

On Stella's Birthday, 1719

By Jonathan Swift

Between 1719 and 1727, Swift wrote seven birthday poems to “Stella” (his sweetheart, Esther Johnson).

Stella this Day is thirty four,
(We won't dispute a Year or more)
However Stella, be not troubled,
Although thy Size and Years are doubled,
Since first I saw Thee at Sixteen
The brightest Virgin of the Green,
So little is thy Form declin'd
Made up so largely in thy Mind.

Oh, would it please the Gods to split
Thy Beauty, Size, and Years, and Wit,
No Age could furnish out a Pair
Of Nymphs so gracefull, Wise and fair
With half the Lustre of Your Eyes,
With half thy Wit, thy Years and Size:
And then before it grew too late,
How should I beg of gentle Fate,
(That either Nymph might have her Swain,)
To split my Worship too in twain.

On the Day of Judgment

By Jonathan Swift

This is a piece of satire Swift wrote to satirize the in-fighting that was going on between Christian denominations.

With a whirl of thought oppressed,
I sink from reverie to rest.
An horrid vision seized my head,
I saw the graves give up their dead.
Jove*, armed with terrors, bursts the skies,
And thunder roars and light'ning flies!
Amazed, confused, its fate unknown,
The world stands trembling at his throne.
While each pale sinner hangs his head,
Jove, nodding, shook the heav'ns, and said:
"Offending race of human kind,
By nature, reason, learning, blind;
You who, through frailty, stepped aside,
And you, who never fell—through pride;
You who in different sects have shammed,
And come to see each other damned;
(So some folk told you, but they knew
No more of Jove's designs than you);
The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more.
I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools!—Go, go, you're bit."

**Jove was the king of the gods in Ancient Rome, also known as Jupiter.*

From *An Essay on Criticism*

By Alexander Pope

Pope wrote *An Essay on Criticism* when he was 21 years old. It's divided into three parts and satires contemporary critics who lack genuine poetic understanding. He is picking on people with poor taste. (Remember, he was a child prodigy.) The original work is long, so this is only a snippet.

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
 There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 And drinking largely sobers us again.
 Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
 In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
 While from the bounded level of our mind,
 Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind,
 But, more advanced, behold with strange surprise
 New, distant scenes of endless science rise!
 So pleased at first, the towering Alps we try,
 Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky;
 The eternal snows appear already past,
 And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
 But those attained, we tremble to survey
 The growing labours of the lengthened way,
 The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
 Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

On Virtue

By Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley's work is outside of the British Restoration Period. She was an enslaved woman in Boston and is considered to be the first African American poet to have a book published.

O thou bright jewel in my aim I strive
 To comprehend thee. Thine own words declare
 Wisdom is higher than a fool can reach.
 I cease to wonder, and no more attempt
 Thine height t' explore, or fathom thy profound.
 But, O my soul, sink not into despair,
Virtue is near thee, and with gentle hand
 Would now embrace thee, hovers o'er thine head.
 Fain would the heaven-born soul with her converse,
 Then seek, then court her for her promised bliss.

Auspicious queen, thine heavenly pinions spread,
 And lead celestial *Chastity* along;
 Lo! now her sacred retinue descends,
 Arrayed in glory from the orbs above.
 Attend me, *Virtue*, thro' my youthful years!
 O leave me not to the false joys of time!
 But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.
Greatness, or *Goodness*, say what I shall call thee,
 To give an higher appellation still,
 Teach me a better strain, a nobler lay,
 O Thou, enthroned with Cherubs in the realms of day!