

To the Nightingale

Exert thy Voice, sweet Harbinger of Spring!
This Moment is thy Time to Sing,
This Moment I attend to Praise,
And set my Numbers to thy Layes.
Free as thine shall be my Song;
As thy Musick, short, or long.
Poets, wild as thee, were born,
Pleasing best when unconfin'd,
When to Please is least design'd,
Soothing but their Cares to rest;
Cares do still their Thoughts molest,
And still th' unhappy Poet's Breast,
Like thine, when best he sings, is plac'd against a Thorn.
She begins, Let all be still!
Muse, thy Promise now fulfill!
Sweet, oh! sweet, still sweeter yet
Can thy Words such Accents fit,
Canst thou Syllables refine,
Melt a Sense that shall retain
Still some Spirit of the Brain,
Till with Sounds like these it join.
'Twill not be! then change thy Note;
Let Division shake thy Throat.
Hark! Division now she tries;
Yet as far the Muse outflies.
Cease then, prithee, cease thy Tune;
Trifler, wilt thou sing till *June*?
Till thy Bus'ness all lies waste,
And the Time of Building's past!
Thus we Poets that have Speech,
Unlike what thy Forests teach,
If a fluent Vein be shown
That's transcendent to our own,
Criticize, reform, or preach,
Or censure what we cannot reach.