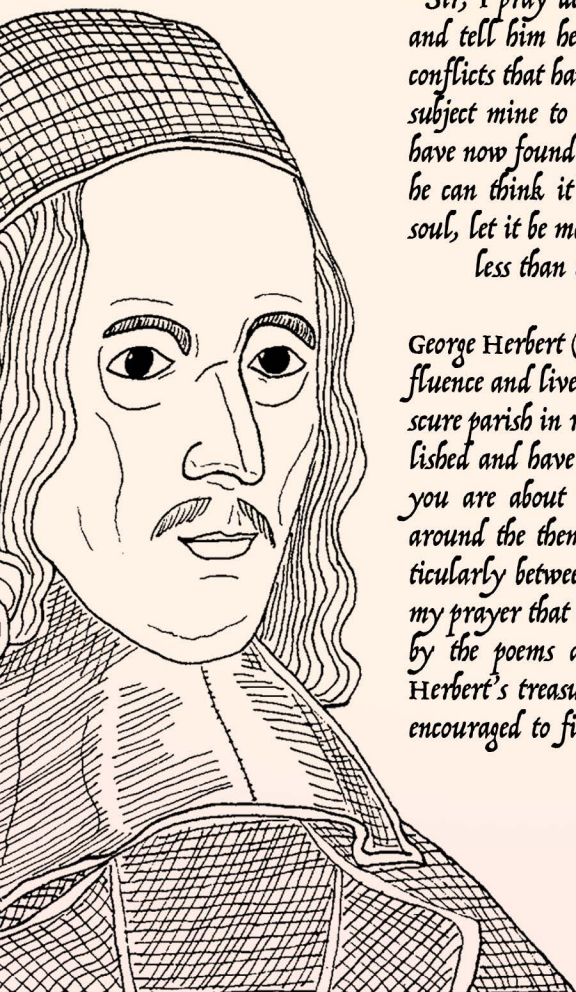


RWB



MEND MY RHYME: THE GEORGE HERBERT PROJECT



"Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Ferrar, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom; desire him to read it: and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public; if not, let him burn it; for I and it are less than the least of God's mercies." -George Herbert

George Herbert (1593-1633) rejected a career of attention and affluence and lived the last few years of his life as a priest to an obscure parish in rural England. Upon his death his poems were published and have attracted attention ever since. The selected poems you are about to hear me sing or read are loosely organized around the theme of Herbert's "many spiritual conflicts," particularly between restlessness in the world and rest in God. It is my prayer that as you listen to these songs, you would be impacted by the poems as they have impacted me, inspired to go read Herbert's treasure trove of words and wisdom for yourself, and encouraged to find rest in God, who makes and mends our eyes, and our rhymes. -Robert Brown

THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."





PARADISE

I bless thee, Lord, because I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force, or hidden CHARM
can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM,
While the inclosure is thine ARM?

Inclose me still for fear I START.
Be to me rather sharp and TART,
Than let me want thy hand and ART.

When thou dost greater judgments SPARE,
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,
Ev'n fruitful trees more fruitful ARE.

Such sharpness shows the sweetest TREND:
Such cuttings rather heal than REND:
And such beginnings touch their END.



VANTY II

Poor silly soul, whose hope and head lies low;
Whose flat delights on earth do creep and grow:
To whom the stars shine not so fair, as eyes;
Nor solid work, as false embroideries;
Hark and beware, lest what you now do measure
And write for sweet, prove a most sour displeasure

O hear betimes, lest thy relenting
May come too late!
To purchase heaven for repenting,
Is no hard rate.
If souls be made of earthly mould,
Let them love gold;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred fly:
For they can never be at rest,
Till they regain their ancient nest.
Then silly soul take heed, for earthly joy
Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy.



LOVE I

Immortal Love, author of this great frame,
Sprung from that beauty which can never fade,
How hath man parcel'd out Thy glorious name,
And thrown it on that dust which Thou hast made,
While mortal love doth all the title gain!
Which siding with Invention, they together
Bear all the sway, possessing heart and brain,
(Thy workmanship) and give Thee share in neither.
Wit fancies beauty, beauty raiseth wit;
The world is theirs, they two play out the game,
Thou standing by: and though Thy glorious name
Wrought our deliverance from th' infernal pit,
Who sings Thy praise? Only a scarf or glove
Doth warm our hands, and make them write of love.

LOVE II

Immortal Heat, O let Thy greater flame
Attract the lesser to it; let those fires
Which shall consume the world first make it tame,
And kindle in our hearts such true desires.
As may consume our lusts, and make Thee way:
Then shall our hearts pant Thee, then shall our brain
All her invention on Thine altar lay,
And there in hymns send back Thy fire again.
Our eyes shall see Thee, which before saw dust,
Dust blown by wit, till that they both were blind:
Thou shalt recover all Thy goods in kind,
Who wert disseized by usurping lust:
All knees shall bow to Thee; all wits shall rise,
And praise Him Who did make and mend our eyes.



DENIAL

When my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent ears,
Then was my heart broken, as was my verse;
My breast was full of fears
And disorder.

My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
Did fly asunder:
Each took his way; some would to pleasures go,
Some to the wars and thunder
Of alarms.

“As good go anywhere,” they say,
“As to benumb
Both knees and heart, in crying night and day,
Come, come, my God, O come!
But no hearing.”

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To cry to thee,
And then not hear it crying! All day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing.

Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
Untuned, unstrung;
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipped blossom, hung
Discontented.

O cheer and tune my heartless breast,
Defer no time;
That so thy favors granting my request,
They and my mind may chime,
And mend my rhyme.



LOVE III

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here":

Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee."

Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lovers, but I have marred them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"

"My dear, then I will serve."

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

THE DEDICATION

Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee;
Yet not mine neither: for from thee they came,
And must return. Accept of them and me,
And make us strive, who shall sing best thy name.
Turn their eyes hither, who shall make a gain:
Theirs, who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.





The poems are **Herbert's**, the artwork is **David Rhee's** (I just traced the drawings), the digital instruments (and the beat in track 1) are from **Apple and Native Instruments** -- the rest is either my fault or owing only the grace of **GOD**. His grace was shown to me through the following individuals, and they must be acknowledged and thanked:

- > **Audrey Olson**, my high school English teacher, who first introduced me to Herbert's poetry.
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- > **Heath McNease**, whose album *The Weight of Glory*, a musical tribute to C. S. Lewis, inspired me to make a similar tribute to Herbert (who inspired Lewis).
- > **George Herbert**. What is there left to say? The album itself speaks of my gratitude to this poet-priest. I look forward to meeting him. I hope we will have a nice long chat.
- > **JESUS CHRIST**, who mends eyes and mends rhymes; who rescued Herbert out of vanity and restlessness and gave him rest and perfect freedom; who inspired him to write these beautiful poems; who rescued me, and to whom I offer up my first fruits -- yet not mine neither: for from thee they came, and must return.

THE PULLEY

PARADISE

VANITY II

LOVE I & II

DENIAL

LOVE III

THE DEDICATION

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JBH