

John Ogilvie, "Ode to the Genius of Shakespear"

Description

JOHN OGILVIE

"Ode to the Genius of Shakespear"

I. 1

Rapt from the glance of mortal eye,
Say bursts thy Genius to the world of light?
Seeks it yon star-bespangled sky?
Or skims its fields with rapid flight?
Or mid' yon plains where Fancy strays, 5
Courts it the balmy-breathing gale?
Or where the violet pale
Droops o'er the green-embroider'd stream;
Or where young Zephir stirs the rustling sprays,
Lyes all dissolv'd in fairy-dream. 10
O'er yon bleak desert's unfrequented round
See'st thou where Nature treads the deepening gloom,
Sits on yon hoary tow'r with ivy crown'd,
Or wildly wails o'er thy lamented tomb;
Hear'st thou the solemn music wind along? 15
Or thrills the warbling note in thy mellifluous song?

I. 2

Oft while on earth 'twas thine to rove
 Where'er the wild-eyed Goddess lov'd to roam,
 To trace serene the gloomy grove,
 Or haunt meek Quiet's simple dome; 20
 Still hovering round the Nine appear,
 That pour the soul-transporting strain;
 Join'd to the Loves' gay train,
 The loose-robed Graces crown'd with flow'rs,
 The light-wing'd gales that lead the vernal year, 25
 And wake the rosy-featured Hours.
 O'er all bright Fancy's beamy radiance shone,
 How flam'd thy bosom as her charms reveal!
 Her fire-clad eye sublime, her starry zone,
 Her tresses loose that wanton'd on the gale; 30
 On Thee the Goddess fix'd her ardent look,
 Then from her glowing lips these melting accents broke.

I. 3

"To Thee, my favourite son, belong
 The lays that steal the listening hour;
 To pour the rapture-darting song 35
 To paint gay Hope's elysian bower.
 From Nature's hand to snatch the dart,
 To cleave with pangs the bleeding heart;
 Or lightly sweep the trembling string,
 And call the Loves with purple wing 40
 From the blue deep where they dwell
 With Naiads in the pearly cell,
 Soft on the sea-born Goddess gaze;
 Or in the loose robe's floating maze,
 Dissolv'd in downy slumbers rest; 45
 Or flutter o'er her panting breast.
 Or wild to melt the yielding soul,
 Let Sorrow clad in sable stole
 Slow to thy musing thought appear;
 Or pensive Pity pale; 50
 Or Love's desponding tale
 Call from th' intender'd heart the sympathetic tear."

II. 1

Say, whence the magic of thy mind?
 Why thrills thy music on the springs of thought?
 Why, at thy pencil's touch refin'd 55
 Starts into life the glowing draught?
 On yonder fairy carpet laid,

Where Beauty pours eternal bloom,
 And Zephir breathes perfume;
 There nightly to the tranced eye 60
 Profuse the radiant goddess stood display'd,
 With all her smiling offspring nigh.
 Sudden the mantling cliff, the arching wood,
 The brodered mead, the landskip, and the grove,
 Hills, vales, and sky-dipt seas, and torrents rude, 65
 Grots, rills and shades, and bowers that breath'd of love
 All burst to sight!—while glancing on the view,
 Titania's sporting train brush'd lightly o'er the dew.

II. 2

The pale-eyed Genius of the shade
 Led thy bold step to Prosper's magic bower; 70
 Whose voice the howling winds obey'd,
 Whose dark spell chain'd the rapid hour:
 Then rose serene the sea-girt isle;
 Gay scenes by Fancy's touch refin'd
 Glow'd to the musing mind: 75
 Such visions bless the hermit's dream,
 When hovering Angels prompt his placid smile,
 Or paint some high ecstatic theme.
 Then flam'd Miranda on th' enraptur'd gaze,
 Then fail'd bright Ariel on the bat's fleet wing: 80
 Or starts the lift'ning throng in still amaze!
 The wild note trembling on th' aerial string!
 The form in heav'n's resplendent vesture gay
 Floats on the mantling cloud, and pours the melting lay.

II. 3

O lay me near yon limpid stream, 85
 Whose murmur soothes the ear of Woe!
 There in some sweet poetic dream
 Let Fancy's bright Elysium glow!
 'Tis done :—o'er all the blushing mead
 The dark Wood shakes his cloudy head; 90
 Below, the lily-fringed dale
 Breathes its mild fragrance on the gale;
 While in pastime all-unseen,
 Titania robed in mantle green
 Sports on the mossy bank :— her train 95
 Skims light along the gleaming plain;
 Or to the fluttering breeze unfold
 The blue wing streak'd with beamy gold;
 Its pinions opening to the light !—

Say, bursts the vision on my sight? 100
Ah, no! by Shakespear's pencil drawn
The beauteous shapes appear;
While meek-eyed Cynthia near
Illumes with streamy ray the silver-mantled lawn.

III. 1

But hark! the Tempest howls afar! 105
Bursts the loud whirlwind o'er the pathless waste!
What Cherub blows the trump of war?
What Demon rides the stormy blast?
Red from the lightning's livid blaze,
The bleak heath rushes on the sight; 110
Then wrapt in sudden night
Dissolves.—But ah ! what kingly form
Roams the lone desert's desolated maze!
Unaw'd! nor heeds the sweeping storm.
Ye pale-eyed Lightnings spare the cheek of Age! 115
Vain wish ;—though Anguish heaves the bursting groan.
Deaf as the flint, the marble ear of Rage
Hears not the Mourner's unavailing moan:
Heart-pierc'd he bleeds, and stung with wild despair
Bares his time-blasted head, and tears his silver hair. 120

III. 2

Lo! on yon long-resounding shore,
Where the rock totters o'er the headlong deep;
What phantomes bathed in infant gore
Stand muttering on the dizzy steep!
Their murmur shakes the zephir's wing! 125
The storm obeys their pow'rful spell;
See, from His gloomy cell
Fierce Winter starts! his scowling eye
Bloats the fair mantle of the breathing Spring,
And lowers along the ruffled sky. 130
To the deep vault the yelling harpies run,
Its yawning mouth receives th' infernal crew.
Dim thro' the black gloom winks the glimmering sun,
And the pale furnace gleams with brimstone blue.
Hell howls: and fiends that join the dire acclaim 135
Dance on the bubbling tide, and point the livid flame.

III. 3

But ah! on Sorrow's cypress bough
Can Beauty breathe her genial bloom?

On Death's cold cheek will Passion glow?
 Or Music warble from the tomb? 140
 There sleeps the Bard, whose tuneful tongue
 Pour'd the full stream of mazy song.
 Young Spring with lip of ruby, here
 Showers from her lap the blushing year;
 While along the turf reclin'd, 145
 The loose wing swimming on the wind,
 The Loves with forward gesture bold,
 Sprinkle the sod with spangling gold;
 And oft the blue-eyed Graces trim
 Dance lightly round on downy limb; 150
 Oft too, when Eve' demure and still
 Chequers the green dale's purling rill,
 Sweet Fancy pours the plaintive strain,
 Or wrapt in soothing dream,
 By Avon's ruffled stream, 155
 Hears the low-murmuring gale that dies along the plain.

NOTES:

- 3** *yon* "That" (*OED*).
6 *balmy-breathing gale* A warm, fragrant breeze.
9 *Zephir* "The west wind; frequently personified" (*OED*).
13 *hoary* "Ancient, venerable" (*OED*).
16 *mellifluous* "Pertaining to speech, words, or music; being sweet" (*OED*).
21 *the Nine* The Muses.
30 *wanton'd on the gale* Blowing about carelessly in the wind.
36 *elysian bower* An ideal or happy abode (*OED*).
42 *Naiads* "Water nymphs" (*OED*).
43 *sea-born Goddess* "Venus" [Author's note].
48 *clad in sable stole* Dressed in mourning garments (*OED*).
51 *desponding* "To lose heart or resolution; to become depressed or dejected in mind by loss of confidence or hope" (*OED*).
66 *rills* Small streams (*OED*).
68 *Titania* "The queen of the fairies in William Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (written about 1595–96). Titania, who opposes her husband, Oberon, bears some resemblance to Hera of Greek mythology" (*Britannica*).
70 *Prosper* Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.
83 *vesture* "All growth on land, except trees" (*OED*).
84 *Floats on the mantling cloud* "Ariel: see the *Tempest*" [Author's note].
91 *dale* "A valley" (*OED*).
104 *the silver-mantled lawn* "See the *Midsummer Night's Dream*" [Author's note].
110 *heath* "Wilderness" (*OED*).
120 *tears his silver hair* "Lear" [Author's note].
122 *totters* "As if about to collapse" (*OED*).
131 *the yelling harpies run* "The Witches in *Macbeth*" [Author's note].
151 *Eve'*

Evening.

153 *plaintive* “Lamenting” (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Subjects* (London, 1762), pp. 8-15. [[Google Books](#)]

Edited by Janice Rodriguez