

RAPE OF LUCRECE

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DRAFT 7

CAST LIST

LUCRECE
STORYTELLER

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THE RAPE OF LUCRECE

JUSTIN From the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Colatium bears the lightless fire,
Which in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire
And girdle with embracing flames the waist
Of Colatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

For [Colatine] the night before in Tarquin's tent,
Unlock'd the treasure of his happy state:
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent,
In the possession of his beauteous mate.
Reckoning his fortune at such high-proud rate,
That Kings might be espoused to more fame,
But King nor peer to such a peerless dame.

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sovereignty
Suggested this proud issue of a King:
For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be:
Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,
Braving compare, disdainfully did sting
Honour and Beauty in the owner's arms,
Are weakly fortress'd from a world of harms.

[And] some untimely thought did instigate
His all-too-timeless speed if none of those;
His honor, his affairs, his friends, his state,
Neglected all, with swift intent he goes
To quench the coal which in his liver glows.
O rash false heat, wrapp'd in repentant cold,
Thy hasty spring still blasts, and ne'er grows old.

When at Colatium this false Lord arrived,
Well was he welcomed by the Roman dame,

Within whose face Beauty and Virtue strived
Which of them both should underprop her fame.
When Virtue bragg'd, Beauty would blush for shame;
When Beauty boasted blushes, in despite
Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.

This earthly saint adored by this devil,
Little suspecteth the false worshipper:
For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil;
Birds never limed no secret bushes fear:

CARA So guiltless she securely gives good cheer,
And reverend welcome to her princely guest,
Whose inward ill no outward harm express'd.

JUSTIN For that he colour'd with his high estate,
Hiding base sin in pleats of Majesty:
That nothing in him seem'd inordinate,
Save something too much wonder of his eye,
Which having all, all could not satisfy;
But poorly rich so wanteth in his store,
That cloy'd with much, he pineth still for more.

CARA But she that never coped with stranger eyes,
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
Writ in the glassy margents of such books;
She touch'd no unknown baits, nor fear'd no hooks,
Nor could she moralize his wanton sight,
More than his eyes were open'd to the light.

JUSTIN He stories to her ears her husband's fame,
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy;
And decks with praises Colatine's high name,
Made glorious by his manly chivalry,
With bruised arms and wreaths of victory:

CARA Her joy with heaved-up hand she doth express,
And wordless so greets heaven for his success.

JUSTIN Far from the purpose of his coming hither,
He makes excuses for his being there;
No cloudy show of stormy blustering weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear,
Till sable Night, mother of dread and fear,
Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
And in her vaulty prison, stows the Day.

For then is Tarquin brought unto his bed,
Intending weariness with heavy sprite:
For after supper long he questioned
With modest Lucrece, and wore out the night;
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight;
And every one to rest himself betakes,
Save thieves, and cares, and troubled minds, that [wake].

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving
The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining:
Yet ever to obtain his will resolving.
Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining,
Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining;
And when great treasure is the meed proposed,
Though death be adjunct, there's no death supposed.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life,
With honor, wealth, and ease in waning age:
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife,
That one for all, or all for one we gage:
As life for honor, in fell battle's rage,
Honor for wealth, and oft that wealth doth cost
The death of all, and altogether lost.

Such hazard now must doting Tarquin make,
Pawning his honor to obtain his lust,

And for himself himself [he] must forsake.
Then where is truth if there be no self-trust?
When shall he think to find a stranger just,
When he himself himself confounds, betrays
To slanderous tongues and wretched hateful days?

CARA Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had closed up mortal eyes;
No comfortable star did lend his light,
No noise but owls, and wolves' death-boding cries:

JUSTIN Now serves the season that they may surprise
The silly lambs; pure thoughts are dead and still,
While Lust and Murder wake to stain and kill.

And now this lustful Lord leapt from his bed,
Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm;
Is madly toss'd between desire and dread;
Th' one sweetly flatters, th' other feareth harm;
But honest fear, bewitch'd with lust's foul charm,
Doth too too oft betake him to retire,
Beaten away by brain-sick rude desire.

"O shame to knighthood, and to shining arms;
O foul dishonour to my household's grave;
O impious act, including all foul harms.
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave,
True valour still a true respect should have;
Then my digression is so vile, so base,
That it will live engraven in my face.

"Yea though I die the scandal will survive,
And be an eye-sore in my golden coat:
Some loathsome dash the Herald will contrive,
To cipher me how fondly I did dote:
That my posterity shamed with the note
Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin

To wish that I their father had not been.

“What win I if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
Would with the scepter straight be stricken down?”

“Shameful it is: Aye, if the fact be known;
Hateful it is: there is no hate in loving;
I'll beg her love: but she is own:
The worst is but denial and reproving.
My will is strong past reason's weak removing:
Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw
Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.”

[“And yet she] took me kindly by the hand,
And gazed for tidings in my eager eyes,
Fearing some hard news from the warlike band,
Where her beloved Colatinus lies.
O how her fear did make her colour rise!
First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
Then white as lawn the roses took away.

“Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?
All Orators are dumb when Beauty pleadeth,
Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses,
Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth,
Affection is my Captain and he leadeth.
And when his gaudy banner is display'd,
The coward fights, and will not be dismay'd.”

As corn o'ergrown by weeds: so heedful fear
Is almost choked by unresisted lust:
Away he steals with open list'ning ear,

Full of foul hope, and full of fond mistrust:
Both [wretched] servitors to the unjust,
By reprobate desire thus madly led,
The Roman lord marcheth to Lucrece' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
Each one by him enforc'd retires his ward:
But as they open they all rate his ill,
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard;
The threshold grates the door to have him heard,
Night-wandering weasels shriek to see him there;
They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
Through little vents and crannies of the place
The wind wars with his torch to make him stay,
And blows the smoke of it into his face,
Extinguishing his conduct in this case.
But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,
Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch:

Now is he come unto the chamber door,
That shuts him from the Heaven of his thought,
Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
Hath barr'd him from the blessed thing he sought.
So from himself impiety hath wrought,
That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
As if the Heavens should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
Having solicited th' eternal power
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
And they would stand auspicious to the hour;
Even there he starts; quoth he, “I must deflower;
The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact,
How can they then assist me in the act?”

“Then Love and Fortune be my Gods, my guide;
My will is back'd with resolution:
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried,
The blackest sin is clear'd with absolution.
Against love's fire fear's frost hath dissolution.
The eye of Heaven is out, and misty night
Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.”

This said, his guilty hand pluck'd up the latch,
And with his knee the door he opens wide;
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch.
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
Who sees the lurking serpent steps aside;
But she sound sleeping fearing no such thing,
Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,
And gazeth on her yet unstained bed:
The curtains being close, about he walks,
Rolling his greedy eyeballs in his head.
By their high treason is his heart misled,
Which gives the watch word to his hand full soon
To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look as the fair and fiery-pointed Sun,
Rushing from forth a cloud, bereaves our sight:
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
To wink, being blinded with a greater light.
Whether it is that she reflects so bright,
That dazzleth them, or else some shame supposed,
But blind they are, and keep themselves enclosed.

O had they in that darksome prison died,
Then had they seen the period of their ill:
Then Colatine again, by Lucrece' side,
In his clear bed might have reposed still.
But they must ope this blessed league to kill,

And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand, her rosy cheek lies under,
Cozening the pillow of a lawful kiss:
Who therefore angry seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss,
Between whose hills her head entombed is;
Where like a virtuous monument she lies,
To be admired of lewd unhallowed eyes.

Her hair like golden threads play'd with her breath,
(O modest wantons, wanton modesty!)
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality.
[Each] in her sleep themselves so beautify,
As if between them twain there were no strife,
But that life lived in death, and death in life.

Her breasts like Ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered;
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honored.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred,
Who like a foul usurper went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see but mightily he noted?
What did he note but strongly he desired?
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tired.
With more than admiration he admired
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied:

So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
His rage of lust by gazing qualified;
Slak'd, not suppress'd; for standing by her side,
Anon his beating heart alarum striking,
Gives the hot charge and bids [him] do [his] liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,
His eye commends the leading to his hand;
His hand as proud of such a dignity,
Smoking with pride, march'd on, to make his stand
On her bare breast, the heart of all her land;
Whose ranks of blue vein, as his hand did scale,
Left there round turrets destitute and pale.

They mustering to the quiet cabinet,
Where their dear governess and lady lies,
Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
And fright her with confusion of their cries.

CARA She much amazed breaks open her lock'd up eyes,
Who peeping forth this tumult to behold,
Are by his flaming torch dimm'd and controll'd.

JUSTIN Imagine her as one in dead of night,
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking;
What terror 'tis: but she in worsen taking,
From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view
The sight which makes supposed terror true.

CARA Wrapp'd and confounded in a thousand fears,
Like to a new-kill'd bird she trembling lies:
She dares not look, yet winking there appears
Quick-shifting antics ugly in her eyes.
Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries,
Who angry that the eyes fly from their lights,

In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights.

JUSTIN His hand that yet remains upon her breast
(Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall!)
May feel her heart (poor Citizen) distress'd,
Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.
This moves in him more rage and lesser pity,
To make the breach and enter this sweet City.

First like a trumpet doth his tongue begin
To sound a parley to his heartless foe,

CARA Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
The reason of this rash alarm to know,

JUSTIN Which he by dumb demeanor seeks to show.

CARA But she with vehement prayers urgeth still
Under what colour he commits this ill.

JUSTIN Thus he replies, "The colour in thy face,
That even for anger makes the lily pale,
And the red rose blush at her own disgrace,
Shall plead for me and tell my loving tale.
Under that colour am I come to scale
Thy never conquered fort; the fault is thine,
For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

"I see what crosses my attempt will bring,
I know what thorns the growing rose defends,
I think the honey guarded with a sting;
All this beforehand counsel comprehends.
But will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends,
Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity,
Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy."

This said, he shakes aloft his Roman blade,
Which like a falcon towering in the skies,
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade,
Whose crooked beak threatens if he mount he dies.
So under his insulting falchion lies
 Harmless Lucretia marking what he tells
 With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcon's bells.

“Lucrece,” quoth he, “This night I must enjoy thee;
If thou deny, then force must work my way:
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee.
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay,
To kill thine honour with thy [life's] decay.
 And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
 Swearing I slew him seeing thee embrace him.”

“So thy surviving husband shall remain
The scornful mark of every open eye,
Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
Thy issue blurr'd with nameless bastardy;
And thou the author of their obloquy,
 Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes,
 And sung by children in succeeding times.

“But if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend;
The fault unknown, is as a thought unacted;
A little harm done to a great good end
For lawful policy remains enacted.
The poisonous simple sometimes is compacted
 In a pure compound; being so applied,
 His venom in effect is purified.”

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye
He rouseth up himself, and makes a pause,

CARA While she the picture of pure piety,
Like a white hind under the gripe's sharp claws,

Pleads in a wilderness where are no laws;

JUSTIN [But he gives no] entrance to her plaining;
Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining.

CARA She conjures him by high Almighty Jove,
By knighthood, gentry, and sweet friendship's oath,
By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
By holy humane law, and common troth,
By Heaven and Earth, and all the power of both:
 That to his borrowed bed he make retire,
 And stoop to Honor, not to foul desire.

JUSTIN Quoth she,

CARA “My husband is thy friend, for his sake spare me;
Thyself art mighty, for thine own sake leave me;
Myself a weakling, do not then ensnare me.
Thou look'st not like deceit, do not deceive me.
My sighs like whirlwinds labor hence to heave thee.
 If ever man were moved with woman moans,
 Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans.

“In Tarquin's likeness I did entertain thee;
Hast thou put on his shape, to do him shame?
To all the Host of Heaven I complain me.
Thou wrong'st his honor, wound'st his princely name:
Thou art not what thou seem'st, and if the same,
 Thou seem'st not what thou art, a God, a King;
 For Kings like Gods should govern everything.

“To thee, to thee, my heaved up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash relier:
I sue for exiled majesty's repeal;
Let him return, and flattering thoughts retire.
His true respect will prison false desire,
 And wipe the dim mist from thy dotting eyne,

That thou shalt see thy state and pity mine.”

“So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state—”

JUSTIN “No more,” quoth he, “By Heaven I will not hear thee.

Yield to my love; if not, enforced hate
Instead of love's coy touch shall rudely tear thee.
That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
Unto the base bed of some rascal groom,
To be thy partner in this shameful doom.”

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
For light and lust are deadly enemies,
Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
The wolf hath seized his prey, the poor lamb cries,
Till with her own white fleece her voice controll'd
Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold.

For with the nightly linen that she wears
He pens her piteous clamors in her head,
Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
O that prone lust should stain so pure a bed,
The spots whereof could weeping purify,
Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
And he hath won what he would lose again,
This forced league doth force a further strife,
This momentary joy breeds months of pain,
This hot desire converts to cold disdain;
Pure chastity is rifled of her store,
And lust the thief far poorer than before.

O deeper sin than bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination!

Drunken Desire must vomit his receipt
Ere he can see his own abomination.
While Lust is in his pride, no exclamation
Can curb his heat, or rein his rash desire,
Till like a Jade self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank, and lean discolour'd cheek,
With heavy eye, knit-brow, and strengthless pace,
Feeble desire, all recreant, poor, and meek,
Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case:
The flesh being proud, Desire doth fight with grace;
For there it revels, and when that decays,
The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this fault-full Lord of Rome,
Who this accomplishment so hotly chased;
For now against himself he sounds this doom,
That through the length of times he stands disgraced:
Besides his soul's fair temple is defaced,
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
To ask the spotted Princess how she fares.

CARA She says her subjects with foul insurrection
Have batter'd down her consecrated wall,
And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
Her immortality, and made her thrall
To living death and pain perpetual;
Which in her prescience she controlled still,
But her foresight could not forestall their will.

JUSTIN Even in this thought through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor that hath lost in gain,
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will despite of cure remain,
Leaving his spoil perplex'd in greater pain.

CARA She bears the load of lust he left behind,

JUSTIN And he the burden of a guilty mind.

He like a thievish dog creeps sadly thence,

CARA She like a wearied lamb lies panting there,

JUSTIN He scowls and hates himself for his offence,

CARA She desperate with her nails her flesh doth tear.

JUSTIN He faintly flies sweating with guilty fear;

CARA She stays exclaiming on the direful night;

JUSTIN He runs and chides his vanish'd loath'd delight.

He thence departs a heavy convertite,

CARA She there remains a hopeless cast-away;

JUSTIN He in his speed looks for the morning light,

CARA She prays she never may behold the day.
"For day,"

JUSTIN quoth she,

CARA "Night's 'scapes doth open lay,
And my true eyes have never practised how
To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

"They think not but that every eye can see
The same disgrace which they themselves behold:
And therefore would they still in darkness be,
To have their unseen sin remain untold,
For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,

And 'grave, like water that doth eat in steel,
Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel."

"O hateful, vaporous, and foggy night,
Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime:
Muster thy mists to meet the Eastern light,
Make war against proportion'd course of time.
Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
[Ensnarl in] smoky ranks his smother'd light,
[Ravish the morning air] and make perpetual night.

"Were Tarquin night, as he is but night's child,
The silver shining Queen he would distain;
Her twinkling handmaids too (by him defiled)
Through night's black bosom should not peep again.
So should I have co-partners in my pain,
And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

"Where now I have no one to blush with me,
To cross their arms and hang their heads with mine,
To mask their brows and hide their infamy;
But I alone, alone must sit and pine,
Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine;
Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

"Make me not object to the tell-tale day;
The light will show character'd in my brow,
The story of sweet chastity's decay,
The impious breach of holy wedlock vow.
Yea the illiterate that know not how
To cipher what is writ in learned books,
Will [quote] my loathsome trespass in my looks.

"The nurse to still her child will tell my story,
And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name.

The Orator to deck his oratory,
Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame.
Feast-finding minstrels tuning my defame,
 Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
 How Tarquin wronged me, I Colatine.

“O unseen shame, invisible disgrace,
O unfelt sore, crest-wounding private scar!
Reproach is stamp'd in Colatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,
How he in peace is wounded, not in war.
 “If, Colatine, thine honour [in me was left],
 From me by strong assault it is bereft:

“Yet am I guilty of thy Honor's wrack;
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him;
Coming from thee I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him:
Besides, of weariness he did complain him,
 And talk'd of virtue (O unlook'd for evil
 When virtue is profaned in such a Devil).

“Misshapen time, copesmate of ugly night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight:
Base watch of woes, sin's packhorse, virtue's snare.
Thou nursest all and murd' rest all that are.
 O hear me then, injurious shifting time,
 Be guilty of my death since of my crime.

[“Guilty thou art of murder, and of theft,
Guilty of perjury and subornation,
Guilty of treason, forgery, and shift,
Guilty of incest that abomination,
An accessory by thine inclination
 To all sins past and all that are to come,
 From the creation to the general doom.]

“Why work'st thou mischief in thy Pilgrimage,
Unless thou couldst return to make amends?
One poor retiring minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends;
 O this dread night, wouldst thou one hour come back,
 I could prevent this storm, and shun thy wrack.

“Thou ceaseless lackey to Eternity,
With some mischance cross Tarquin in his flight.
Devise extremes beyond extremity,
To make him curse this cursed crimeful night:
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright,
 And the dire thought of his committed evil
 Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

“Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
 And ever let his unrecalling crime
 Have time to wail [the base] abusing of his time.

“The baser is he coming from a King,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate;
The mightier man the mightier is the thing
That makes him honor'd, or begets him hate:
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
 The Moon being clouded presently is miss'd,
 But little stars may hide them when they list.

“Out idle words, servants to shallow fools,
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators;
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools,
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters:

To trembling clients be you mediators,
For me, I force not argument a straw,
Since that my case is past the help of law.

“In vain I rail at opportunity,
At time, at Tarquin, and uncheerful night;
In vain I cavil with mine infamy,
In vain I spurn at my confirm'd despite;
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right:
The remedy indeed to do me good
Is to let forth my foul-defiled blood.

“Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honor thyself to rid me of this shame;
For if I die, my Honor lives in thee,
But if I live thou live'st in my defame;
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal Dame,
And wast afraid to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself, and her for yielding so.”

JUSTIN This said, from her betumbled couch she starteth,
To find some desp'rate Instrument of death;
But this no slaughterhouse no tool imparteth
To make more vent for passage of her breath,
Which thronging through her lips so vanisheth
As smoke from AETna, that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

CARA “In vain”

JUSTIN (quoth she)

CARA “I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I fear'd by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife;
But when I fear'd I was a loyal wife,

So am I now; O no that cannot be,
Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

“Well, well, dear Colatine, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth:
I will not wrong thy true affection so,
To flatter thee with an infringed oath:
This bastard graff shall never come to growth,
He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute
That thou art doting father of his fruit.

“Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state,
But thou shalt know thy interest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stol'n from forth thy gate.
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses.
My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes like sluices.”

JUSTIN By this lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow sad gait descended
Revealing day through every cranny spies,
To whom she sobbing speaks,

CARA “O eye of eyes,
Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
For day hath nought to do what's done by night.”

JUSTIN The little birds that tune their morning's joy,
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody;
For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy,
Sad souls are slain in merry company,
Grief best is pleased with grief's society;
True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed
When with like semblance it is sympathized.

CARA "You mocking Birds"

JUSTIN (quoth she)

CARA "your tunes entomb

Within your hollow-swelling feathered breasts,
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb;
My restless discord loves no stops nor rests:
A woeful Hostess brooks not merry guests.
Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
Distress likes dumps when time is kept with tears.

"Come Philomel that sing'st of ravishment,
Make thy sad grove in my dishevell'd hair;
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear:
For burden-wise I'll hum on Tarquin still,
While thou on Tereus descant'st better skill."

JUSTIN As the poor frightened Deer that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one encompass'd with a winding maze,
That cannot tread the way out readily:
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die which of the twain were better,
When life is shamed and death reproach's debtor.

CARA "To kill myself,"

JUSTIN quoth she,

CARA "Alack what were it,
But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it
Than they whose whole is swallow'd in confusion.
That mother tries a merciless conclusion

Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one,
Will slay the other and be nurse to none.

"My body or my soul, which was the dearer?
When the one pure, the other made divine?
Whose love of either to myself was nearer?
When both were kept for Heaven and Colatine?
Ay me, the Bark peel'd from the lofty Pine,
His leaves will wither, and his sap decay,
So must my soul her bark being peel'd away.

"Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy,
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy.
Then let it not be call'd impiety,
If in this blemish'd fort I make some hole,
Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

"Yet die I will not, till my Colatine
Have heard the cause of my untimely death,
That he may vow in that sad hour of mine,
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath;
My stained blood to Tarquin I'll bequeath,
Which [by] him tainted, shall for him be spent,
And as his due writ in my testament.

"My Honor I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonored.
'Tis Honor to deprive dishonour'd life;
The one will live, the other being dead:
So of shame's ashes shall my Fame be bred;
[Dear Lord,] thy friend will kill myself thy foe,
And for my sake serve thou false Tarquin so."

JUSTIN Her [time] is gone, and she prepares to write,
First hovering o'er the paper with her quill:

Conceit and grief an eager combat fight,
What wit sets down is blotted straight with will.
This is too curious-good, this blunt and ill,
 Much like a press of people at a door,
 Throng her inventions, which shall go before.

At last she thus begins:

CARA "Thou worthy Lord
Of that unworthy wife that greeteth thee,
Health to thy person; next vouchsafe t' afford
(If ever love thy Lucrece thou wilt see)
Some present speed to come and visit me:
 So I commend me, from our house in grief,
 My woes are tedious, though my words are brief."

JUSTIN Here folds she up the tenor of her woe,
Her certain sorrow writ uncertainly.

CARA By this short schedule Colatine may know
[My grief, but not my grief's true quality;
I dare not thereof make discovery,
 Lest he should hold it my own gross abuse,
 Ere I with blood have stain'd my stain'd excuse.]

JUSTIN Her letter now is seal'd, and on it writ

CARA "At Ardea to my lord with more than haste";

JUSTIN The Post attends, and she delivers it,
Charging the sour-faced groom to hie as fast
As lagging fowls before the Northern blasts,
 Speed more than speed, but dull and slow she deems,
 Extremity still urgeth such extremes.

CARA But long she thinks till he return again,
And yet the duteous vassal scarce is gone.

The weary time she cannot entertain,
For now 'tis stale to sigh, to weep, and groan:
So woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan,
 That she her plaints a little while doth stay,
 Pausing for means to mourn some newer way.

JUSTIN At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skillful painting, made for Priam's Troy;
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen's rape the city to destroy,
Threat'ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
 Which the conceited Painter drew so proud,
 As Heaven (it seem'd) to kiss the turrets bow'd.

A thousand lamentable objects there,
In scorn of Nature, Art gave [lifeless] life:
Many a dry drop seem'd a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaught' red husband by the wife.
The red blood reek'd, to show the Painter's strife,
 Such sweet observance in this work was had,
 That one might see those far-off eyes look sad.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come,
To find a face where all distress is stell'd;
Many she sees where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwell'd,
Till she despairing Hecuba beheld.
 Time's ruin, beauty's wrack, and grim care's reign;
 Of what she was no semblance did remain:

On this sad shadow Lucrece spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries,
And bitter words to ban her cruel Foes.
The Painter was no God to lend her those,
 And therefore Lucrece swears he did her wrong,
 To give her so much grief and not a tongue.

CARA "Poor instrument"

JUSTIN (quoth she)

CARA "without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue,
And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long,
And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.

"Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear:
Thy heat of lust, fond Paris, did incur
This load of wrath that burning Troy doth bear;
Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here,
And here in Troy for trespass of thine eye,
The Sire, the son, the Dame, and daughter die.

"Lo here weeps Hecuba, here Priam dies,
Here manly Hector faints, here Troylus swoonds,
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies:
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
And one man's lust these many lives confounds.
Had doting Priam check'd his son's desire,
Troy had been bright with Fame and not with fire."

JUSTIN Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complaining;
She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,
And both she thinks too long with her remaining.
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining;
Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps,
And they that watch see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipp'd her thought,
That she with painted Images hath spent,
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment,
Losing her woes in shows of discontent:
It easeth some, though none it ever cured,
To think their dolour others have endured.

But now the mindful Messenger [comes] back,
Brings home his lord and other company,
Who finds his Lucrece clad in mourning black,
And round about her tear-stained eye
Blue circles stream'd like rainbows in the sky.
These water-galls in her dim Element
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
Her eyes though sod in tears look'd red and raw,
Her lively colour kill'd with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares,
Both stood like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wond'ring each other's chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins: "What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent?
Why art thou thus attired in discontent?
Unmask dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress."

CARA Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe:
At length address'd to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her Honor is ta'en prisoner by the Foe,

While Colatine and his consorted Lords
With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale Swan in her wat'ry nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending;
"Few words"

JUSTIN (quoth she)

CARA "Shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending.
In me moe woes than words are now depending,
And my laments would be drawn out too long,
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

"Then be this all the task it hath to say;
Dear husband in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head;
And what wrong else may be imagined,
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that (alas) thy Lucrece is not free.

"For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature with a flaming light,
And softly cried 'Awake thou Roman Dame,
And entertain my love; else lasting shame
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

"For some hard-favour'd groom of thine,' quoth he,
'Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of Lust, and so did kill
The lechers in their deed; this act will be

My Fame, and thy perpetual infamy.'

"With this, I did begin to start and cry,
And then against my heart he sets his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,
I should not live to speak another word;
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty Rome
Th' adulterate death of Lucrece and her groom.

"Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
(And far the weaker with so strong a fear)
My bloody Judge forbade my tongue to speak,
No rightful plea might plead for Justice there.
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloin'd his eyes,
And when the Judge is robb'd the prisoner dies.

"O teach me how to make mine own excuse,
Or (at the least) this refuge let me find,
Though my gross blood be stain'd with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind,
That was not forced, that never was inclined
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poison'd closet yet endure."

JUSTIN Lo here the hopeless Merchant of this Loss,
With head declined, and voice damm'd up with woe,
With sad set eyes and wretched arms across,
From lips new waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away that stops his answer so.
But so his sighs, his sorrows make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

CARA Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh,
"Dear Lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth

Another power; no flood by raining slaketh,
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
More feeling-painful; let it then suffice
To drown on woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

“And for my sake when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy Lucrece, now attend me;
Be suddenly revenged on my Foe.
Thine, mine, his own, suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past; the help that thou shalt lend me
Comes all too late, yet let the Traitor die,
For sparing justice feeds iniquity.

“But ere I name him, you fair Lords,” quoth she,
(Speaking to those that came with Colatine)
“Shall plight your Honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine;
For 'tis a meritorious fair design
To chase injustice with revengeful arms;
Knights by their oaths should right poor ladies' harms.”

JUSTIN At this request, with noble disposition,
Each present Lord began to promise aid,
As bound in Knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful Foe bewray'd.
But she that yet her sad task hath not said,
The protestation stops.

CARA “O speak,”

JUSTIN quoth she,

CARA “How may this forced stain be wiped from me?

“What is the quality of mine offence,
Being constrain'd with dreadful circumstance?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense

My low-declined Honor to advance?
May any terms acquit me from this chance?
The poisoned fountain clears itself again,
And why not I from this compelled stain?”

JUSTIN With this they all at once began to say,
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears,

CARA While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carv'd in it with tears.
“No, no,”

JUSTIN quoth she,

CARA “No Dame, hereafter living,
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving.”

JUSTIN Here with a sigh as if her heart would break,
She throws forth Tarquin's name:

CARA “He, he,”

JUSTIN she says,
But more than “he” her poor tongue could not speak;
Till after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this,

CARA “He, he, fair lords, 'tis he,
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.”

JUSTIN Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed;
That blow did [free] it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breathed:
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeath'd

Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
[Life's] lasting date from cancell'd destiny.

Stone still, astonish'd with this deadly deed,
Stood Colatine and all his Lordly crew,
Till Lucrece' Father that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaught' red body threw,
And from the purple fountain Brutus drew
 The murd'rous knife, and as it left the place,
 Her blood in poor revenge, held it in chase.

"Daughter, dear daughter," old Lucretius cries,
"That life was mine which thou hast here deprived,
If in the child the father's image lies;
Where shall I live now Lucrece is unliv'd?
The old Bees die, the young possess their hive;
 Then live, sweet Lucrece, live again and see
 Thy father die, and not thy father thee."

By this starts Colatine as from a dream,
And bids Lucretius give his sorrow place;
And then in key-cold Lucrece' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space.
 Till manly shame bids him possess his breath
 And live to be revenged on her death.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
The father says "She's mine." "O mine she is,"
Replies her husband, "Do not take away
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
 He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
 And only must be wail'd by Colatine."

"O," quoth Lucretius, "I did give that life
Which she too early and too late hath spill'd."

"Woe, woe," quoth Colatine, "She was my wife;
I owed her, and 'tis mine that she hath kill'd."
"My daughter" and "my wife" with clamors fill'd
 The dispersed air, who holding Lucrece' life,
 Answer'd their cries, "my daughter" and "my wife."

Brutus, who pluck'd the knife from Lucrece' side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe,
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in Lucrece' wound his folly's show.
He with the Romans was esteemed so
 As silly-jeering idiots are with Kings,
 For sportive words and uttering foolish things:

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise;
And arm'd his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in Colatinus' eyes.
"Thou wronged Lord of Rome," quoth he, "Arise;
 Let my unsounded self, supposed a fool,
 Now set thy long-experienced wit to school.

"Why Colatine, is woe the cure for woe?
Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds?
Is it revenge to give thyself a blow
For his foul Act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
Such childish humor from weak minds proceeds;
 Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
 To slay herself that should have slain her Foe.

"Courageous Roman, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of Lamentations,
But kneel with me and help to bear thy part,
To rouse our Roman Gods with invocations,
That they will suffer these abominations
 (Since Rome herself in them doth stand disgraced)
 By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chased.

“Now by the Capitol that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stain'd,
By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in Rome maintain'd,
And by chaste Lucrece' soul that late complained
 Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
 We will revenge the death of this true wife.”

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kiss'd the fatal knife, to end his vow:
And to his protestation urged the rest,
Who wond'ring at him, did his words allow.
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow,
 And that deep vow which Brutus made before,
 He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom,
They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence,
To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence;
Which being done with speedy diligence,
 The Romans plausibly did give consent
 To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

FINIS