

Eliza Haywood, "The Vision"

Description

ELIZA HAYWOOD

"The Vision"

As I this Morn, neglecting coming Day,
In the dull God's Embrace supinely lay;
My nobler Part, scorning to be confin'd,
Did upwards soar, and left my Earth behind:
Thro' the AEtherial Regions swiftly flew, 5
Past interposing Clouds which barr'd my View.
Methought, with stedfast and undazled Eyes,
I took in all the Glory of the Skies!
Beheld the rolling Orbs in order move,
And in their Symmetry, prov'd the Art of *Jove*. 10
But long I could not in that Prospect stay,
My hurry'ng Fancy made me farther stray
To those bright Plains, where, in superior State,
The High-thron'd Sons of Wit illustrious sat!
Each had their Works in shining Cases plac'd, 15
With Stars adorn'd, more by their Titles grac'd.
These seem'd the genuine Product of their Art;
Which to th' Unlearn'd, no Profit could impart:
But what amaz'd me most, vast heaps I spy'd
Of Books, (the same Inscriptions beautify'd) 20
With Pages torn, and Leaves disorder'd, lie
Like useless Lumber, thrown neglected by!
With eager haste, the nearest Lines I snatch'd,
But, e'er my purpose fully was dispatch'd,
The awfull'st Form, which grac'd the Laureat Sect, 25
Did in these Words, my erring Search direct.
In vain thou here, wou'dst Ovid's Softness find,
Or trace the Majesty of *Homer*'s Mind!
Our forceful Fire, in faint Translation lost,
Can little of its native Vigour boast! 30
Would'st thou behold us as at first we were,
Back to the nether World again repair;
There thou, thy wonder-searching Soul may'st fill
With due contemplating *Hillarius*' Skill;
In him our different Beauties center'd, shine, 35

With congregated Pow'r, and Blaze divine!
 Our Muses now attend on him alone,
 Join'd with a brighter, greater, of his own!
 Had former Times been, like the present, blest,
 Low Adorations, had their Joy confest! 40
 Each Path to *Delphos*, had been left untrod,
 His star-like Fame had pointed out the God!
 And happy Britain, proud of such a Birth,
 Receiv'd the loaded Tribute of the Earth!
 Go then, his matchless Works with Care read o'er. 45
 Just Admiration will enflame thee more,
 Than vain Desires of Knowledge could before.
 If any Spark of true poetick Fire,
 Does thy dull Breast, with generous Warmth inspire;
 That Theme will call it forth, and teach thee, how 50
 More able Pens their Gratitude should show
 For abdicated Wit, so long deplor'd,
 Now, by his Genius to the World restor'd!
 Thus spoke the *Bard*, and all the Bays-wreath'd Tribe,
 In shouts of Joy, did pleas'd Assent ascribe! 55
 Then swift, as shooting Stars, the Phantoms fled,
 And I, that moment, found my self in Bed.
 But, Oh! when Soul and Body were rejoin'd,
 What various Transports fir'd my anxious Mind?
 Not mov'd with wonder at so strange a Dream, 60
 (My waking Thoughts, can find no other Theme,)
 But struck with conscious Guilt, with Shame oppress'd,
 I curs'd my backward Muse, which charm'd and blest
 With unhop'd Favours, had no Thanks exprest.
 In vain I rag'd, vainly did Efforts make, 65
 My grateful Meaning, or his Worth to speak.
 Amazing Excellence! what words can paint?
 To describe Lightning, Colours are too faint:
 The vast Idea, over-swell'd my Thought,
 And all my Senses to Confusion brought. 70
 As those whose Opticks, ne'er were blest with Sight,
 But from their Birth condemn'd to darksome Night;
 By miracle at last, their Eyes unseal'd,
 And the bright Glories of the Sun reveal'd;
 With sudden Transport start, with Rapture gaze, 75
 Their new-born Sense, half lost in wild Amaze!
 So I, who but some Glimmerings had seen,
 Some little Sketches, of Wit's glorious Scene,
 With instant Rush, all Heaven at once disclos'd,
 Such beamy Brightness, âgainst weak Sense oppos'd:
 Shot Rays too fierce! too poynant to sustain, 80
 And ev'n to madness, work'd my aking Brain!
 Aw'd! charm'd! and dazled ! cool Reflections shun;

My staggering Reason, into Flights I run!
 With incoherent Extasies am firâ??d, 85
 Such, as of old, the *Bachanals* inspirâ??d!
 What can the Medium in my Soul restore?
 What give the Calmness I enjoyâ??d before?
 Vain Hope, Nature must change, in him, or me!
 I grow less sensible, or less glorious he! 90
 Eâ??er past Tranquility again can be.

NOTES:

5 *AEtherial* â??Heavenlyâ?• (OED).

9 *Orbs* Planets.

10 *Jove* Jupiter, the highest diety in Roman mythology.

11 *Prospect* â??An extensive or commanding range of sightâ?• (OED).

12 *Fancy* â??Faculty of imaginationâ?• (OED).

25 *awfullâ??st* â??Arousing or inspiring reverential respect, mixed with wonder or fearâ?• (OED); *the Laureat Sect* Poets graced with Apolloâ??s favor.

27 *Ovid* Roman poet (43BC- 17AD), famous for *Metamorphoses*.

28 *Homer* Ancient Greek poet (c. 750BC), famous for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

34 *Hillariusâ?? Skill* A compliment paid to Aaron Hill (1685-1750), dramatist and poet who, in the early 1720s, developed â??a literary coterie dubbed the â??Hillarian circleâ?? after the name bestowed on him by one of his fervent admirers, the novelist and dramatist Eliza Haywoodâ?• (Christine Gerrard, *Aaron Hill: The Musesâ?? Projector, 1685-1750*, pp. 61-2).

41 *Delphos* Mythical birthplace of Apollo, god of poetry.

59 *Transports* â??The state of being â??carried out of oneself,â?? i.e. out of oneâ??s normal mental condition; vehement emotionâ?• (OED).

86 *Bachanals* Followers of Bacchus, the Greco-Roman god of wine, excess, and ecstasy.

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1725), pp. 11-14. [Google Books]

Edited by Jake Araiza