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## Phantastes Chapter 23: Astrophel: An Elegy, or Friend's Passion, for His Astrophill

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# Astrophel: An Elegy, or Friend's Passion, for His Astrophill

By Matthew Roydon

As then, no winde at all there blew,  
No swelling cloude accloid the aire,  
The skie, like grasse of watchet hew,  
Reflected Phoebus golden haire,  
The garnisht tree, no pendant stird;  
No voice was heard of anie Bird.

There might you see the burly Beare,  
The Lion king, the Elephant,  
The maiden Unicorne was there;  
So was Acteons horned plant,  
And what of wilde or tame are found,  
Were coucht in order on the ground.

Alcides speckled poplar tree,  
The palme that Monarchs do obtaine,  
With love juice staine the mulberie,  
The fruit that dewes the Poets brain,  
And Phillis philbert there away,  
Comparede with mirtle and the bay.

The tree that coffins doth adorne,  
With stately height threatning the skie,  
And for the bed of Love forlorne,  
The blacke and dolefull Ebonie;  
All in a circle compast were,  
Like to an Ampitheater.

Upon the branches of those trees,  
The airie winged people sat,  
Distinguished in od degrees,  
One sort is this, another that,  
Here Philomell, that knowes full well,  
What force and wit in love doth dwell.

The skiebred Egle roiall bird,  
Percht there upon an oke above,  
The Turtle by him never stird,  
Example of immortall love.  
The Swan that sings about to dy,  
Leaving Meander stood thereby.

And that which was of woonder most,  
The Phoenix left sweet Arabie:  
And on a Cedar in this coast,  
Built up her tombe of spicerie,  
As I conjecture by the same,  
Preparde to take her dying flame.

In midst and center of this plot,  
I saw one groveling on the grasse:  
A man or stone, I knew not that,  
No stone, of man the figure was,  
And yet I could not count him one,  
More than the image made of stone.

At length I might perceive him reare  
His bodie on his elbow end:  
Earthly and pale with gastly cheare,  
Upon his knees he upward tend,  
Seeming like one in uncouth stound,  
To be ascending out the ground.

A grievous sigh forthwith he throwes,  
As might have torne the vitall strings,  
Then down his cheeks the teares so flows,  
As doth the streame of many springs.  
So thunder rends the cloud in twaine,  
And makes a passage for the raine.

Incontinent with trembling sound,  
He wofully gan to complaine,  
Such were the accents as might wound,  
And teare a diamond rocke in twaine,  
After his throbs did somewhat stay,  
Thus heavily he gan to say.

O sunne (said he) seeing the sunne,  
On wretched me why dost thou shine,  
My star is falne, my comfort done,  
Out is the apple of mine eie,  
Shine upon those possesse delight,  
And let me live in endlesse night.

O griefe that liest upon my soule,  
As heavie as a mount of lead,  
The temnant of my life controll,  
Consort me quickly with the dead,

Halfe of this hart, this sprite and will,  
Di'de in the brest of Astrophill.

And you compassionate of my wo,  
Gentle birds, beasts, and shadie trees,  
I am assurde ye long to kno,  
What be the sorrowes me aggriev's,  
Listen ye then to that insu'th,  
And hear a tale of teares and ruthe.

You knew, who knew not Astrophill,  
(That I should live to say I knew,  
And have not in possession still)  
Things knowne permit me to renew  
Of him you know his merit such,  
I cannot say, you heare too much.

Within these woods of Arcadie  
He chief delight and pleasure tooke,  
And on the mountaine Parthenie,  
Upon the chrystall liquid brooke,  
The Muses met him ev'ry day,  
That taught him sing, to write, and say,

When he descended down the mount,  
His personage seemed more divine,  
A thousand graces one might count,  
Upon his lovely cheerfull eine,  
To hear him speake and sweetly smile,  
You were in Paradise the while.

A sweet attractive kinde of grace,  
A full assurance given by lookes,  
Continuall comfort in a face,  
The lineaments of Gospell bookes,  
I trowe that countenance cannot lie,  
Whose thoughts are legible in the eie.

Was never eie, did see that face,  
Was never eare, did heare that tong,  
Was never minde, did minde his grace,  
That ever thought the travell long,  
But eies, and eares, and every thought,  
Were with his sweete perfections caught.

O God, that such a worthy man,

In whom so rare desarts did raigne,  
Desired thus, must leave us than,  
And we to wish for him in vaine,  
O could the stars that bred that wit,  
In force no longer fixed sit.

Then being fild with learned dew,  
The Muses willed him to love,  
That instrument can aptly shew,  
How finely our conceits will move,  
As Bacchus opes dissembled harts,  
So love sets out our better parts.

Stella, a Nymph within this wood,  
Most rare and rich of heav'nly blis,  
The highest in his fancie stood,  
And she could well demerite this:  
'Tis likely they acquainted soone,  
He was a Sun, and she a Moone.

Our Astrophill did Stella love,  
O Stella vaunt of Astrophill,  
Albeit thy graces gods may move,  
Where wilt thou find an Astrophill,  
The rose and lillie have their prime,  
And so hath beautie but a time.

Although thy beautie do exceed,  
In common sight of ev'ry eie,  
Yet in his Poesies when we reede,  
It is apparent more thereby,  
He thee hath love and judgment too,  
Sees more than any other doo.

Then Astrophill hath honord thee,  
For when thy bodie is extinct,  
Thy graces shall eternall be,  
And live by vertue of his inke,  
For by his verses he doth give,  
To short livde beautie aye to live.

Above all others, this is hee,  
Which erst approved in his song,  
That love and honor might agree,  
And that pure love will do no wrong.  
Sweet saints, it is no sinne nor Blame

To love a man of vertuous name.

Did never love so sweetly breath  
In any mortall brest before,  
Did never Muse inspire beneath,  
A Poets braine with finer store:  
He wrote of love with high conceit,  
And beautie reard above her height.

Then Pallas afterward attyrde,  
Our Astrophill with her device,  
Whom in his armor heaven admyrde,  
As of the nation of the skies,  
He sparkled in his armes afarrs,  
As he were dight with fiery starrs.

The blaze whereof when Mars beheld,  
(An envious eie doth see afar)  
Such majesie (quoth he) is seeld,  
Such majestie my mart may mar,  
Perhaps this may a suter be,  
To set Mars by his deitie.

In this surmize he made with speede,  
An iron cane wherein he put,  
The thunder that in cloudes doth breede,  
The flame and bolt together shut,  
With privie force burst out againe,  
And so our Astrophill was slaine.

This word (was slaine) straightway did move,  
And nature's inward life strings twitch;  
The skie immediately above,  
Was dimd with hideous clouds of pitch,  
The wrastling winds from out the ground,  
Fild all the aire with ratling sound.

The bending trees exprest a grone,  
And sighd the sorrow of his fall;  
The forrest beasts made ruthfull mone,  
The birds did tune their mourning call,  
And Philomell for Astrophill,  
Unto her notes annex a phill.

The Turtle dove, with Tunes of ruthe,  
Shewd feeling passion of his death,

Me thought she said I tell the truthe,  
Was never he that drew in breath,  
Unto his love more trustie found,  
Than he for whom our griefs abound.

The swan that was in presence heere,  
Began his funerall dirge to sing,  
Good things (quoth he) may scarce appeere,  
But passe away with speedie wing.  
This mortall life, as death is tride,  
And death gives life, and so he di'de.

The general sorrow that was made,  
Among the creatures of kinde,  
Fired the Phoenix where she laide,  
Her ashes flying with the winde,  
So as I might with reason see,  
That such a Phoenix nere should bee.

Haply the cinders driven about,  
May breede an offspring neere that kinde,  
But hardly a peere to that I doubt.  
It cannot sinke into my minde,  
That under branches ere can bee  
Of worth and value as the tree.

The Egle markt with pearcing sight,  
The mournfull habit of the place,  
And parted thence with mounting flight,  
To signifie to Jove the case,  
What sorrow nature doth sustaine,  
For Astrophill by envie slaine.

And while I followed with mine eie,  
The flight the Egle upward tooke,  
All things did vanish by and by,  
And disappeared from my looke,  
The trees, beasts, birds, and grove was gone,  
So was the friend that made this mone.

This spectacle had firmly wrought,  
A deep compassion in my spright,  
My molting hart issude me thought,  
In streames forth at mine eies aright,  
And here my pen is forst to shrinke,  
My teares discollors so mine inke.