from Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen*

Pride

17

So forth she[[1]](#footnote-2) comes and to her coach does climb,

Adorned all with gold and garlands gay,

That seemed as fresh as Flora in her prime

And strove to match in royal rich array

Great Juno’s golden chair, the which they say

The gods stand gazing on when she does ride

To Jove’s high house through heaven’s brass-paved way,

Drawn of fair peacocks, that excel in pride

And, full of Argus’ eyes[[2]](#footnote-3) their tails dispreaden[[3]](#footnote-4) wide.

Sloth

18

But this was drawn of six unequal[[4]](#footnote-5) beasts,

On which her six sage counselors did ride,

Taught to obey their bestial behests,

With like conditions to their kinds[[5]](#footnote-6) applied.

Of which the first, that all the rest did guide,

Was sluggish, Idleness, the nurse of sin.

Upon a slothful ass he chose to ride,

Arrayed in habit black and amis[[6]](#footnote-7) thin,

Like to an holy monk, the service to begin.

19

And in his hand his portess[[7]](#footnote-8) still he bare,

That much was worn but therein little read;

For of devotion he had little care.

Still drowned in sleep and most of his days dead.

Scarce could he once uphold his heavy head

To looken whether it were night or day.

May seem[[8]](#footnote-9) the wain[[9]](#footnote-10) was very evil led

When such an one had guiding of the way,

That knew not whether right he went or else astray.

20

From worldly cares himself he did esloin[[10]](#footnote-11)

And greatly shunned manly exercise;

From every work he challenged essoin,[[11]](#footnote-12)

For contemplation sake. Yet otherwise

His life he led in lawless riotize,[[12]](#footnote-13)

By which he grew to grievous malady;

For in his lustless[[13]](#footnote-14) limbs, through evil guise[[14]](#footnote-15)

A shaking fever reigned continually.

Such one was Idleness, first of this company.

Gluttony

21

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,

Deformed creature, on a filthy swine;

His belly was up-blown with luxury,

And eke[[15]](#footnote-16) with fatness swollen were his eyne,[[16]](#footnote-17)

And like a crane his neck was long and fine,[[17]](#footnote-18)

With which he swallowed up excessive feast,

For want whereof poor people oft did pine.[[18]](#footnote-19)

And all the way most like a brutish beast,

He spewed up his gorge, that[[19]](#footnote-20) all did him detest.

22

In green vine leaves he was right fitly clad,

For other clothes he could not wear for heat;

And on his head an ivy garland had,

From under which fast trickled down the sweat.

Still as he rode, he somewhat[[20]](#footnote-21) still did eat,

And in his hand did bear a boozing can,

Of which he supped so oft that on his seat

His drunken corse he scarce upholden can,

In shape and life more like a monster than a man.

23

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,

And eke unable once[[21]](#footnote-22) to stir or go,

Not meet[[22]](#footnote-23) to be of counsel to a king,

Whose mind in meant and drink was drowned so

That from his friend he seldom knew his foe.

Full of diseases was his carcass blue,[[23]](#footnote-24)

And a dry[[24]](#footnote-25) dropsy through his flesh did flow,

Which by misdiet daily greater grew.

Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

Lechery

24

And next to him rode lustful Lechery

Upon a bearded goat whose rugged hair

And whally[[25]](#footnote-26) eyes (the sign of jealousy)

Was like the person self[[26]](#footnote-27) whom he did bear;

Who rough and black and filthy did appear,

Unseemly man to please fair lady’s eye.

Yet he of ladies oft was loved dear,

When fairer faces were bid standen by.

O who does know the bent of women’s fantasy?

25

In a green gown he clothed was full fair,

Which underneath did hide his filthiness;

And in his hand a burning heart he bare,

Full of vain follies and newfangledness.[[27]](#footnote-28)

For he was false and frought[[28]](#footnote-29) with fickleness,

And learned had to love with secret looks,

And well could[[29]](#footnote-30) dance and sing with ruefulness,

And fortunes tell, and read in loving[[30]](#footnote-31) books,

And thousand other ways to bait his fleshly hooks.

26

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw

And lusted after all that he did love;

Ne[[31]](#footnote-32) would his looser life be tied to law,

But joyed weak women’s hearts to tempt and prove[[32]](#footnote-33)

If from their loyal loves he might them move.

Which lewdness filled him with reproachful pain

Of that foul evil,[[33]](#footnote-34) which all men reprove,

That rots the marrow and consumes the brain,

Such one was Lechery, the third of all this train.

Avarice

27

And greedy Avarice by him did ride

Upon a camel loaden all with gold;

Two iron coffers hung on either side,

With precious metal full as they might hold;

And in his lap an heap of coin he told;[[34]](#footnote-35)

For of his wicket pelf[[35]](#footnote-36) his god he made,

And unto hell himself for money sold.

Accursed usury was all his trade.

And right and wrong alike in equal balance weighed.

28

His life was nigh unto death’s door y’placed,[[36]](#footnote-37)

And threadbare coat and cobbled shoes he ware,

Ne scarce good morsel all his life did taste;

But both from back and belly still did spare

To fill his bag and richess to compare.[[37]](#footnote-38)

Yet child ne kinsman living had he none

To leave them to; but thorough[[38]](#footnote-39) daily care

To get and nightly fear to hose his own,

He led a wretched life, unto himself, unknown.[[39]](#footnote-40)

29

Most wretched wight, [[40]](#footnote-41) whom nothing might suffice,

Whose greedy lust did lack in greatest store,[[41]](#footnote-42)

Whose need had end, but no end covetise,[[42]](#footnote-43)

Whose wealth was want,[[43]](#footnote-44) whose plenty made him poor,

Who had enough, yet wished ever more—

A vile disease. And eke in food and hand

A grievous gout tormented him full sore,

That well he could not touch, nor go,[[44]](#footnote-45) nor stand.

Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this fair band.

Envy

30

And next to him malicious Envy rode

Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw

Between his cankered[[45]](#footnote-46) teeth a venomous toad,

That all the poison ran about his chaw,[[46]](#footnote-47)

But inwardly he chawed his own maw[[47]](#footnote-48)

At neighbors’ wealth, that made him ever sad;

For death it was when any good he saw,

And wept that cause of weeping none he had;

But when he heard of harm, he waxed wondrous glad.

31

And in a kirtle[[48]](#footnote-49) of discolored say[[49]](#footnote-50)

He clothed was, y’painted full of eyes;

And in his bosom secretly there lay

An hateful snake, the which his tail upties

In many folds and mortal sting implies.[[50]](#footnote-51)

Still as he rode, he gnashed his teeth to see

Those heaps of gold with gripple[[51]](#footnote-52) Covetise,

And grudged[[52]](#footnote-53) at the great felicity

Of proud Lucifera and his own company.

32

He hated all good words and virtuous deeds,

And him no less that any like did use;[[53]](#footnote-54)

And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,

His alms for want of faith he doth accuse;

So every good to bad he doth abuse.[[54]](#footnote-55)

And eke the verse of famous poets’ wit

He does backbite, and spiteful poison spews

From leprous mouth on all that ever writ.

Such one vile Envy was, that fifth in row did sit.

Wrath

33

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath

Upon a lion loath[[55]](#footnote-56) for to be led;

And in his hand a burning brand[[56]](#footnote-57) he hath,

The which he brandisheth about his head.

His eyes did hurl forth sparkles fiery red,

And stared stern on all that him beheld,

As ashes pale of hue and seeming dead;

Trembling through hasty range when choler[[57]](#footnote-58) in him swelled.

34

His ruffian[[58]](#footnote-59) raiment all was stained with blood,

Which he had spilt, and all to rags y’rent,

Through unadvised rashness woxen wood;[[59]](#footnote-60)

For of his hands he had no government,

Ne cared for blood in his avengement.

But when the furious fit was overpassed,

Yet willful man, he never would forecast[[60]](#footnote-61)

How many mischiefs should ensue his heedless haste.

35

Full many mischiefs follow cruel Wrath;

Abhorred bloodshed and tumultuous strife,

Unmanly murder and unthrifty scath,[[61]](#footnote-62)

Bitter despite, with rancor’s rusty knife,

And fretting grief, the enemy of life.

All these, and many evils mo[[62]](#footnote-63) haunt ire,

The swelling spleen [[63]](#footnote-64) and frenzy raging rife,

The shaking palsy and Saint Francis’ fire.[[64]](#footnote-65)

Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire.

1. she, Lucifera, the goddess of Pride; the most important of all the deadly sins. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Argus was the thousand-eyed monster whose eyes Juno stole for her special bird, the peacock. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. **dispreaden**- spread [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. **unequal-** different [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. **kinds-** natures [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. **amis-** hood [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. **portess-** breviary; book of prayers, hymns, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. **may seem-** it may seem [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. **wain-** cart [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. **esloin-** withdraw [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. **challenged essoin-** claimed exemption [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. **riotize-** riotousness [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. **lustless-** feeble [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. **guise-** behavior [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. **eke-** also [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. **eyne-** eyes [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. **fine-** thin [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. **pine-** starve [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. **that-** so that [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. **somewhat-** something [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. **once-** at all [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. **meet-** fit [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. **blue-** livid [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. **dry-** thirst-producing [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. **whally-** greenish [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. **person self-** the very person [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. **newfangledness-** novelties [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. **frought-** loaded [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. **could-** knew how to [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. **loving-** carnal, erotic [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. **Ne-** Not [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. **prove-** try [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. **foul evil-** syphilis [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. **told-** counted [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. **pelf-** wealth [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. **y’placed-** placed [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. **compare-** acquire [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. **thorough-** through [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. **unknown-** friendless [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. **wight-** person [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. **store-** plenty [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. **covetise-** covetousness [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. **want-** poverty [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. **go-** walk [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. **cankered-** corroded [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. **chaw-** jaw [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. **maw-** guts [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. **kirtle-** jacket [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. **discolored say-** multicolored wool [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. **implies-** covers up [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. **gripple-** grasping [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. **grudged-** grumbled [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. **use-** practice [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. **abuse-** its regular meaning, plus the root meaning of *twist* [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. **loath-** unwilling [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. **brand-** sword [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. **choler-** anger [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. **ruffian-** disordered [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. **woxen wood-** grown mad [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. **forecast-** foretell [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. **scath-** damage [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. **mo-** more [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. **spleen-** temper; also the bodily organ in which anger was thought to be created [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. **Saint Francis’ fire-** erysipelas, a skin disease characterized by shiny red inflammation [↑](#footnote-ref-65)