Anonymous, â??Evening and Nightâ?•

Description

ANONYMOUS

â??EVENING *and* NIGHTâ?•

NOW all is calm, and through the ambient air
The breathing zephyrs, on their balmy wings,
Ambrosial odours waft, that glad the heart
And to the nerves relaxâ??d on their tone restore,
The sun, just hovering on the giddy verge,
â??Twixt world and world, faint and oblique, emits
His blunted rays; that tinge with golden dye
The lofty mountainâ??s russet head from far,
Mean while he opes on some far distant realm
The chrystal portals of the joyful morn,
Proclaiming, as he moves, returning day.
As more to these he lends his chearing beams,
Night, from the east, in majesty sedate,
And slow progression comes, with shade oâ??er shade
Of growing darkness; and with silent force
Expels the last reluctant lingâ??ring ray.
Where art thou busy world? and in what cave
Profound and dark, now hushâ??d to silence deep,
Sleeps your loud noise, your tumult, and confusion
That lately beat the yielding air; and where
That soft harmonious change of various notes?
Now only the sad nightingale disturbs
The solemn silence while throâ?? awful shades,
Sad as the night she sings, the warbler pours
Her plaintive notes. Or from his lonely haunt,
The tottâ??ring ruins of some antient dome,
The midnight owl, bent on black deeds, steals forth
And with dread cries, and harsh discordant notes,
To the drear hour adds horrors not its own.
Hail! sacred silence, thou who first of things
Erst held throâ?? all thâ?? ilimitable void,
An universal sway, ere circling worlds
Were formâ??d, ere yon caerulean arch began
Tâ?? expand its recent shape, and ere the sun
Was from blended mass, formless and rude,
Severâ??d, and fixâ??d the lucid central point
Of fair creationâ??s wide extended round.

Blest powâ??r, I feel thy sacred influence now,
Thine is the genâ??rous plan that patriots form;
Thine is the glow that warms the poetâ??s mind;
Led forth by thee he wanders forth, beneath
The silver moon, and conscious satyrs, to view
The gloomy night, whose dusky horrors please
And wake in studious minds the lofty thought.
Not to the sons of riot spend their hours,
Sworn foes at once to silence and to peace,
These to ill deeds the midnight revel fires
To rude intempâ??rance and to lawless love.
See oâ??er the north a blaze of meteors spread,
In mystic dance, and convolutions wild;
Dilated now, how densâ??d, now brightness all,
Now stainâ??d with sanguine dye, swiftly they mix,
They thwart, extinguish, and renew. On these
Pale Superstition turns her eye aghast,
And sees, or thinks she sees, portended fate.
Yet these, and whateâ??er else the worlds above
Meteor or storm, produce, are but thy path
Father of light and life; whateâ??er we see,
Whateâ??er we know, is but the varied God,
He in black darkness oft, and thickest gloom,
Involves his awful brow, or mounts the blaze,
Of unextinguishâ??d light, and round the world,
The wondâ??ring world, displays Almighty powâ??r,
And love, which, unconfinâ??d, sustains, directs,
Whatever isâ??to him be endless praise.
Sheerness, Dec. 11, 1760

NOTES:

2 *zephyrs* A soft, gentle breeze (*OED*). Wind that blows from the west.

3 *Ambrosial* Something very pleasing to taste or smell (*OED*).

22 *nightingale* A small bird known for its rich song (*OED*). In literature and poetry, the nightingale and its nocturnal song are often used as symbols of love and loss.

31 *Erst* Formerly (*OED*).

33 *caerulean* A sky-blue color.

42 *satyrs* Woodland figures of Classical mythology who resemble men with horse or goat-like physical features. Typically represented as lustful and hedonistic.

52 *sanguine* Optimistic, especially in an apparently difficult situation. In medieval science, â??sanguineâ?• referred to a ruddy complexion and an optimistic disposition symptomatic of an excess of blood in the bodily humors (*OED*).

66 *Sheerness* A coastal town in Southeast England that began as a naval fort and dockyard in the seventeenth century (*BBC).*

SOURCE: ***The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine*** **(December, 1760), pp. 586-87.**

Edited by Ariana Balagtas