

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

2 *Sandys' Ghost;*

or,

A Proper New Ballad on the New Ovid's Metamorphoses,  
As it was intended to be translated by persons of quality.

Ye Lords and Commons, men of wit,  
And pleasure about town;  
Read this ere you translate one bit  
Of books of high renown.

Beware of Latin authors all! 5  
Nor think your verses sterling,  
Though with a golden pen you scrawl,  
And scribble in a Berlin:

For not the desk with silver nails,  
Nor bureau of expense, 10  
Nor standish well japann'd avails  
To writing of good sense.

Hear how a ghost in dead of night,  
With saucer eyes of fire,  
In woeful wise did sore affright 15  
A wit and courtly 'squire.

Rare imp of Phœbus, hopeful youth  
Like puppy tame that uses  
To fetch and carry, in his mouth,  
The works of all the Muses. 20

Ah! why did he write poetry,  
That hereto was so civil;  
And sell his soul for vanity,  
To rhyming and the Devil?

A desk he had of curious work, 25  
With glittering studs about;  
Within the same did Sandys lurk,

Though Ovid lay without.

Now as he scratch'd to fetch up thought,  
Forth popp'd the sprite so thin; 30  
And from the key-hole bolted out,  
All upright as a pin.

With whiskers, band, and pantaloon,  
And ruff composed most dully;  
This 'squire he dropp'd his pen full soon, 35  
While as the light burnt bluely.

“Ho! Master Sam,” quoth Sandys' sprite,  
“Write on, nor let me scare ye;  
Forsooth, if rhymes fall in not right,  
To Budgell seek, or Carey. 40

“I hear the beat of Jacob's drums,  
Poor Ovid finds no quarter!  
See first the merry P—— comes  
In haste, without his garter.

“Then lords and lordlings, 'squires, and knights, 45  
Wits, witlings, prigs, and peers!  
Garth at St. James's, and at White's,  
Beats up for volunteers.

“What Fenton will not do, nor Gay,  
Nor Congreve, Rowe, nor Stanyan, 50  
Tom B——t or Tom D'Urfey may,  
John Dunton, Steele, or any one.

“If Justice Philips' costive head  
Some frigid rhymes disburses;  
They shall like Persian Tales be read, 55  
And glad both babes and nurses.

“Let W—rw—k's muse with Ash—t join,  
And Ozell's with Lord Hervey's:  
Tickell and Addison combine,  
And P—pe translate with Jervas. 60

“L—— himself, that lively lord,  
Who bows to every lady,  
Shall join with F—— in one accord,  
And be like Tate and Brady.

“Ye ladies too draw forth your pen, 65  
I pray where can the hurt lie?  
Since you have brains as well as men,  
As witness Lady W—l—y.

“Now, Tonson, list thy forces all, 70  
Review them, and tell Noses:  
For to poor Ovid shall befall  
A strange metamorphosis.

“A metamorphosis more strange  
Than all his books can vapour;”  
‘To what’ (quoth ’squire) ‘shall Ovid change?’ 75  
Quoth Sandys: “To waste paper.”

1727

(From *The Works of Alexander Pope*. New Edition.  
With Introductions and Notes by the Rev. Whitwell  
Elwin, and William John Courthope. Vol. 4. London:  
John Murray, 1882)