

Flushed falls every little kiss
 with the waste of weeping eyes
 which the blandishments of bliss
 only serve to emphasize:
 so rekindling all desire
 my flames aspire
 to consummate this loving:
 but she, with the bitterness
 of Coronis,
 tumbles headlong into tears
 and all my prayers
 gain nothing.

Plea on plea I aggregate,
 supplement with kiss on kiss:
 neither will her tears abate,
 nor yet is she moved by this.
 See: there sparks within her gaze
 no less a blaze —
 soon, all too soon, receding;
 now she struggles to break free —
 now clings to me —
 but the more I press with prayers
 the less she bears
 my pleading.

Boldly I press home the advance.
 Unsheathing her talons, she implants
 them in my hair,
 struggles to tear
 away from me,
 now bends herself,
 defends herself,
 knee over knee,
 denying me
 the gate to her affections.

Then — (sound of trumpet! roll of drums!) —
 triumphantly the breakthrough comes:
 with arms entwined
 I firmly bind
 us tighter:
 with kisses pressed
 upon each breast
 delight her:
 excite her taste with
 intimate confections . . .

Both sides content with the affair,
 she stopped protesting: couldn't bear
 a lasting grudge — instead she bore
 me kisses, more
 and sweeter:

She smiled at me through half-closed eyes
 with trembling lids, while troubled sighs
 escaped her lips, as she grew tired
 and dreams conspired
 to cheat her.

CB75 Down with Study!

*Omitamus studia
 dulce est desipere . . .*

Down with study! Books away!
 Come and learn a sweeter truth
 finding pleasure in the play
 and the greenery of youth:
 it's the pride of old professors
 to engage in serious things
 and the joy of youth (God bless us!)
 to prefer venerous things.

*Days go tumbling headlong by,
gone to waste on learning:
young-at-heart were made to ply
trades of less discerning.*

Springtime slyly slithers by
while our winter urges haste:
melancholies multiply,
bits of body go to waste:
blood runs thin: the heart distresses:
happineses fade away:
age's brood of ills depress us
by their odour of decay.

*Days go tumbling headlong by,
gone to waste on learning:
young-at-heart were made to ply
trades of less discerning.*

Let's be like those gods of yore –
admirable sentiments! –
take our snares a-hunting for
love in all its innocence:
mindful that the inmost urgings
of our hearts are sure and sound,
come down to the street where virgins
gather for their dancing round.

*Days go tumbling headlong by,
gone to waste on learning:
young-at-heart were made to ply
trades of less discerning.*

Oh what sights are for the seeing!
Oh how palpable they seem!
Arms and legs go flashing free in
time to music's merry scheme:
watching limbs evolve amazing
patterns in that lithe display
I can only stand there gazing
till my heart is plucked away.

*Days go tumbling headlong by,
gone to waste on learning:
young-at-heart were made to ply
trades of less discerning.*

CB77 The Dream of the Rose

*Si linguis angelicis loquar et humanis
non valeret exprimi palma nec inanis . . .*

1

Though I speak with tongues of men
and angels – words must fail me
to do justice to the palm
selected to regale me:
one that has exalted me
throughout all generations –
even roused some critics to
profane disapprobations.

'Glory be for revelation
of this god's denomination –
hear its utterance divine!

26

'I'm immune to your derision –
though such rudeness spoils the vision
of all that a god might say.
I, before I've gone ten paces,
dissipate the final traces
of the filth I've borne away.'

27

Wine replies: 'Your finely spoken
argument's a worthless token
for the facts give you away:
many fall to grave disorder
from contaminated water,
dying off within the day!'

28

Overcome by Wine's offences,
Water took leave of her senses –
numbed and dumbstruck, wept and sighed.
'What?' says Wine. 'No more excuses?
Wine's the winner: Water loses:
one can see you're stupefied!'

29

I (your poet, Peter) now de-
clare a finish to this rowdy
dispute. Here's the final score:
*Whoso join these two together
may Christ from salvation sever
always and for evermore.*

AMEN

CB 196 In the Tavern

*In taberna quando sumus
non curamus, quid sit huius . . .*

In the tavern when we're drinking,
though the ground be cold and sinking,
down we get to join the action
with the dice-controlling faction:
what goes on inside the salon –
where it's strictly cash per gallon –
if you'd like to know, sir, well you
shut your mouth and I shall tell you.

Some are boozing, some are playing,
some a coarser side displaying:
most of those who like to gamble
wind up naked in the scramble:
some emerge attired in new things,
some in bits and bobs and shoestrings:
no one thinks he'll kick the bucket
dicing for a beery ducat.

First to them with cash to wallow in,
then we layabouts toast the following:
second, drink to all held captive,
thirdly drink to those still active,
fourthly drink to the Christian-hearted,
fifthly drink to the dear departed,
sixthly to our free-and-easy sisters,
seventhly to all unemployed enlisters.

Eighthly drink to friars deconverted,
ninthly, monks from monast'ries diverted,
tenthly, sailors of the oceans,
eleventhly, louts who cause commotions,

twelfthly, those who wear the penitential,
thirteenth, and whose journey is essential –
to this fat pope, to that thin king –
who the hell cares why they're drinking!

Drinking tinker, drinking tailor,
drinking soldier, drinking sailor,
drinking rich man, drinking poor man,
drinking beggarman, thief and lawman:
drinking servant, drinking master,
drinking mistress, drinking pastor,
drinking doctor, drinking layman,
drinking drunkard, drinking drayman,

Drinking rude man, drinking proper,
drinking tiddler, drinking whopper,
drinking scholar, drinking gypsy,
drinking drunk or maudlin tipsy:
drinking father, drinking mother,
drinking sister, drinking brother,
drinking husbands, wives and lovers,
and a hundred thousand others –

Half a million pounds would never
purchase what we drink together,
for we drink beyond all measure,
purely for the sake of pleasure:
so you see us, poor and shoddy,
criticized by everybody –
God grant that they be confounded!
when at last the trump is sounded!

CB 197 The Tavern's Lantern

*Dum domus lapidea
foro sita cernitur . . .*

When the tavern's crystalline
lantern lights the market place,
shimmering with nasal shine
from many a brother's rosy face –
'Here we are!' cries everyone:
'This looks like a bag of fun.'
Bacchus drily –
Venus slyly –
snatches students in a snare:
for a bob or
two they'll rob or
hock the very coats they wear.

As we're taught by appetite,
let's begin to
get struck into
food for – not thought, but – delight.
Then to wine we'll expedite.

O how welcome wine is! – Wine, the antidote
to all our watery storms of hurt and doubt,
instils between the lips of those half cut
such ecstasy as ever love poured out.

Bacchus kindly minds us:
unflagging flagons finds us
of gentle wine mellifluous in flavour,
outstanding for its nectar-sodden savour:
and endless rounds and rounds of it go turning
to blot our troubles out of all discerning . . .

... 'Come on then,' cries everyone, 'let's scarper
now our appetites are that much sharper:
bellies balk at foodless drink – it puts them in a flummock:
a booze-up's only half the fun upon an empty stomach.'

They stagger from the inn with cheers and waving
and tumble forth upon the weed-grown paving;
brother drinkers, bare-backed in the clover,
devoutly genuflect, and topple over.

Down in the mud they murrur 'Let us pray!
But then – 'Arise!' they hear somebody, *a posteriori*, say:
'You've earned a favourable response to your petition –
for Bacchus can't fail to be touched by your contrite position!'

CB207 Verses on Dice

Tessera, blandita fueras michi . . .

Tessera materies est . . .

Sunt comites ludi . . .

Hi tres ecce cares . . .

I

Dice, you were kind to me once
when I still had cash to my name:
Dice, now I've been double-crossed –
I'm lost! You're entirely to blame!

II

Dice are the root and branch of
every deterioration:
Dice degrade humankind, con-
found divine aspiration.

III
Guess who accompany gaming? –
Trickery, Trumpery, Shaming,
Breaking-of-pledges, and Theft,
and Having-no-property-left.

IV
These are my hounds, my three dice:
Swift, Slothful, Hardly-Precise:
in them I trust
to earn me a crust
and double or triple my price.

Property, mortgages, fee,
estates with fine houses – these three
sniff out with a view
to extracting from you
thus rendering service to me!

CB210 Verses on Chess

Qui capit egregium scachorum noscere ludum,

Audiat: ut potui carmine composui . . .

All who desire instruction
in chess, most noble distraction,
hark: I've written you these
ditties of expertise.

First, a few lines to settle
the scene of this sportive battle.
The board measures eight by eight
and bi-coloured squares alternate.