For it is true without any fable
No man setteth more by riding in your saddle,
Too much travail so do your train appair,
    Ye old mule!
With false savours though you deceive the air,
Whoso taste you shall well perceive your lair
Savoureth somewhat of a kappur’s stable,
    Ye old mule!

Ye must now serve to market and to fair,
All for the burden for panniers a pair,
For since grey hairs been powdered in your sable,
The thing ye seek for you must yourself enable
To purchase it by payment and by prayer,
    Ye old mule!

XXXVI
Such hap as I am happed in
Had never man of truth I ween.
At me fortune list to begin
To show that never hath been seen,
A new kind of unhappiness.
Nor I cannot the thing I mean
Myself express.

5 train: ‘course or manner of running (of a horse)’ (OED sb.1); deceit, trap,
lure (OED sb.2); and perhaps other senses.
7 savours: doubtful reading. Perhaps savours.
8 taste: (also) ‘tries out’, ‘handles’, ‘has carnal knowledge of’ (OED 3.b).
8 lair: an animal’s lair; but also ‘love’, ‘fornication’.
hipper, adj., light, nimble, as kipper as a colt, North. Yorksh.; amorous, fond,
lascivious, Lancashire’ (Padelford). The Lancashire senses fit better, despite W’s
Yorkshire origin, but in any case Kappurs would, unsatisfyingly, be an adj.
used as sb. Perhaps W’s original form was a variant of capel’s, i.e. ‘nag’s’ (cf.
Robinson, Glossary).

5 of: in.


11-12 unless . . . food: ‘except that I know I am perpetually dying of
hunger—amidst my food’. The argument is throughout that ‘food’, i.e. satisfaction
of sexual appetite, contrary to expectation leads to further ‘hunger’.
13, 16 deserve: ‘earn, win’, i.e. my sexual conquest—the result of ‘service’.
16: Cf. Tilley, A343, and CLXXXIII, 1.
27: Cf. Tilley, A343, and CLXXXIII, 1.
30: Like a hawk, he must practise control of appetite by abstention.
31: ‘But in my case that rule isn’t appropriate.’
XXXVII

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek
With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek
That now are wild, and do not remember
That sometime they put themself in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range,
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better, but once in special,
In thin array after a pleasant guise
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
Therewithal sweetly did me kiss,
And softly said, 'Dear heart, how like you this?'

It was no dream: I lay broad waking
But all is turned thorough my gentleness
Into a strange fashion of forsaking,

There is little evidence that this is an allegory about fortune (cf., e.g., the shift from they to she, and the eroticism of st. 2). As for the argument that st. 1 describes birds or deer, which would then be metaphorical for women, R. L. Greene, *Bucknell Review*, XII, 3 (1964), 17–30, persuasively refutes those who see st. 1 as referring to anything but women. But though he shows that, e.g., the claim that the creatures are falcons is open to many objections, there may be some suggestion of animal-like behaviour in the stanza, perhaps that of birds, and WMT's quotation (note, 19) from Chaucer's *The Squire's Tale*, 610–1, 'Men loven of propre kynde newfangelnesse;/As briddles doon that men in cages fede', is interesting.

1: Cf. Charles d'Orleans, 1347, 'They flee fro me'; also Greene about flee='flee', not: 'fly'.
2: stalking: walking softly (e.g. in Chaucer, LGW, 1781—Nott), but cf. OED.
3: danger: risk; or: my power.
4: To ... hand: the expression is elsewhere used of women (cf. Greene and MT).
5: guise: manner, style.
6: Long and slender (small) arms were considered beautiful (WMT, note).
7: newfangelness: fickleness, or craze for novelty.
8: wealth: well-being.
9: And I have leave to go of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangelness.
But since that I so kindly am served,
I would fain know what she hath deserved.

XXXVIII

There was never nothing more me pained,
Nor nothing more me moved,
As when my sweetheart her complained
That ever she me loved.

Alas the while!

With piteous look she said and sighed:
'Alas, what aileth me
To love and set my wealth so light
On him that loveth not me?

Alas the while!

'Was I not well void of all pain,
When that nothing me grieved?
And now with sorrows I must complain,
And cannot be relieved.

Alas the while!

'My restful nights and joyful days
Since I began to love
Be take from me; all thing decays,
Yet can I not remove.

Alas the while!'

18 of: by.
19 newfangelness: fickleness, or craze for novelty.
20 kindly: possibly 'according to her nature', but more likely ironic for 'unkindly, cruelly', as D's gentilly suggests.

---
8 wealth: well-being.
10: The refrain is here and in 15 and 20 spoken by the woman, or by W looking back on the event (cf. 5, 25, and 30). It is perhaps taken from Chaucer, 'Complaynt d'Amours', 9 (F).
XXIX

Patience: though I have not
The thing that I require,
I must of force, God wot,
Forbear my most desire,
For no ways can I find
To sail against the wind.
Patience: do what they will
To work me woe or spite,
I shall content me still
To think both day and night:
To think, and hold my peace,
Since there is no redress.
Patience, withouten blame,
For I offended nought:
I know they know the same,
Though they have changed their thought.
Was ever thought so moved
To hate that it hath loved?
Patience of all my harm,
For fortune is my foe;
Patience must be the charm
To heal me of my woe:
Patience without offence
Is a painful patience.

A note in D connects this poem with XXIX: ‘patiens tho I had not the &c/to her that saide this patiens was not for her but that the contrarye of myne was most metiste for her po’posse/’ However, in D, XXIX is quite different from E’s version, regularly with she for they, etc. W later seems to have made the application of XXIX more general, with the result that its connection with XL has become more tenuous than in D.

1 device: motto (but cf. OED).
4 forbear: control.
13 no... that: it is no matter.
19-22: ‘In the previous poem I adopted patience for my device: now it is your turn. Show change whenever you like, for I have taken a new mistress.’ (But let see may mean ‘let us see’, as in CT, A891.)
XLI

Ye know my heart, my lady dear,
That since the time I was your thrall
I have been yours both whole and clear,
Though my reward hath been but small:
So am I yet, and more than all.
And ye know well how I have served,
As if ye prove it shall appear

How well, how long,

How faithfully,

And suffered wrong

How patiently!

Then since that I have never swerved,
Let not my pains be undeserved.

Ye know also, though ye say nay,
That you alone are my desire,
And you alone it is that may
Assuage my fervent flaming fire.
Succour me then, I you require!
Ye know it were a just request,
Since ye do cause my heart, I say,

If that I burn,

That ye will warm,

And not to turn

All to my harm,

Sending such flame from frozen breast
Against all right for my unrest.

And I know well how frowardly
Ye have mistaken my true intent,
And hitherto how wrongfully
I have found cause for to repent.
But death shall rid me readily
If your hard heart do not relent;

XLII

Who hath heard of such cruelty before?
That when my plaint remembered her my woe
That caused it, she cruel more and more
Wished each stitch as she did sit and sew
Had pricked mine heart, for to increase my sore.
And as I think, she thought it had been so:
For as she thought 'This is his heart indeed',
She pricked hard, and made herself to bleed.

XLIII

If fancy would favour
As my deserving shall,
My love, my paramour,
Should love me best of all.

But if I cannot attain
The grace that I desire,
Then may I well complain
My service and my hire.

34 I and mine: SCM (174) sees an appeal to Anne Boleyn here, whose motto was 'Me and Mine', and suggests (49) that 34–37 may speak literal truth.

37 spill: destroy.

2 remembered: caused to remember (Nott).

POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

Fancy doth know how
To further my true heart,
If fancy might avow
With faith to take part.

But fancy is so frail,
And flitting still so fast,
That faith may not prevail
To help me, first nor last.

For fancy at his lust
Doth rule all but by guess:
Whereeto should I then trust
In truth or steadfastness?

Yet gladly would I please
The fancy of her heart
That may me only ease
And cure my careful smart.

Therefore, my lady dear,
Set once your fantasy
To make some hope appear
Of steadfast remedy.

For if he be my friend
And undertake my woe,
My grief is at an end
If he continue so.

Else fancy doth not right
As I deserve and shall,
To have you day and night,
To love me best of all.

XLIV

Alas, madame! for stealing of a kiss,
Have I so much your mind then offended?
Have I then done so grievously amiss
That by no means it may be amended?
Then revenge you, and the next way is this:
Another kiss shall have my life ended.
For to my mouth the first my heart did suck,
The next shall clean out of my breast it pluck.

XLV

What no, perdie, ye may be sure!
Think not to make me to your lure
With words and cheer so contrarily,
Sweet and sour counterweighing:
Too much it were still to endure.
Truth is tried where craft is in use,
But though ye have had my heartes cure,
Trow ye I dote without ending?
What no, perdie!

Though that with pain I do procure
For to forget that once was sure
Within my heart, shall still that thing
Unstable, unsure and wavering
Be in my mind without recure?
What no, perdie!

5 next: nearest.
2: i.e. 'Don't think you can exercise the power of your lure over me'; cf. Hawes, Passetyme of Pleasure, 453, and LXXX, 5.
6: 'Honest loyalty is severely tested where deceit is practised.' Ure: cf. XXI, 17.
14 recure: remedy.

11-12: The fancy is the lady's, the faith the lover's.
17 lust: (sexual) pleasure.
24 careful: full of grief.
XLVI
The wandering gadding in the summer tide
That finds the adder with his reckless foot,
Starts not dismayed so suddenly aside
As jealous despite did, though there were no boot,
When he saw me, sitting by her side
That of my health is very crop and root.
It pleased me then to have so fair a grace
To sting that heart, that would have my place.

XLVII
The lively sparks that issue from those eyes
Against the which ne 'vail eth no defence
Have pressed mine heart, and done it none offence
With quaking pleasure more than once or twice.
Was never man could anything devise
The sunbeams to turn with so great vehemence
To daze man's sight as by their bright presence
Dazed am I, much like unto the guise
Of one ystricken with dint of lightning.
Blinded with the stroke, erring here and there,
So call I for help, I not when ne where,
The pain of my fall patiently bearing;
For after the blaze, as is no wonder,
Of deadly 'Nay!' hear I the fearful thunder.

XLVIII
What needeth these threatening words and wasted wind?
All this cannot make me restore my prey.
To rob your good iwis is not my mind,
Nor causeless your fair hand did I display.
Let love be judge or else whom next we meet
That may both hear what you and I can say.
She took from me an heart, and I a glove from her:
Let us see now, if the one be worth the other.

XLIX
Right true it is, and said full yore ago:
'Take heed of him that by thy back thee claweth',
For none is worse than is a friendly foe.
Though they seem good, all thing that thee delighteth,
Yet know it well, that in thy bosom creepeth:
For many a man such fire oft kindleth,
That with the blaze his beard singeth.

1 threatening: MS. threnin (disyllabic).
2 wind: breath.
3 good: property.
4 twis: certainly.
5 display: i.e. 'strip so as to reveal' (cf. It. dispoglio).
6 meet: may be intentional though it does not rhyme, since a scribe would hardly mistake a form like T's finde for meit.
7 both hear: i.e. hear both.
8 full yore ago: a very long time ago.
9 'Beware of him that claps you on the back' (MT). Cf. CT, A4526 (proverbial, cf. Tilley, B17).
10 thing: uninflected plural.
11 that ... creepeth: taken over from CT, D1095-5, which alludes to the treachery and ingratitude of the snake in Aesop's fable (I.X.), cf. ODEP, p. 747 (Tilley, V68), 'To nourish a snake in one's bosom', and to the 'Snake in the grass' (ODEP, p. 748; Tilley, S585).
L

What word is that, that changeth not
Though it be turned and made in twain?
It is mine answer, God it wot,
And eke the causer of my pain.
A love rewardeth with disdain,
Yet is it loved. What would ye more?
It is my health eke and my sore.

LI

At most mischief
I suffer grief,
For of relief
Since I have none,
My lute and I
Continually
Shall we apply
To sigh and moan.

Nought may prevail
To weep or wail:
Pity doth fail
In you alas.
Mourning or moan,
Complaint or none,
It is all one
As in this case.

A likely solution to this riddle is ‘Anna’, which T substituted for ‘aunswer’ in his second edition; and ‘aunswer’ might be a pun, Anne, Sir, as R. C. Harrier suggests (N & C, 1959, 189). ‘Anna’ is presumably Anne Boleyn. SCM (18) quotes a riddle from D, ‘am el men’, which he solves and believes to be Anne’s reply to L. But it is not in Anne’s hand, and might equally well be related to CXLII. Cf. also Baldi, 231–4.

7 eke: the MS. has a virgula before this.
1: ‘At the highest pitch of suffering’ (Tillyard).
Marvel no more although
The songs I sing do moan,
For other life than woe
I never proved none,
And in my heart also
Is graven with letters deep
A thousand sighs and mo,
A flood of tears to weep.

How may a man in smart
Find matter to rejoice?
How may a mourning heart
Set forth a pleasant voice?
Play who that can that part,
Needs must in me appear
How fortune overthwart
Doth cause my mourning cheer.

Perdie, there is no man,
If he never saw sight,
That perfectly tell can
The nature of the light.
Alas, how should I then,
That never tasted but sour,
But do as I began,
Continually to lour.

But yet perchance some chance
May chance to change my tune,
And when such chance doth chance
Then shall I thank fortune;

Where shall I have at mine own will
Tears to complain? Where shall I fet
Such sighs that I may sigh my fill,
And then again myplaints repeat?

For though my plaint shall have none end,
My tears cannot suffice my woe.
To moan my harm have I no friend,
For fortune's friend is mishap's foe.

Comfort, God wot, else have I none
But in the wind to waste my words:
Nought moveth you my deadly moan,
But all you turn it into bords.

I speak not now to move your heart
That you should rue upon my pain;
The sentence given may not revert:
I know such labour were but vain.

But since that I for you, my dear,
Have lost that thing that was my best,
A right small loss it must appear
To lose these words and all the rest.

The doubtfully authoritative tag (45) might suggest that this belongs to W's Spanish years (1537-9).
8: Cf. CT, VII, 8244-5. 'For what man that hath frendes thurg Fortune,/Mishap wol maken hem ennemys'; proverbial, cf. Tilley, T301.
10: Cf. Tilley, W831 and W833.
12 bords: mockery; jests.
14 rue: pity.
15 revert: i.e. be recalled.
But though they sparkle in the wind,
Yet shall they show your falsed faith,
Which is returned unto his kind:
For like to like, the proverb sayeth.

Fortune and you did me advance:
Me thought I swam and could not drown,
Happiest of all; but my mischance
Did lift me up to throw me down.

And you with your own cruellness
Did set your foot upon my neck,
Me and my welfare to oppress,
Without offence your heart to wreak.

Where are your pleasant words alas?
Where is your faith, your steadfastness?
There is no more, but all doth pass,
And I am left all comfortless.

But for because it doth you grieve
And also me, my wretched life,
Have here my truth: shall not relieve
But death alone my very strife.

Therefore farewell, my life, my death!
My gain, my loss! my salve, my sore!
Farewell also with you my breath!
For I am gone for evermore.

Podra esser che non es.

21 sparkle: disperse (cf. XII, 6).
24: Cf. XIX, 4.
37–40: ‘But since my wretched life grieves both you and me, I promise you: death, and nothing else, shall deliver me from my struggle.’ (Not= nothing, cf. OED 1d).
45: Spanish-Italian (?), ‘That which is not may some day be’ (Maxwell).

She sat and sewed, that hath done me the wrong
Whereof I plain and have done many a day,
And whilst she heard my plaint in piteous song
Wished my heart the sampler as it lay.
The blind master, whom I have served so long,
Grudging to hear that he did hear her say,
Made her own weapon do her finger bleed,
To feel if pricking were so good in deed.

‘Ah, Robin,
Jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy leman doth,
And thou shall know of mine.’

‘My lady is unkind, perdie!’
‘Alack, why is she so?’
‘She loveth another better than me,
And yet she will say no.’

Responce

‘I find no such doublessness,
I find women true.
My lady loveth me doubtless,
And will change for no new.’

Cf. XLII, which follows this in D.
6 Grudging: discontented.

1 Robin: Padelford notes that the epithet ‘jolly’ was often applied to Robin Hood. In January 1510, Henry VIII burst into the Queen’s Chamber at Westminster with ten men dressed as Robin Hood’s men, as Edward Halle relates (Henry VIII, ed. Charles Whibley, 1904, i, 15). Stevens (186) points out that this incident belongs to a social ‘game of love’; it included dances, and the shorter version of this carol (cf. Appendix) would have fitted such an occasion.
5 unkind: cf. XXV, 3.
8 say no: i.e. deny 7.
Le Plaintiff

'Thou art happy while that doth last,
But I say as I find,
That women's love is but a blast,
And turneth like the wind.'

Response

'If that be true yet as thou sayst,
That women turn their heart,
Then speak better of them thou mayst,
In hope to have thy part.'

Le Plaintiff

'Such folks shall take no harm by love
That can abide their turn,
But I alas can no way prove
In love but lack and mourn.'

Response

'But if thou wilt avoid thy harm,
Learn this lesson of me:
At other fires thyself to warm,
And let them warm with thee.'

LVII

Though I cannot your cruelty constrain
For my good will to favour me again,
Though my true and faithful love
Have no power your heart to move,
Yet rue upon my pain.

Though I your thrall must evermore remain
And for your sake my liberty restrain,
The greatest grace that I do crave
Is that ye would vouchsafe
To rue upon my pain.

Though I have not deserved to obtain
So high reward but thus to serve in vain,
Though I shall have no redress,
Yet of right ye can no less
But rue upon my pain.

But I see well that your high disdain
Will nowise grant that I shall that attain;
Yet ye must grant at the least
This my poor and small request:
Rejoice not at my pain.

17 If yet: even if.
23 prove: try; experience.
2: 'In lonely hope and undoubted moaning.' (But perhaps by= by means of.)
LIX

Sometime I fled the fire that me brent
By sea, by land, by water and by wind;
And now I follow the coals that be quent
From Dover to Calais against my mind.
Lo how desire is both sprung and spent!
And he may see that whilom was so blind,
And all his labour now he laugh to scorn
Meshed in the briars that erst was all to-torn.

LX

He is not dead that sometime hath a fall:
The sun returneth, that was under the cloud,
And when fortune hath spit out all her gall
I trust good luck to me shall be allowed,
For I have seen a ship into haven fall
After the storm hath broke both mast and shroud,
And eke the willow that stoopeth with the wind
Doth rise again, and greater wood doth bind.

34 speed: profit, use.

W probably here compares his former feelings for Anne Boleyn with those he experiences while accompanying her (and Henry VIII) from Britain to Calais, France, in October 1532. Anne’s marriage to the King took place soon after.

1 bren: burnt. 3 coals: MS. coles, perhaps disyllabic; quent: quenched.
7–8: ‘And he who was at first torn to pieces’ (cf. Tilley, B679). SCM (34) thinks of the briars through which the lover must force his way in RR. (cf. RR, 1712.)

This may refer to W’s imprisonment in the Fleet (1534)—or to any fall from fortune. The reflections are largely proverbial, cf. Tilley, F38 (1); C442 (2); S344 (5–6); W404 (7–8); which SCM, 28, compares with T & C, II, 1387–8.

4 allowed: allotted.
LXI
The furious gun in his raging ire,
When that the bowl is rammed in too sore
And that the flame cannot part from the fire,
Cracketh in sunder, and in the air doth roar
The shivered pieces. Right so doth my desire,
Whose flame increaseth from more to more,
Which to let out I dare not look nor speake:
So now hard force my heart doth all to-break.

LXII
My hope alas hath me abused,
And vain rejoicing hath me fed;
Lust and joy have me refused,
And careful plaint is in their stead.
Too much advancing slacked my speed,
Mirth hath caused my heaviness,
And I remain all comfortless.

Where to did I assure my thought
Without displeasure steadfastly?
In fortune's forge my joy was wrought,
And is revolted readiness.
I am mistaken wonderly,
For I thought nought but faithfulness,
Yet I remain all comfortless.

2 bowl: ball, bullet.
3 i.e. 'when no part of the fire can find an outlet'.
4 to-break: break into pieces.
5 Lust: pleasure.
6 careful: sorrowful.
7 Cf. 'The more haste the less speed' (Tilley, H i98).
8-9: i.e. 'Why, when I was without sorrow, did I commit myself to constant service?'
11 revolted: 'turned, as applied to the edge of a tool' (Padelford).

LXIII
What death is worse than this,
When my delight,
My weal, my joy, my bliss,
Is from my sight?
Both day and night
My life alas I miss.

24 among: from time to time.
33: 'Constant allegiance procures no pleasure.'
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

For though I seem alive,
My heart is hence:
Thus bootless for to strive
Out of presence
Of my defence
Toward my death I drive.

Heartless alas what man
May long endure?
Alas, how live I then?
Since no recre
May me assure,
My life I may well ban.

Thus doth my torment grow
In deadly dread.
Alas, who might live so,
Alive as dead?
Alive to lead
A deadly life in woe?

LXIV

The enemy of life, decayer of all kind,
That with his cold withers away the green,
This other night me in my bed did find,
And offered me to rid my fever clean;
And I did grant, so did despair me blind.
He drew his bow with arrow sharp and keen,
And struck the place where love had hit before,
And drove the first dart deeper more and more.

9–12: "My struggle is helpless since my heart is not here to protect me from death, so I drift fast towards my end."
16 recre: remedy.
1–2: Death.
1 all kind: 'everything in nature' (Rollins).
7, 8 struck; drove: MS. strake; drave.

POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

LXV

Once as me thought fortune me kissed,
And bade me ask what I thought best,
And I should have it as me list,
Therewith to set my heart in rest.

I asked nought but my dear heart
To have for evermore mine own:
Then at an end were all my smart,
Then should I need no more to moan.

Yet for all that a stormy blast
Had overturned this goodly day,
And fortune seemed at the last
That to her promise she said nay.

But like as one out of despair
To sudden hope revived I:
Now fortune sheweth herself so fair
That I content me wonderly.

My most desire my hand may reach,
My will is alway at my hand;
Me need not long for to beseech
Her that hath power me to command.

What earthly thing more can I crave?
What would I wish more at my will?
No thing on earth more would I have,
Save that I have to have it still.

For fortune hath kept her promise
In granting me my most desire:
Of my sufferance I have redress,
And I content me with my hire.

18 My will: generally, 'what I desire'; or, specifically, 'what I sexually desire'—if the dear heart of 5 is a woman (the Her of 20, which may alternatively refer to fortune).
27 sufferance: suffering.
LXVI

My lute awake! Perform the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun;
For when this song is sung and past,
My lute be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave in marble stone,
My song may pierce her heart as soon.
Should we then sigh or sing or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually
As she my suit and affection,
So that I am past remedy,
Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts thorough Love's shot,
By whom, unkind, thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain
That maketh but game on earnest pain!
Think not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lovers plain,
Although my lute and I have done.

Moralized by John Hall in The Court of Virtue, who suggests that his version may have been sung to the tune of 'My pen obey' which he provides. Cf. CXX.

LXVII

If chance assigned
Were to my mind
By very kind
Of destiny,
Yet would I crave
Nought else to have
But only life and liberty.

Then were I sure
I might endure
The displeasure
Of cruelty,
Where now I plain
Alas in vain,
Lacking my life for liberty.

26 Perchance: i.e. 'it may chance that'.
27 The winter night: adverbial; night is an uninflected plural.

10 displeasure: injury. 14 for liberty: i.e. because of its absence, cf. 15–21.
For without the one
The other is gone,
And there can none
It remedy:
If the one be past,
The other doth waste,
And all for lack of liberty.
And so I drive,
As yet alive,
Although I strive
With misery;
Drawing my breath,
Looking for death
And loss of life for liberty.
But thou that still
Mayst at thy will
Turn all this ill
Adversity:
For the repair
Of my welfare
Grant me but life and liberty.
And if not so,
Then let all go
To wretched woe,
And let me die;
For the one or the other,
There is none other:
My death, or life with liberty.

Nature that gave the bee so feat a grace
To find honey of so wondrous fashion,
Hath taught the spider out of the same place
To fetch poison, by strange alteration.
Though this be strange, it is a stranger case
With one kiss by secret operation
Both these at once in those your lips to find,
In change whereof I leave my heart behind.

I have sought long with steadfastness
To have had some ease of my great smart,
But nought availeth faithfulness
To grave within your stony heart.
But hap and hit or else hit not,
As uncertain as is the wind,
Right so it fareth by the shot
Of love alas, that is so blind.

Therefore I played the fool in vain,
With pity when I first began
Your cruel heart for to constrain,
Since love regardeth no doleful man.
But of your goodness all your mind
Is that I should complain in vain;
This is the favour that I find:
Ye list to hear how I can plain.

But though I plain to please your heart,
Trust me I trust to temper it so
Not for to care which do revert:
All shall be one, in wealth or woe.

15-21 the one: liberty; the other: life.
22 drive: cf. LXIII, 12.
27 Looking for: expecting.

5 hit . . . not: cf. 'Hit or miss'.
6: Cf. Tilley, W412.
10 pity: i.e. an appeal to pity.
13 of: by.
20 wealth: well-being.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

For fancy ruleth, though right say nay,
Even as the goodman kissed his cow;
None other reason can ye lay
But as who sayeth 'I reck not how'.

LXX

Like as the swan towards her death
Doth strain his voice with doleful note,
Right so sing I with waste of breath:
I die! I die! and you regard it not.

I shall enforce my fainting breath
That all that hears this deadly note
Shall know that you doth cause my death:
I die! I die! and you regard it not.

Your unkindness hath sworn my death,
And changed hath my pleasant note
To painful sighs that stops my breath:
I die! I die! and you regard it not.

Consumeth my life, faileth my breath:
Your fault is forger of this note.
Melting in tears, a cruel death
I die! I die! and you regard it not.

My faith with me after my death
Buried shall be, and to this note
I do bequeath my weary breath,
To cry: 'I died! and you regard it not!'

In eternum I was once determed
For to have loved, and my mind affirmed
That with my heart it should be confirmed
In eternum.

Forthwith I found the thing that I might like,
And sought with love to warm her heart alike,
For as me thought I should not see the like
In eternum.

To trace this dance I put myself in press;
Vain hope did lead, and bade I should not cease
To serve, to suffer, and still to hold my peace
In eternum.

With this first rule I furthered me apace,
That as me thought my truth had taken place
With full assurance to stand in her grace
In eternum.

It was not long ere I by proof had found
That feeble building is on feeble ground,
For in her heart this word did never sound—
In eternum.

In eternum then from my heart I kest
That I had first determed for the best:
Now in the place another thought doth rest
In eternum.

1, 22 determed: determined.
3 confirmed: made strong.
9 trace: participate in (this dance of love); cf. VIII, 25.
9 put . . . press: exerted myself (OED press sb.), 5; Robbins, Glossary; but cf. also XV, 13.
15 stand . . . grace: 'enjoy her favour'; cf., e.g., T & C, III, 472.
18: 'That it is poor building on a shaky foundation'; cf. Tilley, F619.
21 kest: cast.

21–22: Proverbial (Flügel), a variant of 'Every man as he loves, quothe the good man [goodman = head of household] when he kissed his cow' (Tilley, M103). Fancy: cf. XLIII, 1.

The opening is traditional (cf. specific references in MT) and proverbial (Tilley, S1028).
9 unkindness: cf. XXV, 3.
20 regard it: B regarded.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

LXXII

Since ye delight to know That my torment and woe Should still increase Without release, I shall enforce me so That life and all shall go, For to content your cruelness.

And so this grievous train That I too long sustain Shall sometime cease And have redress, And you also remain Full pleased with my pain, For to content your cruelness.

Unless that be too light And that ye would ye might See the distress And heaviness Of one yslain outright, Therewith to please your sight And to content your cruelness.

Then in your cruel mood Would God forthwith ye would With force express My heart oppress, To do your heart such good To see me bathe in blood, For to content your cruelness.

Then could ye ask no more, Then should ye ease my sore

LXXXIII

And the excess Of mine excess; And you should evermore Defamed be therefore, For to repent your cruelness.

Heaven and earth, and all that hear me plain, Do well perceive what care doth cause me cry, Save you alone, to whom I cry in vain: 'Mercy, madame! Alas, I die, I die!' If that you sleep, I humbly you require Forbear a while, and let your rigour slake, Since that by you I burn thus in this fire: To hear my plaint, dear heart, awake, awake!

Since that so oft ye have made me to wake In plaint and tears and in right piteous case, Displease you not if force do now me make To break your sleep, crying 'Alas! alas!' It is the last trouble that ye shall have Of me, madame, to hear my last complaint; Pity at last your poor unhappy slave, For in despair alas I faint, I faint!

It is not now, but long and long ago I have you served as to my power and might As faithfully as any man might do, Claiming of you nothing of right, of right.

32 excess: immoderate grief.

There is a lute tablature for a song 'Heven and erth' in B. M. Roy. MSS., App. 58 (cf. Stevens, 135), but we do not know that LXXXIII was written either for or to a tune.

27 care: grief.

5 require: implore. 6 let slake: relax. 7: May relate to 8 rather than 6.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

Save of your grace only to stay my life,
That fleeth as fast as cloud afore the wind;
For since that first I entered in this strife
An inward death hath fret my mind, my mind.

If I had suffered this to you unaware,
Mine were the fault, and you nothing to blame;
But since you know my woe and all my care,
Why do I die? Alas, for shame, for shame!

I know right well my face, my look, my tears,
Mine eyes, my words, and eke my dreary cheer
Have cried my death full oft unto your ears:
Hard of belief, it doth appear, appear!

A better proof I see that ye would have
How I am dead. Therefore when ye hear tell,
Believe it not, although ye see my grave.
Cruel! Unkind! I say farewell, farewell!

LXXIV

Comfort thyself, my woeful heart,
Or shortly on thyself thee wreak,
For length redoubleth deadly smart:
Why sighs thou, heart, and wilt not break?

To waste in sight were piteous death;
Alas, I find thee faint and weak.
Enforce thyself to lose thy breath:
Why sighs thou, heart, and wilt not break?

Thou knowest right well that no redress
Is thus to pine; and for to speak,
Perdie, it is remediless:
Why sighs thou then, and wilt not break?

21-22: Perhaps taken from Petrarch, cf. MT.
30 cheer: aspect; mood.
36 Unkind: Cf. XXV. 3.

5 sight: i.e. sighs (uninflected plural).
9 redress: aid, remedy.

It is too late for to refuse
The yoke when it is on thy neck;
To shake it off 'vaileth not to muse:
Why sighs thou then, and wilt not break?

To sob and sigh it were but vain,
Since there is none that doth it reck;
Alas, thou dost prolong thy pain:
Why sighs thou then, and wilt not break?

Then in her sight, to move her heart,
Seek on thyself thyself to wreak,
That she may know thou sufferedst smart:
Sigh there thy last, and therewith break!

LXXV

Desire, alas, my master and my foe:
So sore altered, thyself how maist thou see?
Sometime I sought that drives me to and fro,
Sometime thou lestd that leadeth thee and me.
What reason is to rule thy subjects so
By forced law and mutability?
For where by thee I doubted to have blame,
Even now by hate again I doubt the same.

LXXVI

Venomous thorns that are so sharp and keen
Sometime bear flowers fair and fresh of hue;
Poison of time is put in medicine
And causeth health in man for to renew;
Fire that purgeth all thing that is unclean
May heal, and hurt: and if these been true,
I trust sometime my harm may be my health,
Since every woe is joined with some wealth.

15: 'It is of no avail to consider how the yoke may be shaken off, after it is once fastened on the neck' (Nott).
6 forced: enforced.
7 doubted: feared.

Largely proverbial, cf. Tilley, R179 (1-2); P457 (3-4); F238 (5-6); W188 (8).
2 hue: appearance.
8 wealth: well-being.
LXXVII

To cause accord or to agree
Two contraries in one degree
And in one point as seemeth me
To all man's wit it cannot be:
   It is impossible.

Of heat and cold when I complain
And say that heat doth cause my pain
When cold doth shake me every vein
And both at once, I say again
   It is impossible.

That man that hath his heart away,
If life liveth there as men do say,
That he heartless should last one day
Alive and not to turn to clay,
   It is impossible.

'Twixt life and death, say what who saith,
There liveth no life that draweth breath,
They join so near; and eke in faith
To seek for life by wish of death
   It is impossible.

Yet love that all thing doth subdue,
Whose power there may no life eschew,
Hath wrought in me that I may rue
These miracles to be so true
   That are impossible.

3 point: condition (OED point sb.1, D.4), cf. ML, 75, 'in good point and accord'.
16 say...saith: no matter what anyone says.
22 life: living being.

LXXVIII

Though this thy port, and I thy servant true,
And thou thyself dost cast thy beams from high
From thy chief house, promising to renew
Both joy and eke delight, behold yet how that I,
Banished from my bliss, carefully do cry:
'Help now, Cytherea, my lady dear,
My fearful trust, en vogant la galere!'

Alas the doubt that dreadful absence giveth!
Without thine aid, assurance is there none:
The firm faith, that in the water fleeteth,
Succour thou therefore: in thee it is alone.
Stay that with faith that faithfully doth moan,
And thou also givest me both hope and fear:
Remember thou me, en vogant la galere.

By seas and hills elonged from thy sight,
Thy wonted grace reducing to my mind,
Instead of sleep, thus I occupy the night:
A thousand thoughts and many doubts I find.
And still I trust thou canst not be unkind,
Or else despair my comfort and my cheer
Would flee forthwith, en vogant la galere.

Cytherea (6) is Aphrodite (Venus in Roman mythology), here thought of as both goddess and planet (2-3), and called Cytherea because she was specially worshipped in Cythera, an island near the most southerly point of Laconia, Greece. (Cf. Cithera, T & C, III, 1255—F.) However, W actually seems to be thinking of his mistress in, e.g., 15; presumably he indirectly addresses her in st. 1 (otherwise his use of thy is inconsistent; and cf. LXV). Note supposed that W wrote LXXVIII when crossing the Channel, en route to Spain in 1537, and that the mistress was Elizabeth Darrell (cf. ML, 85 ff.).

3 chief house: 'The first and seventh houses, of the twelve into which the celestial sphere was divided, were regarded as propitious. The reference here is almost certainly to the seventh' (MT). Cf. T & C, II, 681 (F).
5 carefully: sorrowfully.
7 en...galere: 'while rowing the galley'; MT also refers to Et vogue la galere = 'Come what may!'
8 doubt: fear; suspicion. 8 dreadful: full of fear.
21 flee: MS. she, which may, unexpectedly, refer to the mistress (if thy sight, 15, refers to Venus); despair (20) can mean 'cast into despair'.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

Yet on my faith full little doth remain
Of any hope whereby I may myself uphold,
For since that only words do me retain
I may well think the affection is but cold.
But since my will is nothing as I would,
But in thy hands it resteth whole and clear,
Forget me not, en vogant la galere.

LXXIX

Unstable dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once, or else at least be true;
By tasted sweetness make me not to rue
The sudden loss of thy false feigned grace.
By good respect in such a dangerous case
Thou broughtst not her into this tossing mew,
But madest my sprite live my care to renew,
My body in tempest her succour to embrace.
The body dead, the sprite had his desire:
Painless was the one, the other in delight.
Why then alas did it not keep it right,
Returning to leap into the fire,
And where it was at wish it could not remain?
Such mocks of dreams they turn to deadly pain.

LXXX

In doubtful breast, whilst motherly pity
With furious famine standeth at debate,
Saith the Hebrew mother: 'O child unhappy,
Return thy blood where thou hadst milk of late.'

1 according ... place: just like the place where I am.
5 By ... respect: with proper consideration (MT).
6 this ... mew: this hawk's cage in which I am tossing, i.e. my bed. Cf. also OED toss v., II 5, 'to be in mental agitation'.
7 care: sorrow.
9 dead: i.e. asleep.
11: 'Why did not the spirit keep itself right by staying that way?' Cf. CXL, 9.

The discovery of the source in a Spanish MS., and perhaps LXXX's position in E, may suggest that W wrote the poem in Spain (1537-9).
2 at debate: at variance.
3 the ... mother: Mary, the daughter of Eleazer, who acc. to Josephus in his Jewish War, killed her son and ate him, during the siege of Jerusalem, A.D. 70.

Yield me those limbs that I made unto thee,
And enter there where thou wert generate.
For of one body against all nature
To another must I make sepulture.'

LXXXI

Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior,
Could overcome, but could not use his chance,
And I likewise of all my long endeavour
The sharp conquest though fortune did advance
Could not it use: the hold that is given over
I unpossessed. So hangeth in balance
Of war my peace, reward of all my pain;
At Monçon thus I restless rest in Spain.

LXXXII

Process of time worketh such wonder
That water which is of kind so soft
Doth pierce the marble stone asunder
By little drops falling from aloft.

And yet an heart that seems so tender
Receive no drop of the stilling tears
That alway still cause me to render
The vain plaint that sounds not in her ears.

5 made ... thee: made for you, or 'Brought into your possession or power (see N.E.D., 9b)' (MT; cf. XLV, 2).

MT attempts to explain what this might allude to, but unfortunately none of the suggestions adequately accounts for W's sense of personal failure. The circumstances 'are so darkly hinted at, that they elude all conjecture' (Nott). W wrote a letter from Barbastria, near Monçon, Spain, on 16 October 1537 (cf. ML, 47).

1: Hannibal. (Cf. Livy's History, xii, 51—MT.)
3 of: in.
5-6 the ... unpossessed: 'I did not possess the hold [over events] which is now abandoned altogether' (MT).

2-4: Cf. Tilley, D618.
7 render: emit.
So cruel alas is nought alive,
So fierce, so froward, so out of frame;
But some way, some time, may so contrive
By means the wild to temper and tame.

And I that always have sought and seek
Each place, each time for some lucky day,
This fierce tiger less I find her meek
And more denied the longer I pray.

The lion in his raging furor
Forbears that sueth meekness for his boot,
And thou alas in extreme dolour
The heart so low thou treads under thy foot!

Each fierce thing lo how thou dost exceed,
And hides it under so humble a face!
And yet the humble to help at need
Nought helpeth time, humbleness nor place.

LXXXIII

After great storms the calm returns,
And pleasanter it is thereby;
Fortune likewise that often turns
Hath made me now the most happy.

The heaven that pitied my distress,
My just desire and my cry,
Hath made my languor to cease,
And me also the most happy.

Wherefore despaired ye, my friends?
My trust alway in Him did lie
That knoweth what my thought intends,
Whereby I live the most happy.

POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

Lo, what can take hope from that heart
That is assured steadfastly?
Hope therefore, ye that live in smart,
Whereby I am the most happy.

And I that have felt of your pain
Shall pray to God continually
To make your hope your health retain,
And me also the most happy.

LXXXIV

All heavy minds
Do seek to ease their charge,
And that that most them binds
To let at large.

Then why should I
Hold pain within my heart,
And may my tune apply
To ease my smart?

My faithful lute
Alone shall hear me plain,
For else all other suit
Is clean in vain.

For where I sue
Redress of all my grief,
Lo, they do most eschew
My heart's relief.

Alas my dear,
Have I deserved so
That no help may appear
Of all my woe?

10 out of frame: perverse.
18: 'Spares one that sues for meekness to help him out of his plight', cf. L, 25–28; or possibly for his boot — 'as a reward for some service' (MT).

10 in Him did lie: MS. in hid ly. Of all the emendations suggested in MT, this seems to be the best. The line wants a syllable; him did could easily have been copied as hid; and the reading fits the poem's meaning (cf., e.g., 17–20).

14 assured: pledged; or: made secure.
19: Perhaps with a comma after hope (Nott, etc.) the sense would be better, but it may be: 'To make your hope preserve your well-being'.

14 redress: remedy.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

Whom speak I to,
Unkind and deaf of ear?
Alas, lo, I go,
And wot not where.

Where is my thought?
Where wanders my desire?
Where may the thing be sought
That I require?

Light in the wind
Doth flee all my delight
Where truth and faithful mind
Are put to flight.

Who shall me give
Feathered wings for to flee,
The thing that doth me grieve
That I may see?

Who would go seek
The cause whereby to pain?
Who could his foe beseech
For ease of pain?

My chance doth so
My woeful case procure
To offer to my foe
My heart to cure.

What hope I then
To have any redress?
Of whom, or where, or when,
Who can express?

No, since despair
Hath set me in this case,
In vain oft in the air
To say alas,

I seek nothing
But thus for to discharge
My heart of sore sighing,
To plain at large,

And with my lute
Sometime to ease my pain,
For else all other suit
Is clean in vain.

LXXXV
To seek each where where man doth live,
The sea, the land, the rock, the cliff,
France, Spain, and Ind, and everywhere,
Is none a greater gift to give,
Less set by oft, and is so lief and dear,
Dare I well say, than that I give to year.

I cannot give brooches nor rings,
These goldsmiths' work and goodly things,
Pieirre nor pearl orient and clear,
But for all that is no man brings
Liefer jewel unto his lady dear,
Dare I well say, than that I give to year.

Clearly a New Year's gift poem, punning on year and ye at the end of each stanza (MS. yere; to year = for the year). Stevens suggests (210) that an emblem in the shape of a heart would have accompanied the poem as a present. F's notion that LXXXV was written in Spain (for the New Year of 1538 or 1539) may derive support not only from its position in E, but also from the mention of Spain (5).

5 Ind: India, seen as 'the farthest corner of the world' (F). Cf., e.g., CT, C722. 5 lief: beloved; precious.
9 Pieirre: (cf. OED perrie) jewellery, (set) precious stones.
Nor I seek not to fetch it far,
Worse is it not though it be near,
And as it is it doth appear
Uncounterfeit mistrust to bar,
Left whole and pure withouten peer,
Dare I well say, the gift I give to year.

To thee therefore the same retain;
The like of thee to have again
France would I give, if mine it were!
Is none alive in whom doth reign
Lesser disdain: freely therefore lo here
Dare I well give, I say, my heart to year.

LXXXVI
O goodly hand
Wherein doth stand
My heart distressed in pain,
Fair hand alas
In little space
My life that doth restrain;
O fingers slight,
Departed right,
So long, so small, so round,
Goodly begone,
And yet alone
Most cruel in my wound;
With lilies white
And roses bright
Doth strive thy colour fair;
Nature did lend
Each finger’s end
A pearl for to repair.

LXXXVII

1
Lo what it is to love!
Learn ye that list to prove
At me, I say,
No ways that may
The grounded grief remove,
My life alway
That doth decay:
Lo what it is to love!
Flee alway from the snare,
Learn by me to beware
Of such a train
Which doubles pain

W’s plan is indicated by the B version, where part 2 is preceded by the words ‘the answer’, and part 3 by ‘the answer to thys’. In part 1, W argues against love. In part 2, we are to see a woman denying it. In part 3, W returns to the attack, criticizing the lady’s behaviour rather than love, which she misuses. Thus you (85) is the haughty lady; us (91) refers to the abused lovers.

15–16: ‘And it appears—as it is—the genuine thing, impossible to suspect.’
8 Departed: separated.
9 small: slender (cf. XXXVII, 12).
10: ‘Exquisitely fashioned’ (Tillyard).
18 for to repair: for adornment.
21 demesne: possession, power.
25 rue: pity.
And endless woe and care
That doth retain;
Which to refrain
Flee alway from the snare.

To love and to be wise,
To rage with good advice,
Now thus, now then,
Now off, now an,
Uncertain as the dice—
There is no man
At once that can
To love and to be wise.

Such are the divers thrones,
That hath not proved
And once hath loved;
Such are the raging woes,
Sooner reproved
Than well removed:
Such are the divers thrones.

Love is a fervent fire
Kindled by hot desire,
For a short pleasure
Long displeasure:
Repentance is the hire.
A poor treasure
Without measure,
Love is a fervent fire.

Lo what it is to love!

Leave thus to slander love!
Though evil with such it prove
Which often use
Love to misuse
And loving to reprove,
Such cannot choose
For their refuse
But thus to slander love.

Flee not so much the snare:
Love seldom causeth care,
But by deserts
And crafty parts
Some lose their own welfare.
Be true of hearts
And for no smarts
Flee not so much the snare.

To love and not to be wise
Is but a mad device:
Such love doth last
As sure and fast
As chance on the dice—
A bitter taste
Comes at the last,
To love and not to be wise.

Such be the pleasant days,
Such be the honest ways;
There is no man
That fully can
Know it but he that says
Loving to ban
Were folly then:
Such be the pleasant days.

15ff. care: grief. 15 refrain: shun.
17: Cf. 'It is impossible to love and be wise' (Tilley, L.55).
18 advice: wisdom; judgement. 20 an: on.
23 can: knows how to.
35ff.: MEW, 121, offers possible sources.
36 displeasure: sorrow.
Love is a pleasant fire
Kindled by true desire,
And though the pain
Cause men to plain,
Sped well is oft the hire.
Then though some feign
And lose the gain,
Love is a pleasant fire.

Who most doth slander love
The deed must alway prove:
Truth shall excuse
That you accuse
For slander and reproof;
Not by refuse
But by abuse
You most do slander love.

Ye grant it is a snare
And would us not beware;
Lest that your train
Should be too plain
Ye colour all the care.
Lo how you feign
Pleasure for pain
And grant it is a snare!

To love and to be wise
It were a strange device,
But from that taste
Ye vow the fast;
On cinq though run your dice,
Ambs-ace may haste
Your pain to waste:
To love and to be wise!

LXXXVIII

I lead a life unpleasant, nothing glad.
Cry and complaint offer, voids joyfulness:
So changeth me unrest, that nought shall fade.
Pain and despite hath altered pleasantness
Ago, long since, that she hath truly made
Disdain—for truth, set light in steadfastness.
I have cause good to sing this song:
Plain or rejoice who feeleth weal or wrong.

2: ‘Crying and moaning offer themselves, while joyfulness avoids me.’
3 that... fade: which shall not grow weak at all (but cf. MT).
4–6: ‘Pain and scorn have altered pleasantness, which my mistress has long since turned into disdain—in exchange for my loyalty and honesty, slighted by her for all my constancy.’ Truly (5): 1 verily, 2 ironic.
LXXXIX

If in the world there be more woe
Than I have in my heart,
Whereso it is it doth come fro',
And in my breast there doth it grow,
For to increase my smart.
Alas, I am receipt of every care,
And of my life each sorrow claims his part.
Who list to live in quietness
By me let him beware,
For I by high disdain
Am made without redress,
And unkindness alas hath slain
My poor true heart all comfortless.

XC

The answer that ye made to me, my dear,
When I did sue for my poor heart's redress,
Hath so appalled my countenance and my cheer
That in this case I am all comfortless,
Since I of blame no cause can well express.

I have no wrong where I can claim no right,
Nought ta’en me fro' where I nothing have had,
Yet of my woe I cannot so be quite,
Namely since that another may be glad
With that that thus in sorrow maketh me sad.

Another? Why shall liberty be bond?
Free heart may not be bond but by desert.

Nor none can claim, I say, by former grant
That knoweth not of any grant at all:
And by desert I dare well make avaunt
Of faithful will there is nowhere that shall
Bear you more truth, more ready at your call.

Now, good, then call again that friendly word,
That saith your friend, in saving of his pain,
And say, my dear, that it was said in bound:
Late or too soon, let that not rule the gain
Wherewith free will doth true desert retain.

XCI

Most wretched heart, most miserable,
Since thy comfort is from thee fled,
Since all thy truth is turned to fable,
Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

'No, no, I live, and must do still,
Whereof I thank God, and no mo.
For I myself have all my will,
And he is wretched that weens him so.'

But yet thou hast both had and lost
The hope so long that hath thee fed,
And all thy travail and thy cost:
Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

18–20: 'So now, dear, repeat that "friendly" word—thus your friend (i.e. lover) asks you to—so as to save him pain; and say that you spoke it in jest.' The 'friendly' word is the cruel answer of 1; cf. it (20) and that (21).

A dialogue between W and his heart in the traditional form of a debate, this was perhaps written during W's imprisonment in 1541 (Nott). Thus 35–35 seems to refer to Bonner, W's principal accuser at his arrest after Cromwell's fall in 1541, whose attempt to harm W in 1538 had then been foiled by C, W's consistent protector. In his Defence (ML, 207), W (B's superior in Spain) suggested that B. had been envious of him.

8: 'And he is unhappy who considers himself such'; i.e. unhappiness is in the mind, and subject to it. From Chaucer, 'Fortune', 25 (Padelford). Chaucer's line is Boethian (cf. Robinson, note). See also QM, e.g., 459.
'Some other hope must feed me new:
If I have lost, I say: “What though?”
Despair shall not through it ensue,
For he is wretched that weens him so.'

The sun, the moon doth frown on thee,
Thou hast darkness in daylight's stead,
As good in grave as so to be:
Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

'Some pleasant star may show me light,
But though the heaven would work me woe,
Who hath himself shall stand up right,
And he is wretched that weens him so.'

Hath he himself that is not sure?
His trust is like as he hath sped,
Against the stream thou mayst not dure:
Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

'The last is worst: who fears not that,
He hath himself whereso he go.
And he that knoweth what is what
Saith he is wretched that weens him so.'

Seest thou not how they whet their teeth
Which to touch thee sometime did dread?
They find comfort for thy mischief:
Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

'What though that curse do fall by kind
On him that hath the overthrow?
All that cannot oppress my mind,
For he is wretched that weens him so.'

Yet can it not be then denied
It is as certain as thy cred
Thy great unhap thou canst not hide:
Unhappy then, why art thou not dead?

'Unhappy, but no wretch therefore!
For hap doth come again and go,
For which I keep myself in store,
Since unhap cannot kill me so.'

XCII

You that in love find luck and abundance
And live in lust and joyful jollity,
Aris for shame, do away your sluggardly!
Aris I say, do May some observance!
Let me in bed lie dreaming in mischance,
Let me remember thehaps most unhappy
That me betide in May most commonly,
As one whom love list little to advance.
Sephm said true that my nativity
Mischanced was with the ruler of the May:
He guessed I prove of that the verity,
In May my wealth and eke my life I say
Have stood so oft in such perplexity.
Rejoice! Let me dream of your felicity.

27: Cf. Tilley, S927.
31: Chaucer (F), or Boethius, or: 'he who is wise'.
35: 'It pleases them to hurt you.'
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

XCIII

And if an eye may save or slay
And strike more deep than weapon long,
And if an eye by subtle play
May move one more than any tongue,
How can ye say that I do wrong
Thus to suspect without desert?
For the eye is traitor of the heart.

To frame all well, I am content
That it were done unwittingly;
But yet I say, who will assent,
To do but well, do nothing why
That men should deem the contrary.
For it is said by men expert
That the eye is traitor of the heart.

But yet alas that look, all soul,
That I do claim of right to have,
Should not methinks go seek the school
To please all folk. For who can crave
Friendlier thing than heart? Vouchsafe
By look to give in friendly part:
For the eye is traitor of the heart.

And my suspect is without blame,
For as ye say, not only I
But other mo have deemed the same.
Then is it not of jealousy,
But subtle look of reckless eye
Did range too far, to make me smart,
For the eye is traitor of the heart.

1 And if; if.
7: Cf. Tilley, E31.
11 To... well: 'If you mean to do nothing but what is good' (Nott).
17 seek the school: 'seek to study (how to please all)' (MT).
20: i.e. to me (cf. 15-16), not to my rivals; friendly= 'as befits a lover'.
22 suspect: suspicion.
34 mo: besides.
35 if: my suspicion.

XCIV

Psalm 37. Noli emulare in maligna

Although thou see the outrageous climb aloft,
Envy not thou his blind prosperity;
The wealth of wretches, though it seemeth soft,
Move not thy heart by their felicity.
They shall be found like grass turned into hay,
And as the herbs that wither suddenly.
Stablish thy trust in God, seek right alway,
And on the earth thou shalt inhabit long.
Feed and increase such hope from day to day,
And if with God thou tune thy hearty song,
He shall thee give whatso thy heart can lust.
Cast upon God thy will that right thy wrong.

41 astart: escape.
42 fear: i.e. let fear (subjunctive).
1 outrageous: 'the excessively bold (one)' (Hughey).
11 lust: like (cf. 67).
12 right: subjunctive.

Psalm 37 in the Authorized Version; No. 36 in the Vulgate.
Give him the charge, for he upright and just
Hath cure of thee and of thy cares all,
And he shall make thy truth to be discussed
Bright as the sun, and thy righteousness shall
(The cursed's wealth though now do it deface)
Shine like the daylight, that we the noon call.
Patiently abide the Lord's assured grace,
Bear with even mind the trouble that he sends,
Dismay thee not though thou see the purchase
Increase of some, for such like luck God sends
To wicked folk...

Restrain thy mind from wrath that aye offends,
Do 'way all rage, and see thou do eschew
By their like deed such deeds for to commit,
For wicked folk their overthrow shall rue.
Who patiently abide and do not flit,
They shall possede the world from heir to heir:
The wicked shall of all his wealth be quit
So suddenly, and that without repair,
That all his pomp and his staring array
Shall from thine eye depart as blast of air.
The sober then the world shall wield I say,
And live in wealth and peace so plentiful.
Him to destroy the wicked shall essay,
And gnash his teeth eke with girming iefful.
The Lord shall scorn the threatenings of the wretch,
For he doth know the tide is nigh at full
When he shall sink and no hand shall him seech.
They have unsheathed eke their bloody bronds
And bent their bow to prove if they might reach

14 cares: disyllabic.
15 discussed: made known.
16 righteousness: MS. righteousnes, with stress on w.
17: 'Though now the prosperity of the wicked casts it in shade.'
20, 109 trouble: affliction.
21 purchase: prosperity.
29 possede: i.e. possess.
30 quit: deprived.
32 staring: ostentatious.
37 with... iefful: by showing his teeth in anger.
38 scorn: deride (cf. Camp., ridehit).
40 seek: i.e. seek.
41 bronds: swords.

To overthrow the...
Bare of relief the harmless to devour.
The sword shall pierce the heart of such that fonds,
Their bow shall break in their most endeavour.
A little living gotten rightfully
Passeth the riches and eke the high power
Of that that wretches have gathered wickedly;
Perish shall the wicked's posterity,
And God shall stablish the just assuredly.
The just men's days the Lord doth know and see:
Their heritage shall last for evermore,
And of their hope beguiled they shall not be.
When dismal days shall wrap the t'other sore,
They shall be full when other faint for food;
Therewhilst shall fail these wicked men therefore.
To God's enemies such end shall be allowed
As hath lambs' grease wasting in the fire
That is consumed into a smoky cloud.
Borrowth the unjust without will or desire
To yield again, the just freely doth give
Where he seeth need as mercy doth require.
Who willth Him well for right therefore shall live,
Who banneth Him shall be rooted away.
His steps shall God direct still and relieve
And please him shall what life him lust essay,
And though he fall under foot lie shall not he,
Catching his hand for God shall straight him stay...

Nor yet his seed foodless seen for to be.
The just to all men merciful hath been,
Busy to do well: therefore his seed I say
Shall have abundance alway fresh and green.

43: Incomplete. F conj. just; stretched forth their hands. 45 fonds: plays the fool.
48 riches: cf. CVIII, 164.
50, 96, 107 wick'd's: plural.
51 stablish: make firm, strengthen.
58 allowed: allotted.
62 yield again: pay back.
65 banneth: speak ill of, curse. MS. bannyshe, but cf. Camp. maledicunt.
70-71: Omitted from the MS. M conj. The righteous yet, though age has stolen on me/Forsaken by the Lord I ne'er have seen.
Flee ill, do good, that thou mayst last alway,
For God doth love for evermore the upright:
Never his chosen doth he cast away,
For ever he them mindeth day and night;
And wicked seed alway shall waste to nought.
The just shall wield the world as their own right,
And long thereon shall dwell as they have wrought.
With wisdom shall the wise man's mouth him able,
His tongue shall speak alway even as it ought,
With God's learning he hath his heart stable,
His foot therefore from sliding shall be sure.
The wicked watcheth the just for to disable
And for to slay him doth his busy cure,
But God will not suffer him for to quail
By tyranny, nor yet by fault unpure
To be condemned in judgement without fail.
Await therefore the coming of the Lord;
Live with his laws in patience to prevail,
And he shall raise thee of thine own accord
Above the earth, in surety to behold
The wicked's death, that thou may it record.
I have well seen the wicked sheen like gold,
Lusty and green as laurel lasting aye,
But even anon and scant his seat was cold:
When I have passed again the selfsame way
Where he did reign, he was not to be found—
Vanished he was for all his fresh array.

Let uprightness be still thy steadfast ground,
Follow the right: such one shall alway find
Himself in peace and plenty to abound.
All wicked folk reversed shall untwine,
And wretchedness shall be the wicked's end;
Health to the just from God shall be assigned.
He shall them strength whom trouble should offend;
The Lord shall help I say, and them deliver
From cursed's hands, and health unto them send,
For that in him they set their trust for ever.

XCV
From these high hills as when a spring doth fall,
It trilleth down with still and subtle course,
Of this and that it gathers aye and shall
Till it have just off-flowed the stream and force,
Then at the foot it rageth over all:
So fareth love when he hath ta'en a source;
His rein is rage, resistance 'vaileth none:
The first eschew is remedy alone.

XCVI
(fragment)
Prove whether I do change, my dear,
Or if that I do still remain
Like as I went or far or near;
And if ye find . . .

untwine: 'untwine', be destroyed.
untwine: 'untwine', be destroyed.