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A Bushful of Sparrows

John Dillon Husband

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NMQ Poetry Selections

A BUSHFUL OF SPARROWS

I shall be a lewd old man.

If I have wealth, and a front lawn, there

In sun and dark will lovers and their sweethearts pair,

And fat angleworms entwine,

And ratty sparrows, full of spunk,

All hotly feather in the honeysuckle scent

Until shocked deacons run to ring the bells

And push with grubby sweating hands their virtue in,

As spinsters shake their petticoats and fall

While the virtuous cover their heads with aprons

And cry like nightingales.

I will have a house full of wicked children

Different in shape and size and the colors of their eyes,

But all of them juicy with wickedness!

They will not go to school.

They will rob my neighbor's peaches off his wall.

In the night you will hear their voices convex

with lewd designs.

They will stalk the morning sun stiff-legged like colts

While they guard silence, a great apple among them,

And walk as soft as violets

Until

Clatter and roar and pell mell pound

They tear a street of houses like paper and throw it
away.

I shall have a pretty boy with eyes like summer clouds

To bring me ripened pears and bunches of gold
grapes in bed,

And a mistress with breasts as tender as mallow

To rub warmth in my shins.

NMQ POETRY SELECTIONS

Young girls will run when they see me come
And cry Oh Oh as I undo them.
Good wives and plump matrons will squeak like mice
When my lads overtake them
And the churchbells all will go cr-rack cr-rack,
As they tumble them down from the steeples.

I shall breed stallions and mares,
Feeding them honey and hot Sorento wines
Till their eyes grow rounder than moons
And they leap over fences like feathers.
Great cats with silver teeth and muscled fur
Will couple in rooms that smell of sulphur and perfume,
Or corridors where tall girls with honey mouths,
Like orchids in nunneries, walk in a sound of thighs
and silk
To music Byzantine and shrill
On into rooms with painted walls and windows
full of eyes.

When I am exceedingly old,
The marrow hollowed out of my bones,
My lights burned out,
I will grow pious as an outworn sin,
And suck the warm cathedral airs,
Drink the organ music up like wine,
(The blossomy dresses of the girls,
The faces of boys waxy with godliness;
Tapping of rosaries and heels)
While churchmen with their collars backside out,
Rubbing their hands, rejoice
And walk home stoutly to their wives
To thank themselves for all the sinners saved.

JOHN DILLON HUSBAND