

Robert Herrick
from *Hesperides*

Robert Herrick (1591-1674) was an English poet who sided with the royalist forces during the English Civil War (1642-1651) and so lost his place as an Anglican minister. Upon the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he was restored to the church. In 1648 he published his collected poems under the title of *Hesperides*. He is best known today for his lyric verses celebrating country life.

Corinna's Going A-Maying

Get up! get up for shame! the blooming morn
 Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
 See how Aurora throws her fair
 Fresh-quilted colors through the air:
 Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see 5
 The dew bespangling herb and tree.
 Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east
 Above an hour since : yet you not dressed;
 Nay ! not so much as out of bed?
 When all the birds have matins said 10
 And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
 Nay, profanation to keep in,
 Whereas a thousand virgins on this day
 Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen 15
 To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and green,
 And sweet as Flora. Take no care
 For jewels for your gown or hair:
 Fear not ; the leaves will strew
 Gems in abundance upon you: 20
 Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
 Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
 Come and receive them while the light
 Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
 And Titan on the eastern hill 25
 Retires himself, or else stands still
 Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
 Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming, mark

How each field turns a street, each street a park 30
 Made green and trimmed with trees: see how
 Devotion gives each house a bough
 Or branch : each porch, each door ere this
 An ark, a tabernacle is,
 Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove; 35
 As if here were those cooler shades of love.
 Can such delights be in the street
 And open fields and we not see't?
 Come, we'll abroad ; and let's obey
 The proclamation made for May: 40
 And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
 But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
 But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
 A deal of youth, ere this, is come 45
 Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
 Some have dispatched their cakes and cream
 Before that we have left to dream:
 And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted troth,
 And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth: 50
 Many a green-gown has been given;
 Many a kiss, both odd and even:
 Many a glance too has been sent
 From out the eye, love's firmament;
 Many a jest told of the keys betraying 55
 This night, and locks picked, yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
 And take the harmless folly of the time.
 We shall grow old apace, and die
 Before we know our liberty. 60
 Our life is short, and our days run
 As fast away as does the sun;
 And, as a vapor or a drop of rain
 Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
 So when or you or I are made 65
 A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
 All love, all liking, all delight

Lies drowned with us in endless night.
 Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
 Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying. 70

To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
 Old time is still a-flying;
 And this same flower that smiles to-day,
 To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun, 5
 The higher he's a-getting,
 The sooner will his race be run,
 And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first, 10
 When youth and blood are warmer;
 But being spent, the worse, and worst
 Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
 And while ye may go marry;
 For having lost but once your prime, 15
 You may for ever tarry.

Upon Julia's Clothes

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
 Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
 That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
 That brave vibration each way free; 5
 O how that glittering taketh me!