

**Sir Walter Raleigh**  
The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618) was an English writer, soldier, explorer, and statesman knighted in 1585 by Queen Elizabeth I. Raleigh was beheaded under James I on October 29, 1618. "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" (1596) was written in response to Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (1593).

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,                   5  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;  
And Philomel becometh dumb;  
The rest complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields                   10  
To wayward winter reckoning yields;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,  
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,                   15  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,  
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,  
All these in me no means can move  
To come to thee and be thy love.                   20

But could youth last and love still breed,  
Had joys no date nor age no need,  
Then these delights my mind might move  
To live with thee and be thy love.