

Anonymous, "Sickness. An Ode"

Description

ANONYMOUS

"SICKNESS. An ODE"

From the GRUBSTREET JOURNAL.

At midnight when the fever ragged,
By physic's art still unasswaged,
And tortured me with pain:
When most it scorched my aching head,
Like sulphurous fire, or liquid lead, 5
And hissed through every vein:

With silent steps approaching nigh,
Pale death stood trembling in my eye,
And shook the up-lifted dart:
My mind did various thoughts debate 10
Of this, and of an after state,
Which terrified my heart.

I thought 'twas hard, in youthful age,
To quit this fine delightful stage,
No more to view the day; 15
Nor e'er again the night to spend
In social converse with a friend,
Ingenious, learned, and gay.

No more in curious books to read
The wisdom of the illustrious dead; 20
All that is dear to leave,
Relations, friends, and MIRA too,
Without one kiss, one dear adieu,
To moulder in the grave.

Incircled with congenial clay, 25
To worms and creeping things a prey,
To waste, dissolve, and rot:
To lie wrapped cold within a shroud,
Mingled amongst the vilest crowd,
Unnoted, and forgot. 30

Oh horror by this train of thought
 My mind was to distraction brought,
 Impossible to tell:
 The fever ragâ??d still more without,
 Whilst dark despair, or dismal doubt, 35
 Made all within my hell.

At length, with grave, yet cheerful air
 Repentance came, serenely fair,
 As summerâ??s evening sun;
 At sight of whom extatic joy 40
 Did all that horrid scene destroy;
 And every fear was gone.

If joinâ??d in consort, with one voice,
 Angels at such a change rejoice;
 I heard their joy exprest. 45
 If there be music in the spheres,
 That music struck my ravishâ??d ears,
 And charmâ??d my soul to rest.

NOTES:

Title *The Grubstreet Journal* (January 1730-1738) was a critical and satirical newspaper published weekly in London (The Library of Congress).

2 *unasswagâ??d* An archaic spelling of unassuaged; â??not soothed or relievedâ?• (*Oxford Dictionaries* [no definition given in *OED*]).

24 *moulder* â??To decay to dust; to rot; to crumbleâ?• (*OED*).

25 *congenial* â??Suited to the nature ofâ?• (*OED*).

43 *consort* â??To keep company with; to escort or attendâ?• (*OED*).

Source: *The Gentlemanâ??s Magazine* (January 1733), p. 42.

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