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Things Miraculous and Strange:

A Poetic Interpretation of the Death and Afterlife of Agnes Sampson

(TITLE)

BY

Ann Mary Hart

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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Abstract

In this collection of poems, I tell the story of Agnes Sampson's 1591 trial for witchcraft, her torture and death, and her response to these events from the afterlife. Using persona perspectives and utilizing a variety of poetic forms, I reveal the voices, thoughts, and feelings of Agnes and others involved in the trials in hopes to give a full and well-rounded account of the events in a compelling and creative way. Included in the collection are erasures on some of James VI's poems with the goal of turning them into responses to his actions from Agnes. Using this technique, Agnes treats James' poems like a poetic Ouija board, covering his words to allow her voice to come through. Though persona poems are a long standing poetic device, this collection is rooted in the new historical persona movement, which includes award winning collections such as Patricia Smith's *Blood Dazzler* and Tyhemba Jess's *Leadbelly*.

*This collection is dedicated to Matthew Hart.
Thank you for all of your love and support. I could not have done it without you.*

And to Agnes Sampson, I wish you peace.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Olga Abella, Dr. Melissa Caldwell, and Dr. Jeannie Ludlow. Working with these wise women has been an honor and a privilege.

Also, special thanks to all of my readers: Jamie Golladay, Kelly Pierce, Becky Lawson and the members of CUPoetry. Your thoughtful consideration and criticism have made this collection possible.

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Introduction

My collection *Things Miraculous and Strange: A Poetic Interpretation on the Death and Afterlife of Agnes Sampson* is composed of historical persona poems recounting the trial for witchcraft of Agnes Sampson in 1591. A persona poem is told from the viewpoint of a person who is not the poet. As an actor pretends to be someone else, a poet writing a persona poem puts on someone else's identity to tell the story from the speaker's perspective, which "is offered without overt analysis or commentary, placing emphasis on subjective qualities that are left to the audience to interpret." (poets.org) Taking the persona perspective has been popular with poet for a long time and includes such classic works as "My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning and the collection *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters. Historical persona poems, a term coined by former Kentucky Poet Laureate Frank X. Walker, are meant to give readers a deeper understanding about a historical person or event. By using historical persona poems, my goal is to "reveal character, motivation, and the human soul through intimate speech – sometimes addressed to an auditor and sometimes in a moment of self-reflection." (Thompson)

In this collection of poems, I tell the story of Agnes Sampson's trial for witchcraft, her torture and death, and her response to these events from the afterlife. Using a variety of poetic forms, I reveal the voices, thoughts, and feelings of Agnes and others involved in the trials in order to give a full and well-rounded account of the events in a compelling and creative way. I created this collection about Agnes because I find her story compelling. Agnes was a midwife, healer and widow, which means that, although

she had some level of economic and social autonomy, she, like many women then and now, was at the mercy of the men in power. Scotland and England may have had a recent history of women on the throne, but men still had all the authority. Independent and knowledgeable women like Agnes were often seen as a threat to the patriarchal structure. Due to their status as second-class citizens, with few exceptions, women's accounts of their lives in the late sixteenth century are nonexistent or have been lost over time. Agnes desired to help the people around her by using her skills to heal their illnesses, and these skills were turned against her as evidence of witchcraft.

The locus of power in Agnes's trial was King James VI of Scotland. He is noted in history for many accomplishments. James was the only son of Mary Queen of Scots and the nephew of England's Elizabeth I. In 1603 he united Scotland, England and Ireland under one rule, creating Great Britain. James was also a writer. He wrote a famous book on witchcraft in 1597 called *Daemonologie*. But what made me realize I had to tell Agnes's story with poems was when I learned King James, a man who personally participated in the torture and deaths of Agnes and her co-accused, was himself a poet. In all of these events, all of these deaths, the only person who had a voice, the only person whose words and opinions counted, was James. I realized my goal is to, after all this time, give Agnes a chance to have her say.

While books, essays and histories have been written about James, very little is known about the life of Agnes Sampson. The exact year of her birth is not recorded, but by the end of the 1580s Agnes was a working midwife and healer living in the East Lothian region of Scotland, near the North Sea. Referred to in court documents as "The Wise Wife of Keith," meaning she was from the town of Keith, Agnes was likely a

widow, as she is referred as such in the trial records. There are few remaining records of her trial: a few fragments of Agnes's deposition on December 4-5, 1590, partial records of her examination in early January 1591, and most of the text of her conviction, called a Dittay, dated January 26-27, 1591. In the Dittay there is a reference to a daughter, son, and goddaughter, but there is no record of their names or any other information about them. There are two prayers attributed to Agnes in the trial record, but no direct quotes from her or anyone else, just summaries of what witnesses reported. In these documents we learn what she was accused of and what she confessed to (under torture), but nothing of what she was thinking or feeling. I decided to do erasures on some of James' poems with the goal of turning them into statements from Agnes. Erasure poems are an adaptation called a palimpsest, which take an existing text and eliminate most of the words to reveal a poem. They are also called blackout poems. A typical expectation is that at least 50% of the original text must be eliminated. Using this technique, Agnes treats James' poems like a poetic Ouija board, covering his words to allow her voice to come through.

One of the first poems I created was an erasure of James' poem, "A complaint against the contrary Wyndes that hindered the Queene to com to Scotland from Denmarke." I chose this poem because in it he describes the story of the storm that blew the ships of his new wife, Queen Anne, off course on her trip to meet him after they were married by proxy in 1589. This storm, which drove Anne's ships to Norway, was the first excuse used for the beginning of the witch trials. One of Anne's admirals blamed the wife of a rival for the storm and she was put on trial for witchcraft in Denmark. When James learned of the events, he began his own investigation of witchcraft on Scottish soil. In

the poem James, using references to Greek mythology, talks about how hard the whole experience was on him, and I wondered what Agnes would respond to his *wishe for ease of all my paine*. I realized that she would mock him by turning his poem into the very spell he claims was cast, saying:

sacred heauen
breathe
blowe
enchant
And change the course
make the earthe
danse,
Beasts, foules, fishe
followe the sea,
obeye,
the aire.
arise.

To study the technique of erasure I read *A Little White Shadow* by Mary Ruefle and *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel* by Tom Phillips. Phillips' book focuses on visual technique. He covers the words in the novel with complex drawings in his attempt to convey truths about the human condition. Ruefle, using WhiteOut™, covers most of the words in the novella *A Little White Shadow*, written in 1889 by Emily Malbone Morgan, and is more focused on the words of the poem. For example, in one section the vast majority of the text is covered in WhiteOut™ leaving only, "no one at the Villa / made me secretly think of children chasing butterflies." By making these changes, Ruefle creates a forty-two-page poem that gives us a glimpse into what may have been going on in Morgan's mind.

The speech patterns of our current president have inspired several poets. Using social media platforms and other online forums, they not only create poems from his

words, but also put the erasures in public view as an act of protest. Activist-poet Jayy Dodd (@deyblxk) did an erasure of the president's inaugural speech and posted it to his Twitter feed. Poet Ariel Yelen's collection of several speeches, "When You Win It's Winning: Trump Translations & Erasures," was featured on queensmob.com. While these poets are trying to bring out the truth of what politicians really mean when they speak, I see my work as bringing Agnes's and the voices of the unheard into the conversation.

After creating several erasures, I went back to the storm that began these particular events and wrote a sea shanty from the view point of the sailors on Queen Anne's ship. I wrote the shanty with a repeating chorus to reflect that, though these sailors were proud to be a part of their new queen's voyage, they also had their own personal concerns to attend to:

Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.

I also wanted the song to foreshadow the witch hunt to come so I ended it with the lines, "And vowed to burn the wily witch / Who'd marred his Wedding Day."

The sea shanty expands on the story of the storm which blew Queen Anne's ship off course. To expand the story of Agnes's life, trial, torture, and execution, I needed the viewpoints of more of the participants. Many people were a part of her life and this process, and each of them saw the events from their own perspective. Salman Rushdie said, "If you want to tell the untold stories, if you want to give voice to the voiceless, you've got to find a language. Which goes for film as well as prose, for documentary as well as autobiography. Use the wrong language, and you're dumb and blind." The

language that best tells these people's stories is their own, so I decided to create their poems as persona poems.

In this process, I had to invent the thoughts of the participants of the events and create several characters entirely. I wanted to reflect the ideas of standpoint theory and intersectionality in their voices. Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to discuss how people's marginalization and disempowerment are multiplied as the various facets of their lives intersect. Paying attention to the intersections in the lives of these characters helped me avoid stereotyping them and allowed me to express their personas as fully formed individuals. Standpoint theory says that people who are marginalized see things with a broader viewpoint than those who have power. In their book *Intersectionality*, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge state, "power relations are to be analyzed both via their intersections ... as well as across domains of power." (27) The more powerful someone is, such as James, the less he must look from another's viewpoint. The less powerful a person is, such as Agnes, the more she both sees the world from her own standpoint and through the lenses of the powerful, because their choices have consequences in her life.

The concepts in my persona poems, for Agnes and the other characters, had to recognize where they sit in the chain of power, and the consequences their choices will have. For example, the poem "Robert Dixon – Assizer and Witness for the Prosecution" is based on the possible viewpoint of Robert Dixon, who is listed in the court record as both a witness for the prosecution and one of the judges who would decide Agnes's fate. From his standpoint Agnes is a good healer who helped him when he was ill. At the same time, he knows if he sides with her against the king the consequences could be dire,

“What choice do I have? / If I protect her / I may be next.” While he is far enough from the center of power to see the consequences of his choices based on the views of the king, he is close enough to that power center to choose not to see what his choices will mean for Agnes.

The crafting of this work has been influenced by several poets who have used persona poems to tell the stories of historical figures or events including Patricia Smith in her book *Blood Dazzler*, Diane Seuss in *Four-Legged Girl*, and Carol Anne Duffy in *The World's Wife*. One of the most influential collections of persona poems is *Leadbelly* by Tyehimba Jess. Jess tells the story of the musician Huddie William “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, using the persona of Ledbetter and the people, the objects, and the places who were part of his life. Jess writes poems in the voices of Leadbelly’s parents, his wives and girlfriends, and of the ethnographer John Lomax, who recorded and promoted Ledbetter and other singers in the early twentieth century. Instead of giving his readers a history lesson, Jess helps us understand characters’ minds and hearts with his persona poems. The poem “mistress stella speaks” is told from the perspective of Leadbelly’s guitar. The poem begins, “you think i’m his property/ ‘cause he paid cash / to grab me by the neck.” It would be easy to believe this poem is the voice of one of the many women in his life, but Jess wants his readers to know that the one “woman” who Leadbelly did not have power over was his guitar. Using this approach, Jess does more than give the facts of Ledbetter’s life. He gives us a deeper look, and perhaps a better understanding of Leadbelly’s life, than could be gotten from a historical document alone.

In my poem “The Fire Sings Agnes’s Immolation,” the fire that was used to burn Agnes at the stake describes its effect on Agnes and her body, “See how she twists and turns / Terpsichorean at my touch,” and compares itself to music or a band:

Listen, can you hear
The pipes in my sizzle?
The crackle of drums?
Can you hear the audience cheer,
And sing along
As I make the music blaze?

The fire has no opinion about guilt or innocence. It refers to Agnes as a witch because burning witches is the fire’s job. It has no reason to contradict the name the men have given her. The fire’s only goal is to do its job, and it is proud of the effect it has on Agnes and the crowd. To the fire, turning her to ashes that fly up into the sky, like a witch, or fly like dancing feet, is its sign of success. Many of the people involved with the witch trials could not, or chose not to, see the effects their actions had on others. In many ways, the fire is a metaphor for James, having the power of destruction, and caring only about the adulation that the destruction brought him.

In addition to the contemporary poets I read to create this collection, I read several women poets who were writing in the early modern period along with James, with the idea of modeling the styles and themes that were common at that time. Women of the sixteenth century were writing poems about their faith, nature, love, friends, and people they admired. They wrote in a variety of forms that include dialogs, couplets, laments, and sonnets. My poem, “After a Year of Marriage, The Young Queen Anne Attempts a Sonnet,” was written in a sonnet form because I imagine that Queen Anne, who was only fifteen at the time of her marriage, would have been writing in that style. I have not seen any evidence that Queen Anne did write poems, but it seems unlikely that

she did not, considering it was a typical pastime for aristocratic women at that time.

However, my poem is about her disillusionment with her marriage, now that a year has passed, and the romance of a royal wedding has begun to fade. As Queen, Anne knows it is her duty to fulfill her role, including providing the kingdom with its next king. Now she is wondering if this will come to pass:

But coolness has come to our marriage bed:
I fear my dreams will be unreconciled;
suspicions assault my young heart and head
that God may deny the Kingdom a child.

This poem alludes to the rumors that James may have had male lovers, both before and during his marriage. Though James wrote in his book *Basilikón Dōron* that homosexual action was “horrible crimes which ye are bound in conscience never to forgive,” he may have been bisexual. I carry this possibility into the next poem, “Robert Carr, 1st Earl of Somerset, Speaks of The Seven Virtues and the Seven Deadly Sins,” which is written in the voice of one of James’s supposed lover, who is attempting to be discrete:

I am your diligent servant,
waiting for each instant you return my gaze
acknowledge the heat between us.

This poem follows the motif of reflecting on sin, which was also a common theme at the time.

Another woman poet from the period is James’s mother, Mary Queen of Scots. Mary was an accomplished poet in Latin, French, Italian, and Scots. Her poem “In my sweet and sad song,” written in Latin as “En mon triste et do chant,” tells the lamenting story of a loss of a love. In my poem “Agnes Speaks to Her Husband in Heaven on The Night Before Her Death,” Agnes also speaks of a lost love, in this case her husband, and

laments that she did not recognize how short the time they had together would be. She says:

Look up, you would say
See the rabbit in the cloud
My gaze was on my work
On my hands

At the time, Agnes was busy with the day to day work of her life, and now that she knows she will soon be dead, she is hoping to be reunited with her lost love in heaven, asking:

Will I soon be with you
In that place beyond the clouds?
Will the sky be blue beneath our feet
Or grey like the water of the North Sea?

In her religious environment, Presbyterian Protestantism, Agnes would have probably been wondering if she would go to heaven to be with her husband or be doomed to hell for eternity.

Not all the poems in the collection are written in poetic styles common in the sixteenth century. While writing poetry was a common pastime for the privileged people of Agnes's time, such as James and Anne, common people like Agnes would have had very little exposure to sonnets or rhyming couplets. In their daily lives there would be prayers and working songs, such as the sea shanty and the waulking song, so I gave some personas their voices in ways that would be familiar to them. The dwarf has a riddle because, as a court fool figure, he would be expected to share gossip and news, as well as his pithy insights, in a way that would entertain. I used free verse for poems which were supposed to reflect a persona's regular speech, such as The Witch-Pricker, or that would provide introspection, such as in the sexton's poem and Gellis and David's poems. Elva,

the garden, and the fire would have no traditional poetic forms, so I used free verse to reflect their lack of expected syntactical structure. To fully express the voices of these persona, the structure and form had to fit the content.

Two poems had difficult content which required delving into specific forms that would not be considered typical of 1590's Scotland. In the poem, "The Thoughts of the Members of the Assize During Agnes's Trial," my goal was to show the thoughts of this group of men as they sat through the proceedings. This group was expected to speak their verdict at the end of the trial with a single voice, but at the same time, they all had their own thoughts as the trial went on. I chose to put them in a villanelle because the form allows each man to have his own thoughts, but the poem ends with them all in the same thought, "Our time is wasted by this woman's denial, let us bring a swift end to this trial." Though the term villanelle had not yet been attached to this form of poetry (that would come in 1606 with Jean Passerat's poem "Villanelle (J'ay perdu ma Tourterelle)"), they, as privileged men, would have been familiar with the French songs and dances on which the form was based. The form balances their thoughts, their privileged access to French culture, and their roles as the working gentry or rising middle class.

The three days Agnes was tortured by being kept awake and chained to a wall with her head locked in a device called a Scold, Branks, or a Witches Bridle, was another difficult topic on which to write a poem. The Scold was an iron head covering that included spiked prongs which went into the wearer's cheeks and tongue, piercing them if she tried to speak. Agnes was not allowed to sleep while wearing the device, even though sleep deprivation was not considered torture by the Scottish courts. I had been having a challenging time figuring out how to portray Agnes's experiences over those three days

in the bridle, but then I read Quentin's chapter in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Quentin's mind slowly degrades as he goes through the day preparing for his suicide. His thoughts touch on many things from his past, both reality and fantasy until, by the end of the chapter, he has so fallen into his own mind, that the past becomes the here and now. His *was* becomes his *is*. In the stream of consciousness piece called "Three Days in the Witches Bridle," I give that same effect as I depict Agnes's response to the torture and lack of rest over those three days. The prose poem begins with Agnes describing her situation, praying, and remembering the events of her trial:

*Curia Justicie supremi domini nostri regis, tenta in pretorio de
Edinburgh 27 Januarii....*

I don't know these words, these court words. I know nothing of court.
These men, these judges, these Assize.

Magistrum Umphridem Humphrey Blynshelias

Afraid to look at me, walking backwards, stripped naked, so I can't put a
spell on them. This judge, these men, these cowards.

Justiciarum deputatum

Accusations fly like bats, crows. Black and harsh, fleeing away from truth,
light.

As the three days of sleeplessness progress, marked by the description of changes in the dim light of the room from grey days to black nights, "Grey has come again; stone, worm wood, the under feathers of a dove," Agnes slowly loses track of her thoughts and begins to imagine that the accusations against her are true and she has actual memories of them. Using a stream of consciousness form, I was able to depict the degradation of Agnes's mind in ways that a poetic form from the period would have been unable to convey.

Sprinkled throughout this poem are bits of a prayer that is attributed to Agnes in the court Dittay, a variation on the Apostles' Creed she supposedly used while she was healing the sick. Though the record does not say if this prayer was admitted to the court by Agnes or someone else, combined with evidence about her use of charms and herbs, it does attest to the fact that Agnes was living in a world where Christian faith and belief in magic were not mutually exclusive.

Was Agnes a witch? This is a question that I have had to ponder often in the creation of this collection. The short answer is no: She did not create the storms at sea, she did not curse people and cause their death, she did not kiss the devil's buttocks and swear to serve him. At the same time the question is more complex. She used charms, herbs, and incantations. It was said she claimed to be able to cure bewitchments, and she likely believed in elves and fairies. According to the court record, she supposedly knew, without being told, what the new queen had whispered to the king in the privacy of their bedchamber on their wedding night.

The events of the trial, as reported in *Newes from Scotland*, "were so miraculous and strange" that it seems easy to dismiss them as the superstitions and fanatical beliefs of a bygone age. However, for Agnes and the other accused, these events and beliefs were very real and the reactions to them had significant consequences. By the end of the court proceedings, after the torture, shaving and inspection by a witch-pricker, the accusations and testimony against her by supposed friends, the January cold of her prison, and the constant fear, she must have known that, no matter what she said, her life and death were at the whim of the King.

Agnes might have begun to wonder if she were indeed a witch. But I doubt it. According to *Newes from Scotland*, almost to the end she “stood stiffely in the deniall of all that was laide to her charge.” Her confession came in a moment when she realized her denials were meaningless, that the men of the Assize and the King considered her guilty and her only hope for mercy, hope for a swift death, was confession. The erasures at the end of the collection are an attempt to bring Agnes’s voice back into the story, to allow her to address the people who killed her and have her say, to, as Rushdie said, “bring voice to the voiceless”.

Rumor has it that Agnes’s ghost haunts Holyrood Palace, the sight of her trial, torment and execution. She supposedly appears, naked and bald, to people who have suffered an injustice. As recently as 2014 her ghost was seen limping down the corridors. Is this Agnes trying to tell her side of the story? Is she trying to find her voice, after it was so brutally taken from her? Perhaps. Perhaps these poems will give her a chance to have her voice heard again and give her some peace.

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AGNES

*All kinds of ill that ever may be,
In Christs name I conjure thee.
I conjure thee, both more and less,
With all the virtues of the mass;
And right so by the nails sore
That nailed Jesus and no more;
And right so by the same blood
That reeked over the ruthful rood.
Forth of the flesh and of the bone
And in the earth and in the stone,
I conjure thee in God's name.*

- attributed to Agnes Sampson

Agnes's Prayer for Safe Childbearing

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; — Genesis 3:16

Holy and Gentle Mother Mary,
Bless this caudle I give her to drink
Bless Fenugreek, Black Cohosh, Raspberry Leaf
the honey gathered in the light of the waning moon
bless it to ease her pains, and pains this night to come.

Bless the women, the Gossips
Gathered around, mothers all
As they ease her back, cool her brow, sooth her fears
Share stories of births and babes
While the sun sets and the moon grows high.

Bless the charms
The Mary drift nuts, rare gifts from the sea
The salt sprinkled around the bed
The green thread, the Rowan wood
That chase away the fairies and halt the changeling's mischief.

Bless our prayers
The Bible tucked tight under the pillow
The prayers to Saint Margaret
Saint Brigit, Saint Anne
May it please the Almighty God.

Holy Mother Mary
Bless these hands to their work
So this mother be delivered safe and whole
The bairn's welcome truly made.
Amen.

JAMES VI

*thereby, so farre as I can, to resolue the doubting harts
-Daemonologie*

The Ballad of the Wiley Witch

VI

'Twas Fifteen Hundred eight-nine
That James our 'loved King,
Called for his young bride, Princess Anne
From Kronburg Castle keep.
We swabbed our decks and raised the flag
No ripples touched the foam,
We welcomed on our Lady fair,
And set our sails for home

Chorus:

*Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.*

V2

Then suddenly the winds blew wild
The skies turned stormy grey
The blackest clouds we'd ever seen
Made night of noontime day.
The sea came up, the hail came down
The Queen fell to her knees,
She prayed to God that we'd survive
These hell-begotten seas.

Chorus:

*Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.*

V3

"Batten down the hatches boys"
called Captain from the wheel,
we furled the main sheet to the mast
For fear it'd split the keel,
"Heave to, me mates! and ring the bell,
We must protect our Queen"
We fought the storm to hell and back
'til calmness ruled the seas.

Chorus:

*Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.*

V4

As Greeks speak of Leander's love
Drown'd swimmin' for the light
The King feared for his Lady's life,
Paced cliffs both day and night.
He called for fasting and for prayer,
He called his troubadour
to sing to God to spare the life
Of his *Cherie Amour*.

Chorus:
*Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.*

The winds grew calm the sky was blue
No ripples touched the foam
The Good King sailed with scores of men
To bring his new queen home
He found her on the leeward shore
Kissed her the Scottish way,
And vowed to hang the wily witch
Who'd marred his wedding day.

Chorus:
*Will I ever touch the green again?
Will I ever see the shore?
The winds from hell will sink us down
I'll kiss my love no more.*

After a Year of Marriage, The Young Queen Anne Attempts a
Sonnet

— *For James*

Came precious love, to this girl of fourteen
day dreams of knights kept sweet time in my heart;
He is the King who called me to be Queen;
I fell to the aimings of sly Cupid's dart.
Hours consumed scripting his name with mine,
flourishes, curlicues, serifs abound,
my hand writes our love, our heart's will entwine,
enduring love, built on more than a crown.
But coolness has come to our marriage bed:
I fear my dreams will be unreconciled;
suspicions assault my young heart and head
that God may deny the Kingdom a child.
My Lord James is slaking his lust in sin
not in our bed, but in those of his men.

Robert Carr, 1st Earl of Somerset, Speaks of
The Seven Virtues and the Seven Deadly Sins
— *For James*

I am patient,
though I smolder in my lust for you.
My desire seethes beneath a placid surface,
forcing a chastity I wish to discard.
My eyes follow you,
greedily devouring your every smile,
your every glance my way.
Insatiably hunting down any contact,
gluttonously hording each encounter in my heart.

I am your diligent servant,
waiting for each instant you return my gaze
acknowledge the heat between us.
I am prideful of my temperance,
crowing my restraint to all,
wallowing in my humility as your eyes tell me
Wait.

I avoid idleness,
charitably doling out kindnesses
to your sycophants as a penance
for my envy of every little attention you give them.
I am angry at them for pulling you away from me.
Angry enough to kill?
No, of course not, that would be a sin.

DECEMBER 1590

After this her confession, she was committed to prison, wheee she continued for a season, where immediatly she accused these persons following to be notorious witches, and caused them foorthwith to be apprehended one after an other, vidz. Agnis Sampson the eldest Witch of them al,

- Newes From Scotland 1591

David Seaton: An Accusation

I swear it is true.
I am Bailiffe
 (an upright man)
In Trentent Town
 (a Godly man)
I keep the Law
 (a lonely man)
She was my maid
Lived in my house
By my good grace.
 (she barely saw me)
She healed the sick
 (those gentle hands)
Too easily, to soon
Unnatural things?
Unlawful means?
 (Why did she leave me?)
coaxed the truth
From her hands With Pilliwinckes
From her head with corde
She would not confess
 (she had a lover)
Until I found the devil's mark
Proof of his kiss
Upon her throat.

God save the King
God save us all
From her wickedness.
 (from my lust for her touch)

Geillis Duncan: The Confession After Torture

I swear it is true
 (please stop the pain)
I am a witch
 (I am only a girl)
I fly through the night
 *(To my love
 Hiding, waiting,
 hoping for our day to come)*
Bring curses with a twist of my hand
 *(I was a healer
 soothing the sick
 from their pain)*

You say:
I killed the cat
 (no)
passed the candle
 (no)
Played my music

We danced
John
 (my teacher)
Barbara
 (my friend)
Agnes
 (wise, wise Agnes)
My Love
 (my love)

*(My hands were beautiful
Bringing comfort
Coaxing music from the Jews Harp
Touching my Love.
You broke them
You twisted them

because they would not touch you)*

Elva Witnesses Agnes's Arrest

Her scent is here
Strong on the bed where we slept,
Fresh on the hem of her shawl
Hanging in its place by the left open door

I roll my fur on the threshold to own it

Her piss stinks a trail where they dragged her across the grass
The fetid of men still hangs in the air
Their loud voices stick in my back brain
 Go they yell
 Devil dog they yell

Throwing sticks at my head
They carry her away

Her screams punched my ears

I howl my pain to the sky

I follow the scent of her fear sweat
I find her by the smell of her blood

She gave rough scratching on the lump above my tail
Soft words in her breath

I will carry her garden between the pads of my paws

She is mine
I will find her
I will bring her home

Agnes's Herb Garden Laments

Together we brought life
Now I lay fallow, waiting
Under the cold winter sun

Before, hands working my soil
Breaking my clumps, kneading me
Until I was smooth, pliant, ready to receive

You brought seeds and seedlings to me
Trusted them to my love and care
And I, in return, held them fast

When their roots spread within me
I gave way, kept them cool
Brought food, held water

I was the alchemy for women's charms
To sooth the pain of bringing bairns
To stop the ones not meant to be

Juniper, tansy, pennyroyal
Wild mint and rue
Mustard and artemisia

I will lie here alone and wait
Wait for rain, wait for sun
Wait for you to come home

Agnes's First Night in Haddington Tollbooth

At first just the edge of the moon peeks in
Illuminating the window high above me
Slowly bathing the stone wall in light
I reach high as my chains allow
Soon her soft glow
Touches my
Finger tips
Knuckles
Pads
Palm
Wrist
And then
Disappears from my skin
As she escapes across the sky

JANUARY 1591

...but stood stiffely in the deniall of all that was laide to her charge: wherupon they caused her to be conueied awaye to prison, there to receiue such torture as hath been lately prouided for witches in that country: and forasmuch as by due examination of witchcraft and witches in Scotland,

— News from Scotland, 1591

The Witch-Pricker Inspects Agnes

*Whereupon they, suspecting she had been marked by the devil (as commonly
witches are), made a diligent search around her, and found the enemie's mark
– News from Scotland 1591*

*Step Up good gentlemen,
Step Right Up
And Behold a sight
So Horrible!
So Strange!
So Wicked
You'll hold it fast in your heart
And tell it to your grandchildren
When you dandle them on your knee!*

I call them 'round like a showman
at the Lammastide Fair
Not that they need an invitation
They know what's to come

*I warn you that you are about to see Proof
Yes, Proof!
That the Devil works among us!*

I like the young ones best
They twist and cry
Pleading their case
Professing innocence
High drama for these bored folks

*Come one, Come all
See the Hag! See the Witch!
Accused by good men
This Wyse woman
This Cunning woman*

This old woman, not as much fun

*See! As I shave her bald
Watch! As I inspect her skin
Where has the devil hid his mark?
Belly? Arms? Eyelids?
Hold her feet, We'll check her womb!*

*Careful they tell me
Don't shave off the mark
I taught them that*

*(Move woman
Cry)*

Will she feel the pain when I prick her skin?
Is she his servant? Will she bleed?
Only the Devil knows!

*(I'll prick her skin slow
Give the audience their show —
Men only though
This is no place for a girl)*

Robert Dixon – Assizer* and Witness for the Prosecution

Summer last I suffered
with sickness in my bowels
my life slowly draining away
surgeons came
doing nothing
no hope for cure.

She said I was bewitched
by the mother of my bairn
or her mother
or someone
look for grains in your doublet
She advised
stop wearing it and the sickness will cease.

Now, she sits before us
shivering in the dock
should I speak on her behalf?

Should I say she is kind
say her magic is white
say she saved my life with wisdom
and the hand of God?

What choice do I have?
If I protect her
I may be next.

*A Judge, there were seventeen Azzisa in Agnes's court record

A Waulking Song*

*(Agnes) Confirms raising of the devil in form of a black dog at the death of old
Lady Edmiston – Examination of Agnes Sampson, January 1591*

Good old Lady Edmiston
Took to sickness in her bed
Took to sickness in her bed
Saint Mary save her soul

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Sisters called for Agnes then
She came in the evening hò
She came in the evening hò
Came to heal our La-dy

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Agnes told the ladies hò
Gather in the garden then
Gather in the garden then
For to save your La-dy

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Agnes called “Hola Hola”
Then the devil he arose
Then the devil he arose
Crawled out of the well

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too*

*Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Better dig her grave he said
Said your lady soon will die
Said your lady soon will die
Her life will be o-ver

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Said a sister too must die
Pay his fee with one of them
Pay his fee with one of them
Carry one to hell now

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, girls
Someday he will come for you*

Agnes banished him away
Turned him to a howling dog
Turned him to a howling dog
Called him her Sweet Elva

*Praying for our Lady hò
Praying for her sisters too
Praying 'gainst the devil, ' girls
Someday he will come for you*

*Women would gather in groups to waterproof fabric by waulking or fulling the cloth; soaking it in urine and beating it on a table while passing it around the circle. Often songs would be created about current events or gossip to pass the time and keep the rhythm.

The Thoughts of the Assiza January 27, 1591

Must we listen again to the woman's denial
When the King knows her witching is true?
Let us bring a swift end to this trial.

Every word from her mouth is falseness and guile,
While these cold, honest witnesses wait in a queue.
Must we listen to this old woman's denial?

Talk of witches and spells turn my innards to bile,
Or did she cast a curse on me, too?
Let us bring a swift end to this trial.

She stands there so calm, collected, and poised
While we doze off from nothing to do.
Must we listen to the witch's denial?

The smells coming off her are putrid and vile
Oh, when will *my* suffering be through?
Let us bring a swift end to this trial.

Burn her, hang her, send her into exile,
Who cares? Just get rid of the shrew.
Our time is wasted by this woman's denial,
Let us bring a swift end to this trial.

Three Days in the Witches Bridle

The iron presses cold, feeding the January air into my cheeks, colder than any heat that has ever bloomed fevered in my forehead. My skin shrinks away, retreats against my skull. Only the spikes in my mouth are warm, heated by my shaking breath and the blood that fills my mouth, choking me with every cough and swallow.

Confess he screams, so close his wet hot breath enters my mouth. I steal myself against inhale, willing his hatred away from my lungs. My shoulders rigid, my legs determined. No, I am not a witch. I will not please this man by pleading so. His rancid spittle pelts my cheeks, glistens in his mustache and beard, I blink against the onslaught. The smell of it tells me he has a rotting tooth, one I could heal with some honey and thyme.

It was hours ago they brought me here. Hours? Only minutes? There was sun then, I remember, sun I saw when they dragged me from the courtroom and across the yard by the bindings on my hands, to this dark place, this tiny hell. They tied me tight, feet flat on the dirt. They locked my head in the bridle and mounted it to the wall. The spiked bit presses against my tongue, piercing if I speak. They have taken my voice, my words from my mouth, leaving only the bitterness of iron, the copper of blood.

Grey dimness turned to black; Razorbill feathers, Elva's fur, a moonless night.

I am alone. Why leave a guard to watch me, when this hood of iron holds me in place? Why keep a man awake, when he can rise, refreshed from his bed, to do their bidding another day? I have no hope of sleep. Even a slight relaxing of my knees presses the spikes in, bringing fresh pain, flowing blood. Alone I could finally cry, if there were tears to be had, but no, sadness has no place here, only anger and God will sustain me.

*I trow in almighty God that wrought
Both heaven and earth and all of nought
Into his dear son, Christ Jesu,
Into that anaplie lord I trow...*

Slow. Steady. Fold my elbows. Reach hands to my face. Swollen fingers. Nails bloody and torn. Raise the chin of the mask. Lift spikes from tongue. Gulp dusty stale air. Breathe in decay, rot. I miss my home. It smells of herbs and clean wood burning.

*Curia Justicarie supremi domini nostri regis, tenta in pretorio de Edinburgh 27
Januarii....*

I don't know these words, these court words. I know nothing of court. These men, these judges, these Assize.

Magistrum Umphridem Humphrey Blynshelis

Afraid to look at me, walking backwards, stripped naked, so I can't put a spell on them.
This judge, these men, these cowards.

Justiciarum deputatum

Accusations fly like bats, crows. Black and harsh, fleeing away from truth, light.

*You called to your master, "Haul! Hola" and pulled him from hell on a heavy cord.
What did you say when he asked if they had been good servants? You danced masked in
the kirk yard. Confess! Geillis Duncan played the trump, John Fian led the dance, we
know it's true! Confess. You quarreled with the devil, threatened to renounce him, but
obey him just the same. We have it on good authority. Confess. Confess!*

Meg, Kat, Jonat and young Geillis, sweet Geillis, yawning, head nodding, after a moon lit
tryst with her love. Now they hide, black my name from their lips. *Keep them safe,
Father God.*

*That night you sailed from North Berwick in a boat of smoke and stone, drank wine with
the devil, raised the wind, perished ships, and was back in your bed before dawn.*

The people of the town pretend they never knew me, pretend I never healed their bodies,
their hearts, their souls. But then, then yes, they came to me for herbs and charms, for
poultices and prayer. Yes, I knew who would live. Who would die. It's clear to anyone
who knows how to look. I can see death in their eyes.

*Please, you must come, my son is so ill. I cannot help him, William. You must pray, I will
pray. Only the Lord can cure one who is elfshot. Pray? Pray? You'd better pray, woman,
you'd better pray he lives.*

My arms are shaking, the ice-cold iron trembles against my face. My eyes fill as my arms
lower and the spikes again bite deep, bringing pain, blood. How long is this night? How
high is the moon? Sleep beckons. I must resist.

*Was gotten of the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary...*

Like vigil for a babe, waiting, singing, applying salves, praying through the night. So
many babies, so many mothers young and old, trusting my cunning, trusting the old ways.
Alison Ker, no witchcraft, just fear of a husband with a weighty hand. Goodwife
Cameron, too young to be a mother, went home with a healthy bairn, though she left on
crutches. Isobel, her husband would rather see her dead than squeeze a cent from his
greedy fist.

Agnes, Agnes, please, I cannot take this anymore. James, you must get the doctor, this is beyond my skill. No, she's best left to your hands. And he's not worth the price.

Will they come back with the dawn? How long 'til dawn?

*Stoppit to heaven that all well then
And sits at his Father's right hand
He bade us come and there to doom
Both quick and dead, as he thought convene...*

The kirk is easy to picture. Plain benches, wooden door in the back, modest cross in the front. Quiet, humble prayers. The dead lay outside beneath the trees and the grass, patiently waiting for their next companion. My husband lies there, his sister, my father...

*And syne to rise in flesh and bone
The life that never more has gane
Thou sayest Lord...*

Grey has come again; stone, worm wood, the under feathers of a dove.

Breathe. Pray. Wait.

*Thou cost me on the holy cross
And lent me body soul and voice
And ordained me to heavens bliss
Where for I thank thee, Lord, of this...*

Staring into the dim, the empty, my eyes. Just close them, rest them. Brace my feet, back hard against the wall, rest my eyes, don't sleep, rest my eyes.

A boy? A girl? A girl. You look hungry, but pups always are. Come on then, let's get you fed. What to call you? Fresh from your mother you are, just a bit of black. What should we call you, then? Blackie? No. Selkie? No. Elva? Elva.

Elva! Blood flows fresh, fills my mouth, runs over my chin. Eyes, traitorous eyes, you were only supposed to rest.

Confess! Item 33. When did the devil first come to you? Did he promise you riches, safety, prosperity? Revenge? Did you believe him, you stupid witch, you hag, you woman?

Black; horse beetles, nightshade, my jailer's rotting soul.

My feet have left me. Wandered together out into the night, leaving me here on wooden stumps. The court yard is empty, they won't be seen. Too low for the gate guards to notice. They'll wander the town. To the woods? To the shore? Home to Elva?

*Thou Lord, for...
Thou Lord...
Thou Lord...*

At the shore! Confess. Tied the heart to the baptized cat, tossed it to the waves, danced...

Take my hand!
One two one two, that's right,
lift your knees,
follow the harp,
one two one, one two one, stretch, lift, bend.
John, beat the drum!
Geillis, faster now!
One two one, one two one,
take my hand, take my hand,
John, the drum's too loud, stop the drumming, stop the drum....

Grey; Ash, old bones, the sea. Outside the door, sounds.

*To keep me from sin and worldly shame
And endless damnation
Grant me the joy that will never be gane
Sweet Jesus Christus...*

Dwarf William Gibson Offers the Court A Riddle after King James Has a
Private Audience with Agnes

The witch has whispered in his ear,
Words he'll naught want us to hear.
The truth about his wedding night!
Was his young bride a'full of fright?
For her his passions would not rise?
Did he not lay between her thighs?
Just Witch and King know truth from lies
Guess which one lives, and which one dies?

JANUARY 28, 1591

the said Agnes was ordained by the justice pronounced by the mouth of James Shiel, dempster, to be taken to the castle of Edinburgh and these bound to a stake and worried while she was dead, and thereafter her body to be burned to ashes and all her moveable goods to be escheat and inbright to our sovereign lord's use - January 27, 1591

Agnes Speaks To Her Husband In Heaven On The Night Before Her Death

*In my sweet and sad song, Of most lamenting tone, Mary Stuart, Queen
of Scots*

When I could 'ever see the sky
I thought blue was blue was blue
Look up, you would say
See the rabbit in the cloud
My gaze was on my work
On my hands

Busy with the work of women
The garden, babes,
The sick, the lame,
Drying herbs for poultices and tinctures, prayers
Always prayers
There was little time for cloud watching

No lazy days gazing at clouds
No lying down in white heather
Aye, from sunrise to gloaming
keeping my eyes on the path
sleeping during star and moon

You courted with bouquets
of sweet gale and thistle,
wrapped me in wool
of white, black and green
whispering stories of kelpies
promised a future of dreams

Will I soon be with you
In that place beyond the clouds?
Will the sky be blue beneath our feet
Or grey like the water of the North Sea?

The Fire Sings Agnes's Immolation

I begin a soft ember
Like the quiet voice of a Jew's Harp
Tucked deep in a cheek

Men brighten my flame
Encourage the tune
Force the rhythm
temper the melody

Listen, can you hear
The pipes in my sizzle?
The crackle of drums?
Can you hear the audience cheer,
And sing along
As I make the music blaze?

Watch the witch dance
My heat moves the air
sways her blood
Blushes her cheeks
Animates flesh and bone

My Flames leap
From the soles of her feet
See how she twists and turns
Terpsichorean at my touch
Knees lift, arms strain to stretch
palms plead to God

Watch me make her fly

The Sexton of Greyfriars Kirkyard

'Tis the job.
I dig the graves.
I ring the bell
To call the mourners.
Simple as that.

A well dug grave is
Tall as a man,
Long as a man,
Wide enough to lower the box.
Simple as that.

No singing,
No readings,
Just honest company.
Hate sin — the cause of death —
Fear the judgement of God.
Simple as that.

I don't think much
Of all this burning.
Scooping up the ashes
Tossing them in the river,
No one pays for that.
No one comes to mourn
These dead.

AGNES ERASES JAMES

Agnis Sampson confessed before the Kings Maiestie sundrye thinges which were so miraculous and strange, as that his Maiestie saide they were all extreame lyars, wherat she answered, she would not wishe his Maiestie to suppose her woords to be false -Newes From Scotland 1591

contrary Wyndes hindered the Queene com to Scotland

sacred heauen
breathe Poets brests blowe
Wherethrough all things inferiour in degrie
As vassalls vnto them doe hommage showe
There songs enchants Apollos selfe ye knowe
And chaste Dianas coache can haste or staye
Can change the course of Planets high or lowe
And make the earthe obeye them euerie waye
Make rockes to danse, hugge hills to skippe and playe
Beasts, foules, and fishe to followe them allwhere
Though thus the heauen, the sea, and earthe obeye,
Yett mutins the midde region of the aire.
What hatefull Juno, Æolus entiseth
Wherby contrarious Zephyre thus ariseth.

Sonnet 1

contrary Wyndes hindered the Queene com to Scotland

James VI

From sacred throne in heauen Empyrick hie
A breathe diuine in Poets brests does blowe
Wherethrough all things inferiour in degrie
As vassalls vnto them doe hommage showe
There songs enchants Apollos selfe ye knowe
And chaste Dianas coache can haste or staye
Can change the course of Planets high or lowe
And make the earthe obeye them euerie waye
Make rockes to danse, hugge hills to skippe and playe
Beasts, foules, and fishe to followe them allwhere
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What hatefull Juno, Æolus entiseth
Wherby contrarious Zephyre thus ariseth.

[Redacted]
 [Redacted]
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 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 All [Redacted] lying [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted] causde [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 This [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted] vwork [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 On me [Redacted] sin [Redacted] bee dravvne
 [Redacted] be not [Redacted]
 [Redacted]:
 [Redacted] to be.

FINIS.

SONNET
XXVI

[A sonnet on Du Bartas]
James VI

Since ye immortall sisters nine hes left
 All other countries lying farre or nere:
 To follvv him vvho from them all you reft,
 And novv hes causde your residence be here
 VVho though a straunger yet he lovde so dere
 This Realme and me, so as he spoilde his avvne,
 And all the brookes & banks, & fountains clere
 That be therein of you as he hath shavvne
 in this his vwork: then let your breath be blavvne,
 In recompence of this his vvilling minde
 On me: that sine may vvith my pen bee dravvne
 His praise: for though himselfe be not inclynde

Nor preaseth but to touch the Laurer tre:
Yet vvell he merits crownd thervvith to be.

FINIS.

To the Queene, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] blessed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] gracious Queene
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] how soone [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] protect [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
A [REDACTED] [REDACTED] female [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] sacred [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] blesse [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Mine [REDACTED] please [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

To the Queene, Anonimos

That blessed houre when first was brought to light
Our earthlie Juno, and our gracious Queene
Three Goddesses how soone they hade her seene
Contended who protect her shoulde by right
Bot being as Goddesses of equall might
And as of female sexe like stiffe in will
It was agreed by sacred Phœbus skill
To ioyne there powers to blesse that blessed wight.
Then happie Monarch sprung of Ferguse race
That talkes with wise Minerue when pleaseth the
And when thou list some Princelie sporte to see
Thy chaste Diana rides with the in chase
Then when to bed thou gladlie does repaire
Clasps in thine armes thy Cytherea faire.

Constant
 Now disdain
 His colde
 deaz'd
 face.
 And
 his
 deade
 hart
 that threatn
 to
 burne,
 me

Constant Loue in all Conditions

Now doeth disdainfull Saturne sadd and olde
 With ycie bearde enioye his frosen raigne
 His hoarie haire and snowie mantle colde
 Ou'rcouers hills and euerie pleasant plaine
 Whiles deaz'd with frost, whiles droun'd with rapping raine
 Doe beasts and birds bewaile there carefull cace
 With longsume lookes in houpe to see againe
 Sweete sauoured Flora showe her aimeled face.

And looke how long they are in this estate,
This dolent season so there courage dants
That now no Cupide with his golden bate
Darr make there harts his harbour where he hants
Bot rather deade as are the trees and plants,
There spirits of life must hide them at the hart
Wherethrough there kindlie courage daylie scants
Whill mounting Phœbus make them to reuert.
And shall I then like birde or beast forgett
For anie stormes that threatning heauen can send
That obiect sweete, wheron my hart is sett
Whome for to serue my senses all I bend
My inward flame with colde it dothe contend
The more it burnes, the more restrain'd it be
No winters frost, nor sommers heate can end
Or staye the course of constant loue in me



TO THE QUEENE

I am a patient of your grace
 Who could not quench that burning flame
 Which onlie ye by sympathie ease
 So I can troubled be with no disease
 Bot ye my onlie Medicinar remains
 And easilie when ever that ye please
 May salve my sores and mitigatt my paines
 Your smiling is an antidote againes
 The Melancholie that opresseth me
 And when a raging wrathe into me raignes
 Your loving lookes may make me calme to be

[III]

TO THE QUEENE

As on the wings of your enchanting fame
 I was transported ou'r the stormie seas
 Who could not quench that restles burning flame
 Which onlie ye by sympathie did ease
 So I can troubled be with no disease
 Bot ye my onlie Medicinar remains
 And easilie when ever that ye please
 May salve my sores and mitigatt my paines
 Your smiling is an antidote againes
 The Melancholie that opresseth me
 And when a raging wrathe into me raignes
 Your loving lookes may make me calme to be

How oft you see me have an heavie hart
Remember then sweete Doctour on your art.

An Epitaphe
[redacted]

Thou [redacted] braue
[redacted]
And thou [redacted] knowledge [redacted]
[redacted]
Lament for [redacted]
Whome in, [redacted]
[redacted] vnexpected fall
I neede [redacted] remembrance [redacted]
[redacted], [redacted], [redacted] houpe [redacted] of [redacted]
[redacted] cruell deathe [redacted]
[redacted], [redacted], [redacted]
[redacted] doeth [redacted] rest
[redacted] euermore [redacted].

An Epitaphe on Sr Philip Sidney
James VI

Thou mightie Mars the God of souldiours braue
And thou Minerue that does in witt excell
And thou Apollo that does knowledge haue
Of euerie art that from Parnassus fell
With all the Sisters that theron doe dwell
Lament for him who dewlie seru'd yow all
Whome in, yow wiselie all your arts did mell
Bewaile I saye his vnexpected fall
I neede not in remembrance for to call
His youth, his race, the houpe hade of him aye
Since that in him doeth cruell deathe appall
Both manhoode, witt, and learning euerie waye
Now in the bed of honour doeth he rest
And euermore of him shall liue the best.

An epitaphe

procure death

For thou

honoured vertues
doe not spaire
such a life
Bot here my greefe make me
to paye.

An epitaphe on John Shaw

A vertuous life procures a happie deathe
And raires to loftie skies there noble name
Then blest is he who looseth thus his breathe
Though to his friends it be a grieffe the same
This may be saide of thy immortall fame
Who here reposes closed in honours laire
For as of trewe and noble race thou came

So honestie and trueth was all thy caire
Thy kinn was honoured by thy vertues raire
Thy place of creditt did thy friends defend.
Then noble mindes aspire and doe not spaire
With such a life to conquise such an end
Bot here my inward greefe does make me staye
I minde with deeds, and not with wordes to paye.

Constant [redacted]

Now [redacted] disdain [redacted]

His [redacted] colde

[redacted] deaz'd [redacted]

[redacted] face.

And [redacted],

[redacted] his [redacted]

[redacted] deade [redacted]

[redacted] hart

[redacted] that threatn [redacted]

[redacted] to [redacted]

[redacted] burn [redacted]

[redacted] me

Constant Loue in all Conditions

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With ycie bearde enioye his frosen raigne
His hoarie haire and snowie mantle colde
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My inward flame with colde it dothe contend
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No winters frost, nor sommers heate can end
Or staye the course of constant loue in me

■ ■■■■■ AGAINST THE COULD THAT WAS IN JANUARY ■■■■■

How cruel the
loathsome
cancered Kinge
That
wont to quesnch and
freeze us
Refuses foode to
The
starving
Curst bee
That creatur

A SONET AGAINST THE COULD THAT WAS IN JANUARY 1616

How cruelly these catiffs doe conspire
What loathsome love breeds such a baleful band,
Betwixt the cancered Kinge of Creta land
That melancholyould and angry syre
And him who wont to quesnch debaite and ire
Amongst the Romains when his ports were clos'd
But now his double face is still dispos'd
With Saterns helpe to freeze us at the fire
The earth or'e-covered with a sheete of snow
Refuses foode to fowl to bird and beast
The chillinge cold lets every thing to grow
A surfets cattil with a starving feast
Curst bee that Love and may't continue short
That kills all creaturs and doth spoile our sport.

Die

My cries and groans

raging

My griefs grewe
in my hart

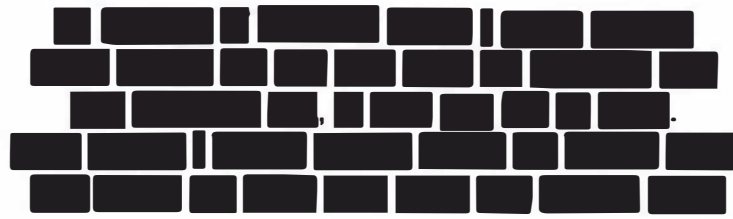
Thus am I tortured
without
houpe

What houpe can I looke for
a monstre amongs men
My state can neuer change

I onlie houpe for
death
my miserie
endles
my paine growes
in
hell

men
constant
lye.

willfull lye
so lowd a lye
How soone flames



A Dier at her M:ties desyer
James VI

If mourning might amend my harde vnhappie cace
Or if complaining coulde appease Dame Fortunes frowning face
Then shoulde I neuer cease by songs and sonnets still
With my to iust conceaued regraits the earthe and aire to fill
My cairfull cries and grones shoulde make the rockes rebounde
The montains riue and all the earth with Echoes to resounde
No Orpheus charming notes for his departed wife
Nor raging Roland for his loue that ledd so madd a life
No not the worlde in one compared should neuer be
Vnto the mone that I shoulde make, suche passions martyrs me
Bot what can that awaile except for to renewe
My olde and deeplie rooted griefs that els to gladlie grewe
To rankle wp the sore that lurkes into my hart
And as a cancer make it spreade abroade in euerie part.
What wrathe haue all the Gods conceaued at me allace
That makes me loue where hatred dwells, and pittie hath no place
Ô if she were bot faire, or if she were bot false
Bot faire and false torments me thus and holdes me by the halse
If beautie as it ought with bountie coupled ware
Then suirlie she wolde pittie take on my consuming caire
Or if she wear but false and lacking Venus grace
Then woulde I not haue bene abused by her enchanting face
Thus am I tortured still, I mourne without remeade
My languour lackes one graine of houpe to mixe with daylie dreade

My teares getts no regarde, my sighs can haue no eare
And in one houre is quite forgott my seruice manie a yeare
What houpe can rest behinde, what may I looke for then
Bot be a butt to heauenlie plagues, a monstre amongs men

My state can neuer change my griefs are bot begunne
 Thus casten is my luckles lott that woefull weirds haue spunne
 Away with comfort then and wellcome colde dispaire
 And since I can haue no delight, lett me delight in caire
 My mirth in murning be, my ioye in dolours deepe
 I will with sadd and sorie sighs my selfe from languour keepe
 And for my cheefest sports to minde then will I bring syne
 As in a roll my whole mishaps, then like a swanne them sing
 My houpe is whole transformed in blacke and colde dispaire
 Except I onlie houpe for deathe to end continuall caire:
 No, death he must not haste, my mischiefs woulde he mend
 It best becumes my miserie to duine before I end
 Yett if the endles smart and sorrowe I sustaine
 Were suffered for some worthie wight, I happie wolde remaine
 I wolde me happie thinke if thus I martyred ware
 For some sweete Sainct in sacrifice that both were good and faire
 Bot ô allace my paine and restles griefe it growes
 For her who neuer once on me a louing thought bestowes
 Yett lett not this dishart no happie man in loue that
 Who finds a maike that will not change, nor for no chance remoue.
 All wemen are in ouers, in vertue sume excell
 And sume in vices may ou'rmatche the greatest Diuell in hell

The blessedest creatures made by God the Angells ware
 The cursedest creatures in the worlde the fallen Angells are
 For me I onlie craue a spectacle to be
 Wherin as in á masse confused all miseries men may see
 And when my happ shall be to goe to wished graue
 Which is the onelie happie chance I euer wishe to haue
 That then the passenger may reade in going by
 For true and honest constant loue, this patient here does lye.
 the sonnett lakkis heere quhiche interprettis all the matter

My Muse hath made a willfull lye I grante,
 I sung of sorrows neuer felt by me;
 I haue as great occasion for to wante,
 My loue begunne my blessing for to be.
 How can I then excuse so lowd a lye?
 O yes, I did it euen at her desire,
 Who made me such successe in loue to see,
 How soone her flames hade sett my hart on fire.

Since for her sake I presse for to aspire,
To preache of passions which I neuer prou'd;
What should yee doe who haue for haplesse hire
The lucklesse lott, to loue and not be lou'd.
Your plaints I thinke should pierce the starrie skies
And deaue the Gods with shrill and cairfull cries: