

Classic Poetry Series

**Thomas Shadwell**  
**- poems -**

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## Thomas Shadwell(1642 - 1692)

Thomas Shadwell was an English playwright and miscellaneous writer. He was born in 1642, at Santon Hall, Norfolk. He was educated at Bury St Edmund's School, and at Caius College, Cambridge. He left the university without a degree, and joined the Middle Temple. In 1668 he produced a prose comedy, *The Sullen Lovers, or the Impertinents*, based on a play of Moliere, and written in avowed imitation of Ben Jonson. His best plays are *Epsom Wells* (1672), for which Sir Charles Sedley wrote a prologue, and *the Squire of Alsatia* (1688). Alsatia was the cant name for Whitefriars, then a kind of sanctuary for persons liable to arrest, and the play represents, in dialogue full of the argot of the place, the adventures of a young heir who falls into the hand of the sharpers there. For fourteen years from the production of his first comedy to his memorable encounter with Dryden, Shadwell produced a play nearly every year. These productions display a genuine hatred of shams, and a rough but honest moral purpose. They are disfigured by indecencies, but present a vivid picture of contemporary manners. Shadwell is chiefly remembered as the unfortunate MacFlecknoe of Dryden's satire, the "last great prophet of tautology," and the literary son and heir of Richard Flecknoe: - "The rest to some faint meaning make pretence, But Shadwell never deviates into sense."

Dryden had furnished Shadwell with a prologue to his *True Widow* (1679), and in spite of momentary differences, the two had been apparently on friendly terms. But when Dryden joined the court party, and produced *Absalom and Achitopizel* and *The Medal*, Shadwell became the champion of the true-blue Protestants, and made a scurrilous attack on the poet in *The Medal of John Bayes: a Satire against Folly and Knavery* (1682). Dryden immediately retorted in *MacFlecknoe, or a Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T.S.* (1682), in which Shadwell's personalities were returned with interest. A month later he contributed to Nahum Tate's continuation of *Absalom and Achitopizel* satirical portraits of Elkanah Settle as Doeg and of Shadwell as Og. In 1687 Shadwell attempted to answer these attacks in a version of the tenth satire of Juvenal. At the Whig triumph in 1688 he superseded his enemy as poet laureate and historiographer royal. He died at Chelsea on the 19th of November 1692. A complete edition of Shadwell's works was published by his son Sir John Shadwell in 1720.

# Dear Pretty Youth

Dear pretty youth, unveil your eyes,  
How can you sleep when I am by?  
Were I with you all night to be,  
Methinks I could from sleep be free.  
Alas, my dear, you're cold as stone:  
You must no longer lie alone.  
But be with me my dear, and I in each arm  
Will hug you close and keep you warm.

Thomas Shadwell

# Halcyon Days

Halcyon days, now wars are ending.  
You shall find where-e'er you sail  
Tritons all the while attending  
With a kind and gentle gale.

Thomas Shadwell

# Love In Their Little Veins Inspires

Love in their little veins inspires  
their cheerful notes, their soft desires.  
While heat makes buds and blossoms spring,  
those pretty couples love and sing.  
But winter puts out their desire,  
and half the year they want love's fire.

Thomas Shadwell

# Love Quickly Is Pall'D

Love quickly is pall'd,  
Tho' with labour 'tis gain'd;  
Wine never does cloy  
Tho' with ease 'tis obtain'd.  
We sing while you sigh,  
We laugh while you weep;  
Love robs you of rest,  
Wine lulls us asleep.

Thomas Shadwell

# Nymphs And Shepherds

Nymphs and shepherds, come away.  
In this grove let's sport and play,  
For this is Flora's holiday,  
Sacred to ease and happy love,  
To dancing, to music and to poetry;  
Your flocks may now securely rest  
Whilst you express your jollity.  
Nymphs and shepherds, come away.

Thomas Shadwell

# Prepare, Prepare

Prepare, prepare, new Guests draw near  
And on the brink of Hell appear.  
Kindle fresh Flame of Sulphur there.  
Assemble all ye Fiends,  
Wait for the dreadful ends  
Of impious Men, who far excell  
All th'Inhabitants of Hell.  
Let 'em come, Let 'em come,  
To an Eternal dreadful Doom,  
Let 'em come, Let 'em come.  
In Mischiefs they have all the Damn'd out-done;  
Here they shall weep, and shall unpitty'd groan,  
Here they shall howl, and make Eternal moan.  
By Bloud and Lust they have deserv'd so well,  
That they shall feel the hottest flames of Hell.  
In vain they shall here their past mischiefs bewail,  
In exquisite Torments that never shall fail.  
Eternal Darkness they shall find,  
And them Eternal chains shall bind  
To infinite pain of Sense and Mind.  
Let 'em come, Let 'em come,  
To an Eternal dreadful Doom,  
Let 'em come, Let 'em come.

Thomas Shadwell



# Your Awful Voice

Your awful voice I hear and I obey,  
Brother to Jove and monarch of the sea.  
Come down, my blusterers, swell no more,  
Your stormy rage give o'er.

To your prisons below,  
Down you must go.  
In hollow rocks your revels make,  
Nor 'till I call your trembling dens forsake.

Thomas Shadwell