

That like fierce torrents sweep this mortal stage, 35
 Can famine, war, or pestilence, compare
 With keen reflection, edg'd with conscious guilt,
 And time misspent, and suffering goodness scorn'd,
 And dark futurity? No! This alone
 Close view'd, can freeze the boiling blood of lust, 40
 And in a moment damp an age's joy.
 Then let us hence contingences improve
 By foresight prudent, and self-love refine:
 So shall true dignity adorn each brow,
 Firm-footed peace with calm unruffled hours, 45
 And mental freedom with immortal youth,
 Renew the soul. Then, saturated high
 With beauty inexpressive, each great mind,
 In faint resemblance of all-bounteous heaven,
 Shall seize officious each occurring hour 50
 To spread the joy, and raise a groveling world.

NOTES:

Title *Plague* The bubonic plague destroyed much of Europe in the Middle Ages.

13 *the Danish monarch* An allusion to Valdemar IV Atterdag. The title Atterdag roughly translates to "New Day," a title bestowed because of his restoration of wealth to Denmark during his reign.

18 "Grim Death grinn'd horrible:" Reid is drawing from Book II of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. He is synthesizing two passages, "Grim Death, my son and foe" (l. 804) and "Death/Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile" (ll. 845-46), perhaps for alliterative effect.

22 *hetacombs* In ancient times, a reference to public sacrifice of 100 oxen for a religious ceremony. By the eighteenth-century, however, it meant a great number of people dying (*OED*).

27 *Amors Patriae* Latin for love of one's country (*OED*).

34 *Muse* In poetry, the image of the Muse was often invoked as someone who aids the poet in writing.

42 *contingences* Variant spelling of the word contingencies.

51 "groveling world" Quotation not traced.

Source: *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 59 Pt. 2 (July 1789), pp. 650-651.

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