

# The passionate shepherd to his love essay



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Come I've with me and be my love, And we will all the pleasures prove That valleys, groves, hills, and fields Woods or steepy mountain yields And we will sit upon the rocks, Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks By shallow rivers to whose falls Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses And a thousand fragrant posies, A cap of flower, and a kirtle Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle; A gown made of the finest wool Which from our pretty lambs we pull; Fair lined slippers for the cold With buckles of the purest gold; A belt of straw and ivy buds, With coral clasps and amber studs; And if these pleasures may thee move, Come live with me and be my love. The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing For thy delight each May morning: If these delights thy mind may move, Then live with me and be my love.

I The Nymph's Reply to the shepherd by Sir Walter Raleigh 1600 If all the world and love were young, And truth in every shepherd's tongue, These pretty pleasures might me move To live with thee and be thy love. Time drives the flocks from field to fold, When rivers age and rocks grow cold; And Philomel becometh dumb; The rest complain of cares to come, The flowers do fade, and wanton fields To wayward winter reckoning yields: A honey tongue, a heart of gall, Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall - Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses, Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies, Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten, In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds, Thy coral clasps and amber studs, All these in me no means can move To come to thee and be thy love. But could youth last and love still breed, Had joys no age nor need, Then these

delights my mind might move To I live with thee and be thy love. I Notes for “ The Passionate Shepherd to His Love. ” Pastoral lyric: Poetry that expresses emotions in an idyllic setting. It is related to the term “ pasture,” and is associated with shepherds writing music to their flocks.

The tradition goes back to David in the Bible and Hesiod the Greek poet. The themes of the poem - carpe diem and the immediate gratification of their sexual passions. Love in the May countryside will be like a return to the Garden of Eden. There is a tradition that our problems are caused by having too many restrictions, by society. If we could get away from these rules, we could return to a pristine condition of happiness. The “ free love” movement of the 1960’s was a recent manifestation of this utopian belief.

If the nymph would go a-maying with the shepherd, they would have a perfect life. In quatrains (4 line stanzas) of iambic tetrameter (8 syllables per line, 4 measures per line with 2 syllables in each measure), the shepherd invites his beloved to experience the Joys of nature. He hopes to return with the nymph to a Edenic life of free love in nature. Notes for “ The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd. ” Raleigh argues that it is not society that taints sexual love. We are already tainted before we enter society. Raleigh combines carpe diem with tempus fugit in an unusual way.

Normally we should seize the day because time flies. Raleigh argues that because time flies, we should not seize the day. There will be consequences to their roll in the grass. Time does not stand still; winter inevitably follows the spring; therefore, we cannot act on impulses until we have examined the consequences. The world is not young—we are not in Eden, but in this old

fallen world – a world in which shepherds have actually been known to lie to their nymphs. This poem by Sir Walter Raleigh uses the same meter and references to present “ mirror images” of Marlowe’s poem.

The feminine persona (the nymph) of the poem sets up a hypothetical set of questions that undermine the intelligence of the man’s offer because all that he offers is transitory. She reverses his images into negative ones: \* rocks grow cold \* fields yield to the harvest \* the flocks are driven to fold in winter rivers rage \* birds complain of winter (a reference to the story of Philomela who was raped and turned into a nightingale). We live in a fallen world. Free love in the grass is impossible now because the world is not in some eternal spring.

The seasons pass, as does time. Nymphs grow old, and shepherds grow cold. Analysis “ The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” was composed sometime in Marlowe’s early years, (between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three) around the same time he translated Ovid’s Amores. This is to say, Marlowe wrote this poem before he went to London to become a playwright. Thornton suggests that Marlowe’s poetic and dramatic career follows an “ Ovidian career model” (xiv), with his amatory poems belonging to his youth, followed later by epic poems (such as Hero and Leander) and Lucan’s First Book).

The energy and fanciful nature of youth is evident in “ Passionate Shepherd”, which has been called “ an extended invitation to rustic retirement” (xv). It is headlong in its rush of sentiment, though, upon examination, it reveals itself to be a particularly well-balanced piece of poetry. This poem is justly famous: though it may not be immediately identifiable as Marlowe’s (it is often

mistakenly thought to be a sonnet of Shakespeare, though that is incorrect in both authorship and poetic form) it has a place in most anthologies of love-poetry.

It may well be the most widely recognized piece that Marlowe ever wrote, despite the popularity of certain of his plays. The meter, though seemingly regular, gives a great deal of meaning and music to this poem. In line 10 the iambic pattern, so far unbroken, reverses to trochaic (stressed, unstressed). The line is innocuous “ And a thousand fragrant posies” – here is no special meaning in this line that requires a complete reversal of the meter. But it is a completely complementary line to the one above it (which contains an almost perfect match of nine iambic syllables), and creates movement and motion in the poem.

This kind of temporary shift of meter makes the poem lighter to read, and, while preserving regularity, lessens any sing-song quality that might occur if too many regular lines appear in sequence. This skillful change is one of the reasons this poem is so often read aloud. It is musical and regular to the ear, but it is never rigid or predictable. Line endings, too, can create variety within regularity, and also call attention to the subject matter of the lines.

The only stanza which contains the line ending termed “ feminine” (that is, an additional unstressed syllable following the final stressed syllable – while it may not have been called “ feminine” in Marlowe’s day, the softer consonant at the end of a disyllabic word such as those in this stanza definitely can convey femininity) is the third. “ There will I make thee beds of roses” This is done by using disyllabic words at the end of the line. The

second syllable of most two-syllable words is usually an unstressed one. These lines all end with particularly feminine objects, too – roses, posies, kirtle (a woman's garment), and myrtle.

It should be noted that every other line-terminating word in the entire poem is a monosyllabic one, with the lone exception of line 22, in which the “masculine” stressed ending is forced by the hyphenated construction “May-morn ing”. Marlowe chose his words with very great care. Scansion of poetry is never exact; while lines 1 and 20 are often read as iambic, the beginning (especially line 20) can easily be read as a spondee (two long syllables – Come live with me and be my love/ rather than Come live with me and be my love’).

A skillful and expressive reader might read this repeated line thusly, upon its second occurrence. The different stress would add pleading to the tone of the line (the emphases on the verbs “come live” and “and be”) and bespeak a slight desperation on the part of the Shepherd. If read the opposite way from the first line (spondaic rather than iambic) the meaning of the line changes just enough to create a development of emotion. This is no mean feat in a poem only twenty-four lines in length.

Note that there is a disputed stanza (second from the last) “Thy silver dishes for thy meat” which appears in some older editions – the latest critical editions do not include it. ) At first glance “The Passionate Shepherd To His Love” can seem to be a nice piece of pastoral frippery. Considering that it was written, probably, in Marlowe's late adolescence, and if read as a

superficial exercise in the practice of a very old form of poetry, it can seem to be light and insubstantial.

But any studied analysis of the poem reveals its depth; the poem can be read as containing irony (as written by an urbane man who longed for the city rather than the country, and thus constructed impossible rustic scenarios), serious and heartfelt emotion, a slight political commentary, a gentle sadness, and a transcendent love of nature. Good poetry is often many things to different readers, and Marlowe was able to create, within a codified (and one might say ossified) form of poetry a piece of clever and flexible Elizabethan verse. The Shepherd may not have been real, but the emotions and effects created by this poem have their own reality.