

Anonymous, [On Tobacco, a translation]

Description

ANONYMOUS

[On Tobacco, a translation]

Sweet charmer of my solitude, Brilliant pipe, consuming tube, Who clearst 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, An emblem of my own decay.	15

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