

# Imitation

-the sincerest form of flattery

As an exercise in teaching himself more about writing poetry, a few years ago Neil Richardson decided to imitate the 17th century priest and poet, Robert Herrick 1591-1634. Herrick wrote his poems to imaginary women and he never had a relationship with a woman like the ones he writes about. Here are some samples.

## UPON HIS REASONS FOR WRITING VERSE FOR JULIA

My love's presented with these verses.  
Each one a part of you rehearses,  
And in the presentation of these lines  
Love and respect for you combines.

## UPON JULIA'S TEETH

No necklace garlanded with finest pearl  
Could match the beauty of your teeth, my girl.

To kiss your mouth adorn'd with margarite  
Would be my joy and passionate delight.

## UPON THE RELUCTANCE OF JULIA TO KISS HIS MOUTH

Oh, what a world of wonder thou dost miss  
By coyly holding back my mouth to kiss.  
What ecstasy would spin thee, fair and long,  
By gracefully receiving of my tongue!  
What transport wouldst thou know and what favour  
My lips t'embrace your mouth and then savour  
Each other's dewy issue and fair taste,  
And linger there, and never to make haste.

## UPON JULIA'S HAIR

No crown has ever graced a monarch's head so fair  
As that fair crown of gold which is your hair.

And now, two from the master himself:

## UPON JULIA'S VOICE

As, could they hear, the damn'd would make no noise,  
But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,  
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber  
So smooth, so sweet, so silv'ry is thy voice

## UPON JULIA'S BREASTS

DISPLAY thy breasts, my Julia—there let me  
Behold that circummortal purity,  
Between whose glories there my lips I'll lay,  
Ravish'd in that fair via lactea.

## UPON JULIA'S EYES

A sunlit sea and azure source of light  
Streams, flows, profluent from your sight.  
It bathes me in its warm blue glistening  
Like as an infant at a christening,  
Your eyes a world of beauty fold me round,  
And then I find no contact with the ground.  
Were I to be a man and that full wise,  
Then never should I look in Julia's eyes.

## UPON JULIA'S FINGERS AND THUMBS

You have but ten, but ten so fine and chaste,  
Their beauty only bettered by their taste;  
Slim, elegant and shapely, in each case,  
Bestowing honour to my lips' embrace.  
Employed, they are precision tools of pace.  
At rest, they are repositories of grace.

## UPON JULIA'S WISDOM

My Julia is intricately wise.  
Gainsaying her is always my demise.  
She has sagacious judgement in all things.  
Her wisdom wells up fresh from sober springs.



Robert Herrick

