

Polemical Poetry

All things, desires, and loues are vaine¹ (1658)

- [46] *All things, desires, and loues are vaine,
But only that which tends
To God alone our cheifest good,
And all things ells transcends.
My soul therefor by this sweet Loue 5
shall day, and night aspire,
And rest in God, (all things above)
My Loue, and lifes desire.
And while I liue, Ile neuer cease 10
To languish for his Loue,
Breathing, and sighing after him,
Till he my life remoue.
For since I am not where I loue,
How can I comfort find,
But only in the song of Loue 15
By Loue to me assign'd?
And where so ere this word² is writt,
It yeilds a siluer sound;
But if that word I misse in it 20
Me thinks I want my ground.
Nothing so simple can be pennd
If it but treat of Loue,
But that it serueth in some sort
My sadnes to remoue.
And shall my soul by senselesse loue, 25
Which yet is neuer true,
Bestow more loue where it is lost,
Then where't is only due?*
- [47] *O no my God, but rather lett 30
Such folly be to me
A meanes to vrge my sinnefull soul
To Loue more fernently!
And hencefoth lett me draw no breath,
But to aspire by Loue
To thee my God, and all my good 35
By whom I liue and moue.³*

¹ This poem is a fragment of "Amor Ordinem Nescit," lines 9-72, 101-200.

² In the 1658 edition, "love" is printed above "word."

³ "For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, We are his offspring" (Acts 17:28, Douay-Rheims Bible).

	<i>No Stagge in chace so thirsty is, Or greedy of sweet spring, As is my soul of thee my God While I here sighing sing.⁴</i>	40
	<i>My soul where is thy Loue, and Lord, Since him thou canst not find?⁵ O cheere vp hart, be comforted, For he is in thy mind!</i>	
	<i>To him relation thou maist haue, As often as thou goes Into the closett⁶ of thy hart, Thy griefs for to disclose.</i>	45
	<i>As silly Lambes from rauening Woolues For help to Sheapheards fly,⁷</i>	50
	<i>So shall my soul in every case For help, and counsell hye, To thee my God by humble Prayer, In hope, and confidence,</i>	
[48]	<i>That thou my Lord wilt succour me, And be my soules defence. And seeing that my God is rich How can I say, I'm poore? And hee more myne, then I myne owne: What can I wish for more?</i>	55
	<i>And in his Maiesty, and power, Much more I will reioice, Then if of all in heaven, and earth I had commaund, and choice.</i>	60
	<i>My God one thing alone thou know'st I feare and apprehend, Which is my Lord for to displease, Whose mercies haue no end.</i>	65
	<i>From all that doth displease thyne eyes, Be pleas'd to sett me free, For nothing ells in heauen, or earth,</i>	70

⁴ “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?” (Psalm 41:2-3, Douay-Rheims Bible).

⁵ “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not” (Canticles 3:1-2, Douay-Rheims Bible).

⁶ “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me” (Canticles 3:4, Douay-Rheims Bible).

⁷ “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15, Douay-Rheims Bible).

	<i>Do I desire but thee. And lett me rather death embrace, Then thee my God offend, Or in my hart to giue thy place To any other freind.</i>	75
	<i>Nothing would greiue my soul so much, As in me to perceauē Any affection in the world That thine would me bereaue.</i>	80
[49]	<i>I know thou must possesse alone, Or els we are not thine, In such good plight as we should be, If light to vs did shine, As thou desirest it should do By grace our soules within; For which are all the helps we haue Intended, and haue been Imparted, and bestowed by thee, That we might liue alone To thee who satiat'st pure soules With ioyes that that are vnknown. And wo to them a thousand times, Who interest haue in any,⁸ Or haue deuided harts to thee, After thy gifts so many. For thou hast purchased our loue At too too deare a rate, To haue a partner in our hart, Which iustly thou dost hate. O this thy wrong makes Angells blush O make it farre from me Since that I am both body and soul All consecrate to thee! And I also will greiue with them, To see thee haue such wrong From soules selected by thy self To sing with them the song Of Loue, and praise to thee, O God, And euen in this place To Contemplate thee, as we may, O sweet and happy grace! If we woud dy vnto our selues And all things ells but thee, It would be naturall to our soules</i>	85 90 95 100 105 110 115
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⁸ The text has a manicule pointing to this line.

*For to ascend, and be
Vnited to our Center deare,
To which our soules would hy,
Being as proper then to vs,
As fire to upwards fly. 120
O lett vs therefor loue my God,
For Loue pertaines to him,
And lett our soules seek nothing ells,
But in this Loue to swimme,
Till we absorpt by his sweet Loue 125
Return from whom we came,
Where we shall melt into that Loue,
Which ioyeth me to name.
And neuer can I it too much
Speak of, or it desire, 130
Since that my God, who's Loue it selfe,
Doth only Loue require.
Come therfor all, and lett vs loue
And with a pure aspect,
Regard our God in all we do, 135
And he will vs protect.
O that all things vpon the earth,
Re-ecchoed with thy praise
My everlasting glorious God,
The Ancient of dayes!⁹ 140
And it I wish with all my soul
Incessantly to sing;
But seeing this I cannot do,
My sighes to heauen shall ring;
Yea if I writ out all the sea, 145
Yet could I not expresse
The ioy, and comfort I do feele
In what thou dost possesse.
No gifts, or grace, nor comforts heere
How great so ere they be, 150
Can satiat my longing soul,
While I possesse not thee.
For thou art all my harts desire,
Yea all that I do craue,
In earth, or heauen now, and euer 155
Thou art all that I would haue.
And I do wish with all my soul,*

⁹ "I beheld therefore in the vision of the night, and lo, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of days: and they presented him before him" (Daniel 7:13, Douay-Rheims Bible).

*That to thee I could pray,
With all my hart, and all my strength
Ten thowsand times a day.* 160
*Lett peoples, tribes, and tongues confesse¹⁰
Vnto thy Maiesty;
And lett vs neuer cease to sing
Sanctus, Sanctus¹¹ to thee.*

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¹⁰ “For it is written: As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11, Douay-Rheims Bible).

¹¹ “Holy, holy”; a reference to a hymn sung during the Mass.