



Bright from ANGELICA's unrival'd hand,  
Goddess, thy portrait glows, and charms the gazing Land.

Nor let this Delphic Vase alone  
Thy all-enlivening influence own;  
Exert then still thy magic power  
Â  
35  
To whiten every passing hour  
For him, whose taste decided shines  
In the fair Priestess of these shrines;  
For her, who guides the devious feet  
Of Genius to this fair retreat,  
Â  
40  
Her verdant prize extending there; "â€"  
Ah still for them, the generous Pair,  
Collect thou each idea bright  
From Fancy's shrine of missive light;  
From Health, from Love, from Virtue's ray,  
Â 45  
To gild through life their varied day,  
Illume the night, and bless the rising morn,  
And with the beams of bliss the golden sun adorn.

**NOTES:**

**Title** *Comic Muse* Thalia, the muse of comedy.

**Subtitle** *Prize Poem at Bath-Easton* Seward wrote and performed this poem in 1778, her first submission to one of Lady Anna Miller's fortnightly poetry contests associated with her literary salon at Batheaston, a village just northeast of Bath (Claudia T. Kairoff, *Anna Seward and the End of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 32-41).

- 1 *mirth-devoted* Joyful, happy (*OED*).
- 2 *bowers* a vague poetic word for an idealized abode (*OED*).
- 3 *sable vestments* Black clothing (*OED*).
- 4 *MELPOMENE* One of the nine Muses, patron of tragedy and lyre playing (*Britannica*).
- 9 *Phrenzy* An archaic spelling of *phrenzy*, meaning agitation or disorder of the mind likened to madness (*OED*).
- 10 *lays* Poetry, verses.
- 18 *car* A chariot, esp. of war, triumph, splendour, or pageantry (*OED*).
- 24 *jocund* Mirthful, merry; light-hearted (*OED*).

**31-32** *ANGELICA* Alluding to a celebrated picture of Mrs. Kauffman's, *THE NYMPHS DISARMING CUPID*. [Author's note]. Â Angelica Kauffman (1741-1802) was a Swiss painter who live and worked in

England from 1766-1781. She was a founding member of the Royal Academy, and was well-known for her paintings of mythological subjects (*Britannica*).

**33** *Delphic Vase* A reference to the ancient urn that the Millers brought back from Italy in 1772; contestants for the salon's poetry prize would submit their poems by rolling them up and placing them in the urn (Kairoff, p. 35).

**37** *him* Sir John Miller, Lady Anna Miller's husband.

**38** *the fair Priestess of these shrines* That is, Lady Anna Miller.

**40** *Genius* Specifically, poetic genius in the context of the poetry competition.

**44** *Fancy* Poetic imagination.

**SOURCE:** *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward With Extracts from Her Literary Correspondence, Volume 2*, ed. Walter Scott (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Company, 1810), pp. 22-24. [Google Books]

*Edited by Hannah Mayer*