Elizabeth Singer Rowe, â??To one that persuades me to leave the Musesâ?•

Description

[ELIZABETH SINGER ROWE]

â??To one that perswades me to leave the Musesâ?•

Forgo the *charming Muses!* No, in spight
Of your ill-naturâ??d Prophecy Iâ??ll write,
And for the future *paint* my thoughts at large,
I waste no paper at the *Hundreds* charge:
I rob no *Neighbouring Geese* of Quills, nor slink
For a collection to the Church for ink:
Besides my *Muse* is the most gentle thing
That ever yet made an attempt to *sing:*
I call no Lady *Punk,* nor Gallants *Fops,*
Nor set the *married world an edge for Ropes*;
Yet Iâ??m so scurvily inclinâ??d to Rhiming,
That undesignâ??d my thoughts *burst out a chiming;*
My *active Genius* will by no means sleep,
And let it then its proper channel keep.
Iâ??ve told you, and you may believe me too,
That I must this, or greater mischiefe do;
And let the world think me *inspirâ??d, or mad,*
Iâ??le surely write whilst paperâ??s to be had;
Since Heaven to me has a *Retreat assignâ??d,*
That would inspire a less *harmonious* mind.
All that a Poet loves I have in view,
Delight some Hills, refreshing Shades, and pleasant Valleys too,
Fair spreading Valleys cloathâ??d with lasting green,
And Sunny Banks with gilded *streams between,*
Gay as Elisium, in a Lovers Dream,
Or *Floraâ??s* Mansion, seated by a stream,
Where free from sullen cares I live at ease,
Indulge my Muse, and wishes, as I please,
Exempt from all that looks like want or strife,
I smoothly glide along the Plains of Life,
Thus Fate conspires, and what can I do toâ??t?
Besides, Iâ??m *vehâ??mently in love to boot,*
And that thereâ??s not a *Willow Sprig* but knows,
In whose sad shade I breathe my direful woes.
But why for these dull Reasons do I pause,

When Iâ??ve at hand my genuine *one, because!*
And that my Muse may take no counter Spell,
I fairly bid the *Boarding Schools* farewel:
No *Young Impertinent,* shall here intrude,
And vex me from this blisful solitude.
Spite of her heart, *Old Puss* shall damn no more
Great *Sedleyâ??s* Plays, and never look â??em oâ??re;
Affront my *Novels,* no, nor in a Rage,
Force *Drydens* lofty Products from the Stage,
Whilst all the rest of the *melodious crew,*
With the *whole* System of *Athenians* too,
For Studyâ??s sake out of the Window flew.
But Iâ??to Church, shall fill her Train no more,
And walk as if I sojurnâ??d by the hour.
To *Stepwel* and his Kit I bid adieu,
Fall off, and on, be hangâ??d and *Coopee* too
Thy self for me, my *dancing days* are oâ??re;
Iâ??le act thâ?? inspired *Bachannels* no more.
Eight Notes must for another Treble look,
In *Burlesque* to make Faces by the book.
Japan, and my esteemed *Pencil* too,
And pretty Cupid, in the Glass adieu,
And since the dearest friends that be must part,
Old Governess farewell with all my heart.
Now welcome all ye *peaceful Shades* and *Springs,*
And welcome all the *inspiring* tender things;
That please my *genius,* suit my make and years,
Unburdenâ??d yet with all but lovers cares.

NOTES:

1 *Muses* â??The nine goddesses regarded as presiding over and inspiring learning and the arts, esp. poetry and musicâ?• *(OED).*

4 *Hundreds* Corrected from â??*Hunderds;*â?• a printerâ??s error.

9 *Lady Punk* â??Prostituteâ?• *(OED); Fop* â??One who is foolishly attentive to and vain of his appearance, dress, or manners; a dandy, an exquisiteâ?• *(OED).*

25 *Elisium* Elysium; the paradise where the gods determined a heroâ??s immortality, a land of perfect happiness (*Britannica*).

26 *Floraâ??s Mansion* The natural world; Flora is the Roman goddess of the flowering plants (*Britannica*).

32 *to boot â??*In additionâ?• *(OED).*

33 *Sprig* â??A small branch of a treeâ?• (*OED*).

41 *Old Puss* A contemptuous term for a woman.

42 *Sedley* Sir Charles Sedley, 4th Baronet, (1639-1701), â??an English Restoration poet, dramatist, wit, and courtier.â?• One of his most notable plays was *Bellamira* (1687) (*Britannica*).

44 *Force Drydens lofty Products from the Stage* John Dryden (1631-1700), poet, playwright, and influential critic; the suppression of Roweâ??s work was linked to censorship of Drydenâ??s dramas (John West, *Dryden and Enthusiasm: Literature, Religion, and Politics in Restoration England*, p. 170).

46 *whole system of Athenians* A reference to The Athenian Society, founded by John Dunton (1659-1733), bookseller and author, in 1691. Rowe regularly published poetry in *The Athenian Mercury*, the societyâ??s periodical published by Dunton, between 1693 and 1696.

50 *Stepwel* A made up name for a dancing master; *Kit* â??A small fiddle, formerly much used by dancing mastersâ?• (*OED).*

51 *Coopee* Coupee; â??a dance stepâ?• typically included in a minuet (*OED*).

53 *Bachannels* Bacchanals; â??a dance or song in honour of Bacchus,â?• Roman god of wine and fertility (*OED*).

54 *Eight Notes* Eighth notes; â??The note separated from any given one above or below by an interval of an eighthâ?• (*OED*);*Treble* The G clef, â??pertaining to, or suited to the highest part in harmonized musical compositionâ?• (*OED*).

56 *Japan* A black compound applied to the eye; *Pencil* â??A small brush suitable for delicate workâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1696), pp. 6-9. [*Google Books*]

Edited by Celina Lopez