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Author(s): William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden

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MILTON'S COY EVE: *PARADISE LOST* AND RENAISSANCE LOVE POETRY

BY WILLIAM KERRIGAN AND GORDON BRADEN

The various tradition of the love lyric is among the distinctive contributions of the Renaissance to our literary culture. In no subsequent period will love be the dominant preoccupation of lyric poetry, or would-be poets feel compelled, as a public demonstration of their seriousness, to animate the conventions of literary love. Few Renaissance careers, on the other hand, are without some episode of Petrarchism; and the long arc of that tradition, from the sequences of frustrated or ideal love to the Ovidian consummations of the seventeenth century, comes down on the work of Milton.

Love in the 1645 *Poems* is in certain obvious ways subordinate to the theme of male friendship. Yet if Milton's Italian *diva* was not, after all, such an inspiration, his brief Petrarchan fever signals the future—another of the youthful possibilities reworked triumphantly in *Paradise Lost*, the first and last epic since the *Odyssey* able to render its love story both genuine and positively heroic. The epic centers in a marriage. Its explorations of cosmic space and time invariably return to this proving ground. Satan, God, Christ, angels, freedom, pleasure, work, the Fall, death, grace, inspiration, redemption: everything in this lofty poem gets placed in the history of Adam and Eve's "wedded love." In the end its entire wisdom has been assimilated in their clasped hands, again together on the guided quest for a new bower.

Critics have recognized that Milton uses the narrative positions opened to him during the course of his "great Argument" to evoke varieties of poetic love, making literary conventions into moral revelations. Thus the famous lyric hailing "wedded love" at the close of book 4 offers the epithalamion as the speech act appropriate to the first instance of human love, and this "elect" genre is often contrasted with the supposedly "Cavalier" seductions of the devil's early speeches to Eve in book 9, which isolate for praise her

singularity while denigrating her “wedded” relationship. But we want to argue that Milton’s *agon* with love poetry is considerably richer and more extensive than these familiar observations suggest. His epic stands as the consummate expression of the love tradition, at once a monument to its wisdom and a telling commentary on its treacheries. First, then, we must take a fresh look at this tradition and the form in which it reached Milton.

OID REBORN, PETRARCH REVEALED

Seventeenth-century love poetry has sometimes been viewed as a more or less libertine, Ovidian refutation of the Petrarchism that, imported by Wyatt and Surrey, flourished widely under Elizabeth. This is true enough, so far as it goes. Marlowe, Ovid’s translator, does indeed cross some threshold when the lovers at the end of *Hero and Leander* manage to get out of their weird Petrarchan outfits and into real sexual consummation. Initially overcome with shame, Hero resists “Like chaste Diana when Acteon spied her” (2.261).¹ But this chased Diana learns new ways, and learns them, in a magnificent play upon the same and the different, when practicing the old. Push having come to shove, she tries to repel the ungoverned Leander. But in the very rhythm of this resistance—his onslaught prompting her repulsion, her repulsion prompting his onslaught—Hero discovers nature’s way. She slips into something more comfortable:

She trembling strove; this strife of hers (like that
Which made the world) another world begat
Of unknown joy.

(2.291–93)

From the perspective of literary history, one of the worlds of unknown joy begotten here is that of consummated English love poetry—the verse of Donne, Carew, Suckling, Randolph, Lovelace, and Marvell among others.

Petrarchan conventions, though there were attempts to adapt them to fulfilled and mutual love (as in Spenser), are clearly most at home with unconsummated and unrequited love. It is the denying mistress who burns like ice, like fire. It is the denied lover, charged with forgetfulness, who seeks to occlude his hopelessness. When the lady consents, other conventions become appropriate—

the epithalamic or the libertine—and these are in fact prominent in the seventeenth century. But several aspects of this last phase of the love tradition retain strong continuity with the Petrarchan wellsprings. In particular, there is a new clarity about the deep logic of Petrarchism, as if the later poets, inhabiting a brave new world of sexual success, could understand the peculiar alliances among love, fame, and poetry that their predecessors negotiated, somewhat blindly, in the grip of their frustration.

The poems in the *Canzoniere* manifest at every turn the resourcefulness of obsession. They appear in the beloved's absence. Fantasy is not only their element, but often their subject—the image of Laura, the memory of Laura, the replaying of her ambiguous gestures in the act of interpreting Laura. This cultivated obsession is petrifying, toxic, shameful, counter to wordly, moral, and religious self-interest. But—and this becomes one of the defining gestures of the Petrarchan tradition—the love is nonetheless to be affirmed as an ideal. The interpretations of Laura must in the end confirm the good sense of her devotee: being herself ideal, she will eventually reward his service to this truth; somehow or other, hope keeps springing up from apparently absolute despair. However we assess their artistic worth, the much-maligned idealizing couplets in the bulk of Shakespeare's sonnets (57: "So true a fool is love that in your will, / Though you do anything, he thinks no ill") should be taken as assertions of genre, submissions to the fundamental rule of idealization, just as the concluding sonnets of self-reproach (152: "For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured eye, / To swear against the truth so foul a lie") should be understood as indictments of Petrarchan rule-following. If we cut away the two trivial Cupid sonnets, Shakespeare's sequence ends with the explosion of its own genre. This, too, like *Hero and Leander*, is one of those thresholds at which literary historians may view the future becoming possible.

One thing the Petrarchan lover has, in compensation for his agony, is poems. In the *Secretum* Laura and poetic fame are as close as the twin sins of lust and pride, but there, as in the *Canzoniere*, literary immortality serves only obliquely to reward the lover's suffering: for Petrarch the laurel in Laura was not an offset. As the tradition developed, however, we do indeed find the sort of calculation that Petrarch would probably have reached had he not been so invested in the *Africa*. Some of the most grandiose claims for the vivifying power of literature in all the Renaissance—the

great age of this claim—occur in love lyrics. Petrarch wrote of the worth and steadfastness of his devotion. Subsequent poets, declaring and deploying the equation between love and fame implicit in Petrarch, counted fame-making among their prime worthinesses, as the posthumous fate of Petrarch's own reputation enlarged their capital. Immortal celebrity can be straightforwardly seductive (I alone among my rivals can make you immortal) or threateningly seductive (Be kind, or I will betray your cruelty to aftertimes). When artistic immortality rebounds from the lady to the poet himself, it can be simply compensatory, as in Drayton's

Proudly thou scorn'st my world-out-wearing rhymes,
And murder'st virtue with thy coy disdain:
And though in youth, my youth untimely perish,
To keep thee from oblivion and the grave,
Ensuing ages yet my rhymes shall cherish,
Where I entomb'd, my better part shall save;
And though this earthly body fade and die,
My name shall mount upon eternity.²

Shakespeare, Daniel, and Drayton, whose art came to maturity in the golden period of the first wave of English love poetry, leave the impression that their varied deployment of fame arose in the midst of serious disappointment. In seventeenth-century verse the moves in the game seem to be known in advance. The Carew of "Ungrateful Beauty Threatened" tells a Petrarchan mistress that there is something in this situation that she has not considered with sufficient care; she's refusing, it must be remembered, a *poet*. Waller, in his "Story of Phoebus and Daphne, Applied," presents a grieving youth whose complaints fail to win Saccharissa, that artificial sweetener. No cause for lamentation, since the instrumentality of love poetry, despite appearances, is no longer aimed at the stubborn beloved:

Yet what he sung in his immortal strain,
Though unsuccessful, was not sung in vain;
All, but the nymph that should redress his wrong,
Attend his passion, and approve his song.
Like Phoebus thus, acquiring unsought praise,
He caught at love, and filled his arm with bays.³

"Apollo," in other words, "hunted Daphne so, / Only that she might laurel grow." Had Waller written this couplet, it would mean that approving readers can stand in for an immune nymph. Embracing an armful of bays, the poet can do without the woman.

The solitary egoism of Waller's love poet moves Petrarchism toward the hyperbolic solitude of "The Garden," whose speaker takes the divestment a step further by sacrificing not just the woman but the ambition to wear the laurel, finding his compensation in the radically internal crown of "a green thought in a green shade."

Milton's Italian *Canzone* is also aware in the seventeenth-century manner that Petrarchan verse aims finally at the poet's own fame. Young people of both sexes ask the lovestruck Milton why he is writing in Italian; on another and English river, they assure him, "the immortal guerdon, the crown of unfading leaves, is already sprouting for your head."⁴ The crown, *L'immortal guiderdon d'eterne frondi*, is the thing poets would pluck, as even laymen realize. This nexus of love, fame, and crown reappears in the first movement of "Lycidas":

Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th'abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise,
Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil

(67–78)

Here again fame compensates for denied love. But in Milton successful desire and poetic immortality have fallen into perfect opposition. Instead of seeking the first and making do with the second, like the wooer of Saccharissa, the clear spirits of "Lycidas" choose fame from the very beginning, and do not woo anybody. The furies that conventionally torment unrequited lovers of Petrarchan verse now strike against the lust for fame; unrequited fame, not love, is the cruelty that must be interpreted in the first third of "Lycidas." Whereas Petrarch and his followers, like the *stilnovisti* before them, had often negotiated with the unbearable injustice of their frustrated love by projecting their reward into the afterlife, Milton enacts this strategem for the sake of protecting the experience of being famous rather than being loved. This *translatio*, informed by

the new awareness of seventeenth-century poetry, retains the key image of the Petrarchan tradition. For Milton's "fair guerdon" almost certainly means "laurel crown," an interpretation that links this passage to the opening line of the elegy, and makes good sense of the first words of Phoebus, whose frustrated desire produced the original laurel crown: "Fame is *no plant* that grows on mortal soil." The knot of love, fame, and crown is rewoven, as we will see, in *Paradise Lost*.

OVID REVEALED, PETRARCH REBORN

Another thing the Petrarchan lover has in compensation for his suffering is the beloved's image. Precisely as in the case of fame, the sacrifice of full presence, of realized sexuality, can have its pleasures. Once again, the psychological transaction by which the image becomes preferable to the woman herself is only latent in Petrarch, but emerges openly in the tradition he inspired. An important English poem for the study of this emergence is "Absence, hear thou my protestation," generally assigned to John Hoskyns, though sometimes attributed to Donne (the more likely choice, judging solely on the basis of its excellence and the Donnean lurch of its sense at the conclusion):⁵

By absence this good means I gain,
That I can catch her
Where none can watch her,
In some close corner of my brain;
There I embrace and kiss her,
And so I both enjoy and miss her.

The mind's a fine and private place, and some, we think, do there embrace. The logic of this consolation reaches a characteristically seventeenth-century finality in a poem like Lovelace's "Love Made in the First Age: To Chloris," where the speaker vengefully rejects the invitation of a woman who once scorned him, preferring instead the joy of ravishing her image: "Crownèd with mine own soft beams, / Enjoying of myself I lie." In the solitary enjoyment of his own crowning sunbeams, this Apollo has no interest in external Lauras or laurels. Via this pronounced tendency to replace the woman with her image, the high-minded, idealized sufferings of Petrarchan poetry made a bizarre marriage with the new libertine strands of the seventeenth century.

Libertine poetry is of course dead set, programmatically, against

Petrarchism—"whining poetry," as Donne sneered. In his libertine verse Donne promotes a world where honor is but a hymen, and exclusive, jealous devotion is impossible. The indifferent can love her and her, and you and you, *provided that* she be not true, or in other words, that she be herself indifferent: save for the few heretics doomed to be true to faithless lovers, the situation that generates Petrarchism will pass from the earth. Along with attacks on the varieties of female refusal (honor, discretion, coyness), we find in the libertine tradition self-help poems such as Suckling's "Why so pale and wan." Here the Petrarchan convention of supplying hopeful interpretations of ambiguous gestures is turned against the tradition. The speaker's arch assumption that the pale silence of the Petrarchan loser must be a stratagem designed to convert his mistress, and as such sure to fail, neatly reinstalls self-interest as the true ideal; and the lyric ends by detaching the lover from his unobtainable object: "Nothing can make her, / The devil take her."⁶ This plank in the libertine platform received extensive support from an unlikely quarter—Burton's blistering pages on "Remedies of Love": "she is lovely, fair, well-favoured, well qualified, courteous and kind: But if she be not so to me, what care I how kind she be? I say with Philostratus, beautiful to others, she is a tyrant to me, and so let her go."⁷ Burton proposes numerous exercises to cool passion's heat, among them the deliberate manipulation of the beloved's image so as to produce revulsion. These currents in the libertine tradition, with their pious antecedents in patristic literature, left their mark on *Paradise Lost*. Milton's brief evocation of the "serenade, which the starved lover sings / To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain" (4.769–70) is virtually an epitome of Suckling's "Why so pale and wan." Burton's renewed concern with the self-interested use of repulsive images can be discerned in Raphael's suggestion that Adam cure his uxoriousness by realizing that the rites he values are no more than those enjoyed by copulating animals (8.579–85).

Petrarchism may well be, remembering a Miltonic phrase in Donne's "The Ecstasy," a defect of loneliness. But it is remarkable that so many of the seventeenth-century love poets encountered defects of union. A hangover of postcoital depression awaited them in the new subject matter of sexual success. Ovid as literary master was not the mere inverse of Petrarch. In libertine poetry, the old moral and theological critique of sexual love reappears at the level of nature: there is a curse or privation in the very design of it. As

Donne recorded in his “Farewell to Love,” sexual consummation is short, depleting, dulling. Jonson lends his authority to this estimate through his translation of *Foeda est in coitu et brevis voluptas*, believed in the Renaissance to be the work of Petronius: “Doing, a filthy pleasure is, and short; / And done, we straight repent us of the sport.” Man dislikes an unsolvable problem, and today we have whole industries and professions, products and gurus, devoted to the rectification of these related and design flaws. Seventeenth-century poetry also teems with advice on this matter. Petronius, in Jonson’s translation, offered this pregnant suggestion:

Let us together closely lie, and kiss,
There is no labour, nor no shame in this;
This hath pleased, doth please, and long will please; never
Can this decay, but is beginning ever.⁸

Shameless, endlessly renewable, the kiss is the most innocent of all sexual acts, and avoids almost entirely that sense of decay and death so deeply embedded, linguistically and emotionally, in typical Renaissance descriptions of intercourse. It was probably from following this advice, backed up by several notably delicious kisses elsewhere in Jonson’s songs and lyrics, that Robert Herrick became the monarch of osculation in seventeenth-century poetry.

Antifruition was a libertine topos. Some of these *paradossi*, such as Cowley’s “Against Fruition,” appear to be exercises on a set theme. Others bespeak an actual discipline, a program for chastening the sexual drive by confining it to fantasy. One supposes that Bishop King, the master elegist, lived chastely in a continued marriage to his deceased wife. His “Paradox. That Fruition Destroys Love” delivers the usual complaints. Coition degrades love to lust, and causes the lover to devalue his partner; guilt is its inevitable sequel. The alternative is “expectation and delay”:⁹

Give me long dreams and visions of content,
Rather than pleasures in a minute spent.
And since I know before, the shedding rose
In that same instant doth her sweetness lose,
Upon the virgin-stock still let her dwell
For me to feast my longings with her smell.

This resolve to leave the rosebuds ungathered, to live with unfulfillable images of fulfillment, supplies a regimen for the flesh comparable to the deliberate schemes of image manipulation recom-

mended by Catholics and Protestants alike for the devotional life of the soul. We are once again reminded of Herrick. Like Ovid and Martial, Herrick tells us that “Jocund his Muse was, but his life was chaste,” yet the many instances of interrupted or blocked fruition in his lyrics give us better reason to believe the Renaissance poet. Sir Thomas Browne was not the only seventeenth-century male who “could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the world without this trivial and vulgar way of coition.”¹⁰ But, Suckling wrote, disposing of Browne’s objection, “since there are enough / Born to the drudgery, what need we plough?” (p. 37). The restriction of sexuality to fantasy produced its own issue—brainchildren, poems of indulged erotic imagination. *Hesperides* may be the fullest record we possess of the actual practice of poetic sexual fantasy as programmatic chastity.¹¹

Suckling wrote two poems entitled “Against Fruition,” and the better of them, “Stay here fond youth and ask no more, be wise,” was taken seriously enough to inspire at least two answers, by Edmund Waller and the aptly named Henry Bold. The Suckling lyrics have a somewhat different tone from the ones discussed thus far. Orgasmic disappointment is inexorable—the incarnation of our fallen condition, our severance from heaven. Beneath the jauntiness of the poems lies a conviction that the mind may be, tragically, the best bower we know in this world. “’Tis expectation makes a blessing dear: / It were not heaven, if we knew what it were” (p. 38). Having is finite, summed, just what it is: a score. Anticipation, on the other hand, is untold, incalculable, forever beckoning, and above all preserves the love object from debasement. The answers by Waller and Bold respond to the self-defeating silliness of the wormseed advice that Suckling pours on the tail of his fond youth. If sex is not, as Browne declared, “the foolishness of a wise man commits,” it is certainly the subject about which wise men are given to speak most foolishly.¹² So, Bold replies, “Go on, bold boy! and put her to’t, be wise!” (p. 183).

Yet the poems deserve a more reflective reply. In Suckling’s hands this topos loses its oddity and reveals its stalwart allegiance to Petrarchism: at stake in the antifruition poems is the preservation of an ideal; they are obedient, in a libertine setting, to the fundamental rule of the Petrarchan tradition. The second of Suckling’s efforts, “Fie upon hearts that burn with mutual fire,” inverts *carpe diem* by urging the mistress to be coy and unforthcoming,

and systematically unmakes the world projected in Donne's "The Indifferent" by demanding that the sexual passions of men and women never be in sync. After decades of poetic assaults on Petrarchan love, Suckling here reinvents from libertine premises the Petrarchan mistress, and for the sake of ideal sexual pleasure teaches to seventeenth-century beloveds the old virtue of coyness. Rochester, no less, was alive to the fleshy compensations of this proposal. His lyric "The Platonic Lady" shows us an antifruitional mistress laying down her rules, improving upon the usual advice of the topos by substituting infinite foreplay for infinite fantasy:

I hate the thing is called enjoyment:
 Besides it is a dull employment,
 It cuts off all that's life and fire
 From that which may be termed desire;

 I love a youth will give me leave
 His body in my arms to wreath;
 To press him gently, and to kiss;
 To sigh, and look with eyes that wish

 I'd give him liberty to toy
 And play with me, and count it joy.
 Our freedom should be full complete,
 And nothing wanting but the feat.¹³

To this day, such advice has its practitioners. But the profoundest answer to Suckling, or at least to the questions he raises for lovers, was given by Andrew Marvell. "To His Coy Mistress" opens with an infinite courtship, which is then rejected by a frantic doing in which the very shortness or hurriedness of the sexual act, the complaint of so many poet-lovers of the century, becomes precisely its *excellence* in our fallen race with time.

The need to master the faults and privations at the heart of our sexuality is everywhere at issue in libertine poetry. These authors want to ensure the renewability, the unending fascination, of sexual love. A bedrock fear of "aphanisis"—the term Ernest Jones coined for the disappearance of sexual desire—drives this literature.¹⁴ Nothing is forbidden in Carew's "A Rapture" except disinterest: "We only sin when Love's rites are not done." The initial attack on honor in this fine and revealing poem is one of several indicators that seduction or acceptance, sexual connection for the first time, is no longer the major focus of literary love. The exhilarating first times of *Hero and Leander* or Donne's elegy "On His Mistress

Going to Bed” are a generation away; the problem now is how to “die and rise *the same*,” without deflating desire or its object, ready to die and rise again.¹⁵ “A Rapture” begins in imitation of Donne’s elegy, but where Donne leaves off, Carew takes off—and then takes off again. The sexual act most elaborately described in the poem is the *second* time. Carew’s lyrics often end with comebacks and renewals, and he left us, appropriately enough, “A Second Rapture.” Restoration, provision, prevenient secular grace, a warrantee against decaying desire: all the libertine poets crave futurity, and this is the wish that, in a Suckling or a Rochester, revives repressed Petrarchism in a libertine world. The antifruition poems reposition desire on the before side of consummation. With this shift, frustration emerges once again as the ideal: frustration, be thou my pleasure! The topos we have studied imaginatively reclaims the innocence that the first phase of Renaissance love poetry was largely written in the hope of losing.

Before proceeding to explanations, consequences, and *Paradise Lost*, it might be well, following the example of Freud, simply to acknowledge the sheer peculiarity of human sexuality. The reinvention of Petrarchan frustration from Ovidian premises may be an absurd folly, correctly diagnosed by the Bolds of the seventeenth century, but the antifruition topos also concedes an authentic waywardness in our sexual passion. In his essay on “The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life”—one especially pertinent to the aspects of Renaissance lyric under discussion here—Freud opposes the idea that satisfaction engenders degradation in all the spheres of our desire. Sexual passion and its objects are uniquely fragile:

But is it also true that with the satisfaction of an instinct its psychical value always falls just as sharply? Consider, for example, the relation of a drinker to wine. Is it not true that wine always provides the drinker with the same toxic satisfaction, which in poetry has so often been compared to erotic satisfaction—a comparison acceptable from the scientific point of view as well? Has one ever heard of the drinker being obliged constantly to change his drink because he soon grows tired of keeping to the same one? On the contrary, habit constantly tightens the bond between a man and the kind of wine he drinks. Does one ever hear of a drinker who needs to go to a country where wine is dearer or drinking is prohibited, so that by introducing obstacles he can reinforce the dwindling satisfaction that he obtains? Not at all. If we listen to what our great

alcoholics, such as Böcklin, say about their relation to wine, it sounds like the most perfect harmony, a model of a happy marriage. Why is the relation of the lover to his sexual object so very different?

It is my belief that, however strange it may sound, we must reckon with the possibility that something in the nature of the sexual instinct itself is unfavourable to the realization of complete satisfaction.¹⁶

This uncanny passage, which should interest future annotators of Herrick's sack poems, might even serve as a preface to the seventeenth-century secular lyric in its entirety. Freud asks us to reckon with the possibility that complete and unequivocal satisfaction of sexual desire is an impossible attainment. As if in secret agreement with this proposition, we protect desire and its object against mutual disillusionment by erecting obstacles between them. Fantasy, poetry itself, may be among these obstacles. There is something Petrarchan in the nature of us. The barriers we erect to prevent what Milton calls in *Paradise Lost* "Casual fruition" (4.767) are in Freud's view a topos of the unconscious, whose beloveds are images, not realities, and whose ideal is mere desire, not its end in satisfaction.

MILTON MAKES IT RIGHT

Alexander Ross observes that Browne must be wrong about the inherent foolishness of the sexual act, since God himself had sculpted the genitals of man and woman.¹⁷ *Paradise Lost* is also happy, by and large, with the gift of sexuality: God made it right, following, with certain modifications, a design he had already worked out in the creation of the angels. But like all writing about sexual love, Milton's has a peculiar fantasy structure, a *way* in which sex is right. The crux of Adam and Eve's sexual connection is a cunningly and poetically imagined version of the dominant sexual fantasy of the Renaissance, or if that is too provincial, of the dominant sexual fantasy of Western culture from the Romans to this day, so pervasive and so enmeshed in cultural symbols that to many people it has looked like nature, with little or nothing of the fantastic about it. Moreover, Milton presents this fantasy so as to guard his garden sexuality, not only from hypocrites who feel that this particular beast should not be there, but also from the libertine melancholy that fell so heavily on the love poetry of his day.

In rough and ready form the fantasy, as well as its major meta-

phors, is already there in Ovid. It is slowed down into a ritual, given rules and a code of minute gestures, by the Christian tradition of courtly love. It is central to Petrarch, who dwells on myths of dangerous chase—the ill fates of Daphne and Actaeon. The fantasy passed down through the centuries is venerable—the love hunt. Men chase, women flee. Men aggressively manifest their interest. Women are coy, demure, hard-to-get, which is to say, undeclared, ambiguous. When the fantasy is successfully realized, there comes a turning, a sign from the woman that she will yield by gradual degrees and the two desires will be as one, declared equally and simultaneously in sexual activity—the moment dramatized with such pungency in *Hero and Leander* when turning coincides with doing. The fantasy has its inverse, as when Corinna comes at noon to Ovid or the special lady stalks Wyatt in his chambers. But the impressed male's thankfulness reveals that these gifts are, indeed, breaks with routine.

This is the erotic scenario Milton activates when, outdoing his predecessors, he undertakes the narration of the first time in the person of Eve. The act is, of course, a double loss of virginity—still considered, in many places, the ideal initiation. Milton's may be the most reflective, even philosophical account of sexual consummation in all of Renaissance literature. For the story of how Eve lost her virginity turns upon the psychological and metaphysical status of her own image. Beginning in primitive form as the captivating shape that pleases in the pool, Eve's image of herself goes through an astonishing series of intellectual metamorphoses, as if Milton were creating a new genre for this occasion—Ovidian wisdom literature. Here is the voice of God breaking into Eve's vain rapture:

What thou seest,
 What there thou seest fair creature is thyself,
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
 Mother of human race.

(4.467–75)

God ends her ignorant and therefore innocent romance with her

image by first imparting to her the unmistakably Platonic concept of the mirror image. From this primal idea others are born. The future opens. Eve is led by imaginative foreshadowing to him whose image *she* is, different from the mirror image in that this one can be embraced as a sexual partner. The embrace, the dialectic of the flesh, will disseminate her image in “Multitudes like thyself.” In dilating the concept of the image, God has moved from mirror to mother, arriving thereby at the concept of Eve: the voice is reflecting her in a mirror of knowledge. God’s speech concludes with the most sophisticated of the images of Eve—what she will be called, “Mother of human race,” the definitive epithet forever to be coupled with her proper name.

“Invisibly thus led,” self-knowledge being the route to sexual knowledge, Eve sees Adam and the love hunt is off and running. She turns and flees. Adam gives chase. The narrative itself is now mirroring the romance at the pool, when also Eve “started back” and “soon returned.” Adam calls out, mirroring the voice of God. But whereas the divine speaker reflected in his invisible mirror the image of Eve, the voice of the male, of “he / Whose image thou art,” reflects himself:

Return fair Eve,
Whom fly’st thou? Whom thou fly’st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear;
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.

(4.482–88)

“Me” is the answer to his initial question, but a “me” whose essence is relatedness to “thee,” “My other half.” Whereupon her hand is gently seized, and that transition from repulsion to welcome that Marlowe represented in the rocking of the body Milton renders in a play of hands. We are given to know that Eve fled because Adam’s body, in its angularity, was “Less winning soft, less amiably mild, / Than that smooth watery image” (479–80). Since she must know at this point that the image was of her own form, Adam’s rival in the courtship of Eve is Eve herself.

The narrative ends with a passage commonly subject to misinterpretation:

I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

(4.489–91)

She is telling us just what, after all these image lessons, she has been enabled to “see,” and there is nothing in her conclusions that need disturb a modern liberal mind. “Manly” modifies “grace,” but not “wisdom”: wisdom is something separate from manly grace, though joined with it in their shared superiority to physical beauty. Beauty is excelled by manly grace. Eve is simply telling us what her yielding meant, telling us that the male body is preferable as a love object to the more beautiful female body, that Adam is preferable to his rival, that she is, in other words, heterosexual. And beauty is excelled by wisdom, as in the intellectual sense given to the verb “see” in this very passage. Wisdom led her from the beautiful shape in the pool, and again detached her from that image, thus bringing her narrative to “I yielded,” when reborn in the invisible voice of Adam calling out behind her. Wisdom, which is linguistic and invisible, conceptual rather than perceptible, is a higher-order beauty, alone *truly* fair, because truth is not an image but a knowing, and for the speaker of these words, was first of all a knowing of a beautiful image. Having told her tale and summed her wisdom, Eve proceeds to act out its happy ending, yielding to Adam and receiving his impregnating kisses.

Man chases, woman yields. When Satan first sees her, Eve has adopted the same erotic attitude she learned in the beginning—subjection, submission, yielding. Drawing out his syntax, Milton seems driven to become more and more precise about the logic of their erotic bond:

Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet reluctant amorous delay.

(4.308–11)

Coy submission—a red flag word in seventeenth-century poetry, and we are reading, it is well to remember here, Andrew Marvell’s employer. Eve has learned something from those moments in the libertine tradition that unexpectedly reaffirm the erotic value of modesty and withholding. In her yielding, there is a pretense of refusal, an evocation of the Platonic Lady. A fluid coupling of three

perfect adjectives charges the word “delay” with considerable libidinal power.¹⁸ Reluctant to be amorous? Reluctant to delay? In either case it is sweet. Apparently they play this slowpoke game of chasing and yielding, sweetening the day, but delay consummation until the night: as at the end of book 4, sex is the last thing they do, the pleasure that crowns the working day and discharges the energy built up through sweet reluctant amorous delaying.

A naked man and woman arise in the morning, intermix the duties of the day with flirtatious venery, then consummate their love at night with a real capture, a real yielding, and go to sleep. This is paradise. It depends upon the wise management of temptation. In the Miltonic temptation the offer, if successfully resisted, will eventually be given as a reward in a higher and transmuted form.¹⁹ Milton’s sexual imagination was of a piece with his moral vision—patient resistance in the service of ideal consummation. In the rhythm of paradisaic eroticism, as in the rhythm of sacred history, all is “ever best found in the close” (*Samson Agonistes*, 1748). At our entrance into Eden in *Paradise Lost* we are introduced, as in the Elizium of Carew’s “A Rapture,” to an established sexual relationship. But in place of the voluptuous décor that ensures sexual renewal in Carew’s poem we find instead a drama of delay in which Adam and Eve restage each day, as reliable foreplay, the chase-capture-yielding of the first time. As in Milton generally, origins are conclusive. In his representation of the ideal sexual life, virginity is always symbolically being lost, and every time is as the first time. Eve will not, at day’s end, turn away, coy rather than she is submissive:

nor turned I ween
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused.

(4.741–43)

The text says that Adam did not turn from Eve, and Eve did not refuse, but it may be lawful to speculate that she might have turned away, as she did in the beginning, only to return in answerable style.

There is something brilliant about even the sexual fantasies of the man. “Sweet reluctant amorous delay” can be viewed as Milton’s deft contribution to the ongoing problem of how to enjoy another sexually and not, afterwards, suffer the rebound of degradation—a bulwark against boredom, disinterest, depletion, de-

pression, lovelessness, all of the curses and deprivations that, in libertine literature, constitute sexuality's particular brush with the Fall. Milton understood the erotic importance of the barrier. In his Eden, coyness and delay protect love by incorporating an obstacle into a sexual life of satisfied consummation. Antifruition sets up happy fruition.

That surely was his goal, as can be learned from observing what he has done with the three major myths of the Petrarchan tradition—the love chase of Apollo and Daphne, the disastrous love-at-first-sight of Actaeon and Diana, and the suicidal love of Narcissus: all three myths of nonconsummation, of unfulfilled love and thwarted chase.

Milton subsumes Narcissus and Apollo-Daphne into the narrative of love's happy genesis, incorporating even the myths of the barrier in his representation of fulfillment. There were two threats to the primal mating. Eve might have fixed her eyes forever on the image, but God intervenes to break the Narcissus spell; like Daphne, she might never have consented to capture, but the voice of Adam intervenes to break the Daphne spell. Furthermore, Eve's birth narrative is linked in several ways to Sin's, where the Narcissus myth appears *in malo*. Like Eve, Satan first recoiled from his "perfect image" (2.764), then "Becamest enamoured." Eventually Sin conceived, "such joy" he took with her "in secret" (765–66): we are not told how many times this secret joy occurred, but the most imaginative guess would be only once. For Sin is the prototype of the degraded love object—an unlovable horror when beheld for the first time after fruition. Myths implode upon this victim of decay. Her unchaste, monstrously fertile womb suffers the fate of Actaeon, hounded by her own dogs. Irksome disappointment, pining always in vain desire, is the demonic fate in *Paradise Lost*: Satan, we are told in the hymn to wedded love, "bids abstain" (4.748); inverting the usual vision of the Christian cosmos, this poem shows us sex in Heaven and deprivation in Hell. Implicit in the way Milton has apportioned these major Petrarchan myths among the two love stories of his epic lies a redemptive polemic against frustration.

HOW IT GOES WRONG: SATAN, ARCH-PETRARCHIST

Human sexuality does not result in Eve's degradation in the eyes of her husband, but rather the opposite, as he informs Raphael when seeking counsel on this matter in book 8. His problem

bears upon the social meaning of the chase and capture fantasy.

There is a charming and suggestive episode in the *Lusiads* of Camoens. At last the long-wandered Portuguese receive a reward from Venus, their divine champion. She peoples an island with her nymphs and instructs them in how to please these storm-tossed sailors. And the game on this Belle Isle, at the wise decree of Venus, is the dominant sexual fantasy of Western culture: the nymphs flee, the sailors run them down. But one sailor, a man notoriously unlucky in love, draws a perverse nymph. She will not be caught. After the other sailors have captured their partners and they have consented to more stationary delights, the unlucky sailor is still in pursuit. Who told you it was me? he cries out in despair, and quotes Petrarch—"What a wall is set between the grain and my hand" (*Canzoniere* 56)—as he is swept to a vision of his fate as a calculus of endless frustration: even if you were to stop now, I would be too tired to touch you (book 9, stanzas 77–78). But he is in fact completing the nymph's erotic playlet; at the sound of his lament she returns to prove him memorably wrong. She is the pupil of Venus, attuned to complaints, that Petrarchans dreamed of finding. She is also, according to Camoens, desirous of selling at a greater price than the others (stanza 76)—a nymph with a high opinion of her worth.²⁰

Why must there be a chase? Why must woman run and man pursue even in Eden, even on the Isle of Venus? We have suggested in psychoanalytic terms that obstacles may help to save desire and its object from decay. There is a social side as well to this preservation of value. Venery has to do with dearness, which is how Adam, speaking with his angelic counsellor, interprets the ambiguous gesture of Eve's original flight:

Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
Her virtue and the conscience of her worth,
That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable, or to say all,
Nature her self, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turned.

(8.501–7)

Her flight was "more desirable" than overt invitation would have been, but that was not its purpose. As women will tend to do in a society in which they flee and men pursue (Adam, making the common mistake, confuses her behavior with "Nature her self"),

Eve was expressing “the conscience of her worth.”²¹ By her elusiveness, by the precise degree of her coyness, by exactly how hard she is to get, a woman measures her worth, and by his pursuit, by the precise degree of his tenacity, by exactly the hard effort he expends, a man acknowledges this worth: a match. When a period of delay and not an end in itself, Petrarchan devotion is a way of reckoning or settling female worth. Male worth remains secondary as the game was usually played in Renaissance poetry, determined primarily by the poet-lover’s willing consent to his mistress’s demand. The hunted leads, the hunter follows. Self-interest—male worth—keeps resurfacing in the characteristic conflicts between reason and passion or the chiding friend and the heedless heart, but must be put aside in obedience to the fundamental rule of idealization. The rule, in this sense, is submission to the female’s assessment of her value—the chase at all costs.

After proposing an infinite courtship in the first section of “To His Coy Mistress,” Marvell surprisingly adds, contrary to his ironic hyperbole,

For Lady you deserve this State;
Nor would I love at lower rate.

Prolonged Petrarchan devotion, about to be repudiated by mortal necessity, retains its imaginative truth. The impossibly lengthy chase required by her coyness is indeed the ideal measure of her value: though in a subjunctive world contrary to mortal fact, the woman is loved at her own rate. Even in the best of the *carpe diem* poems a social transaction, an agreed reckoning of female worth, lies at the heart of the chase and capture fantasy. In *Paradise Lost* this game is fraught with moral danger.

Because sweet reluctant amorous delay will provide a daily reaffirmation of “the conscience of her worth,” Adam will inevitably be vulnerable to the opposite of object-debasement. The game that preserves Eve’s value from the fate of debasement works all too well, and the consequence is a tendency in the first husband to abase himself before the idol of his mate. It is no surprise when he falls “Fondly overcome with female charm” (9.999). The sexual fantasy Milton embedded at the origins of human love simply has to, by its very meaning, buck against the ordained hierarchy that sets the man over the woman. It makes the Fall explicable.

Eve also falls when fondly overcome with female charm: “nor was godhead from her thought” (9.790). It is not until the fatal

temptation of book 9 that we can appreciate why Milton married the origin of love to so many lessons about the image of Eve. At the moral center of the epic stands an acute diagnosis of Renaissance love poetry.

The deadly *venator* in this love hunt is Satan, eavesdropper at the intimate revelations of book 4. He paid special attention, it is clear, to the images that surrounded the loss of virginity. Adam's first words to Eve ("Return fair Eve, / Whom fly'st thou?") appear to have inspired the dream of flight Satan designs for her in order to strengthen that initial mysterious impulse toward solitude;²² adopting the voice of Adam, who spoke against her romance with her image, he tells her that stars exist to gaze upon her beauty. As the voice of the snake, he leads Eve symbolically back to the image in the pool, Adam's rival, and uncreates her wisdom. The successor to that image is the tree of prohibition in book 9. Satan assures her that its fruits pleased as "the teats / Of ewe or, goat dropping with milk at even, / Unsucked of lamb or kid" (581–83). Like Eve, or like the image of Eve he intends to reflect, the tree is an ignored mother, a provider whose worthy goods have not been allowed their due fruition; it is subordinate, underappreciated, cursed. (See Eve's last unfallen musings, 9.745–59: she is addressing herself.) As the snake leaves her, her eyes are once again fixed in self-worship on her own enchanting image; to eat the fruit is to realize or unfold her true worth. And once again, as at the beginning, she has no consciousness that the tree she thinks she knows is in fact her own image. Gone is the wisdom. Gone is the sweet reluctant amorous delay: a rash hand plucks and eats. Twice in the poem Eve has desired solitude. When she departs from the dinnertime symposium, it is for the sake of erotic delay; Adam will intermix his account with "Grateful digression, and solve high dispute / With conjugal caresses, from his lip / Not words alone pleased her" (8.55–57). But in the next book the motive for her solitude includes some sense of oppressive closeness, "so near each other thus all day" (9.220), some souring on the sweet flirtation of their daytime eroticism. Accomplishment is more to her liking: "Looks intervene and smiles" (9.222). As it turns out, delay is one thing, absence another. For the absence of Adam gives Eve over to his rival—the solitude and singularity of her image.

Satan accomplishes his design by exploiting something very close to what seventeenth-century poets learned about the logic of Petrarchism:

Fairest resemblance of thy maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
 With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
 Where universally admired; but here
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
 Who sees thee? (And what is one?) Who shouldst be seen
 A goddess among gods, adored and served
 By angels numberless, thy daily train.

(9.538–48)

And what is one? Waller's Apollo found in "unsought praise," an armful of laurels, a good trade-off from the lost Daphne. Eve should be adored by many, an empress at a civilized court, crowned and on display. The imperial destiny laid before Eve extricates her image from the exclusive mutual devotion of her love and repositions it as the centerpiece of an empire of gazes, guiding her desire onto the same track that made fame an agreeable substitute for love in the Petrarchan tradition. Fame is the first infirmity of fallen mind: Satan fell when he could not bear to be eclipsed by the crowned son. The Cavalier poets spoke for erotic satisfaction, which was the usual motive for the imperial compliments they paid to women. Satan, a specialist in the pleasures left to the frustrated, draws rather on the imperial yearnings, the wish for the crown, found in Petrarchan love.

Her vulnerability to this lethal gambit springs from the way Milton represented ideal love. The image in the pool was never abandoned. Adam fell in love with it. Eve, still thinking about it, ran away. Adam chased after her, willing to love at whatever rate she priced her worth. Eve yielded, fixing the value of her image, and each day the game has been replayed. Since Miltonic love is ultimately about the determination of female worth, one can readily see how Satan is able to convert Eve from the fixed value agreed upon in her marriage to the inflation of an imperial reckoning. What is one? Love is a fragile knot woven of narcissism—the consummate pleasure of paradise, but equally the precondition of paradise lost. As Eve falls, Adam is weaving "Of choicest flowers a garland to adorn / Her tresses, and her rural labours crown, / As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen" (9.840–42). The bridge between this innocent rural token woven by a husband for his harvest queen and the pomposities of Satan's Hell, where

he sits crowned like a king of kings, in Godlike imitated state—the bridge actually built in the poem by Sin and Death—measures exactly the extent to which Eve's image has fallen.

The temptation Eve designs for Adam is a love trial. He must again reckon her worth. And again, eating, he pays the price, choosing against another Eve. Courtly love was charged early on with idolatry, and Adam's Fall is in this sense a medieval one. Eve's is the more modern. In the Petrarchan poetry of the Renaissance the old threat of idolatry gave way to the newly expansive and resourceful ego of the suitor-poet; the rejected male began to try out new and extravagant compensations, the most enduring of these being poetic immortality via an empire of admirers. The female Fall has this distinctly Renaissance tone. Hell in *Paradise Lost*, built like Renaissance civilization itself in imitation of a lost magnificence, smacks of Burckhardt's Renaissance, with its great building remembered from Milton's Italian travels and its many reminiscences of the culture of imperial Rome. Satan opens wide the gates of this secondhand *imperium* to entertain the image of Eve, and her dizzy imagination welcomes the Hell disguised as Heaven in her tempter's rhetoric. She flies away from her rustic garden to thrones and pillared halls where power, the chief delight of frustration, is displayed and adored, and the delay of loving sexual gratification may become, as it is for Hell's monarch, infinite. One of the secrets of Milton's artistic creations is in the way he entitles himself to fulfill his soaring desires by sacrificing, in the works themselves, versions of these desires.²³ It is difficult to believe that the Renaissance Fall of Eve indicated in *Paradise Lost* does not represent a purgation of intimate wishes consummated in the creation of the epic itself—the Lady of Christ's, the Lady of *Comus*, and in the end the Lady Eve of *Paradise Lost*.

After his medieval Fall, however, Adam becomes wonderfully evocative of the seventeenth century. Once intoxicated on the fruit he expresses some new libertine anxieties: he wishes that there were ten forbidden trees in what seems a not altogether jocular concern with making provision for his erotic future;²⁴ the fires, his joke implies, may never be this intense again. The game of sweet reluctant amorous delay now seems to him, as it did to Eve at the beginning of this book, a failure:

But come, so well refreshed, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare;
For never did thy beauty since the day

I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
With all perfections, so inflame my sense
With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever, bounty of this virtuous tree.

(9.1027–33)

The Renaissance left us thousands of these lyrics of sexual invitation in which the man says to the woman, in so many words, “But come . . . now let us play,” but this one is rich with the meaning of a long and lofty poem. It seems at first that Adam might simply be saying that he is as excited now as he was the first time—that it is only that the days of sweet reluctant amorous delay have been impoverished, not that the rites mysterious of connubial love have themselves been improved on. But alas, Eve is “fairer now / Than ever,” and we must hear in sorrow that he never before has been so excited. In fallen sexuality, the barrier that preserves and secures desire is no longer delay, the mastered temptation of erotic postponement. The new excitement is moral transgression, the new barrier the law that forbids, taboo itself. God, in other words, now takes his place among those erotic barriers whose presence, when defied, paradoxically serves to protect desire against fatigue. Throughout the poem Milton has striven unto heresy to avoid the usual conflicts between God and sexuality. But that ideal is finally compromised. The last act of intercourse in paradise sets the urgent flesh against the deity, and that, in fact, is its pleasure, “bounty of this virtuous tree.” Sexual desire, like the appetite for food, becomes capable of heightened satisfaction with the Fall, and this heightening has a name: “in lust they burn” (9.1015).

Adam seizes her hand, not gently, and leads her to “a shady bank.” It is still daylight, as at their first coupling, and they will seize this, too, before it fades. There are no prayers, no delays. They fall upon each other like amorous birds of prey: “There they their fill of love and love’s disport / Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal, / The solace of their sin” (9.1042–44). The gustatory metaphor reminds us that this sex act is the first in an unended series of repetitions of the Fall. Fallen sex, “their fill” taken largely, is a carnivorous meal; as Adam put it when punning in his invitation lyric, this dalliance “meet is.” Milton ends garden eroticism with a sinister transformation of the love hunt.

The course of sexual fruition in his epic may be viewed as a pointed expansion of “To His Coy Mistress.” When, before the Fall, there is world enough and time, coyness is no crime, and

delay in the game of love is both the government of desire and its major inducement. But as soon as they hear what they are the first to hear, Time's winged chariot, Adam and Eve rather at once their time devour. Time has been hurrying near us human beings for some while now, and modern lovers may no longer hear it as clearly as these do. To this pair the impending catastrophe is not simply or even primarily death, which these sinful lovers have no experience of, just as earlier they "knew not eating death" (9.792), but punishing justice; and their defiance of justice through fugitive intercourse is the "seal" of legitimacy on a confession of "mutual guilt." Their "solace" lies in taking pleasure in sin.

There is much to be said about the restitution of this marriage. Love in *Paradise Lost* is not a minor subject. But we have said enough to conclude that Milton's epic provides a moral and psychological etiology for the manifold postures and dispositions of Renaissance love poetry. It consumes a great tradition, and gives it back to us as representation and as understanding. Wisely Milton captured the beautiful image.

University of Maryland
University of Virginia

NOTES

¹ Text from Christopher Marlowe, *The Poems*, ed. Millar Maclure (London: Methuen, 1968).

² *Idea 44*, in John Buxton, ed., *Poems of Michael Drayton* (2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), 1:13. The obsession with fame evident in Drayton's love poetry is perhaps what drew him to historical and patriotic subjects.

³ G. Thorn Drury, ed. *The Poems of Edmund Waller* (2 vols. London: Bullen, 1901), 1:52.

⁴ John Carey and Alastair Fowler, eds., *The Poems of John Milton* (London: Longman, 1968), 93–94; we adjust Carey's translation slightly. Further quotations of Milton are from this edition.

⁵ See the discussion of the authorship of this lyric in Louise Brown Osborn, ed., *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns 1566–1638* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), 285–87. Grierson printed the poem among the *Dubia* in *The Poems of John Donne* (2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912). Donne rejects mental images as substitute gratification in his elegy "The Dream," but his poems often exploit dichotomies ("The Storm," "The Calm"), and that fact alone does not mean much one way or the other in determining the authorship of "Absence, hear thou my protestation." Because Louise Osborn prints inferior variants in her edition of Hoskyns, we have quoted the version from Francis Davison's *Poetic Rhapsody*, which is printed in J. William Hebel and Hoyt Y. Hudson, eds., *Poetry of the English Renaissance 1509–1660* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), 203–4.

⁶ Thomas Clayton, ed., *The Works of Sir John Suckling: The Non-dramatic Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 64; further citations of Suckling (and replies to him) are from this edition.

⁷ *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York:

Farrar and Rinehart, 1927), 786. Both the sentiment and the phrasing here recall the refrain to George Wither's "Shall I be wasting in despair" (Hebel and Hudson, 592).

⁸ Jonson read the poem to Drummond, who understood it, but could not bring himself to write down just what it was that kissing beat. See George Parfitt, ed., *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 462–63.

⁹ Margaret Crum, ed., *The Poems of Henry King* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 185. King touches on the same theme in "The Surrender." Even in "The Short Wooing" he speaks of his "chaste desire." In "Paradox. That Fruition Destroys Love" he notes that Adam, had he confined himself to looking, would not have lost his innocence. The association of orgasm with the Fall is a regular feature of the antifruition poems: it may be that one component of postcoital sadness is the male's mourning for his fallen erection. Doing, as Jonson had Pseudo-Petronius say, is *short*. This is also Donne's complaint in "Farewell to Love."

¹⁰ *Religio Medici* 2.9 in *Religio Medici and Other Works*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 67.

¹¹ See Braden, *The Classics and English Renaissance Poetry: Three Cases Studies* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978), 217 ff.

¹² *Religio Medici and Other Works*, 67.

¹³ David Vieth, ed., *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), 25–26.

¹⁴ See "Early Development of Female Sexuality" in *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (London: Bailliere, Tindall, and Cox, 1950), 438–51. Jones contended that the dread of aphanisis was deeper than the castration complex, though it is hard to see how the two could be separated.

¹⁵ A. J. Smith has argued that the famous line at the center of "The Canonization" is not, as often alleged, Donne flaunting any old orgasm as a religious mystery; he is rather celebrating orgasm without the appendage of *post coitum triste* so memorably (and seriously) evoked in "Farewell to Love." See "The Dismissal of Love" in Smith, ed., *John Donne: Essays in Celebration* (London: Methuen, 1972), 127.

¹⁶ James Strachey and Anna Freud, eds., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (24 vols. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1964), 11:188–89; in this edition the essay is given its less common English title, "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love." A quotation from this essay prefaces the memorable account of fruition difficulties in Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*.

¹⁷ *Medicus Medicatus* (London, 1645), 76–78. The sculpting metaphor is ours.

¹⁸ Edward LeComte quotes the *Ars Amatoria* on erotic delay in *Milton and Sex* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1978), 91.

¹⁹ "Everything he has renounced in his own name is restored to him tenfold," Stanley Fish writes of *Paradise Regained*'s hero in "Inaction and Silence: The Reader in *Paradise Regained*" (Joseph Anthony Wittreich, ed., *Calm of Mind* [Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve Univ., 1971], 44). See also Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 59 and *passim*.

²⁰ A good deal of ethnography supports the ideas we are about to introduce concerning courtship and the determination of female worth. See Lucy Mair, *Marriage* (London: Scolar Press, 1977), esp. 48–73.

²¹ At the precise moment she took flight from Adam, Eve may of course have been driven by other motives, such as fear.

²² Here we are indebted to a course paper written for Kerrigan by Janet Lyon of the University of Virginia.

²³ *The Sacred Complex*, 256–59.

²⁴ Not to worry, Adam: Fowler and other Miltonists—we are not sure who was the first—note that God would eventually fulfill this wish for ten taboo trees by delivering Moses the ten commandments.