

***HENRY
CONSTABLE,
SAMUEL DANIEL***



***ELIZABETHAN
SONNET-
CYCLES:
DELIA -
DIANA***

Henry Constable, Samuel Daniel

Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles: Delia - Diana

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REJECTED SONNETS

DIANA

BY

HENRY CONSTABLE

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DIANA

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THE FIRST DECADE

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SONNETS FROM THE MANUSCRIPT EDITION, NOT FOUND IN
THAT OF 1594

TO DELIA

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I

Unto the boundless ocean of thy beauty
Runs this poor river, charged with streams of
zeal,

Returning thee the tribute of my duty,
Which here my love, my youth, my plaints
reveal.

Here I unclasp the book of my charged soul,
Where I have cast th' accounts of all my care;
Here have I summed my sighs. Here I enrol
How they were spent for thee. Look, what they
are.

Look on the dear expenses of my youth,
And see how just I reckon with thine eyes.
Examine well thy beauty with my truth,
And cross my cares ere greater sums arise.
Read it, sweet maid, though it be done but
slightly;
Who can show all his love, doth love but lightly.

II

Go, wailing verse, the infants of my love,
Minerva-like, brought forth without a mother;
Present the image of the cares I prove,
Witness your father's grief exceeds all other.

Sigh out a story of her cruel deeds,
With interrupted accents of despair;
A monument that whosoever reads,
May justly praise and blame my loveless Fair;
Say her disdain hath dried up my blood,
And starvèd you, in succours still denying;
Press to her eyes, importune me some good,
Waken her sleeping pity with your crying:
Knock at her hard heart, beg till you have
moved her,
And tell th'unkind how dearly I have loved her.



If so it hap this offspring of my care,
These fatal anthems, lamentable songs,
Come to their view, who like afflicted are;
Let them yet sigh their own, and moan my
wrongs.
But untouched hearts with unaffected eye,
Approach not to behold my soul's distress;
Clear-sighted you soon note what is awry,
Whilst blinded souls mine errors never guess.
You blinded souls, whom youth and error lead;
You outcast eaglets dazzled with your sun,
Do you, and none but you, my sorrows read;
You best can judge the wrongs that she hath
done,
That she hath done, the motive of my pain,
Who whilst I love doth kill me with disdain.

IV

These plaintive verse, the posts of my desire,
Which haste for succour to her slow regard,
Bear not report of any slender fire,
Forging a grief to win a fame's reward.
Nor are my passions limned for outward hue,
For that no colours can depaint my sorrows;
Delia herself, and all the world may view
Best in my face where cares have tilled deep
furrows.

No bays I seek to deck my mourning brow,
O clear-eyed rector of the holy hill!
My humble accents bear the olive bough
Of intercession but to move her will.
These lines I use t'unburden mine own heart;
My love affects no fame nor 'steems of art.

V

Whilst youth and error led my wandering mind,
And set my thoughts in heedless ways to
range,
All unawares a goddess chaste I find,
Diana-like, to work my sudden change.
For her, no sooner had mine eye bewrayed,
But with disdain to see me in that place,
With fairest hand the sweet unkindest maid
Casts water-cold disdain upon my face.
Which turned my sport into a hart's despair,
Which still is chased, while I have any breath,

By mine own thoughts set on me by my Fair.
My thoughts like hounds pursue me to my
death;
Those that I fostered of mine own accord,
Are made by her to murder thus their lord.

VI

Fair is my love, and cruel as she's fair;
Her brow shades frowns although her eyes are
sunny;
Her smiles are lightning though her pride
despair;
And her disdains are gall, her favours honey;
A modest maid, decked with a blush of honour,
Whose feet do tread green paths of youth and
love;
The wonder of all eyes that look upon her,
Sacred on earth, designed a saint above.
Chastity and beauty, which were deadly foes,
Live reconcilèd friends within her brow;
And had she pity to conjoin with those,
Then who had heard the plaints I utter now?
O had she not been fair and thus unkind,
My Muse had slept and none had known my
mind!

VII

For had she not been fair and thus unkind,
Then had no finger pointed at my lightness;

The world had never known what I do find,
And clouds obscure had shaded still her
brightness.
Then had no censor's eye these lines surveyed,
Nor graver brows have judged my Muse so
vain;
No sun my blush and error had bewrayed,
Nor yet the world had heard of such disdain.
Then had I walked with bold erected face;
No downcast look had signified my miss;
But my degraded hopes with such disgrace
Did force me groan out griefs and utter this.
For being full, should I not then have spoken,
My sense oppressed had failed and heart had
broken.

VIII

Thou, poor heart, sacrificed unto the fairest,
Hast sent the incense of thy sighs to heaven;
And still against her frowns fresh vows
repairest,
And made thy passions with her beauty even.
And you, mine eyes, the agents of my heart,
Told the dumb message of my hidden grief;
And oft, with careful tunes, with silent art,
Did treat the cruel Fair to yield relief.
And you, my verse, the advocates of love,
Have followed hard the process of my case:
And urged that title which doth plainly prove

My faith should win, if justice might have place.
Yet though I see that nought we do can move,
'Tis not disdain must make me cease to love.

IX

If this be love, to draw a weary breath,
To paint on floods till the shore cry to th'air;
With downward looks still reading on the earth.
These sad memorials of my love's despair;
If this be love, to war against my soul,
Lie down to wail, rise up to sigh and grieve,
The never-resting stone of care to roll,
Still to complain my griefs, whilst none relieve;
If this be love, to clothe me with dark thoughts,
Haunting untrodden paths to wail apart,
My pleasures horror, music tragic notes,
Tears in mine eyes and sorrow at my heart;
If this be love, to live a living death,
Then do I love, and draw this weary breath.

X

Then do I love and draw this weary breath
For her, the cruel Fair, within whose brow
I written find the sentence of my death
In unkind letters wrote she cares not how.
Thou power that rul'st the confines of the night,
Laughter-loving goddess, worldly pleasures'
queen,
Intenerate that heart that sets so light

The truest love that ever yet was seen;
And cause her leave to triumph in this wise
Upon the prostrate spoil of that poor heart
That serves, a trophy to her conquering eyes,
And must their glory to the world impart;
Once let her know sh'hath done enough to
prove me,
And let her pity if she cannot love me!

XI

Tears, vows and prayers gain the hardest
hearts,
Tears, vows and prayers have I spent in vain;
Tears cannot soften flint nor vows convert;
Prayers prevail not with a quaint disdain.
I lose my tears where I have lost my love,
I vow my faith where faith is not regarded,
I pray in vain a merciless to move;
So rare a faith ought better be rewarded.
Yet though I cannot win her will with tears,
Though my soul's idol scorneth all my vows,
Though all my prayers be to so deaf ears,
No favour though the cruel Fair allows,
Yet will I weep, vow, pray to cruel she;
Flint, frost, disdain, wears, melts and yields, we
see.

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