Elizabeth Carter, â??To Miss Hall. 1746â?•

Description

ELIZABETH CARTER

â??To Miss Hall. 1746â?•

WHILE soft throâ?? water, earth, and air,
The vernal spirits rove,
From noisy joys, and giddy crowds,
To rural scenes remove.

The mountain snows are all dissolvâ??d,
And hushâ??d the blustâ??ring gale:
While fragrant Zephyrs gently breathe,
Along the flowâ??ry vale.

The circling planets constant rounds
The wintry wastes repair:
And still, from temporary death,
Renew the verdant year.

But ah! when once our transient bloom,
The spring of life is oâ??er,
That rosy season takes its flight,
And must return no more.

Yet judge by Reasonâ??s sober rules,
From false opinion free,
And mark how little pilfâ??ring years
Can steal from you or me.

Each moral pleasure of the heart,
Each lasting charm of truth,
Depends not on the giddy aid
Of wild, inconstant youth.

The vain coquet, whose empty pride
A fading face supplies,
May justly dread the wintry gloom,
Where all its glory dies.

Leave such a ruin to deplore,
To fading forms confinâ??d:

Nor age, nor wrinkles discompose
One feature of the mind.

Amidst the universal change
Unconscious of decay,
It views, unmovâ??d, the scythe of Time
Sweep all besides away.

Fixt on its own eternal frame,
Eternal are its joys:
While, borne on transitory wings,
Each mortal pleasure flies.

While evâ??ry short-livâ??d flower of sense
Destructive years consume,
Throâ?? Friendshipâ??s fair enchanting walks
Unfading myrtles bloom.

Nor with the narrow bounds of Time,
The beauteous prospect ends,
But lengthenâ??d throâ?? the vale of Death,
To Paradise extends.

NOTES:

Title â??Afterwards wife of the Rev. John Nairn, of Kingston, near Canterburyâ?• [Authorâ??s Note].

2 *vernal* â??Of the springtimeâ?• (*OED*).

7 *Zephyrs* â??The west wind, frequently personifiedâ?• (*OED*).

25 *coquet* â??A woman, who is a flirt for the gratification of vanity and has no intention on responding to the feelings provokedâ?• (*OED*).

35 *scythe of Time* Typically a destructive force.

44 *myrtles* Evergreen shrubs or small trees with fragrant white flowers (*OED*).

Source: Montagu Pennington, ed., *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, with a New Edition of her Poems* (London, 1807), pp. 394-395. [*Google Books*]

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