

Thomas Chatterton Manuscript Project (TCMP)

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Elegy 2.

‘Joyless I seek the solitary shade’

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Control Panel ↓ :

Original Chatterton Manuscript : Missing / presumed lost

Published :

- Town and Country Magazine, November 1769, p.607 : [View Panel 3](#)

Transcript Verbatim of Taylor from Town and Country Magazine :

- Elegy 2 : Joyless I seek the solitary shade : [View Panel 1 below](#)

Notes:

- Abbreviations : [View](#)

Panel 1 : **Elegy [II].**

JOYLESS I seek the solitary shade,

Where dusky Contemplation veils the scene,
The dark retreat (of leafless branches made)
Where sick'ning sorrow wets the yellow'd green.

The darksome ruins of some sacred cell,
Where erst the sons of Superstition trod,
Tott'ring upon the mossy meadow, tell
We better know, but less adore, our God.

Now, as I mournful tread the gloomy cave,
Thro' the wide window (once with myst'ries dight) 10
The distant forest, and the dark'ned wave
Of the swol'n Avon ravishes my sight.

But see, the thick'ning veil of evening's drawn,
The azure changes to a sabled blue,
The rapt'ring prospects fly the less'ning lawn, 15
And nature seems to mourn the dying view.

Self-frighted Fear creeps silent thro' the gloom,
Starts at the rustling leaf, and rolls his eyes;
Aghast with horror, when he views the tomb,
With ev'ry torment of a Hell, he flies- 20

The bubbling brooks in plaintive murmurs roll,
The bird of Omen with incessant scream,
To melancholy thoughts awakes the soul,
And lulls the mind to Contemplation's dream.

A dreary stillness broods o'er all the vale, 25
The clouded Moon emits a feeble glare;
Joyless I seek the darkling hill and dale,
Where'er I wander Sorrow still is there.

Bristol, Nov. 17, 1769.

Panel 2 ↓ : **Analysis:**

MS. : None.

Published : *T & CM*, i (November 1769), 607. *1778*, p. 103.

Text : *T & CM*. Though *1778* clearly derives from the magazine, an odd *1778* reading, 'Self-sprighted' for 'Self-frighted' (l. 17) is perpetuated in subsequent editions until corrected in *1871*.

Authority : *1778* is reliable for attributions before 24 April 1770: see introduction. 'Elegy, Written at Stanton Drew' and the Phillips elegies of October and November 1769 are so closely related (see notes below) as solidly to support the *1778* attribution.

Date : Dated 17 November 1769.

1. Cf. 'Elegy, Written at Stanton Drew', ll. 1-2.

1-4. Cf. first two stanzas of the 'Elegy to Phillips'.

6. Cf. Stanton Drew elegy, l. 3.

9. *cave*. *1871* reads 'nave', following Sir Daniel Wilson, *Chatterton* (London, 1869), p. 227, but see next note.

12. It is not clear which of several British and Roman ruins along the Avon near Bristol are intended. On the various ruins see Seyer, i, Chs. I and II *passim*.

13-16. Cf. 'Elegy to Phillips', final version, ll. 77-80.

21-5. Cf. 'Elegy to Phillips', final version, ll. 81-92, 105-8.

Panel 3 ↓ : Elegy 2 : Joyless I seek the solitary shade

Published 1769 in *Town and Country Magazine* : [View online](#)

[607]

POETICAL PIECES.

NOVEMBER. AN ODE.

Distant to southern climes the sloping sun
Hastens to bend his rays beyond the line,
Where Sagittary puts his armour on;
Slung is the quiver where his arrows shine;
His azure bow reflects the solar beam,
While his bright darts across th' horizon gleam.
Now first, the woodcock, near the gelid stream,
Seeks his known haunt, amid th' embrown-
ed copse,
Where cruel fowlers take their deadly aim.
Inglorious triumph! &c. the victim drops!—
Forbear your savage sport—oh! spare, ye swains,
The new adventurers on Britannia's plains!

Now sharper bites the hyperborean blast,
While eager morning chills us at the dawn,
With drizzling sleet the sky is overcast,
And the white frost bespangles o'er the lawn;
The well-napp'd druggert cloaths the rural folk,
And homely cots display a thicker smoke.

Come, Myra, since the woods have lost their
shade,

Since undelighting are the hills and plains,
Quit we the villas, while their glories fade,
To seek the town, where gayer pleasure reigns;
But if the villas still delight my fair,
Welcome the howling grove, and brumal air.

She, like Content, can bless the barren heath,
Her presence bids the shaggy mount be smooth,
For where she treads fresh herbage springs be-
neath,

And myrtles blow in spite of Winter's tooth;
The rugged North, acknowledging her charms,
Suspends his anger, and his blast disarms.

ELEGY.

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Where dusky Contemplation veils the scene,
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Where sick'ning sorrow wets the yellow'd
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Bristol, Nov. 17, 1769.

STREPHON to CHLORINDA.

WHEN first thy lovely form I view'd,
I gaz'd, I sigh'd, and raptur'd stood.
The rosy cheek with lillies dress'd,
The sparkling eye, the snowy breast,
The easy shape, the graceful air,
Made my Chlorinda heav'nly fair.
A sweet confusion gently stole
Across my breast, and fill'd my soul:
Soon as I heard thy rural strains,
Harmonious, echo thro' the plains,
With rapture fill'd, the melting lay
Stole ev'ry ravish'd sense away;
My ears forgot th' enliv'ning sound,
My eyes in giddy mists were drown'd;
Speech to my falt'ring tongue was lost,
And all my soul in transport tost.
But when with graces which cou'd move
An adamant heart to love;
When with melodious notes which might
Strike savage ears with sweet delight,
Were join'd (to bless the charming whole)
The matchless virtues of the soul;
When shape, and voice, and heart combine
To form a harmony divine;
The trembling pulse, the heaving breast,
The melting eye at once confess'd
Th' impassion'd glow, the kindling flame,
That quickly spread thro' all my frame:
'Tis this that racks my tortur'd breast,
'Tis this deprives my soul of rest,
'Tis this that prompts th' eternal sigh,
With this oppress'd I faint, I die,
Shou'd but my fair refuse her aid
To heal the wounds her charms have made,
Haste then, in pity to my pain,
And cure, O cure, a love-sick swain;
Fly to thy Strephon's longing arms,
Bless the fond youth with all thy charms.
But if no love impassion'd pray'r
Can tempt my unrelenting fair,
To soothe my pain, and lull to rest
The raging tumults in my breast;
If nought can dear Chlorinda move
The tend'rest passion to approve,
I cease to live, and cease to love.

Dulverton, Somersetshire, 11. 11. 1769.
Nov. 18, 1769.

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