Christopher Marlowe

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was an English Elizabethan writer and contemporary of Shakespeare. He wrote several plays, the one most anthologized today being *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, staged in 1594 and published in 1605. His early death is still a mystery. “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” was not published until 1599. It is an example of “pastoral poetry,” a genre going back to Greek and Latin literature and revived during the Renaissance.

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields

And we will sit upon the rocks, 5
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies, 10
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold 15
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love. 20

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.