondly go about  
To hasten forth my death, and to thine own to run,  
Which Nature's law and wisdom's lore teach every wight to shun.  
For, but thou change thy mind, I do foretell the end,  
Thou shalt undo thyself for aye, and me thy trusty friend.  
For why, thy absence known, thy father will be wroth,  
And in his rage so narrowly he will pursue us both,  
That we shall try in vain to 'scape away by flight,  
And vainly seek a lurking place to hide us from his sight.  
Then we, found out and caught, quite void of strong defence,

Shall cruelly be punished for thy departure hence;  
I as a ravisher, thou as a careless child,  
I as a man who doth defile, thou as a maid defiled;  
Thinking to lead in ease a long contented life,  
Shall short our days by shameful death: but if, my loving wife,  
Thou banish from thy mind two foes that counsel hath,  
That wont to hinder sound advice, rash hastiness and wrath;  
If thou be bent t'obey the lore of reason's skill  
And wisely by her princely power suppress rebelling will,  
If thou our safety seek, more than thine own delight,

Since surety stands in parting, and thy pleasures grow of sight,  
Forbear the cause of joy, and suffer for a while,  
So shall I safely live abroad, and safe turn from exile,  
So shall no slander's blot thy spotless life distain,  
So shall thy kinsmen be unstirred, and I exempt from pain.  
And think thou not, that aye the cause of care shall last;  
These stormy broils shall overblow, much like a winter's blast.  
For Fortune changeth more than fickle fantasy;  
In nothing Fortune constant is save in unconstancy.  
Her hasty running wheel is of a restless course,

That turns the climbers headlong down, from better to the worse,  
And those that are beneath she heaveth up again:  
So we shall rise to pleasure's mount, out of the pit of pain.  
Ere four months overpass, such order will I take,  
And by my letters and my friends such means I mind to make,  
That of my wand'ring race ended shall be the toil,  
And I called home with honour great unto my native soil.  
But if I be condemned to wander still in thrall,

I will return to you, mine own, befall what may befall.  
And then by strength of friends, and with a mighty hand,

From Verone will I carry thee into a foreign land,  
Not in man's weed disguised, or as one scarcely known,  
But as my wife and only fere, in garment of thine own.  
Wherefore repress at once the passions of thy heart,  
And where there is no cause of grief, cause hope to heal thy smart.  
For of this one thing thou may'st well assuréd be,  
That nothing else but only death shall sunder me from thee."

The reasons that he made did seem of so great weight,  
And had with her such force, that she to him 'gan answer straight:  
"Dear sir, nought else wish I but to obey your will;

But sure whereso you go, your heart with me shall tarry still,  
As sign and certain pledge, till here I shall you see,  
Of all the power that over you yourself did grant to me;  
And in his stead take mine, the gage of my good will. --  
One promise crave I at your hand, that grant me to fulfil;  
Fail not to let me have, at Friar Laurence' hand,  
The tidings of your health, and how your doubtful case shall stand.  
And all the weary while that you shall spend abroad,  
Cause me from time to time to know the place of your abode."  
His eyes did gush out tears, a sigh brake from his breast,

When he did grant and with an oath did vow to keep the hest.

Thus these two lovers pass away the weary night,  
In pain and plaint, not, as they wont, in pleasure and delight.  
But now, somewhat too soon, in farthest east arose  
Fair Lucifer, the golden star that lady Venus chose;  
Whose course appointed is with speedy race to run,  
A messenger of dawning day and of the rising sun.  
Then fresh Aurora with her pale and silver glade  
Did clear the skies, and from the earth had chaséd ugly shade.  
When thou ne lookest wide, ne closely dost thou wink

When Phoebus from our hemisphere in western wave doth sink,  
What colour then the heavens do show unto thine eyes,  
The same, or like, saw Romeus in farthest eastern skies.  
As yet he saw no day, ne could he call it night  
With equal force decreasing dark fought with increasing light.  
Then Romeus in arms his lady 'gan to fold,  
With friendly kiss, and ruthfully she 'gan her knight behold.  
With solemn oath they both their sorrowful leave do take;

They swear no stormy troubles shall their steady friendship shake.  
Then careful Romeus again to cell returns,

And in her chamber secretly our joyless Juliet mourns.  
Now huge clouds of care, of sorrow, and of dread,  
The clearness of their gladsome hearts hath wholly overspread.  
When golden-crested Phoebus boasteth him in sky,  
And under earth, to 'scape revenge, his deadly foe doth fly  
Then hath these lovers' day an end, their night begun,  
For each of them to other is as to the world the sun,  
The dawning they shall see, ne summer any more,  
But blackfaced night with winter rough, ah, beaten over sore.  
The weary watch discharged did hie them home to sleep,

The warders and the scouts were charged their place and course to keep,  
And Verone gates awide the porters had set open,  
When Romeus had of his affairs with Friar Laurence spoken.  
Warily he walked forth, unknown of friend or foe,  
Clad like a merchant venturer, from top even to the toe.  
He spurred apace, and came, withouten stop or stay,  
To Mantua gates, where lighted down, he sent his man away  
With words of comfort to his old afflicted sire;  
And straight, in mind to sojourn there, a lodging doth he hire,  
And with the nobler sort he doth himself acquaint,

And of his open wrong received the duke doth hear his plaint.  
He practiseth by friends for pardon of exile;  
The whilst he seeketh every way his sorrows to beguile.  
But who forgets the coal that burneth in his breast?  
Alas, his cares deny his heart the sweet desired rest;  
No time finds he of mirth, he finds no place of joy,  
But everything occasion gives of sorrow and annoy.  
For when in turning skies the heaven's lamps are light,  
And from the other hemisphere fair Phoebus chaseth night,  
When every man and beast hath rest from painful toil,

Then in the breast of Romeus his passions 'gin to boil.  
Then doth he wet with tears the couch whereon he lies,  
And then his sighs the chamber fill, and out aloud he cries  
Against the restless stars in rolling skies that range,  
Against the fatal sisters three, and Fortune full of change.  
Each night a thousand times he calleth for the day,  
He thinketh Titan's restless steeds of restiness do stay;  
Or that at length they have some baiting place found out,

Or, guided ill, have lost their way and wandered far about.  
While thus in idle thoughts the weary time he spendeth,

The night hath end, but not with night the plaint of night he endeth.  
Is he accompanied? Is he in place alone?  
In company he wails his harm, apart he maketh moan:  
For if his feres rejoice, what cause hath he to joy,  
That wanteth still his chief delight, while they their loves enjoy?  
But if with heavy cheer they show their inward grief,  
He waileth most his wretchedness that is of wretches chief.  
When he doth hear abroad the praise of ladies blown,  
Within his thought he scorneth them, and doth prefer his own.  
When pleasant songs he hears, while others do rejoice,

The melody of music doth stir up his mourning voice.  
But if in secret place he walk somewhere alone,  
The place itself and secretness redoubleth all his moan.  
Then speaks he to the beasts, to feathered fowls and trees,  
Unto the earth, the clouds, and to whatso beside he sees.  
To them he shew'th his smart, as though they reason had.  
Each thing may cause his heaviness, but nought may make him glad.  
And, weary of the day, again he calleth night,  
The sun he curseth, and the hour when first his eyes saw light.  
And as the night and day their course do interchange,

So doth our Romeus' nightly cares for cares of day exchange.

In absence of her knight the lady no way could  
Keep truce between her griefs and her, though ne'er so fain she would;  
And though with greater pain she cloakéd sorrow's smart,  
Yet did her paléd face disclose the passions of her heart.  
Her sighing every hour, her weeping everywhere,  
Her reckless heed of meat, of sleep, and wearing of her gear,  
The careful mother marks; then of her health afraid,  
Because the griefs increaséd still, thus to her child she said:  
"Dear daughter, if you should long languish in this sort,

I stand in doubt that oversoon your sorrows will make short  
Your loving father's life and mine, that love you more  
Than our own proper breath and life. Bridle henceforth therefore  
Your grief and pain, yourself on joy your thought to set,  
For time it is that now you should our Tybalt's death forget.  
Of whom since God hath claimed the life that was but lent,  
He is in bliss, ne is there cause why you should thus lament.  
You can not call him back with tears and shriekings shrill:

It is a fault thus still to grudge at God's appointed will."

The seely soul had now no longer power to feign,

No longer could she hide her harm, but answered thus again,

With heavy broken sighs, with visage pale and dead:

"Madam, the last of Tybalt's tears a great while since I shed.

Whose spring hath been ere this so laded out by me,

That empty quite and moistureless I guess it now to be.

So that my painéd heart by conduits of the eyne

No more henceforth, as wont it was, shall gush forth dropping brine."

The woeful mother knew not what her daughter meant,

And loth to vex her child by words, her peace she warely hent.

But when from hour to hour, from morrow to the morrow,

Still more and more she saw increased her daughter's wonted sorrow,

All means she sought of her and household folk to know

The certain root whereon her grief and bootless moan doth grow.

But lo, she hath in vain her time and labour lore,

Wherefore without all measure is her heart tormented sore.

And sith herself could not find out the cause of care,

She thought it good to tell the sire how ill his child did fare.

And when she saw her time, thus to her fere she said:

"Sir, if you mark our daughter well, the countenance of the maid,

And how she fareth since that Tybalt unto death,

Before his time, forced by his foe, did yield his living breath,

Her face shall seem so changed, her doings eke so strange,

That you will greatly wonder at so great and sudden change.

Not only she forbears her meat, her drink, and sleep,

But now she tendeth nothing else but to lament and weep.

No greater joy hath she, nothing contents her heart

So much as in the chamber close to shut herself apart;

Where she doth so torment her poor afflicted mind,

That much in danger stands her life, except some help we find.

But, out, alas, I see not how it may be found,

Unless that first we might find whence her sorrows thus abound.

For though with busy care I have employed my wit,

And used all the ways I knew to learn the truth of it,

Neither extremity ne gentle means could boot;

She hideth close within her breast her secret sorrow's root.

This was my first conceit, that all her ruth arose

Out of her cousin Tybalt's death, late slain of deadly foes;

But now my heart doth hold a new repugnant thought;

Some greater thing, not Tybalt's death, this change in her hath wrought.  
Herself assuréd me that many days ago

She shed the last of Tybalt's tears; which word amazed me so  
That I then could not guess what thing else might her grieve;  
But now at length I have bethought me; and I do believe  
The only crop and root of all my daughter's pain  
Is grudging envy's faint disease: perhaps she doth disdain  
To see in wedlock yoke the most part of her feres,  
Whilst only she unmarried doth lose so many years.  
And more perchance she thinks you mind to keep her so;  
Wherefore despairing doth she wear herself away with woe.  
Therefore, dear sir, in time take on your daughter ruth;

For why, a brickle thing is glass, and frail is frailless youth.  
Join her at once to some in link of marriage,  
That may be meet for our degree, and much about her age:  
So shall you banish care out of your daughter's breast,  
So we her parents, in our age, shall live in quiet rest."  
Whereto 'gan easily her husband to agree,  
And to the mother's skilful talk thus straightway answered he:  
"Oft have I thought, dear wife, of all these things ere this,  
But evermore my mind me gave, it should not be amiss  
By farther leisure had a husband to provide;

Scarce saw she yet full sixteen years: too young to be a bride!  
But since her state doth stand on terms so perilous,  
And that a maiden daughter is a treasure dangerous,  
With so great speed I will endeavour to procure  
A husband for our daughter young, her sickness faint to cure,  
That you shall rest content, so warely will I choose,  
And she recover soon enough the time she seems to lose.  
The whilst seek you to learn, if she in any part  
Already hath, unaware to us, fixéd her friendly heart;  
Lest we have more respect to honour and to wealth,

Than to our daughter's quiet life, and to her happy health;  
Whom I do hold as dear as th'apple of mine eye,  
And rather wish in poor estate and daughterless to die,  
Than leave my goods and her y-thralled to such a one,  
Whose churlish dealing, I once dead, should be her cause of moan."

This pleasant answer heard, the lady parts again,  
And Capulet, the maiden's sire, within a day or twain,  
Conferreth with his friends for marriage of his daughter,

And many gentlemen there were with busy care that sought her;  
Both for the maiden was well shapéd, young, and fair,

As also well brought up, and wise; her father's only heir.  
Among the rest was one inflamed with her desire,  
Who County Paris clepéd was; an earl he had to sire.  
Of all the suitors him the father liketh best,  
And easily unto the earl he maketh his behest,  
Both of his own good will, and of his friendly aid,  
To win his wife unto his will, and to persuade the maid.  
The wife did joy to hear the joyful husband say  
How happy hap, how meet a match, he had found out that day;  
Ne did she seek to hide her joys within her heart,

But straight she hieth to Juliet; to her she tells, apart,  
What happy talk, by mean of her, was past no rather  
Between the wooing Paris and her careful, loving father.  
The person of the man, the features of his face,  
His youthful years, his fairness, and his port, and seemly grace,  
With curious words she paints before her daughter's eyes,  
And then with store of virtue's praise she heaves him to the skies.  
She vaunts his race, and gifts that Fortune did him give,  
Whereby, she saith, both she and hers in great delight shall live.  
When Juliet conceived her parents' whole intent,

Whereto both love and reason's right forbode her to assent,  
Within herself she thought, rather than be forsworn,  
With horses wild her tender parts asunder should be torn.  
Not now, with bashful brow, in wonted wise, she spake,  
But with unwonted boldness straight into these words she brake:  
"Madam, I marvel much that you so lavas are  
Of me your child, your jewel once, your only joy and care,  
As thus to yield me up at pleasure of another,  
Before you know if I do like or else mislike my lover.  
Do what you list, but yet of this assure you still,

If you do as you say you will, I yield not there until.  
For had I choice of twain, far rather would I choose  
My part of all your goods and eke my breath and life to lose,  
Than grant that he possess of me the smallest part;  
First, weary of my painful life, my cares shall kill my heart,  
Else will I pierce my breast with sharp and bloody knife;  
And you, my mother, shall become the murd'ress of my life,  
In giving me to him whom I ne can, ne may,

Ne ought, to love: wherefore on knees, dear mother, I you pray,  
To let me live henceforth, as I have lived tofore;

Cease all your troubles for my sake, and care for me no more;  
But suffer Fortune fierce to work on me her will,  
In her it lieth to do me boot, in her it lieth to spill.  
For whilst you for the best desire to place me so,  
You haste away my ling'ring death, and double all my woe.

So deep this answer made the sorrows down to sink  
Into the mother's breast, that she ne knoweth what to think  
Of these her daughter's words, but all appalled she stands,  
And up unto the heavens she throws her wond'ring head and hands.  
And, nigh beside herself, her husband hath she sought;

She tells him all; she doth forget ne yet she hideth aught.  
The testy old man, wroth, disdainful without measure,  
Sends forth his folk in haste for her, and bids them take no leisure:  
Ne on her tears or plaint at all to have remorse,  
But, if they cannot with her will, to bring the maid perforce.  
The message heard, they part, to fetch that they must fet,  
And willingly with them walks forth obedient Juliet.  
Arrived in the place, when she her father saw,  
Of whom, as much as duty would, the daughter stood in awe,  
The servants sent away, (the mother thought it meet,)

The woeful daughter all bewept fell grovelling at his feet,  
Which she doth wash with tears as she thus grovelling lies --  
So fast, and eke so plenteously distil they from her eyes:  
When she to call for grace her mouth doth think to open,  
Muet she is -- for sighs and sobs her fearful talk have broken.  
The sire, whose swelling wrath her tears could not assuage,  
With fiery eyne, and scarlet cheeks, thus spake her in his rage,  
Whilst ruthfully stood by the maiden's mother mild:  
"Listen," quoth he, "unthankful and thou disobedient child,  
Hast thou so soon let slip out of thy mind the word

That thou so oftentimes hast heard rehearséd at my board?  
How much the Roman youth of parents stood in awe,  
And eke what power upon their seed the fathers had by law?  
Whom they not only might pledge, alienate, and sell,  
Whenso they stood in need, but more, if children did rebel,  
The parents had the power of life and sudden death.  
What if those goodmen should again receive the living breath,  
In how strait bonds would they thy stubborn body bind?

What weapons would they seek for thee? what torments would they find?  
To chasten, if they saw, the lewdness of thy life,

Thy great unthankfulness to me, and shameful sturdy strife?  
Such care thy mother had, so dear thou wert to me,  
That I with long and earnest suit provided have for thee  
One of the greatest lords that wones about this town,  
And for his many virtues' sake a man of great renown.  
Of whom both thou and I unworthy are too much,  
So rich ere long he shall be left, his father's wealth is such,  
Such is the nobleness and honour of the race,  
From whence his father came: and yet, thou playest in this case  
The dainty fool, and stubborn girl; for want of skill

Thou dost refuse thy offered weal, and disobey my will.  
Even by His strength I swear, that first did give me life,  
And gave me in my youth the strength to get thee on my wife,  
Unless by Wednesday next thou bend as I am bent,  
And at our castle called Freetown thou freely do assent  
To County Paris' suit, and promise to agree  
To whatsoever then shall pass 'twixt him, my wife, and me,  
Not only will I give all that I have away  
From thee, to those that shall me love, me honour, and obey,  
But also to so close and to so hard a gaol

I shall thee wed, for all thy life, that sure thou shalt not fail  
A thousand times a day to wish for sudden death,  
And curse the day and hour when first thy lungs did give thee breath.  
Advise thee well, and say that thou art warnéd now,  
And think not that I speak in sport, or mind to break my vow.  
For were it not that I to County Paris gave  
My faith, which I must keep unfalsed, my honour so to save,  
Ere thou go hence, myself would see thee chastened so,  
That thou should'st once for all be taught thy duty how to know;  
And what revenge of old the angry sires did find

Against their children that rebelled and showed themselves unkind."

These said, the old man straight is gone in haste away,  
Ne for his daughter's answer would the testy father stay.  
And after him his wife doth follow out of door,  
And there they leave their chidden child kneeling upon the floor:  
Then she that oft had seen the fury of her sire,  
Dreading what might come of his rage, nould farther stir his ire.  
Unto her chamber she withdrew herself apart,

Where she was wonted to unload the sorrows of her heart.  
There did she not so much busy her eyes in sleeping,

As overpressed with restless thoughts in piteous bootless weeping.  
The fast falling of tears make not her tears decrease,  
Ne, by the pouring forth of plaint, the cause of plaint doth cease.  
So that to th'end the moan and sorrow may decay,  
The best is that she seek some mean to take the cause away.  
Her weary bed betime the woeful wight forsakes,  
And to Saint Francis' church to mass her way devoutly takes.  
The friar forth is called; she prays him hear her shrift;  
Devotion is in so young years a rare and precious gift.  
When on her tender knees the dainty lady kneels,

In mind to pour forth all the grief that inwardly she feels,  
With sighs and salted tears her shriving doth begin,  
For she of heapéd sorrows hath to speak, and not of sin.  
Her voice with piteous plaint was made already hoarse,  
And hasty sobs, when she would speak, brake off her words perforce.  
But as she may, piece-meal, she poureth in his lap  
The marriage news, a mischief new, preparéd by mishap,  
Her parents' promise erst to County Paris past,  
Her father's threats she telleth him, and thus concludes at last:  
"Once was I wedded well, ne will I wed again;

For since I know I may not be the wedded wife of twain,  
For I am bound to have one God, one faith, one make,  
My purpose is as soon as I shall hence my journey take,  
With these two hands, which joined unto the heavens I stretch,  
The hasty death which I desire, unto myself to reach.  
This day, O Romeus, this day thy woeful wife  
Will bring the end of all her cares by ending careful life.  
So my departed sprite shall witness to the sky,  
And eke my blood unto the earth bear record, how that I  
Have kept my faith unbroke, steadfast unto my friend."

When this her heavy tale was told, her vow eke at an end,  
Her gazing here and there, her fierce and staring look,  
Did witness that some lewd attempt her heart had undertook.  
Whereat the friar astound, and ghaftfully afraid  
Lest she by deed perform her word, thus much to her he said:  
"Ah, Lady Juliet, what need the words you spake?  
I pray you, grant me one request, for blesséd Mary's sake.  
Measure somewhat your grief, hold here awhile your peace;

Whilst I bethink me of your case, your plaint and sorrows cease.  
Such comfort will I give you, ere you part from hence,

And for th'assaults of Fortune's ire prepare so sure defence,  
So wholesome salve will I for your afflictions find,  
That you shall hence depart again with well contented mind."

His words have chaséd straight out of her heart despair,  
Her black and ugly dreadful thoughts by hope are waxen fair.  
So Friar Laurence now hath left her there alone,  
And he out of the church in haste is to his chamber gone;  
Where sundry thoughts within his careful head arise;  
The old man's foresight divers doubts hath set before his eyes,  
His conscience one while condemns it for a sin  
To let her take Paris to spouse, since he himself had bin

The chiefest cause, that she unknown to father or mother,  
Not five months past, in that self place was wedded to another.  
Another while an hugy heap of dangers dread  
His restless thought hath heapéd up within his troubled head.  
Even of itself th'attempt he judgeth perilous;  
The execution eke he deems so much more dangerous,  
That to a woman's grace he must himself commit,  
That young is, simple and unaware, for weighty affairs unfit;  
For if she fail in aught, the matter publishéd,

Both she and Romeus were undone, himself eke punishéd.  
When to and fro in mind he divers thoughts had cast,  
With tender pity and with ruth his heart was won at last;  
He thought he rather would in hazard set his fame,  
Than suffer such adultery. Resolving on the same,  
Out of his closet straight he took a little glass,  
And then with double haste returned where woeful Juliet was;  
Whom he hath found well-nigh in trance, scarce drawing breath,  
Attending still to hear the news of life or else of death.  
Of whom he did enquire of the appointed day:

"On Wednesday next," quod Juliet, "so doth my father say,  
I must give my consent; but, as I do remember,  
The solemn day of marriage is the tenth day of September."  
"Dear daughter," quoth the friar, "of good cheer see thou be,  
For lo, Saint Francis of his grace hath showed a way to me,  
By which I may both thee and Romeus together  
Out of the bondage which you fear assurédly deliver.  
Even from the holy font thy husband have I known,

And, since he grew in years, have kept his counsels as mine own.  
 For from his youth he would unfold to me his heart,

And often have I curéd him of anguish and of smart;  
 I know that by desert his friendship I have won,  
 And I him hold as dear as if he were my proper son.  
 Wherefore my friendly heart cannot abide that he  
 Should wrongfully in aught be harmed, if that it lay in me  
 To right or to revenge the wrong by my advice,  
 Or timely to prevent the same in any other wise.  
 And sith thou art his wife, thee am I bound to love,  
 For Romeus' friendship's sake, and seek thy anguish to remove,  
 And dreadful torments, which thy heart besiegen round;

Wherefore, my daughter, give good ear unto my counsels sound.  
 Forget not what I say, ne tell it any wight,  
 Not to the nurse thou trustest so, as Romeus is thy knight;  
 For on this thread doth hang thy death and eke thy life,  
 My fame or shame, his weal or woe that chose thee to his wife.  
 Thou art not ignorant -- because of such renown  
 As everywhere is spread of me, but chiefly in this town --  
 That in my youthful days abroad I travelléd,  
 Through every land found out by men, by men inhabited;  
 So twenty years from home, in lands unknown a guest,

I never gave my weary limbs long time of quiet rest,  
 But in the desert woods, to beasts of cruel kind,  
 Or on the seas to drenching waves, at pleasure of the wind,  
 I have committed them, to ruth of rover's hand,  
 And to a thousand dangers more, by water and by land.  
 But not in vain, my child, hath all my wand'ring bin;  
 Beside the great contentedness my sprite abideth in,  
 That by the pleasant thought of passéd things doth grow,  
 One private fruit more have I plucked, which thou shalt shortly know:  
 What force the stones, the plants, and metals have to work,

And divers other things that in the bowels of earth do lurk,  
 With care I have sought out, with pain I did them prove;  
 With them eke can I help myself at times of my behove, --  
 Although the science be against the laws of men, --  
 When sudden danger forceth me; but yet most chiefly when  
 The work to do is least displeasing unto God,  
 Not helping to do any sin that wreakful Jove forbode.  
 For since in life no hope of long abode I have,

But now am come unto the brink of my appointed grave,  
And that my death draws near, whose stripe I may not shun,

But shall be called make account of all that I have done,  
Now ought I from henceforth more deeply print in mind  
The judgment of the Lord, than when youth's folly made me blind,  
When love and fond desire were boiling in my breast,  
Whence hope and dread by striving thoughts had banished friendly rest.  
Know therefore, daughter, that with other gifts which I  
Have well attained to, by grace and favour of the sky,  
Long since I did find out, and yet the way I know  
Of certain roots and savoury herbs to make a kind of dough,  
Which bakéd hard, and beat into a powder fine,

And drunk with conduit water, or with any kind of wine,  
It doth in half an hour astonne the taker so,  
And mast'reth all his senses, that he feeleth weal nor woe:  
And so it burieth up the sprite and living breath,  
That even the skilful leech would say, that he is slain by death.  
One virtue more it hath, as marvellous as this;  
The taker, by receiving it, at all not grievéd is;  
But painless as a man that thinketh nought at all,  
Into a sweet and quiet sleep immediately doth fall;  
From which, according to the quantity he taketh,

Longer or shorter is the time before the sleeper waketh;  
And thence, th'effect once wrought, again it doth restore  
Him that received unto the state wherein he was before.  
Wherefore, mark well the end of this my tale begun,  
And thereby learn what is by thee hereafter to be done.  
Cast off from thee at once the weed of womanish dread,  
With manly courage arm thyself from heel unto the head;  
For only on the fear or boldness of thy breast  
The happy hap or ill mishap of thy affair doth rest.  
Receive this vial small and keep it as thine eye;

And on thy marriage day, before the sun do clear the sky,  
Fill it with water full up to the very brim,  
Then drink it off, and thou shalt feel throughout each vein and limb  
A pleasant slumber slide, and quite dispread at length  
On all thy parts, from every part reave all thy kindly strength;  
Withouten moving thus thy idle parts shall rest,  
No pulse shall go, ne heart once beat within thy hollow breast,  
But thou shalt lie as she that dieth in a trance:

Thy kinsmen and thy trusty friends shall wail the sudden chance;  
Thy corpse then will they bring to grave in this churchyard,

Where thy forefathers long ago a costly tomb prepared,  
Both for themselves and eke for those that should come after,  
Both deep it is, and long and large, where thou shalt rest, my daughter,  
Till I to Mantua send for Romeus, thy knight;  
Out of the tomb both he and I will take thee forth that night.  
And when out of thy sleep thou shalt awake again,  
Then may'st thou go with him from hence; and, healéd of thy pain,  
In Mantua lead with him unknown a pleasant life;  
And yet perhaps in time to come, when cease shall all the strife,  
And that the peace is made 'twixt Romeus and his foes,

Myself may find so fit a time these secrets to disclose,  
Both to my praise, and to thy tender parents' joy,  
That dangerless, without reproach, thou shalt thy love enjoy."

When of his skilful tale the friar had made an end,  
To which our Juliet well her ear and wits did bend,  
That she hath heard it all and hath forgotten nought,  
Her fainting heart was comforted with hope and pleasant thought,  
And then to him she said: "Doubt not but that I will  
With stout and unappalléd heart your happy hest fulfil.  
Yea, if I wist it were a venomous deadly drink,

Rather would I that through my throat the certain bane should sink,  
Than I, not drinking it, into his hands should fall,  
That hath no part of me as yet, ne ought to have at all.  
Much more I ought with bold and with a willing heart  
To greatest danger yield myself, and to the deadly smart,  
To come to him on whom my life doth wholly stay,  
That is my only heart's delight, and so he shall be aye."  
"Then go," quoth he, "my child, I pray that God on high  
Direct thy foot, and by thy hand upon the way thee guide.  
God grant he so confirm in thee thy present will,

That no inconstant toy thee let thy promise to fulfil."  
A thousand thanks and more our Juliet gave the friar,  
And homeward to her father's house joyful she doth retire;  
And as with stately gait she passéd through the street,  
She saw her mother in the door, that with her there would meet,  
In mind to ask if she her purpose yet did hold,  
In mind also, apart 'twixt them, her duty to have told;  
Wherefore with pleasant face, and with unwonted cheer,

As soon as she was unto her approachéd somewhat near,  
Before the mother spake, thus did she first begin:

"Madam, at Saint Francis' church have I this morning bin,  
Where I did make abode a longer while, percase,  
Than duty would; yet have I not been absent from this place  
So long a while, without a great and just cause why;  
This fruit have I receivéd there -- my heart, erst like to die,  
Is now revived again, and my afflicted breast,  
Releaséd from affliction, restoréd is to rest!  
For lo, my troubled ghost, alas, too sore dis-eased,  
By ghostly counsel and advice hath Friar Laurence eased;  
To whom I did at large discourse my former life,

And in confession did I tell of all our passéd strife;  
Of County Paris' suit, and how my lord, my sire,  
By my ungrate and stubborn strife I stirréd unto ire;  
But lo, the holy friar hath by his ghostly lore  
Made me another woman now than I had been before.  
By strength of arguments he chargéd so my mind,  
That, though I sought, no sure defence my searching thought could find.  
So forced I was at length to yield up witless will,  
And promised to be ordered by the friar's praiséd skill.  
Wherefore, albeit I had rashly, long before,

The bed and rites of marriage for many years forswore,  
Yet mother, now behold your daughter at your will,  
Ready, if you command her aught, your pleasure to fulfil.  
Wherefore in humble wise, dear madam, I you pray,  
To go unto my lord and sire, withouten long delay;  
Of him first pardon crave of faults already past,  
And show him, if it pleaseth you, his child is now at last  
Obedient to his just and to his skilful hest,  
And that I will, God lending life, on Wednesday next be prest  
To wait on him and you, unto th'appointed place,

Where I will, in your hearing, and before my father's face,  
Unto the County give my faith and whole assent,  
And take him for my lord and spouse; thus fully am I bent;  
And that out of your mind I may remove all doubt,  
Unto my closet fare I now, to search and to choose out  
The bravest garments and the richest jewels there,  
Which, better him to please, I mind on Wednesday next to wear;  
For if I did excel the famous Grecian rape,

Yet might attire help to amend my beauty and my shape."

The simple mother was rapt into great delight;

Not half a word could she bring forth, but in this joyful plight  
 With nimble foot she ran, and with unwonted pace,  
 Unto her pensive husband, and to him with pleasant face  
 She told what she had heard, and praiseth much the friar,  
 And joyful tears ran down the cheeks of this gray-bearded sire.  
 With hands and eyes heaved up he thanks God in his heart,  
 And then he saith: "This is not, wife, the friar's first desert;  
 Oft hath he showed to us great friendship heretofore,  
 By helping us at needful times with wisdom's precious lore.  
 In all our commonweal scarce one is to be found

But is, for some good turn, unto this holy father bound.

Oh that the third part of my goods -- I do not feign --

But twenty of his passéd years might purchase him again!

So much in recompense of friendship would I give,

So much, in faith, his extreme age my friendly heart doth grieve."

These said, the glad old man from home go'th straight abroad

And to the stately palace hieth where Paris made abode;

Whom he desires to be on Wednesday next his geast,

At Freetown, where he minds to make for him a costly feast.

But lo, the earl saith, such feasting were but lost,

And counsels him till marriage-time to spare so great a cost,

For then he knoweth well the charges will be great;

The whilst, his heart desireth still her sight, and not his meat.

He craves of Capulet that he may straight go see

Fair Juliet; whereto he doth right willingly agree.

The mother, warned before, her daughter doth prepare;

She warneth and she chargeth her that in no wise she spare

Her courteous speech, her pleasant looks, and comely grace,

But liberally to give them forth when Paris comes in place:

Which she as cunningly could set forth to the show,

As cunning craftsmen to the sale do set their wares on row;

That ere the County did out of her sight depart,

So secretly unwares to him she stale away his heart,

That of his life and death the wily wench had power.

And now his longing heart thinks long for their appointed hour,

And with importune suit the parents doth he pray

The wedlock knot to knit soon up, and haste the marriage day.

The wooer hath passed forth the first day in this sort,

And many other more than this, in pleasure and disport.  
At length the wished time of long hoped delight,

As Paris thought, drew near; but near approachéd heavy plight.  
Against the bridal day the parents did prepare  
Such rich attire, such furniture, such store of dainty fare,  
That they which did behold the same the night before  
Did think and say, a man could scarcely wish for any more.  
Nothing did seem too dear; the dearest things were bought;  
And, as the written story saith, indeed there wanted nought  
That 'longed to his degree, and honour of his stock;  
But Juliet, the whilst, her thoughts within her breast did lock;  
Even from the trusty nurse, whose secretness was tried,

The secret counsel of her heart the nurse-child seeks to hide.  
For sith, to mock her Dame, she did not stick to lie,  
She thought no sin with show of truth to blear her nurse's eye.  
In chamber secretly the tale she 'gan renew,  
That at the door she told her dame, as though it had been true.  
The flatt'ring nurse did praise the friar for his skill,  
And said that she had done right well by wit to order will.  
She setteth forth at large the father's furious rage,  
And eke she praiseth much to her the second marriage;  
And County Paris now she praiseth ten times more,

By wrong, than she herself, by right, had Romeus praised before.  
Paris shall dwell there still, Romeus shall not return;  
What shall it boot her life to languish still and mourn?  
The pleasures past before she must account as gain;  
But if he do return, what then? -- for one she shall have twain.  
The one shall use her as his lawful wedded wife,  
In wanton love with equal joy the other lead his life;  
And best shall she be sped of any townish dame,  
Of husband and of paramour to find her change of game.  
These words and like the nurse did speak, in hope to please,

But greatly did these wicked words the lady's mind dis-ease;  
But aye she hid her wrath, and seeméd well content,  
When daily did the naughty nurse new arguments invent.  
But when the bride perceived her hour approachéd near,  
She sought, the best she could, to feign, and tempered so her cheer,  
That by her outward look no living wight could guess  
Her inward woe; and yet anew renewed is her distress.  
Unto her chamber doth the pensive wight repair,

And in her hand a percher light the nurse bears up the stair.  
In Juliet's chamber was her wonted use to lie;

Wherefore her mistress, dreading that she should her work descry,  
As soon as she began her pallet to unfold,  
Thinking to lie that night where she was wont to lie of old,  
Doth gently pray her seek her lodging somewhere else;  
And, lest she, crafty, should suspect, a ready reason tells.  
"Dear friend," quoth she, "you know to-morrow is the day  
Of new contract; wherefore, this night, my purpose is to pray  
Unto the heavenly minds that dwell above the skies,  
And order all the course of things as they can best devise,  
That they so smile upon the doings of to-morrow,

That all the remnant of my life may be exempt from sorrow:  
Wherefore, I pray you, leave me here alone this night,  
But see that you to-morrow come before the dawning light,  
For you must curl my hair, and set on my attire."  
And easily the loving nurse did yield to her desire,  
For she within her head did cast before no doubt;  
She little knew the close attempt her nurse-child went about.

The nurse departed once, the chamber door shut close,  
Assuréd that no living wight her doing might disclose,  
She pouréd forth into the vial of the friar

Water, out of a silver ewer that on the board stood by her.  
The sleepy mixture made, fair Juliet doth it hide  
Under her bolster soft, and so unto her bed she hied:  
Where divers novel thoughts arise within her head,  
And she is so environed about with deadly dread,  
That what before she had resolved undoubtedly  
That same she calleth into doubt; and lying doubtfully,  
Whilst honest love did strive with dread of deadly pain,  
With hands y-wrung, and weeping eyes, thus gan she to complain:  
"What, is there any one, beneath the heavens high,

So much unfortunate as I? so much past hope as I?  
What, am I not myself, of all that yet were born,  
The deepest drenchéd in despair, and most in Fortune's scorn?  
For lo, the world for me hath nothing else to find,  
Beside mishap and wretchedness and anguish of the mind;  
Since that the cruel cause of my unhappiness  
Hath put me to this sudden plunge, and brought to such distress,  
As, to the end I may my name and conscience save,

I must devour the mixed drink that by me here I have,  
Whose working and whose force as yet I do not know."

And of this piteous plaint began another doubt to grow:  
"What do I know," quoth she, "if that this powder shall  
Sooner or later than it should, or else, not work at all?  
And then my craft descried as open as the day,  
The people's tale and laughing-stock shall I remain for aye."  
"And what know I," quoth she, "if serpents odious,  
And other beasts and worms that are of nature venomous,  
That wonted are to lurk in dark caves underground,  
And commonly, as I have heard, in dead men's tombs are found,  
Shall harm me, yea or nay, where I shall lie as dead? --

Or how shall I that alway have in so fresh air been bred,  
Endure the lothsome stink of such an heapéd store  
Of carcases not yet consumed, and bones that long before  
Intombéd were, where I my sleeping-place shall have,  
Where all my ancestors do rest, my kindred's common grave?  
Shall not the friar and my Romeus, when they come,  
Find me, if I awake before, y-stifled in the tomb?"

And whilst she in these thoughts doth dwell somewhat too long,  
The force of her imagining anon did wax so strong,  
That she surmised she saw, out of the hollow vault,

A grisly thing to look upon, the carcase of Tybalt;  
Right in the selfsame sort that she few days before  
Had seen him in his blood embrued, to death eke wounded sore.  
And then when she again within herself had weighed  
That quick she should be buried there, and by his side be laid,  
All comfortless, for she shall living fere have none,  
But many a rotten carcase, and full many a naked bone;  
Her dainty tender parts 'gan shiver all for dread,  
Her golden hairs did stand upright upon her chillish head.  
Then presséd with the fear that she there livéd in,

A sweat as cold as mountain ice pierced through her slender skin,  
That with the moisture hath wet every part of hers:  
And more besides, she vainly thinks, whilst vainly thus she fears,  
A thousand bodies dead have compassed her about,  
And lest they will dismember her she greatly stands in doubt.  
But when she felt her strength began to wear away,  
By little and little, and in her heart her fear increaséd aye,  
Dreading that weakness might, or foolish cowardice,

Hinder the execution of the purposed enterprise,  
As she had frantic been, in haste the glass she caught,

And up she drank the mixture quite, withouten farther thought.  
Then on her breast she crossed her arms long and small,  
And so, her senses failing her, into a trance did fall.

And when that Phoebus bright heaved up his seemly head,  
And from the East in open skies his glist'ring rays dispread,  
The nurse unshut the door, for she the key did keep,  
And doubting she had slept too long, she thought to break her sleep;  
First softly did she call, then louder thus did cry:  
"Lady, you sleep too long; the earl will raise you by and by."  
But, well away, in vain unto the deaf she calls,

She thinks to speak to Juliet, but speaketh to the walls.  
If all the dreadful noise that might on earth be found,  
Or on the roaring seas, or if the dreadful thunder's sound  
Had blown into her ears, I think they could not make  
The sleeping wight before the time by any means awake;  
So were the sprites of life shut up, and senses thrall'd;  
Wherewith the seely careful nurse was wondrously appall'd.  
She thought to daw her now as she had done of old,  
But lo, she found her parts were stiff and more than marble cold;  
Neither at mouth nor nose found she recourse of breath;

Two certain arguments were these of her untimely death.  
Wherefore, as one distraught, she to her mother ran,  
With scratchéd face, and hair betorn, but no word speak she can,  
At last, with much ado, "Dead," quoth she, "is my child!"  
"Now, out, alas!" the mother cried, and as a tiger wild,  
Whose whelps, whilst she is gone out of her den to prey,  
The hunter greedy of his game doth kill or carry away;  
So raging forth she ran unto her Juliet's bed,  
And there she found her darling and her only comfort dead.  
Then shrieked she out as loud as serve her would her breath,

And then, that pity was to hear, thus cried she out on Death:  
"Ah cruel Death," quoth she, "that thus against all right,  
Hast ended my felicity, and robbed my heart's delight,  
Do now thy worst to me, once wreak thy wrath for all,  
Even in despite I cry to thee, thy vengeance let thou fall.  
Whereto stay I, alas, since Juliet is gone?  
Whereto live I, since she is dead, except to wail and moan?  
Alack, dear child, my tears for thee shall never cease;

Even as my days of life increase, so shall my plaint increase:  
Such store of sorrow shall afflict my tender heart,

That deadly pangs, when they assail shall not augment my smart."  
Then 'gan she so to sob, it seemed her heart would brast;  
And while she crieth thus, behold, the father at the last,  
The County Paris, and of gentlemen a rout,  
And ladies of Verona town and country round about,  
Both kindreds and allies thither apace have preast,  
For by their presence there they sought to honour so the feast;  
But when the heavy news the bidden guests did hear,  
So much they mourned, that who had seen their count'nance and their cheer,  
Might easily have judged by that that they had seen,

That day the day of wrath and eke of pity to have been.  
But more than all the rest the father's heart was so  
Smit with the heavy news, and so shut up with sudden woe,  
That he ne had the power his daughter to be-weep,  
Ne yet to speak, but long is forced his tears and plaint to keep.  
In all the haste he hath for skilful leeches sent;  
And, hearing of her passéd life, they judge with one assent  
The cause of this her death was inward care and thought;  
And then with double force again the doubled sorrows wrought.  
If ever there hath been a lamentable day,

A day ruthful, unfortunate and fatal, then I say,  
The same was it in which through Verone town was spread  
The woeful news how Juliet was stervéd in her bed.  
For so she was bemoaned both of the young and old,  
That it might seem to him that would the common plaint behold,  
That all the commonwealth did stand in jeopardy;  
So universal was the plaint, so piteous was the cry.  
For lo, beside her shape and native beauty's hue,  
With which, like as she grew in age, her virtues' praises grew,  
She was also so wise, so lowly, and so mild,

That even from the hoary head unto the witless child,  
She wan the hearts of all, so that there was not one,  
Ne great, ne small, but did that day her wretched state bemoan.

Whilst Juliet slept, and whilst the other weepen thus,  
Our Friar Laurence hath by this sent one to Romeus,  
A friar of his house, -- there never was a better,  
He trusted him even as himself, -- to whom he gave a letter,  
In which he written had of everything at length,

That passed 'twixt Juliet and him, and of the powder's strength;  
The next night after that, he willeth him to come

To help to take his Juliet out of the hollow tomb,  
For by that time the drink, he saith, will cease to work,  
And for one night his wife and he within his cell shall lurk;  
Then shall he carry her to Mantua away, --  
Till fickle Fortune favour him, -- disguised in man's array.

This letter closed he sends to Romeus by his brother;  
He chargeth him that in no case he give it any other.  
Apace our Friar John to Mantua him hies;  
And, for because in Italy it is a wonted guise  
That friars in the town should seldom walk alone,

But of their convent eye should be accompanied with one  
Of his profession, straight a house he findeth out,  
In mind to take some friar with him, to walk the town about.  
But entered once he might not issue out again,  
For that a brother of the house, a day before or twain,  
Died of the plague -- a sickness which they greatly fear and hate --  
So were the brethren charged to keep within their convent gate,  
Barred of their fellowship that in the town do wone;  
The townfolk eke commanded are the friar's house to shun  
Till they that had the care of health their freedom should renew;

Whereof, as you shall shortly hear, a mischief great there grew.  
The friar by this restraint, beset with dread and sorrow,  
Not knowing what the letters held, deferred until the morrow;  
And then he thought in time to send to Romeus.  
But whilst at Mantua where he was, these doings framéd thus,  
The town of Juliet's birth was wholly busiéd  
About her obsequies, to see their darling buriéd.  
Now is the parents' mirth quite changéd into moan,  
And now to sorrow is returned the joy of every one;  
And now the wedding weeds for mourning weeds they change,

And Hymene into a dirge; -- alas! it seemeth strange:  
Instead of marriage gloves, now funeral gloves they have,  
And whom they should see marriéd, they follow to the grave.  
The feast that should have been of pleasure and of joy,  
Hath every dish and cup filled full of sorrow and annoy.

Now throughout Italy this common use they have,  
That all the best of every stock are earthéd in one grave:  
For every household, if it be of any fame,

Doth build a tomb, or dig a vault, that bears the household's name;  
Wherein, if any of that kindred hap to die,

They are bestowed; else in the same no other corpse may lie.  
The Capulets her corpse in such a one did lay,  
Where Tybalt, slain of Romeus, was laid the other day.  
Another use there is, that whosoever dies,  
Borne to their church with open face upon the bier he lies,  
In wonted weed attired, not wrapped in winding sheet.  
So, as by chance he walked abroad, our Romeus' man did meet  
His master's wife; the sight with sorrow straight did wound  
His honest heart; with tears he saw her lodgéd underground.  
And, for he had been sent to Verone for a spy,

The doings of the Capulets by wisdom to descry,  
And for he knew her death did touch his master most,  
Alas, too soon, with heavy news he hied away in post;  
And in his house he found his master Romeus,  
Where he, besprent with many tears, began to speak him thus:  
"Sire, unto you of late is chanced so great a harm,  
That sure, except with constancy you seek yourself to arm,  
I fear that straight you will breathe out your latter breath,  
And I, most wretched wight, shall be th'occasion of your death.  
Know, sir, that yesterday, my lady and your wife,

I wot not by what sudden grief, hath made exchange of life  
And for because on earth she found nought but unrest,  
In heaven hath she sought to find a place of quiet rest  
And with these weeping eyes myself have seen her laid  
Within the tomb of Capulets": and herewithal he stayed.

This sudden message' sound, sent forth with sighs and tears,  
Our Romeus received too soon with open list'ning ears  
And thereby hath sunk in such sorrow in his heart,  
That lo, his sprite annoyéd sore with torment and with smart,  
Was like to break out of his prison house perforce,

And that he might fly after hers, would leave the massy corse.  
But earnest love that will not fail him till his end,  
This fond and sudden fantasy into his head did send:  
That if near unto her he offered up his breath,  
That then a hundred thousand parts more glorious were his death.  
Eke should his painful heart a great deal more be eased,  
And more also, he vainly thought, his lady better pleased.  
Wherefore when he his face hath washed with water clean,

Lest that the stains of dried tears might on his cheeks be seen,  
And so his sorrow should of everyone be spied,

Which he with all his care did seek from everyone to hide,  
Straight, weary of the house, he walketh forth abroad:  
His servant, at the master's hest, in chamber still abode;  
And then fro street to street he wand'reth up and down,  
To see if he in any place may find, in all the town,  
A salve meet for his sore, an oil fit for his wound;  
And seeking long -- alack, too soon! -- the thing he sought, he found.

An apothecary sat unbusied at his door,  
Whom by his heavy countenance he guessed to be poor.  
And in his shop he saw his boxes were but few,

And in his window, of his wares, there was so small a shew;  
Wherefore our Romeus assuredly hath thought,  
What by no friendship could be got, with money should be bought;  
For needy lack is like the poor man to compel  
To sell that which the city's law forbiddeth him to sell.  
Then by the hand he drew the needy man apart,  
And with the sight of glittering gold inflaméd hath his heart:  
"Take fifty crowns of gold," quoth he, "I give them thee,  
So that, before I part from hence, thou straight deliver me  
Some poison strong, that may in less than half an hour

Kill him whose wretched hap shall be the potion to devour."  
The wretch by covetise is won, and doth assent  
To sell the thing, whose sale ere long, too late, he doth repent.  
In haste he poison sought, and closely he it bound,  
And then began with whispering voice thus in his ear to round:  
"Fair sir," quoth he, "be sure this is the speeding gear,  
And more there is than you shall need; for half of that is there  
Will serve, I undertake, in less than half an hour  
To kill the strongest man alive; such is the poison's power."

Then Romeus, somewhat eased of one part of his care,

Within his bosom putteth up his dear unthrifty ware.  
Returning home again, he sent his man away  
To Verone town, and chargeth him that he, without delay,  
Provide both instruments to open wide the tomb,  
And lights to show him Juliet; and stay till he shall come  
Near to the place whereas his loving wife doth rest,  
And chargeth him not to bewray the dolours of his breast.  
Peter, these heard, his leave doth of his master take;

Betime he comes to town, such haste the painful man did make:  
And then with busy care he seeketh to fulfil,

But doth disclose unto no wight his woeful master's will.  
Would God, he had herein broken his master's hest!  
Would God, that to the friar he had disclosed all his breast!  
But Romeus the while with many a deadly thought  
Provokéd much, hath caused ink and paper to be brought,  
And in few lines he did of all his love discourse,  
How by the friar's help, and by the knowledge of the nurse,  
The wedlock knot was knit, and by what mean that night  
And many mo he did enjoy his happy heart's delight;  
Where he the poison bought, and how his life should end;

And so his wailful tragedy the wretched man hath penned.

The letters closed and sealed, directed to his sire,  
He locketh in his purse, and then a post-horse doth he hire.  
When he approachéd near, he warely lighted down,  
And even with the shade of night he entered Verone town  
Where he hath found his man, waiting when he should come,  
With lantern, and with instruments to open Juliet's tomb.  
"Help, Peter, help," quod he, "help to remove the stone,  
And straight when I am gone fro thee, my Juliet to bemoan,  
See that thou get thee hence, and on the pain of death

I charge thee that thou come not near while I abide beneath,  
Ne seek thou not to let thy master's enterprise,  
Which he hath fully purposéd to do, in any wise.  
Take there a letter, which, as soon as he shall rise,  
Present it in the morning to my loving father's eyes;  
Which unto him, perhaps, far pleasanter shall seem,  
Than either I do mind to say, or thy gross head can deem."

Now Peter, that knew not the purpose of his heart,  
Obediently a little way withdrew himself apart;  
And then our Romeus (the vault-stone set upright),

Descended down, and in his hand he bare the candle light.  
And then with piteous eye the body of his wife  
He 'gan behold, who surely was the organ of his life;  
For whom unhappy now he is, but erst was blissed,  
He watered her with tears, and then a hundred times her kissed;  
And in his folded arms full straitly he her plight,  
But no way could his greedy eyes be filléd with her sight:  
His fearful hands he laid upon her stomach cold,

And them on divers parts beside the woeful wight did hold.  
But when he could not find the signs of life he sought,

Out of his curséd box he drew the poison that he bought;  
Whereof he greedily devoured the greater part,  
And then he cried, with deadly sigh fetched from his mourning heart:  
"O Juliet, of whom the world unworthy was,  
From which, for world's unworthiness thy worthy ghost did pass,  
What death more pleasant could my heart wish to abide  
Than that which here it suff'reth now, so near thy friendly side?  
Or else so glorious tomb how could my youth have craved,  
As in one self-same vault with thee haply to be ingraved?  
What epitaph more worth, or half so excellent,

To consecrate my memory, could any man invent,  
As this our mutual and our piteous sacrifice  
Of life, set light for love?" But while he talketh in this wise,  
And thought as yet awhile his dolours to enforce,  
His tender heart began to faint, pressed with the venom's force;  
Which little and little 'gan to overcome his heart,  
And whilst his busy eyne he threw about to every part,  
He saw, hard by the corse of sleeping Juliet,  
Bold Tybalt's carcasse dead, which was not all consuméd yet  
To whom, as having life, in this sort speaketh he:

"Ah, cousin dear, Tybalt, whereso thy restless sprite now be  
With stretchéd hands to thee for mercy now I cry,  
For that before thy kindly hour I forcéd thee to die.  
But if with quenched life not quenched be thine ire,  
But with revenging lust as yet thy heart be set on fire,  
What more amends, or cruel wreak desirest thou  
To see on me, than this which here is showed forth to thee now?  
Who reft by force of arms from thee thy living breath,  
The same with his own hand, thou seest, doth poison himself to death.  
And for he caused thee in tomb too soon to lie,

Too soon also, younger than thou, himself he layeth by."

These said, when he 'gan feel the poison's force prevail,  
And little and little mastered life for aye began to fail,  
Kneeling upon his knees, he said with voice full low, --  
"Lord Christ, that so to ransom me descendedst long ago  
Out of thy Father's bosom, and in the Virgin's womb  
Didst put on flesh, oh, let my plaint out of this hollow tomb,  
Pierce through the air, and grant my suit may favour find;

Take pity on my sinful and my poor afflicted mind!  
For well enough I know, this body is but clay,

Nought but a mass of sin, too frail, and subject to decay."  
Then pressed with extreme grief he threw with so great force  
His overpresséd parts upon his lady's wailéd corse,  
That now his weakened heart, weakened with torments past,  
Unable to abide this pang, the sharpest and the last,  
Remainéd quite deprived of sense and kindly strength,  
And so the long imprisoned soul hath freedom won at length  
Ah cruel death, too soon, too soon was this divorce,  
'Twixt youthful Romeus' heavenly sprite, and his fair earthy corse!

The friar that knew what time the powder had been taken,  
Knew eke the very instant when the sleeper should awaken;  
But wondering that he could no kind of answer hear  
Of letters which to Romeus his fellow friar did bear,  
Out of Saint Francis' church himself alone did fare,  
And for the opening of the tomb meet instruments he bare.  
Approaching nigh the place and seeing there the light,  
Great horror felt he in his heart, by strange and sudden sight;  
Till Peter, Romeus' man, his coward heart made bold,  
When of his master's being there the certain news he told:  
"There hath he been," quoth he, "this half hour at the least

And in this time, I dare well say, his plaint hath still increast."  
Then both they entered in, where they, alas, did find  
The breathless corpse of Romeus, forsaken of the mind:  
Where they have made such moan, as they may best conceive,  
That have with perfect friendship loved, whose friend fierce death did reave.  
But whilst with piteous plaint they Romeus' fate bewEEP,  
An hour too late fair Juliet awakéd out of sleep;  
And much amazed to see in tomb so great a light,  
She wist not if she saw a dream, or sprite that walked by night.  
But coming to herself she knew them, and said thus:

"What, friar Laurence, is it you? Where is my Romeus?"  
And then the ancient friar, that greatly stood in fear,  
Lest, if they lingered over long they should be taken there,  
In few plain words the whole that was betid, he told,  
And with his finger showed his corpse out-stretchéd, stiff, and cold;  
And then persuaded her with patience to abide  
This sudden great mischance, and saith, that he will soon provide  
In some religious house for her a quiet place,

Where she may spend the rest of life, and where in time, perchance,  
 She may with wisdom's mean measure her mourning breast,

And unto her tormented soul call back exiled rest.  
 But lo, as soon as she had cast her ruthful eye  
 On Romeus' face, that pale and wan fast by her side did lie,  
 Straightway she did unstop the conduits of her tears,  
 And out they gush; -- with cruel hand she tare her golden hairs.  
 But when she neither could her swelling sorrow 'suage  
 Ne yet her tender heart abide her sickness' furious rage,  
 Fall'n on his corpse she lay, long panting on his face,  
 And then with all her force and strength the dead corpse did embrace.  
 As though with sighs, with sobs, with force, and busy pain

She would him raise, and him restore from death to life again:  
 A thousand times she kissed his mouth, as cold as stone,  
 And it unkissed again as oft; then 'gan she thus to moan:  
 "Ah, pleasant prop of all my thoughts, ah, only ground  
 Of all the sweet delights that yet in all my life I found,  
 Did such assuréd trust within thy heart repose,  
 That in this place and at this time, thy churchyard thou hast chose  
 Betwixt the arms of me, thy perfect-loving make  
 And thus by means of me to end thy life, and for my sake ?  
 Even in the flow'ring of thy youth, when unto thee

Thy life most dear, as to the most, and pleasant ought to be,  
 How could this tender corpse withstand the cruel fight  
 Of furious Death, that wons to fray the stoutest with his sight?  
 How could thy dainty youth agree with willing heart,  
 In this so foul-infected place to dwell, where now thou art?  
 Where spiteful Fortune hath appointed thee to be  
 The dainty food of greedy worms, unworthy, sure, of thee.  
 Alas, alas, alas, what needed now anew  
 My wonted sorrows, doubled twice, again thus to renew?  
 Which both the time and eke my patient long abode

Should now at length have quenched quite, and under foot have trode?  
 Ah, wretch and caitive that I am, even when I thought  
 To find my painful passion's salve, I missed the thing I sought;  
 And to my mortal harm the fatal knife I ground,  
 That gave to me so deep, so wide, so cruel deadly wound!  
 Ah thou, most fortunate and most unhappy tomb!  
 For thou shalt bear, from age to age, witness in time to come  
 Of the most perfect league betwixt a pair of lovers,

That were the most unfortunate and fortunate of others,  
 Receive the latter sigh, receive the latter pang,

Of the most cruel of cruel slaves that wrath and death aye wrang."

And when our Juliet would continue still her moan,  
 The friar and the servant fled, and left her there alone;  
 For they a sudden noise fast by the place did hear,  
 And lest they might be taken there, greatly they stood in fear.  
 When Juliet saw herself left in the vault alone,  
 That freely she might work her will, for let or stay was none,  
 Then once for all she took the cause of all her harms,  
 The body dead of Romeus, and clasped it in her arms;  
 Then she with earnest kiss sufficiently did prove,

That more than by the fear of death, she was attaint by love;  
 And then past deadly fear, for life ne had she care,  
 With hasty hand she did draw out the dagger that he ware.  
 "O welcome Death," quoth she, "end of unhappiness,  
 That also art beginning of assuréd happiness,  
 Fear not to dart me now, thy stripe no longer stay,  
 Prolong no longer now my life, I hate this long delay;  
 For straight my parting sprite, out of this carcass fled,  
 At ease shall find my Romeus' sprite among so many dead.  
 And thou my loving lord, Romeus, my trusty fere,

If knowledge yet do rest in thee, if thou these words dost hear,  
 Receive thou her whom thou didst love so lawfully,  
 That caused, alas, thy violent death, although unwillingly;  
 And therefore willingly offers to thee her ghost,  
 To th'end that no wight else but thou might have just cause to boast  
 Th'enjoying of my love, which aye I have reserved  
 Free from the rest, bound unto thee, that hast it well deserved;  
 That so our parted sprites from light that we see here,  
 In place of endless light and bliss may ever live y-fere."  
 These said, her ruthless hand through-girt her valiant heart:

Ah, ladies, help with tears to wail the lady's deadly smart!  
 She groans, she stretcheth out her limbs, she shuts her eyes,  
 And from her corpse the sprite doth fly; -- what should I say -- she dies.  
 The watchmen of the town the whilst are passéd by,  
 And through the gates the candle-light within the tomb they spy;  
 Whereby they did suppose enchanters to be come,  
 That with prepared instruments had opened wide the tomb,  
 In purpose to abuse the bodies of the dead,

Which by their science' aid abused, do stand them oft in stead.  
Their curious hearts desire the truth hereof to know;

Then they by certain steps descend, where they do find below,  
In claspéd arms y-wrapt, the husband and the wife,  
In whom as yet they seemed to see some certain marks of life.  
But when more curiously with leisure they did view,  
The certainty of both their deaths assuredly they knew:  
Then here and there so long with careful eye they sought,  
That at the length hidden they found the murth'ers; -- so they thought.  
In dungeon deep that night they lodged them underground;  
The next day do they tell the prince the mischief that they found.

The news was by and by throughout the town dispread,

Both of the taking of the friar, and of the two found dead.  
Thither might you have seen whole households forth to run,  
For to the tomb where they did hear this wonder strange was done,  
The great, the small, the rich, the poor, the young, the old,  
With hasty pace do run to see, but rue when they behold.  
And that the murtherers to all men might be known,  
Like as the murder's bruit abroad through all the town was blown,  
The prince did straight ordain, the corses that were found  
Should be set forth upon a stage high raiséd from the ground,  
Right in the selfsame form, showed forth to all men's sight,

That in the hollow vault they had been found that other night;  
And eke that Romeus' man and Friar Laurence should  
Be openly examinéd; for else the people would  
Have murmuréd, or feigned there were some weighty cause  
Why openly they were not called, and so convict by laws.

The holy friar now, and reverent by his age,  
In great reproach set to the show upon the open stage, --  
A thing that ill beseemed a man of silver hairs, --  
His beard as white as milk he bathes with great fast-falling tears:  
Whom straight the dreadful judge commandeth to declare

Both, how this murther had been done, and who the murth'ers are;  
For that he near the tomb was found at hours unfit,  
And had with him those iron tools for such a purpose fit.  
The friar was of lively sprite and free of speech,  
The judge's words appalled him not, ne were his wits to seech,  
But with advised heed a while first did he stay,  
And then with bold assuréd voice aloud thus 'gan he say:

"My lords, there is not one among you, set together,  
So that, affection set aside, by wisdom he consider

My former passéd life, and this my extreme age,  
And eke this heavy sight, the wreak of frantic Fortune's rage,  
But that, amazéd much, doth wonder at this change,  
So great, so suddenly befall'n, unlooked for, and strange.  
For I, that in the space of sixty years and ten,  
Since first I did begin, too soon, to lead my life with men,  
And with the world's vain things, myself I did acquaint,  
Was never yet, in open place, at any time attaint  
With any crime, in weight as heavy as a rush,  
Ne is there any stander-by can make me guilty blush,  
Although before the face of God, I do confess

Myself to be the sinfull'st wretch of all this mighty press.  
When readiest I am and likeliest to make  
My great accompt, which no man else for me shall undertake;  
When worms, the earth, and death, do cite me every hour,  
T'appear before the judgment seat of everlasting power,  
And falling ripe, I step upon my grave's brink,  
Even then, am I, most wretched wight, as each of you doth think,  
Through my most heinous deed, with headlong sway thrown down,  
In greatest danger of my life, and damage of renown.  
The spring, whence in your head this new conceit doth rise,

And in your heart increaseth still your vain and wrong surmise,  
May be the hugeness of these tears of mine, percase,  
That so abundantly down fall by either side my face;  
As though the memory in Scriptures were not kept  
That Christ our Saviour himself for ruth and pity wept;  
And more, whoso will read, y-written shall he find,  
That tears are as true messengers of man's unguilty mind.  
Or else, a liker proof, that I am in the crime,  
You say these present irons are, and the suspected time;  
As though all hours alike had not been made above!

Did Christ not say, the day had twelve -- whereby he sought to prove,  
That no respect of hours ought justly to be had,  
But at all times men have the choice of doing good or bad;  
Even as the sprite of God the hearts of men doth guide,  
Or as it leaveth them to stray from virtue's path aside.  
As for the irons that were taken in my hand,  
As now I deem, I need not seek to make ye understand  
To what use iron first was made, when it began;

How of itself it helpeth not, ne yet can help a man.  
The thing that hurteth is the malice of his will,

That such indifferent things is wont to use and order ill.  
Thus much I thought to say, to cause you so to know  
That neither these my piteous tears, though ne'er so fast they flow,  
Ne yet these iron tools, nor the suspected time,  
Can justly prove the murther done, or damn me of the crime:  
No one of these hath power, ne power have all the three,  
To make me other than I am, how so I seem to be.  
But sure my conscience, if so my guilt deserve,  
For an appeacher, witness, and a hangman, eke should serve;  
For through mine age, whose hairs of long time since were hoar,

And credit great that I was in, with you, in time tofore,  
And eke the sojourn short that I on earth must make,  
That every day and hour do look my journey hence to take,  
My conscience inwardly should more torment me thrice,  
Than all the outward deadly pain that all you could devise.  
But, God I praise, I feel no worm that gnaweth me,  
And from remorse's pricking sting I joy that I am free:  
I mean, as touching this, wherewith you troubled are,  
Wherewith you should be troubled still, if I my speech should spare.  
But to the end I may set all your hearts at rest,

And pluck out all the scruples that are rooted in your breast,  
Which might perhaps henceforth, increasing more and more,  
Within your conscience also increase your cureless sore,  
I swear by yonder heavens, whither I hope to climb,  
And for a witness of my words my heart attesteth Him,  
Whose mighty hand doth wield them in their violent sway,  
And on the rolling stormy seas the heavy earth doth stay,  
That I will make a short and eke a true discourse  
Of this most woeful tragedy, and show both th'end and source  
Of their unhappy death, which you perchance no less

Will wonder at than they, alas, poor lovers in distress,  
Tormented much in mind, not forcing lively breath,  
With strong and patient heart did yield themselves to cruel death:  
Such was the mutual love wherein they burnéd both,  
And of their promised friendship's faith so steady was the troth."

And then the ancient friar began to make discourse,  
Even from the first, of Romeus' and Juliet's amours;  
How first by sudden sight the one the other chose,

And 'twixt themselves did knit the knot which only death might loose;  
 And how, within a while, with hotter love oppressed,

Under confession's cloak, to him themselves they have addressed,  
 And how with solemn oaths they have protested both,  
 That they in heart are married by promise and by oath;  
 And that except he grant the rites of church to give,  
 They shall be forced by earnest love in sinful state to live:  
 Which thing when he had weighed, and when he understood  
 That the agreement 'twixt them twain was lawful, honest, good,  
 And all things pleased well, it seemed meet to be,  
 For like they were of nobleness, age, riches, and degree:  
 Hoping that so, at length, ended might be the strife,

Of Montagues and Capulets, that led in hate their life,  
 Thinking to work a work well pleasing in God's sight,  
 In secret shrift he wedded them; and they the self-same night  
 Made up the marriage in house of Capulet,  
 As well doth know, if she be asked, the nurse of Juliet.  
 He told how Romeus fled for reaving Tybalt's life,  
 And how, the whilst, Paris the earl was offered to his wife;  
 And how the lady did so great a wrong disdain,  
 And how to shrift unto his church she came to him again;  
 And how she fell flat down before his feet aground,

And how she swore, her hand and bloody knife should wound  
 Her harmless heart, except that he some mean did find  
 To disappoint the earl's attempt; and spotless save her mind.  
 Wherefore, he doth conclude, although that long before  
 By thought of death and age he had refused for evermore  
 The hidden arts which he delighted in, in youth, --  
 Yet won by her importuneness, and by his inward ruth,  
 And fearing lest she would her cruel vow discharge  
 His closed conscience he had opened and set at large;  
 And rather did he choose to suffer for one time

His soul to be spotted somewhat with small and easy crime,  
 Than that the lady should, weary of living breath,  
 Murder herself, and danger much her seely soul by death:  
 Wherefore his ancient arts again he puts in ure,  
 A certain powder gave he her, that made her sleep so sure,  
 That they her held for dead; and how that Friar John  
 With letters sent to Romeus to Mantua is gone;  
 Of whom he knoweth not as yet, what is become;

And how that dead he found his friend within her kindred's tomb.  
He thinks with poison strong, for care the young man sterved,

Supposing Juliet dead; and how that Juliet hath carved,  
With Romeus' dagger drawn, her heart, and yielded breath,  
Desirous to accompany her lover after death;  
And how they could not save her, so they were afeard,  
And hid themselves, dreading the noise of watchmen, that they heard.  
And for the proof of this his tale, he doth desire  
The judge to send forthwith to Mantua for the friar,  
To learn his cause of stay, and eke to read his letter;  
And, more beside, to th'end that they might judge his cause the better,  
He prayeth them depose the nurse of Juliet,

And Romeus' man whom at unwares beside the tomb he met.

Then Peter, not so much erst as he was, dismayed;  
"My lords," quoth he, "too true is all that Friar Laurence said.  
And when my master went into my mistress' grave,  
This letter that I offer you, unto me then he gave,  
Which he himself did write, as I do understand,  
And charged me to offer them unto his father's hand."  
The opened packet doth contain in it the same  
That erst the skilful friar said; and eke the wretch's name  
That had at his request the deadly poison sold,

The price of it, and why he bought, his letters plain have told.  
The case unfolded so and open now it lies,  
That they could wish no better proof, save seeing it with their eyes;  
So orderly all things were told and triéd out,  
That in the press there was not one that stood at all in doubt.

The wiser sort, to council called by Escalus,  
Have given advice, and Escalus sagely decreeth thus:  
The nurse of Juliet is banished in her age,  
Because that from the parents she did hide the marriage,  
Which might have wrought much good had it in time been known,

Where now by her concealing it a mischief great is grown;  
And Peter, for he did obey his master's hest,  
In wonted freedom had good leave to lead his life in rest,  
Th'apothecary high is hangéd by the throat,  
And for the pains he took with him the hangman had his coat.  
But now what shall betide of this grey-bearded sire?  
Of Friar Laurence thus arraigned, that good barefooted friar  
Because that many times he worthily did serve

The commonwealth, and in his life was never found to swerve,  
He was discharged quite, and no mark of defame

Did seem to blot or touch at all the honour of his name.  
But of himself he went into an hermitage,  
Two miles from Verone town, where he in prayers passed forth his age;  
Till that from earth to heaven his heavenly sprite did fly,  
Five years he lived an hermit and an hermit did he die.

The strangeness of the chance, when triéd was the truth,  
The Montagues and Capulets hath moved so to ruth,  
That with their emptied tears their choler and their rage  
Was emptied quite; and they, whose wrath no wisdom could assuage,  
Nor threat'ning of the prince, ne mind of murthers done,

At length, so mighty Jove it would, by pity they are won.

And lest that length of time might from our minds remove  
The memory of so perfect, sound, and so approvéd love,  
The bodies dead, removed from vault where they did die,  
In stately tomb, on pillars great of marble, raise they high.  
On every side above were set, and eke beneath,  
Great store of cunning epitaphs, in honour of their death.  
And even at this day the tomb is to be seen;  
So that among the monuments that in Verona been,  
There is no monument more worthy of the sight,

Than is the tomb of Juliet and Romeus her knight.

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