

The following excerpts from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* are intended primarily to show you a mid-seventeenth-century characterization of Eve that is neither as harsh as it might be nor, I hope, as charitable as we would like it to be.

RC

Book 1

THE ARGUMENT

This first Book proposes, first in brief, the whole Subject, Mans disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was plac't: Then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many Legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his Crew into the great Deep. Which action past over, the Poem hasts into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell, describ'd here, not in the Center (for Heaven and Earth may be suppos'd as yet not made, certainly not yet accurst) but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest call'd Chaos: Here Satan with his Angels lying on the burning Lake, thunder-struck and astonisht, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in Order and Dignity lay by him; they confer of thir miserable fall. Satan awakens all his Legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; They rise, thir Numbers, array of Battel, thir chief Leaders nam'd, according to the Idols known afterwards in Canaan and the Countries adjoyning. To these Satan directs his Speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new World and new kind of Creature to be created, according to an ancient Prophesie or report in Heaven; for that Angels were long before this visible Creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this Prophesie, and what to determin thereon he refers to a full Council. What his Associates thence attempt. Pandemonium the Palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: The infernal Peers there sit in Council.

OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat, [5]
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill [10]

Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
 Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
 That with no middle flight intends to soar
 Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues [15]
 Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.
 And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread [20]
 Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
 And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
 Illumin, what is low raise and support;
 That to the highth of this great Argument
 I may assert Eternal Providence, [25]
 And justify the wayes of God to men.

Book 4

THE ARGUMENT

Satan now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprize which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despare; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and scituation is discribed, overleaps the bounds, sits in the shape of a Cormorant on the Tree of life, as highest in the Garden to look about him. The Garden describ'd; Satans first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at thir excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work thir fall; overhears thir discourse, thence gathers that the Tree of knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his Temptation, by seducing them to transgress: then leaves them a while, to know further of thir state by some other means. Mean while Uriel descending on a Sun-beam warns Gabriel, who had in charge the Gate of Paradise, that some evil spirit had escap'd the Deep, and past at Noon by his Sphere in the shape of a good Angel down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the Mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to thir rest: thir Bower describ'd; thir Evening worship. Gabriel drawing forth his Bands of Night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adams Bower, least the evill spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there they find him at the ear of Eve,

tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom question'd, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but hinder'd by a Sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

[Satan, "the Fiend," has escaped Hell and snuck into the Garden of Eden, his plan being to tempt humanity away from God]

From this Assyrian Garden, where the Fiend [285]
 Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
 Of living Creatures new to sight and strange:
 Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
 Godlike erect, with native Honour clad
 In naked Majestie seemd Lords of all, [290]
 And worthie seemd, for in thir looks Divine
 The image of thir glorious Maker shon,
 Truth, wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
 Severe but in true filial freedom plac't;
 Whence true authority in men; though both [295]
 Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;
 For contemplation hee and valour formd,
 For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
 Hee for God only, shee for God in him:
 His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd [300]
 Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin Locks
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung
 Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
 Shee as a vail down to the slender waste
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore [305]
 Disheveld, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
 As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd
 Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best receivd,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride, [310]
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.
 Nor those mysterious parts were then conceald,
 Then was not guiltie shame, dishonest shame
 Of natures works, honor dishonorable,
 Sin-bred, how have ye troubl'd all mankind [315]
 With shews instead, meer shews of seeming pure,

And banisht from mans life his happiest life,
 Simplicitie and spotless innocence.
 So passd they naked on, nor shund the sight
 Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill: [320]
 So hand in hand they passd, the lovliest pair
 That ever since in loves imbraces met,
 Adam the goodliest man of men since borne
 His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters Eve.
 Under a tuft of shade that on a green [325]
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh Fountain side
 They sat them down, and after no more toil
 Of thir sweet Gardning labour then suffic'd
 To recommend coole Zephyr, and made ease
 More easie, wholsom thirst and appetite [330]
 More grateful, to thir Supper Fruits they fell,
 Nectarine Fruits which the compliant boughes
 Yielded them, side-long as they sat recline
 On the soft downie Bank damaskt with flours:
 The savourie pulp they chew, and in the rinde [335]
 Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance as beseems
 Fair couple, linkt in happie nuptial League,
 Alone as they. About them frisking playd [340]
 All Beasts of th' Earth, since wilde, and of all chase
 In Wood or Wilderness, Forrest or Den;
 Sporting the Lion rampd, and in his paw
 Dandl'd the Kid; Bears, Tygers, Ounces, Pardes
 Gambold before them, th' unwieldy Elephant [345]
 To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreathd
 His Lithe Proboscis; close the Serpent sly
 Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
 His breaded train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded; others on the grass [350]
 Coucht, and now fild with pasture gazing sat,
 Or Bedward ruminating: for the Sun
 Declin'd was hasting now with prone career
 To th' Ocean Iles, and in th' ascending Scale
 Of Heav'n the Starrs that usher Evening rose: [355]

When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,
Scarce thus at length faild speech recoverd sad.

[This passage starts with Adam speaking to Eve:]

Sole partner and sole part of all these joyes,
Dearer thy self then all; needs must the Power
That made us, and for us this ample World
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite, [415]
That rais'd us from the dust and plac't us here
In all this happiness, who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can performe
Aught whereof hee hath need, hee who requires
From us no other service then to keep [420]
This one, this easie charge, of all the Trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that onely Tree
Of knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life,
So neer grows Death to Life, what ere Death is, [425]
Som dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou knowst
God hath pronounc't it death to taste that Tree,
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signes of power and rule
Conferrd upon us, and Dominion giv'n [430]
Over all other Creatures that possess
Earth, Aire, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
One easie prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights: [435]
But let us ever praise him, and extoll
His bountie, following our delightful task
To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flours,
Which were it toilsom, yet with thee were sweet.

To whom thus Eve repli'd. O thou for whom [440]
And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my Guide
And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.

For wee to him indeed all praises owe,
 And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy [445]
 So farr the happier Lot, enjoying thee
 Præeminent by so much odds, while thou
 Like consort to thy self canst no where find.
 That day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awak't, and found my self repos'd [450]
 Under a shade of flours, much wondring where
 And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
 Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
 Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread
 Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd [455]
 Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n; I thither went
 With unexperienc't thought, and laid me downe
 On the green bank, to look into the cleer
 Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite, [460]
 A Shape within the watry gleam appeard
 Bending to look on me, I started back,
 It started back, but pleas'd I soon returnd,
 Pleas'd it returnd as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathie and love; there I had fixt [465]
 Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
 Had not a voice thus warnd me, What thou seest,
 What there thou seest fair Creature is thy self,
 With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow staies [470]
 Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces, hee
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
 Inseparablie thine, to him shalt beare
 Multitudes like thy self, and thence be call'd
 Mother of human Race: what could I doe, [475]
 But follow strait, invisibly thus led?
 Till I espi'd thee, fair indeed and tall,
 Under a Platan, yet methought less faire,
 Less winning soft, less amiablie milde,
 Then that smooth watry image; back I turnd, [480]
 Thou following cryd'st aloud, Return faire Eve,
 Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art,

His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, neerest my heart
 Substantial Life, to have thee by my side [485]
 Henceforth an individual solace dear;
 Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim
 My other half: with that thy gentle hand
 Seisd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
 How beauty is excelld by manly grace [490]
 And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

So spake our general Mother . . .

[. . . .]

When Adam thus to Eve: Fair Consort, th' hour [610]
 Of night, and all things now retir'd to rest
 Mind us of like repose, since God hath set
 Labour and rest, as day and night to men
 Successive,

. . . .

To morrow ere fresh Morning streak the East
 With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
 And at our pleasant labour, to reform [625]
 Yon flourie Arbors, yonder Allies green,
 Our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
 That mock our scant manuring, and require
 More hands then ours to lop thir wanton growth:
 Those Blossoms also, and those dropping Gumms, [630]
 That lie bestrowne unsightly and unsmooth,
 Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease;
 Mean while, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest.

To whom thus Eve with perfet beauty adornd.
 My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst [635]
 Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains,
 God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more
 Is womans happiest knowledge and her praise.

....

[As Adam and Eve are about to turn in for the night . . .]

Thus at thir shadie Lodge arriv'd, both stood [720]
 Both turnd, and under op'n Skie ador'd
 The God that made both Skie, Air, Earth and Heav'n
 Which they beheld, the Moons resplendent Globe

And starrie Pole: Thou also mad'st the Night,
 Maker Omnipotent, and thou the Day, [725]
 Which we in our appointed work imployd
 Have finisht happie in our mutual help
 And mutual love, the Crown of all our bliss
 Ordaind by thee, and this delicious place
 For us too large, where thy abundance wants [730]
 Partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
 But thou hast promis'd from us two a Race
 To fill the Earth, who shall with us extoll
 Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
 And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep. [735]

This said unanimous, and other Rites
 Observing none, but adoration pure
 Which God likes best, into thir inmost bowre
 Handed they went; and eas'd the putting off
 These troublesom disguises which wee wear, [740]
 Strait side by side were laid, nor turnd I weene
 Adam from his fair Spouse, nor Eve the Rites
 Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd:
 Whatever Hypocrites austereely talk
 Of puritie and place and innocence, [745]
 Defaming as impure what God declares
 Pure, and commands to som, leaves free to all.

....

[Angels, alerted to Satan's presence in Eden, have been dispatched to find him.]

So saying, on he [Zephon, one of the Angels] led his radiant Files,
 Daz'ling the Moon; these to the Bower direct
 In search of whom they sought: him there they found
 Squat like a Toad, close at the eare of Eve; [800]
 Assaying by his Devilish art to reach
 The Organs of her Fancie, and with them forge
 Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams,
 Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
 Th' animal spirits that from pure blood arise [805]
 Like gentle breaths from Rivers pure, thence raise
 At least distemperd, discontented thoughts,
 Vaine hopes, vaine aimes, inordinate desires
 Blown up with high conceits ingendring pride.

Book 5

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approacht, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her: They come forth to thir day labours: Thir Morning Hymn at the Door of thir Bower. God to render Man inexcusable sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand; who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise, his appearance describ'd, his coming discern'd by Adam afar off sitting at the door of his Bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choycest fruits of Paradise got together by Eve; thir discourse at Table: Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates at Adams request who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his Legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, perswading all but only Abdiel a Seraph, who in Argument diswades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

NOW Morn her rosie steps in th' Eastern Clime
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with Orient Pearle,
 When Adam wak't, so customd, for his sleep
 Was Aerie light, from pure digestion bred,
 And temperat vapors bland, which th' only sound [5]
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
 Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill Matin Song
 Of Birds on every bough; so much the more

His wonder was to find unwak'nd Eve
 With Tresses discompos'd, and glowing Cheek, [10]
 As through unquiet rest . . .

....

Her hand soft touching, whisperd thus. Awake [17]
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
 Heav'ns last best gift, my ever new delight,
 Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field [20]
 Calls us, we lose the prime, to mark how spring
 Our tended Plants, how blows the Citron Grove,
 What drops the Myrrhe, and what the balmie Reed,
 How Nature paints her colours, how the Bee
 Sits on the Bloom extracting liquid sweet. [25]

Such whispering wak'd her, but with startl'd eye
 On Adam, whom imbracing, thus she spake.
 O Sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
 My Glorie, my Perfection, glad I see
 Thy face, and Morn return'd, for I this Night, [30]
 Such night till this I never pass'd, have dream'd,
 If dream'd, not as I oft am wont, of thee,
 Works of day pass't, or morrows next designe,
 But of offense and trouble, which my mind
 Knew never till this irksom night; methought [35]
 Close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
 With gentle voice, I thought it thine; it said,
 Why sleepest thou Eve? now is the pleasant time,
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
 To the night-warbling Bird, that now awake [40]
 Tunes sweetest his love-labor'd song; now reignes
 Full Orb'd the Moon, and with more pleasing light
 Shadowie sets off the face of things; in vain,
 If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,
 Whom to behold but thee, Natures desire, [45]
 In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
 Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.
 I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
 To find thee I directed then my walk;

And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways [50]
 That brought me on a sudden to the Tree
 Of interdicted Knowledge: fair it seem'd,
 Much fairer to my Fancie then by day:
 And as I wondring lookt, beside it stood
 One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n [55]
 By us oft seen; his dewie locks distill'd
 Ambrosia; on that Tree he also gaz'd;
 And O fair Plant, said he, with fruit surcharg'd,
 Deigns none to ease thy load and taste thy sweet,
 Nor God, nor Man; is Knowledge so despis'd? [60]
 Or envie, or what reserve forbids to taste?
 Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
 Longer thy offerd good, why else set here?
 This said he paus'd not, but with ventrous Arme
 He pluckt, he tasted; mee damp horror chil'd [65]
 At such bold words voucht with a deed so bold:
 But he thus overjoy'd, O Fruit Divine,
 Sweet of thy self, but much more sweet thus cropt,
 Forbidd'n here, it seems, as onely fit
 For God's, yet able to make Gods of Men: [70]
 And why not Gods of Men, since good, the more
 Communicated, more abundant growes,
 The Author not impair'd, but honourd more?
 Here, happie Creature, fair Angelic Eve,
 Partake thou also; happie though thou art, [75]
 Happier thou mayst be, worthier canst not be:
 Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
 Thy self a Goddess, not to Earth confind,
 But somtimes in the Air, as wee, somtimes
 Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see [80]
 What life the Gods live there, and such live thou.
 So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
 Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
 Which he had pluckt; the pleasant savourie smell
 So quick'nd appetite, that I, methought, [85]
 Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the Clouds
 With him I flew, and underneath beheld
 The Earth outstretcht immense, a prospect wide

And various: wondring at my flight and change
 To this high exaltation; suddenly [90]
 My Guide was gon, and I, me thought, sunk down,
 And fell asleep; but O how glad I wak'd
 To find this but a dream! Thus Eve her Night

Related, and thus Adam answerd sad.

Best Image of my self and dearer half, [95]
 The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
 Affects me equally; nor can I like
 This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear;
 Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
 Created pure. But know that in the Soule [100]
 Are many lesser Faculties that serve
 Reason as chief; among these Fansie next
 Her office holds; of all external things,
 Which the five watchful Senses represent,
 She forms Imaginations, Aerie shapes, [105]
 Which Reason joyning or disjoyning, frames
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call
 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
 Into her private Cell when Nature rests.
 Oft in her absence mimic Fansie wakes [110]
 To imitate her; but misjoyning shapes,
 Wilde work produces oft, and most in dreams,
 Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
 Som such resemblances methinks I find
 Of our last Eevnings talk, in this thy dream, [115]
 But with addition strange; yet be not sad.
 Evil into the mind of God or Man
 May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
 No spot or blame behind:

....

[Adam spots the angel Raphael coming for a visit.]

Haste hither Eve, and worth thy sight behold
 Eastward among those Trees, what glorious shape

Comes this way moving; seems another Morn [310]
 Ris'n on mid-noon; Som great behest from Heav'n
 To us perhaps he brings, and will voutsafe
 This day to be our Guest. But goe with speed,
 And what thy stores contain, bring forth and poure
 Abundance, fit to honour and receive [315]
 Our Heav'nly stranger; well we may afford
 Our givers thir own gifts, and large bestow
 From large bestowd, where Nature multiplies
 Her fertil growth, and by disburd'ning grows
 More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare. [320]

To whom thus Eve. Adam, earths hallowd mould,
 Of God inspir'd, small store will serve, where store,
 All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
 Save what by frugal storing firmness gains
 To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes: [325]
 But I will haste and from each bough and break,
 Each Plant and juiciest Gourd will pluck such choice
 To entertain our Angel guest, as hee
 Beholding shall confess that here on Earth
 God hath dispenst his bounties as in Heav'n. [330]

....

... to the Silvan Lodge
 They came, that like Pomona's Arbour smil'd
 With flourets deck't and fragrant smells; but Eve
 Undeckt, save with her self more lovely fair [380]
 Then Wood-Nymph, or the fairest Goddess feign'd
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from Heav'n; no vaile
 Shee needed, Vertue-proof, no thought infirme
 Alterd her cheek. On whom the Angel Haile [385]
 Bestowd, the holy salutation us'd
 Long after to blest Marie, second Eve.

Haile Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb
 Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons
 Then with these various fruits the Trees of God [390]

Have heap'd this Table.

....

.... Mean while at Table Eve
 Ministerd naked, and thir flowing cups
 With pleasant liquors crown'd: O innocence [445]
 Deserving Paradise! if ever, then,
 Then had the Sons of God excuse to have bin
 Enamour'd at that sight; but in those hearts
 Love unlibidinous reign'd, nor jealousy
 Was understood, the injur'd Lovers Hell.

....

Book 9

THE ARGUMENT

Satan having compast the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by Night into Paradise, enters into the Serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the Morning go forth to thir labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart: Adam consents not, alledging the danger, lest that Enemy, of whom they were forewarn'd, should attempt her found alone: Eve loath to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make tryal of her strength; Adam at last yields: The Serpent finds her alone; his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking, with much flattery extolling Eve above all other Creatures. Eve wondring to hear the Serpent speak, asks how he attain'd to human speech and such understanding not till now; the Serpent answers, that by tasting of a certain Tree in the Garden he attain'd both to Speech and Reason, till then void of both: Eve requires him to bring her to that Tree, and finds it to be the Tree of Knowledge forbidden: The Serpent now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat; she pleas'd with the taste deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not, at last brings him of the Fruit, relates what perswaded her to eat thereof: Adam at first amaz'd, but perceiving her lost, resolves through vehemence of love to perish with her; and extenuating the trespass, eats also of the Fruit: The Effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover thir nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

Adam, well may we labour still to dress [205]
 This Garden, still to tend Plant, Herb and Flour,

Our pleasant task enjoyn'd, but till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
 Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind, [210]
 One night or two with wanton growth derides
 Tending to wilde. Thou therefore now advise
 Or hear what to my minde first thoughts present,
 Let us divide our labours, thou where choice
 Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind [215]
 The Woodbine round this Arbour, or direct
 The clasping Ivie where to climb, while I
 In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt
 With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon:
 For while so near each other thus all day [220]
 Our taske we choose, what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our dayes work brought to little, though begun
 Early, and th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd. [225]

To whom mild answer Adam thus return'd.
 Sole Eve, Associate sole, to me beyond
 Compare above all living Creatures deare,
 Well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts imployd
 How we might best fulfill the work which here [230]
 God hath assign'd us, nor of me shalt pass
 Unprais'd: for nothing lovelier can be found
 In Woman, then to studie houshold good,
 And good workes in her Husband to promote.
 Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd [235]
 Labour, as to debarr us when we need
 Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
 Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
 Of looks and smiles, for smiles from Reason flow,
 To brute deni'd, and are of Love the food, [240]
 Love not the lowest end of human life.
 For not to irksom toile, but to delight
 He made us, and delight to Reason joyn'd.
 These paths & Bowers doubt not but our joynt hands

Will keep from Wilderness with ease, as wide [245]
 As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
 Assist us: But if much converse perhaps
 Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield.
 For solitude sometimes is best societie,
 And short retirement urges sweet returne. [250]
 But other doubt possesses me, least harm
 Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou knowst
 What hath bin warn'd us, what malicious Foe
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame [255]
 By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder,
 Hopeless to circumvent us joynd, where each
 To other speedie aide might lend at need; [260]
 Whether his first design be to withdraw
 Our fealtie from God, or to disturb
 Conjugal Love, then which perhaps no bliss
 Enjoy'd by us excites his envie more;
 Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side [265]
 That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
 The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
 Safest and seemliest by her Husband staies,
 Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.

To whom the Virgin Majestie of Eve, [270]
 As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
 With sweet austere composure thus reply'd,

Ofspring of Heav'n and Earth, and all Earths Lord,
 That such an Enemie we have, who seeks
 Our ruin, both by thee informd I learne, [275]
 And from the parting Angel over-heard
 As in a shadie nook I stood behind,
 Just then returnd at shut of Evening Flours.
 But that thou shouldst my firmness therfore doubt
 To God or thee, because we have a foe [280]
 May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
 His violence thou fear'st not, being such,

As wee, not capable of death or paine,
 Can either not receave, or can repell.
 His fraud is then thy fear, which plain inferrs [285]
 Thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love
 Can by his fraud be shak'n or seduc't;
 Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy brest
 Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?

To whom with healing words Adam replyd. [290]
 Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve,
 For such thou art, from sin and blame entire:
 Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
 Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
 Th' attempt itself, intended by our Foe. [295]
 For hee who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonour foul, suppos'd
 Not incorruptible of Faith, not proof
 Against temptation: thou thy self with scorne
 And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong, [300]
 Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,
 If such affront I labour to avert
 From thee alone, which on us both at once
 The Enemie, though bold, will hardly dare,
 Or daring, first on mee th' assault shall light. [305]
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;
 Suttle he needs must be, who could seduce
 Angels nor think superfluous others aid.
 I from the influence of thy looks receave
 Access in every Vertue, in thy sight [310]
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame to be overcome or over-reacht
 Would utmost vigor raise, and rais'd unite.
 Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel [315]
 When I am present, and thy trial choose
 With me, best witness of thy Vertue tri'd.

So spake domestick Adam in his care
 And Matrimonial Love; but Eve, who thought

Less attributed to her Faith sincere, [320]
 Thus her reply with accent sweet renewd.

If this be our condition, thus to dwell
 In narrow circuit strait'nd by a Foe,
 Suttle or violent, we not endu'd
 Single with like defence, wherever met, [325]
 How are we happie, still in fear of harm?
 But harm precedes not sin: onely our Foe
 Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
 Of our integritie: his foul esteeme
 Sticks no dishonor on our Front, but turns [330]
 Foul on himself; then wherefore shund or feard
 By us? who rather double honour gaine
 From his surmise prov'd false, find peace within,
 Favour from Heav'n, our witness from th' event.
 And what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid [335]
 Alone, without exterior help sustaind?
 Let us not then suspect our happie State
 Left so imperfet by the Maker wise,
 As not secure to single or combin'd.
 Fraile is our happiness, if this be so, [340]
 And Eden were no Eden thus expos'd.

To whom thus Adam fervently repli'd.
 O Woman, best are all things as the will
 Of God ordain'd them, his creating hand
 Nothing imperfet or deficient left [345]
 Of all that he Created, much less Man,
 Or aught that might his happie State secure,
 Secure from outward force; within himself
 The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
 Against his will he can receave no harme. [350]
 But God left free the Will, for what obeyes
 Reason, is free, and Reason he made right
 But bid her well beware, and still erect,
 Least by some faire appeering good surpris'd
 She dictate false, and misinforme the Will [355]
 To do what God expresly hath forbid,
 Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoynes,

That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me.
 Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
 Since Reason not impossibly may meet [360]
 Some specious object by the Foe subornd,
 And fall into deception unaware,
 Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warnd.
 Seek not temptation then, which to avoide
 Were better, and most likelie if from mee [365]
 Thou sever not: Trial will come unsought.
 Wouldst thou approve thy constancie, approve
 First thy obedience; th' other who can know,
 Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
 But if thou think, trial unsought may finde [370]
 Us both securer then thus warnd thou seemst,
 Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more;
 Go in thy native innocence, relie
 On what thou hast of vertue, summon all,
 For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine. [375]

So spake the Patriarch of Mankinde, but Eve
 Persisted, yet submit, though last, repli'd.
 With thy permission then, and thus forewarnd
 Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
 Touchd onely, that our trial, when least sought, [380]
 May finde us both perhaps farr less prepar'd,
 The willinger I goe, nor much expect
 A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek,
 So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.

Thus saying, from her Husbands hand her hand [385]
 Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's Traine,
 Betook her to the Groves, but Delia's self
 In gate surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
 Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver armd, [390]
 But with such Gardning Tools as Art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had formd, or Angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona, thus adornd,
 Likeliest she seemd, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime, [395]

Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.
 Her long with ardent look his Eye pursu'd
 Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick returne
 Repeated, shee to him as oft engag'd [400]
 To be returnd by Noon amid the Bowre,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or Afternoons repose.
 O much deceav'd, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presum'd return! event perverse! [405]
 Thou never from that houre in Paradise
 Foundst either sweet repast, or sound repose;
 Such ambush hid among sweet Flours and Shades
 Waited with hellish rancour imminent
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back [410]
 Despoild of Innocence, of Faith, of Bliss.

....

[Shortly thereafter, Satan, disguised as a serpent . . .]

Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
 Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood, [425]
 Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
 About her glowd, oft stooping to support
 Each Flour of slender stalk, whose head though gay
 Carnation, Purple, Azure, or spect with Gold,
 Hung drooping unsustained, them she upstaies [430]
 Gently with Mirtle band, mindless the while,
 Her self, though fairest unsupported Flour,
 From her best prop so farr, and storm so nigh.
 Neerer he drew . . .

....

Much hee the Place admir'd, the Person more. [444]

....

Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold [455]
 This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus earlie, thus alone; her Heav'nly forme
 Angelic, but more soft, and Feminine,
 Her graceful Innocence, her every Aire

Of gesture or lest action overawd [460]
 His Malice, and with rapine sweet bereav'd
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
 That space the Evil one abstracted stood
 From his own evil, and for the time remaind
 Stupidly good, of enmitie disarm'd, [465]
 Of guile, of hate, of envie, of revenge;
 But the hot Hell that alwayes in him burnes,
 Though in mid Heav'n, soon ended his delight,
 And tortures him now more, the more he sees
 Of pleasure not for him ordain'd: then soon [470]
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites.

....

let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles, behold alone [480]
 The Woman, opportune to all attempts,
 Her Husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage hautie, and of limb
 Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould, [485]
 Foe not formidable, exempt from wound,
 I not; so much hath Hell debas'd, and paine
 Infeebld me, to what I was in Heav'n.
 Shee fair, divinely fair, fit Love for Gods,
 Not terrible, though terrour be in Love [490]
 And beautie, not approacht by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger, under shew of Love well feign'd,
 The way which to her ruin now I tend.

So spake the Enemie of Mankind, enclos'd
 In Serpent, Inmate bad, and toward Eve [495]
 Address'd his way, not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his reare,
 Circular base of rising foulds

....

of his tortuous Traine
 Curld many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
 To lure her Eye; shee busied heard the sound
 Of rusling Leaves, but minded not, as us'd
 To such disport before her through the Field, [520]
 From every Beast, more duteous at her call,
 Then at Circean call the Herd disguis'd.
 Hee boulder now, uncall'd before her stood;
 But as in gaze admiring: Oft he bowd
 His turret Crest, and sleek enamel'd Neck, [525]
 Fawning, and lick'd the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turnd at length
 The Eye of Eve to mark his play; he glad
 Of her attention gaind, with Serpent Tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal Air, [530]
 His fraudulent temptation thus began.

Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps
 Thou canst, who art sole Wonder, much less arm
 Thy looks, the Heav'n of mildness, with disdain,
 Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze [535]
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feard
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retir'd.
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker faire,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy Celestial Beautie adore [540]
 With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
 Where universally admir'd; but here
 In this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except, [545]
 Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
 A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd
 By Angels numberless, thy daily Train.

So glaz'd the Tempter, and his Proem tun'd;
 Into the Heart of Eve his words made way, [550]
 Though at the voice much marveling; at length
 Not unamaz'd she thus in answer spake.

What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc't
 By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?
 The first at lest of these I thought deni'd [555]
 To Beasts, whom God on thir Creation-Day
 Created mute to all articulat sound;
 The latter I demurre, for in thir looks
 Much reason, and in thir actions oft appeers.
 Thee, Serpent, sottlest beast of all the field [560]
 I knew, but not with human voice endu'd;
 Redouble then this miracle, and say,
 How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
 To me so friendly grown above the rest
 Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight? [565]
 Say, for such wonder claims attention due.

[Satan explains that he {i.e as the serpent}gained speech and the ability to reason from the fruit of a tree, to which he subsequently takes Eve. Whereupon Eve avers . . .]

Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither,
 Fruitless to mee, though Fruit be here to excess,
 The credit of whose vertue rest with thee,
 Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects. [650]
 But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;
 God so commanded, and left that Command
 Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
 Law to our selves, our Reason is our Law.

....

[They engage in some dialogue, which ends as follows.]

O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant,
 Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power [680]
 Within me cleere, not onely to discern
 Things in thir Causes, but to trace the wayes
 Of highest Agents, deemd however wise.
 Queen of this Universe, doe not believe
 Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not Die: [685]
 How should ye? by the Fruit? it gives you Life
 To Knowledge, By the Threatner, look on mee,

Mee who have touch'd and tasted, yet both live,
 And life more perfet have attaind then Fate
 Meant mee, by ventring higher then my Lot. [690]
 Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast
 Is open? or will God incense his ire
 For such a petty Trespass, and not praise
 Rather your dauntless vertue, whom the pain
 Of Death denounc't, whatever thing Death be, [695]
 Deterred not from atchieving what might leade
 To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil;
 Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
 Be real, why not known, since easier shunnd?
 God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just; [700]
 Not just, not God; not feard then, nor obeyd:
 Your feare it self of Death removes the feare.
 Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
 His worshippers; he knows that in the day [705]
 Ye Eate thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere,
 Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then
 Op'nd and cleerd, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.
 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man, [710]
 Internal Man, is but proportion meet,
 I of brute human, yee of human Gods.
 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
 Human, to put on Gods, death to be wisht,
 Though threat'nd, which no worse then this can bring. [715]
 And what are Gods that Man may not become
 As they, participating God-like food?
 The Gods are first, and that advantage use
 On our belief, that all from them proceeds;
 I question it, for this fair Earth I see, [720]
 Warm'd by the Sun, producing every kind,
 Them nothing: If they all things, who enclos'd
 Knowledge of Good and Evil in this Tree,
 That whoso eats thereof, forthwith attains
 Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies [725]
 Th' offence, that Man should thus attain to know?

What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree
 Impart against his will if all be his?
 Or is it envie, and can envie dwell
 In Heav'nly breasts? these, these and many more [730]
 Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.
 Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste.

He ended, and his words replete with guile
 Into her heart too easie entrance won:
 Fixt on the Fruit she gaz'd, which to behold [735]
 Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
 Yet rung of his perswasive words, impregn'd
 With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth;
 Mean while the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd
 An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell [740]
 So savorie of that Fruit, which with desire,
 Inclenable now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first
 Pausing a while, thus to her self she mus'd.

Great are thy Vertues, doubtless, best of Fruits. [745]
 Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admir'd,
 Whose taste, too long forborn, at first assay
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
 The Tongue not made for Speech to speak thy praise:
 Thy praise hee also who forbids thy use, [750]
 Conceales not from us, naming thee the Tree
 Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
 Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding
 Commends thee more, while it inferrs the good
 By thee communicated, and our want: [755]
 For good unknown, sure is not had, or had
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
 Such prohibitions binde not. But if Death [760]
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eate
 Of this fair Fruit, our doom is, we shall die.
 How dies the Serpent? hee hath eat'n and lives,

And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, [765]
 Irrational till then. For us alone
 Was death invented? or to us deni'd
 This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?
 For Beasts it seems: yet that one Beast which first
 Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy [770]
 The good befall'n him, Author unsuspect,
 Friendly to man, farr from deceit or guile.
 What fear I then, rather what know to feare
 Under this ignorance of good and Evil,
 Of God or Death, of Law or Penaltie? [775]
 Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine,
 Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste,
 Of vertue to make wise: what hinders then
 To reach, and feed at once both Bodie and Mind?

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour [780]
 Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat:
 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
 Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,
 That all was lost.

Book 10

THE ARGUMENT

Mans transgression known, the Guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve thir vigilance, and are approv'd, God declaring that The entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the Transgressors, who descends and gives Sentence accordingly; then in pity cloaths them both, and reascends. Sin and Death sitting till then at the Gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathie feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confin'd in Hell, but to follow Satan thir Sire up to the place of Man: To make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad Highway or Bridge over Chaos, according to the Track that Satan first made; then preparing for Earth, they meet him proud of his success returning to Hell; thir mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium, in full of assembly relates with boasting his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transform'd with himself also suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom giv'n in Paradise; then deluded with a shew of the forbidden Tree springing up before them, they greedily

reaching to take of the Fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death; God foretels the final Victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but for the present commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam more and more perceiving his fall'n condition heavily bewailes, rejects the condolment of Eve; she persists and at length appeases him: then to evade the Curse likely to fall on thir Ofspring, proposes to Adam violent wayes which he approves not, but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late Promise made them, that her Seed should be reveng'd on the Serpent, and exhorts her with him to seek Peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.

[Adam looks bad in Book 10, after eating the apple Eve offers him, but Eve is made to look worse.]