

1630
THE PASSION
John Milton

Milton, John (1608-1674) - English poet and prose writer who is one of the most highly regarded figures in world literature and is widely considered the greatest poet since Shakespeare. Often called the "Puritan Poet," he had many of the good traits of the Puritans as well as many of the bad and spent much of his life immersed in political and religious controversy. The Passion (1630) - One of Milton's early minor poems. This is one of many works Milton wrote while he was at Cambridge.

THE PASSION**I**

Ere-while of Musick, and Ethereal mirth,
Wherwith the stage of Ayr and Earth did ring,
And joyous news of heav'nly Infants birth,
My muse with Angels did divide to sing;
But headlong joy is ever on the wing,
In Wintry solstice like the shortn'd light
Soon swallow'd up in dark and long out-living night.

II

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my Harpe to notes of saddest wo,
Which on our dearest Lord did sease er'e long,
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse then so,
Which he for us did freely undergo.
Most perfect Heroe, try'd in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight.

III

He sov'ran Priest stooping his regall head
That dropt with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly Tabernacle entered,
His starry front low-rooft beneath the skies;
O what a Mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more; the stroke of death he must abide,
Then lies him meekly down fast by his Brethrens side.

IV

These latter scenes confine my roving vers,
To this Horizon is my Phoebus bound,
His Godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings other where are found;
Loud o're the rest Cremona's Trump doth sound;
Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of Lute, or Viol still, more apt for mournful things.

V

Befriend me night best Patroness of grief,
 Over the Pole thy thickest mantle throw,
 And work my flatter'd fancy to belief,
 That Heav'n and Earth are colour'd with my wo;
 My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
 The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
 And letters where my tears have washt a wannish white.

VI

See see the Chariot, and those rushing wheels,
 That whirl'd the Prophet up at Chebar flood,
 My spirit som transporting Cherub feels,
 To bear me where the Towers of Salem stood,
 Once glorious Towers, now sunk in guiltles blood;
 There doth my soul in holy vision sit
 In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatick fit.

VII

Mine eye hath found that sad Sepulchral rock
That was the Casket of Heav'ns richest store,
And here though grief my feeble hands up-lock,
Yet on the softned Quarry would I score
My plaining vers as lively as before;
For sure so well instructed are my tears,
That they would fitly fall in order'd Characters.

VIII

Or should I thence hurried on viewles wing,
Take up a weeping on the Mountains wilde,
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unboosom all their Echoes milde,
And I (for grief is easily beguild)
Might think th' infection of my sorrows loud,
Had got a race of mourners on som pregnant cloud.

This Subject the Author finding to be above the yeers he had, when he wrote it, and nothing satisfi'd with what was begun, left it unfinisht.

THE END