“I Care Not for These Ladies” (1601)
Thomas Campion

I care not for these ladies, That must be wooed and prayed:
Give me kind Amaryllis, The wanton country maid.
Nature art disdaineth, Her beauty is her own.

Who, when we court and kiss,
She cries, “Forsooth, let go!”
But when we come where comfort is,
She never will say no.

If I love Amaryllis,
She gives me fruit and flowers:
But if we love these ladies,
We must give golden showers.

Give them gold, that sell love,
Give me the nut-brown lass,

Who, when we court and kiss,
She cries, “Forsooth, let go!”
But when we come where comfort is,
She never will say no.

These ladies must have pillows,
And beds by strangers wrought;
Give me a bower of willows,
Of moss and leaves unbought,
And fresh Amaryllis,

With milk and honey fed;

Who, when we court and kiss,
She cries, “Forsooth, let go!”
But when we come where comfort is,
She never will say no.

Helpful Information:

3 Amaryllis: In Roman literature, a name given to a stock female character; a natural, pretty young woman who is usually a shepherdess. Also a common name for a female lover in pastoral poetry

4 wanton: A sexually immodest or promiscuous woman

8 forsooth: indeed or truly; term is often used ironically or to express surprise or indignation

21-22 pillows [a]nd beds by strangers wrought: i.e. imported

24 unbought: untouched
Pastoral Poetry

“To Penshurst” (1616)
Ben Jonson

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,  
Of touch or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;  
Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told,  
Or stair, or courts; but stand’st an ancient pile,
And, these grudged at, art reverenced the while.
Thou joy’st in better marks, of soil, of air,  
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair.
Thou hast thy walks for health, as well as sport;  
Thy mount, to which the dryads do resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,  
Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade;
That taller tree, which of a nut was set  
At his great birth where all the Muses met.
There in the writhéd bark are cut the names  
Of many a sylvan, taken with his flames;
And thence the ruddy satyrs oft provoke  
The lighter fauns to reach thy Lady’s Oak.
Thy copse too, named of Gamage, thou hast there,  
That never fails to serve thee seasoned deer
To crown thy open table, doth provide  
The purpled pheasant with the speckled side;
And for thy mess is willing to be killed.  
And if the high-swollen Medway fail thy dish,
Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish,  
Fat aged carps that run into thy net,
And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat,  
As loath the second draught or cast to stay;
Before the fisher, or into his hand.
Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,  
Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours.
The early cherry, with the later plum,  
Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come;
The blushing apricot and woolly peach  
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
And though thy walls be of the country stone,  
They’re reared with no man’s ruin, no man’s groan;
There’s none that dwell about them wish them down;  
But all come in, the farmer and the clown,
And no one empty-handed, to salute  
Thy lord and lady, though they have no suit.
Some bring a capon, some a rural cake,

Helpful Information:
2 touch: touchstone, an expensive black basalt rock.
6 More pretentious houses attract envy.
9 Going on long walks in the countryside was exercise for wealthy people.
10 dryads: fairies that live in the woods.
11 Pan: half-goat, half-human Roman god; patron of shepherds and flocks.
11 Bacchus: Greed god of wine, intoxication, and wild nature.
16 sylvan: countryman.
17 & 18 satyrs & fauns: woodland fairies.
17 provoke: challenge to a race.
19 copse: small grove of trees.
23 kine: cattle.
25 conies: rabbits.
25 tops: high ground.
30 mess: table.
31 Medway: local river in Kent.
36 officiously: dutifully.
42 quince: hard, acidic, pear-shaped fruit often used to make jam.
48 clown: peasant.
50 suit: request to make.
51 capon: a castrated rooster.
Pastoral Poetry

Some nuts, some apples; some that think they make
The better cheeses bring them, or else send
By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
This way to husbands, and whose baskets bear
An emblem of themselves in plum or pear.
But what can this (more than express their love)
Add to thy free provisions, far above
The need of such? whose liberal board doth flow
With all that hospitality doth know;
Where comes no guest but is allowed to eat,
Without his fear, and of thy lord’s own meat;
Where the same beer and bread, and selfsame wine,
This is his lordship’s shall be also mine,
And I not fain to sit (as some this day
At great men’s tables), and yet dine away.
Here no man tells my cups; nor, standing by,
A waiter doth my gluttony envy,
But gives me what I call, and lets me eat;
He knows below he shall find plenty of meat.
The tables hoard not up for the next day;
Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
For fire, or lights, or livery; all is there,
As if thou then wert mine, or I reigned here:
There’s nothing I can wish, for which I stay.
That found King James when, hunting late this way
With his brave son, the prince, they saw thy fires
Shine bright on every hearth, as the desires
Of thy Penates had been set on flame
To entertain them; or the country came
With all their zeal to warm their welcome here.
What (great I will not say, but) sudden cheer
Didst thou then make ’em! and what praise was heaped
On thy good lady then, who therein reaped
The just reward of her high housewifery;
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh,
When she was far; and not a room but dressed
As if it had expected such a guest!
These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all.
Thy lady’s noble, fruitful, chaste withal.
His children thy great lord may call his own,
A fortune in this age but rarely known.
They are, and have been, taught religion; thence
Their gentler spirits have sucked innocence.
Each morn and even they are taught to pray,
With the whole household, and may, every day,
Read in their virtuous parents' noble parts
The mysteries of manners, arms, and arts.
Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

Pastoral Poetry

“To His Book” (Excerpt from The Shepherd’s Calendar)¹ (1579)
Edmund Spenser

Go little book: thy self present
As child whose parent is unkent:
To him that is the president
Of noblesse and of chivalry
And if that Envy bark at thee
As sure it will, for succoure flee
    Under the shadow of his wing
And asked, who thee forth did bring,
A shepherds swaine say did thee sing,
All as his straying flock he fed:
And when his honor has thee redde,
Crave pardon for my hardyhedde.
    But if that any ask thy name,
Say thou were base begot with blame
For thy thereof thou taskest shame
And when thou art past jeopardy,
Come tell me, what was said of me:
And I will send more after thee.

IMMERITO.

Helpful Information:
1 Go little book: allusion to a line from a Chaucer poem
2 unkent: unknown
5 bark: yell loudly
6 succoure: aide, help
7 under the protective sponsorship of the poet’s patron, Sir Philip Sidney, whom he dedicated the book to
9 swaine: young boy
11 redde: seen
97 hardyhedde: boldness (hardy head)
14-15 Say you were blamed and that’s why you feel ashamed or embarrassed
16 jeopardy: danger
19 Immerito: unworthy


¹ The complete Shepheardes Calendar contains twelve poems, each one titles for a month of the year.
“Work without Hope” (1825)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Lines Composed 21st February 1825

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And Hope without an object cannot live.

Pastoral Poetry

“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (1592)
Christopher Marlowe

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Helpful Information:
2 prove = experience
8 madrigals = songs of a type popular during the Renaissance
11 kirtle = skirt
21 swains = youths

“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” can be found on page 290 in The Language of Literature: British Literature.
Pastoral Poetry

“The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd” (1596)
Sir Walter Raleigh

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields:
A honey tongue, a heart of gill,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

The gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,—
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.