

Anonymous, "Thoughts on Life"

Description

ANONYMOUS

"THOUGHTS on LIFE"

LIFE! thou dead, deceitful guest!	
Precious trifle! ferious jest!	
Drawn by thee, we roam below,	
Pilgrims, thro' a vale of woe:	
Toiling or by land or seas,	5
Strangers to the balm of ease!	
Slaves to pleasure, tumult, gain,	
O thou bitter-sweet to man!	
In thy train, thy belt of friends,	
Hope, fallacious fair! attends;	10
Hope, a thin, a shadowy elf!	
Hope, true image of thyself;	
When against thy power we rise,	
Roused to rage, to mutinies!	
When we aim the fatal stroke,	15
Ready to throw off thy yoke;	
She the lifted hand arrests,	
Fills with food of courts our breasts;	
Anew we own our former lord,	
To thee, and to ourselves, restored.	20

NOTES:

2 *ferious* Variant of "furious."

7 *tumult* "Commotion of a multitude, usually with confused speech or uproar; public disturbance; disorderly or riotous proceeding" (*OED*).

10 *fallacious* "Deceptive, misleading" (*OED*).

11 *Shadowy elf* A "wandering spirit; a devil" (Johnson).

16 *yoke* "A bond; a mark of servitude; slavery" (Johnson).

Source: *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (December 1744), p. 671.

Edited by Henry Bettencourt