

## Anonymous, "[On Tobacco, a translation]"

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ANONYMOUS

### ["On Tobacco, a translation"]

Sweet charmer of my solitude,  
Brilliant pipe, consuming tube,  
Who clear'st the vapours from my brain,  
And my mind from anxious pain!  
Tobacco! source of my delight, 5  
When I see thee quit my sight,  
And vanish in the purer air,  
Like the lightning's quick career,  
I see the image of my life below,  
And whither soon my breath must go. 10  
By thee I trace, in colours strong,  
That man is nothing but a song,  
An animated heap of clay,  
The jest and sport of but a day;  
That as thy smoke I pass away, 15  
An emblem of my own decay.

#### NOTES:

**Title** This poem appears without a title in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but includes the following prefatory comment: "Mr. Urban, I send you the following French verses written by a Monk, with the translation. A.P.P."

**2** *Consuming tube* A reference to the reed stem pipe, which was developed in the eighteenth-century. These pipes were made with a natural reed stem, resembling a tube, which slips into a bowl.

**3-4** In the eighteenth-century, tobacco was used to treat anything from colic to vomit, hernia, rheumatic pains, and various infirmities including anxiety.

**Source:** *The Gentleman's Magazine* (April, 1785), p. 308.

*Edited by Farnam Adelhani*

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