

Sent to a Gentleman whose Father was lately dead.¹

In imitation of *Quis desiderio sit pudor, etc.*²

[John Wesley]

What shame shall stop our flowing tears ?
What end shall our just sorrows know ?
Since Fate, relentless to our prayers,
Has given the long destructive blow!³

Ye Muses, strike the sounding string,
In plaintive strains his loss deplore,
And teach an artless voice to sing
The great, the bounteous, now no more!

For him the wise and good shall mourn,
While late records his fame declare;
And oft as rolling years return,
Shall pay his tomb a grateful tear.

Ah! what avail their plaints to thee?
Ah! what avails his fame declared?
Thou blam'st,⁴ alas! the just decree
Whence virtue meets its just⁵ reward.

Though sweeter sounds adorned thy tongue
Than Thracian Orpheus whilom⁶ played,
When list'ning to the morning⁷ song
Each tree bowed down its leafy head:

Never! ah, never from the gloom
Of unrelenting Pluto's sway

¹Included in a Letter to Samuel Wesley Jr., March 21, 1726 (*Works* 25:192–93). Samuel had solicited it for a friend publishing a poetry collection. This verse was selected and appeared with slight revisions in *Miscellaneous Poems by Several Hands*, ed. David Lewis (London: J. Watts, 1726), 232–34.

²Horace, *Odes*, I. xxiv.

³Published version:

What decent time shall stay our tears?
What bounds shall our just sorrow know?
Since fate, relentless to our pray'rs,
Has giv'n th' irrevocable blow!

⁴Published version substitutes “moan'st” for “blam'st.”

⁵Published version substitutes “full” for “just.”

⁶Published version substitutes “ever” for “whilom.”

⁷Published version substitutes “moving” for “morning.”

Could the thin shade again resume⁸
Its ancient tenement of clay.

Indulgent patience! heav'n-born guest!
Thy healing wings around display:
Thou gently calm'st the stormy breast
And driv'st the tyrant grief away.

Corroding care and eating pain
By just degrees thy influence own;
And lovely lasting peace again
Resumes her long-deserted throne.

⁸Published version: "Recall'd, could the thin shade resume."