“Prophetic Mourning”

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Topic: “Prophetic Mourning”: From the Anglo-Irish manuscripts of Anne Southwell to the Anglo-Welsh Katherine Philips and the exiled Margaret Cavendish, from the early Caroline era through to the Restoration, women writers’ elegiac texts persistently make use of grief’s double effect of isolating the speaker and enabling polemical speech aimed at the future. Like the alienated prophets of biblical tradition, these writers embody both misery and special insight, loss and speech to power. In so doing, these texts written from the periphery and from the center identify with the past (the dead) while they throw their voices into a social future.

A. Advance Required Readings: SEE BELOW.

I. Prophetic mourning as political polemic: Mary Pope (excerpts)
II. Eulogizing domestic saints: Philips elegy; “A Christians victorie”
III. Elegy and religious polemic: Southwell elegies, epitaphs
IV. Sites of Mourning: Pulter elegy, Cavendish letters, memoir

B. Advance Questions for Participants:
   ➢ How does a mock elegy such as Southwell’s to the Countess of Londonderry compare with real elegies?
   ➢ How do elegies and epitaphs negotiate between private and public concerns?
   ➢ How do these writers imagine the reception of their work by present and/or future audiences? Do they present themselves as part of a broader community or a tradition of mourners and commemorators?
   ➢ What spaces (physical and metaphorical) matter in these elegiac texts and how are they linked to the work of mourning?
   ➢ How does the cultural gendering of grief make itself visible or invisible in these writers’ works?
   ➢ Which models of grief or commemorative convention are most visible in each text (and why)?
B. Advance Required Readings:

1. Prophetic mourning as political polemic

Excerpts from pamphlets by Mary Pope:

1. *A Treatise of Magistracy*, Nov. 1647

To the Right Honourable the Lords

and Commons assembled in

Parliament.

Now your unworthy Handmaid in Christ...doth present unto you (Worthies) these lines, beseeching you, to receive them with an empty hand, and to view them with a cleare eye, and to ponder them with single, self-denying heart....

And now you the court of the three Kingdomes, you (I say) that represent the great Court of heaven, therefore not to turne to the right hand, nor to the left, but with a single heart, and hand to execute judgment and justice according to truth: And now with the woman of Tekoah, I am directed to sound a word in your eares, which is, that yee Lords and Commons would with joint consent, as soone as you have thoroughly understood what God by me hath put you in mind to doe...I say as soone as you understand by these lines, where the hedge of Gods providence, and presence was first broken downe, and so to know where to begin to make it up...and seeing the word of truth commands children to be obedient unto parents in all things....

Now I beseech you harken to your handmaid, as King David harkened to the woman of Tekoah, in all that she requested. Now this is further my request, that yee would present unto the King...and so yee shall obey the commandments of God, and manifest yourselves to be obedient children....

And now that these kingdoms are in a deplored condition, and you may see by God his lengthening these combustions, and confusions, the right way is not taken for the composing of them...therefore leave off contention....

And now I hope as King David did, yee will looke mediately to God, who hath directed this speech, and so immediately set about the worke....

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.
The cause of my writing this little Treatise is, because through the precepts of God I have gotten understanding, therefore I hate every false way; And seeing that God is pleased to bring me forth in this age, and time of the Church, wherein there hath been variety of changes; and in all this my time, especially for these last twenty yeares, I have beene a looker on, and observer of the ebings and flowings up and downe of Gods providence, and of the various mind and fancies of the men and women in this my time, and finding all almost very unstable, groundlesse, and unsound in the profession of Christ, and his Gospel, and Satan compassing the earth up and downe, and walking in it, as it appears in our dayes; and seeing there hath beene long sitting, yet no settled course taken, for the making out of Gods mind, and for the making up, and composing of these past differences in the Church, and out of the Church, I say beholding this, and God having made me a Mother in Israel, I thought it my duty to put my helping hand, having good warrant out of Gods word so to doe; and example from the women that brought of the worke of their hands to Moses, for the helping forward of the building of the Tabernacle and the Ark; and finding God over-powring my spirit, and as it were forcing of me on, for the improvement of those tallents he hath given me for his glory, and serving of my generation, and for the helping to settle these unsettled times, for he onely hath beene my helper, and none else, and my childe (a youth) the writer.

p. 4

Now the cause of all these great afflictions, which are now at this time among us, is because God hath not beene, nor yet is knowne, owned or honoured amongst us as hee hath manifested himselfe in his Word; because we have beene, and still are a lawlesse people....And now under pretence of publishing the Gospel, the Law is put by, and conscience set up to bee obeyed in the roome of it, so that more and more, all of all sorts begin to live as without God in the world...and it is to be feared, that people ere long, will neither feare God, nor reverence man, Luke 18.3.

p. 104

And wee ourselves see that God hath kindled a fire in many places of the Kingdome, and it is his infinite mercy, that the Pallaces, and the Cities are not utterly demolished, with unquenchable fire and the high ways laid fully waste.

p. 108-109

Now you worthie Magistrate, and Magistrates...goe to God for counsel and direction, and let Gods word in all things be your guide....

And seeing David held it no disparagement, though a king, to take the advice of a woman 1 Sam. 25.33 and seeing that God himselfe, hath in many great acts honoured women as well as men....

I say if God will have it so, in the midst of these distractions, to unable a weak woman to cast in her mite willingly, let it not repent you, nor disparage the assembly, but let it be accepted, and received willingly, as Moses willingly received the womens help for the building of the Tabernacle and the Ark, and I desire, God may be onely seene, who hath wrought in me to will this, and enabled me to do it.

And seeing that all the foundations of the earth are out of order...and Idolatry, and injustice, and the prophanation of the Lords day, are the causes of it...now that it doth plainly appeare, that God will make (you the Parliament of England, Head and Members)...to bring in a through Reformation, not onely in this Kingdome...but make you exemplary to all other Nations....
And seeing all the foundations of the earth, and of these Kingdomes, and of this Nation have been out of order, as before-said, and still is worse and worse, and void of any settle constant course of execution of justice, and shewing mercy to the poore, and fatherlesse, and sanctifying the Lords day by the line of the word, and these and such like are the causes of all these disturbances, and distractions, which are among us: and hereby we may see that God hath been exceedingly displeased with Us....

...And now that God is about this great worke, that he may not turne from us but come neere to us, prepare to meet thy God O England.

Now I pray you Lords and Commons, thinke it noe dishonour to heare the counsel of a woman, being nothing but what is according to the Word: you read in the Word, that Joab an eminent man and a Captaine, heard a woman that called to him over the wall; also the City heard her, and took her counsel, and thereby it was preserved, 2 Samuel 20.16.

Now this is my counsel, and if you heare it, I make no question but God will bee with you....

2. Behold, Here is a Word, Dec. 1648/Jan. 1649

Note: This was written after Pride’s Purge on Dec. 6, 1648, as it became clear that the Parliament, under the control of the New Model Army, was going to place King Charles I on trial.

And that mens backs or rather estates have been broken in peeces, and their hearts too almost at the sad events: and indeed the hand of God hath been sore upon us in that we were no content to have Christs Kingly Office held forth to us in these three Kingdomes ...according to God distinct order, 1 Cor.12.21.

And now I pray consider, who hath kept or broken the commandment of the great God of heaven and hath suffered for it: but when the Lord hath taken the king out of your hands (as he will certainly doe) and set him upon his Throne too.

And when it shall appeare that God doth translate the estates of those that withstand the King to the King, then it will plainly be seen, or appear, that the Lord was highly displeased at the standing out against the King. Christs command and example was, To give unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, and unto God the things that are Gods: and had it been so, the blessing of God had been upon us at our going out and at our coming in; and wee had had peace in our borders: but we have been an empty Vine, and we have brought forth fruit to ourselves, according to the complaint of God to the children of Israel.

And now that you all are out of Gods wayes, and therefore go on further, but come quite back again, and put your selves into the right way speedily: and if you doe not beware of the immediate
wrath of the great God, that bids you lay down your temporall sword, least God cause you to turn it one upon another; for you have no cause to hold it forth in this manner. And for those that you call malignants, there is no question, but they may prove as honest men as your selves, (through the power of God) and go you every one to his own field and vinyard, (if you have any) and take pains to earn your own bread, for the commandement of God is, that they that will not work should not eat.

And now that you have made your Will, and set forth your Magna Carta, which is to kill your Lord and King, that his inheritance may be yours (and you have disposed of it already) and this you say, that it will give the most authentique Testimony and Seal that ever was: to doe it you have moulded the Parliament to your modle.

And now that you dare break the commandement of Christ and teach men so to doe Matth. 5.25. remember what Christ saith, they shall be least in the Kingdome of heaven.

3. Heare, heare, heare, heare, a Word or Message from Heaven, January, 1649

Intended as a continuation of the previous pamphlet.

p. 20

Now that that old Serpent, the Devil and Satan, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, hath made these representatives believe, that he will give them all the power of this kingdome to be at their disposing; and they believing him, doe not onely attempt the pulling down of the supremacy of kings, but they endeavor to unthrone God himselfe. But when they or their Master Satan can unthrone God, then they shall throw down the supremacy of kings. For God hath decreed a supremacy of Kings, Nobles, and Princes from the beginning, and it's derived to them from the Kingly office of Christ....

p. 21

...And now a word to these uncircumcised in heart and eare, that cannot hearken to the word of the Lord, and have no delight in it, but have utterly rejected the perfect Law of god, and his Covenant too, and have set up laws of their owne, and bounds to them, according to their own discretion. But who shall now in this nick of time feare man and be cursed, or trust in God and be blessed. Now to the business in hand.

All those that have adhered to the King, according to Gods commandement, are and have been punished by man, and threatened to be. And seeing the business is carried so, and the work set up, I shall not now refrain my tongue by the power of God any longer, seeing pride, loftiness, and arrogancy hat possessed you.

p. 25

And you say your Country men would not oppose you if they knew their own good: Doth good some to any by breaking Gods Commandements?...

And now that you are summoned to bring forth your strong reasons and your scriptures for your foundation, and Will is cancelled, and God will make inquisition for blood, what will you plead to, for all your insurrections against God and your king, and for all the blood you have shed in this warre, for you have no commission nor call from God to doe all this that you have done, nor from the grand laws of this Kingdome made by head and members....and thus this Partie hath nonparliamented the Parliament, and
they intend to nonking the King, and unlaw the Laws, as aforesaid, and set themselves Head and
members, and thus they spend their time in matters of highest concernment, as they say, and neglect
their own soules. And they say, they desire that God alone may be acknowledged in Justice impartial,
and in righteousness in the Earth, and so he will, and it will suddainly appeare from among his People,
because he that hath dispised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his Commandements, that soule
shall be utterly cut off, and his iniquitie shall be upon him, when the Lord awaketh as one asleep,
and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of Wine, he will smite his enemies in the hinder parts, andput
them to a perpetuall reproach: And now that the thred of Hipocrisie that hath long been spinning in a
cornet behind the doore, like the Spyder is now brought forth to the full staple, now that you go on in
this height of presumption, and doe weave your Spyders Web, you shall bee cut off….

p. 31

But trespasses hath growne in this Kingdome…and these are the very times, our Saviour Christ
foretold: the Father rising against the Donne, and the Sonne against the Father: and there hath beene
wonderfull shakings in the whole world, and specially in this Kingdome; where sin hath had its full height
and ripeness…And this I should e’re this time made fully cleare unto you; but that I have laine amoung
the pots, under disgrace, because of my booke of Magistracy, which God inabled mee to set forth for
the good of his people…the wings of my desires were clipt by reason of the frownes and strange
speeches of those who were my familiar friends. And now God hath gielded my wings with confidence in
his promise, and raised up my spirits, and by reading of his Word God hath given me to understand
much of his secret will by his revealed will….

p. 34

Now that you of the Citty and kingdom see this their illegall and unlawfull rebellions and
tiranical infamous and most odious proceedings against freedome and nature, against reformation and
religion, both to the laws of God and man, for you your selves, and they themselves can but know that
their proceedings against the king are utterly unjust, and against all law, and…by the same power, they
will take away your lives and goods to, as they have done to others of your bretheren….

p. 34-35

Now to you the Lord Mayor who is the chief Magistrate under the King in this Metropolitain
Citty of the Kingdome…you I say, who have the sole power now in your hand… there is no power else
here that ought to be acknowledged by the Lawes of God or man, till you and your brethren have
restored the king to his throne….Fear nothing (but be glad) and fetch your King with all expedition and
set him upon his Throne, and stand by him; and the God of Heaven will stand by him and you: some
scuffling there will be, but you shall see the God of heaven shall fight for you, and that wonderfully…and
make your enemies like unto Satan, to hang their ears, and run away sneaking…

p. 36-37

And Deborah said unto Barak…so say I to you the Lord Mayor, Is not the Lord gone out before
thee?….And Barak said, if thou wilt not goe with me, I will not go? she said, I will surely go with thee?
Deborah’s reply, I make mine: If you are afraid, and question this my Message, you see its warrantable by
the Word, and God holds it forth through my weakness to you...

Yours and the Kingdome’s Servant in Christ,

MARY POP.E.
II. Eulogizing domestic saints:
   a) “A Christians victorie” funeral sermon (excerpts)
   b) Katherine Philips, “Upon...Mrs. Mary Lloyd”

a) Sermon xiii. “A Christians victory: or, conquest over deaths enmity.” from Threnoikos the house of mourning furnished with directions for the hour of death ... delivered in LIII sermons preached at the funerals of divers faithfull servants of Christ / by Daniel Featly, Martin Day, John Preston, Ri. Houldsworth, Richard Sibbs, Thomas Taylor, doctors in divinity, Thomas Fuller and other reverend divines. 1660. EEBO.

1 COR. 15.26. The last Enemy that shall be destroyed, is Death.

....Lastly, that we may the better subdue Death, that it may not be an Enemy too strong; [Note: 4. Settle all things before hand, that ] Learn before so to dispose of our selves, and order our affairs, that when Death cometh, we may have nothing to do but to die. Get all differences reconciled, all doubts settled, all reckonings ordered: sequester our selves from all other avocations, that nothing may interrupt us, when that work is to go inhand with. Put thy house in order (saith God to Hezekiah,) I say so to every one of you. First, [Note: concern the outward man, ] your outward house, that which concerneth your worldly estate, put that house in order. What? wouldest thou make thy Will and testament, and be troubled about that, when thou hadst more need to have that Will and testament, confirmed, that Christ hath made?
And then set thy soul and conscience, [Note: The inward. ] thy inner house in order, let not conscience be to seek then of any thing that concerneth thee for thy peace toward God and man. Die thus, and die happily. Though Death be an enemy, yet thou shalt not be hurt of it, because it is subdued, and at last thou shalt get the victory over it, when thou shalt see it utterly destroyed. And now as I have exhorted you to do this, by way of counsel, so yet a little further I crave patience, that I may encourage you to do it by way of example: By the example of this blessed servant, and Saint of God, for whose occasion you have given this meeting, and I have preached this Sermon.
Give me leave to do by her, as Mary Magdelen did by our Saviour Christ, to break a box of Spiknard and pour it on her, that I may anoint her for her burial. Concerning whom, though I could say a great deal, yet (knowing how well she was known to you) I should not be afraid to say too much. Yet on the other side (because the night is farr spent, and because she was sufficiently known to you although I speak but a little, I shall speak enough. She dwelt among you: who is he that can speak ill of her? who knew her but reported well of her?
The Apostle Saint Paul reduceth all the practical parts of Christianity to three heads; [Note: Tit. 3.11. ] Living soberly, and righteously, and holily: The grace of God (saith he) hath appeared, and teachth us to do all this. She had learned to live soberly; She was a pattern of sobriety. Sober in her countenance, in her diet, in her apparel, in her speeth, in all her behaviour. And the grace of God taught her to live righteously, both in those things that concern the works of justice, and those things that concern the works of mercy, both are referred to righteousness.
170 For her justice, I am persuaded she was exceeding careful in all her ways to keep a good conscience. I am sure she was a woman very diligent and painful in her Calling, she was truly one of those good house-wives that Solomon describeth in Prov. 31. and had studied that Chapter well, and attained the practise of it: she could never endure idleness in any: there was no plague (she said) to idleness; and that diligence in our Callings sets open a door to many blessings, and shuts up the door to many tentations. I may call her a discreet woman, that was a crown to her husband; so Solomon said a vertuous woman is. He had a rich portion, when God gave him her. Houses and lands come by inheritance, but a Prudent wife cometh of the the Lord. She was an excellent guide to her family, to her servants: Children she had none. She had such children as S. Austin speaks of, and he saith, they are those children that women are saved by. What children, saith he? Good works: and those children she was full of. She did the part of a Mother in bringing up her servants that were with her: insomuch as she would say sometimes (though they were none of her own children) Behold, here am I, and the children that God hath given me. And for works of mercy as well as justice, she was most open-hearted and handed, not only to do according, but beyond her ability: always ready upon every occasion to distribute, and administer to the necessities of the Saints, and provoked, and stirred others to the doing of the like. Among her neighbours she lived unblameably: A woman of a meek and quiet spirit, and Saint Peter saith, [Note: 1 Pet. 3.4. ] Such of God are much set by. She was no tattler, nor busie medler in other folks matters.

For Piety, she was remarkable. She shewed it both in her health and sickness. In her health, both publickly and privately. In publick, She was a religious frequenter of the ordinances on the Lords day, and on the week dayes, a diligent hearer and attender, an excellent rememberer: one of the best Remembrancers that I have heard of. And in private, she was excellent for duties there, both for the discharge of her own duty, by giving enample to others, and many times by good and godly exhortations and instructions, and daily by private reading and prayer, she set apart some time for her self, for private meditation.

In her sickness, she was a spectacle for thousands to look on. It pleased God to lay a long and heavy affliction upon her. She had a Cancer in her breast, that had been on her three years: in the two last years she suffered a great deal of extremity, as you may imagine by one thing that I shall say. She was fain to endure a great deal of dressing, with Corrasives and sharp medicines; a great deal of cutting, and searing, and burning: she was above fifty times burnt with hot Irons: but (Lord) with what patience did she still endure it? She would say, It was no matter; sanctified afflictions were better then unsanctified prosperity. Apelles said, when the picture of a beautiful woman was to be compleatly drawn; he must borrow one part from one, and another from another, and put all together. She had learned this. She had looked on many good patterns in the Scripture, and had drawn to her self an imitation of them all, so that she was a perfect and compleat Model. Though I say much, yet I know, I say nothing but the truth. I read of few excellent woman in the Scripture, but she made them a pattern of one vertue or other. For obedience, she was a Sarah: for wisdome a Rebecca: for meekness a Hannah: for a discreet temper, an Abigail: for good huswivery, a Martha: for piety, a Mary, a Lydia. I know not any necessary thing, that belonged to make up a good Christian, but in some measure it pleased God to bestow it on her. Thus she continued all her life in the time of her health: and in sickness with so much patience as (after a sort) she endured a martyrdom, and I see no reason but we may allow a Martyr of Gods making, a swell as of mans: I am sure, if God make Martyrs, [Note: Prov. 31.29. ] I know not any fitter then she, so meek, and patient, and constant. Many daughters (saith Solomon) have done vertuously, but thou surmountest them all. I will not say so of her,
because I decline flattery. But this I will say, that I know not many excel her, scarce any that come neer her. She hath the reward of that she hath done, given her of God, and *her works follow her*. We leave her to God, and having committed her soul into his hands, we beseech his gracious favour upon our selves.

b) Katherine Philips, “Mrs Mary Lloyd”

On the memory of that excellent person
Mrs. Mary Lloyd of Bodidrist in
Denbighshire, who dy’d the 13th of
November 1656, soon after she came thither
from Penbrokeshire

I cannot hold, for though to write be rude,
Yet to be silent were ingratitude,
And folly too; for if Posterity
Should never hear of such an one as she,
And onely know this Age’s brutish fame,
They would think vertue nothing but a name.
And though farre abler Pens must her define,
Yet her Adoption hath engaged mine:
And I must own, where merit shines so cleare,
’Tis hard to write, but harder to forbeare.
Sprung from an Ancient and an honour’d Stemm,
Who lent her lustre, and she paid it them,
Who still in great and noble things appear’d,
Whome both their Country lov’d and yet they fear’d.
Match’d to another, good and great as they
Who did their Countrye both obleige and sway.
Behold her self! who had, without dispute,
More then both familys could contribute.
What early Beauty Grief and Age had broke,
Her lovely reliques and her offspring spoke.
She was by Nature and her Parents care
A woman long before most others are.
But yet that antedated Season she
Improv’d to Vertue, not to Liberty;
For she was still, in either state of Life,
Meek as a Virgin, prudent as a wife.
And she well knew, although so young and faire,
Justly to mix Obedience, Love and Care;
Whilst to her children she did still appeare
Soe wisely kind, so tenderly severe,
That they from her Rule and Example brought
A native honour, which she stampt and taught.
Nor can a single pen enough commend
Soe kind a Sister, and so cleare a friend.
A wisdom from above did her secure,
Which though ‘twas peacable, was ever pure.
And if well order’d Commonwealth must be
Patterns for every private Family,
Her house, rul’d by her hand, aw’d by her Ey,
Might be a pattern for a Monarchy.
Her noble bounty was her prudent care,
Who handsom freedom gave, yet regular.
Salomon’s wisest woman less could doe;
She built her house, but this preserv’d hers too.
She was so pious, that when she did Dye,
She scarce chang’d Place, I’m sure not company.
Her zeale was primitive, and practick too;
She did believe, and pray, and read, and doe.
Soe firm an equall Soule she had engross’d,
Just even to those that disobleig’d her most,
She lost all sence of wrong, glad to beleive
That it was in her power to forgive.
Her almes I may admire, but nere relate,
But her own works shall praise her in the Gate.
Her life was chequer’d with afflictive yeares,
And even her comforts season’d in her teares.
Scarce for a husband’s loss her eys were dry’d,
And that loss by her children half supply’d,
When Heav’n was pleas’d not those deare props t’afford,
But tore most off, by sickness, or a Sword.
She, who in them could still their father boast,
Was a fresh widdow every Son she lost.
Litigious hands did her of Right deprive,
That after all ‘twas pennance to survive.
Yet she these Griefs had nobly undergone,
Which few support at all, but better none.
Such a submissive Greatness who can find?
A Tender heart, with so resolv’d a mind?
But she, though sencible, was still the same,
Of a Resigned Soule, untainted Fame;
Nor were her Vertues coursly sett, for she
Out=did Example in Civillity:
To bestow blessings, to obleige, Relieve,
Was all for which she could endure to live,
And had a Joy higher in doing good,
Then they to whom the benefit accrew’d.
Though none of honour had a quicker sence,
Never had woman more of complacence;
Yet lost it not in empty forms, but still
Her nature noble was, her Soul Gentile.
And as in Youth she did extract, for she
The verdure had, without the vanity,
Soe she in Age was grave and milde to all,
Was not morose, but was majestical.
Thus from all other women she had skill
To draw their good, but nothing of their ill;
And since she knew the mad Tumultuous world,
Saw Crowns revers’d, Temples to ruine hurl’d;
She in Retirement chose to shine and burne,
As Ancient Lampes in some Egiptian Urne.
At last, when spent with sickness,Grief and Age,
Her Guardian Angell did her death presage:
So that by strong impulse she cheerfully
Dispenced blessings, and went home to dy;
That soe she might, when to that place remov’d,
Marry his Ashes, whom she ever Lov’d.
She dy’d, gain’d a reward, and pay’d a debt:
The Sun himself did never brighter set!
Happy were they that knew her, and her End,
More happy they that did from her descendent:
A double blessing they may hope to have,
One she convey’d to them, and one she gave.
All that are hers are therefore sure to be
Bless’d by inheritance and Legacy.

    A Royall birth had less advantage been,
    ‘Tis more to dy a Saint, then live a Queen.
III. Elegy and religious polemic: Southwell elegies, epitaphs

Elegies and Epitaphs by Lady Anne Southwell (1573-1636)
(Folger ms. V.b.198, modernized by C. Luckyj)

An Elegy Written by the Lady A.S. to the Countess of Londonderry, supposing her to be dead by her long silence

Since thou, fair soul, art warbling to a sphere
From whose resultances these quickened were,
Since thou hast laid that downy couch aside
Of lilies, violets and rosial pride,
And locked in marble chests that tapestry
That did adorn the world’s epitome,
So safe that doubt itself can never think
Fortune or fate hath power to make a chink;
Since thou for state hath raised thy state so far,
To a large heaven from a vault circular,
Because the thronging virtues in thy breast
Could not have room enough in such a chest,
What need hast thou these blotted lines should tell
Souls must again rise from whence they fell—
From Paradise, and that this earth’s dark womb
Is but a wardrobe till the day of doom
To keep those worms that on her bosom’s bred
Till time and death be both exterminated.
Yet in thy passage, fair soul, let me know
What things thou saw’st in rising from below:
Whether that Cynthia, regent of the flood,
Will in her orb admit of mortal brood?
Whether the twelve signs serve the sun for state,
Or else confine him to the zodiac,
And force him retrograde to be the nurse
(Who circularly glides his oblique course)
Of Alma Mater, or unfreeze the womb
Of Madam Tellus – which else proves a tomb?
Whether the stars be knobs upon the spheres?
Or shreds composed of Phoebus’ golden hairs?
Or whether th’air be as a cloudy sieve?
The stars be holes through which the good souls drive?
Whether that Saturn that the six out-tops
Sits ever eating of the brats of Ops,
Whose jealousy is like a sea of gall
Unto his own proves periodical?
But as a gliding star who falls to earth
Or lovers’ thoughts, so souls ascend their birth,
Which makes me think that thine had no one notion
Of those true elements, by whose true motion
All things have life and death; but if thine eyne
Should fix a while upon the crystalline,
Thy hungry eye, that never could before
See but by faith, and faithfully adore,
Should stay, to mark the threefold hierarchy,
Differing in state, not in felicity,
How they in order ‘bout Jehova move,
In several offices, but with one love,
And from his hand do hand in hand come down
Till the last hand do heads of mortals crown.
Fain would I know from some that have been there,
What state or shape celestial bodies bear?
For man to heaven hath thrown a waxen ball,
In which he thinks t’hat got true forms of all,
And, from the forge house of his fantasy,
He creates new, and spins out destiny.
And thus these proud worms, wrapped in loathsome rags,
Shut heaven’s idea up in leathern bags.
Now since in heaven are many ladies more,
That blind devotion busily implore,
Good lady, friend, or rather lovely dame,
If you be gone from out this clayey frame,
Tell what you know, whether th’ saints’ adoration
Will stoop to think on dusty procreation.
And if they will not, they are fools (perdy)
That pray to them and rob the trinity;
The angels joy in our good conversation,
Yet see us not, but by reverberation,
And if they could, you saints as clear eyes have,
If down you look to earth, then to the grave,
Tis but a landscape more, to look to hell;
From out that sulphurous and bituminous lake,
Where Pluto doth his tilt and tourney make,
Where the Elysium and their Purgatory
Stand, like two suburbs by a promontory.
Poets and popelings are equipollent,
Both makers are of gods, of like descent,
Poets make blind gods, who with willows beat them,
Popelings make hosts of gods and ever eat them.
But let them both, poets and popelings, pass;
Who deals too much with either is an ass.
Charon conduct them, as they have devised.
The fall of angels must not be disguised,
As ‘tis not tyranny but loving pity
That Kings build prisons in a populous city.
So the next way to fright us back to good
Is to discuss the pains of Stygian flood.
In Eve’s distained nature we are base
And whips persuade us more than love or grace,
So that if heaven should take away this rod,
God would hate us and we should not love God.
For as affliction, in a full fed state,
Like vinegar in sauces do awake
Dull appetites, and makes men feed the better,
So when a lethargy our brains doth fetter,
The only way to rouse again our wits
Is when the surgeon’s chiepest tool is whips.
Brass hath a cozening face and looks like gold
But where the touchstone comes it cannot hold.
That Son of ours doth best deserve our rent
That doth with patience bear our chastisement.
Each titmouse can salute the lusty spring,
And wear it out with jolly reveling,
But your pure white and vestal clothed swan
Sings at her death and never sings but then.
O noble-minded bird, I envy thee
For thou hast stol’n this high-born note from me.
But as the prophet at his master’s feet,
When he ascended up the welkin fleet
Watched for his cloak, so every bird and beast
When princely Adam tumbled from the nest,
Catched, from his knowing soul, some quality,
And humbly kept it, to re-edify
Their quondam king, and now man goes to school
To every pismire that proclaims him fool.
But stay my wand’ring thoughts – alas where wade I
In speaking to a dead, a senseless lady?
You ink and paper be her passing bell –
The sexton to her knell be Anne Southwell.

An Epitaph upon Cassandra MacWilliams wife to Sir Thomas Ridgeway Earl of Londonderry,
by the Lady A.S.

Now let my pen be choked with gall
Since I have writ prophetical.
I wondered that the world did look
Of late, like an unbaited hook
Or as a well whose spring was dead.
I knew not that her soul was fled
Till that the mourning of her earl
Did vindicate this dear lost pearl.
You star gazers that view the skies,
Saw you of late a new star rise?
Or can you by your art discover
Her seat near the celestial mover?
She is gone that way, if I could find her,
And hath not left her match behind her.
I’ll praise no more her blessed condition
But follow her with expedition.

An Epitaph upon the King of Bohemia, written by the Lady Anne Southwell

Here lies a king, and God’s anointed
By fate a pilgrim poor appointed
Who lived his death, and died his life.
Now pity leads us to his wife,
Whose many griefs and good desert
Makes each man wear a wounded heart.
For he with reason is not blessed
That pities not goodness distressed.

An Epitaph upon the King of Sweden

Malicious fate, envying human glory,
Hath rent the diadem from chivalry,
Leaving the subject of a woeful story
To fright the ears of all posterity.
   Mars, we have lost thy only son and heir
   See thou him stellified in highest sphere.
Blue-eyed Bellona tears her amber tress
To see her Champion and her darling quelled
And vows his like the earth shall ne’er re-bless
But he shall live and die unparalleled.
   Fame swoll’n with grief resounds his praise so loud
   That nothing but eternity can cloud.
The widow earth embalms his corpse in tears
And on her couch of ebony lies mourning,
Hoping to frame a deluge for her fears,
Enraged with grief, against all comfort spurning.
   Each eye doth hate that light that lets him see
   Glorious Gustavus’ sad catastrophe.
IV. Sites of Mourning: Pulter elegy, Cavendish letters, memoir


But not onely the Family I am linkt to is ruin’d, but the Family from which I sprung, by these unhappy Wars, which ruine my Mother lived to see, and then died, having lived a Widow many years, for she never forgot my Father so as to marry again; indeed he remain’d so lively in her memory, and her grief was so lasting, as she never mention’d his name, though she spoke often of him, but love and grief caused tears to flow, and tender sighs to rise, mourning in sad complaints: she made her house her Cloyster, inclosing her self, as it were therein, for she seldom went abroad, unless to Church, but these unhappy Warrs forc’d her out, by reason she and her children were loyall to the King; for which they plundered her, and my Brothers of all their Goods, Plate, Jewells, Money, Corn, Cattle, and the like, cut down their Woods, pull’d down their Houses, and sequestered them from their Lands and Livings; but in such misfortunes my Mother was of an Heroick Spirit, in suffering patiently where there is no remedy, or to be industrious where she thought she could help; She was of grave Behaviour, and had such a Magestick Grandeur, as it were continually hung about her, that it would strike a kind of an awe to the beholders, and command respect from the rudest, I mean the rudest of civiliz’d people, I mean not such Barbarous people, as plundered her, and used her cruelly, for they would have pulled God out of Heaven, had they had power, as they did Royaltie out of his Throne: also her beauty was beyond the ruin of time, for she had a well favoured loveliness in her face, a pleasing sweetness in her countenance, and a well temper’d complexion, as neither too red, nor too pale, even to her dying hour, although in years, and by her dying, one might think, death was enamoured with her, for he imbraced her in a sleep, and so gently, as if he were afraid to hurt her: also she was an affectionate Mother, breeding her children with a most industrious care, and tender love, and having eight children, three sons and five daughters, there was not any one crooked, or any ways deformed, neither were they dwarfish, or of a Giant-like stature, but every ways proportionable, likewise well featured, cleer complexions, brown haires, but some lighter than others, sound teeth, sweet breaths, plain speeches, tunable voices, I mean not so much to sing as in speaking, as not stuttering, nor wharling in the throat, or speaking through the Nose, or hoarsely, unless they had a cold, or squeakingly, which impediments many have: neither were their voices of too low a strain or too high, but their notes & words were tuneable and timely; I hope this Truth will not offend my Readers, and lest they should think I am a partiall Register, I dare not commend my Sisters, as to say they were handsome, although many would say they were very handsome: but this I dare say, their Beautie, if any they had, was not so lasting as my Mothers, time making suddener ruin in their faces than in hers; likewise my Mother was a good Mistriess to her servants, taking care of her servants in their sickness, not sparing any cost she was able to bestow for their recovery: neither did she exact more from them in their health than what they with ease or rather like pastime could do: she would freely pardon a fault, and forget an injury, yet sometimes she would be angry, but never with her children, the sight of them would pacify her, neither would she be angry with others, but when she had course, as with negligent or knavish servants, that would lavishly or unnecessarily waste, or subtilly, and thievishly steal, and through she would often complain, that her family was too great for her weak Management, and often prest my Brother to take it upon him, yet I observe she took a pleasure, and some little
pride in the governing therof: she was very skilfull in Leases, and setting of Lands, and Court-keeping, ordering of Stewards, and the like affaires: also I observed, that my Mother, nor Brothers before these warrs, had ever any Law-suites, but what an Atturney dispatched in a Term with small cost, but if they had, it was more than I knew of, but as I said, my Mother lived to see the ruin of her Children, in which was her ruin, and then dyed; my brother Sir Thomas Lucas soon after, my brother Sir Charles Lucas after him, being shot to death for his Loyall Service, for he was most constantly Loyall and Couragiously active, indeed he had a superfluity of courage; My eldest sister died some time before my Mother, her death being, as I believe, hastned through grief of her onely daughter, on which she doted, being very pretty, sweet natured, and had an extraordinary wit for her age, she dying of a Consumption, my sister, her Mother dyed some half a year after of the same disease, and though time is apt to waste remembrance as a consumptive body, or to wear it out like a garment into rags, or to moulder it into dust, yet I finde the natural affections I have for my friends, are beyond the length, strength and power of time: for I shall lament the loss so long as I live, also the loss of my Lords Noble Brother, which died not long after I returned from England, be being then sick of an Ague, whose favours and my thankfulness, ingratitude shall never disjoyne; for I will build his Monument of truth, though I can not of Marble, and hang my tears as Scutchions on his Tombe.
Letter 118

Madam,

I do not wonder, that some Persons which seem so Kind, as to be, as it were, ready to deliver their Lives for the Sake of some others, they never saw, nor knew, before their Kind Meeting, yet the Next time of Meeting, strive to Affront those to whom they Made or Profess'd such Services, Love, and Adventures, and if they should not endeavour to Affront them, yet will Look upon them, or Pass by them, as if they had never Seen, or Spoken to them; Neither do I wonder, that Others in Great Authority and Power, will Advance some Persons, when they have but a New Acquaintance, or rather, a Sight of them, to Place and Office, and before they are Setled in their Offices, Displace them again, without any Reason, or Knowledge, either of Advancing or Displacing. Nor do I wonder, Others will be so in Love for two or three Days, as they almost Sigh out their Breath of Life, for their Wished Desires, and a Day or two after, Reproach or Laugh at those they were so much in Love with, as they Desired their Favour more than Heaven; All this, I say, I do not wonder at. Observing and Perceiving the Inconstant Natures of Mankind; But I wonder to Perceive or Find any one to be Constant Seven Years, or One Year, much more, to be Constant their Whole Life time; for Constancy is as Seldom or Barely Seen, as a Blazing Star; Indeed, Constancy in this World is somewhat like a Blazing Star; It Lasts for a time, and then Goes out, for it is not as the Fix'd Stars, but rather as the Wandering Planets; though truly I am constantly Fix'd to be,

Madam,

Your faithful Friend and Servant.

Letter 119

Madam,

I give you many Thanks for your Counsel, and Advice concerning my Health, for certainly an Over-studious Mind doth Weak the Body, which is the Cause, for the most part, that Painful Students are Lean, for the Mind Feeds as much upon the Body, as the Body upon Meat; But truly, I am sometimes in a Dispute with my self, whether it be better to live a Long and Idle, than a Short, but Profitable Life, that is, to Employ a Little time Well, or to Waste a Great Deal of Time to no Purpose; and I Conclude, that a Little Good is better than Nothing, or better than a Sum of Evil; for 'tis better through Industry to Leave a Little to After Age, than Die so Poor as to Leave Nothing, no not so much as After Agens may say, there Liv'd such a one in Former Ages, than to Die, and be quite Forgotten; and therefore should I live out the Course of Nature, or could live so Long as Metaphysic, when the Time were Past, it would seem as Nothing, and perchance I should be as Unwilling to Die then, as if I Died in my Youth, so that a Long, and a Short time of Life, is as one and the same; 'Tis true, Death is Terrible to Think of, but in Death no Terour Remains; so as it is Life that is Painful both to the Body and Mind, and not Death, for the Mind in Life is Fearful, and the Body is seldom at Ease. But however, I will endeavour, Madam, so to Divide the time of my Bodily Life, as to Employ part of my Time for Health, and part for Fame, and all for Gods Favour, and when I Die, I will Bequeath my Soul to Heaven, my Fame to Time, and my Body to Earth, there to be Dissolved and Transformed as Nature Pleases, for to her it belongs. I do not much Care, nor Trouble my Thoughts to think where I shall be Buried, when Dead, or into what part of the Earth I shall be Thrown; but if I could have my Wish, I would my Dust might be Imured, and mix'd with the Dust of those I Love best, although I think they would not Remain Long together, for I did observe, that in this last War the Urns of the Dead were Digged up, their Dust Dispersed, and their Bones Thrown about; and I suppose that in all Civil or Home-wars such Inhuman Acts are Committed; wherefore it is but a Folly to be Troubled and Concerned, where they shall be Buried, or for their Graves, or to Bestow much Cost on their Tombs, since not only Time, but Wars will Ruin them. But, Madam, lest I should make you Melancholy with Discoursing of so sad Subjects as Death and Graves, Bones and Dust, I leave you to Liveller and Pleasanter Thoughts and Conversation, and rest.

Madam,

Your faithful Friend and Servant.

Letter 120

Madam,

You were pleased to tell me in your last Letter, that many have desired your Charity, which have been Ruined by these last Civil Wars, and that they, who before this time were able to Relieve many with their Wealth, now do want Relief themselves; by which we may know, that neither Riches nor Peace is Permanent; and many are not only Ruinned in their Estates, and Banished their Native Country, but Forsaken of their Friends, which is a terrible Misery; but Misery and Friends seldom keep together, and it is to be observed, that a Civil War doth not only Abolish Laws, Dissolve Government, and Destroy the Plenty

126 CAVERNISH

Parliamentary soldiers desecrated her family's tombs in Colchester during the Civil Wars. See letter 107.

SOCIABLE LETTERS 127
Then will I sigh till I suspend no more
Twice hath the earth Thrown Cloris Mantle by
Imbrodered or’er with Curious Tapestry
And twice hath seem’d to mourn unto our sight
Like Jewels, or Chiniesses in snowey white
Since she laid down her milky limbs on Earth
Which dying gave her virgin Soule new birth
Yet still my heart is overwhelmed with grief
And tears (heis) gives Sorrow, noe relief
Twice hath sad Philomel left off to sing
Her mortifying sonnets to the Spring
Twice at the Silvian choristers desire
She hath lent her Musick to compleat theire Qoire
Since all devouing Death on her took assidue
And Tellys Wombe involv’d soc rich a Treasure.
Yet stay my heart is overwhelmed with grief
And time nor tears will give my woes relieue
Twelve times hath Phoebus horned seemed to fight
As often he’d them with her Brothers light
Since she did close her sparkling Diamond eyes
Yet my sad Heart for her still pining Dies
Through the Twelve houses the illustrious Sun
With splendour his Annuaull Jorney Run
Twice hath his fiery furious horses hurl’d
His blazing Chariots to the Lower World
Shewing his power to the wondring eyes
Of our (now so well known) Antipodes
Since the brack of her spootles virgin story
Which now on her soule doth end in endless Glory.
Yet my afflicted soul forsaken soul
For her in tears and Ashes still doth Rolle
O could a favour spot her snowey skin
Whose Virgin soule was scarcely soyled with sin
Aye me it di’d, soe have I sometimes seen
Faire Maydens sit incircled on a green
Whose lilies spread while they were making loves
Upon them scatter leaves of Damask Roses
E’er the spots upon her faire skin shows
Like Lilly leaves sprinkled with Damask Rose
Or as a stately Hert to Death pursued
By ravening Hounds his eyes with tears bedewed
An Arrow sticking in his trembling breast
Her lost condition to the life exprest
Soe trips he o’re the Lawns on trodden snow
And from his side his guilties blood doth flow
[Soe did the spots upon her faire skin shew
Like drops of blood upon unsalted snow]
HESTER PULTER

What want ye part a sinner then shee shed
They striving in their lives to embrase each other
Shee twill'd and twisted both of them together
Then Clotho at their constant love did wonder
And in meere pity pull'd them out asunder
Shew being it seems the Tendrest hearted Lass
Goe Noble Soules shee said and let them pass
But Atropos ingrained beguin to slide
Saying these two loves knots should be untied
But seeing there Lives she could not stay to untwist
Let those sit idling here (she said) that list
How can wee give account unto those powers
That us impoy in trifleing out our hours
Then soddling at her sisters for thire sloth
Shew with her fatal Gazers snip them both
Shew then cryed out, alas but hurrying fate
Forced her poore Girle, her pitty came too late.
Liceen Tantall tender to this brood
Who fed on Hostages and Infants blood.
Why are they now more cruel then at first
They Drunk with Christian blood yet still they thirst
Doth that old Vulture and his preyimg brood
Think to grow young with suckling sprightly blood
Oh let them next suck Nessus's pow'rful gore
Like mad Alcides let them Rave and Rant
And as they have bin three kingdoms sore annoysers
Let them like him last but selfe destroyers
Had these undaunted loving Heros died
In former times they had bin Delight
Then thire Renown and love had spread as far
As those two famous Thunderbolts of War
Effigies, Pyramids, Collums, Collosses,
Had bin erect to memorise our losses
But wee are now denied, our Just desires
Trew grateful love in this our age expires
Yet som sad I know there will be found
That for this onely Action will be Crowned
That shall bære lovely Lisle, and Lucas name
Unto the Temple of Eternall fame.
When that black Armie after thire short Dreame
Shall Boating bee on Stix's Sable Streame
They by the Angrey billows shall be tossed
Till in obvious Horrid wemb ther'e lost
If he that fired Diana's Flame for fame
Lost both his expectation and his name
If covetous Cambises who presum'd
To rob the Gods till shed his mein consom'd

ELIZABETH BANCKES AND GEORGE JAMES

Or that Fierce Gaulie who Delphus went to plunder
Till grey Phebus routed him with Thunder
If these live now in Honour then no doubt
Fame shall attend this Sacrilegus rout
Who have our Truths defenders ever powerd
And Temples, Altars, Victims, all devoured.
But these victorious soles live now above
And gloriously go on in endless love
Whilst thiere faire frames which here did close their lives
Shall live in fame till they in Glory rise.

1 Liked and Execd Sir George Lisle (d. 1648) and Sir Charles Lucas (1613-48), Royalist commanders in the First and Second Civil Wars, both were in arms with the Royalist insurgents that occupied Carlisle from 24 June 1644 until the city fell to Fairfax on 27 August. Lisle and Lucas were shot to death on Fairfax's orders for breaking their parole; the occasion of much Royalist recrimination. 2 Minerva's darling; more probably Sir Charles Lucas. 3 Heracles many-headed ravishing monster slain by Hercules 7 Mars on the Argo; the Hill of Aven Or (Arnos) near Arles that he god answered for his sojourn with Alcides in Athens (Venus). 15 These seven were: perhaps the son of Zeus and Leto, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Hestia, Hades, and Dionysus, since two of three were famous judges, or perhaps Mars, son of Alcides, Dionysus, son of Semele, and a third. 14 Ares, husband of Aphrodite (Artemis), and father of the winds. 23 Independent societies and militant Parliamentarians 48 Perseus the three Fates, Laocoon, Clotho, and Arion. 48 Garets season. 49 having hurrying 47 Lucas Tristram by comparison with Tantalus, who devoured his own son and made a feast of his gores. 49 Nessus the centaur Nessus had venomous blood; a shirt dipped in it was given to Heracles (Hakides) by his wife Hesione, who believed it to be a love-charm, and he died in agony. 50 These were gods of the rivers of the underworld. 74 in the great temple of Diana at Ephesus, one of the wonders of the ancient world, was destroyed by Herodesotus, who hoped this vandalism would make its name immortal. 75 Cambises: Cambyses of Persia; his story is told by Herodotus. 75 Fierce Gaulie: Bannock, who raided Delphi in 279 BCE and was repelled by a miraculous snowstorm sent by Apollo, which was commemorated by the festival of Soteria.

ELIZABETH BANCKES AND GEORGE JAMES

(1616)

This verse is the subject of a libel case brought before the Star Chamber. The plaintiffs were Henry Bessyce of Excect, gent., and Lucy his wife; the defendants, George James of Lutterworth, Leicestershire, plaintiff's servant, and Elizabeth Banckes. The libel was circulated after Mrs Bessyce had taken away George James's livery coat with intent to dismiss him. The aggrieved George called in an associate, Elizabeth Banckes, to help him concoct this poem in 1616. It suggests that it was she who had a way with words, while George was more responsible for the contents. Quite a number of libels of this kind were made by women, and are of some importance for the history of women's culture, since these actions for libel and slander bear witness to a lively coal working-class culture, both urban and rural, of verse-making for ritual insult. For
A.2) Bibliography for Further Reading:


