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THOMAS CAMPION  
1567–1620

When Thou Must Home to Shades of Underground

When thou must home to shades of underground,  
And there arrived, a new admiréd guest,  
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,  
White Iope,<sup>1</sup> blithe Helen, and the rest,  
5 To hear the stories of thy finished love  
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move,

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,  
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,  
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,  
10 And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake;  
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,  
Then tell, Oh tell, how thou didst murder me.

1601

Rose-cheeked Laura<sup>2</sup>

Rose-cheeked Laura, come,  
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's  
Silent music, either other  
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow  
5 From concent<sup>3</sup> divinely framed;  
Heav'n is music, and thy beauty's  
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing  
10 Discords need for helps to grace them;  
Only beauty purely loving  
Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,  
Like clear springs renewed by flowing,  
15 Ever perfect, ever in them-  
Selves eternal.

1602

1. Daughter of Aeolus, also known as Cassiopeia.

2. Written by Campion to illustrate his theories of versification in *Observations in the Art of English*

*Poesy*, this song is a brilliant example of quantitative verse made musically effective in English.

3. Playing or singing together in harmony.

## What If a Day

What if a day, or a month, or a year  
 Crown thy delights with a thousand sweet contentings?  
 Cannot a chance of a night or an hour  
 Cross thy desires with as many sad tormentings?  
 5     Fortune, honor, beauty, youth  
       Are but blossoms dying;  
       Wanton pleasure, doting love  
       Are but shadows flying.  
       All our joys are but toys,  
 10     Idle thoughts deceiving;  
       None have power of an hour  
       In their lives' bereaving.

Earth's but a point to the world, and a man  
 Is but a point to the world's comparéd centure;<sup>4</sup>  
 15     Shall then the point of a point be so vain  
       As to triumph in a sely<sup>5</sup> point's adventure?  
       As is hazard that we have,  
       There is nothing biding;  
       Days of pleasure are like streams  
 20     Through fair meadows gliding.  
       Weal and woe, time doth go,  
       Time is never turning;  
       Secret fates guide our states,  
       Both in mirth and mourning.

1606

## Never Love Unless You Can

Never love unless you can  
 Bear with all the faults of man;  
 Men sometimes will jealous be,  
 Though but little cause they see,  
 5     And hang the head, as discontent,  
       And speak what straight they will repent.

Men that but one saint adore  
 Make a show of love to more;  
 Beauty must be scorned in none,  
 10     Though but truly served in one;  
       For what is courtship but disguise?  
       True hearts may have dissembling eyes.

Men when their affairs require  
 Must a while themselves retire,

4. Circumference (literally, a belt or girdle).

5. Innocent, insignificant.

- 15 Sometimes hunt, and sometimes hawk,  
 And not ever sit and talk.  
 If these and such like you can bear,  
 Then like, and love, and never fear.

1617

Think'st thou to seduce me then<sup>6</sup>

Think'st thou to seduce me then with words that have no meaning?  
 Parrots so can learn to prate, our speech by pieces gleaning;  
 Nurses teach their children so about the time of weaning.

- Learn to speak first, then to woo; to wooing much pertaineth:  
 5 He that courts us, wanting art, soon falters when he feigneth,  
 Looks asquint on his discourse,<sup>7</sup> and smiles when he complaineth.

Skillful anglers hide their hooks, fit baits for every season;  
 But with crooked pins fish thou, as babes do that want reason:  
 Gudgeons<sup>8</sup> only can be caught with such poor tricks of treason.

- 10 Ruth<sup>9</sup> forgive me, if I erred from humane heart's compassion,  
 When I laughed sometimes too much to see thy foolish fashion:  
 But, alas, who less could do that found so good occasion?

1617 ed

6. In this poem, Campion assumes the voice of a female speaker; the procedure is rare among early poets. Both poems are written in the old-fashioned metrical form known as fourteeners—verses of fourteen or fifteen syllables, with seven accented beats.

7. Looks away from the lady to check on his script. "Wanting art": lacking skill.

8. Small fish.

9. Pity, which misled the girl into seeming too complaisant.