

Thomas Randolph

*An Elegy upon the Lady Venetia Digby*<sup>2</sup>

*D*eath, who'd not change prerogatives with  
thee,  
That dost such rapes, yet may'st not question'd be?  
Here cease thy wanton lust, be satisfied:  
Hope not a second, and so fair a bride.  
5 Where was her *Mars*, whose valiant arms did hold  
This *Venus* once, that thou durst be so bold  
By thy too nimble theft? I know 'twas fear,  
Lest he should come, that would have rescued her.  
*Monster* confess, didst thou not blushing stand,  
10 And thy pale cheek turn red to touch her hand?  
Did she not lightning-like strike sudden heat

<sup>2</sup> Lady Venetia Digby was a famous beauty; see the selection from Aubrey's *Brief Lives*.

Alan Rudrum, Joseph Black, et al., ed., The Broadview Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Verse and Prose (Peterborough: Broadview, 2000), 456-57

Through thy cold limbs, and thaw thy frost to  
sweat?

Well, since thou hast her, use her gently, *Death*,  
And in requital of such precious breath,  
15 Watch sentinel to guard her; do not see  
The worms thy rivals, for the gods will be.  
Remember *Paris*, for whose pettier sin  
The *Trojan* gates let the stout *Grecians* in.  
So, when time ceases (whose unthrifty hand  
20 Has now almost consumed his stock of sand),  
Myriads of angels shall in armies come,  
And fetch (proud ravisher) their *Helen* home.  
And to revenge this rape, thy other store  
Thou shalt resign too, and shalt steal no more.  
25 Till then, fair ladies (for you now are fair,  
But till her death I feared your just despair),  
Fetch all the spices that *Arabia* yields,  
Distil the choicest flowers of the fields:  
And when in one their best perfections meet,  
30 Embalm her corse, that she may make them sweet,  
Whilst for an epitaph upon her stone  
I cannot write, but I must weep her one.

*Epitaph*

Beauty itself lies here, in whom alone  
Each part enjoyed the same perfection.  
35 In some the eyes we praise, in some the hair:  
In her the lips, in her the cheeks are fair:  
That nymph's fine feet, her hands we beauteous  
call:  
But in this form we praise no part, but all.  
The ages past have many beauties shown,  
40 And I more plenty in our time have known.  
But in the age to come I look for none;  
Nature despairs, because her pattern's gone.  
—1638