

[John Scott], “Verses occasioned by the Description of the Eolian Harp”

**Description**

[JOHN SCOTT]

“Verses occasioned by the Description of the EOLIAN HARP”

Untaught o’er strings to draw the rosin’d bow,  
Or melting strains on the soft flute to blow,  
With others long I mourn’d the want of skill,  
Resounding roofs with harmony to fill;  
Till happy ! now the *Eolian* lyre is known,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   5  
And all the powers of musick are my own.  
Swell all thy notes, delightful harp , O swell!  
Inflame thy poet to describe thee well,  
When the full chorus rises with the breeze,  
Or slowly sinking lessens by degrees,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   10  
To sounds more soft than am’rous gales disclose,  
At evening panting on the blushing rose;  
More sweet than all the notes that organs breathe,  
Or tuneful echoes, when they die, bequeathe.  
Oft where some sylvan temple decks the grove,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   15  
The slave of easy indolence I rove;  
There the wing’d breeze the lifted sash pervades,  
Each breath is musick, vocal all the shades;  
Charm’d with the soothing sound at ease reclin’d,  
To fancy’s pleasing power I yield my mind:   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   20  
And now enchanted scenes around me rise,  
And some kind *Ariel* the soft air supplies:  
Now lofty *Pindus* through the shades I view,  
Where all the nine their tuneful art pursue,  
To me the sound the parting gale conveys,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   25  
And all my heart is extasy and praise:  
Now to *Arcadian* plains at once convey’d,  
Some shepherd’s pipe delights his favorite maid;  
Mix’d with the murmurs of a neighboring stream,  
I hear soft notes that suit an am’rous theme;   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   30  
Ah! then a victim to the fond deceit,  
My heart begins with fierce desires to beat;  
To fancy’s sighs I real sighs return,  
By turns I languish, and by turns I burn.  
Ah *Delia* haste! and here attentive prove,   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   Â   35  
Like me that music is the voice of love,  
So shall I mourn my rustic strains no more,

While pleasâ€™d you listen who could frown before.  
*Hertfordshire, Nov. 15, 1754.*

**NOTES:**

**Â Author** This poem is signed â€™R.Sâ€™; identified by Emily Lorraine de Montluzin as John Scott of Amwell (1731-1783), a Quaker poet who published a number of poems in the *GM* between 1753-1758 (â€™The Poetry of the *Gentlemanâ€™s Magazine*, 1731-1800â€™).

**Title** *EOLIAN HARP* â€™A stringed instrument producing musical sounds on exposure to a current of airâ€™ (*OED*). Â Named after Aeolus, the Greek god of wind. Â The “description” Scott is responding to appeared in the *GM*, vol. 24 (February 1754), p. 74.

**15** *sylvan* Of the woods (*OED*).

**23** *Pindus* Grecian mountain range that includes Mount Parnassus, home of the nine muses.

**27** *Arcadian* Belonging to Arcadia; ideally rural or rustic (*OED*).

**36** â€™music is the voice of loveâ€™ Quoted from James Thomson, *Spring* (1735), line 569.

**SOURCE:** *The Gentlemanâ€™s Magazine*, vol. 24 (November, 1754), p. 525. [Internet Archive]

*Edited by Neil Donovan*