

# John Gay, “Panthea. An Elegy”

## Description

JOHN GAY

### “Panthea. An Elegy”

Long had *Panthea* felt Love’s secret smart,  
And hope and fear alternate rul’d her heart;  
Consenting glances had her flame confest.

(In woman’s eyes her very soul’s exprest)

Perjur’d *Alexis* saw the blushing maid,    5  
He saw, he swore, he conquer’d and betray’d:

Another love now calls him from her arms,

His fickle heart another beauty warms;

Those oaths oft whisper’d in *Panthea*’s ears,

He now again to *Galatea* swears.    10

Beneath a beech th’ abandon’d virgin laid,

In grateful solitude enjoys the shade;

There with faint voice she breath’d these moving strains,

While sighing Zephyrs shar’d her am’rous pains.

Pale settled sorrow hangs on upon my brow,    15

Dead are my charms; *Alexis*, breaks his vow!

Think, think, dear shepherd, on the days you knew,

When I was happy, when my swain was true;

Think how thy looks and tongue are form’d to move,

And think yet more—that all my fault was love.    20

Ah, could you view me in this wretched state!

You might not love me, but you could not hate.

Could you behold me in this conscious shade,

Where first thy vows, where first my love was paid,

Worn out with watching, sullen with despair,    25

And see each eye swell with a gushing tear?

Could you behold me on this mossy bed,

From my pale cheek the lively crimson fled,

Which in my softer hours you oft have sworn,

With rosie beauty far out-blush’d the morn;    30

Could you untouch’d this wretched object bear,

And would not lost *Panthea* claim a tear?

You could not sure—tears from your eyes would steal,



No more, ye streams, with murmur<sup>TM</sup>ring musick flow,  
 And let not groves a friendly shade bestow: 80  
 With sympathizing grief let nature mourn,  
 And never know the youthful spring<sup>TM</sup>s return;  
 And shall I never more *Alexis* see?  
 Then what is spring, or grove or stream to me?

Why sport the skipping lambs on yonder plain? 85  
 Why do the birds their tuneful voice strain?  
 Why frisk those heifers in cooling grove?  
 Their happier life is ignorant of love.

Oh! lead me to some melancholy cave,  
 To lull my sorrow in a living grave; 90  
 From the dark rock where dashing waters fall,  
 And creeping ivy hangs the craggy wall,  
 Where I may waste in tears my hours away,  
 And never know the seasons or the day.  
 Die, die, *Panthea*—fly in this hateful grove, 95  
 For what is life without the Swain I love?

**NOTES:**

**Title** *Panthea* This name means “of all gods” in Greek.

**1** *smart* “Mental suffering, sorrow” (QED).

**10** *Galatea* “In Greek mythology, a Nereid who was loved by the Cyclops Polyphemus. Galatea, however, loved the youth Acis” (Britannica).

**14** *Zephyrs* Greek god of gentle winds.

**18** *swain* “Lover” (QED).

**39** *quarry* Here a reference to the vulture<sup>TM</sup>s “prey” or carrion (QED).

**42** *flint* “Hard stone” (QED).

**45** *hard* “Unyielding” (QED).

**49** *watry glass* Water serving as a mirror.

**51** *northern winds* Refers to Boreas, Greek god of the cold northern winds.

**61** *mazy* “Twisting” (QED).

**70** *warbling* “Singing with sweet quavering notes” (QED).

**72** *cowslips* “Well-known plant in pastures and grassy banks, blossoming in spring” (QED).

**87** *heifers* *â€œYoung cowsâ€œ*(*QED*).

**92** *craggy* *â€œHard and roughâ€œ*(*QED*).

**SOURCE:** *Poems on Several Occasions: Volume 2* (London, 1737), pp. 109-113. [[Google Books](#)]

*Edited by Joanna Tran*

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