Ann Yearsley, â??To a Friend, on Valentineâ??s Dayâ?•

Description

ANN YEARSLEY

â??To a Friend, on Valentineâ??s Dayâ?•

Thoâ?? blooming shepherds hail this day
With love, the subject of each lay,
Yet friendship tunes my artless song,
To thee the grateful themes belong.

STREPHON, I never will repine,
Thoâ?? desinâ??d not thy Valentine;
Oâ??er friendshipâ??s nobler heights weâ??ll rove,
Nor heed the softâ??ning voice of love.

Strangers to Passionâ??s tyrant reign,
Careless, weâ??ll range the happier plain,
Where all those calmer joys weâ??ll prove,
Which wait sublime platonic love.

Yet Iâ??ll allow a future day,
When friendship must at last give way;
When thou, forgetful, shalt resign
The maid who wrote this Valentine.

Think not, my friend, I dream of love ,
That with some happier maid thouâ??lt prove;
Friendship alone is my design
In this officious Valentine.

Yet, when that victor God shall reign,
And conquerâ??d Friendship quits the plain,
This gentle whisperer captive take,
â??T will all they former kindness wake.

But if its pleadings you deny,
And fain wouâ??d have remembrance die,
Then to devouring flames consign
My too ill-fated Valentine.

NOTES:

1 *blooming* â??In the bloom of health and beauty, in the prime of youthâ?• (*OED*).

5 *STREPHON* A typical male name used in pastoral poetry (*Oxford Reference*); *repine* â??To feel or express discontent or dissatisfaction; to grumble, complainâ?• (*OED*).

12 *sublime* â?? perfect, consummate; supremeâ?• (*OED*); *platonic* â?? Of love, affection, or friendship: intimate and affectionate but not sexual; spiritual rather than physicalâ?• (*OED*).

26 *fain* â??Gladly, willingly, with pleasureâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1786), p. 21. [Google Books]

Edited by Katherine Lowden