XCVII

If waker care, if sudden pale colour,
If many sighs with little speech to plain,
Now joy, now woe, if they my cheer distain,
For hope of small, if much to fear therefore,
To haste, to slack my pace less or more,
Be sign of love, then do I love again.
If thou ask whom, sure since I did refrain
Brunet that set my wealth in such a roar
The unfeigned cheer of Phyllis hath the place
That Brunet had; she hath and ever shall.
She from myself now hath me in her grace:
She hath in hand my wit, my will, and all.
My heart alone well worthy she doth stay
Without whose help scant do I live a day.

XCVIII

In Spain

So feeble is the thread that doth the burden stay
Of my poor life, in heavy plight that falleth in decay,
That but it have elsewhere some aid or some succours,
The running spindle of my fate anon shall end his course.

1 waker care: sleepless grief.
2 many sighs: object of plain.
3 cheer: face.
4-5: 'If—in hope of little, therefore fearing much—I vary my pace according to these feelings...
5 refrain: give up; avoid.
W revised 8 (originally 'her that did set our country in a rore'), no doubt because it was too clear a reference to Anne Boleyn (fittingly described as Brunet). Phyllis is quite possibly Elizabeth Darrell (cf. LXXVIII).
8 wealth: well-being.
12 wit: mind.
13 alone: i.e. she.

W's revision At other will (88) probably refers to the King's will that W was to stay in Spain. If so, it is likely (MT) that he was revising the poem early in 1539, 'at which point his frustration and anxiety to be recalled reached their peak' (cf. ML, 86–87). The mistress alluded to may well be Elizabeth Darrell (cf. XCVII).
2 that: i.e. my life.
4: 'W brings in the common classical metaphor of the spinning Fates' (MT).

For since the unhappy hour that did me to depart
From my sweet weal, one only hope hath stayed my life apart,
Which doth persuade such words unto my sorry mind:
'Maintain thyself, O woeful sprite, some better luck to find:
For though thou be deprived from thy desired sight,
Who can thee tell if thy return be for thy most delight?
Or who can tell thy loss if thou once mayst recover?
Some pleasant hour thy woe may rape and thee defend and
cover.'

This is the trust that yet hath my life sustained,
And now alas I see it faint, and I by trust am trained.
The time doth fleet, and I perceive the hours how they bend
So fast that I have scant the space to mark my coming end.
Westward the sun from out the east scant doth show his light,
When in the west he hides him straight within the dark of
night,
And comes as fast where he began his path away:
From east to west, from west to the east, so doth his journey
lie.

The life so short, so frail, that mortal men live here,
So great a weight, so heavy charge the body that we bear,
That when I think upon the distance and the space
That doth so far divide me from my dear desired face,
I know not how to attain the wings that I require
To lift my weight that it might flee to follow my desire.
Thus of that hope that doth my life something sustain
Alas I fear—and partly feel—full little doth remain.
Each place doth bring me grief where I do not behold
Those lively eyes which of my thoughts were wont the keys to
hold.

Those thoughts were pleasant sweet whilst I enjoyed that grace,
My pleasure past, my present pain, where I might well
embrace.
But for because my want should more my woe increase,
In watch, in sleep, both day and night, my will doth never cease
That thing to wish whereof since I did lose the sight
I never saw the thing that might my faithful heart delight.
The uneasy life I lead doth teach me for to mete
The floods, the seas, the land and hills that doth them
'nsemble
'Tween me and those shining lights that wondred to clear
My dark pangs of cloudy thoughts, as bright as Phoebus'
spear;
It teacheth me also what was my pleasant state,
The more to feel by such record how that my wealth doth
bate.
If such record alas provoke the enflamed mind
Which sprang that day that I did leave the best of me behind,
If love forget himself, by length of absence let,
Who doth me guide, O woeful wretch, unto this baited net
Where doth increase my care? Much better were for me
As dumb as stone, all thing forgot, still absent for to be.
Alas, the clear crystal, the bright transparent glass,
Doth not bewray the colour hid which underneath it has,
As doth the accumbered sprite thoughtful throes discover
Of fierce delight, of fervent love, that in our hearts we cover.
Out by these eyes it showeth, that ever more delight
In plaint and tears to seek redress, and that both day and night.
These new kinds of pleasures, wherein most men rejoice,
To me they do redouble still of stormy sighs the voice:

For I am one of them whom plaint doth well content,
It sits me well, mine absent wealth me seems me to lament,
And with my tears for to essay to charge mine eyes twain,
Like as mine heart above the brink is fraught with full of pain.
And for because thereto of those fair eyes to treat
Do me provoke: I shall return, my plaint thus to repeat,
For there is nothing else that toucheth me so within,
Where they rule all, and I alone nought but the case or skin.
Wherefore I do return to them as well or spring
From whom descends my mortal woe above all other thing.
So shall mine eyes in pain accompany mine heart,
That were the guides that did it lead of love to feel the smart.
The crisped gold that doth surmount Apollo's pride,
The lively streams of pleasant stars that under it doth glide,
Wherein the beams of love doth still increase their heat,
Which yet so far touch me so near in cold to make me sweat,
The wise and pleasant talk, so rare or else alone,
That did me give the courteous gift that such had never none,
Be far from me alas, and every other thing
I might forbear with better will than that did me bring
With pleasant word and cheer redress of lingered pain,
And wonted oft in kindled will to virtue me to train.
Thus am I driven to hear and hearken after news;
My comfort scant, my large desire in doubtful trust renews.
And yet with more delight to moan my woeful case
I must complain: those hands, those arms that firm do
embrace
Me from myself and rule the stern of my poor life,
The sweet disdain, the pleasant wrathes, and eke the lovely
strophe

34 In warch: when I am awake.
38 entremete: put (themselves) between.
39 lights: i.e. eyes.
40 Phoebus: Phoebus Apollo, the sun.
42 record: memory.
43 wealth: well-being.
44 sprang: i.e. to life (MT).
47 care: sorrow.
48 As . . . stone: cf. Chaucer, House of Fame, 656.
51 accumbered: (cf. encumbered) crushed.
53 by: through (lt. Per).
54 redress: remedy, aid.
That wonted well to tune in temper just and meet,
The rage that oft did make me err, by furor undiscreet—
All this is hid me fro’ with sharp and cragged hills.
At other will my long abode my deep despair fulfils.
But if my hope sometime rise up by some redress,
It stumb leth straight for feeble faint, my fear hath such
excess.

Such is the sort of hope, the less for more desire,
Whereby I fear and yet I trust to see that I require:
The resting place of love, where virtue lives and grows,
Where I desire my weary life also may take repose.
My song, thou shalt attain to find that pleasant place
Where she doth live by whom I live, may chance thee have this
grace—
When she hath read and seen the dread wherein I starve,
Between her breasts she shall thee put: there shall she thee
reserve.

Then tell her that I come, she shall me shortly see:
If that for weight the body fail, this soul shall to her flee.

XCIX

In Spain

Tagus farewell, that westward with thy streams
Turns up the grains of gold already tried:
With spur and sail for I go seek the Thames
Gainward the sun that showeth her wealthy pride

87: Cf. LXXVIII, 15; with: by.
88 fulfils: makes full.
91 the less... desire: made worse by my growing desire.
97 starve: die (i.e. from deprivation).

1 Tagus: one of the main rivers in Spain and Portugal.
3-6: 'For I with spur and sail am going to seek the Thames that shows her abundant splendour towards the sun and that like a crescent moon lends her beautiful side to the town which B. sought by dreams.'
In deep wide wound the deadly stroke doth turn
To cured scar that never shall return.
Go to, triumph, rejoice thy goodly turn,
Thy friend thou dost oppress.
Oppress thou dost, and hast of him no cure,
Nor yet my plaint no pity can procure.
Fierce tiger fell! Hard rock without recurse!
Cruel rebel to love!
Once may thou love, never beloved again,
So love thou still, and not thy love obtain,
So wrathful love with spite of just disdain
May threat thy cruel heart!

CII
(fragment?)

From thought to thought, from hill to hill love doth me lead;
Clean contrary from restful life these common paths I tread.

CIII

Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught,
Nature my mother, craft nourished me year by year,
Three bodies are my food, my strength is in nought,
Slaughter, wrath, waste and noise are my children dear.
Guess, friend, what I am, or how I am wrought:

Monster of land, sea, or elsewhere?

Have me and use me, and I may thee defend,
And if I be thine enemy, I may thy life end.

10 that: i.e. the wound (9), which will never be restored to a cured scar. Cf. CLXII, 14.
12 friend: lover.
13 cure: care.
15: Cf. CXLVIII, 9–12.
15 recurse: remedy.

Cf. Appendix, CIII.

1 Vulcan: the Roman god of fire, and the divine smith.
2 Minerva: Roman goddess of wisdom; also protector of handicrafts and goddess of war.
3 in nought: cf. Lat. de nihilo. 'In the O of the gun's mouth' (S).
4 waste: destruction, ruin (Lat. ruina).
With great swift sway the first, and with his restless source,
Carrieth itself and all those eight in even continual course.
And of this world so round, within that rolling case,
There be two points, that never move, but firmly keep their
place.

The t'one we see alway: the t'other stands object
Against the same, dividing just the round by line direct
Which by imagination drawn from the one to the other
Toucheth the centre of the earth—way there is none other.
And these been called the poles, described by stars not bright:
Arctic the t'one northward we see, Antarctic the other hight.
The line that we devise from the one to the other so
As axle is, upon the whic the heavens about doth go,
Which of water nor earth, of air nor fire have kind:
Therefore the substance of those same were hard for man to
find.

But they been uncorrupt, simple and pure unmixed,
And so we say been all those stars that in those same been
fixed,
And eke those erring seven, in circles as they stray,
So called because against that first they have repugnant way,
And smaller byways too, scant sensible to man—
Too busy work for my poor harp: let sing them he that can.
The widest save the first of all these nine above
One hundred year doth ask of space for one degree to move,
Of which degrees we make, in the first moving heaven,
Three hundred and three score in parts justly divided even.
And yet there is another between those heavens two
Whose moving is so sly, so slack, I name it not for now.
The seventh heaven or the shell next to the starry sky
All those degrees that gatherth up, with aged pace so sly,

And doth perform the same, as elders' count hath been,
In nine and twenty years complete, and days almost sixteen,
Doth carry in his bout the star of Saturn old,
A threatener of all living things, with drought and with his
cold.

The sixth whom this contains doth stalk with younger pace
And in twelve year doth somewhat more than the other's
voyage was.

And this in it doth bear the star of Jove benign,
'Tween Saturn's malice and us men friendly defending sign.
The fifth bearth bloody Mars that in three hundred days
And twice eleven, with one full year, hath finished all those
ways.

A year doth ask the fourth, and hours thereto six,
And in the same the day his eye, the sun, therein he sticks.
The third that governed is by that that governeth me
And love for love—and for no love—provokes as oft we see,
In like space doth perform that course that did the t'other.
So doth the next to the same, that second is in order,
But it doth bear the star that called is Mercury,
That many a crafty secret step doth tread as calkers try.
That sky is last and first, next us those ways hath gone
In seven and twenty common days, and eke the third of one,
And beareth with his sway the diverse moon about,
Now bright now brown, now bent now full, and now her light
is out.

Thus have they of their own two movements all those seven:
One wherein they be carried still each in his several heaven,

15 source: flight.  19 object: opposite.  24 hight: is called.
27: W refers to the four elements of which all material bodies were thought to
be composed.  31 those ... seven: the planets; erring: wandering.
36, 57 space: duration.
39 another: W has so far talked of nine spheres. Now he thinks of
another—scholarship was uncertain about the exact number.
41, 70 the starry sky: the firmament.

45 bout: circuit.
45 star: was common for 'planet' and 'fixed star'.
47 this: Saturn's sphere, which contains the sixth sphere, that of Jupiter.
47 stalk: move quietly.
47 with ... pace: 'with quicker movement' (Rollins).
55 The third: Venus.  60 calkers: astronomers.  66 try: find.
61 last: i.e. in my description; first because closest to the earth.
61 next us: 'which nearest to us'.  64 bent: crescent.
65 of their own: i.e. not counting their being carried by the primum mobile.
Another of himselfes where their bodies been laid
In byways and in lesser rounds, as I afore have said,
Save of them all the sun doth stray least from the straight.
The starry sky hath but one course, that we have called the eight. 70

And all these movings eight are meant from west to the east,
Although they seem to climb aloft I say from east to west;
But that is but by force of the first moving sky,
In twice twelve hours from east to the east that carrieth them by and by. 75

But mark we well also these movings of these seven
Be not about that axe tree of the first moving heaven,
For they have their two poles directly the one to the other . . .'

CV
Satire I
Mine own John Poyntz, since ye delight to know
The cause why that homeward I me draw,
And flee the press of courts whereso they go
Rather than to live thrall under the awe
Of lordly looks, wrapped within my cloak
To will and lust learning to set a law:
It is not for because I scorn or mock
The power of them to whom fortune hath lent
Charge over us, of right to strike the stroke;

by and by: on and on.

Written after either W's first imprisonment in the Tower (1536), or his second (1541). Nott favoured 1541. Certainly 89-99 seems to refer to past experience rather than the future. The dog of 86 may refer to some unpleasant experience W had to accept when released (cf. ML, 209) or to whatever he saw as a restriction; or, if the poem was written in 1536, W may hint that he is on parole to his father, enjoying relative freedom only. His imprisonment in 1536 had in his opinion been due to the machinations of the Duke of Suffolk and he had witnessed the execution of Anne Boleyn, so he had reason not to look favourably on life at court. However, this was even more true in 1541.

1 John Poyntz: a courtier contemporary with W, of whom little is known.
3 wrapped . . . cloak: Nott mentions Horace's 'mea/virute me involvi' (Odes, III, No. 29, 54-55) as the source, and perhaps as an explanation.
4. 10-13: 'I esteem the great less than the common sort of people do, who in their intent, i.e. view of things, judge of persons by their outward appearance, without regard to what is their internal merit' (Nott; cf. the It.). The common sort: cf. QM, 450.
15-16: me . . . desire: 'I do not like to talk censoriously about honour while yet I desire it.'
18: 'Who cannot add to a liar's blackness'; cf. Tilley, B436. 22 part: interest.
27 seey: (cf. silly) innocent. See Matthew 10:16, and Whiting, W455.
30: Cf. Tilley, W777. Turn: i.e. call back.
32 Use . . . wot: substitute deceitful subleties for reason.
33 paint: flatter, deceive.
37 allow: praise.
Of him Caesar, and damn Cato to die,
That with his death did 'scape out of the gate
From Caesar's hands, if Livy do not lie,
And would not live where liberty was lost,
So did his heart the common weal apply.
I am not he such eloquence to boast
To make the crow singing as the swan,
Nor call the lion of coward beasts the most,
That cannot take a mouse as the cat can,
And he that dieth for hunger of the gold
Call him Alexander, and say that Pan
Passeth Apollo in music manifold,
Praise Sir Thopas for a noble tale
And scorn the story that the knight told,
Praise him for counsel that is drunk of ale,
Grin when he laugheth that beareth all the sway,
Frown when he frowneth and groan when he is pale,
On others' lust to hang both night and day:
None of these points would ever frame in me—
My wit is nought, I cannot learn the way,
And much the less of things that greater be,
That asken help of colours of device
To join the mean with each extremity:

With the nearest virtue to cloak alway the vice,
And as to purpose likewise it shall fall
To press the virtue that it may not rise,
As drunkenness good fellowship to call,
The friendly foe with his double face
Say he is gentle, and courteous therewithal,
And say that favel hath a goodly grace
In eloquence, and cruelty to name
Zeal of justice and change in time and place,
And he that sufferth offence without blame
Call him pitiful, and him true and plain
That raileth reckless to every man's shame,
Say he is rude that cannot lie and feign,
The lecher a lover, and tyranny
To be the right of a prince's reign:
I cannot, I—no, no, it will not be!
This is the cause that I could never yet
Hang on their sleeves that weigh as thou mayst see
A chip of chance more than a pound of wit.
This maketh me at home to hunt and to hawk,
And in foul weather at my book to sit,
In frost and snow then with my bow to stalk:
No man doth mark whereso I ride or go,
In lusty lease at liberty I walk,
And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe,
Save that a clog doth hang yet at my heel—
No force for that, for it is ordered so

38 him: D, C, CC. But possibly this should be high (A, P, T).
39 damn: sentence.
38 Cato: 'Brutus' uncle, Cato of Utica, who... fought for freedom against
Caesar, and who committed suicide after the battle of Thapsus in 46 B.C.' (MT).
Cf. the Epitome of Book cxiv of Livy's History (Nott).
42 the common weal: 'the old republic, and the general good' (Nott).
43 lion: cf. the heraldic 'Lion Coward' (OED coward, adj., 2).
48-49: W contrasts Pan and his pipe with Apollo, the higher god
who—amongst many civilized functions—was the patron of music. Both are
Greek deities.
50-51: W contrasts Chaucer's Sir Thopas, a deliberately clumsy parody of a
chivalric tale, with the genuine thing—The Knight's Tale, also by C.
55 On... hang: to depend on the wishes of others. Cf. 78.
56 frame: fit; prosper.
59 colours of device: ingenious disguises; distortions.
61 ff.: For possible sources, cf. Nott.
62: 'And likewise as it shall be opportune' (MT).
67 favel: probably 'flattery' rather than 'deceit'; cf. the context and Nott's
examples. Not necessarily a personification, and without a capital in E.
70-71 And... pitiful: 'and call him compassionate who tolerates offences
against people who do not deserve them'.
78: Hang on sleeves: fawn on, be obsequious to. But cf. 55.
79: Proverbial (Rollins), cf. Tilley, O85.
82 go: walk.
84 lease: pasture; cf. Kenneth A. Bleeth (N & Q, 1971, 214), who compares
86: Proverbial (cf. Rollins).
87 No... that: never mind about that.
That I may leap both hedge and dike full well.
I am not now in France to judge the wine,
With savoury sauce the delicates to feel;
Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline,
Rather than to be, outwardly to seem—
I meddle not with wits that be so fine;
Nor Flanders’ cheer letteth not my sight to deem
Of black and white, nor taketh my wit away
With beastliness, they beasts do so esteem;
Nor I am not where Christ is given in prey
For money, poison and treason, at Rome
A common practice used night and day:
But here I am in Kent and Christendom
Among the Muses where I read and rhyme,
Where if thou list, my Poynzt, for to come,
Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

CVI

Satire 2

My mother’s maids, when they did sew and spin,
They sang sometime a song of the fieldmouse,
That for because her lyvelood was but thin

89: F notes that W was granted a licence to import wine when serving in Calais, September 1529.
90 feel: taste and smell.
94–96: 'Nor does the merry-making of the Flemish prevent me from seeing the difference between black and white, or replace my brains with beastliness—the way one would expect from their high opinion of beasts as models.'
100 Kent and Christendom: the history of Kent, with Canterbury, as the centre of English Christendom (to which it was first converted) had become proverbial (cf. ODEP, p. 420; Tilley, K16). But W expresses his own feeling, and Allington Castle, the home of the Wyat family, is in Kent.
101 Muses: cf. QM, 446, 'the best remedy is with the muses . . .'

3 lyvelood: i.e. livelihood.
15 lyvelood: i.e. livelihood.
And with her foot anon she scrapeth full fast.
The other for fear durst not well scarce appear,
Of every noise so was the wretch aghast.
At last she asked softly who was there,
And in her language as well as she could,
‘Peep,’ quod the other, ‘sister, I am here.’
‘Peace,’ quod the towny mouse, ‘why speakest thou so loud?’
And by the hand she took her fair and well.
‘Welcome,’ quod she, ‘my sister, by the rood!’
She feasted her that joy it was to tell
The fare they had—they drank the wine so clear,
And as to purpose now and then it fell
She cheered her with ‘How, sister, what cheer?’
Amids this joy befell a sorry chance,
That wellaway the stranger bought full dear
The fare she had. For as she looked askance
Under a stool she spied two steaming eyes
In a round head with sharp ears: in France
Was never mouse so feared, for though the unwise
Had not yseen such a beast before,
Yet had nature taught her after her guise
To know her foe and dread him evermore.
The towny mouse fled: she knew whither to go.
The other had no shift, but wonders sore
Feared of her life; at home she wished her th'o.
And to the door alas as she did skip,
The heaven it would, lo, and eke her chance was so,

At the threshold her seeley foot did trip,
And ere she might recover it again
The traitor Cat had caught her by the hip,
And made her there against her will remain
That had forgotten her poor surety and rest
For seeming wealth wherein she thought to reign.
Alas my Poyntz, how men do seek the best,
And find the worst, by error as they stray!
And no marvel: when sight is so oppressed
And blind the guide, anon out of the way
Goeth guide and all in seeking quiet life.
O wretched minds! there is no gold that may
Grant that ye seek, no war, no peace, no strife—
No, no: although thy head were hooped with gold,
Sergeant with mace, halbert, sword, nor knife
Cannot repulse the care that follow should!
Each kind of life hath with him his disease:
Live in delight even as thy lust would,
And thou shalt find when lust doth most thee please
It irketh straight and by itself doth fade.
A small thing it is that may thy mind appease.
None of ye all there is that is so mad
To seek grapes upon brambles or briers,
Nor none (I trow) that hath his wit so bad

---

64 seeley: innocent, pitiful. Cf. CV, 27.
65 hip: cf. ‘To have one on the hip’ = to have one at a disadvantage (Tilley, H474).
66 poor surety: ‘the security which she derived from her poverty’ (Nott).
67: Nott rightly compares CT, A1266–7, and Arbice's speech generally.
68: Poyntz: cf. CV, I.
69: gold: cf. QM, 462, ‘So nouther gorousnesse...’
70: Sergeant: i.e. a bodyguard. 71: knife: dagger.
72: ‘Cannot repel the anxiety that is bound to follow’. Nott compares Horace, Odes, I, 16.
73: his disease: its distress.
74: ‘The thing which can set your mind at rest is only small.’
75: Proverbial (Rollins), cf. Tilley, G411.
To set his hay for conies over rivers,
Ne ye set not a drag-net for an hare:
And yet the thing that most is your desire
Ye do misseek with more travail and care.
Make plain thine heart, that it be not knotted
With hope or dread, and see thy will be bare
From all affects whom vice hath ever spotted;
Thyself content with that is thee assigned,
And use it well that is to thee allotted:
Then seek no more out of thyself to find
The thing that thou hast sought so long before,
For thou shalt feel it sitting in thy mind—
Mad if ye list to continue your sore,
Let present pass, and gape on time to come,
And deep yourself in travail more and more.
Henceforth, my Poyntz, this shall be all and some:
These wretched fools have shought else of me,
But to the great God and to his high doom
None other pain pray I for them to be
But when the rage doth lead them from the right
That looking backward virtue they may see
Even as she is, so goodly fair and bright;
And whilst they clasp their lusts in arms across
Grant them, good Lord, as thou mayst of thy might,
To fret inward for losing such a loss.

88 hay for conies: hunting-net for rabbits.
89: Cf. QM, 452, 'them that . . . hunt an hart with a dragge net'. Ne: nor.
93–94 bare . . . affects: 'free from the dominion of all passion' (Nott).
97: Cf. Persius, I, 7, 'Nec te quasesiveris extra'.
97 out of: outside.
99 it: i.e. 98—satisfaction, mental peace.
100 Mad: in apposition to thou (99). Cf. QM, 455, 'for foles let good thynges passe tho they be present . . . so moche doth their thoughtes gape greedily after thynges to come'.
101 gape on: long for.
102 travail: agony.
103 all and some: the sum total.
105 ff.: Cf. Persius, III, 35–38 (e.g. in Rollins, II, 214).
And drink good ale so nappy for the nonce,  
Feed thyself fat and heap up pound by pound?  
Liesth thou not this? 'No.' Why? 'For swine so groins  
In sty and chaw the turds moulded on the ground,  
And drivell on pearls, the head still in the manger,  
Than of the harp the ass to hear the sound.  
So sacks of dirt be filled up in the cloister,  
That serves for less than do these fatted swine.  
Though I seem lean and dry, without moisture,  
Yet will I serve my prince, my lord and thine,  
And let them live to feed the paunch that list,  
So I may feed to live both me and mine.'

By God, well said! But what and if thou wist  
How to bring in as fast as thou dost spend?  
'That would I learn.' And it shall not be missed  
To tell thee how. Now hark what I intend.  
Thou knowst well, first, whose can seek to please  
Shall purchase friends where truth shall but offend.  
Flee therefore truth: it is both wealth and ease.  
For though that truth of every man hath praise,  
Full near that wind goeth truth in great misease.  
Use virtue as it goeth nowadays:  
In word alone to make thy language sweet,  
And of the deed yet do not as thou sayst,  
Else be thou sure thou shalt be far unmeet  
To get thy bread, each thing is now so scant.  
Seek still thy profit upon thy bare feet;

Lend in no wise, for fear that thou do want,  
Unless it be as to a dog a cheese,  
By which return be sure to win a cant  
Of half at least: it is not good to lese.  
Learn at Kytson, that in a long white coat  
From under the stall, without lands or fees  
Hath leapt into the shop, who knoweth by rote  
This rule that I have told thee here before.  
Sometime also rich age beginneth to dote:  
See thou when there thy gain may be the more,  
Stay him by the arm whereas he walk or go,  
Be near alway, and if he cough too sore,  
When he hath spit, tread out and please him so.  
A diligent knave that picks his master's purse  
May please him so that he withouten mo  
Executor is, and what is he the worse?  
But if so chance you get nought of the man,  
The widow may for all thy charge deburse:  
A rivelled skin, a stinking breath, what then?  
A toothless mouth shall do thy lips no harm,  
The gold is good, and though she curse or ban,  
Yet where the list thou mayst lie good and warm:  
Let the old mule bite upon the bridle  
Whilst there do lie a sweeter in thine arm.

44 a dog: i.e. do not give a dog a bone (which he will keep), but a cheese, which he will return—with at least half an additional portion (cants). (So: make sure that the interest on your loans is excessive.)  
45 lese: lose.  
47 fees: goods.  
48 knave: servant; rogue.  
49 charge: cf. CVI, 28.  
50 deburse: disburse.  
51 what then: so what.  
52 Proverbial (Rollins); cf. Tilley, B670. 'Let the old woman (cf. also XXXV) vex herself.'
In this also see you be not idle:
Thy niece, thy cousin, thy sister or thy daughter,
If she be fair, if handsome by her middle,
If thy better hath her love besought her,
Advance his cause, and he shall help thy need:
It is but love, turn it to a laughter.
But 'ware, I say, so gold thee help and speed,
That in this case thou be not so unwise
As Pandar was in such a like deed:
For he, the fool, of conscience was so nice
That he no gain would have for all his pain.
Be next thyself, for friendship bears no price.
Laughst thou at me? Why, do I speak in vain?
'No, not at thee, but at thy thrifty gest!
Wouldest thou I should for any loss or gain
Change that for gold that I have ta'en for best
Next godly things: to have an honest name?
Should I leave that? Then take me for a beast!'
Nay then farewell, and if you care for shame
Content thee then with honest poverty,
With free tongue what thee mislikes to blame,
And for thy truth sometime adversity,
And therewithal this thing I shall thee give:
In this world now little prosperity,
And coin to keep as water in a sieve.

Cf. Appendix. Preceded by Surrey's 'The great Macedon' (cf. ed. Emrys Jones, p. 29), which must have been added later. W's references to enemies and imminent death have suggested to scholars that he wrote CVIII at the time of either his imprisonment in 1536, or that in 1541. (A date earlier than 1534, when Aretino was published, is impossible.) Mason prefers 1536; for counter arguments cf., e.g., ML, 256, and SCM, 168. The sources do not settle the question one way or the other, nor does the poem's position in E. We may remember W's repentant tone in his letters to his son (ML, 38 ff.), written in 1537; on the other hand, 364 ff. would quite well fit the circumstances of W's imprisonment in 1541 (cf., e.g., XCI).

In the first prologue, W treats 'the story of David's love for Uriah's wife Bathsheba, the warnings of the prophet Nathan, and his repentance, as told in 2 Samuel, 11-12' (MT). As Hughey notes, W is indebted to Aretino 'for the romantic concept of the Psalms as repentant laments . . . with the dramatic and psychological progression secured through the prologues.'

Prologue
2 Barsabe: (Aretino: Bersabe) Bathsheba.
8 sparpled: scattered.
12 brawl: 'a kind of French dance resembling a cotillon' (OED’s gloss, brawl sb.5).
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

So that forgot the wisdom and forecast
(Which woe to realms when that these kings doth lack),
Forgetting eke God’s majesty as fast,
Yea and his own, forthwith he doth to make
Uriah to go into the field in haste,
Uriah I say, that was his idol’s make,
Under pretence of certain victory
For enemies’ swords a ready prey to die.

Whereby he may enjoy her out of doubt
Whom more than God or himself he mindeth.
And after he had brought this thing about
And of that lust possessed himself, he findeth
That hath and doth reverse and clean turn out
Kings from kingdoms and cities undermineth:
He blinded thinks this train so blind and close
To blind all thing that nought may it disclose.

But Nathan hath spied out this treachery,
With rueful cheer and sets afore his face
The great offence, outrage and injury
That he hath done to God as in this case,
By murder for to cloak adultery.
He showeth him eke from heaven the threats alas
So sternly sore, this prophet, this Nathan,
That all amazed this aged woeful man.

Like him that meets with horror and with fear
The heat doth straight forsake the limbs cold;
The colour eke droopeth down from his cheer,
So doth he feel his fire manifold;

His heat, his lust and pleasure all in fear
Consume and waste, and straight his crown of gold,
His purple pall, his sceptre he lets fall,
And to the ground he throweth himself withal.

The pompous pride of state and dignity
Forthwith rebates repentant humbleness;
Thinner vile cloth than clotheth poverty
Doth scantily hide and clad his nakedness;
His fair hoar beard of reverent gravity
With ruffled hair, knowing his wickedness,
More like was he the selfsame repentance
Than stately prince of worldly governance.

His harp he taketh in hand to be his guide,
Wherewith he offereth his plaints his soul to save
That from his heart distils on every side,
Withdrawing him into a dark cave
Within the ground, wherein he might him hide,
Fleeing the light, as in prison or grave:
In which as soon as David entered had
The dark horror did make his fault adrad.

But he without prolonging or delay
Of that that might his Lord his God appease
Falith on his knees, and with his harp I say
Afore his breast, fraughted with disease

49 The... dignity: direct object.
55 the... repentance: repentance itself.
64 adrad: feared, i.e. by him.
66 Of: controversial reading. Some modern scholars read rof (i.e. row). But in 65 or replaces earlier of, and in 66 rof that that would take the place of W’s earlier the thing that. Rove, pace R. C. Harrier (N & Q, 1953, 234) does not simply mean ‘took’, and it cannot be parallel to It. prendendo, pace MT. Of gives easier sense, and was adopted by A, R, and Q.
68 fraughted: cf. XCVIII, 60.
68 disease: discomfort, suffering.
Of stormy sighs, his cheer coloured like clay,
Dressed upright, seeking to counterpese
His song with sighs and touching of the strings
With tender heart, lo thus to God he sings:

Psalm 6. Domine ne in furore

[1] 'O Lord, since in my mouth thy mighty name
Suffereth itself my Lord to name and call,
Here hath my heart hope taken by the same,
That the repentance which I have and shall
May at thy hand seek mercy as the thing
Only comfort of wretched sinners all.
Whereby I dare with humble bemoaning
By thy goodness of thee this thing require:
Chastise me not for my deserving
According to thy just conceived ire!
O Lord, I dread, and that I did not dread
I me repent, and evermore desire
Thee, thee to dread! I open here and spread
My fault to thee, but thou for thy goodness
Measure it not in largeness nor in bread,
Punish it not as asketh the greatness
Of thy furor, provoked by my offence.

[2] Temper, O Lord, the harm of my excess
With mending will that I for recompense
Prepare again, and rather pity me,
For I am weak, and clean without defence:
More is the need I have of remedy,
For of the whole the leech taketh no cure.
The sheep that strayth the shepherd seeks to see:

70 Dressed upright: directed upwards.
70 counterpese: i.e. counterpoise.

80 require: implore.
87 bread: i.e. breadth.
95: 'For the physician does not take care of those who are healthy.'
For if thy righteous hand that is so just
Suffer no sin or strike with damnation,
Thy infinite mercy want needs it must
Subject matter for his operation:
[5] For that in death there is no memory
Among the damned, nor yet no mention
Of thy great name, ground of all glory.
Then if I die and go whereas I fear
To think thereon, how shall thy great mercy
Sound in my mouth unto the world’s ear?
For there is none that can thee laud and love,
For that thou nilt no love among them there.
Suffer my cries thy mercy for to move,
That wooted is a hundred years’ offence
In moment of repentance to remove.
[6] How oft have I called up with diligence
This slothful flesh long afore the day
For to confess his fault and negligence,
That to the down for ought that I could say
Hath still returned to shroud itself from cold,
Whereby it sufferth now for such delay.
By nightly plaints, instead of pleasures old,
I wash my bed with tears continual,
[7] To dull my sight that it be never bold
To stir my heart again to such a fall.
Thus dry I up among my foes in woe,
That with my fall do rise and grow withal
And me beset even now where I am, so
With secret traps to trouble my penance.
Some do present to my weeping eyes, lo,

The cheer, the manner, beauty and countenance
Of her whose look alas did make me blind;
Some other offer to my remembrance
Those pleasant words, now bitter to my mind;
And some show me the power of my armour,
Triumph and conquest, and to my head assigned
Double diadem; some show the favour
Of people frail, palais, pomp, and riches.
To these mermaids and their baits of error
I stop mine ears with help of thy goodness,
And for I feel it cometh alone of thee
That to my heart these foes have none access
I dare them bid: “Avoid, wretches, and flee!
The Lord hath heard the voice of my complaint;
Your engines take no more effect in me.
[8] The Lord hath heard I say, and seen me faint
Under your hand, and pityth my distress.
He shall do make my senses by constraint
Obey the rule that reason shall express,
Where the deceit of your glozing bait
Made them usurp a power in all excess.”
[9] Shamed be they all that so lie in wait
To compass me, by missing of their prey!
Shame and rebuke redound to such deceit!
Sudden confusion’s stroke without delay
Shall so deface their crafty suggestion
That they to hurt my health no more essay,
Since I, O Lord, remain in thy protection.”

138: It is God’s will that love be excluded from the region of the damned.
Nill = ne will, wilt not.
145 down: R’s doun (M.E.W).
146 shroud: shelter.
150 my foes: i.e. the senses.
157 cheer: cf. 43.
171 engines: machinations, snares.
180 rebuke: disgrace.
182 suggestion: incitement to evil.
183 health: welfare, salvation.
Prologue
Whoso hath seen the sick in his fever
After truce taken with the hot or cold
And that the fit is past of his fervour
Draw fainting sighs, let him I say behold
Sorrowful David after his languor,
That with the tears that from his eyes down rolled
Paused his plaint, and laid adown his harp,
Faithful record of all his sorrows sharp.

It seemed now that of his fault the horror
Did make afeared no more his hope of grace,
The threats whereof in horrible error
Did hold his heart as in despair a space
Till he had willed to seek for his succour,
Himself accusing, beknowing his case,
Thinking so best his Lord for to appease:
Eased—not yet healed—he feeleth his disease.

Seemeth horrible no more the dark cave
That erst did make his fault for to tremble;
A place devout, or refuge for to save
The succourless it rather doth resemble.
For who had seen so kneel within the grave
The chief pastor of the Hebrews' assemble,
Would judge it made by tears of penitence
A sacred place worthy of reverence.

With vapoured eyes he looketh here and there,
And when he hath a while himself bethought,
Gathering his sprites that were dismayed for fear,
His harp again into his hand he raught.

Tuning accord by judgement of his ear,
His heartes bottom for a sigh he sought,
And therewithal upon the hollow tree
With strained voice again thus crieth he:

Psalm 32. Beati quorum remisse sunt

[1] 'O happy are they that have forgiveness got
Of their offence—not by their penitence
As by merit which recompenseth not,
Although that yet pardon hath none offence
Without the same—but by the goodness
Of Him that hath perfect intelligence
Of heart contrite, and covereth the greatness
Of sin within a merciful discharge.
And happy are they that have the wilfulness
Of lust restrained afore it went at large,
Provoked by the dread of God's furor,
Whereby they have not on their backs the charge
Of other's fault to suffer the dolour,
For that their fault was never execute
In open sight, example of error.

[2] And happy is he to whom God doth impute
No more his fault, by knowledgeing his sin,
But cleansed now the Lord doth him repute,
As adder fresh, new, stripped from his skin, Nor in his sprite is ought undiscovered.  
I for because I hid it still within, Thinking by state in fault to be preferred, Do find by hiding of my fault my harm, As he that feels his health to be hindered By secret wound concealed from the charm Of leech's cure, that else had had redress, And feel my bones consume and wax unfit, By daily rage, roaring in excess.  
Thy heavy hand on me was so increased Both day and night, and held my heart in press With pricking thoughts bereaving me my rest, That withered is my lustiness away As summer heats that hath the green oppressed; Wherefore I did another way essay, And sought forthwith to open in thy sight My fault, my fear, my filthiness I say, And not to hide from thee my great unright. "I shall," quod I, "against myself confess Unto the Lord all my sinful plight." And thou forthwith didst wash the wickedness Of mine offence, of truth right thus it is, Wherefore they that have tasted thy goodness At me shall take example as of this, And pray and seek in time for time of grace: Then shall the storms and floods of harm him miss, And him to reach shall never have the space.

Thou art my refuge and only safeguard From the troubles that compass me the place.

Such joy as he that 'scapes his enemies' ward With loosed bonds hath in his liberty, Such joy, my joy, thou hast to me prepared; That as the seaman in his jeopardy By sudden light perceived hath the port, So by thy great merciful property

Within thy look thus read I my comfort: "I shall thee teach and give understanding, And point to thee what way thou shalt resort For thy address, to keep thee from wandering; Mine eye shall take the charge to be thy guide.

I ask thereto of thee alone this thing: Be not like horse or mule that man doth ride, That not alone doth not his master know, But for the good thou dost him must be tied And bridled lest his guide he bite or throw."

O divers are the chastisings of sin, In meat, in drink, in breath that man doth blow, In sleep, in watch, in fretting still within, That never suffer rest unto the mind Filled with offence, that new and new begin With thousand fears the heart to strain and bind! But for all this he that in God doth trust With mercy shall himself defended find.

Joy and rejoice I say, ye that be just, In Him that maketh and holdeth you so still; In Him your glory alway set you must, All ye that be of upright heart and will.
Prologue

This song ended, David did stint his voice,
And in that while about he with his eye
Did seek the cave, with which withoutein noise
His silence seemed to argue and reply
Upon this peace, this peace that did rejoice
The soul with mercy that mercy so did cry
And found mercy at mercy's plentiful hand,
Never denied but where it was withstand.

As the servant that in his master's face
Finding pardon of his passed offence
Considering his great goodness and his grace
Glad tears distils, as gladsome recompense,
Right so David, that seemed in that place
Marble image of singular reverence
Carved in the rock with eyes and hands on high,
Made as by craft to plain, to sob, to sigh.

This while a beam that bright sun forth sends,
That sun the which was never cloud could hide,
Pierceth the cave, and on the harp descends,
Whose glancing light the cords did overglide,
And such lustre upon the harp extends
As light of lamp upon the gold clean tried,
The turn whereof into his eyes did start,
Surprised with joy by penance of the heart.

Psalm 38. Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me

[1] 'O Lord, as I thee have both prayed and pray
(Although in thee be no alteration
But that we men like as ourselves we say,
Measuring thy justice by our mutation,
Chastise me not, O Lord, in thy furor,
Nor me correct in wrathful castigation,

[2] For that thy arrows of fear, of terror,
Of sword, of sickness, of famine and fire
Sticks deep in me. I, lo, from mine error
Am plunged up as horse out of the mire
With stroke of spur. Such is thy hand on me

[3] That in my flesh for terror of thy ire
Is not one point of firm stability,
Nor in my bones there is no steadfastness,
Such is my dread of mutability,

317 affect: passionate love. 318 Bersabe: cf. 2.
319–20: David rests the sole of his left foot on the ground, so that the lower part of his leg is straightened up. His right knee remains level (just) with the earth.
322 health: cf. 183.
323 'With his hand he sought the music, with his mind the words of his song.'

Psalm 38 (Vulgate 37)

326–8: W means that 'there is no alteration in God, except what we men, being more men, think we see, judging His justice by human standards of changeability' (MT).
334 plunged up: heaved up.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

For that I know my frailful wickedness:
For why my sins above my head are bound
Like heavy weight that doth my force oppress,
Under the which I stoop and bow to ground
As willow plant haled by violence;
And of my flesh each not well cured wound,
That festered is by folly and negligence,
Of secret lust hath rankled under skin,
Not duly cured by my penitence.
Perceiving thus the tyranny of sin
That with his weight hath humbled and depressed
My pride by grudging of the worm within
That never dieth, I live withouten rest.
So are mine entrails infect with fervent sore,
Feeding the harm that hath my wealth oppressed,
That in my flesh is left no health therefore.
So wondrous great hath been my vexation
That it hath forced my heart to cry and roar.
O Lord, thou knowest the inward contemplation
Of my desire, thou knowest my sighs and plaints,
Thou knowest the tears of my lamentation
Cannot express my heart's inward restraints.
My heart panteth, my force I feel it quail,
My sight, mine eyes, my look decays and faints.
And when mine enemies did me most assail,
My friends most sure, wherein I set most trust,
Mine own virtues, soonest then did fail,
And stood apart: reason and wit unjust
As kin unkind were farthest gone at need.
So had they place their venom out to thrust

POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

That sought my death by naughty word and deed:
Their tongues did fraud apply,
And I like deaf and dumb forth my way yede,
Like one that hears not, nor hath to reply
One word again, knowing that from thy hand
These things proceed and thou, O Lord, shalt supply
My trust in thee, wherein I stick and stand.
Yet have I had great cause to dread and fear
That thou wouldst give my foes the over hand,
For in my fall they showed such pleasant cheer;
And therewithal I alway in the lash
Abide the stroke, and with me everywhere
I bear my fault, that greatly doth abash
My doleful cheer, for I my fault confess,
And my desert doth all my comfort dash.
In the meanwhile mine enemies safe increase
And my provokers hereby do augment,
That without cause to hurt me do not cease.
In evil for good against me they be bent,
And hinder shall my good pursuit of grace.
Lo now, my God, that seest my whole intent,
My Lord, I am thou knowest well in what case:
Forsake me not, be not far from me gone,
Haste to my help, haste, Lord, and haste apace,
O Lord, the Lord of all my health alone!

Prologue

Like as the pilgrim that in a long way
Fainting for heat, provoked by some wind,
In some fresh shade lieth down at mids of day,
So doth of David the wearied voice and mind

341 For why: for; because (as W wrote first, and cf. the sources).
344 plant: young tree. 351 grudging: inward vexation.
351 the worm: W refers to the pricking of conscience (F), which is eternal. Cf. also OED, I.6.b.
356 my vexation: the attack on me, my affliction.
361 restraints: lit. what is restrained in the heart, and which ought to be expressed (MT).
368 unkind: disloyal.

370 naughty: wicked.
378 over hand: upper hand, victory.
379 yede: went.
379: Cf. XCI, 35.
385 safe: in good health, strong.
385 increase: thrive.
390 intent: endeavour.
394 health: cf. 183.
Take breath of sighs when he had sung this lay
Under such shade as sorrow hath assigned;
And as the t'one still minds his voyage end,
So doth the t'other to mercy still pretend.

On sonore cords his fingers he extends,
Without hearing or judgement of the sound;
Down from his eyes a storm of tears descends
Without feeling that trickle on the ground,
As he that bleeds in bain right so intends
The altered senses to that that they are bound.
But sigh and weep he can none other thing,
And look up still unto the heaven's king.

But who had been without the cave's mouth
And heard the tears and sighs that he did strain,
He would have sworn there had out of the south
A lukewarm wind brought forth a smoky rain.
But that so close the cave was and uncouth
That none but God was record of his pain,
Else had the wind blown in all Israel's ears
The woeful plaint and of their king the tears.

Of which some part when he up supped had,
Like as he whom his own thought affrays
He turns his look: him seemeth that the shade
Of his offence against his force essays
By violence despair on him to lade:
Starting like him whom sudden fear dismays
His voice he strains, and from his heart out brings
This song that I not whether he cries or sings.

Prologue

401 t'one: the pilgrim.
403 sonore: i.e. sonorous.
406 With his senses transformed by God, David can only direct them towards
Him, and hence does not notice the loss of his tears. He is just like someone
who in his bath feels only the water, and not the loss of his blood.
411 cave's: disyllabic.
415 uncouth: unknown.
416 record: cf. 192.
420 affrays: frightens.
426 not ne wot, don't know.

Psalm 51 (Vulgate 50)

427 rue: pity.
429 brace: i.e. embrace.
430 brace: i.e. embrace.
435 laid: imposed (MT).
442 beknew: cf. 198.
454 able: fit.
455 just: see 488.
POEMS FROM THE EGERTON MANUSCRIPT

They shall return to thee and thy grace sue;
[14] My tongue shall praise thy justification;

But of thyself, O God, this operation
It must proceed, by purging me from blood,
Among the just that I may have relation;
And of thy lauds for to let out the flood
Thou must, O Lord, my lips first unloose.

[16] For if thou hadst esteemed pleasant good
The outward deeds that outward men disclose,
I would have offered unto thee sacrifice.
But thou delightest not in no such groze
Of outward deed as men dream and devise.

[17] The sacrifice that the Lord liketh most
Is spire contrite: low heart in humble wise
Thou dost accept, O God, for pleasant host.

[18] Make Sion, Lord, according to thy will
Inward Sion, the Sion of the ghost:
Of heart's Jerusalem strength the walls still.

[19] Then shalt thou take for good these outward deeds
As sacrifice thy pleasure to fulfil.
Of thee alone thus all our good proceeds.'

Prologue

Of deep secrets that David here did sing,
Of mercy, of faith, of frailty, of grace,
Of God's goodness and of justifying,
The greatness did so aston him a space.

[488 justification: 'the action whereby man is justified, or freed from the penalty of sin, and accounted or made righteous by God' (OED 4). Perhaps influenced by Luther, cf. Mason, 217, and MEW, 189.
[497 sacrifice: i.e. instead of lauds (493) and spire contrite (501), David would have offered a holocaust (or other 'outward' sacrifice).
[498 groze: false show, pretence. 502 host: sacrifice.
[504: 'Spiritual Sion, the Sion of the heart, formed to the will of God' (Nott).
[506 deeds: now signs of internal 'justice'.

Prologue

As who might say: 'Who hath expressed this thing? I, sinner I, what have I said, alas, That God's goodness would within my song entreat? Let me again consider and repeat.'

And so he doth, but not expressed by word, But in his heart he turneth and peiseth Each word that erst his lips might forth afford. He points, he pauseth, he wonders, he praiseth The mercy that hides of justice the sword, The justice that so his promise 'complisheth, For his word's sake, to worthless desert, That gratis his graces to men doth depart.

Here hath he comfort when he doth measure Measureless mercies to measureless fault, To prodigal sinners infinite treasure, Treasure termless that never shall default. Yea when that sin shall fail and may not dure, Mercy shall reign, 'gain whom shall no assault Of hell prevail, by whom lo at this day Of heaven gates remission is the key.

And when David hath pondered well and tried, And seeth himself not utterly deprived From light of grace, that dark of sin did hide, He finds his hope so much therewith revived, He dare importune the Lord on every side (For he knoth well to mercy is ascribed Respectless labour), importune, cry, and call, And thus beginth his song therewithal:

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515 entreat: discuss.
518 turneth and peiseth: turns and reflects upon (cf. paizeth).
520 points: hints, suggests (Hughey).
544 depart: bestow.
531 by whom: 'By means of mercy remission of sins is the key to the gates of heaven' (MT). Cf. MEW, 185–7.
538–9 For ... labour: 'for he knows well that his reckless effort will be considered due to mercy'.

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Psalm 102. Domine exaudi orationem meam

[1] 'Lord hear my prayer, and let my cry pass Unto the Lord without impediment. Do not from me turn thy merciful face,
[2] Unto myself leaving my government. In time of trouble and adversity Incline to me thine ear, and thine intent, And when I call help my necessity; Readily grant the effect of my desire. These bold demands do please thy majesty, And eke my case such haste doth well require:
[3] For like as smoke my days been passed away, My bones dried up as furnace with the fire,
[4] My heart, my mind is withered up like hay, Because I have forgot to take my bread, My bread of life, the word of truth, I say; And for my plaintive sighs and my dread My bones, my strength, my very force of mind Cleaved to the flesh, and from thy spritc were fled, As desperate thy mercy for to find.
[5] So made I me the solein pelican, And like the owl that fleeth by proper kind Light of the day, and hath herself beta'en To ruin life out of all company;
[6] With waker care, that with this woe began, Like the sparrow was I solitary, That sits alone under the houses' eaves.
[7] This while my foes conspired continually.

Psalm 102 (Vulgate 101)
544 government: management (of myself).
545 trouble: cf. 100.
546 intent: attention.
560 solein: solitary, lonely.
561 by ... kind: by its very nature.
564 waker care: cf. XCVII, 1.
And did provoke the harm of my disease.

[8] Wherefore like ashes my bread did me savour,
Of thy just word the taste might not me please;
Wherefore my drink I tempered with liquor
Of weeping tears, that from mine eyes do rain.

[9] Because I know the wrath of thy furor,
Provoked by right, had of my pride disdain,
For thou didst lift me up to throw me down,
To teach me how to know myself again,

[10] Whereby I knew that helpless I should drown.
My days like shadow decline, and I do dry:
And thee forever eternity doth crown,
World without end doth last thy memory.

[12] For this frailty, that yoketh all mankind,
Thou shalt awake, and rue this misery,
Rue on Sion, Sion that as I find
Is the people that live under thy law:
For now is time, the time at hand assigned,

[13] The time so long that doth thy servants draw
In great desire to see that pleasant day,
Day of redeeming Sion from sin’s awe.
For they have ruth to see in such decay,
In dust and stones, this wretched Sion sour.

[14] Then the Gentiles shall dread thy name alway,
All earthly kings thy glory shall honour,
Then, when thy grace thy Sion thus redeemeth,
When thus thou hast declared thy mighty power
The Lord his servants’ wishes so esteemeth
That he him turneth unto the poor’s request.

[17] To our descent this to be written seemeth,
Of all comforts as consolation best,
And they that then shall be regenerate
Shall praise the Lord therefore, both most and least.

568 disease: cf. 68. 581 this frailty: i.e. original sin (MT).
582 rue: cf. 427. 590 lour: be depressed
591 Gentiles: in the sense of ‘Heathen’ (MT).
594 declared: shown. 594 mighty: W myght. 597 descent: i.e. descendants.
600 both...least: the greatest and the meanest; ‘attached to thei (l. 599)’ (MT).

[18] For he hath looked from the height of his estate,
The Lord from heaven in earth hath looked on us,

[19] To hear the moan of them that are algate
In foul bondage, to loose and to discuss
The sons of death out from their deadly bond,

[20] To give thereby occasion gracious
In this Sion his holy name to stond
And in Jerusalem his lauds lasting aye;
When in one church the people of the lond
And realms been gathered to serve, to laud, to pray
The Lord alone, so just and merciful.

[22] But to this ’semble running in the way
My strength faileth to reach it at the full.
He hath abridged my days, they may not dure
To see that term, that term so wonderful,

[23] Although I have with hearty will and cure
Prayed to the Lord: Take me not, Lord, away
In mids of my years, though thine ever sure
Remain eterne, whom time cannot decay.

[24] Thou wroghtest the earth, thy hands the heavens did make;

[25] They shall perish, and thou shalt last alway,
And all things age shall wear and overtake
Like cloth, and thou shalt change them like apparel,
Turn and translate, and they in worth it take.

[26] But thou thyself the self remainest well
That thou wast erst, and shalt thy years extend.

[27] Then since to this there may nothing rebel,
The greatest comfort that I can pretend 
Is that the children of thy servants dear,
That in thy word are got, shall without end
Before thy face be established all in fere.'

Prologue

When David had perceived in his breast
The sprite of God returned that was exiled,
Because he knew he hath alone expressed
These great things that greater sprite compiled
As shawm or pipe lets out the sound impressed
By music's art forging tofore and filed,
I say when David had perceived this,
The sprite of comfort in him revived is.

For thereupon he maketh argument
Of reconciling unto the Lord's grace,
Although sometime to prophecy have lent
Both brute beasts and wicked hearts a place—
But our David judgeth in his intent
Himself by penance clean out of this case,
Whereby he hath remission of offence,
And 'ginneth to allow his pain and penitence.

But when he weigheth the fault and recompense,
He damnh his deed, and findeth plain
Atween them two no whit equivalence,
Whereby he takes all outward deed in vain

Psalm 130. De profundis clamavi

[1] 'From depth of sin, and from a deep despair,
From depth of death, from depth of heartes sorrow,' 665
From this deep cave, of darkness deep repair,
Thee have I called, O Lord, to be my borrow;
Thou in my voice, O Lord, perceive and hear
[2] My heart, my hope, my plight, my overthrow,
My will to rise, and let by grant appear
That to my voice thine ears do well intend.
No place so far that to thee is not near,
No depth so deep that thou ne mayst extend
Thine ear therto: hear then my woeful plaint.
[3] For, Lord, if thou do observe what men offend

656–60: "Realizing this, he wards off the sly temptation vainly to praise his own non-existing merit. He transfers the glory of forgiveness to God's goodness, as exclusively due to Him. He discovers that his own merit is deficient."

Psalm 130 (Vulgate 129)

666 of . . . repair: 'the deep haunt or resort of darkness' (MT).
667 borrow: deliverer from prison.
671 intend: attend.
And put thy native mercy in restraint,
If just exaction demand recompense,
Who may endure, O Lord? Who shall not faint
At such account? Dread, and not reverence,
Should so reign large. But thou seeks rather love,
For in thy hand is mercy’s residence,
By hope whereof thou dost our heartes move.

I in thee, Lord, have set my confidence,
My soul such trust doth evermore approve.
Thy holy word of etere excellency,
Thy mercy’s promise, that is alway just,
Have been my stay, my pillar, and pretence.

My soul in God hath more desirous trust
Than hath the watchman looking for the day
By the relief to quench of sleep the thrust.

Let Israel trust unto the Lord alway,
For grace and favour oun his property:
Plenteous ransom shall come with him I say,
And shall redeem all our iniquity.’

Prologue

This word redeem that in his mouth did sound
Did put David, it seemeth unto me,
As in a trance to stare upon the ground
And with his thought the height of heaven to see,
Where he beholds the Word that should confound
The sword of death, by humble ear to be
In mortal maid, in mortal habit made,
Eternal life in mortal veil to shade.

684 approve: find good through experience.
685 pretence: perhaps ‘defence’ (Nott); but cf. 726. Tillyard suggests: ‘the cause I have for claiming merit’.
689 thrust: i.e. thirst (Nott), with metathesis of r.
692 arm: early form of are.
693 property: cf. 270.
693 ransom: i.e. Christ.

Prologue

700 humble ear: ‘W probably means that the Virgin Mary by listening to the Word, became the mother of Christ’ (MT).
702 in... shade: “in mortal veil to shroud” (cf. the use of “veil” to describe that which divides mortal from eternal life in Hebrews 6:19)” (MT).

He seeth that Word, when full ripe time should come,
Do ’way that veil, by fervent affection
Torn off with death, for death should have her doom;
And leapest lighter from such corruption
The glint of light that in the air doth loom.
Man redeemed, death hath her destruction,
That mortal veil hath immortality,
David assurance of his iniquity.

Whereby he frames this reason in his heart:
‘That goodness which doth not forbear his son
From death for me and can thereby convert
My death to life, my sin to salvation,
Both can and will a smaller grace depart
To him that sueth by humble supplication,
And since I have his larger grace assayed,
To ask this thing why am I then afraid?

‘He granteth most to them that most do crave,
And he delights in suit without respect.
Alas, my son pursues me to the grave,
Suffered by God my sin for to correct;
But of my sin since I my pardon have,
My son’s pursuit shall shortly be reject:
Then will I crave with ’sured confidence.’
And thus begins the suit of his pretence:

706-7: ‘And the gleam of light which appears in the air rises the more brightly away from that destroyer, death.’
710 assurance: the certainty that Christ has saved his soul by delivering him from sin; cf. OED 8.b. See 714.
712 forbear: spare.
715 depart: cf. 524.
717 assayed: tasted.
720 respect: partiality (MT).
721-4: ‘W sets the dramatic time as the interval just preceding the final battle with the hostile forces led by David’s son Absalom (II Samuel 18’) (Hughey, who also compares II Samuel 15:30 and 16:8).
726 pretence: professed aim.
Psalm 143. Domine exaudi orationem meam

[1] 'Hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my request, Not by desert, but for thine own behest, In whose firm truth thou promisest mine empire To stand stable. And after thy justice Perform, O Lord, the thing that I require,

[2] But not of law after the form and guise To enter judgement with thy thrall bondservant To plead his right, for in such manner wise Before thy sight no man his right shall save. For of myself lo this my righteousness By scourge and whip and pricking spurs I have Scant risen up, such is my beastliness;

[3] For that my enemy hath pursued my life And in the dust hath foiled my lustiness; For that in hains, to flee his rage so rife, He hath me forced as dead to hide my head;

[4] And for because within myself at strife My heart and spirit with all my force were fled.

[5] I had recourse to times that have been past, And did remember thy deeds in all my dread, And did peruse thy works that ever last, Whereby I knew above those wonders all

[6] Thy mercies were. Then lift I up in haste My hands to thee, my soul to thee did call Like barren soil for moisture of thy grace.

[7] Haste to my help, O Lord, afore I fall,

Psalm 143 (Vulgate 142)

729: 'Not because I deserve it, but because of thine own promise.'
732 require: cf. 80.
733 guise: manner.
741 foiled: trodden under foot.
742 hains: enclosed places (cf. Camp. locis obscurissimis).
748 did peruse: considered one by one.
750 lift: i.e. lifted.