

Alexander Search

EPITAPH — Here lies who thought himself the best

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Here lies who thought himself the best
Of poets in the world's extent;
In life he had nor joy nor rest.

He filled with madness many a song,
And at whatever age he died
Thus many days he lived too long.

He lived in powerless egotism,
His soul tumultuous and disordered
By thought and feeling's endless schism.

In everything he had a be
And without courage bore his part
In life's interminable woe.

He was a slave to grief and fear
And incoherent thoughts he had
And wishes unto madness near.

Those whom he loved, by arts of ill
He treated worse than foes; but he
His own worst enemy was still.

He of himself ever did sing,
Incapable of modesty,
Lock'd in his wild imagining.

Useless was all his toilless trouble

Empty of sense his fears and pains
And many of them were ignoble.

Vile thus and worthless his distress;
His words, though bitterer far than bate,
His bitter soul could not express.

Thus was he miserable and bad,
Who yet could sob in tenderness —
And none was found to know him mad.

Let not a healthy mind pollute
His grave, but fitly there will pass
The traitor and the prostitute;

The drunkard and the wencher there
May pass, but quick, lest they should ponder,
Perchance, that pleasure is but air.

Each weak and execrable mind
Which plagued man with its rottenness
Its conscious master here will find,

Conscious, for in him he could tell
Madness and ill were what they were,
But neither did he will to quell.

Pass by therefore ye who can weep;
Let rottenness work in neglect,
While the rough winds the dead leaves sweep.

His slumbering brother to the sod
Not even in imagining
Disturb not with the name of God.

But let him lie at peace for ever
Far from the eyes and mouths of men

And from what him from them did sever.

He was a thing that God had wrought
And to the sin of having lived
He joined the crime of having thought.

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Pessoa Inédito. Fernando Pessoa. (Orientação, coordenação e prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes). Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1993: 72.

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