Thomas Percy (1729-1811)

2 The Friar of Orders Gray

It was a triar of orders gray	
Walkt forth to tell his beades;	
And he met with a lady faire	
Clad in a pilgrime's weedes.	
'Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar,	5
I pray thee tell to me,	
If ever at you holy shrine	
My true love thou didst see.'	
'And how should I know your true love	
From many another one?'	10
'O, by his cockle hat, and staff,	
And by his sandal shoone.	
But chiefly by his face and mien,	
That were so fair to view;	
His flaxen locks that sweetly curl'd,	15
And eyne of lovely blue.'	
'O, lady, he is dead and gone!	
Lady, he's dead and gone!	
And at his head a green grass turfe,	
And at his heels a stone.	20
Within these holy cloysters long	
He languisht, and he dyed,	
Lamenting of a ladyes love,	
And 'playning of her pride.	
Here bore him barefac'd on his bier	25
Six proper youths and tall,	

Within yon kirk-yard wall.'	
'And art thou dead, thou gentle youth!	
And art thou dead and gone!	30
And didst thou dye for love of me!	
Break, cruel heart of stone!'	
'O, weep not, lady, weep not soe;	
Some ghostly comfort seek:	
Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,	35
Ne teares bedew thy cheek.'	
'O, do not, do not, holy friar,	
My sorrow now reprove;	
For I have lost the sweetest youth,	
That e'er wan ladyes love.	40
And nowe, alas! for thy sad losse,	
I'll evermore weep and sigh;	
For thee I only wisht to live,	
For thee I wish to dye.'	
'Weep no more, lady, weep no more,	45
Thy sorrowe is in vaine:	
For violets pluckt the sweetest showers	
Will ne'er make grow againe.	
Our joys as winged dreams doe flye,	
Why then should sorrow last?	50
Since grief but aggravates thy losse,	
Grieve not for what is past.'	
'O, say not soe, thou holy friar;	
I pray thee, say not soe:	
For since my true-love dyed for mee,	55
Tie most my toare should flow	

And many a tear bedew'd his grave

And will he ne'er come again?	
Will he ne'er come again?	
Ah! no, he is dead and laid in his grave,	20
For ever to remain.	60
His cheek was redder than the rose;	
The comliest youth was he!	
But he is dead and laid in his grave:	
Alas, and woe is me!'	
'Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,	65
Men were deceivers ever:	
One foot on sea and one on land,	
To one thing constant never.	
Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,	
And left thee sad and heavy;	70
For young men ever were fickle found,	
Since summer trees were leafy.'	
'Now say not so, thou holy friar,	
I pray thee say not soe;	
My love he had the truest heart:	75
O, he was ever true!	
And art thou dead, thou much-lov'd youth,	
And didst thou dye for mee?	
Then farewell home; for ever-more	
A pilgrim I will bee.	80
But first upon my true-love's grave	
My weary limbs I'll lay,	
And thrice I'll kiss the green-grass turf,	
That wraps his breathless clay.'	
'Yet stay, fair lady; rest awhile	85

Beneath this cloyster wall: See through the hawthorn blows the cold wind, And drizzly rain doth fall.'

'O, stay me not, thou holy friar;
O stay me not, I pray;
90
No drizzly rain that falls on me,
Can wash my fault away.'

Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
And dry those pearly tears;
For see, beneath this gown of gray
Thy owne true-love appears.

95

Here forc'd by grief, and hopeless love,
These holy weeds I sought;
And here amid these lonely walls
To end my days I thought.

But haply, for my year of grace
Is not yet past away,
Might I still hope to win thy love,
No longer would I stay.'

'Now farewell grief, and welcome joy
Once more unto my heart;
For since I have found thee, lovely youth,
We never more will part.'

1765

(From Thomas Percy, ed. Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. Vol. 1. With Memoir and Critical Dissertation by the Rev. George Gilfillan. Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1858. A rpt. entire from Percy's last edition of 1794)