

Anonymous, “[On Tobacco, a translation”]

Description

ANONYMOUS

Â [â€œOn Tobacco, a translationâ€•]

Sweet charmer of my solitude,
Brilliant pipe, consuming tube,
Who clearâ€™st the vapours from my brain,
And my mind from anxious pain!
Tobacco! source of my delight, Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 5
When I see thee quit my sight,
And vanish in the purer air,
Like the lightningâ€™s quick career,
I see the image of my life below,
And whither soon my breath must go. Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 10
By thee I trace, in colours strong,
That man is nothing but a song,
An animated heap of clay,
The jest and sport of but a day;
That as thy smoke I pass away, Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 15
An emblem of my own decay.

Â NOTES:

Title This poem appears without a title in the *Gentlemanâ€™s Magazine*, but includes the following prefatory comment: â€œMr. Urban, I send you the following French verses written by a Monk, with the translation. A.P.P.â€•

2 Consuming tube A reference to the reed stem pipe, which was developed in the eighteenth-century. These pipes were made with a natural reed stem, resembling a tube, which slips into a bowl.

Â 3-4 In the eighteenth-century, tobacco was used to treat anything from colic to vomit, hernia, rheumatic pains, and various infirmities including anxiety.

Â Source: *The Gentlemanâ€™s Magazine* (April, 1785), p. 308.

Â Edited by Farnam Adelhani