Sonnets:

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Anne Locke, from *A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner*

A Meditation of a peni-
tent sinner, vpon the 51.
Psalme.

Haue mercie vpon me (o God) after thy great merci

Haue mercy, God, for thy great mercies sake.
O God: my God, vnto my shame I say,
Beynge fled from thee, so as I dred to take
Thy name in wretched mouth, and feare to pray
Or aske the mercy that I haue abusde.
But, God of mercy, let me come to thee:
Not for iustice, that iustly am accusde:
Which selfe word Iustice so amaseth me,
That scarce I dare thy mercy sound againe.
But mercie, Lord, yet suffer me to craue.
Mercie is thine: Let me not crye in vaine,
Thy great mercie for my great fault to haue.
Haue mercie, God, pitie my penitence
With greater mercie than my great offence.

And according vnto the multitude of thy mercies do away myne offences.

My many sinnes in nomber are encreast,
With weight wherof in sea of depe despeire
My sinking soule is now so sore opprest,
That now in peril and in present fere,
I crye: susteine me, Lord, and Lord I pray,
With endlesse nomber of thy mercies take
The endlesse nomber of my sinnes away.
So by thy mercie, for thy mercies sake,
Rue on me, Lord, releue me with thy grace.
My sinne is cause that I so nede to haue
Thy mercies ayde in my so woefull case:
My synne is cause that scarce I dare to craue
Thy mercie manyfolde, which onely may
Releue my soule, and take my sinnes away.

Wash me yet more from my wickednes, and clense me from my sinne.

So foule is sinne and lothesome in thy sighte,
So foule with sinne I see my selfe to be,
That till from sinne I may be washed white,
So foule I dare not, Lord, approche to thee.
Ofte hath thy mercie washed me before,
Thou madest me cleane: but I am foule againe.
Yet washe me Lord againe, and washe me more.
Washe me, O Lord, and do away the staine
Of vggly sinnes that in my soule appere.
Let flow thy ple[n]tuous streames of clensing grace.
Washe me againe, yea washe me euery where,
Bothe leprous bodie and defiled face.
Yea washe me all, for I am all vncleane,
And from my sin, Lord, cleanse me ones againe.

For I knowledge my wickednes, and my sinne is euer before me.

Haue mercie, Lord, haue mercie: for I know
How muche I nede thy mercie in this case.
The horror of my gilt doth dayly growe,
And growing weares my feble hope of grace.
I fele and suffer in my thralled brest
Secret remorse and gnawing of my hart.
I fele my sinne, my sinne that hath opprest
My soule with sorrow and surmounting smart.
Drawe me to mercie: for so oft as I
Presume to mercy to direct my sight,
My Chaos and my heape of sinne doth lie,
Betwene me and thy mercies shining light.
What euer way I gaze about for grace,
My filth and fault are euer in my face.

Sir Thomas Wyatt:

"Whoso list to hunt"

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,
But as for me, *hélas*, I may no more.
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore,
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.
Yet may I by no means my wearied mind
Draw from the deer, but as she fleeth afore
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,
Sithens in a net I seek to hold the wind.
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,
As well as I may spend his time in vain.
And graven with diamonds in letters plain
There is written, her fair neck round about:
Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am,
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.

"If Amorous faith in heart unfeigned"

If amorous faith in heart unfeigned,
A sweet languor, a great lovely desire,
If honest will kindled in gentle fire,
If long error in a blind maze chained,
If in my visage each thought depainted
Or else in my sparkling voice lower or higher
Which now fear, now shame, woefully doth tire,
If a pale colour which love hath stained,
If to have another than myself more dear,
If wailing or sighing continually,
With sorrowful anger feeding busily,
If burning afar off and freezing near
Are cause that by love myself I destroy,
Yours is the fault and mine the great annoy.

"My heart I gave thee, not to do it pain"

My heart I gave thee, not to do it pain;
But to preserve, it was to thee taken.
I served thee, not to be forsaken,
But that I should be rewarded again.
I was content thy servant to remain
But not to be paid under this fashion.
Now since in thee is none other reason,
Displease thee not if that I do refrain,
Unsatiate of my woe and thy desire,
Assured by craft to excuse thy fault.
But since it please thee to feign a default,
Farewell, I say, parting from the fire:
For he that believeth bearing in hand,
Plougheth in water and soweth in the sand.

"Some fowls there be that have so perfect sight"

Some fowls there be that have so perfect sight
Again the sun their eyes for to defend;
And some because the light doth them offend
Do never 'pear but in the dark or night.
Other rejoice that see the fire bright
And ween to play in it, as they do pretend,
And find the contrary of it that they intend.
Alas, of that sort I may be by right,
For to withstand her look I am not able
And yet can I not hide me in no dark place,
Remembrance so followeth me of that face.
So that with teary eyen, swollen and unstable,
My destiny to behold her doth me lead,
Yet do I know I run into the gleed.

Edmund Spenser:

"Happy ye leaves! whenas those lily hands"

Happy ye leaves! whenas those lily hands,
Which hold my life in their dead doing might,
Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft bands,
Like captives trembling at the victor's sight.
And happy lines! on which, with starry light,
Those lamping eyes will deign sometimes to look,
And read the sorrows of my dying sprite,
Written with tears in heart's close bleeding book.
And happy rhymes! bathed in the sacred brook
Of Helicon, whence she derived is,
When ye behold that angel's blessed look,
My soul's long lacked food, my heaven's bliss.
Leaves, lines, and rhymes seek her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

"Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day"

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin,
And having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die,
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live forever in felicity:
And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love thee for the same again;
And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
May love with one another entertain.
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

"One day I wrote her name upon the strand"

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay
A mortal thing so to immortalize!
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wiped out likewise.
Not so (quoth I), let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name;
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

"Fair is my love, when her fair golden hairs"

Fair is my love, when her fair golden hairs
With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark:
Fair, when the rose in her red cheeks appears,
Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark:
Fair, when her breast, like a rich laden bark
With precious merchandise she forth doth lay:
Fair, when that cloud of pride, which oft doth dark
Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away
But fairest she, when so she doth display
The gate with pearls and rubies richly dight,
Through which her words so wise do make their way,
To bear the message of her gentle sprite.
The rest be works of nature's wonderment,
But this the work of heart's astonishment.

William Shakespeare:

1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But, as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory.
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring
Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be—
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till Nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

29

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

Lady Mary Wroth, from *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*:

I.

 Hen night's blacke Mantle could most darknesse proue,
And sleepe (deaths Image) did my senses hyre,
From Knowledge of my selfe, then thoughts did moue
Swifter then those, most [swiftnesse] neede require.
In sleepe, a Chariot drawne by wing'd Desire,
I saw; where sate bright *Venus* Queene of Loue {5},
And at her feete her Sonne, still adding Fire
To burning hearts, which she did hold aboue,
But one heart flaming more then all the rest,
The Goddesse held, and put it to my breast,
Deare Sonne now [shoot], said she: thus must we winne;
He her obey'd, and martyr'd my poore heart.
I waking hop'd as dreames it would depart,
Yet since, O me, a Lover I haue beene.

14.

AM I thus conquer'd? haue I lost the powers,
That to withstand, which ioyes to ruine me?
Must I bee still, while it my strength deuoures,
And captiue leads me prisoner bound, vnfree?
Loue first shall [leaue] mens phant'sies to them free,
Desire shall quench loues flames, Spring, hate sweet showres;
Loue shall loose all his Darts, haue sight, and see
His shame and wishings, hinder happy houres.
Why should we not loues purblinde charmes resist?
Must we be seruile, doing what he list?
No, seeke some hoste too harbour thee: I flye
Thy babish tricks, and freedome doe professe;
But O my hurt makes my lost heart confesse:
I loue, and must; so farewell liberty.

37.

NIght, welcome art thou to my minde distrest,
Darke, heauy, sad, yet not more sad then I:
Neuer could'st thou find fitter company
For thine owne humour, then I thus opprest.
If thou beest darke, my wrongs still vnredrest
Saw neuer light, nor smallest blisse can spye:
If heauy ioy from me too fast doth hie,
And care out-goes my hope of quiet rest.
Then now in friendship ioyne with haplesse me,
Who am as sad and darke as thou canst be,
Hating all pleasure or delight of lyfe,
Silence, and griefe, with thee I best doe loue.
And from you three I know I can not moue,
Then let vs liue companions without strife.

2. (64)

LOue like a Iugler, comes to play his prize,
And all mindes draw his wonders to admire,
To see how cunningly he (wanting eyes)
Can yet deseiue the best sight of desire.
The wanton Childe, how he can faine his fire
So prettily, as none sees his disguise,
How finely doe his trickes; while we fooles hire
The badge, and office of his tyrannies.
For in the ende such Iugling he doth make,
As he our hearts instead of eyes doth take;
For men can onely by their slights abuse,
The sight with nimble, and delightfull skill,
But if he play, his gaine is our lost will,
Yet Child-like we cannot his sports refuse.

Richard Barnfield:

Sonnet 16

BY RICHARD BARNFIELD

Long have I long'd to see my love againe,
Still have I wisht, but never could obtaine it;
Rather than all the world (if I might gaine it)
Would I desire my love's sweet precious gaine.
Yet in my soule I see him everie day,
See him, and see his still sterne countenaunce,
But (ah) what is of long continuance,
Where majestie and beautie beares the sway?
Sometimes, when I imagine that I see him,
(As love is full of foolish fantasies)
Weening to kisse his lips, as my love's fees,
I feele but aire: nothing but aire to bee him.
Thus with Ixion, kisse I clouds in vaine:
Thus with Ixion, feele I endles paine.

Sonnet 17

BY RICHARD BARNFIELD

Cherry-lipt Adonis in his snowie shape,
Might not compare with his pure ivorie white,
On whose faire front a poet's pen may write,
Whose roseate red excels the crimson grape,
His love-enticing delicate soft limbs,
Are rarely fram'd t'intrap poore gazine eies:
His cheeks, the lillie and carnation dies,
With lovely tincture which Apollo's dims.
His lips ripe strawberries in nectar wet,
His mouth a Hive, his tongue a hony-combe,
Where Muses (like bees) make their mansion.
His teeth pure pearle in blushing correll set.
Oh how can such a body sinne-procuring,
Be slow to love, and quicke to hate, enduring?

Sonnet 8 (Barnfield)

Sometimes I wish that I his pillow were,
So might I steale a kisse, and yet not seene,
So might I gaze upon his'sleeping eine,
Although I did it with a panting feare:
But when I well consider how vain my wish is,
Ah foolish Bees (thinke I) that doe not sucke
His lips for hony; but poore flowers doe plucke
Which haue no sweet in them: when his sole kisses,
Are able to reuiue a dying soule.
Kisse him, but sting him not, for if you doe,
His angry voice your flying will pursue:
But when they heare his tongue, what can controule
Their back-returne? for then they plaine may see
How hony-combs from his lips dropping bee.

Sonnet 11 (Barnfield)

Sighing, and sadly sitting by my loue,
He askt the cause of my hearts sorrowing,
Coniuring me by heauens eternall King,
To tell the cause which me so much did moue.
Compell'd: (quoth I) to thee will I confesse,
Loue is the cause; and only loue it is
That doth depriue me of my heauenly blisse,
Loue is the paine that doth my heart oppresse.
And what is she (quoth he) who thou dos't loue?
Looke in this glasse (quoth I) there shalt thou see
The perfect forme of my felicitie.
When, thinking that it would strage Magique proue,
He open'd it: and taking off the couer
He straight perceau'd himselfe to be my Louer.