

Matthew Pilkington, "The Lost Muse"

Description

MATTHEW PILKINGTON  
"The Lost Muse"

Clio the sweetest Muse of Nine  
Who charm the Gods with Lays divine,  
Private and unperceivâ€™d withdrew,  
And swift from sacred Pindus flew,  
On some exalted Project bent, Â  
But told no Creature her Intent.

The God of Numbers heard it said,  
His favâ€™rite, sweet-tonguâ€™d Muse was fled,  
And he had oft observâ€™d, of late  
That she was absent from her Seat, Â 10  
When all her tuneful Sister-Train  
Were forming some immortal Strain.

He usâ€™d to send her, now and then,  
With Hints to some peculiar Men,  
To Pope, Delany, Gay, or Swift, Â 15  
But now he couâ€™d not guess her Drift,  
And wonders much, that she wouâ€™d venture  
To visit Bards, except he sent her;  
So, half-provokâ€™d, away he flies,  
Takes Hermes with him in Disguise, Â 20  
Resolvâ€™d to roam the World around,  
â€™Till Clioâ€™s private Haunt is found.

The Gods, impatient of Delay,  
To famâ€™d Eblana wing their Way,  
And prudent, first at Swiftâ€™s descend, Â 25  
Apolloâ€™s best-regarded Friend,  
And whom the God of Verse and Wit,  
Inspirâ€™d in evâ€™ry Line he writ;  
There might they hope their Prize to gain  
Where evâ€™ry Muse delights to Reign; Â 30  
But she, to execute her Scheme,  
Had left him just before they came.

Quick as descending Rays of Light,  
To Delville

next they take their Flight:

*Delville*, where all the Wise resort, 35

Where oft the Muses keep their Court;

And veilâ€™ from evâ€™ry mortal Eye

Throâ€™ all the *Doctorâ€™s* Rooms they pry,

They search his *arbourâ€™* Seats, and Garden,

(Fit Place to find a *Muse* or *Bard* in:) 40

Then turnâ€™ his Papers oâ€™mer with Care,

And plainly found she had been there,

Such Learning, Elegance, and Ease,

Appear in all *Delanyâ€™s* Lays,

Such Beauties in his Numbers shine, 45

As prove their Origin divine.

With these their Disappointments vext,

They fly to fair *Saphiraâ€™s* next,

And found her, forming into *Rhime*

A Thought exalted and Sublime, 50

Perceivâ€™ such Excellence and Wit,

Such Charms in all she spoke and writ,

As soon convincâ€™d their wondâ€™ring Eyes,

The *Muse* was with her in Disguise,

And, fond the rising Age to bless, 55

Assumâ€™ *amortal* Form and Dress.

The *God*, delighted, calms his Rage,

And crys, there Live, to charm the Age,

Be thou a gay inspiring Guest,

And fill, the soft Delights, her Breast, 60

That Breast with all thatâ€™s good replete,

But *Clio*, this will be thy Fate,

Thou shalt contrive the deathless Lays,

But see *Saphira* win the Praise.

## NOTES:

1 *Clio* – Proper name of the Muse of epic poetry and history (OED).

4 *Pindus* A range of mountains in west central Greece, stretching from the border with Albania southwards to the Gulf of Corinth (OED).

7 *God of Numbers* Apollo, God of poetry (OED).

**15 Pope** Alexander Pope ( 1688–1744 ), an English poet and a major figure of the Augustan age who is famous for his caustic wit and metrical skill, in particular his use of the heroic couplet (*OED*); *Delany* Patrick Delany (?1685–1768) an Irish clergyman and writer, friend of Jonathan Swift (*OED*); *Gay* John Gay (1685–1732) an English poet and playwright who is chiefly known for *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) (*OED*); *Swift* Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) an Irish satirist, poet, and Anglican cleric; known as Dean Swift. He is best known for *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) (*OED*).

**18 Bards** Poets (*OED*).

**20 Hermes** – In Greek mythology, a deity, the son of Zeus and Maia, represented as the messenger of the gods, the god of science, commerce, eloquence, and many of the arts of life (*OED*).

**24 Eblana** Name recorded in Ptolemy's geography (2nd cent. ad) for the site of what is now Dublin (*OED*).

**26 Apollo** The god of the sun, truth, music, poetry, dance and healing. Poets and bards put themselves under his protection (*OED*).

**34 Delville** The Delany estate located in Glasnevin, Ireland; a separate village in the eighteenth century, now part of Dublin.

**48 Saphira** Mary Barber (c. 1685-c.1755), poet and friend of Swift and Delany (*Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, vol. I, ed. A.C. Elias, Jr, 393).

**49 Rhime** – Metre, measure (in verse) (*OED*).

**Source:** *Poems on Several Occasions* (1730), pp. 52-58. [Google Books]

*Edited by August Braddock*