



JONATHAN DAVID LITTLE

ANTIQUE SONNETS



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PERSONAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

SECOND SERIES

Tillet Press



Poems of the “Picturesque Archaic” School

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SONNET (*Spenserian*)
IX

THE OLD, OLD FASHION

How like a flower that turns against the sun -
Or glories past arrayed in pauper's weeds -
This prison cage descends on everyone,
Estranging honeyed talents' former needs.
Slow stiffening Age makes corpses of moist seeds
And ghastly grottos now where castles stood:
Puts back the child who played with coloured beads,
Then seals up all life's bound'ries tight in wood.
No more embrace the night's once rav'shing hood
Which cowed our writhing dreams beneath the stars -
But, rather, slight this transient adulthood
For, soon enough, Time yokes on shacklebars.
Thus lacking power, and lacking passion, flee
Th' insipid flower of sensuality.

03/01

SONNET *(Shakespearean)*

X

THE WAY OF NOT SEEING

Condemned to live a television life
Of noughts and ones, directed secondhand
By puppet-masters wielding satire's knife
Each night within their push-me pull-you land,
Producers' jellied tears of piety
Congeal the dreams of ev'ry denizen
Of metrosexual society
Where grateful sighs outsing the throat of Heav'n.
Surrend'ring to the script as it appears
Fat, programmed armchair critics postulate,
Accumulating traits whose mindless fears
Decide our hypochondriacal fate:
All these - these pictures of our private pain -
Feed Fortune's rise, and lurid lives sustain.

04/01

SONNET *(Shakespearean)*
XI

THE STORY OF THE AGES

When waterfalls of gasping thoughts descend
And concertinaed hist'ry waves goodbye,
The folds of all Time's anthems find their end
In sobbing rivulets which sluggish lie.
What strange constructions filled those years of lost
Belief - of stillborn might that never kissed
The light - but smothered by fine sands criss-crossed
By endless streams of feet existence missed,
Each Age still tries through clamour all its own
To open foreign pathways in the brain,
Builds over ghosts of gods and habits grown
Exhausted singing expectation's strain:
 "Treat Mem'ry's wisest symbols as a wife
 If you would see me in your future life."

11/01

SONNET (*Spenserian*)
XII

THE POISONED CHALICE

Could God have made an angel without weight,
Bright ingots shine without a sacrifice
Of mind, and finest bullion then create;
Hung massive stars on chiffon black as ice
In voids of gravity not prey to vice?
This heaviness *is* life; its wisdom hurled
Through pregnant bedrock proud to bear strength's price,
Not eager yet to see Time's flag unfurled -
For when pains die, why then, so dies the world.
Now only demons fly, since lacking shame
They float away on inner clouds that swirled
Within spent artists, broken, bent and lame.
So let her sleep, Love's soulful leaden ache:
The Past is Dead. Long Live each Past we make!

12/01

SONNET (*Spenserian*)
XIII

**ON A DESERT ISLAND;
OR,
NEVERMORE**

Abandoned, shipwrecked, calcifying Heart
Beached high above the tide's loose liquid hem,
Neglect will urge your fading pulse depart
When dark grey dripping gloom forms like a gem
That final fev'rish hue, then drowns in phlegm
Hallucination's gasping, bubbling wheeze -
A salty thirst no mariner can stem,
As aimless flotsam drifts on shiv'ring seas
Without that touch that steers each raft to ease.
Grant cold, relentless stares fixed into night
Might penetrate the gate whose rusted keys
Cracked open daybreak's baking, bloated light:
 The mummifying case, the sun-bleached shell -
 The life that was, preserved in driest hell.

12/01

SONNET (*Idiosyncratic*)
XIV

TO BURN BRIGHTLY

When genes unfold their secret stranglehold
And briefly staunch environment's malaise -
That ever circled centres of fixed ways -
As if from cheerless, hour-glass grind paroled:
Then - when we have least hope - epiphanies
May tantalise our gaze, though most such days
Drag on, and on, and on into that haze
Which must define our personalities
As being pressed by Time into a mould
That sinks within the curse of dreariness -
An empty house of grizzly, stinking mess
Whose ways were lost through corridors untold
While gath'ring back the system of past days
Which forged mind's spectral labyrinth from one maze.

12/01

SONNET (*Idiosyncratic*)
XV

OUR NEW THEORY OF RELATIVITY

Philosophers freed from their search for truth,
Like lovers left dissembling for their gain,
Or church folk who eschew the moral plane
(Where lawyers legislate for lack of proof) -
Each learn the politician's careful spin,
And all-pervasive sophistry perfect
So even art itself - our guide - is checked
By masters of the craft of cavilling.
Then fade old visions of an ideal man -
One not exposed to media reports
Of endless "issues" sterilising thoughts,
Extinguishing that spark, wit's bright *élan* -
While chatt'ring hosts launch arguments to suit
A culture far too tired to bear new fruit.

02/02

SONNET (*Petrarchan*)
XVI

ART'S BEQUEST

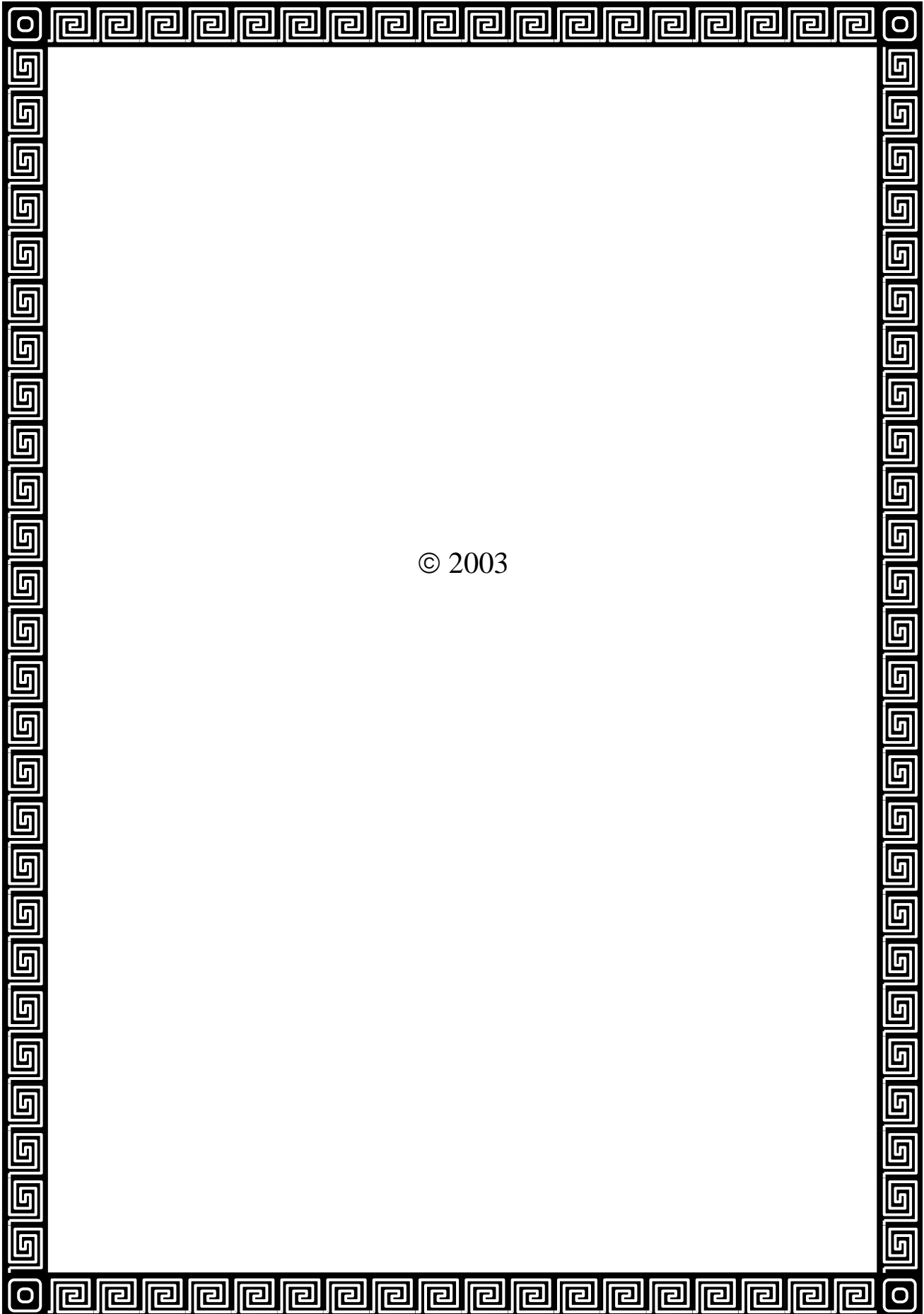
As long, majestic phrases take their toll,
It seems to be the hardest work here still
To fill a page with words or notes at will
And wield those words as weapons to control
Wild music blown like bellows through a soul
Whose verses bowed on viols plead until
Great churning thoughts gyrate and anxious thrill
The mighty, loving alphabet, Time stole.

One day, deprived of intellectual powers,

A jaundiced leaf will hold all we have known
Of ghosts so sorely missed in orphan hours,
Now flown away from unprotected towers:

And though one empty chair rocks all alone,
Life's acid ink, devouring print, sculpts flowers.

04/02



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