

A Monody
(on Chatterton)

Hannah Cowley

O CHATTERTON! for thee the pensive song I raise,
Thou object of my wonder, pity, envy, praise!
Bright star of genius! — torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!
Ye muses! who around his natal bed
Triumphant sung, and all your influence shed;
APOLLO! thou who wrapt his infant breast,
And, in his daedal numbers, shone confest,
Ah! why, in vain, such mighty gifts bestow—
Why give fresh tortures to the child of woe?
Why thus, with barb'rous care, illumine his mind—
Adding new sense to all the ills behind?

Thou haggard! Poverty! whose cheerless eye
Transforms young rapture, to the pondrous sigh;
In whose drear cave no Muse e'er struck the lyre,
Nor Bard e'er madned with poetic fire;
Why all thy spells for CHATTERTON combine—
His thought, creative, why must thou confine?
Subdu'd by thee, his pen no more obeys,
No longer gives the song of ancient days;
Nor paints in glowing tints from distant skies,
Nor bids wild scen'ry rush upon our eyes—
Check'd in her flight, his rapid genius cowers,
Drops her sad plumes, and yields to thee her powers.

Behold him, Muses! see your fav'rite son
The prey of Want, ere manhood is begun!
The bosom ye have fill'd, with anguish torn—
The mind you cherish'd, drooping and forlorn!

And now Despair her sable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends.
Ah see! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd,
Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd—
Seize it APOLLO! — Seize the liquid snare!
Dash it to earth, or dissipate in air!
Stay, hapless youth! refrain, — abhor the draught,
With pangs, with racks, with deep repentance fraught!
Oh, hold! the cup with woe ETERNAL flows,
More — more than Death the pois'nous juice bestows!
In vain! — he drinks — and now the searching fires
Rush through his veins, and writhing he expires!
No sorrowing friend, no sister, parent, nigh,
To ease his pangs, or catch his parting sigh;
Alone, unknown, the Muses darling dies,

And with the vulgar dead, unnoted lies.
Bright star of genius! — torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!

To Della Crusca

Hannah Cowley

Thou bidst! "my purple slumbers fly!"
Day's radiance pours upon my eye.
I wake — I live! the sense o'er pays
The trivial griefs of early days.
What! tho' the rose-bud on my cheek
Spoke youth, and joy — and careless thought,
By guilt, or fear, or shame un-smote:
My "blooming" soul is yet in youth,
Its lively sense attests the truth.

O! I can wander yet, and taste
The beauties of the flow'ry waste;
The Nightingale's deep swell can feel,
Whilst from my lids the soft drops steal;
Rapt! gaze upon the gem-deck'd night,
And mark the clear moon's silent flight;
Whilst the slow river's crumpl'd wave
Repeats the quiv'ring beams she gave.

Nor yet, the pencil strives in vain,
To wake upon the canvas plain,
All the strong passions of the mind,
Or hint the sentiment refin'd;
To its sweet magic yet I bow,
As when Youth deck'd my polish'd brow.
The chissel's feath'ry touch to trace,
Thro' the nerv'd form, or soften'd grace,
Is lent me still. Still I admire,
And kindle at the Poet's fire—
My torch, at Della Crusca's light,
And distant follow his superior flight.

O Time! since these are left me still,
Of lesser thefts e'en take thy fill:
Yes, steal the lustre from my eye,
And bid the soft Carnation fly;
My tresses sprinkle with thy snow,
Which boasted once the auburn glow,
Warp the slim form that was ador'd
By him, so lov'd, my bosom'd LORD—
But leave me, when all these you steal,
The mind to taste, the nerve to feel!

To Della Crusca

The Pen

Hannah Cowley

O! seize again thy golden quill,
And with its point my bosom thrill;
With magic touch explore my heart,
And bid the tear of passion start.
Thy golden quill APOLLO gave—
Drench'd first in bright Aonia's wave:
He snatch'd it flutt'ring thro' the sky,
Borne on the vapour of a sigh;
It fell from Cupid's burnish'd wing
As forcefully he drew the string;
Which sent his keenest, surest dart
Thro' a rebellious frozen heart,
That had till then defy'd his pow'r,
And vacant beat thro' each dull hour.

Be worthy then the sacred loan!
Seated on Fancy's air-built throne;
Immerse it in her rainbow hues,
Nor, what the Godheads bid, refuse.
APOLLO, CUPID, shall inspire,
And aid thee with their blended fire.
The one, poetic language give,
The other bid thy passion live;
With soft ideas fill thy lays,
And crown with LOVE thy wintry days!

Invocation to Horror

Hannah Cowley

Far be remov'd each painted scene!
What is to me the sapphire sky?
What is to me the earth's soft dye?
Or fragrant vales which sink between
Those velvet hills? yes, there I see—
(Why do those beauties burst on me?)
Pearl-dropping groves bow to the sun;
Seizing his beams, bright rivers run
That dart redoubled day:
Hope ye vain scenes, to catch the mind
To torpid sorrow all resign'd,
Or bid my heart be gay?
False are those hopes! — I turn — I fly,
Where no enchantment meets the eye,
Or soft ideas stray.

HORROR! I call thee from the mould'ring tower,
The murky church-yard, and forsaken bower,
Where 'midst unwholesome damps
The vap'ry gleamy lamps
Of ignes fatui, shew the thick-wove night,
Where morbid MELANCHOLY sits,
And weeps, and sings, and raves by fits,
And to her bosom strains the fancied sprite.

Or, if amidst the arctic gloom
Thou toilest at thy sable loom,
Forming the hideous phantoms of Despair—
Instant thy grisly labours leave,
With raven wing the concave cleave,
Where floats, self-borne, the dense nocturnal air.

Oh! bear me to th' impending cliffs,
Under whose brow the dashing skiffs
Behold Thee seated on thy rocky throne;
There, 'midst the shrieking wild wind's roar,
Thy influence, HORROR, I'll adore,
And at thy magic touch, congeal to stone.

Oh! hide the Moon's obtrusive orb,
The gleams of ev'ry star absorb,
And let CREATION be a moment thine!
Bid billows dash; let whirlwinds roar,
And the stern, rocky-pointed shore,
The stranded bark, back to the waves resign!

Then, whilst from yonder turbid-cloud,
Thou roll'st thy thunders long, and loud,
And light'nings flash upon the deep below,
Let the expiring Seaman's cry,
The Pilot's agonizing sigh
Mingle, and in the dreadful chorus flow!

HORROR! far back thou dat'st thy reign;
Ere KINGS th' historic page could stain
With records black, or deeds of lawless power;
Ere empires Alexanders curst,
Or Faction, mad'ning Caesars nurst,
The frightened World receiv'd thy awful dower!

Whose pen JEHOVAH'S self inspir'd;
He, who in eloquence attir'd,
Led Israel's squadrons o'er the earth,
Grandly terrific, paints thy birth.
Th' ALMIGHTY, 'midst his fulgent seat on high,
Where glowing Seraphs round his footstool fly,
Beheld the wanton cities of the plain,
With acts of deadly name his laws disdain;
He gave th' irrevocable sign,
Which mark'd to man the hate divine;
And sudden from the starting sky
The Angels of his wrath bid fly!
Then HORROR! thou presidest o'er the whole,
And fill'd, and rapt, each self-accusing soul!
Thou did'st ascend to guide the burning shower—
On THEE th' Omnipotent bestow'd the hour!

'Twas thine to scourge the sinful land,
'Twas thine to toss the fiery brand;
Beneath thy glance the temples fell,
And mountains crumbled at thy yell.
ONCE MORE thou'lt triumph in a fiery storm;
ONCE MORE the Earth behold thy direful form;
Then shalt thou seek, as holy prophets tell,
Thy native throne, amidst th' eternal shades of HELL!

To Indifference

Hannah Cowley

Oh Nymph, long sought, of placid mien,
With careless steps, and brow serene!
I woo thee from the tufted bowers,
Where listless pass thy easy hours—
Or, if a Naiad of the silver wave
Thou rather lov'st thy purly limbs to lave
In some clear lake, whose fascinating face
Lures the soft willow to its pure embrace;
Or, if beneath the gelid rock
Thy smiles all human sorrows mock,
Where'er thou art, in truth or air,
Oh! come, and chase the fiend DESPAIR!

Have I not mark'd thee on the green
Roving, by vulgar eyes unseen?
Have I not watch'd thy lightsome dance
When evening's soften'd glows advance?
Dear Goddess, yes! and whilst the rustic's mirth
Proclaims the hour which gives wild gambols birth;
Supine, I've found thee in the elm-row's shade,
Lull'd by the hum returning bees have made,
Who chary of their golden spoils
Finish their fragrant, rosy toils
With rest-inviting, slumb'rous song,
As to their waxen couch they throng.
Chaste Nymph! the Temple let me seek
Where thou resid'st in lustre meek;
My future life to thee I give—
Irradiate ev'ry hour I live!
'Tis true no glowing bliss thy vot'ries know,
From thee no poignant extacy can flow;
But oh! thou shield'st the heart from rankling pain,
And Misery strikes, when bless'd with thee, in vain;
Wan Jealousy's empoisoning tooth,
And Love, which feeds upon our youth,
And holy Friendship's broken tie,
Ne'er dim the lustre of thy eye.

For thee, it is all Nature blooms,
For thee, the Spring new charms assumes,
Nor vainly flings her blossoms round,
Nor vainly bids her groves resound;
Her music, colours, odours, all are thine,
To thee her months their richest gifts consign;
To thee the morn is bright, and sweet the ray
That marks the progress of the sinking day;

Each change is grateful to thy soul,
For its fine taste no woes controul,
The powers of Nature, and of Art,
Alike entrance the easy heart.

And oh! beneath thy gentle dome
Which the calm comforts make their home,
That cruel imp is never found,
Whose fame such idle songs resound—
Dread SENSIBILITY! — Oh! let me fly
Where Greenland darkness drinks the beamy sky,
Or where the Sun, with downward torrid ray
Kills, with the barb'rous glories of the day!
I'd dare th' excess of ev'ry clime,
Grasp ev'ry evil known by time,
Ere live beneath that witch's spell,
With whom no lasting pleasure dwells,
Her lovely form deceives the heart,
The tear for ever prompt to start,
The tender look, the ready sigh,
And soft emotion always nigh;
And yet Content th' insidious fiend forbids—
Oh! she has torn the slumber from my lids;
Oft rous'd my torpid sense to living woe,
And bid chill anguish to my bosom grow.
She seals her prey! — in vain the Spring
Wakes rapture, thro her groves to sing;
The roseate Morn's hygeian bloom
Fades down, unmark'd, to evening's gloom,

Oh SENSIBILITY! thy sceptre sad
Points where the frantic glance proclaims THE MAD!
Strain'd to excess, Reason is chain'd thy slave,
Or the poor Victim shuns thee in the grave;
To thee each crime, each evil owes its birth,
That, in gigantic horror treads the earth!

SAVAGE UNTAM'D! she smiles to drink our tears,
And where's no solid ill, she wounds with fears;
Riots in sighs, is sooth'd when most we smart—
Now, whilst she guides my pen, her PANG'S within my heart.

Night Walk in a Garden

Hannah Cowley

Ye jessamines that beneath the lunar ray
Unfold your virgin robes, your modest grace,
Imparting odours you denied the day
Though day's own light condensed adorns your race!
Ye stars, that quivering midst yon azure sky,
From forth your circles softened lustre stream,
And raise towards you calm devotion's eye,
And send to lonely love a soothing beam,
Why cease you now to charm as erst ye did?
Why free from rapture move I now along?
Ye scents, ye blooms, ye stars, in vain ye bid
Your soft enchantments round my senses throng--
For she is lost who greeted all your powers;
She breathes no more who loved your pensive hours!

LINES IN IMITATION OF COWLEY

Hannah Cowley

TOUCH'D by thy wit, my soul's on fire,
My bosom throbs with young desire.
What! though thy form I never saw,
Is there to man divulg'd a law
That only what he sees must touch his heart?

The vulgar rule I disallow,
And in my passion feel e'en now,
That wit, like beauty, gives the tender smart.

Methinks thy form I would not know,
Nor to thy face the pleasure owe
Of these delicious melting pains,
Which when a mortal once attains,
He knows the greatest bliss for man design'd.

No, to my fancy I'll apply,
There find thy form, thy air, thy eye,
And feast my frenzy with a zest refin'd.

When in a pensive mood I sit,
And Melancholy takes her fit,
Mild, tender, soft, thou shalt appear,
Like the first blossoms of the year:
But when in brisker tides my spirits run,

L'Allegro shall the pencil take,
Describe thy look, thy step, thy make,
And shew thee lively as bright MAIA's son.

A MONOLOGUE

Hannah Cowley

OCHATTERTON! for thee the pensive song I raise,
Thou object of my wonder, pity, envy, praise!
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My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!
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Triumphant sung, and all your influence shed;
APOLLO! thou who rapt his infant breast,
And, in his daedal numbers, shone confest,
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—Why give fresh tortures to the Child of Woe?
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Thou haggard! Poverty! whose *cheerless* eye
Transforms young rapture to the pond'rous sigh;
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Drops her sad plumes, and yields to thee her powers.

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The prey of WANT, ere manhood is begun!
The bosom *ye* have fill'd, with anguish torn—
The mind *you* cherish'd, drooping and forlorn!

And now *Despair* her sable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o'er his pillow bends.
Ah, see! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd,
Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd—
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Dash it to earth, or dissipate in air!
Stay, hapless Youth! refrain—abhor the draught,
With pangs, with racks, with deep repentance fraught!
Oh, hold! the cup with woe ETERNAL flows,
More—more than Death the pois'nous juice bestows!
In vain!—he drinks—and now the searching fires

Rush through his veins, and writhing he expires!
No sorrowing *friend*, no *sister*, *parent*, nigh,
To sooth his pangs, or catch his parting sigh;
Alone, *unknown*, the Muses' darling dies,
And with the vulgar dead unnoted lies!
Bright Star of Genius!—torn from life and fame,
My tears, my verse, shall consecrate thy name!

MONODY

Hannah Cowley

IF ever for fictitious grief
My soul a transient sorrow knew;
If sometimes I have heav'd a sigh,
But to behold the virgin leaf
Of the lost LILY with'ring die!
Sure tend'rest sympathy is due
To THEE, from whom each cherish'd bliss is fled,
Who mourn'st by day and night, thy *own* MA|RIA *dead*;
O T—! in the murm'ring gale,
Oft have I found thy plaintive voice prevail;
When the wet fingers of the morn,
Shook the cold pearl-drops from the bending thorn;
Or, when, at close of day,
To the lone vale I took my way,
The *sad vibration* of faint ECHO's *breath*,
Brought to my heart the dirge of Death.
Then all dejected, have I paus'd to hear,
And felt a kindred pang sincere;
Sincere as erst *thy* Father's PARENT prov'd,
When for the **Friend* he lov'd,
He wove a cypress wreath, and pour'd the verse,
That sooth'd the Poet's shade, and hung upon his hearse.
Ah! let me take *my simple reed*,
And seek the moonlight mead;
Or where 'mongst rocks, *the headlong stream*,
Flashes the lucid beam:
Woo calm REFLECTION in her sober bow'r,
As pond'ring at the midnight hour,
She flings her solace on each passing wind,
That wafts the heavenly balm to heal the wounded mind.
So may her mighty spell,
Thy desolating anguish quell,
So may'st thou quit at length the Forest's gloom,
Nor thus for ever dwell upon the Sainted Tomb.
O think, when wand'ring on the shore,
Thou mark'st with musing eye,
O'er the rude cliffs the tempest fly,
And rouse to sudden rage the howling main.
Think, SHE *thou lov'st*, has left a World,
Where jarring elements are hurl'd,
And where contending atoms roar,
To join, 'midst endless joy, th' adoring Seraph's strain!
Yes, *she was mild and lovely as the star*
That in the Western hemisphere afar,
Lifts its pure lamp above the mountain's head,
To light *meek Evening* to her dewy bed.

And as the waning Moon displays,
With mirror clear, Morn's rising rays,
She, in decay, show'd VIRTUE'S ORB refin'd,
Reflected *fairer* from her angel mind;
Till at the last, too fierce a blaze was given,
And then she shrunk from sight, and FADED into HEAVEN.
Yet do not mourn, be grief away,
For see how swift the dark clouds go;
Soon silence drinks the Linnet's lay,
And yonder sapphire waves shall cease to flow,
Scared by the hissing brand,
Of thirsty Summer's sultry hand.
From the lorn wood the leaves descend,
And all of Nature, as of Art, must end.
Sad Consolation, true! yet why,
If soon must close the languid eye,
Since a short moment but remains,
For all our fears, and all our pains,
Why should we fondly brood on care,
Ah! why devote us to despair!
But time assiduous loves to urge
Our footsteps to his utmost verge,
Because that there a rapt'rous scene appears,
Where ANGUISH never throbs, nor SORROW sinks in tears.
Meanwhile, forbear not to disclose,
The Scions of that beauteous Stem;
And tho' the PARENT ROSE,
Was prematurely lost,
By a remorseless frost;
O view the op'ning Buds, and smile at least for them!

ODE TO ANNA MATILDA

Hannah Cowley

O CEASE MATILDA! Cease the strain
That woos INDIFFERENCE to thy arms;
For what are all her boasted charms?
But only to be free from pain!
And would'st thou then her torpid ease,
Her listless apathy to know,
Renounce the magic POW'R to PLEASE;
And lose the LUXURY of WOE?
Why does thy stream of sweetest song,
In many a wild maze wind along;
Foam on the Mountain's murm'ring side;
Or through the vocal covert glide;
Or among fairy meadows steal?—
It is because thy HEART can FEEL!
Alas! if peace must be unknown,
Till ev'ry nerve is turn'd to stone,
Till not a tear-drop wets the eye;
Nor throbs the breast for Sorrow's sigh.
O may I never find relief,
But PERISH, in the PANG of GRIEF!

Think not I reason thus, my Fair!
A stranger to corroding Care!
Ah! if *Thou*, seldom find'st repose,
"I, rest not on a bed of rose."
DESPAIR, cold Serpent, loves to twine
About this helpless heart of mine!
Yet, tho' neglected and forlorn,
I scarce can check the smile of Scorn,
When those the VULGAR call the GREAT,
Bend the important brow of state;
And strive a consequence to find
By seeming more than human kind.
Well, let them strut their hour away,
Till grinning death demand his prey!
Meanwhile, my ANNA! let us rove
The scented vale, the bending grove,
Mix our hot tears with evening dews
And live for FRIENDSHIP and the MUSE!

Yes, let us hasten hand in hand,
Where the blue billows lave the land,

And as they quick recoiling fly,
Send on the surf a lengthen'd sigh,
That strikes the soul, with truth sublime
As 'twere the whisp'ring TONGUE of TIME;
For thus our short Life's ebbing day
Murmurs awhile, and hastes away!
Or let us seek the mould'ring wall
Of some lone Abbey's Gothic Hall;
Recline upon the knee-worn stone,
And catch the North Wind's dismal moan,
That 'midst his sorrows, seems to boast
Of many a gallant vessel lost!
Friends and Lovers sunk in death—
By the fury of his breath!
What tho' at the *imagin'd Tale*,
Thy alter'd cheek be sadly pale;
Ne'er can such SYMPATHY annoy;
For 'tis the price of dearest JOY!

When far off the Night Storm flies,
Let us ponder on the SKIES!
Where countless stars are ever roll'd,
Which yet our weak eyes dare behold;
Adore the SELF-EXISTING CAUSE
That gives to each its sep'rate laws;
That, when the impetuous comet runs
Athwart a wilderness of Suns;
Tells it what mandate to obey,
Nor ever wander from its way;
Till back it hastens whence 'twas brought,
Beyond the boundaries of thought!
Let not the studious Seer reply,
*"Attraction regulates the Sky,
And lends each orb the secret force,
That urges on, or checks its course."*
Or with his Orrery expound
Creation's vainly fancied round.
Ah! quit thy toil, presumptuous Sage!
Destroy thy calculating page;
No more on Second Causes plod;
'Tis not ATTRACTION, but 'tis GOD!
And what the UNIVERSE we call,

Is but a POINT, compar'd to ALL.

SUCH BLISS the sensate bosom knows,
Such bliss Indiff'rence ne'er bestows;
Tho' small the circle we can trace,
In the abyss of time and space;
Tho' learning has its limits got,
The feelings of the soul have not.
Their vast excursions find no end;
And RAPTURE needs not comprehend!

'Tis true, we're ign'rant how the Earth
Wakes the first principles of birth,
With vegetative moisture feeds
To diff'rent purpose, diff'rent seeds;
Gives to the Rose, such balmy sweet,
Or fills the golden ear of Wheat,
Paints the ripe Peach with velvet bloom,
Or weaves the thick Wood's mingling gloom—
YET we can wander in the bow'r;
Can taste the fragrance of the flow'r;
Drink the rich fruit's nectareous juice,
And bend the harvest to our use.—

Then give thy pure perceptions scope,
And sooth thy heaving heart with hope.
HOPE shall instruct my sorr'wing Friend;
The soul's fine fervour ne'er can end;
But when her limbs by Death are laid
Beneath some yew-tree's hallow'd shade,
Then shall her soaring spirit know
The Seraphim's ecstatic glow.
Then shall th' ESSENTIAL MIND confess,
That ANGUISH has the pow'r to BLESS,
That FEELING was in BOUNTY given,
And own THE SACRED TRUTH—IN HEAVEN.

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