

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Queen Elizabeth I**  
**- poems -**

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# Queen Elizabeth I(1533-1603)

Elizabeth I (7 September 1533 – 24 March 1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from 17 November 1558 until her death. Sometimes called The Virgin Queen, Gloriana or Good Queen Bess, the childless Elizabeth was the fifth and last monarch of the Tudor dynasty. Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII by second wife, Anne Boleyn, who was executed two and a half years after Elizabeth's birth. Anne's marriage to Henry VIII was annulled, and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. Her half-brother, Edward VI, ruled until his death in 1553, bequeathing the crown to Lady Jane Grey and ignoring the claims of his two half-sisters, Elizabeth and the Roman Catholic Mary, in spite of statute law to the contrary. However, Edward's will was set aside and Mary became queen, deposing Lady Jane Grey. During Mary's reign, Elizabeth was imprisoned for nearly a year on suspicion of supporting Protestant rebels.

In 1558, Elizabeth succeeded her half-sister to the throne, and she set out to rule by good counsel. She depended heavily on a group of trusted advisers, led by William Cecil, Baron Burghley. One of her first actions as queen was the establishment of an English Protestant church, of which she became the Supreme Governor. This Elizabethan Religious Settlement later evolved into today's Church of England. It was expected that Elizabeth would marry and produce an heir to continue the Tudor line. She never did, despite numerous courtships. As she grew older, Elizabeth became famous for her virginity. A cult grew up around her which was celebrated in the portraits, pageants, and literature of the day.

In government, Elizabeth was more moderate than her father and half-siblings had been. One of her mottoes was "video et taceo" ("I see, and say nothing"). In religion she was relatively tolerant, avoiding systematic persecution. After 1570, when the pope declared her illegitimate and released her subjects from obedience to her, several conspiracies threatened her life. All plots were defeated, however, with the help of her ministers' secret service. Elizabeth was cautious in foreign affairs, manoeuvring between the major powers of France and Spain. She only half-heartedly supported a number of ineffective, poorly-resourced military campaigns in the Netherlands, France, and Ireland. However, by the mid-1580s, war with Spain could no longer be avoided. When Spain finally decided to attempt to conquer England in 1588, the failure of the Spanish Armada associated her with one of the greatest military victories in English history.

Elizabeth's reign is known as the Elizabethan era. The period is famous for the flourishing of English drama, led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and

Christopher Marlowe, and for the seafaring prowess of English adventurers such as Francis Drake. Some historians are more reserved in their assessment. They depict Elizabeth as a short-tempered, sometimes indecisive ruler, who enjoyed more than her share of luck. Towards the end of her reign, a series of economic and military problems weakened her popularity. Elizabeth is acknowledged as a charismatic performer and a dogged survivor in an era when government was ramshackle and limited, and when monarchs in neighbouring countries faced internal problems that jeopardised their thrones. Such was the case with Elizabeth's rival, Mary, Queen of Scots, whom she imprisoned in 1568 and eventually had executed in 1587. After the short reigns of Elizabeth's half-siblings, her 44 years on the throne provided welcome stability for the kingdom and helped forge a sense of national identity.

# Ah, Silly Pug, Wert Thou So Sore Afraid

Ah, silly Pug, wert thou so sore afraid?  
Mourn not, my Wat, nor be thou so dismayed.  
It passeth fickle Fortune's power and skill  
To force my heart to think thee any ill.  
No Fortune base, thou sayest, shall alter thee?  
And may so blind a witch so conquer me?  
No, no, my Pug, though Fortune were not blind,  
Assure thyself she could not rule my mind.  
Fortune, I know, sometimes doth conquer kings,  
And rules and reigns on earth and earthly things,  
But never think Fortune can bear the sway  
If virtue watch, and will her not obey.  
Ne chose I thee by fickle Fortune's rede,  
Ne she shall force me alter with such speed  
But if to try this mistress' jest with thee.  
Pull up thy heart, suppress thy brackish tears,  
Torment thee not, but put away thy fears.  
Dead to all joys and living unto woe,  
Slain quite by her that ne'er gave wise men blow,  
Revive again and live without all dread,  
The less afraid, the better thou shalt speed.

Queen Elizabeth I

# In Defiance Of Fortune

Never think you fortune can bear the sway  
Where virtue's force can cause her to obey.

Queen Elizabeth I

# Oh, Fortune!

Oh, Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state  
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!  
Witnes this present prisonn, whither fate  
Could beare me, and the joys I quitt.  
Thou causedest the guiltie to be losed  
From bandes, wherein are innocents inclosed:  
Causing the guiltles to be strait reserved,  
And freeing those that death had well deserved.  
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,  
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.

signed - A. D. MDLV.  
Elizabethhe, Prisonner.

Queen Elizabeth I

# On Monsieur's Departure

I grieve and dare not show my discontent,  
I love and yet am forced to seem to hate,  
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant,  
I seem stark mute but inwardly to prate.  
I am and not, I freeze and yet am burned.  
Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun,  
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,  
Stands and lies by me, doth what I have done.  
His too familiar care doth make me rue it.  
No means I find to rid him from my breast,  
Till by the end of things it be suppress.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,  
For I am soft and made of melting snow;  
Or be more cruel, love, and so be kind.  
Let me or float or sink, be high or low.  
Or let me live with some more sweet content,  
Or die and so forget what love ere meant.

Queen Elizabeth I

# The Doubt Of Future Foes

The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,  
And wit me warns to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy;  
For falsehood now doth flow, and subjects' faith doth ebb,  
Which should not be if reason ruled or wisdom weaved the web.  
But clouds of joys untried do cloak aspiring minds,  
Which turn to rain of late repent by changed course of winds.  
The top of hope supposed the root upreared shall be,  
And fruitless all their grafted guile, as shortly ye shall see.  
The dazzled eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,  
Shall be unsealed by worthy wights whose foresight falsehood finds.  
The daughter of debate that discord aye doth sow  
Shall reap no gain where former rule still peace hath taught to know.  
No foreign banished wight shall anchor in this port;  
Our realm brooks not seditious sects, let them elsewhere resort.  
My rusty sword through rest shall first his edge employ  
To poll their tops that seek such change or gape for future joy.

Queen Elizabeth I



# When I Was Fair And Young

When I was fair and young, then favor graced me.  
Of many was I sought their mistress for to be.  
But I did scorn them all and answered them therefore:

Go, go, go, seek some other where; importune me no more.  
How many weeping eyes I made to pine in woe,  
How many sighing hearts I have not skill to show,  
But I the prouder grew and still this spake therefore:

Go, go, go, seek some other where, importune me no more.  
Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious boy,  
Saying: You dainty dame, for that you be so coy,  
I will so pluck your plumes as you shall say no more:

Go, go, go, seek some other where, importune me no more.  
As soon as he had said, such change grew in my breast  
That neither night nor day I could take any rest.  
Wherefore I did repent that I had said before:  
Go, go, go, seek some other where, importune me no more.

Queen Elizabeth I

# Written In Her French Psalter

No crooked leg, no bleared eye,  
No part deformed out of kind,  
Nor yet so ugly half can be  
As is the inward suspicious mind.

Queen Elizabeth I

# Written On A Wall At Woodstock

Oh Fortune, thy wresting wavering state  
Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit,  
Whose witness this present prison late  
Could bear, where once was joy's loan quit.  
Thou causedst the guilty to be loosed  
From bands where innocents were inclosed,  
And caused the guiltless to be reserved,  
And freed those that death had well deserved.  
But all herein can be nothing wrought,  
So God send to my foes all they have thought.

Queen Elizabeth I

# Written With A Diamond On Her Window At Woodstock

Much suspected by me,  
Nothing proved can be,  
Quoth Elizabeth prisoner.

Queen Elizabeth I