

That *Orpheus'* self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped ~~Elucian~~ flow'rs, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of *Pluto*, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd *Eurydice*.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

145. On their wedding day *Orpheus* lost his wife the consent—Ovid says (*Met.* X, 50–63)—was given on the impossible condition that he should not once look back at her as he led her up into the sunlit.

IL PENSEROSO

Hence vain deluding joys,
The brood of folly without father bred,
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys;
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay notes that people the Sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle Pensioners of *Morpheus'* train.
But hail thou Goddess, sage and holy,
Hail divinest Melancholy,
Whose Saintry visage is too bright
To hit the Sense of human sight;
And therefore to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue.
Black, but such as in esteem,
Prince *Memnon's* sister might bescem,
Or that Starr'd *Ethiops* Queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee bright-hair'd *Vesta* long of yore,
To solitary *Saturn* bore;

10. For *Morpheus* see *L'Al.* 10, n.
16. Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I* (Z. S. Fink suggests in *PQ*, XIX (1940), 310) may have contributed to Milton's picture of a dark goddess of melancholy. Burton said (*Anatomy I*, iii, 1, 3; Vol. I, 397) that men in whose horoscope *Saturn* predominated were "very austere, sullen, churlish, and black of colour."
18. Homer's handsome Ethiopian Prince *Memnon* (*Od.* XI, 521) had, according to Dictys, a sister named *Hemera*.
19. The Starr'd *Ethiops* Queen is *Cassiopeia*, who, according to Hyginus' *Astronomica* II, x, was transformed into the familiar constellation for boasting that her daughter *Andromeda* (not herself) was more beautiful than the Nereids.

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(1631?)

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of Melancholy (i.e. of the contemplative temperament) Milton may have remembered that for the mythographer Conti (VIII, xix; p. 910) the important thing about her was her enthrone in the heavens in an Orphic Hymn and in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 247-b.

25. Milton thought of the Golden Age when *Saturn* reigned on Mt. *Ida* in *Crete*, where *Love* was born to him and later overthrew him (cf. *PL* I, 510–23). *Saturn's* share in *Vesta's* fanciful parenage is due in part to Neoplatonic conceptions of him as the collective ægeic mind² and in part to the astrological theory that all melancholic persons were born under ill disposed skies,
When oblique *Saturne* sat in the house of aquines.
(*F.Q.* II, ix, 52, 8–9)

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Such mixture was not held a stain)³,
Oft in glimmering Bow'rs and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody *Ida's* inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of *Jove*.
Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of *Cypress* Lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With ev'n step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to Marble, till
With a sad Lead downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about *Jove's* Altar sing.
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim Gardens takes his pleasure;
But first, and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less *Philomel* will deign a Song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
While *Cynthia* checks her Dragon yoke,
Gently o'er th' accusom'd Oak;
Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee Chantress oft the Woods among,
I woo to hear thy Even-Song;
And missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven Green,
To behold the wand'ring Moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the Heaven's wide pathless way;
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud,
Oft on a Plat of rising ground,

33. grain: color.
35. *Cypreus Lawn*, cf. "Cyprus black as éter was did that of the "Cherubic shays" which convey the "Chariot of Paternal deity" in *PL* VI, 750–3.
42. Mr. Garrod compares Thomas Tomkins' *Altimuzor* (I, iv, 3–4): "Wonder for me, admire name of the nightgale."
59. *Cynthia*: the goddess of the moon. See *Ely*, 57.
43. sad: serious. Cf. *Comus*, 180.

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I hear the far-off *Curlew* sound,
 Over some wide-water'd shore,
 Swinging slow with sullen roar;
 Or if the Air will not permit,
 Some still removed place will fit,
 Where glowing Embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
 Far from all resort of mirth,
 Save the Cricket on the hearth,
 Or the Bellman's drowsy charm,
 To bless the doors from nightly harm:
 Or let my Lamp at midnight hour,
 Be seen in some high lonely Tow'r,
 Where I may oft outwatch the *Bear*,
 With thrice great *Hermes*, or unsphere
 The spirit of *Plato* to unfold
 What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold
 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
 And of those *Dæmons* that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or underground,
 Whose power hath a true consent
 With Planet, or with Element.
 Sometime let Gorgeous Tragedy
 In Scepter'd Pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting *Thebes*, or *Pelops'* line,
 Or the tale of *Troy* divine,
 Or what (though rare) of later age,
 Ennobled hath the Buskin'd stage.
 But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
 Might raise *Musæus* from his bower,
 Or bid the soul of *Orpheus* sing
 Such notes as, warbled to the string,
 Drew Iron tears down *Plato's* cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek.
 Or call up him that left half told

83. The cry of the *Bellman* (night-watchman) calling the hours is like a chant (*charm*, which originally meant "song").

86. The *Tow'r*, as Allen notes (*Vision*, p. 18), is Plato's "acropolis of the soul" (*Rep.* 500b) and the "watchtower" where Isaiah said (xxi, 8), "I am set in my ward whole nights." There Milton contemplates the constellation of the Great Bear, which never sets, and which the *thrice-great Hermes* taught was a symbol of perfection.

87. To outwatch the *Bear* is to work through the night; the Great Bear circles the North Pole without ever setting.

88. *Hermes Trimegistus* was identified with both Egyptian Thoth and the Greek *Hermes* and was supposed to have been the author of numerous esoteric writings which were actually written in Alexandria in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Milton probably knew them in the translation of the Florentine Platonist Marsilio Ficino (Paris, 1494). He was *thrice great*, said Raleigh (*History* II, vi, 6), "because he spake of the Trinitie, affirming that there is one God in Trinitie;" but in the Dedication

to the *Advancement* Bacon made his triplicity consist in "the power and fortune of a king, the knowledge and illumination of a priest, and the learning and universality of a philosopher."

89. For *Plato* see *Comus*, 10-11, n.

93. In Burton's "Digression of Spirits" (*Anatomy* I, ii, 1, 2; Vol. I, 190) evil spirits are classified as "fiery, aerial, terrestrial, watery, and subterranean" devils besides those faeries, satyrs, nymphs, &c. The doctrine is traced by E. C. Baldwin (*MLN*, XXXIII [1918], 184) to the Hermetic *Definitions of Asclepius* to King *Amon* xii, though Burton attributes it to *Pellus*.

97. *Tragedy* suggests dramas like *Aeschylus' Seven against Thebes*, plays about *Pelops'* descendants *Agamemnon*, *Orestes*, *Iphigenia*, and *Electra*, and *Trojan* plays like *Euripides' Trojan Dames*, *Andromache*, and *Heccuba*.

104. Perhaps Milton remembered Virgil's picture of the mythical bard *Musæus* standing "foremost of all the heroes and poets" in *Elysium* (*Aen.* VI, 656-8).

105. Cf. *Orpheus* in *L'All*, 145, n.

The story of *Cambuscan* bold,
 Of *Camball*, and of *Algarsife*,
 And who had *Canace* to wife,
 That own'd the virtuous Ring and Glass,
 And of the wondrous Horse of Brass,
 On which the *Tartar* King did ride;
 And if aught else great Bards beside
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
 Of Tourneys and of Trophies hung,
 Of Forests, and enchantments drear,
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.
 Thus night oft see me in thy pale career,
 Till civil-suited Morn appear,
 Not trickt and frount' as she was wont
 With the Attic Boy to hunt,
 But kerchieft in a comely Cloud,
 While rocking Winds are Piping loud,
 Or usher'd with a shower still,
 When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling Leaves,
 With minute-drops from off the Leaves.
 And when the Sun begins to fling
 His flaring beams, me Goddess bring
 To arched walks of twilight groves,
 And shadows brown that *Sylvan* loves
 Of Pine or monumental Oak,
 Where the rude Axe with heaved stroke
 Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
 There in close covert by some Brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look,
 Hide me from Day's garish eye,
 While the Bee with Honied thigh,
 That at her flow'ry work doth sing,
 And the Waters murmuring
 With such consort as they keep,
 Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
 And let some strange mysterious dream
 Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,
 Of lively portraiture display'd,
 Softly on my eyelids laid.
 And as I wake, sweet music breathe
 Above, about, or underneath,
 Sent by some spirit to mortals good,

110-115. In *The Squire's Tale* Chaucer left half told the story of the "Tartre Cambuskan" and his children *Algarsyf*, *Camball*, and *Canace*, whose guest offered him a *Horse of Brass* and gave her a ring which possessed its wearer with symbolic powers which have been identified by Allen (*Vision*, p. 13) with those to which Milton aspires in the closing lines of the poem.

122. *civil-suited*: soberly dressed.
 123. Cf. the story of Aurora's love for *Cephalus* in *El V*, 49-51, n.
 128. *her*: its. The modern form for the neuter had not yet become established.

130. *minute-drops*: drops falling at intervals of a minute.

134. *brown*: dark. Cf. *PR* II, 293, n. The wood-god *Sylvanus* has the forest setting that he has in *Aen.* VIII, 597-9.

145. *consort*: harmony.
 147. Cf. Jonson's image in *Night's* speech in *The Vision of Delight*:
 Break, Phant'ise, from thy cave of cloud,
 And spread thy purple wings;
 Now all thy figures are allowed;
 And various shapes of things;
 Create of airy forms a stream, . . .

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