John Hughes, â??A Letter to a Friend in the Countryâ?•

Description

JOHN HUGHES

â??A Letter to a Friend in the Countryâ?•

Whilst thou art happy in a blest Retreat,
And free from Care dost rural Songs repeat,
Whilst fragrant Air fans thy Poetick Fire,
And pleasant Groves with sprightly Notes inspire,
(Groves, whose Recesses and refreshing Shade
Indulge thâ?? Invention, and the Judgment aid)
I, â??midst the Smoke and Clamours of the Town,
That choke my Muse and weigh my Fancy down,
Pass my unactive Hours; â??â??
In such an Air, how can soft Numbers flow,
Or in such Soil the sacred Laurel grow?
All we can boast of the Poetick Fire,
Are but some Sparks that soon as born expire.
Hail happy Woods! Harbours of Peace and Joy!
Where no black Cares the Mindâ??s Repose destroy!
Where grateful Silence unmolested reigns,
Assists the Muse and quickens all her Strains.
Such were the Scenes of our first Parents Love,
In *Edenâ??s* Groves with equal Flames they strove,
While warbling Birds, soft whispâ??ring Breaths of Wind,
And murmuring Streams, to grace their Nuptials joinâ??d.
All Nature smilâ??d; the Plains were fresh and green,
Unstainâ??d the Fountains, and the Heavâ??ns serene.
Ye blest Remains of that illustrious Age!
Delightful Springs and Woods! â??â??
Might I with You my peaceful Days live oâ??er,
You, and my Friend, whose Absence I deplore,
Calm as a gentle Brookâ??s unruffled Tide
Shouâ??d the delicious flowing Minutes glide;
Dischargâ??d of Care, on unfrequented Plains,
Weâ??d sing of rural Joys in rural Strains.
No false corrupt Delights our Thoughts shouâ??d move,
But Joys of Friendship, Poetry and Love.
While others fondly feed Ambitionâ??s Fire,
And to the Top of human State aspire,
That from their Airy Eminence they may
With Pride and Scorn thâ?? inferior World survey,

Here we shouâ??d dwell obscure, yet happier far than they.

NOTES:

4 *sprightly* â??Bright, clear, cheerful; lively, energeticâ?• (*OED*).

8 *Fancy* That is, poetic imagination.

10 *Numbers* Poetry.

11 *sacred Laurel* Associated with Apollo, Greek god of poetry. Wreathes of laurel were crowned upon renowned poets, meant to symbolize divine inspiration.

15 *black* â??Full of gloom, melancholy, misery, or sadnessâ?• (*OED*); *Repose* â??Stateâ?¦ of being free from care, anxiety, or other disturbances; ease, serenityâ?• (*OED*).

18 *first Parents* Adam and Eve. In Christian theology, created as the first humans, meant to dwell in harmony with the idyllic Garden of Eden.

20 *warbling* â??Of birds: To sing clearly and sweetlyâ?• (*OED*).

31 *Strains* â??A musical sequence of sounds; a melody, tuneâ?• (*OED*).

35 *State* â??A personâ??s social, professional, or legal status or conditionâ?• (*OED*).

SOURCE: ***Poems upon Several Occasions*** **(London, 1735), pp. 111-113. [Google Books]**

Edited by Joy Seydel