A

Funeral POEM

ON

Thomas Gunston Esq;

Presented to

The Right Honourable

The Lady ABNEY

Lady Mayoress of London.

July 1701.

MADAM,

AD I been a common Mourner at the Funeral of the Dear Gentleman deceased, I should have labour'd after more of Art in the following Composition to supply the defect of Nature and to seign a Sorrow; but the uncommon Condescension of his Friendship to Me, the Inward Esteem I pay his Memory, and the vast and tender Sence I have of our Loss make all the Methods of Art needless, whilst natural Grief supplies more than all.

I had resolv'd indeed to lament in Sighs and Silence, and frequently check'd the forward Muse when she brought me Grief in Numbers, and urg'd me to a tuneful Mourning; but the Importunity was not to be resisted: Long Lines of Sorrow flow'd in upon my Fancy 'ere I was aware, whilst I took many a Solitary Walk in the Garden adjoyning to his Seat at Newington: Nor could I free my self from the Melancholy Idea's that crowded themselves upon me, and your Ladyship will find throughout the Poem that the fair and unfinish'd Building which he had just raised for himself gave almost all the turns of Mourning to my Thoughts, for I pursue no other Topicks of Elegy then what my Passion and my Senses led me to.

The Poem roves as my Eyes and Thoughts did, from one part of the Fabrick to the other: It rises from the Foundation, salutes the Walls, the Doors, and the Windows, drops a Tear upon the Roof, and climbs the Turret that dear Retreat, where I promis'd my self many sweet Hours of his Conversation; there my Song wanders amongst the delightful Subjects Divine and Moral which used to Entertain our happy leisure, and thence slings her self down to the Fields and the Shady Walks where I so often injoy'd his pleasing Discourse, and my Sorrows disfuse themselves there without a limit:

I had quite forgotten what I was writing, till I correct my self and rise to the Turret again to lament that Desolate Seat, and how vainly shines the Golden Ball that Crowns it: Thus I have written without rule and with a negligence becoming Woe unseigned.

Had I design'd a compleat Elegy on your Dearest Brother and intended it for publick View, I should have followed the usual Forms of Poetry, spent whole Pages in the Character and Praises of the Deceased, and thence took occasion to call Mankind to Complain aloud of the Universal and Unspeakable Loss: But I wrote meerly for my self as a Friend of the Dead and to ease my full Soul by breathing out my own Complaint: I knew his Character and Vertues so well that there was no need to mention 'em while I talk'd only with my self, for the Image of them was ever present with me, which kept my Sorrow lively and my Tears slowing with my Numbers.

Perhaps your Ladyship will expect some Divine Thoughts and Sacred Meditations mingled with a Subject so solemn as this is: Had I form'd a Design of offering it to your Hands I had compos'd a more Christian Poem: But'twas Grief purely natural for a Death so surprizing that drew all the Lines of it, and therefore my highest Reflections are but of a Moral Strain; Such as it is, your Ladyship requires a Copy of it, but let it not touch your Soul too tenderly, nor renew your own Mournings. Receive it, Madam, as a Sacrifice of Love and Tears offer'd at the Tomb of a Departed Friend, and let it abide with you as a Witness of that Affectionate

Affectionate Respect and Honour that I bore him, all which as your Ladyships most rightful Due both by Merit and Succession, is now humbly offered by

MADAM,

Perhaps your Ladyhip will expelt fone Divine

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Dear Memory of my Honoured Friend

Thomas Gunston Esq;

Who Died November 11. 1700.

When he had just Finish't his Seat at

NEWINGTON.

F blasted Hopes and of short withering Joys
Sing Heavenly Muse. Try thine Ethereal
Voice

In Funeral Numbers and a doleful Song;

GUNSTON the Just, the Generous, and the Young,

GUNSTON the Friend is dead. O Empty Name

Of Earthly Bliss! 'Tis all an Airy Dream,

All a Vain Thought! Our Soaring Fancies rise

On treacherous Wings; and Hopes that touch the

Skies

alula.

Drag but a longer Ruine thro' the downward Air, And plunge the falling Joy but deeper in Despair.

How did our Souls stand slatter'd and prepar'd
To shout him welcome to the Seat he rear'd!
There the Dear Man should see his Hopes Compleat,
Smiling and tasting every lawful Sweet
That Peace and Plenty brings, while numerous Years
Roll'd happy Circles round the Joyful Spheres:
Revolving Suns should still renew his strength,
And draw th' uncommon Thread to an unusual
Length.

But hasty Fate thrusts her dread Shears between,
Cuts the Young Life off, and shuts up the Scene.
Thus Airy Pleasure dances in our Sight
And spreads fair Images of Gay Delight
T' allure our Souls, till just within our Arms.
The Vision dies, and all the painted Charms
Flee quick away from the pursuing Sight,
Till they are lost in Shades, and mingle with the
Night.

Muse, stretch thy Wings and thy sad Journey bend To the fair * Fabrick that thy Dying Friend Built Nameles: 'Twill suggest a thousand things Mournful and Soft as my Urania Sings.

How did he lay the deep & Foundations strong, Marking the Bounds, and rear the | Walls along Solid and Lasting; there a numerous Train Of Happy GUNSTON's might in Pleasure reign While Nations perish and long Ages run, Nations unborn, and Ages unbegun: Not Time it self should waste the Blest Estate. Nor the Tenth Race rebuild the Ancient Seat: How fond our Fancies are! The Founder Dies Childless: His Sisters weep, and close his Eyes, And wait upon his Herse with never-ceasing Cries. Lofty and Slow it moves unto the Tomb, While weighty Sorrow nods on every Plume;

^{*} The House. & The Foundations. | The Walls.

A Thousand Groans his dear Remains convey
To his cold Lodging in a Bed of Clay,
His Countries Sacred Tears well-watering all the
Way.

See the dull Wheels roll on the Sable Load,
But no dear Son to tread the Mournful Road,
And fondly kind drop his young Sorrows there,
The Father's Urn bedewing with a Filial Tear.
O had he left us One behind to play
Wanton about the Painted * Hall, and fay
"This was my Father's, with Impatient Joy
In my fond Arms I'de clasp't the Smiling Boy,
And call'd him my Young Friend: But Awful Fate
Design'd the mighty Stroke as lasting as 'twas great.

And must this Building then, this costly Frame
Stand here for Strangers? Must some unknown
Name

Posses these & Rooms, the Labours of my Friend? Why were these Walls rais'd for this haples End?

^{*} The Hall. + The Rooms.

Why these Apartments all adorn'd so Gay? Why his rich Fancy lavish't thus away? Muse, view the * Paintings, how the hovering Light Plays o're the Colours in a wanton Flight, And mingled Shades wrought in by foft Degrees Give a sweet Foyl to all the Charming Piece; But Night, Eternal Night hangs black around The dismal Chambers of the hollow Ground, And Solid Shades unmingled round his Bed Stand Hideous: Earthy Fogsembrace his Head, And noysom Vapours glide along his Face Rising perpetual. Muse, forsake the place, Flee the raw Damps of the unwholsome Clay, Look to his Airy spacious Hall, and say How has he chang'd it for a loathsome Cave, Confin'd and Crowded in a narrow Grave!

Th' Unhappy House looks desolate and mourns,
And every † Door groans doleful as it turns;
The Pillars languish, and each losty Wall
Stately in Grief, laments the Master's Fall

^{*} The Paintings. + The Doors.

In drops of Briny Dew; the Fabrick bears
His faint Resemblance and renews my Tears.
Solid and square it rises from below;
A Noble Air without a Gaudy Show
Reigns thro' the Model, and adorns the Whole,
Manly and Plain just like the Builders Soul.

O how I love to view the Stately Frame, That dear Memorial of the best-lov'd Name! Then could I wish for some prodigious Cave Vast as his Seat, and silent as his Grave, Where the tall Shades stretch to the hideous Roof, Forbid the Day, and guard the Sun-beams off; Thither, my willing Feet, shou'd ye be drawn At the gray Twilight, and the early Dawn; There sweetly sad shou'd my soft Minutes roll, Numbring the Sorrows of my drooping Soul. But these are Airy Thoughts! Substantial Grief Grows by those Objects that should yield Relief; Fond of my Woes I heave my Eyes around, My Grief from every Prospect courts a Wound;

Views the green Gardens, views the Smiling Skies,
Still my Heart finks, and still my Cares arise;
My wandring Feet round the dear Mansion rove,
And there to sooth my Sorrows I indulge my Love.

Oft have I laid the Awful Calvin by,
And the fweet Cowley, with Impatient Eye
To fee those Walls, pay the sad Visit there,
And drop the Tribute of an hourly Tear:
Still I behold some Melancholy Scene,
With many a Pensive Thought, and many a Sigh between.

Two Daysago we took the Evening Air,

I, and my Grief, and my Urania there;

Say, my Urania, how the Western Sun

Broke from Black Clouds, and in full Glory shone

Gilding the Roof, then dropt into the Sea,

And sudden Night devour'd the sweet remains of Days

Thus the dear Youth just rear'd his shining Head

From Obscure Shades of Life, and sunk among the

Dead.

The rifing Sun adorn'd with all his Light
Smiles on these Walls again: But endless Night
Reigns uncontroul'd where the dear GUNSTON
lies,

He's set for ever, and must never rise. Then why these Beams, Unseasonable Star, These lightsome Smiles descending from afar To greet a Mourning House? In vain the Day Breaks thro' the * Windows with a joyful Ray, And marks a shining Path along the Floors Bounding the Evening and the Morning Hours; In vain it bounds 'em: While vast Emptiness And hollow Silence reigns thro' all the Place, Nor heeds the cheerful change of Nature's Face. Yet Natures Wheels will on without controul, The Sun will rise, the tuneful Spheres will roll, And the two Nightly Bears walk round and watch system and the fill the second second the Pole.

See while I speak, high on her Sable Wheel
Old Night comes rolling up the Eastern Hill:

Brotherical during breeze during the transfer of the

^{*} The Windows.

Troops of dark Clouds prepare her way; behold,
How their brown Pinions Edg'd with Evening Gold
Spread Shaddowing o're the House, and glide away
Slowly pursuing the declining Day;
O're the broad * Roof they fly their Circuit still,
Thus Days before they did, and Days to come they
will;

But the Black Cloud that Shaddows o're his Eyes Hangs there immoveable, and never flies: Fain would I bid the Envious Gloom be gone, Ah fruitless Wish! how are his Curtains drawn For a long Evening that despairs the Dawn!

Muse, view the † Turrer: Just beneath the Skies
Lonesome it stands, and fixes both mine Eyes
As it would ask a Tear. O Sacred Seat,
Sacred to Friendship! O Divine Retreat!
Here did I hope my happy Hours t'employ,
And sed beforehand on the promis'd Joy,
When weary of the noisy Town, my Friend
From Mortal Cares retiring shou'd ascend

^{*} The Roof. + The Turret.

And lead me thither. We * alone wou'd sit,

Free and secure of all Intruding Feet:

Our Thoughts shou'd stretch their longest Wings and rise,

Nor bound their Soarings by the lower Skies:

Our Tongues shou'd aim at everlasting Themes,

And speak what Mortals dare, of all the Names

Of Boundless Joys and Glories, Thrones, and Seats

Built high in Heaven for Souls: We'd trace the Streets

Of Golden Pavement, walk each happy Field,

And climb and tast the Fruits the spicy Mountains

yield:

Then would we swear to keep the Sacred Road,
And walk right upwards to the blest Abode:
We'd charge our parting Spirits there to meet,
There Hand in Hand approach th' Almighty's Seat's
And bend our Heads adoring at our Maker's Feet.
Thus should we mount on bold adventrous Wings,
In high Discourse, and dwell on Heavenly things,

^{*} Our Conversation there.

While the pleas'd Hours in sweet Succession move,

And Minutes measur'd as they are above

By ever-circling Joys, and ever-shining Love.

Anon our Thoughts should lower their lofty Flight,

Sink by degrees, and take a pleafing Sight

A large round Profpect of the spreading Plain,
The Wealthy River, and his Winding Train,
The Smoaky City, and the Busie Men.

How we should smile to see degenerate Worms

Lavish their Lives, and sight for Airy Forms

Of Painted Honour, Dreams of empty sound,
Till Envy rise, and shoot a secret Wound

At swelling Glory; strait the Bubble breaks,
And the Scenes vanish as the Man awakes:

Then the tall Titles Insolent and Proud

Sink to the Dust, and mingle with the Crowd.

Man is a restless Thing: Still vain and wild, Lives beyond Sixty, nor outgrows the Child: His hurrying Lusts still break the Sacred Bound, To seek new Pleasures on forbidden Ground,
And buy them all too dear. Unthinking Fool,
For a short dying Joy to sell a Deathless Soul!
Tis but a Grain of Sweetness they can Sow,
And reap the long sad Harvest of Immortal Woe.

Another Tribe toyl in a different Strife,
And banish all the lawful Sweets of Life
To sweat and dig for Gold, to hoard the Oar,
Hide the dear Dust yet darker than before,
And never dare to use a Grain of all the Store.

Happy the Man that knows the Value just
Of Earthly Things, nor is enslav'd to Dust.
'Tis a rich Gift the Skies but rarely send
To Fav'rite Souls. Then happy thou, my Friend,
For thou hadst learnt to Manage and Command
The Wealth that Heaven bestow'd with Liberal
Hand:

Hence this fair Structure rose; and hence this Seat Made to invite my not unwilling Feet;
In vain 'twas made! for We shall never meet,

And

And Smile, and Love, and Bless each other here,
The Envious Tomb forbids thy Face t' appear,
Detains thee GUNSTON from my longing Eyes,
And all my hopes lie buried where my GUNSTON
lies.

Come hither all ye tenderest Souls that know
The heights of Fondness and the depths of Woe,
Young Mothers, who your darling Babes have found
Untimely Murd'red with a ghastly Wound;
Ye frighted Nymphs, who on the Bridal Bed
Claspt in your Arms your Lovers Cold and Dead,
Come; in the Pomp of all your wild Despair
With flowing Eyelids and disorder'd Hair,
Death in your Looks; come mingle Grief with me,
And drown your little Streams in my unbounded Sea,

You Sacred Mourners of a Nobler Mould
Born for a Friend, whose dear Embraces hold
Beyond all Natures Ties; you that have known
Two happy Souls made intimately One,

A CHARLES AND A CONTRACT OF STREET AND A STR

And felt a parting Stroke, 'tis you must tell
The Smart, the Twinges, and the Racks I feel:
This Soul of mine that dreadful Wound has born,
Off from its Side its dearest Half is torn,
The Rest lies bleeding, and but lives to mourn.
Oh Infinite Distress! Such raging Grief
Shou'd command Pity, and despair Relief.
Passion methinks should rise from all my Groans,
Give Sense to Rocks, and Sympathy to Stones.

Ye dusky * Woods and ecchoing Hills around
Repeat my Cries with a perpetual Sound:
Be all ye flowry Vales with Thorns o'regrown,
Affift my Sorrows, and declare your own,
Alas! your Lord is dead. The humble Plain
Must ne're receive his Courteous Feet again:
Mourn ye gay smiling Meadows, and be seen
In Wintry Robes instead of Youthful Green:
And bid the † Brook that still runs warbling by
Move silent on, and weep his useless Channel dry.

^{*} The adjacent Country. + The Brook.

Hither methinks the lowing Herds shou'd come,
And moaning Turtles murmur o're his Tomb:
The Oak shou'd wither, and the curling * Vine
Weep his Young Life out, while his Arms untwine
Their Amorous Folds, and mix his Bleeding Soul
with mine.

Ye stately Elms in your long Order mourn,
Strip off your Pride to dress your Master's Urn:
Here gently drop your Leaves instead of Tears;
Ye Elms, the Reverend Growth of Ancient Years,
Stand tall and naked to the Blustring Rage
Of the mad Winds; thus it becomes your Age
To show your Sorrows. Often ye have seen
Our Heads reclin'd upon the rising Green;
Beneath your Sacred Shade diffus'd we lay,
Here Friendship reign'd with an unbounded sway:
Hither our Souls their constant Offrings brought,
The Burthens of the Breast, and Labours of the

Our opening Bosoms on the Conscious Ground Spread all the Sorrows, all the Joys we found,

Thought;

^{*} The Trees.

And mingled every Care; nor was it known
Which of the Pains or Pleasures were our own;
Then with an equal Hand and honest Soul
We share the Heap; yet both possess the Whole,
And all the Passions there thro' both our Bosoms roll.
By turns We Comfort, and by turns Complain,
And Bear and Ease by turns the Sympathy of Pain.

Friendship! Mysterious Thing, what Magick Powers Support thy Sway, and charm these Minds of ours? Bound to thy Foot we boast our Birth-right still, And dream of Freedom when we've lost our Will, And chang'd away our Souls: At thy Command We fnatch new Miseries from a Foreign Hand To call them ours, and thoughtless of our Ease Plague the dear Self that we were born to please. Thou Tyranness of Minds, whose Cruel Throne Heaps on poor Mortals Sorrows not their own; As tho' our Mother Nature cou'd no more Find Woes sufficient for each Son she bore, Friendship divides the Shares, and lengthens out (the Store.

Yet are we fond of thine Imperious Reign,
Proud of the Slavery, wanton in our Pain,
And chide the courteous Hand when Death dissolves
the Chain.

Vertue, forgive the Thought! The raving Muse Wild and despairing knows not what she does, Grows mad in Grief, and in her Savage Hours Affronts the Name she Loves and she adores. She is thy Votaress too; and at thy Shrine O Sacred Friendship! offer'd Songs Divine While GUNSTON liv'd, and both our Souls were thine.

Here to these Shades at solemn Hours we came
To pay Devotion with a mutual Flame,
And roll'd in Pleasures, while the Evening Breeze
Fann'd the Leaves gently, sporting thro' the Trees,
And the declining Sun with sloping Wheels
Roll'd down the Golden Day behind the Western
Hills.

Mourn ye young * Gardens, ye unfinish't Gates, Ye Green Inclosures and ye growing Sweets, Lament, for ye our Midnight Hours have known, And watch'd us walking by the filent Moon In Conference Divine, while Heavenly Fire Kindling our Breasts did all our Thoughts inspire With Joys almost Immortal; then our Zeal Blaz'd and burnt high to reach th' Ethereal Hill, And Love refin'd like that above the Poles Threw both our Arms round one anothers Souls In Rapture and Embraces. Oh forbear, Forbear, my Song! this is too much to hear, Too dreadful to repeat; fuch Joys as thefe Fled from the Earth for ever!

Oh for a general Grief! let all things share
Our Woes that knew our Loves. The Neighbouring † Air

Let it be laden with Immortal Sighs,

And tell the Gales, that every Breath that flies

SPECIES AND SECURITY OF STREET

^{*} The Gardens. + The Air.

Over these Fields shou'd murmur and complain,
And kiss the fading Grass, and propagate the Pain.
Weep all ye Buildings, and ye * Groves around
For ever Weep, This is an endless Wound
Vast and Incurable. Ye Buildings knew
His Silver Tongue, ye Groves have heard it too:
At that dear Sound no more shall ye rejoyce,
And I no more must hear the Charming Voice,
Wo to my drooping Soul! that Heavenly Breath
That could speak Life lies now congeal'd in Death;
White on his folded Lips all Cold and Pale
Eternal Chains and heavy silence dwell.

Yet my fond Hope would hear him speak again; Once more at least, one gentle Word; and then GUNSTON aloud I call: In vain I cry GUNSTON aloud; for he must ne're reply. In vain I mourn, and drop these Funeral Tears, Death and the Grave have neither Eyes nor Ears:

^{*} The Groves.

Wandring I tune my Sorrows to the Groves,
And vent my swelling Griefs, and tell the Winds our
Loves;

While the dear Youth Sleeps fast and hears 'em not; He has forgot me: In the lonesome Vault Mindless of WATTS and Friendship there he lies Deaf and Unthinking Clay.

Painting D. 5811-1998 Figuresia

But whither am I led? This Artless Grief

Hurries the Muse on obstinate and deaf

To all the nicer Rules, and bears her down

From the tall Fabrick to the Neighbouring Ground:

The pleasing Hours and the dear Moments past
In these sweet Fields reviving on my Tast

Snatch me away resistless with Impetuous hast.

Spread thy strong Pinions once again my Song,
And reach the 'Turret thou hast left so long:

O're the wide Roof its losty Head it rears,

Waiting for our Converse; but only hears

The noisie Tumults of the Realms on high;

The Winds salute it Whistling as they sly,

^{*} The Turret.

Or jarring round the Windows; Rattling Showers

Lash the fair Sides, above loud Thunder roars,

But still the Master Sleeps; nor hears the Voice

Of Sacred Friendship, nor the Tempests noise:

An Iron Slumber sits on every Sence,

In vain the Heavenly Thunders strive to rouze it thence.

One Labour more, my Muse, the Golden * Sphere Seems to demand: See thro' the Dusky Air Downward it shines upon the rising Moon, And as she labours up to reach her Noon, The Ball pursues her Orb with streaming Light, And shoots a Golden Day on the Pale Queen of Night:

But not one Beam can reach the darksome Grave,
Or pierce the solid Gloom that fills the Cave
Where GUNSTON dwells in Death. My waking
Eyes

Saw the last Midnight reigning o're the Skies,

^{*} The Golden Ball.

And Old Bootes drove his shining Carr
Thro' the Midheaven: Behold the Glittering Sphere
Bright as a Burning Meteor born on high,
Or some new Comet glaring thro' the Sky
It slam'd and mingled with the larger Stars;
In vain (said I) the Golden Comet Glares,
In vain it stands; while with a dismal Fall
He sunk beneath the Ground that rais'd the Losty
Ball.

Now let me call the Joyful Day to mind;
'Twas a fair Morning; and the Blustring Wind
Slept in its peaceful Caverns, while he came
Gazing and pleas'd to see the Noble Frame
Crown'd with that shining Orb. "Stand there, he
"cries,

"Thou little Emblem of the boundless Skies

"Whither my Soul with fiery Passion tends;
The Emblem stands; and tells surviving Friends
Of the bright Palace and the Golden Throne
Where the Dear GUNSTON's better part is

gone:

His eager Thoughts bent on their shining way

Let the Clay drop to mingle with the Clay;

But his great Soul beyond the Stars is fled:

Then why, my Heart, why should we Mourn him Dead?

Strangely, my Thoughts, ye let this cozening Grief

With a false Name impose on your Belief:

It saw the Flesh fink down with closing Eyes

To the cold Earth, and cry'd, 'tis GUNSTON

Dies:

Mistaken Grief! to call the Flesh the Friend!

The Heavenly Court saw the Bright Youth ascend,

Flew to embrace him with Inimortal Love,

And fung his Welcome to the Seats above.

The Building firm, and all the Mansions bright,

The Roof high-Vaulted with Æthereal Light:

Beauty and Strength on the tall Bulwarks Sate

In Heavenly Diamond: And for every Gate

On Golden Hinges a broad Ruby turns,

Guards off the Foe, and as it moves it burns.

Millions of Glories Reign thro' every part;

Infinite Power and Uncreated Art

Stand here display'd, and to the Stranger show

How it out-shines the Noblest Seats below;

The Stranger just look'd down, and Smil'd upon 'em too.

Come, my Urania, leave the doleful Strain,
Let Heavenly Notes resume their Joys again;
In Everlasting Numbers sing, and say,
"GUNSTON the Friend lives still, and wipe our Tears away.