

And holy Genii guard the rock,
 60 Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,
 While on its rich ambitious head,
 An Eden, like his^o own, lies spread:
 I view that oak, the fancied glades among,
 By which as Milton lay, his evening ear,
 65 From many a cloud that dropped ethereal dew,
 Nigh sphered in Heaven its native strains could hear:
 On which that ancient trump he reached was hung;
 Thither oft, his glory greeting,
 From Waller's myrtle⁸ shades retreating,
 70 With many a vow from Hope's aspiring tongue,
 My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue;
 In vain—such bliss to one alone,^o
 Of all the sons of soul was known,
 And Heaven, and Fancy, kindred powers,
 75 Have now o'erturned the inspiring bowers,
 Or curtained close such scene from every future view.

Milton's

Milton

1746

Ode to Evening¹

If aught of oaten stop,² or pastoral song,
 May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
 Like thy own solemn springs,
 Thy springs and dying gales,
 5 O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
 With brede^o ethereal wove,
 O'erhang his wavy bed:
 Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat,
 10 With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
 Or where the beetle winds
 His small but sullen horn,
 As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
 Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
 15 Now teach me, maid composed,
 To breathe some softened strain,
 Whose numbers,^o stealing through thy darkening vale,
 May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
 As, musing slow, I hail
 20 Thy genial^o loved return!
 For when thy folding-star³ arising shows
 His paly circlet, at his warning lamp

embroidery

measures

life-giving

8. The symbol of love poetry. Edmund Waller (1606–1687), whose poetry is thought of as trivial compared with Milton's grandeur.

1. Collins borrowed the metrical structure and the rhymeless lines of this ode from Milton's translation of Horace, *Odes* 1.5 (1673). The text

printed here is based on the revised version, published in Dodsley's *Miscellany* (1748).

2. Finger hole in a shepherd's flute.

3. The evening star, which signals the hour for herding the sheep into the sheepfold.

The fragrant Hours, and elves
 Who slept in flowers the day,
 And many a nymph who wreaths her brows with sedge,
 25 And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
 The pensive Pleasures sweet,
 Prepare thy shadowy car.
 Then lead, calm vot'ress, where some sheety lake
 Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile
 30 Or upland fallows gray
 Reflect its last cool gleam.
 But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
 Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
 That from the mountain's side
 35 Views wilds, and swelling floods,
 And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
 And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
 Thy dewy fingers draw
 The gradual dusky veil.
 40 While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
 And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve;
 While Summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy lingering light;
 45 While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
 Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
 Affrights thy shrinking train,
 And rudely rends thy robes;
 So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
 50 Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And hymn thy favorite name!

1746, 1748

CHRISTOPHER SMART

1722-1771

In 1756 Christopher Smart, who had won prizes at Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a scholar and poet and was known in London as a wit and bon vivant, was seized by religious mania: "a preternatural excitement to prayer," according to Hester Thrale, "which he held it as a duty not to control or repress." If Smart had been content to pray in private, his life might have ended as happily as it began, but he insisted on kneeling down in the streets, in parks, and in assembly rooms. He became a public nuisance, and the public took its revenge. For most of the next seven years Smart was confined, first in St. Luke's hospital, then in a private madhouse. There, severed from his wife, his children, and his friends, he began to write a bold new sort of poetry: