

Sarah Dixon, “On the Death of My Dear Brother...”

Description

[SARAH DIXON]

“*On the DEATH of My Dear BROTHER, Late of University College, OXFORD. Who Dy’d Young.*”

Mournful the Night! with utmost Horror spread;
Which told my trembling *Soul*, that *thine* was fled.
To Sense ’twas dreadful, Nature cou’d not bear
So great a Breach, nor the sad Tidings hear,
Without the Symptoms of a wild Despair. 5
’Twas then I lost, a Brother and a Friend!
What poinant Grief, must such a Stroke attend?
Tho’ as prophetick of so short a Date,
His Soul was disciplin’d, to meet his Fate,
Yet my *Distress* no Mitigation finds; 10
That Blessing is reserv’d for *stronger* Minds:
Minds like his *own*, who can extend their View;
Sit loose to every transient Good below,
Rise to aetherial Joys, and the bright Track pursue.
Wond’rous young Man! thou *early blooming* Good, 15
Snatch’d hence, e’re half thy Virtue’s understood.
In useful Learning, what swift Progress made!
How soon the tender Parents Care repaid.
His toward Genius did with Ease attain,
What some by long Fatigue have sought in vain; 20
Strict were his Morals, his Address polite!
Wit, Judgment, and Humanity, unite
To make his Loss esteem’d, as infinite.
Ah! faint Description, of a Worth so great;
This a short Sketch, th’ Original compleat. 25
Like some Noviciate, I attempt to show,
Those Lines a Master Hand wants Skill to do:
Who can paint Souls? or trace to Realms of Light,
Spirits prepar’d, to reach that glorious Height.
’Twas Heav’n, not Death, that ravish’d him away, 30
For such *Perfection* never can decay.

NOTES:

Title *On the DEATH of my Dear BROTHER* A reference to James Dixon Jr. (1673-1700), brother of Sarah Dixon whose death inspired the poem (Kennedy, *Poetic Sisters*, 129).

7 *poinant* Poignant; “painfully sharp to the physical or mental feelings” (*OED*).

8 *prophetick* Prophetic; “of the nature of a prophecy or prediction” (*OED*).

10 *Mitigation* “Compassion, mercy, or favour” (*OED*).

14 *aetherial* Ethereal; “Of or relating to heaven, God, or the gods; heavenly, celestial” (*OED*).

26 *Noviciate* “A beginner, a novice; a person who is new to something” (*OED*).

Source: *Poems on Several Occasions* (Canterbury, 1740), pp. 169-170. [*Google Books*]

Edited by [Lee Hammel](#)