John Ogilvie, â??Ode to the Genius of Shakespearâ?•

Description

JOHN OGILVIE

â??Ode to the Genius of Shakespearâ?•

I. 1

Rapt from the glance of mortal eye,
Say bursts thy Genius to the world of light?
Seeks it yon star-bespangled sky?
Or skims its fields with rapid flight?
Or midâ?? yon plains where Fancy strays,
Courts it the balmy-breathing gale?
Or where the violet pale
Droops oâ??er the green-embroiderâ??d stream;
Or where young Zephir stirs the rustling sprays,
Lyes all dissolvâ??d in fairy-dream.
Oâ??er yon bleak desartâ??s unfrequented round
Seeâ??st thou where Nature treads the deepening gloom,
Sits on yon hoary towâ??r with ivy crownâ??d,
Or wildly wails oâ??er thy lamented tomb;
Hearâ??st thou the solemn music wind along?
Or thrills the warbling note in thy mellifluous song?

I. 2

Oft while on earth â??twas thine to rove
Whereâ??er the wild-eyed Goddess lovâ??d to roam,
To trace serene the gloomy grove,
Or haunt meek Quietâ??s simple dome;
Still hovering round the Nine appear,
That pour the soul-transporting strain;
Joinâ??d to the Lovesâ?? gay train,
The loose-robed Graces crownâ??d with flowâ??rs,
The light-wingâ??d gales that lead the vernal year,
And wake the rosy-featured Hours.
Oâ??er all bright Fancyâ??s beamy radiance shone,
How flamâ??d thy bosom as her charms reveal!
Her fire-clad eye sublime, her starry zone,
Her tresses loose that wantonâ??d on the gale;
On Thee the Goddess fixâ??d her ardent look,
Then from her glowing lips these melting accents broke.

I. 3

â??To Thee, my favourite son, belong
The lays that steal the listening hour;
To pour the rapture-darting song
To paint gay Hopeâ??s elysian bower.
From Natureâ??s hand to snatch the dart,
To cleave with pangs the bleeding heart;
Or lightly sweep the trembling string,
And call the Loves with purple wing
From the blue deep where they dwell
With Naiads in the pearly cell,
Soft on the sea-born Goddess gaze;
Or in the loose robeâ??s floating maze,
Dissolvâ??d in downy slumbers rest;
Or flutter oâ??er her panting breast.
Or wild to melt the yielding soul,
Let Sorrow clad in sable stole
Slow to thy musing thought appear;
Or pensive Pity pale;
Or Loveâ??s desponding tale
Call from thâ?? intenderâ??d heart the sympathetic tear.â?•

II. 1

Say, whence the magic of thy mind?
Why thrills thy music on the springs of thought?
Why, at thy pencilâ??s touch refinâ??d
Starts into life the glowing draught?
On yonder fairy carpet laid,
Where Beauty pours eternal bloom,
And Zephir breathes perfume;
There nightly to the tranced eye
Profuse the radiant goddess stood displayâ??d,
With all her smiling offspring nigh.
Sudden the mantling cliff, the arching wood,
The broidered mead, the landskip, and the grove,
Hills, vales, and sky-dipt seas, and torrents rude,
Grots, rills and shades, and bowers that breathâ??d of love
All burst to sight!â??while glancing on the view,
Titaniaâ??s sporting train brushâ??d lightly oâ??er the dew.

II. 2

The pale-eyed Genius of the shade
Led thy bold step to Prosperâ??s magic bower;
Whose voice the howling winds obeyâ??d,
Whose dark spell chainâ??d the rapid hour:
Then rose serene the sea-girt isle;

Gay scenes by Fancyâ??s touch refinâ??d
Glowâ??d to the musing mind:
Such visions bless the hermitâ??s dream,
When hovering Angels prompt his placid smile,
Or paint some high ecstatic theme.
Then flamâ??d Miranda on thâ?? enrapturâ??d gaze,
Then failâ??d bright Ariel on the batâ??s fleet wing:
Or starts the liftâ??ning throng in still amaze!
The wild note trembling on thâ?? aerial string!
The form in heavâ??nâ??s resplendent vesture gay
Floats on the mantling cloud, and pours the melting lay.

II. 3

O lay me near yon limpid stream,
Whose murmur soothes the ear of Woe!
There in some sweet poetic dream
Let Fancyâ??s bright Elysium glow!
â??Tis done :â??oâ??er all the blushing mead
The dark Wood shakes his cloudy head;
Below, the lily-fringed dale
Breathes its mild fragrance on the gale;
While in pastime all-unseen,
Titania robed in mantle green
Sports on the mossy bank :â?? her train
Skims light along the gleaming plain;
Or to the fluttering breeze unfold
The blue wing streakâ??d with beamy gold;
Its pinions opening to the light !â??
Say, bursts the vision on my sight?
Ah, no! by Shakespearâ??s pencil drawn
The beauteous shapes appear;
While meek-eyed Cynthia near
Illumes with streamy ray the silver-mantled lawn.

III. 1

But hark! the Tempest howls afar!
Bursts the loud whirlwind oâ??er the pathless waste!
What Cherub blows the trump of war?
What Demon rides the stormy blast?
Red from the lightningâ??s livid blaze,
The bleak heath rushes on the sight;
Then wrapt in sudden night
Dissolves.â??But ah ! what kingly form
Roams the lone desartâ??s desolated maze!
Unawâ??d! nor heeds the sweeping storm.
Ye pale-eyed Lightnings spare the cheek of Age!

Vain wish ;â??though Anguish heaves the bursting groan.
Deaf as the flint, the marble ear of Rage
Hears not the Mournerâ??s unavailing moan:
Heart-piercâ??d he bleeds, and stung with wild despair
Bares his time-blasted head, and tears his silver hair.

III. 2

Lo! on yon long-resounding shore,
Where the rock totters oâ??er the headlong deep;
What phantomes bathed in infant gore
Stand muttering on the dizzy steep!
Their murmur shakes the zephirâ??s wing!
The storm obeys their powâ??rful spell;
See, from His gloomy cell
Fierce Winter starts! his scowling eye
Bloats the fair mantle of the breathing Spring,
And lowers along the ruffled sky.
To the deep vault the yelling harpies run,
Its yawning mouth receives thâ?? infernal crew.
Dim throâ?? the black gloom winks the glimmering sun,
And the pale furnace gleams with brimstone blue.
Hell howls: and fiends that join the dire acclaim
Dance on the bubbling tide, and point the livid flame.

III. 3

But ah! on Sorrowâ??s cypress bough
Can Beauty breathe her genial bloom?
On Deathâ??s cold cheek will Passion glow?
Or Music warble from the tomb?
There sleeps the Bard, whose tuneful tongue
Pourâ??d the full stream of mazy song.
Young Spring with lip of ruby, here
Showers from her lap the blushing year;
While along the turf reclinâ??d,
The loose wing swimming on the wind,
The Loves with forward gesture bold,
Sprinkle the sod with spangling gold;
And oft the blue-eyed Graces trim
Dance lightly round on downy limb;
Oft too, when Eveâ?? demure and still
Chequers the green daleâ??s purling rill,
Sweet Fancy pours the plaintive strain,
Or wrapt in soothing dream,
By Avonâ??s ruffled stream,
Hears the low-murmuring gale that dies along the plain.

NOTES:

3 *yon* â??Thatâ?• (*OED*).
6 *balmy-breathing gale* A warm, fragrant breeze.
9 *Zephir* â??The west wind; frequently personifiedâ?• (*OED*).
13 *hoary* â??Ancient, venerableâ?• (*OED*).
16 *mellifluous* â??Pertaining to speech, words, or music; being sweetâ?• (*OED*).
21 *the Nine* The Muses.
30 *wantonâ??d on the gale* Blowing about carelessly in the wind.
36 *elysian bower* An ideal or happy abode (*OED*).
42 *Naiads â??*Water nymphsâ?• (*OED*).
43 *sea-born Goddess* â??Venusâ?• [Authorâ??s note].
48 *clad in sable stole* Dressed in mourning garments (*OED*).
51 *desponding* â??To lose heart or resolution; to become depressed or dejected in mind by loss of confidence or hopeâ?• (*OED*).
66 *rills* Small streams (*OED*).
68 *Titania* â??The queen of the fairies in William Shakespeareâ??s comedy *A Midsummer Nightâ??s Dream* (written about 1595â??96). Titania, who opposes her husband, Oberon, bears some resemblance to Hera of Greek mythologyâ?• (*Britannica*).
70 *Prosper* Prospero in Shakespeareâ??s *The Tempest*.
83 *vesture* â??All growth on land, except treesâ?• (*OED*).
84 *Floats on the mantling cloud* â??Ariel: see the Tempestâ?• [Authorâ??s note].
91 *dale* â??A valleyâ?• (*OED*).
104 *the silver-mantled lawn* â??See the Midsummer Nightâ??s Dreamâ?• [Authorâ??s note].
110 *heath* â??Wildernessâ?• (*OED*).
120 *tears his silver hair* â??Learâ?• [Authorâ??s note].
122 *totters* â??As if about to collapseâ?• (*OED*).
131 *the yelling harpies run* â??The Witches in Macbethâ?• [Authorâ??s note].
151 *Eveâ??* Evening.
153 *plaintive* â??Lamentingâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Subjects* (London, 1762), pp. 8-15. [Google Books]

Edited by Janice Rodriguez