

## Edmund Spenser, "Garden of Adonis" stanzas from *The Faerie Queene* Bk III

She brought her to her ioyous Paradize,  
Where most she wonnes, whe[n] she on earth  
does dwel.

So faire a place, as Nature can deuize:  
Whether in Paphos, or Cytheron hill,  
Or it in Gnidus be, I wote not well;  
But well I wote by tryall, that this same  
All other pleasant places doth excell,  
And called is by her lost louers name,  
The Gardin of Adonis, farre renowmd by fame.

In that same Gardin all the goodly flowres,  
Wherewith dame Nature doth her beautifie,  
And decks the girlonds of her paramoures,  
Are fetcht: there is the first seminarie  
Of all things, that are borne to liue and die,  
According to their kindes. Long worke it were,  
Here to account the endlesse progenie  
Of all the weedes, that bud and blossome there;  
But so much as doth need, must needs be  
counted here.

It sited was in fruitfull soyle of old,  
And girt in with two walles on either side;  
The one of yron, the other of bright gold,  
That none might thorough breake, nor ouer-  
stride:  
And double gates it had, which opened wide,  
By which both in and out men moten pas;  
Th'one faire and fresh, the other old and dride:  
Old Genius the porter of them was,  
Old Genius, the which a double nature has.

He letteth in, he letteth out to wend,  
All that to come into the world desire;  
A thousand thousand naked babes attend  
About him day and night, which doe require,  
That he with fleshly weedes would them attire:  
Such as him list, such as eternall fate  
Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire,  
And sendeth forth to liue in mortall state,  
Till they againe returne backe by the hinder gate.

After that they againe returned beene,  
They in that Gardin planted be againe;  
And grow afresh, as they had neuer seene  
Fleshly corruption, nor mortall paine.  
Some thousand yeares so doen they there  
remaine;  
And then of him are clad with other hew,  
Or sent into the chaungefull world againe,  
Till thither they returne, where first they grew:  
So like a wheele around they runne from old to  
new.

Ne needs there Gardiner to set, or sow,  
To plant or prune: for of their owne accord  
All things, as they created were, doe grow,  
And yet remember well the mightie word,  
Which first was spoken by th'Almightie lord,  
That bad them to increase and multiply:  
Ne doe they need with water of the ford,  
Or of the clouds to moysten their roots dry;  
For in themselues eternall moisture they imply.

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,  
And vncouth formes, which none yet euer knew,  
And euery sort is in a sundry bed  
Set by it selfe, and ranckt in comely rew:  
Some fit for reasonable soules t'indew,  
Some made for beasts, some made for birds to  
weare,  
And all the fruitfull spawne of fishes hew  
In endlesse rancks along enraunged were,  
That seem'd the Ocean could not containe them  
there.

Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent  
Into the world, it to replenish more;  
Yet is the stocke not lessened, nor spent,  
But still remains in euerlasting store,  
As it at first created was of yore.  
For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes,  
In hatefull darkenesse and in deepe horrore,  
An huge eternall Chaos, which supplies  
The substances of natures fruitfull progenyes.

All things from thence doe their first being fetch,  
 And borrow matter, whereof they are made,  
 Which when as forme and feature it does ketch,  
 Becomes a bodie, and doth then inuade  
 The state of life, out of the griesly shade.  
 That substance is eterne, and bideth so,  
 Ne when the life decayes, and forme does fade,  
 Doth it consume, and into nothing go,  
 But chaunged is, and often altred to and fro.

The substance is not chaunged, nor altered,  
 But th'only forme and outward fashion;  
 For euery substance is conditioned  
 To change her hew, and sundry formes to don,  
 Meet for her temper and complexion:  
 For formes are variable and decay,  
 By course of kind, and by occasion;  
 And that faire flowre of beautie fades away,  
 As doth the lilly fresh before the sunny ray.

Great enemy to it, and to all the rest,  
 That in the Gardin of Adonis springs,  
 Is wicked Time, who with his scyth adrest,  
 Does mow the flowring herbes and goodly  
 things,  
 And all their glory to the ground downe flings,  
 Where they doe wither, and are fowly mard:  
 He flyes about, and with his flaggy wings  
 Beates downe both leaues and buds without  
 regard,  
 Ne euer pittie may relent his malice hard.

Yet pittie often did the gods relent,  
 To see so faire things mard, and spoyled quight:  
 And their great mother Venus did lament  
 The losse of her deare brood, her deare delight:  
 Her hart was pierst with pittie at the sight,  
 When walking through the Gardin, them she  
 spyde,  
 Yet no'te she find redresse for such despight.  
 For all that liues, is subiect to that law:  
 All things decay in time, and to their end do draw.

But were it not, that Time their troubler is,  
 All that in this delightfull Gardin growes,  
 Should happie be, and haue immortall blis:

For here all plentie, and all pleasure flowes,  
 And sweet loue gentle fits emongst them  
 throwes,  
 Without fell rancor, or fond gealosie;  
 Franckly each paramour his leman knowes,  
 Each bird his mate, ne any does enuie  
 Their goodly meriment, and gay felicitie.

There is continuall spring, and haruest there  
 Continuall, both meeting at one time:  
 For both the boughes doe laughing blossomes  
 beare,  
 And with fresh colours decke the wanton Prime,  
 And eke attonce the heauy trees they clime,  
 Which seeme to labour vnder their fruits lode:  
 The whiles the ioyous birdes make their pastime  
 Emongst the shadie leaues, their sweet abode,  
 And their true loues without suspition tell abroad.

Right in the midst of that Paradise,  
 There stood a stately Mount, on whose round  
 top  
 A gloomy groue of mirtle trees did rise,  
 Whose shadie boughes sharpe steele did neuer  
 lop,  
 Nor wicked beasts their tender buds did crop,  
 But like a girlond compassed the hight,  
 And from their fruitfull sides sweet gum did  
 drop,  
 That all the ground with precious deaw bedight,  
 Threw forth most dainty odours, & most sweet  
 delight.

And in the thickest couert of that shade,  
 There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,  
 But of the trees owne inclination made,  
 Which knitting their rancke braunches part to  
 part,  
 With wanton yuie twyne entrayld athwart,  
 And Eglantine, and Caprifole emong,  
 Fashiond aboue within their inmost part,  
 That nether Phoebus beams could through  
 the[m] throng,  
 Nor Aeolus sharp blast could worke them any  
 wrong.

And all about grew euery sort of flowre,  
 To which sad louers were transformd of yore;  
 Fresh Hyacinthus, Phoebus paramoure,  
 And dearest loue:  
 Foolish Narcisse, that likes the watry shore,  
 Sad Amaranthus, made a flowre but late,  
 Sad Amaranthus, in whose purple gore  
 Me seemes I see Amintas wretched fate,  
 To whom sweet Poets verse hath giuen endlesse  
 date.

There wont faire Venus often to enioy  
 Her deare Adonis ioyous company,  
 And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy;  
 There yet, some say, in secret he does ly,  
 Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery,  
 By her hid from the world, and from the skill  
 Of Stygian Gods, which doe her loue enuy;  
 But she her selfe, when euer that she will,  
 Posseseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her  
 fill.

And sooth it seemes they say: for he may not  
 For euer die, and euer buried bee  
 In balefull night, where all things are forgot;  
 All be he subiect to mortalitie,  
 Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,  
 And by succession made perpetuall,  
 Transformed oft, and chaunged diuerslie:  
 For him the Father of all formes they call;  
 Therefore needs mote he liue, that liuing giues to  
 all.

There now he liueth in eternall blis,  
 Ioying his goddesse, and of her enioyd:  
 Ne feareth he henceforth that foe of his,  
 Which with his cruell tuske him deadly cloyd:  
 For that wilde Bore, the which him once annoyd,  
 She firmly hath emprisoned for ay,  
 That her sweet loue his malice mote auoyd,  
 In a strong rocky Caue, which is they say,  
 Hewen vnderneath that Mount, that none him  
 losen may.

There now he liues in euerlasting ioy,  
 With many of the Gods in company,  
 Which thither haunt, and with the winged boy  
 Sporting himselfe in safe felicity:  
 Who when he hath with spoiles and cruelty  
 Ransackt the world, and in the wofull harts  
 Of many wretches set his triumphes hye,  
 Thither resorts, and laying his sad darts  
 Aside, with faire Adonis playes his wanton parts.

And his true loue faire Psyche with him playes,  
 Faire Psyche to him lately reconcyld,  
 After long troubles and vnmeet vpbrayes,  
 With which his mother Venus her reuyld,  
 And eke himselfe her cruelly exyld:  
 But now in stedfast loue and happy state  
 She with him liues, and hath him borne a chyld,  
 Pleasure, that doth both gods and men aggrate,  
 Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late.

Hither great Venus brought this infant faire,  
 The younger daughter of Chrysogonee,  
 And vnto Psyche with great trust and care  
 Committed her, yfostered to bee,  
 And trained vp in true feminitee:  
 Who no lesse carefully her tendered,  
 Then her owne daughter Pleasure, to whom  
 shee  
 Made her companion, and her lessoned  
 In all the lore of loue, and goodly womanhead.

In which when she to perfect ripenesse grew,  
 Of grace and beautie noble Paragone,  
 She brought her forth into the worldes vew,  
 To be th'ensample of true loue alone,  
 And Lodestarre of all chaste affectione,  
 To all faire Ladies, that doe liue on ground.  
 To Faery court she came, where many one  
 Admyrd her goodly haueour, and found  
 His feeble hart wide launched with loues cruell  
 wound.

But she to none of them her loue did cast,  
Saue to the noble knight Sir Scudamore,  
To whom her louing hart she linked fast  
In faithfull loue, t'abide for euer more,  
And for his dearest sake endured sore,  
Sore trouble of an hainous enemy;  
Who her would forced haue to haue forlore  
Her former loue, and stedfast loialty,  
As ye may elsewhere read that ruefull history.

But well I weene, ye first desire to learne,  
What end vnto that fearefull Damozell,  
Which fled so fast from that same foster stearne,  
Whom with his brethren Timias slew, befell:  
That was to weet, the goodly Florimell;  
Who wandring for to seeke her louer deare,  
Her louer deare, her dearest Marinell,  
Into misfortune fell, as ye did heare,  
And from Prince Arthur fled with wings of idle  
feare.