

**Classic Poetry Series**

**John Hoskins**  
**- poems -**

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# John Hoskins(1566-1638)

Serjeant John Hoskins was an English poet, scholar of Greek, and politician.

<b>Life</b>

He was the son of John and Margery Hoskins born in Mownton-upon-Wye, Llanwarne, Herefordshire. His father, impressed by his memory and mental abilities, arranged for him to be taught Greek at the age of ten. He attended Westminster School for a year before going to Winchester College in 1579. From 1584 to 1588 he attended their sister foundation New College, Oxford, arriving alongside Henry Wotton. However he was expelled from the University before he became Regent master. The authorities did not appreciate his biting satire. He became a teacher in Ilchester Somerset, where he worked on a Greek lexicon which went as far as the letter M. However through a fortuitous meeting with Benedicta Moyle, he gained entrance to the Middle Temple to study for the bar.

He was elected to parliament for Hereford in 1603 and 1614. However whilst in 1614, in parliament he spoke his mind about the Sicilian Vespers and consequently was imprisoned for a year in the Tower of London alongside Sir Charles Cornwallis. Subsequent to his release he was elected Lent Reader in 1619, and became a Judge in 1623.

He was an intimate of John Selden, Sir Walter Raleigh and <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/ben-jonson/">Ben Jonson</a>. He once fought a duel with Sir Benjamin Rudyard, but they subsequently became great friends. When he was a Serjeant-at-law and was once indicted for not keeping the pavement in front of his door in good repair. He successfully defended his case arguing that the charge did not specify how he was liable, whether he owned a property at that location, whether he lived there, or even whether he had a tenant who had legally assumed such responsibilities.

The poem *Absence, Hear thou my Protestation* (Printed anonymously in Francis Davison's *A poetical rhapsody containing diverse sonnets, odes, [etc.]* (V. S. for J. Baily, 1602)) was at one time attributed to <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/john-donne/">John Donne</a>. However Herbert Grierson has argued persuasively that it should be attributed to Hoskins.

He is noted for painting an image of the Trusty Servant as an emblem outside the kitchen of Winchester College in 1579. The emblem was accompanied by verse in both Latin and English providing a reading of the image.

# Absence, Hear Thou My Protestation

Absence, hear thou my protestation  
Against thy strength,  
Distance and length:  
Do what thou canst for alteration;  
For hearts of truest mettle  
Absence doth join, and time doth settle.

Who loves a mistress of such quality,  
He soon hath found  
Affection's ground  
Beyond time, place, and all mortality.  
To hearts that cannot vary  
Absence is present, time doth tarry.

My senses want their outward motions,  
Which now within  
Reason doth win  
Redoubl'd in her secret notions;  
Like rich men that take pleasure  
In hiding, more than handling, treasure.

By absence this good means I gain,  
That I can catch her  
Where none can watch her,  
In some close corner of my brain.  
There I embrace and kiss her,  
And so I both enjoy and miss her.

John Hoskins

# Of The Loss Of Time

If life be time that here is lent,  
And time on earth be cast away,  
Whoso his time hath here misspent,  
Hath hastened his own dying day:  
So it doth prove a killing crime  
To massacre our living time.

If doing nought be like to death,  
Of him that doth, chameleon-wise  
Take only pains to draw his breath,  
The passers-by may pasquilize,  
Not, here he lives: but, here, he dies.

John Hoskins

# To His Little Child Benjamin From The Tower

SWEET Benjamin, since thou art young,  
And hast not yet the use of tongue,  
Make it thy slave, while thou art free,  
Imprison it, lest it do thee.

John Hoskins