

Syr. P. S.  
*His Astrophel and Stella.*

Wherein the excellence of sweete  
Poesie is concluded  
(\*<sup>\*</sup>)

*To the end of which are added, sundry  
other rare Sonnets of diuers Noble  
men and Gentlemen.*  
(\*<sup>\*</sup>)

At London,  
Printed for Thomas Newman.  
*Anno. Domini. 1591.*

☛ To the worshipfull and his very  
good Freende, Ma. *Frauncis Flower* Es-  
quire, increase of all content.

IT was my fortune (right worshipfull) not many daies since, to  
light vpon the famous deuce of *Astrophel* and *Stella*, which  
carrying the generall commendation of all men of iudgement,  
and being reported to be one of the rarest things that euer any  
Englishman set abroach, I haue thought good to publish it vnder  
your name, both for I know the excellencie of your worships  
conceit, aboue all other to be such, as is onely fit to discerne of  
all matters of wit, as also for the credite and countenance your  
patronage may giue to such a worke. Accept of it I beseech you,  
as the first fruites of my affection, which desires to approoue it  
selfe in all dutie vnto you: and though the Argument perhaps  
may seeme too light for your graue viewe, yet considering the  
worthines of the Author, I hope you will entertaine it  
accordingly. For my part, I haue beene very carefull in the  
Printing of it, and where as being spred abroad in written  
Coppies, it had gathered much corruption by ill Writers: I haue  
vsed their helpe and aduice in correcting & restoring it to his  
first dignitie, that I knowe were of skill and experience in those  
matters. And the rather was I moued to sette it forth, because I  
thought it pittie anie thing proceeding from so rare a man,  
shoulde bee obscured, or that his fame should not still be  
nourisht in his works, whom the works with one vnited grieffe  
bewailed. Thus crauing pardon for my bold attempt, & desiring  
the continuance of your worships fauour vnto mee, I ende.

Yours alwaies to be  
commaunded.  
*Tho: Newman.*

## Somewhat to reade for them

*that list.*

*Tempus adest plausus aurea pompa venit*, so endes the Sceane of Idiots, and enter *Astrophel* in pompe. Gentlemen that haue seene a thousand lines of folly, drawn forth *ex vno puncto impudentiae*, & two famous Mountains to goe to the conception of one Mouse, that haue had your eares deafned with the eccho of Fames brasen towres, when only they haue been toucht with a leaden pen, that haue seene *Pan* sitting in his bower of delights, & a number of *Midasses* to admire his miserable hornepipes, let not your surfeted sight, new come from such puppetplay, think scorne to turn aside into this Theater of pleasure, for here you shal find a paper stage streud with pearle, an artificial heau'n to ouershadou the faire frame, & christal wals to encounter your curious eyes, whiles the tragicommodity of loue is performed by starlight. The chiefe Actor here is *Melpomene*, whose dusky robes dipt in the ynke of teares, as yet seeme to drop when I view them neere. The argument cruell chastitie, the Prologue hope, the Epilogue dispaire, *videte queso et linguis animisque fauete*. And here peraduenture, my witles youth may be taxt with a margent note of presumption, for offering to put vp any motion of applause in the behalfe of so excellent a Poet, (the least sillable of whose name sounded in the eares of iudgement, is able to giue the meanest line he writes a dowry of immortality) yet those that obserue how iewels oftentimes com to their hands that know not their value, & that the cockscombes of our daies, like *Esops* Cock, had rather haue a Barly kernell wrapt vp in a Ballet, then they wil dig for the welth of wit in any ground that they know not, I hope wil also hold me excused, though I open the gate to his glory, & inuite idle eares to the admiration of his melancholy.

*Quid petitur sacris nisi tantum fama poetis.*

Which although it be oftentimes imprisoned in Ladyes casks, & the president bookes of such as cannot see without another mans spectacles, yet at length it breakes foorth in spight of his keepers, and vseth some priuate penne (in steed of a picklock) to procure his violent enlargement.

The Sunne for a time, may maske his golden head in a cloud: yet in the end, the thicke vaile doth vanish, and his embellished blandishment appears. Long hath *Astrophel* (Englands Sunne) withheld the beames of his spirite, from the common veiw of our darke sence, and night hath houered ouer the gardens of the nine Sisters, while *Ignis fatuus*, and grosse fatty flames (such as commonly arise out of Dunghilles) haue tooke occasion in the midst eclipse of his shining perfections, to wander a broade with a wispe of paper at their tailes like Hobgoblins, and leade men vp and downe in a circle of absurditie a whole weeke, and neuer know where they are. But nowe that cloude of sorrow is dissolued, which fierie Loue, exhaled from his dewie haire, and affection hath vnburthened the labouring streames of her wombe, in the lowe cesterne of his graue: the night hath resigned her iettie throne vnto *Lucifer*, and cleere daylight possesseth the skie that was dimmed; wherfore breake of your daunce you Fayries and Elues, and from the fieldes with the torne carcasses of your Timbrils, for your kingdome is expired. Put out your rush candles, you Poets and Rimers, and bequeath your crazed quaterzayns to the Chaundlers, for loe, here he commeth that hath broken your legs. *Apollo* hath resigned his Iuory Harp vnto *Astrophel*, & he like *Mercury*, must lull you a sleep with his musicke. Sleepe *Argus*, sleep Ignorance, sleep Impudence, for *Mercury* hath *Io*, & onely *Io Pæan* belongeth to *Astrophel*. Deare *Astrophel*, that in the ashes of thy Loue, liuest againe like the *Phœnix*; ô might thy bodie (as thy name) liue

again likewise, here amongst vs: but the earth, the mother of mortalitie, hath snatch thee too soone into her chilled colde armes, and will not let thee by any meanes, be drawne from her deadly imbrace; and thy diuine Soule, carried on an Angels wings to heauen, is installed in *Hermes* place, sole *prolocutor* to the Gods. Therefore mayest thou neuer returne from the *Elisian* fieldes like *Orpheus*, therefore must we euer mourne for our *Orpheus*.

Fayne would a seconde spring of passion heere spende it selfe on his sweet remembrance: but Religion that rebuketh prophane lamentation, drinkes in the riuers of those dispaireful teares, which languorous ruth hath outwelled, & bids me looke back to the house of honor, where from one & the selfe same roote of renowne, I shal find many goodly branches deriued, & such as with the spreading increase of their vertues, may somewhat ouersadow the grieffe of his los. Amongst the which fayre sister of *Phœbus*, & eloquent secretary to the Muses, most rare Countesse of *Pembroke* thou art not to be omitted: whom Artes doe adore as a second *Minerua*, and our Poets extoll as the Patronesse of their inuention; for in thee, the *Lesbian Sappho* with her lirick Harpe is disgraced, & the Laurel Garlande which thy Brother so brauely aduunst on his Launce, is still kept greene in the Temple of *Pallas*. Thou only sacrificest thy soule to contemplation, thou only entertainest emptie handed *Homer*, & keepest the springs of *Castalia* from being dried vp. Learning, wisdom, beautie, and all other ornaments of Nobilitie whatsoever, seeke to approue themselues in thy sight, and get a further seale of felicity, from the smiles of thy fauour.

*O Ioue digna viro ni Ioue nata fores.*

I feare I shall be counted a mercenary flatterer, for mixing my thoughts with such figuratiue admiration, but generall report that surpasseth my praise, condemne my rethoricke of

dulnesse for so colde a commendation. Indeede to say the truth, my stile is somewhat heauie gated, and cannot daunce trip and goe so liuely, with oh my loue, ah my loue, all my loues gone, as other Sheeheardes that haue beene fooles in the Morris time out of minde: nor hath my prose any skill to imitate the Almond leape verse, or sit tabring fiue yeres together nothing but to bee, to hee: on a paper drum. Onely I can keepe pace with Grauesend barge, and care not if I haue water enough, to lande my ship of fooles with the Tearme, (the tyde I shoulde say.) Now euery man is not of that minde, for some to goe the lighter away, will take in their fraught of spangled feathers, golden Peebles, Straw, Reedes, Bulrushes, or any thing, and then they beare out their sayles as proudly, as if they were balisted with Bulbiefte. Others are so hardly bested for loading that they are faine to retaile the cinders of *Troy*, and the shiuers of broken trunchions, to fill vp their boate that else should goe empty: and if they haue but a pound weight of good Merchandise, it shall be placed at the poepe, or pluckt in a thousande peeces to credit their carriage. For my part euery man as he likes, *Mens cuiusque is est quisque*. Tis as good to goe in cut fingerd Pumps as corke shooes, if one were Cornish diamonds on his toes. To explain it by a more familiar example, an Asse is no great stateman in the beastes common-wealth, though he weare his eares *vpseuant musse*, after the Muscouy fashion, & hange the lip like a Capcase halfe open, or looke as demurely as a six penny browne loafe, for he hath some imperfections that do keepe him from the common Councel: yet of many, he is deemed a very vertuous member, and one of the honestest sort of men that are; So that our opinion (as *Sextus Empedocus* affirmeth) giues the name of good or ill to euery thing. Out of whose works (latelie translated into English, for the benefit of vnlearned writers) a man might collect a whole booke of this

argument, which no doubt woulde proue a worthy  
commonwealth matter, and far better than wits waxe karnell:  
much good vvorship haue the Author.

Such is this golden age vvherein vve liue, and so replenisht  
vvith golden Asses of all sortes, that if learning had lost it selfe  
in a groue of Genealogies, vvee neede doe no more but sette an  
olde goose ouer halfe a dozen pottle pots, (vvhich are as it vvere  
the egges of inuention) and vvee shall haue such a breede of  
bookes within a little vvhile after, as vvill fill all the vvorld  
vvith the vvilde fovvle of good vvits; I can tell you this is a  
harder thing then making golde of quicksiluer, and vvill trouble  
you more then the Morrall of *Aesops* Glovv-vvorme, hath  
troubled our English Apes, vvho striuing to vvarme themselues,  
vvith the flame of the Philosophers stone, haue spent all their  
vvealth in buying bellovves to blovve this false fyre.

Gentlemen, I feare I haue too much presumed on your idle  
leysure, and beene too bold, to stand talking all this vvhile in an  
other mans doore: but novv I will leaue you to suruey the  
pleasures of *Paphos*, and offer your smiles on the Aulters of  
*Venus*.

*Yours in all desire to please,*

Tho: Nashe.

[Original content ©2015 by Dirk Jol]