

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 unperceived withdrew,
And swift from sacred *Pindus* flew,
On some exalted Project bent, 5
But told no Creature her Intent.

The *God of Numbers* heard it said,
His favorite, sweet-tongued *Muse* was fled,
And he had oft observed, of late
That she was absent from her Seat, 10
When all her tuneful Sister-Train
Were forming some immortal Strain.

He used to send her, now and then,
With Hints to some peculiar Men,
To *Pope*, *Delany*, *Gay*, or *Swift*, 15
But now he could not guess her Drift,
And wonders much, that she would venture
To visit *Bards*, except he sent her;
So, half-provoked, away he flies,
Takes *Hermes* with him in Disguise, 20
Resolved to roam the World around,
Till *Clio's* private Haunt is found.

The Gods, impatient of Delay,
To famed *Eblana* wing their Way,
And prudent, first at *Swift's* descend, 25
Apollo's best-regarded Friend,
And whom the God of Verse and Wit,
Inspired in every Line he writ;
There might they hope their Prize to gain
Where every *Muse* delights to Reign; 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 veil'd from every mortal Eye
 Thro' all the *Doctor's* Rooms they pry,
 They search his harbour'd Seats, and Garden,
 (Fit Place to find a *Muse* or *Bard* in:) 40
 Then turn'd his Papers o'er with Care,
 And plainly found she had been there,
 Such Learning, Elegance, and Ease,
 Appear in all *Delany's* Lays,
 Such Beauties in his Numbers shine, 45
 As prove their Origin divine.

With these their Disappointments vex'd,
 They fly to fair *Saphira's* next,
 And found her, forming into *Rhime*
 A Thought exalted and Sublime, 50
 Perceiv'd such Excellence and Wit,
 Such Charms in all she spoke and writ,
 As soon convinc'd their wondering Eyes,
 The *Muse* was with her in Disguise,
 And, fond the rising Age to bless, 55
 Assum'd a *mortal* 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 that'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