

Anonymous, "Ode on the month of May, after the manner of Hagedorn"

Description

ANONYMOUS

"ODE on the month of MAY, after the manner of HAGEDORN, Book III. p. 146"

"Der nachtigall reizende lieder"

THY notes, sweet bird, resounding thro' the grove,
Proclaim the joyful hours of spring and love.
The lark ascending hails the new-born day,
The feather'd choir now join in vocal lay,
To celebrate great Nature's holiday; 5
The swan majestic, with her downy throng,
Now seek the clear translucent wave that flows the woods among.

In pleasant green the earth, with flowers attri'd
Calls forth the nymphs and swains by love inspir'd;
To share the pleasures bounteous Nature yields, 10
The merry sparrow ranges thro' the fields;
In gentle strains the soft lamenting dove
Bemoans the absence of his wedded love.
From forth his orient bed, in splendour bright,
The God of Day pursues the shades of night; 15
Driving far off each noxious influence:
Prolific beam! thy genial powers dispense,
That every flower, enliven'd by thy ray,
May spread their glories to the face of day.

Mild Zephyr, long estrang'd from Flora's bed, 20
Impatient seeks the variegated maid,
And woos her mid enamell'd shades and bowers,
Fost'ring their offspring bright of new-born flowers;
Their odours shed a grateful scent around,
Nor e'er did jealousy their loves confound. 25

Winter's cold haggard form now disappears,
In foliage green each tree new livery wears,
And every flower awaken'd rears its head;
The gaudy may-bush, flutt'ring in the shade,
Boasts that this month for her alone was made. 30
From rocks stupendous living water flow,
Refreshing thirsty glades, and fields, and woods below.
To thee, fair month, I consecrate the verse,

Pleas'd while thy bounteous gift I thus rehearse;
And ye, thrice happy swains, who now enjoy
These temperate blessings with no mix'd alloy,
In you the simple and serene we own,
And learn to fly the vices of the Town!

35

NOTES:

Title The subtitle alludes to Friedrich Von Hagedorn (1708-1754), a famous German poet. This poem is modeled after his poem titled "Der Mai" found in the book *Oden und Lieder*, 3 vol. (1742–52; "Odes and Songs"). This poem begins with the line "Der nachtigall reizende lieder" which translates as "the nightingale singing softly" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

5 *Nature's holiday* Springtime.

15 *God of Day* The sun.

9 *Nymphs* "Any of a class of semi-divine spirits, imagined as taking the form of a maiden inhabiting the sea, rivers, mountains, woods, trees, etc., and often portrayed in poetry as attendants on a particular god" (*OED*).

20 *Zephyr, long estrang'd from Flora's bed* Zephyr is a Greek god of the west wind who is married to Flora. She is a nymph to spring time and flowers. He is the messenger of spring.

29 *may-bush* "The hawthorn tree, *Crataegus monogyna*; a branch of this. Also: a construction of hawthorn branches" (*OED*).

33 *consecrate* "Dedicated to a sacred purpose; made sacred; hallowed, sanctified" (*OED*).

36 *alloy* "To qualify or diminish (a pleasure, feeling, etc.) by the admixture of something unpleasant; to contaminate or adulterate" (*OED*).

Source: *The Gentleman's Magazine* (May, 1786), p. 428.

Edited by Lauren Page