

John Barclay: Two Books of Poems
London
At the House of John Bill
1615

To the Greatest and Most Illustrious Prince Charles, Prince of Britain, etc., John Barclay wishes
Happiness, Victories, and Triumphs.

If I did not owe everything to his Most Serene Majesty, your illustrious father, and therefore to your Highness, O Greatest of Princes, I would very much need to explain my reasons for dedicating this work to you and for claiming your patronage. But as it is, I am so entirely yours that whatever I contribute to literature is entirely your gift. My only task is to justify—or perhaps excuse—this book and the principles of its composition, because there will be severe critics who think it inappropriate that I stoop to playful poems after writing my more serious works. However, since everything, especially the hard and difficult, endures better if it includes some variety, who could refuse me some relaxation with a milder muse after the weariness of serious work? We see that choruses interrupt tragedies, which are the representation of the cares and bloody crimes of kings; even there the lute and harp find a place.¹

But I will not excuse myself with this alone, for I would like you to believe that I immerse myself in this poetic sport for a serious reason. Many hold in contempt and consider as common the useful magnificence of the Muses. These people, in the frivolity of their imagination and their ignorance of this art, have made bold attempts at poetry and think that madness by itself is sufficient for poetic composition. This art, which requires special diligence, will never wash off such a stain unless it is celebrated and practiced by those who have seen things other than the school and the academy. Poetry will not be more healthy and relevant to things in the real world—not as it is taught by the naïve and inexperienced—unless it recovers the tone which it had in prior ages when it formed upright character and when it gave eternal fame as the reward of virtue. Consequently, though far from having that piercing intelligence which could restore this poetic art to its native place, nevertheless I was rapt away by the sweetness of these studies in school, and being resident for many years in your most serene father's court, I wished to offer my work here. I hope that those who correctly judge poetry—a rare talent anywhere—may test my abilities and perfect my initial attempts. Those who value

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A contemporary denizen of the court, Ben Jonson, made the same point in his commentary for Prince Henry to *The Masque of Queens*, presented at Whitehall in Feb. 1609: "...a principal part of life in these spectacles [sc. the masques] lay in their variety..." He therefore created the antimasque as a foil to the masque (quoted by Bayne in CHEL 6, p. 395). The lute and the harp are instruments for heroic verse; pipes and flutes for pastoral.

everything only by its exterior beauty should be aware that poetry is not so cheap and childish that those engaged in the court or in other serious matters may blush at it.

Not only that, but even if I were a foreigner and this book had free choice of claiming a patron, how could it pass you by, O most lofty Prince? Your noteworthy young manhood, formed in face and manner for every grace, has something in common with Apollo and the Muses. You honour the latter with daily association and (in my opinion) you consider them useful, since they are the means by which Achilles and the heroes have been preserved for eternity. Word now goes through the whole world that this greatest king, this king endowed with all virtues, has promoted you not just to his power, but to his talents, genius, and character. Whoever remembers the king's youth, does he not adore your age and spirit as a renaissance of his young manhood? In other words, who could see anything wanting in Your Highness now, or fail to anticipate its unfolding in your future years? Mildness, along with a vigorous talent, majesty tempered with kindness in your gaze, in short, whatever talent in the royal mind that flatterers may invent or honest men may hope for, these are so much a part of your talents and abilities that you can only hope that men believe you to be what you truly are.

Nothing will accomplish this better than the Muses, who will not only magnify your qualities for posterity, but will also display them living and breathing to future ages. While we wait for these Muses to create a poet equal to such a task, I have dared to take up my rustic pipes, pipes whose songs have been heard for some time in your household and which have been acceptable to your benevolence. It has been nine years since I dedicated a collection of poems, entitled *Sylvae*, to your uncle, the most serene King of Denmark. However, the passage of time, leisure, and increased carefulness in a man of public reputation have condemned many of these poems. As a result, of those poems which I have transferred to this volume (for quite a few have been omitted entirely), I have made various changes in some. These make up barely a third of the poems and songs which I publish in these two books. I have divided this work in such a way that poems of a higher and more untrammelled spirit constitute Book 1; poems written in the lighter verse which is more appropriate for the limitations of the epigram are placed in Book 2. If I had based these two books on my own poetic powers, I would still hope to be valued by you because of them. But now I beg that these rude and rough songs be viewed tenderly by you, if only, Noble Prince, because of that most ardent devotion with which I dedicate these poems and myself with them to Your Highness. To be sure, even if you reject the rest, you cannot be adverse to the poems scattered throughout these books written in honour of your most sacred father, nor perhaps even those, Most Illustrious Prince, which I sang about Your Highness.

I.1

[This poem describes how, at the beginning of King James's reign, the Spirit (Genius) of Britain approached the Fates (Parcae) and asked for knowledge of the future. Fate (Parca, now singular) replied: James will have many years of rule; his daughter Elizabeth will see the Rhine and have great

offspring; Prince Henry, alas, will die; Prince Charles will be the one chosen to extend his father's glory. The poem was written after Prince Henry's death in Nov. 1612 and Elizabeth's marriage in Feb. 1613 to Frederick V, Elector Palatine, the Winter King of Bohemia.]

O Fame who flies through marvelling nations and makes your news resound. O Fame, you honour worthy men, and ever a devotee of ancestors, you oft despise our modern times. But now at least turn hither all your gaze and you will see things of much greater worth, that you will exalt and recount through all the climes. Do you observe that peaceful Britain delights in James her king. Do you observe that Charles fulfils his noble sire's hopes? Never before has Nature so indulged her blessed tribes, and promised happy ages in one line, and given widespread forecasts of eternal fate. Greater on earth, greater in the heavens was Hercules, but his son was of lesser kind. What offspring could equal great Theseus, or the Macedonian general, or the fleet Achilles? Fate alternates the men it gives. But this our island beseeched the gods and will be happy through the ages in her kings. Never will she see her sceptre stained by polluted hands.

Only just now had the Parcae granted Britain's rule to James, and under a single sceptre was Albion whole, from the shores that face Auster, the warm south breeze, to the Scottish highland forests that seek Boreas's blasts. Just then the spirit who watches over the British land and race approached the Parcae with a smile and addressed them in these words.

“O Powers who rule the world and give no sway to chance, by your decrees does each folk lift its head on high or in dejection stoop. With what incense, or with what prayers have you been so appeased as to grant me now this boon? Behold, the line between my two-fold tribe is now obscured; my tribe will be one. My island no more will know her ancient strife, nor open war, nor quarrels that hide more war. But to unite divided minds and limbs is a lesser task than to supply a guiding spirit. Long ages sought a king known in song, known to tribe of seers, a king whom our rival gods thought their people ought to have. For me you kept this king, this James, for our present age. If your power looks kindly on all the earth and restores our times to the habits of the Golden Age, then will the sun when it rises and when it slips from the sky to touch the Western Waters, see this James alone have rule over men and control over the sacred sword. Who else could have such rank? Whose potent hand would the sceptre better grace? Whose mind could be so equal to this task? He is an equal to the highest gods, if only equal were his years of life. But your distaff will send him to eager Olympus only when he's wearied by seeing so many years, by counting so many days. He will see the Phoenix oft reborn, and will enjoy more years than Tithonus.² Only then will he seek the heavens and leave the sceptre to his son. Behold his children flourish and may they live, I pray: a daughter surpassing all goddesses, two sons like stars in the sky. O Holy Sisters, I pray, preserve them for us. Why then does Charles, the last-born of his beloved mother, (O may this heavy omen be less fearsome!) that tender

² Tithonus, son of Laomedon, was made immortal by Aurora who loved him, but since she failed to ask the gods to give him perpetual youth, he shrivelled away until he became a mere voice, like a cicada. He appears 3x in the *Poemata*.

Charles, alas!, lie with sickly frame? How tender—that boy whom a lovely Naiad would choose, and even false Amor, deceptive with hidden wings. But his fate is in doubt, and he balances on the threshold of life.”

Thus Britain's spirit. And the Parca addressed her with mild expression and spun her thread with favouring hand. “Your loyalty pleases us because you are happy in our gift; you will never say that you have come in vain. For now I wish myself to show you the hidden twists and turns of great affairs and all the mysteries of our decrees. That man to whom we gave the sceptre—his merits have given him a heart larger than his fortune—that James who gives to you sweet peace and has banished war, will enjoy many unspoiled years of life, happy, surpassing all his fathers in mind and spirit. A dazzling fate awaits the queen as well, a queen not inferior to the gods in spirit and face, whom smiling Juno joined to James in wedding pomp. The queen will see her offspring, and be a perfect model. Teaching manners and morals, a monitor of merit, she'll leave behind herself in them.

Yet different glories, different fates await these offspring. Press not to ask for reasons: the eternal line is fixed; we spoke thus once for all, when shapeless was the world, when we unmoved began to unroll our skein for gods and men alike. First comes the maid, a match for quivered Diana, offspring of kings, Elizabeth, now in her childhood years, as she gazes on your stream, O most happy Thames! She will grow, and when grown with what stature will she reign over the marvelling nymphs! Cease your rivalry, gods, about the winner of beauty's golden prize. If winged Mercury had brought her to Phrygian Ida, to join Cyprian Venus, golden-tressed Minerva, and sceptre-bearing Juno, the shepherd so bold would spurn Cytherea and give the prize to virgin Eliza. Now raise your head, O Rhine.³ Swell full your double stream. Cut through your lands with higher waves. Elizabeth will come to you, and now no stranger to the marriage bed, she will cherish you and much famed will give birth to great offspring.

The boy whom you see growing from infant years into the stature and spirit of a man, whose deep intelligence fills the first stages of his young age with adult concerns—that boy, Henry, cherished in your prayers, the great glory of his house, alas, will leave you like a falling flower. Why do you vainly raise up your eyes, lift up your faces madly twisted in sorrow? Do not try to turn our course. You cannot, for we have caused these laws to be cut into steel. No god has the power to transgress them. You, kindly Hymen, will not see his smooth cheeks covered with the soft down of manhood, nor will he summon you to his bed. Nevertheless we will repay these stolen years of life with generous recompense: hardly anyone will be better at directing the reins or splitting the air with his shafts. He will have a mind fit to be cherished and deep concerns in his heart. To Henry will everything bow; of Henry will everything speak. Albion will call herself happy in such a child—when suddenly my thread

³ The Rhine has a double stream here and is two-fold in the poem to Robert Cecil. In V. *Aeneid* 8.727 the Rhine is bicornis, “with two horns”, either because river gods were occasionally depicted with the heads of bulls or because of the two main distributaries of the river, the Rhine and the Waal.

is cut. Now I observe men wailing and observe from afar kings and a funeral's sad procession. When the grim catafalque in black array bears you to your tomb, O Prince, the steeds are bidden to pull the car slowly, and they wet their tracks with their tears. Without a doubt, you hoped, O much-mourned boy, to ride aloft, not in a funeral car, but in a much different chariot. You deserved, O Prince, to rejoice in your triumphs, to hear cheering all around you, and to see your face reflected everywhere in the eyes of the crowd—if the secret knowledge of the gods had not forbade it. I can barely mention without tears the grief that I am about to cause. Thus will he fall, not completing as yet his fourth Olympian term.⁴ Just as in early spring moistened seeds in the broad fields send up hasty shoots and flowery stalks too close to the limits of deep winter; soon when the cloudless days are bright with the strength of the full sun and the sky is aflame with long heat, then these shoots wither, alas, unable to bear such a fire.

But spare your tears; be cheerful and fill your hearts, now stricken with grief, with the presages of better things. I will sing a happier tune. When time in its course has proven my words to be true, you will often bring wonted offerings to the temples and you will invoke our power. Let the laurel adorn your hand, wreaths of laurel your brow, and let rich olive boughs cover all. No joy can be too much. The golden sun does not more surpass the stars, does not more outshine the lesser lights than does your Albion's great deeds more overpower other lands and overshadow them with her monuments. Charles will be the sun's equal, Charles will bring you such years. Unknowing of the future, you are now anxious for him, but for him we spin golden thread. See the full distaff. These threads cannot be cut with sword nor burned with flame. Scarce will long years break the thread. Do you see Charles now struggling to rise with feeble step, his cheeks so pale? Now learn the hidden cause. The loathsome powers that rule in Stygian shades—these are mad Rage, pale Evil, Horror black and blue, Doom, and Death with never satisfied heart—they have joined forces, have readied their hostile blades for Charles, to rip this hope from earth, but all in vain. This troop of raging beasts had less trouble breaking Henry (with his short life) in fierce war. Now they seek the living with hateful intent, but by our power his fate remains untouched. The boy will live and reproduce his father's mien. We know that these powers produced a similar fear at the cradle of his sickly father, whom now you cherish as he wields his sceptre, but each year brought to him increasing strength. We will lead his son with an equal destiny in the same path, and his strength will grow as his years increase. His head will bend more weightily; his arms will swell with muscle; power will be seen in his face, which is now not steady, even when calm. He will be able to endure the stormy blasts. We will be sure to add fatherly concern to his heart. Thus he will be mighty and brave: his heart will not know how to be shaken by violence, but will be ready when victorious to be tempered by pleas. He has the same enthusiasm, the same manner in his studies. You might believe that all are the same to him, but increasing years will make distinctions, as will his

⁴ Prince Henry died in November 1612, aged 18, probably of typhoid fever.

royal state and the humble reverence of a son for his father.

In the southernmost point of the Assyrian world where winds cease and the air is still, where winter never turns the sky black with clouds nor the thunderbolt rage with its roar, there rises the ethereal Phoenix to the blazing light of the risen sun. The bird demands a fruitful death, in its own pyre gives itself rebirth. Soon the son appears, who was the father, soaring aloft, and he (who had long known the skill) balances on his new wings. What manifested itself in the eastern heavens will be Albion's as well. But in the East the fates do not allow twin Phoenixes to appear, and the pyre renews only one bird. Your nurturing Albion will bear two together, and will see them enjoy long years, never buying life at the cost of a death. Your prince, glorious as a star, will have his ancestral eyes and face, and he will magnify his ancestral fame. Grim Malice will depart, for who, O who, could hate these signs of such a great spirit? He will attract everyone with his kindly gaze and will cement their hearts to him with lavish treasure. He will also give great honour to the lords of the Delphic slope. How oft could he pluck the laurel of Parnassus, twine it and place it on his brow? Indeed he would do so, but that a greater laurel wreath will crown his brow, and so he will deprecate those poetic honours.⁵ When on foot he will stand a threat with his sword, on horse a threat as he pulls the reins and guides his steed in close circles. He will bend the supple bow with unerring arrow. Imagine whatever you will, we are readying more than you can compass in your prayers. When the first trace of down covers his glowing cheeks, then will there be a world-wide competition among the nymphs: who is worthy of marrying such a handsome youth; who will win the fortune of such a husband? When by the will of the gods, the one whom fate will present is received into his bedchamber and into his heart, then Charles will place his children in their grandfather's lap, guarantees of the kingdom's and his own future. He will always love to bring new joys to his well-deserving country, will love and cherish his excellent parents. All of you, live in harmony and keep faith and loyalty, qualities which kingship rarely knows. We now add assurance to his potent sceptre. Let no quarrel harm your shy tongue nor the lying bane of crime. Let all places tremble before you; let reverence prevail, even greater than trembling. This it will be; we swore this long ago.”

Thus ended the Parca's speech and the Britannic Spirit expressed suitable thanks. Then the Spirit turned over these oracles and embraced their message. Then more joyfully did she raise up her face and filled the whole year with showers of blossoms.

I.2

To the Most Powerful and Most August Monarch of Britain James I

⁵ Same trope (king as poet) in I.4 and I.5 (on Prince Henry). The equation of poet and ruler is common in Jacobean poetry: Cowley, *Davideis* I.3 “Who from best poet, best of kings did grow”; Ben Jonson, *To King James* : “How best of kings, dost thou a sceptre bear! / How, best of poets, dost thou laurel wear. / But two things rare the fates had in their store, / And gave thee both, to show they could no more.”

On the First of January.⁶

[The poet wonders what New Year's gift he might give the king. The Spirit of Britain appears in the poet's dream. She rushes into the king's bedroom and asks for a boon. She recounts his previous benefactions (peace, control, of the sea, prosperity). She asks that these be made permanent and perpetual. Other goddesses arrive and worship the king, but at their noise the poet awakes. He decides that, like Britannia, he too should ask for gifts from the beneficent deity. The original of this poem appeared in 1606 as poem 2 of the *Sylvae*, (Iacobo Primo, Kal. Jan.). Barclay made only minor revisions for the *Poemata*.]

O Prince powerful on land and sea, O worthy care of the protecting gods, O source of a better age, the chief crown of the world, head closest to the gods, lay aside, I pray, your radiance. Allow my Muses, goddesses accustomed to a lesser sun, to approach you. They sing of well-known things, things seen by you and by me in these dark days while the watching moon winds up this year's end. Do not blame me for revealing the secrets of this blessed night, for now I have the greatest freedom of speech, while fierce Apollo opens maddened hearts and forces the bridled tongue to break out in speech.⁷

Now renewed Phoebus was preparing to reenter the usual paths which he had so recently traversed, when Janus scatters his gifts upon the earth and gazes at the Calends with his whole countenance. Then biting anxiety was exercising me, insomniac in my chamber, in my bed of sloth. What worthy gift, Great King, could I fasten to your temple? Could I unhappily extend an empty hand to you and make no mention of this bounteous day? Suddenly Phoebus came to me and opened my eyes wide. (Bards are allowed to see the gods' faces.) Then the revered Britannia seemed to me to pace with noble steps, nor did it take me long to recognize the goddess: her garb was witness to her rank. A native glory rested on her brow, a gem as shining as the Eastern sea, and laurel separating the ranked gems. Verdant tresses fell down her back, and leafy were her arms. Weapons were in her hand: Neptune's trident weighed her right hand down and steadied her steps on the ground. A shawl was on her shoulders and a cloak befitting the goddess veiled her. On it were the ancient figures of our old ancestors. On it processions marked her many triumphs: when they took the Irish castles, and when they stained with blood the Spanish shore or the midst of the sea with gore. This robe the fierce goddess had put on her sacred form and was rejoicing in the memory of her great sons. A golden brooch fastened her flowing robe, and golden jewels hung from her radiant neck. She looked just like Cybele, the Berecynthian bride, who with perfumed hair and flower-laden arms comes from her temple on Mt. Ida to please her noble husband. Hymen smiles happily as she goes, and Nature hopes for the birth of

⁶ The closest parallel to this poem is Statius *Silvae* 4.1, to Domitian on the Kalends of January.

⁷ Saturnalia allowed free speech. A few lines below, Barclay wonders what he can "fasten to the temple." He refers to the custom mentioned in Livy VII.3 of the *clavus annalis*, which the praetor fastened to a temple to mark the year. Barclay here transfers this custom to New Year's Day.

new gods.

Britannia sought the palace, the spaces of this lofty edifice, the royal bed, where in the silent night you lay your limbs. This is the Muses' bedroom which your Apollo makes glorious, postponing sleep in the first hours of the night. Britannia approaches and suddenly presents herself to your gaze. She calls you both son and father. You seize on her neck and cheeks and fix your gaze entirely on her. Then she says, "Hail, best light of our world, who shines brighter than the joyful sun, for whom tomorrow's light will open again a new start for its slanting course! Lo, the time is at hand when the gods above and you, my son, will give me gifts. Now rich France, proud in her spirited steeds and warlike youth, now Spain, boasting in her troops of swordsmen, now bold Germany with her far from feminine form, come together and hope (Behold!) to enter this your bedroom and this New Year's Day, to woo you with soft words and to forestall this first gift of mine. They will ask that you give them peace, a rest from war, that you will look on the earth with a mild aspect, that you put chains on swollen Mars. They'll ask that you forbid the Ocean make war, that you be peaceful on land and sea, that you generously order human affairs to be calm, that you suppress fighting and the favouring of evildoers. They will not ask that you be the leader in everything, but that you stand in the midst of all and weigh everything with a just scale. This is what these foreign nymphs will cry at your door.

But I should be first in line and have the glory of the first gift. This you know, father: the first gift received by Crete was from her son, Delos's first was from her son.⁸ By pronouncement of ancient fate, by doubtful forecasts of seers the gods long promised you to me as king and father. This is the huge gift you will bring to me, if you keep offering the great things which you long have given, and if your gifts live with you. What more could I wish, even if I wished were given to extravagant prayers? What more could I wish for my people, whom the sea worships under your control, and whose rise under such a power delights the fearful nations? Your land lies open to these nations, whether they inhabit pale shores of western night, or love the Arctic cold, or watch the Mygdonian⁹ day with rising sun. The sea lies open. All think it wicked to vex the British name, which they love and fear. I might wish to remove from this palace if only to see the great glory of my people! How great is that which I see! Fate has blessed our soil. How oft has the plough stuck in the rich ground, and the sticky earth worn out the weary oxen and the goad. No fields are fallow, none untrod, no gloomy mountains stand in silence. Not even happy India or Lydia with its veins of gold gleams more than do our palaces now. I see the foreign realms pour down on us their streams of gold. Then long tranquillity, kindly peace favour Britain forever with unshaken wealth. A wife, unacquainted with violence, will ask her husband who has just returned from a foreign field, "What's a war?" Farmers drag their rakes over rich and fertile fields; sheepfolds cover the untilled plains, and soft fleeces grow on curly backs.

⁸ Crete's son was Zeus/Jupiter, born in a cave on Mt. Ida. Delos's son was Apollo, born of Leto/Latona with his sister Artemis/Diana.

⁹ Mygdon was a king of Phrygian; hence "Phrygian" or "Oriental."

But if I decide instead to review the spirits and the hearts of my people, what more could the fates and the gods (even if they wished it) grant to me? These elder years are suited for deliberations, but are still fresh enough for great triumphs. Thus future ages await glorious offspring. As in the case of horses, complex Nature and the early impulses of youth make distinctions in the growing herd. This colt becomes tamed to the hard bit, that one learns to bear the sound of the bugle, another learns to plough the soil, another is eager to win the Isthmian crown for racing. Should I speak of the conquered waves: that the sky-blue father has yielded his massive trident, that I am the goddess of all the waters? Should I mention that without my command no winds dare to rage; they are silent. With what strong wings do they await the time when I want them to take turns sweeping the sky and ruling the trade winds in their ordered course? What profit is there in counting so often the eastern barques, the Persian ships, and the far-spread fleet in the Greek main? Now I may do even more: when I begin to cover the deep with sails, the surface of the far-spread sea vanishes, and you, Neptune, do not see the sky. The sea scarce holds the boats, and the canvas consumes all the winds. Now Nature fears that new lands and new shores will be linked with ships, now fears a bridge. If it is right to say this, if you can bear, great one, your own praise, we assert that all this is due to you, to your fortune, and to the mind which controls that fortune. You grant, O kindly one, that I am untouched in most honoured peace, that I do not burn with foreign flames, that I am the ruler of the sea, fearsome to the enemy (if there be such), that everything, men, gods, the stars, are favourable, and that a better sun mellows these northern shores.

Come now, great father, and be willing to make everlasting those glorious gifts which you have given me. Because of them the fates and the gods are amazed that I have grown so all-powerful; because of them the frightened world is envious. Here on the threshold of Janus, I beg for this; for these gifts alone your Britannia asks. Other lands may find you persuadable and kind—and rightly so—lands which the lovely sun views with his Eastern torch or which he, dying, sees in the farthest waves. Let these lands know that you can spare, and that you can also savage; let them fear and cultivate your power. From the place where the open-handed Jupiter pours on the earth fruit-bearing rain and the rays of the friendly sun, from that same place he also thunders. But please grant me these first favours with no threatening face. I have seen an omen sufficiently good: you nod, and your care for Britain is close to your heart.”

She finished, and clasping her hands she threw her revered body on the ground and worshipped the great god here in the guise of a prince. Behold, at once nymphs coming in a long line burst through the door, and on their first entrance into the chamber they stretch forth their hands with a shout. Iberia stands beautiful with dark cheeks and hands. Gallia stands undecided with many fashions, even now changing her dress. Soon other goddesses arrive,¹⁰ last of all Germania, excusing her long delay. All of

¹⁰ In the original *Sylvae* version, “Et Latiae Siculaeque deae...” “Italian and Sicilian goddesses” arrive. Perhaps Barclay came to the conclusion that Italy and Sicily were too far-fetched.

them ask you for gifts and ask that you be mild and peaceful. At such a noise my sleep was broken, and startled I roam all around my bed. As my mind grasped the gods' intentions and the counsel of this blessed night, I thought it best (I said), inspired by this prophetic dream, to follow the example of the great goddesses. At this starting point of Phoebus's yearly return, the whole world seeks gifts from our great king. So should I be the only one willing to give? No, I will instead change my mind and make my request on this cheerful day.

O glory, O special ornament of this animate world, O fostering light of your country, for whom the fates with their distaff spin long days of rule, to whom Destiny grants lavish gifts and Jupiter promises new worlds, look! new stars restore the sequence of the months. Do you also grant that new joys come into our hearts. Grant ready access, allow us to touch your great hand, to embrace your knees, and to sweep your footsteps with our eyes. Add something more to those gifts with which you intended to raise up this unworthy one. I think, O magnificent one, that these prayers will not be unpleasing to you, for one who petitions the immortals with sacred incense or with the blood of special oxen cannot be more pleasing to Heaven than one who stretches out his empty hands to the stars and with voice alone confesses that the gods are very great, and that the world needs divine assistance.

I.3

To the Most Serene King of Denmark, Christian IV, When He Landed in England¹¹

[The king of Denmark, Christian IV, Queen Anne's brother, visited England in July 1606. This poem describes his voyage and reception in London. His fleet is guided by Pietas (Righteousness) and his reception shows the world that kings can be friends. The original of the poem was the first poem in the *Sylvae*, since the book as a whole was dedicated to King Christian. In 1606 Barclay might not have fully grasped that “the Danish fleet approaches” had meant something quite different in previous centuries. In *Sylvae* 1.10 the kind is described as “nobilis Ausoniae populator Vandalus orae,” “the noble Vandal plunderer of the Ausonian (Italian) shore.” (The Vandali lived on the south coast of the Baltic, roughly Mecklenburg.) This line is postponed in the later version and the guidance of Pietas (whose opposite would be Scelus, Crime) is emphasized. In the later version Barclay added the colourful comparison between King Christian's joyful reception in London and the Goddess Cybeles's arrival in Rome.]

Smooth your ripples and summon whole flocks of swans to your banks, O Thames. Let garlands be

¹¹ Christian IV, Anne of Denmark's brother, arrived England 17 July 1606 and spent about 3 weeks in London. Several contemporary writers describe the Bacchanalian character of the king's stay. The poem on his departure is Book II.4. The peaceful nature of Christian's arrival is strongly emphasized in contrast with the Danish (“Vandal” just below) arrivals during the Anglo-Saxon period, when they ravaged England and occupied the northern shires. Pietas (Righteousness) now leads the Danish fleet, not Scelus (Crime), its opposite.

woven for men and for ships' prows, and let flags wave on the painted hulls,. This is a festive day for the British land and sea; a golden light is coming to our world. Do you see how the clouds are banished, how the clear air glows, and the warm sky wonderfully displays its tranquillity? Do you see the northern king's crown sending its rays far over your waves. Do you see a thousand ships, a thousand divinities now crowd your waves? The one who bears on his back the Thunderer's palace and the stars with their gods has held up nothing like this, but you properly assume this sacred burden, gladly take on the glorious gifts of happy fate.¹² Only beware of swelling with pride because you have been crowned with this great honour. Let these boats safely cut the calm deeps and connect the distant banks with their numbers.

Gaze happily on these gods. In the crowd of them no one bears the sceptre with a stronger hand than the prince in whom the Dane rejoices, as does the Vandal who plunders Italy's shores.¹³ Gaze also at the joyful parade which you yourself are making on this blessed ground. Gaze at such prodigies and enjoy them, for never has a high-prowed ship arrived with equal auspices or with such enthusiastic assistance from the gods. Pietas herself leaped down from the stars—even though she rarely visits the earth and hates the human race which she abandoned because of its contempt for her—when she saw the Danish ships breast the sea, and she sought out your fleet, where she is respected.¹⁴ The goddess appeared as one celebrating with joyful face a golden age, not an earth warped by its despite of her power. Hiding her divine nature, she herself tended the sails and drove the swelling prow with favourable winds. All the while the tribe of seals and amphibious Glaucus¹⁵ marvelled at the size of the ship, its equipment, and its men, and especially the fact that the heroine goddess Pietas, sitting on the prow, was dashing far across the deep and stood mixing with men. How often did a crowd of Nereids surround your ships and ask the reason and the name for the voyage. Pietas told them everything, since she wished that all those palaces spread throughout the world under every sun should know this: “No flames of war,” she said, “drive on this fleet. Behold the troops of armed men. This army serves Peace and me, Pietas. That king, that one, the father of the Danes, has steered these barques to a brother's shore. I alone am the reason for this trip. The king wishes to see the face of his dear sister and the glory of his brother, along with his small nephews. He wishes to bind in treaty nations which already agree. Denmark shall now not be foreign to Albion's soil; his beloved Danes shall count blond-haired Britons

¹² The Thames is here favourably compared to Atlas.

¹³ Vandalia was on the Baltic coast east of Denmark, roughly Mecklenburg. One of Christian's titles was Rex Vandalorum. The word is a convenient metrical alternative for Cimbri.

¹⁴ Pietas (Righteousness) is made equivalent to the goddess Astraea, daughter of Zeus, the last of the immortals who associated with mankind and who fled the Earth during the Age of Iron (Ovid *Met.* 1.149-150). Astraea is frequently mentioned in Renaissance literature as the spirit of renewal already returned (for example, as Queen Elizabeth I) or soon to return to Earth.

¹⁵ A fisherman who became a sea-god (Ovid *Met.* 13.896ff).

as fellow citizens; the separation made by the boundless sea shall vanish. This is a better reason than if he brought war over the swelling seas and sought savage triumphs in battle.” Thus Pietas, and she scrupulously praised you in words as many as those tiny flames that she sees speckle the heavens, as those curling waves that rear over the deeps. The goddesses listen and believe. They delight in giving kisses to the prows and circle the boats in joyful chorus.

Now the fleet has reached the kindred shore, now the Thames has been your vehicle, and proud of its great burden, was powerfully crashing on the nearby fields. Now look, the prince arrives, swept across with many oars, the cause of your trip, and its reward, the one who brings holy laws to the Britons and raises them to the skies with real fame. Trumpets blare and a few drums beat their peaceful tattoo along the astonished banks of the river. You stood on the very edge of the crowned ship and extended your arms in a tender gesture. But he clasped you around in a full embrace and handed up his dear son for your kiss. Then the mingled mass of notables, Danes and Britons, mixed their souls in embraces. After this came their attendants and the protecting crowd of warriors. Golden peace flew among the resting weapons and through the midst of the troops.

Soon, O prince, you exchanged your native ship for our oars, and then what a spectacle did the world see from afar, what wonders did that day see! Harmony of kings secured by their trust; united hands and a love which competed to care for a friend. Then what were the stares of the crowd! What cheering! What a crowd was standing on the packed banks of the Thames! These banks were too narrow to hold the people and the river was too small for the boats, as was the sky for their prayers and the air for their shouts. It was as when the tower-crowned Cybele deigned to leave the ruins of Phrygia for her Ausonian home; she cut the Tiber's stream and saw the holy towers of the Latin realm.¹⁶ Rome poured out from her hills, all Rome stood on the Tiber's banks and watched the approaching deity. The plebs celebrated the gods with prayers, cheers, with freshly cut boughs, and their heads were crowned with wreaths. They delighted in all kinds of jests and, reviewing the course of centuries, were joyously mindful of their Trojan ancestors. Those Romans did not escort in festive pomp the goddess to her temple with more joy than did the British crowds surround you, O kings, while you rode the waves or when you first trod the outspread carpets laid on the lovely shore, up to the time when you entered the recesses hidden from the mob, the unseen sanctuary where your lofty palace opens its riches only to kings and chief magistrates. Then all buildings echo with prayers and the palace resounds with joyful shouts. The feast day busies the city and the country alike. The countrymen rouse up their line-dancing choruses or return to their feasting as courses come one after the other. They sing praises to the kings along with the gods, honour them, and want them to be immortal. What greater joys could the gods give, could you give? Only that the time which you grant to this land not be rushed in its course. If you intend to see one whole circle of Phoebus here, then may Phoebus move sluggishly. If you intend to

¹⁶ This description taken from Ovid, *Fasti* 4.291-328.

stay a month, may the month go slowly and last for a long age.

I.4

To Henry, The Most Illustrious Prince of Wales

[Praise of Prince Henry, with special emphasis on the requirement that he should model himself on his father. The prince will be both a leader and a poet, like his father; he will do great deeds and will have the talent to sing of them as well. He will rule the nations along with his father. Most of this poem is a revision of *Sylvae*, poem 3, “Ad Serenissimum Britanniarum Principi Henrico, Kalend. Jan. 1606,” one of two poems to Prince Henry in the *Sylvae*. Since it was a New Year's Day poem, the *Sylvae* version begins with an invocation of Phoebus, the sun, who is guiding his horses over a renewed course. These lines are omitted in the *Poemata*, and the first line of *Sylvae* 6 is substituted, “Deliciae superum...” Lines 40-44, 64-77 are also revised from *Sylvae* 6.]

Delight of the gods, you who will increase the number of the eagerly waiting gods after a long life, you whose blood from both parents has links to royalty from countless ages; O child, almost a boy, and—if there are birthdays for great gods—already more than a man even in your first years, go, lift up the holy flame; go, make offering to the gods with Sabeian incense, do not fall short in any manner of prayer. The gods have certainly been generous to you and deserve more offerings than you could give. I will not mention here the fact that you were welcomed in joyful purple when daylight first opened the world to you,¹⁷ or that the gods gave you a mind and body equal to your fortune, O great one. More than this is the fact that you are born to such a father; the kindness of great heaven could not have given you a better gift. Dear boy, he will be the chief power and glory for you. He will be Phoebus for you, and never has a better Phoebus directed the stars than the father who guides the northern reins. You, a child whom the world has longed for, must accustom yourself in your first days to bear the rays of his happy gaze. Learn to fix your countenance on such a great model. In him recognize our ancient kings, as well as the pattern of what future ages promise you, and how you might wish to fashion his grandchildren. No child ever owed more to a father than do you. On the threshold of life, he picked you up and raised your infant face to his kiss. He never ceases to fit your hand to the sceptre, to mould an able mind, and to inculcate good habits in you. O prince, his majesty cannot be surpassed, but he would wish that you be superior, and as a father and a rival, he invites you to a contest for praise and for the highest honours.

But as you ponder in your heart your ever-present concerns, take care that his precepts be not forgotten, for seeds cannot be sown in better soil. For when sprouted, look, they grow strong and lift their tops happily to the sky. Who could properly develop every one of your interests and habits? One

¹⁷ i.e. he was porphyrogenitus, born in the purple.

day you ride fiercely, pulling the bit with its sharp bronze teeth and brandishing small javelins in your hand. Another day you engage in sacred business with the learned Muses. As soon as you decide to relax your mind, tired by the classroom, and to set some limit on your studies—then who could believe that you are so young? You are a boy just like great Mars, whom his mother, Saturn's daughter, saw lying in his cradle in the Thracian forests; or just like Jupiter waxing strong (as they say), or like Phoebus, from whose mouth came oracles even when he was born. Such you appear to us, growing in beauty so far beyond mortal form that you remind us of the gods in your appearance. If you crimp crimson wings on your shoulders, Love should be wary. If you frequent temples, be happy, Apollo. If you frequent forest glades, the Mistress of Paphos¹⁸ would take you for the handsome Adonis. Now continue in this path, nurturing¹⁹ boy, since you have begun to place your childish steps on Parnassus's slopes. The gods did things worthy of song—and the gods sang those songs. The old peasant on the Phrygian plain was amazed at Achilles, who was mighty with the harp and the sword. Bacchus swept from the Thracian woods to crush the lands of the Ganges and to be victorious over the Red Sea and the people of the East.²⁰ Sacrifices on Nysa's peak are not more pleasing to him than those offerings placed in Delphi's temple and the altars that rise to the neighbouring Muses. Such glory awaits you as well: the purple which covers your shoulders and the band which you will soon wear around your radiant head will not appear more beautiful than the glory which you now seek from the Permessian waters.²¹ Nature on its own makes noblemen, and virtue creates those worthy of its crown.

So live long, O happy child, O revered offspring of the gods. For you Fame is developing new wings and fears to grow weary. For you Mars is preparing a sword, a spear, and Terror, and golden Peace is soothing the pacified nations. Live long. Great kings now rejoice around your cradle, and learned Muses prepare their songs. May the Chinese and the Arabs attend you, as well as whatever the sun sees with its Eastern rays or views as it sinks late in the waves. May the Nymphs, O handsome boy, attend you as you add to your years. May Delia beg for your favour, and Pallas as well, who of her own accord wants to lay aside her aegis and, now a maiden, yield softly to you. Do not, I beg, be harsh to the goddess, but give new divinities to the globe and new offspring. And when your spirit is wearied with triumphs, and laurel wreaths cover all your doors, may you happily approach heaven, although well after the longing stars summon you. Or if men's prayers can move the gods, may you stay on the earth with your father and cherish the earth forever. May you never unclasp this sceptre.

¹⁸ Venus

¹⁹ *Almus*, an unusual word for a child. Even more striking, the corresponding line in the *Sylvae* has *Alme parens*, “nurturing father.” Henry has already taken on the attributes of an adult, paternalistic king.

²⁰ On this expedition he discovered tobacco. See <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/thorius/>

²¹ River of Boeotia sacred to Apollo and the Muses (Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.64).

I.5

The Plaint of Corydon to Phoebus
(verse translation by Robert Meindl)

[The first of four pastoral eclogues. Here the shepherd Corydon complains that he has left his home, his sheep, and his wonted ways to become an attendant in Phoebus's temple. (Phoebus is the sun, the sun god, and Barclay's usual term for King James.) Corydon had been famous for his song, but now his pipes are worn out and he has had no reward for his labours. He begs leave to return to his home. Judging from lines 22-23, it has been three years since Corydon left home; from this I assume that Barclay wrote the poem in 1608, three years after his arrival in London in 1605.]

Apollo's shepherd Corydon, at temple gates,
His cheeks with tears besmeared, his breast with dust,
This mournful tune played on his broken pipe.
"Sire Phoebus, to whom Ocean did his waves
Entrust, and Jove himself his fire bequeathed,
Why pleases me your look, of all things fairest—
That quickens fields and gives the world new age—
Why please your beams? Why reckless from our fields
Befled was I, and vain hope slipped me by.
To me in vain the prescient fowl cried out,
'Where to, Corydon, how touches court the clown?
Why flee these fields and long, o fool, for state?'
Which said, the birds affected me no whit,
Nor did the bullock's lows from out his field.
I came, and merry piped my doubled reeds,
Mayhap I pleased; your nod indeed you gave
On high, and said, 'Do bide with us a time.'
I stayed indeed, e'en dared to play in verse,
And, pipe laid down, to touch again my strings,
To prove my lyre and blunt my quill with lyre.
Behold my life, hard toils beguile faint hopes.

A third time summer clothes the woods with leaves,
As oft returns the cold to naked fields.
Thus sad and weak beneath these altars high
I tire myself and thee, O Sire, with prayer.
Sometimes my thoughts recall me to my home,

And old Amyntas sends advice on bark,
‘Now tend your sheep, Corydon, enough and more
Your prayers wear out the gods, look to your home.’

So what to do? Your temples leave and go?
O grief! Return to home and no fame won?
Whate’er I bore here once across the deep—
My pack, crook, flute, lambs strayed and piped again—
Long days destroyed and I am shamed, alas,
To travel home like this. If I should go
Far hence, and leave my sheep once more with friends,
Why then I’ll go, but sure my muse will groan,
Will damn the gods and Fate’s accursed thread.
Perhaps she’ll leave some markers to our grief,
Perhaps new ages will believe our muse.
Whate’er will be, Phoebus, I worship thee,
My flute in pastoral song will sing thy praise
While streams have stones and meadows grow wild oats,
While wolf in woods and lambs in vales abide.

I’ll have my fame, my song will live eterne.
And while I roamed, a lad ‘neath quivering shade,
I saw, and praised in songs, dear Lyda mine.
The country gods fell still; then all the pipes,
All fields, all things, resounded with our verse.
I saw contend, and prizes then were rung,
Chromis and Nomas both; I knew Acestas’ flute,
What it could do, though rare heard in our fields.
Where thunders Rhone with black and tumid waves,
Where Loire’s sands shift and Seine does nurse the world,
Or Po and Tiber run down to the sea;
Wherever shepherds sport the fields, dare match
Their skills with mine; my pipe will conquer all.
If those on high will grant me life and time,
Forever will it conquer Lydian trump,
Cybele’s horn, and raucous Bacchus’ drums.
I’ll speak the West where Nature’s bounds reach out
The land at Ocean’s end, where Morning Star,

O Sire, you dim and light the eager world.
You'll wish perhaps then that you'd saved my song,
When I address far tribes and distant lands,
And vend false words, alas, to lesser gods.
If thou art harsh with me (all times will know!),
If thou art harsh, throughout the world they'll say,
'Wretched Corydon, by Fate's decree,
And Phoebus' fault, who sees not everything.'

So what if you shine splendid o'er the world,
Depend the weight of earth and Muses rule—
Though wiser than the Muses you yourself—
If you shine not on me nor love my song.
Relent, O Sire, relent, O heaven's delight;
My plaint is just. Mayhap my fault drove me
To Phrygian fields, mayhap my words beneath
A barbarous roof wore out my burdened pipes,
Mayhap Midas, lord of that savage shore,
My verse extolled; there were rewards of praise.
Oh me if, when you've seen these plaints, only
You'll say, O Sire, 'These, shepherd, are good songs';
Just that; win back my songs with trifling praise.

Smiling to me you say, 'Just ask, Corydon.'
What should I seek? Choose, Sire, for Corydon
Reward. Poor shepherd knows not what to ask.
My wish? my song will hang upon your shrine,
My wish? my reeds will echo to your name.
Your wish? to bring me gifts. I don't ask much.
Incense we take to Jove for fecund rains.
For honeyed wine earth mother bears rich crops,
For butchered kid old Bacchus grants us wine.

But if my pipes are lead for such slight task,
Return my crook, my pack, and shepherd's marks,
All that I brought and long use turned to trash.
Return I beg, what by your sons I seek,
Delights of gods and stars of dawning world.
May, Phoebus, they survive you, nay exceed!

Just as you left your sceptre-bearing sires.”

He ceased, and in the sacred temple’s dust
He tore the ragged locks from his bowed head.
The father heard and nodded from his caves.

I.6

Corydon's Poem of Thanks

[This second pastoral is a response to I.5, Corydon's plaint. Phoebus has granted the shepherd's wishes and has given him appropriate rewards. The shepherd will now lay aside his rustic flutes and pipes and take up the heroic lyre. He now produces a sample of heroic verse in praise of the king, as well as a poem of thanks to the temple guardian (sc. court official) who commended to the king the shepherd's petition. Written in 1608/9.]

Corydon had made his plaint, had laid aside his flute with a final kiss, and was closing his eyes in death, when father Phoebus replied from his hidden cavern: “Cease your plaint, Corydon, you'll not “address far tribes and distant lands, nor vend false words to lesser gods.”²² You will be ours and will sing at our altars when old.” He spoke and stretched out his noble hand for our kiss. On hearing this, Corydon straightway wiped his face and death-pale eyes, and raising his hands to the stars, said: “Phoebus father, the heavens have no more lovely power than you, nor our sphere a more bountiful. Please pardon our tears and spare our baseless fears. You often said to me, 'Corydon, leave your flocks, for greater rewards will be yours.' Vain promises from you, O Phoebus, would be wicked, and wicked it is to doubt holy Phoebus. But dull time, a destiny hostile to my Muse, and constant faultfinding by the rest of the gods frightened me. Now my hopes endure, now my troubles have been put aside and my cares and fears are without basis. I enjoy this delight, even if long postponed. No longer will I search for woodland shade and springs for myself, as shepherd, and for my flock, nor will I lead my tame goats through unknown pastures to the seclusion of steep cliffs. The muse of cruel Lycotas will not deride me as banished to my native land, nor will evil Acestes point at me with his finger. No longer will I be a shepherd, no, not if Pan himself handed me the flute, not if the Nymphs sought pastures for me and gave me fodder soaked in a charm against wolves.

So go my flocks. I say a long farewell to my previous concerns: for what reason is another shepherd spinning out his song under a huge tree where the sunlight is dim; perhaps he is considering a country gift for a welcoming girlfriend, birds' nests or baskets full of strawberries. This was a happy life that one could love, one who knows not the gods nor Phoebus's palace. But now a better day and a clearer sky shines for me, and my longed-for place in heaven stands ready. Not for me are the flutes

²² Quoted from the previous poem.

and the pipes of smooth willow bark, nor the songs which move the rustic nymphs. Now I have the lute and the learned harp, fame from the cithara and the lyre, and a noble song played on golden strings.²³

“Father Phoebus, chief light of the gods, whom the stars worship with light made dim, whom the skies worship with winds made calm. O Phoebus, salvation of the earth and glory of the heavens, one above all praise of harp. You far surpass mortal song; only the Delphic god is able to tell of you. Nonetheless your Corydon will dare to raise you above the roof of heaven and to adorn his muse with your deeds. Whether the roaring seas lament the victory of your fleet, or whether you thunder like a king and join in rough battle and deadly wars throughout the world, or whether when victorious, you overcome your wrath (your greatest victory) and grant mild terms—whatever you do, my lyre will sing of it, and with your eternal fame I will repay whatever gifts you have granted me, Phoebus, or will grant me in the future. No years can blot this out. But your merits, not your outstanding gifts, have driven me to this course, I swear by the cithara and lyre which you gave to me and by the oaten flute which I, now destined for greater things, have left.”

“You, most holy guardian of Phoebus's temple, whether you want to be called Thestorides²⁴ or Theodomas or Melampus, who looks far into destiny's future; you, the great glory and most distinguished devotee of Phoebus, an attendant on Phoebus, lesser only than Phoebus himself, you were the one to commend to the god my offering of incense, whose vapours did not spread far, and to call its meagre odour to his attention. In doing so you pleased great Phoebus's might. Now receive my thanks and may it please you, o holy priest, to hear them. You received gifts with great effect. The earth will hear of this, wherever the limpid waves beat the shore or rivers run with full channels. The skies will hear of this, no age will lack its sound: Corydon was the shepherd; the priest bore this shepherd's prayers to Phoebus; Apollo made him his seer.”

Thus Corydon spoke and he called upon Phoebus and Phoebus's attendant with humble prayers and much incense. Then suddenly he was destined for greatness and happy in Phoebus's ready power. He then planted his feet on higher ground.

I.7

Daphne

[The third pastoral. Corydon burned with love for Daphne, but she had rejected his suit. He praises himself, partly by citing the devotion of his previous girlfriend Leuconoe, whom he has deserted for Daphne (cp. Vergil *Ecl.* 2, Horace *Epode* 11). The shepherd has just finished his plaint when signs from heaven indicate that his wishes will be fulfilled. There is no evidence of the poem's date; no earlier

²³ Here follows two examples of such a “noble song,” one to the king, one to a chief minister.

²⁴ Thestorides (son of Thestor) is Calchas, the Greek prophet frequently mentioned in the *Iliad*. Thiodamas (often Theiodamas), son of Melampus, is the seer of the Seven against Thebes (Statius *Theb.* 8.279). Melampus is a seer whose story is told in *Odyssey* 11.223ff.

version in the *Sylvae*.]

Corydon from Thrace, the shepherd loved by Apollo, burned with love for Daphne, the most beautiful of all creatures. To be sure, he had been worthy of the nymph Leuconoe's enduring love, but destiny carried him in a new direction. Lovely Daphne was the one and only delight for Corydon, so to her he built green altars of turf and on them placed incense and festive garlands. He often made an offering of the new crop's first fruits or the newly born lambs. To all this he added psalms and celebrated his great love in song. His hopes were long-enduring, for heroic nobles of divine race then governed Daphne's life. To them Corydon often made his prayers. They often answered him and gave him hope, hope more worrying than all other emotions! Hope endured until they grimly said with harsh mien, alas: "Corydon, you ask in vain. Our realm cannot be accessed with your offerings. Corydon is a shepherd; Daphne is a goddess." Corydon shuddered when he heard this, and he broke down his brushy structures as he came to them and bade farewell to himself and his grief. He wandered in the fields alone and gloomy. At last he dispelled the fog in his unhappy soul, sat on the opposite bank of the stream, and sang this song.

"O nymph whom I love with unhappy longing, O nymph, the jewel of the forest. Who has pushed you to reject me. Who has cruelly crushed our newborn love? Is it because I humbly bowed low at your threshold and often gave kisses to a bare door? From this do you think I am base? Do you condemn me for lacking courage? Do you swell with false pride? You are mistaken, for Leuconoe, the richest nymph of the fields, cherishes me and adds alluring words to her gifts. She also cools summer days for me with fresh milk or with fruit. She often brings me beakers, often brings me full baskets of red strawberries which she picked herself. And when winter sweeps snow in on frosted wings she builds fires and roasts fowl which we both had caught, and she lovingly doubles my clothing. O how dear she would be to me, were you not dearer! But wild love drives me on, and I would prefer that the presents given by her should be due to you. Even if these presents were small, you would make their value enormous, since you would be the giver—anyone who has been in love knows this—and my fondness for you would grow in them. In return I would bring you gifts by the handful.

"Is it because I am a shepherd? Phoebus was a shepherd, and my fame has flown to all pasture land. Not as an unsung or a dull guest will I come into your palace. So open wide your door, Daphne. I can do anything with my crook that my fathers could do: I can signal my flock; I can lift clods of dirt and scare away wolves; I can leap over ditches in one bound. Good God! when I throw a stone with a great whirl of my sling, it even surprises me when it hits the mark. Don't be so pleased with yourself, o shining maiden. Daphne is certainly worth the attention, but Corydon is worth loving. I will even say that I know my face and my blue eyes, and you will scarce find a shepherd to match my looks.

"But I am out of my mind. Why do I say these things to deaf ears? By the gods, Daphne, you are in danger of losing Corydon. Are you so hard-hearted that you spurn my adoration, shown so oft in my

songs? Does my pleading make me contemptible, not any fault or error on my part? Allow me, O Phoebus, to swell with anger. Give me savage songs to repay her with interest. Let avenging Nemesis hear my just complaints—but what am I so miserably saying? Love has given you, most lovely one, all rights over my life, and 'rights' include anything you want to do. Nymph, you do nothing wrong. But you, noble heroes, race of the gods, the guardians of this nymph, you have done great wrong. Whence came this thunderbolt? Why have you killed me with this bolt? Which one of you failed to give me hopes, favourable signs, and cheerful words, when I timidly confessed my great love and asked (O woe!) to be enslaved to my beloved girl? Everyone then was promising help. Why now are you all unhappily taking away the hope which you all gave me. I was certainly asking for something great, but not wicked, and I was paying for it with my prayers—I also approach the gods with my prayers. But why do I keep talking? Can I at least lighten my burdened heart with these words? No fate forbids such a solace, so let's have prayers, but I will try something more effective than prayers.

“From the place where the blazing father rises in the eastern hemisphere to the place where he wearily lays down his torch in the waters of the night, fame has borne your glory everywhere and praise of you has filled all lands, even knocking at the stars of the sky. But that name will soon perish and fade with age when you are snatched from view and men of the future hold sway. Others blazed up like you, but their stout-hearted virtues eventually suffered mould and decay, and their names scarcely survive. Life remains only for those who received the benefits of the shepherd's fame-bringing pipes, the pipes that Apollo has given me.”

Corydon had just finished saying this when suddenly with a thunderous rumble the clouds split open and gave signs with flaming lights. The section of the sky where Phoebus usually rises was clear, and on the left birds sang rightly. Corydon hailed the present power of the gods, wiped his face and eyes with his hand, and was magnified in hopes and appearance alike. Laying aside his plaint, he said, “O my nymph, as well as you heroes, the guardians of this nymph, spare me. A deceitful story said you were harsh to me, but you will not be so. The favourable region, the sky on the left, has turned red and has told me to lay aside my fears. My milk-white Daphne will yield to me. Hereafter, I beg, do not make your face harsh to me. I will be yours. I trust the gods and the words from heaven. I will call on you with prayers and incense while the air surrounds the earth, and the sky surrounds the air, while there are bounds to the lands and shores to the seas. You will always be honoured, always, just behing the highest gods, Jupiter and Daphne.”

Thus Corydon, and he promised himself Daphne's love. Was he trusting too much in the gods who showed him these signs?

Daphnis²⁵

[The fourth eclogue, closely based on Vergil, *Ecl.* 5, the death of Daphnis. Both poems are amoebaeon laments by Corydon and Tityrus for the death of Daphnis, the ideal shepherd of pastoral. Daphnis has died, but he now shines as a new star in the heavens. His genius (guardian spirit) has also appeared as a new Daphnis with a small crook and sling. Vergil's eclogue has traditionally been viewed as memorialising the death of Julius Caesar and his rebirth as a comet. Barclay's poem is presumably on the death of Prince Henry (Nov. 1612). The new Daphnis would be Prince Charles.]

Father Sun had covered his shuddering face in gloomy darkness and the stars had put on filthy garb throughout the heavens. Tityrus and Corydon with heads in hand and faces pale as boxwood were weeping for you, great Daphnis, Daphnis, glory of the pasture. Not only the farmers and the shepherds' tribe were weeping for him, carried off by a grim stroke, but also all the elements, the earth and sky. The hard-hit forests were twisting their branches and the seas were rolling their roaring waves even more sadly. Along with their tears and words broken by laments, they kept saying, "Return, O stars, return to us our Daphnis."

Tityrus: Are we alive? Or have we gone down unhappily to black Hades? What crime has there been? Why this wrath of the gods? By the harsh spinning of the Sisters, who have never before devised such wicked madness! Look, the fields have changed their colour and all the grass has withered, even though Boreas has not blown in from the cold climes. The quivering blades have grown pale and the harvest has turned yellow, but no spell has blighted the grain. The fields fail by themselves. Goodness drags everything along in its sadness and recognizes its kin by their grief. Return, O stars, now return to us our Daphnis.

Corydon: Throw away your crook, O Tityrus, since we do not now care for our flocks. Now after such a blow there's no love of life, no laughter. We are dead, and with a small dagger has dread death carried off shepherds and sheep alike. Now that Daphnis is dead, the field withers and mute terror scatters the lifeless flocks throughout the wilderness. O generations to come, be ignorant of this dread deed, for such an injustice as this makes the gods almost guilty. Return, O stars, now return to us our Daphnis.

Tityrus: Look at how happy the countryside was and how it rejoiced in its 'burden' when our Daphnis put his feet on it. Now, alas, it is spattered with the cruel wounds of slaughtered Daphnis—all red, not of its own accord. In what font can the countryside lay aside this miserable sin? With what water can it atone for it. O gods, wash out this wretched crime with clouds full of rain, or if clouds have vanished from the whole sky, at least, return, O stars, return now our Daphnis.

Corydon: O goddesses, O swift nymphs, you woodland powers, you often admitted Daphnis into your choir. You often pointed out unwary beasts to him when he asked, and you guided his shafts. Now let

²⁵ A pastoral elegy for Prince Henry (Daphnis), who died in Nov. 1612.

down and tear your hair. Rip your garlands, for Daphnis is no more and never more his cheering song. Alas, his smooth cheeks have perished with his cheerful face and the glow of his eyes, no less bright than Lucifer, the Morning Star, when he tells us that the stars are fleeting, the gates of dawn are opening, and he is now revisiting the dewy pastures. Beat your withered breasts in savage modes, O forest dwelling nymphs. Beat them and add these words to your plaint: Return, O stars, now return our Daphnis to us.

Tityrus: O monstrous chaos, the divisions of nature have perished. Government has gone from the earth and all wickedness has returned. Now the ram with his horns, the rampant buck in the grass drives the feeble flock far from the grassy plains. All the bulls toss their heads, all those with force in their horns wildly burst their pens and in a great ring encircle the fields which are richest in fodder. All the countryside is shocked and the deer begin to starve. O stop this evil, or rather return, you stars who rule the world, return now our Daphnis to us.

Corydon: What a storm from the highest parts of the overturned earth was scrambling the world when Daphnis (with the help of the gods) began to calm our countryside. How fitting it was for him to wield his swift sling throughout the world in fierce war and to lay low his opponents with stones!

Tityrus: What peace his victories gave the pacified world, when wild beasts stopped their attacks and maddened hearts laid aside their wretched insanity when they heard Daphnis's songs. Not just his own pasture lands did he fill with his great fame. All the shepherds who herd their sheep or rock-loving goats either in Arctic winter or towards the setting sun, and the shepherds attacked by the south wind's heat or browned by the eastern rays of the sun, all trembled and fell at the threatening power and might of Daphnis, or they were burned with love, captivated by such goodness. Alas, victorious in war, he now lies a victim of savage peace. Return, O stars, now return our Daphnis to us.

Corydon: Tityrus, now picture in your mind Daphnis as he was. See his right hand weighed down with the long sceptre which the myrtle groves gave him. See his brow crowned with well-merited honours: oak leaves they were, laurel and soft olive.²⁶ Wherever he trod, the fields flourished happily, the serpent laid aside his hiss, and trees were bent down with fruits of all kinds. See the glory of his face. See bulls hastening at his every word and wandering fat with dewlaps spread wide. Fat sheep also roamed and Saturn's kingdom was returning. Tityrus, you will say—and tears will accompany your words—Apollo was such a shepherd in Messenian fields. Tityrus, you will say he lived to benefit us all. You will say, return, O stars, now return our Daphnis.

Tityrus: Instead, see his pale limbs with blood streaming down, his fainting head, and the livid wounds on his chest. Then, Corydon, you will say that Daphnis died for our death. He was lifted to the stars with brief pain, but his wounds will cause long-lasting grief for the world. Return, O stars, return now

²⁶ These are the three types of civic wreaths/crowns won by the ancients: oak leaves for the Roman corona civica (for saving the life of a fellow citizen); the laurel wreath for athletic or military victories; the olive wreath for an Olympic victor.

our Daphnis to us.

Corydon: May he be gentle and may he reconcile the gods to us. May all these portents be free from fear. May his spirit be safe in the heavens and his fame last eternal on the earth. May the burden of the ground which covers his body and his shade be light. May flowers grow from his blood.

Tityrus: May there always be grief-stricken rites at this tomb and a reverend crowd of mourners. Let us surpass Eleusis's fires with our own.

Corydon: Tityrus, cease your fears. We have appeased the heavens with our grief. Look, the sky appears happier with twinkling starry host. Daphnis controls the sky and holds the stars, himself shining as the new star called Daphnis. Just count them to see.

Tityrus: Daphnis controls the earth. Look, the new Daphnis rules everything with his small crook and even smaller sling, but with a growing power. But his greater genius fills everything, and, O, how many years has it fixed for him! Go on, happy flocks, and graze your usual meadows. Go on, leaders of the sheep, for the good ages now begin. Go on through the shady forests, for Daphnis rules all. Therefore you dryads all and you nymphs who wander the lofty peaks now cease your long mourning. Break out in light laughter and do up your hair. This very one will lead your choruses in the traditional way.

I.9

To the Most Noble Earl of Salisbury, Robert Cecil,

Lord High Treasurer and Lord Privy Seal

[To Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury, 1563-May 24, 1612, son of William Cecil, First Baron Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's chief advisor. Robert was advisor to Queen Elizabeth after his father's death in 1598, and chief advisor to King James I. The poet relates how Cecil's father, the famous Elizabethan statesman, raised him to be even greater than himself, and thus his father's spirit still lives on. Cecil's fame has spread throughout the world. He is wearied by the crowds of petitioners, but never flags. The poet asks for a kind reception for his requests. The original of this poem, *Sylvae* 5, was another New Year's greeting on Kal. Jan. 1606. There are only small verbal revisions in this later version.]

I beg that you act mercifully while my feeble Muses attempt to spread abroad your fame. They have just proclaimed Jove, and after doing so they think it right to go through the other gods, O glory of our world, one destined to be famous to far generations. Instead, cherish the poet and his Muses, for the magnitude of the task now demands all nine, even though they are goddesses. Even now they are searching for a suitable beginning for your praise and a topic which would be most suitable for my final chords. When, for instance, the new year summons all its riches from the vales of Hybla and garbs itself in flowers, and when Nature resumes her joyous robes, the bees leave their hive, stop and wonder what area they should trust, what flower they should first taste: now the soft aster, then the violet, soon

the marjoram hear the tiny wings. But when the Muses view your handsome countenance made in the heroic pattern, review your family and household, and see from whose blood you sprang, who showed you the route to fame, who taught you never to yield to troubles and always to show faith to the sacred crown, then I think they will make that person the starting point of their well-deserved praise.

How often with a fond smile did your father's love caress you, placing a kiss on your cheek. He hugged you with an old man's strength and uttered prophetic words from his far-seeing mind: you would be the man whom Goodness will foster, to whom Pallas and the Cyllenian youth²⁷ will willingly yield with astonished words. When your father wished to train your heart to understand the highest affairs and to explicate nations' weightiest matters, how often was he astonished at the superior abilities of mind growing in you, and at the fact that he could still be taught something. Now, unforgettable elder, listen, whatever tomb covers your shade. Just as you surpassed all earlier ages, so you could have surpassed all future generations as well, if your glorious offspring were not standing in the way. But your son lessens your high fame, just as the stars grow dim while the rising sun renews the day, or as lovely rivers (the beautiful Thames or the channels of the twofold Rhine) disappear into the sea and merge their names along with their streams. From all of your great deeds there is none more notable than this, that you engendered such a great man. If it is right to believe that the various souls transmigrate and that worthy spirits only pause in individual bodies or in Elysian glades, I would believe that you were joined with your son when grim death completed your course. Then great strength was added to his mind, and his spirit was straightway enlarged with a great flood. Just as when the Indus with no resistance receives the Hydaspes into its blue waters and the current swells amidst the marvelling fields, the streams rush to unite their powers and sweep by their wide banks, two rivers no longer.

But you, intellectual offspring of your great-souled father, ornament of a seafaring race, you whom the fair-haired troops of Britain praise for the settlement of Ireland, as does that island itself, do not, I beg, hesitate to recognize real praise and to give yourself joy of it. No one has been superior in courage and counsel. If you had been living in that age when Pyrrhus, son of Aeacus, fierce and tough in the skills of war, was oppressing Latium from the fortress of Spartan Tarentum, Cineas would never have had his memorable name.²⁸ You would have calmly entered the Ausonian senate with all Rome applauding, the maker of the treaty between the king and the senate. Or if the Greek fleet had seen you on the Phrygian shore, the Greek poets would never have mentioned Nestor.²⁹ It was not Fortune, so fickle in its various impulses, that granted you this highest place. Instead your dazzling merit exalted

²⁷ Mercury

²⁸ Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, encouraged by the people of Tarentum (originally a colony of Sparta), waged war with Rome (281-275 BC). He sent Cineas to Rome to negotiate peace. Cineas was noted for his memory; shortly after arriving in Rome, he could greet each senator by name.

²⁹ known for wise advice.

you this high and lifted you among the earthly stars. That very governor of all, who first received Britain from the Fates, kind Jupiter and even kinder Fortune, recognizes and praises your talents, and congratulates his nation and himself on them, and finds nothing to envy in the heavens. He shares with you the weight of great cares, and opening the sacred recesses of his celestial intelligence, fashions destiny along with you, just as we suppose that Jove the Thunderer occasionally consults the oracle of astonished Phoebus.

It was not right that praise of you, your name, and your bright fame should be confined to the place where the waves of our ancestral waters confine the warlike Britons and separate the two worlds with their barrier. It is not the unsteady security of ships and winds that carries your fame to foreign shores. Your merits alone lift it on spreading wings and carry it through Nereus's swelling deep. Fame wings its way over the Tartessian shores of the western tribe,³⁰ over the Rhone and the Loire, and stretches its way right over the frozen Alps, the barricades of potent nature. One part of the world cherishes you, one part fears you, but all marvel at you, not just noble hearts (i.e. those who can bear the light of the swift sun), but the commons as well and the boys trembling in their early years recognize you. Women whispering down long corridors and light-minded farmers tell of you throughout the countryside. Fond parents have now found a new prayer, as have nurses with their unbridled love: over the cradles which they hug to their breasts, which they fill with flowers, they pray not for Ulysses's brain, not for great Achilles's strength, or Tithonus's length of days, but, "Child, I pray that you be like Robert Cecil, and that you employ with skill an intelligence like his."

Even before Phoebus has left the watery Eastern ocean, how often does a crowd of clients at your doorstep weary your threshold with their timid requests—not only commoners, but men whose education, status, and birth might want to elevate them to a high level, one inferior only to yours. You listen to now one, now another with such a mild demeanour that, whether you approve their petitions or deny them, they always love you; the attitudes of the rejected and the accepted are the same. Although cares surround you on all sides and require you to spend wakeful nights, we never see you change your expression and take on a wrathful face. You are consistent to all, and always to yourself. In the same way, rivers roll their sloping channels into the sea, but Nereus does not stoop to notice them. He does not become any deeper with these flows nor are his waves any fuller.

Now I beg that you keep this countenance and the sweet glory of this kindly face when our Phoebus stands in your reception room. And, I pray, give self-confidence to our timid Muses.

I.10 To his Father³¹

³⁰ Spain

³¹ Remembering John's departure from France one year earlier to return to England, 1605 or 1606. William Barclay (1546-1608) was a professor of civil law in Pont-à-Mousson until 1603 and at Angers from 1604-8.

[A poem of encouragement for his father. It has been a year since the poet said goodbye to his father. He hopes that his father enjoys good health wherever he might go. His father's health will probably prevent his visiting England again, so the poet sends news of King James, Queen Anne, and Prince Henry. Originally poem 7 of the *Sylvae*, written in 1606, one year after Barclay's arrival in London. The earlier *Sylvae* version explicitly refers to William's controversial work *De regno et regale potestate* (1600); differences from the *Poemata* are in italics:

(I.9.21ff) At tu seu placitam curis subducere vitam...

Seu tua purpureos generoso flumine Reges

Musa colit, sternitque fera sub acumine pennae

Protinus, et positos victrix ulciscitur hostes,

Nunc certe viresque...

“But whether you plan to withdraw peacefully from affairs...*or whether your Muse cultivates empurpled kings with her ample flow of words, straightway lays low the enemy with the ferocious point of your pen, and declares herself the victor in their defeat,* certainly, father, you are blaming your health...”

By 1615 John had edited his father's second controversial work *De potestate papae* (1610), and perhaps thought that a more general statement about the impulses of Themis was more appropriate than the *Sylvae*'s specific reference to an earlier work. John added several similes, including the still mysterious Sidonian seer.]

So that the universe, great father, might not believe that the stars which shine under the Arctic pole could become stationary, fortune ordered one of them to leave sea-girt Britain for foreign soil, and on the shores of Lorraine to unite Scottish fame with elegant nobility. Phoebus has not yet completed one trip in his light-bearing cart and revolved the bountiful year since the time when you took me to your bosom, hugging me gently in a father's arms. You infused your spirit into me with your sighs, when the sacred orders of my kind prince recalled me to my native Britain. I think now that the age begrudged that I have a long time with you. How often has your dear image come to me and stirred my heart with its soothing presence? Everything that you said to me when I greeted you at the dawn of day or when, after late setting of the sun, cheerful evenings brought sober conversations—all this returns to me and seizing my spirit, soothes with sweet conversation, even though the deep separates us with all its waves, and Nereus muffles our talk with his deafening waves.

But whether you plan to withdraw peacefully from affairs, to tend your grey hairs, to enjoy testimonials to yourself, and to remember your active years in the peace and quiet of your wearied old age, or whether you prefer to engage in your usual pursuits, wherever holy Themis³² and your

³² Goddess of Justice. Barclay père was a law professor.

penetrating mind drives you headlong and shows you the rewards of a well-deserved reputation, certainly, father, you are blaming your health and your old age because they have separated you far from your native shore and have, alas, forbidden you to see my land. And more than land, more than your native air, they also separate you from the face of King James, a face more sought by you than were the joyful stars by the Sidonian seer, when the hidden light was driven out and left his fearful body and fled into the holy mind.³³ But if destiny commands you to cross the swollen Channel and to view again your Britain, do not be frightened by your health or the distance on land and sea or old age, more cruel than any distance. Dear parent, do not repine. The king lauds your talents more than enough and accepts your health and age as excuses.

Whether you live in the pleasant fields of civilized Anjou or of Lorraine, the Austrasian land, where the vine-bearing Moselle winds its deep channel through many hills, take care of yourself. Do not let vain toil exhaust your limbs any further. Calmly indulge yourself as your years deserve. Be pleased to preserve your elder years for your son and for your wife, whom faithful Hymen joined to you from her early years.³⁴ With such a wife everyone has said that you are blessed. They often say as well that she is one of the lucky girls of Lorraine with such a good husband. If her upright character is pleasing, if her merits receive their reward, then do not be quick to envy the gods their Inachia, Leda, or Europa. Do what you already do: honour Anna alone with an eternal flame. She has always been a faithful companion at your side, has clung, a sweet burden, on your shoulder, whether light winds billowed the sails or the seas roared and the terrified barque creaked and groaned. Her spirits were never downcast with fear.

O happy couple! The Assyrian Phoenix lives his life through centuries until he fearlessly puts off in the flames the lethargy of old age and his excessive years. The goddess who summons the sun to the day gave many years to Tithonus,³⁵ and the Cumaean sibyl also asked Apollo for many years of life. May the fates who hold sway over the relentless spindle give of their own accord an equal number of years to you, and may they never choose to let your frame's vigorous old age grow weary and die. But if one can be said to "live" while his name and merits survive, while his fame continues to exist, then you will certainly conquer the centuries with eternal life.

A time will come when I address you with humble respect, embrace you, touch your hands and kiss you. Then will I begin to tell you the news from our beloved Britain. Then I'll recount what our Governor is doing, with what a kind face he condescends to his servants and improves their fortunes with his mild words. Then news about our Thunderer's wife, how beautiful in face, how her eyes shine

³³ Perhaps a reference to Pythagoras.

³⁴ William Barclay had married Anne de Mallevillier in 1581. Judging from the end of this paragraph, she apparently had visited England with her husband.

³⁵ See note on Tithonus in I.1.

with sacred majesty. Finally news about the prince,³⁶ how sweet, how he is already mature even in these early years, how he is growing to become the marvel of an astonished world.

I.11

Funeral Poem for the Illustrious Maiden

Isabella a Boschoit,

Daughter of the Most Noble Couple Ferdinand a Boschoit and Anna Maria a Zamudio³⁷

[A funeral poem. The poet was acquainted with the little girl, the daughter of an ambassador. He describes her, her parents' grief, her journey to the heavens, and her return in a vision to comfort her parents. This poem could be dated if the ambassador were identified.]

Which god now might prompt my tears and my sad songs? Which one will open my heart with suitable plaint? What grief, what pity! What a brutal end to a great inheritance, a doom never to be satisfied with tears! I would not dare to ask the Delphic Sisters for their harp and their funereal chants, for they have laid aside their lyre, weep for a small maiden, and beat their breasts. Even when summoned, they cannot hear the poet. Nor do I summon you, O Nature, whose most beautiful gift was this girl, for if you, Nature, had any power, she would not have died, the girl in whom you often gloried, whom you often showed to Jove or promised as a companion to Diana.³⁸

Have you died, Isabella? Has mad death snatched away such a budding talent, such great hopes? The sun had not completed your fifth birthday in his orbit when, because of your goodness, you avoided that day and left the earth. You were directed to ascend to the heavens and to take on the brightness of the radiant stars, not yet discoloured by the desires of a life which you had not yet tasted. Do I speak the truth—or do false dreams distract my mind? Just now you danced happily, you engaged in the holy pastimes of a simple life, always delighting in new games. Now, alas, Isabella, have you entered the tomb? What thunderbolt fell with such force? What god so envied our home? I remember—although it is a huge sorrow to remember the good things which have gone; we have lost so many of these—I remember when you moved your happy feet, following the commands of the guitar and the singing harp. Then your hair bobbed lightly on your head, lovely by itself, but gathered in a small knot which stood on the top of your head. The picture sticks with me. This picture also, when with a sweet face you could barely encircle your parents' necks straining with both arms. When visiting, by yourself you would go up to everyone, totally unaware of your own beauty, and put out your hand and chat with

³⁶ Because of this poem's date (1605/6), "prince" must refer to Henry.

³⁷ I have not been able to identify any of these people. Ferdinand clearly was a diplomat.

³⁸ i.e. either married or unmarried. She could have been like Leda or Danae, a consort of Jove, or a virgin nymph, a companion to Diana.

them. You would very prettily start quarrels with rushing words, sometimes making small threats and hot tantrums, sometimes excusing bad behaviour with trembling lips. O innocent one, what did marriage and its contracts have to do with you, or its daily changes? Boys of good family begged eagerly for you, but you were owed to heaven alone. I was that kind of father-in-law myself,³⁹ and I mourn for your death almost as a daughter-in-law, and am now paying my respects with this poem.

The activities which attracted your youthful interest were mixtures of playfulness, youthfulness, and festive charm, and were always, my girl, foretastes of character to come—if the Parcae and death, so hateful to our affairs, had allowed. Thus buds swell in the orchards under the springtime sun, and when the first glory appears on the branches and their tips begin to grow green—but the tree itself has not yet developed its fruit—then in the midst of the leaves come purple flowers in glowing bunches, growths hostage to the winds. Their loveliness, full of expectation, delight us, but, alas, if hateful Auster, the South Wind, blows in, our expectations hang frustrated along with their lost loveliness.

Your childish years had scarcely loosened the lock on your tongue and had given you communication in a known language, when you could boldly speak to Spaniards, Frenchmen, and fair-haired Britons, and to those who view the rough waves of the Rhine mix with the sea at the shore where it enters so boisterously. Your maternal Spain boasted that you were hers, as did the Belgian earth. Britain is happy to welcome you in your infancy and wishes to number you among its girls, while your father, an ambassador from a great prince, dwells as a most welcome guest by our Thames. Here fate will give you our death. Here your departure from life was on a foreign soil. Death was not slow in carrying out this crime. Although it is savage and cannot be turned aside, still it was afraid to torment you with slow torture. Sad Lucifer it was who first spied your illness, when late in the night he returned, carried on the wings of Hesperus. Then he cut your tender thread and snatched you away, taking you to celestial realms, snatched from your mother's arms, while frozen grief covered her face, frozen much like your death, my pretty one.

What was your home like when grief with many voices overturned all hearts, as the deadly cold of winter gradually crept into your limbs? At times the house was mute, at times it shuddered and gave out cries, as pity was fired with various blasts. Your father stood in shock like one whom a god has frightened with flashing fire or has touched with the swift wings of his thunderbolt. Unconsciously at times he held back his tears with a stern face, at times overcome by the blow he flees all company, groans, and pours out the quiet words that a bereaved father can say. He accuses the fates, those fates who care nothing for his accusations. Meanwhile her unhappy mother beats her breast and indulges in sorrow. Lying on her still warm child she uses up all her tears and pours out pitiable moans. Alas, how often does her husband come to stop this wild lamentation?⁴⁰ How often, on the point of stopping her,

³⁹ i.e. prospective

⁴⁰ This sentence and the next may be exclamations rather than questions.

does the same desire to cry and the same uncontrolled and understandable grief break his intention and stop his attempt just as he starts to speak? But when the impulse to grieve grows less fierce, and the sudden emotions recede, then both parents raise their hearts to heaven, are sorry for their grieving, and beg pardon: the decrees of the inexorable universe must not be disturbed; whatever God does in his lofty sphere and whatever fate he gives to a trembling world is holy. Then they took hold of themselves; then with receptive hearts they acquiesced in God's will. Just as in the high mountains a sudden blast brings Boreas in a rush onto an ash tree. The tree bends at first and taken unawares, it bows its remaining branches, but shortly it stands upright and fills the whole sky and faces as a rival the now helpless wind. In the same way the parents lay aside their wild laments and with a mighty struggle fought their troubles. Still, they remembered that they had been parents, and nature allowed them appropriate grief.

It was night, and tears gave sleep to the sad parents, while you, maiden, were happy to be carried up to the heavens higher than the flaming stars. You were glad to push off from the earth and to lay aside your perishable body for a better life. Still, you greatly pitied your dear parents; so you directly head for the earth and your well-known home. They recognized their own daughter, and struggling to stretch out their arms in sleep, they tried to embrace you, but soon struck with fear, they ceased their attempts. For a lofty majesty appeared in your face, Isabella. Amazed they fill their mind's eye with you and fearfully try to grasp your hand. You had waxed great and your countenance radiated an unearthly glow. Your hair was bright and from your shoulder flowed a glorious robe which covered your steps all around. At last you appeared to speak: "Do not be troubled. I really live, and my fortunate death has given me abilities which mature years could barely have given. I have left my childish things to join my stars and have put on new limbs and new senses. Whatever you have seen here on earth is commonplace. In heaven there are other suns and eternally renewed joys in the stars, and never a surfeit of the divine presence. If you had not touched my ears with your laments, I would already have forgotten the earth. If you ever loved me as a daughter, then rejoice and be happy at my victory. Destiny has given me heaven in place of my lost earth. What similar gift could you have given me, father, or you, my best mother? To be sure, I was able to delight in and count noble ancestors from your blood, and names famous through the ages; noble Belgians and Spaniards were included in my pedigree. The royal family was able to add me to their honoured attendants—and they would have added me. When grown, I would have given you a son-in-law and perhaps small grandchildren from my fortunate womb, then later more daughters-in-law from them. Hope and longing prayers promised in vain that I would give these joys to you. Now suppose my Parcae had willed all this. What a mixture of joys with hard troubles this had been, what delights, but far from unalloyed! But now I soar over my stars with prayers sure of fulfilment. Now I think on other marriages and other honours. I will be forever a maiden, never losing my youthfulness. I will be greater than royalty (but may ill-will never touch me), and greater than those for whom fortune would have made me an attendant. I soar through

the vaults of heaven. I will always be with maidens of an equal fate, and always close to the great Thunderer, with never a care for myself, but always concerned about you.”

Thus she spoke, and was whisked back to heaven in gliding flight. Allowing no embrace, she returned. After such revelations, the parents, sad no longer, lost the night and their worries.

Reader, be aware that some of the poems published here speak to the dead as if they still lived, for example the poem which I composed in honour of the most illustrious Prince Henry while he was still healthy; likewise the poems for that great man, the Earl of Salisbury, and for my famous and most beloved father. It would be hurtful to remove from this publication those who have been taken from us. It would be sacrilegious to take what I wrote about living men and devise a way to apply it to the dead. If this were the practice, poems would be limited to a one-time publication, for they would certainly be untimely after a century (which defines the life of a really long-lived man) if the words which we spoke about them cannot endure after their deaths.

Farewell.