

Poems of Ben Johnson
Texts

I. Fall Grief in Showers

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower, yet, O faintly, gentle springs!
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers;
Fall grief in showers;
Our beauties are not ours.
O, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

II. Oh, That Joy So Soon Should Waste

Oh, that joy so soon should waste!
Or so sweet a bliss
As a kiss
Might not forever last!
So sugared, so melting, so soft, so delicious!
The dew that lies on roses
When morn herself discloses,
Is not so precious.
Oh, rather than I would it smother,
Were I to taste such another,
It should be my wishing
That I might die kissing.

III. The Hour Glass

Do but consider this small dust
Here running in the glass,
By atoms moved;
Could you believe that this
The body was
Of one that loved?
And in his mistress' flame, playing like a fly,
Turned to cinders by her eye?
Yes; and in death, as life, unblessed,
To have't expressed,
Even ashes of lovers find no rest.

IV. Oh Do Not Wanton With Those Eyes

O, DO not wanton with those eyes,
—Lest I be sick with seeing;
Nor cast them down, but let them rise,
—Lest shame destroy their being.

O, be not angry with those fires,
—For then their threats will kill me;
Nor look too kind on my desires,
—For then my hopes will spill me.

O, do not steep them in thy tears,
—For so will sorrow slay me;
Nor spread them as distract with fears;
—Mine own enough betray me.