



(1564–1593)

## 5 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

### Author of “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”

Killed before the age of thirty, Christopher Marlowe nonetheless managed to achieve renown as a brilliant playwright and poet. He spent his college days writing plays and serving as a government agent.

**A Pioneer in Drama** *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe’s first drama, dazzled the public with its dynamic characterization of the tyrant-hero. All of Marlowe’s subsequent plays may be seen as variations on a single theme: the larger-than-life hero who “overreaches,” seeking to dominate everything around him.

The most famous example is the protagonist in *Doctor Faustus*, who thirsts for supreme knowledge and sells his soul to the devil. Marlowe matched the grandeur of his heroes with the grandeur of language, forging blank verse into a powerfully expressive medium for the first time in English drama.

**A Life of Intrigue** Marlowe has been described as a scoundrel, a ladies’ man, and a hothead. By all accounts, his personal magnetism attracted both friends and enemies. When the court of Queen Elizabeth I wrote a letter implying that Marlowe had performed important government services, rumors flew about that he was a spy.

**A Violent Death** Marlowe was knifed to death in a tavern brawl in 1593. To this day, scholars question whether his death was really caused by his drunken refusal to pay his bill or whether he was murdered because of his undercover activities on behalf of the government.



(1554?–1618)

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH

### Author of “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”

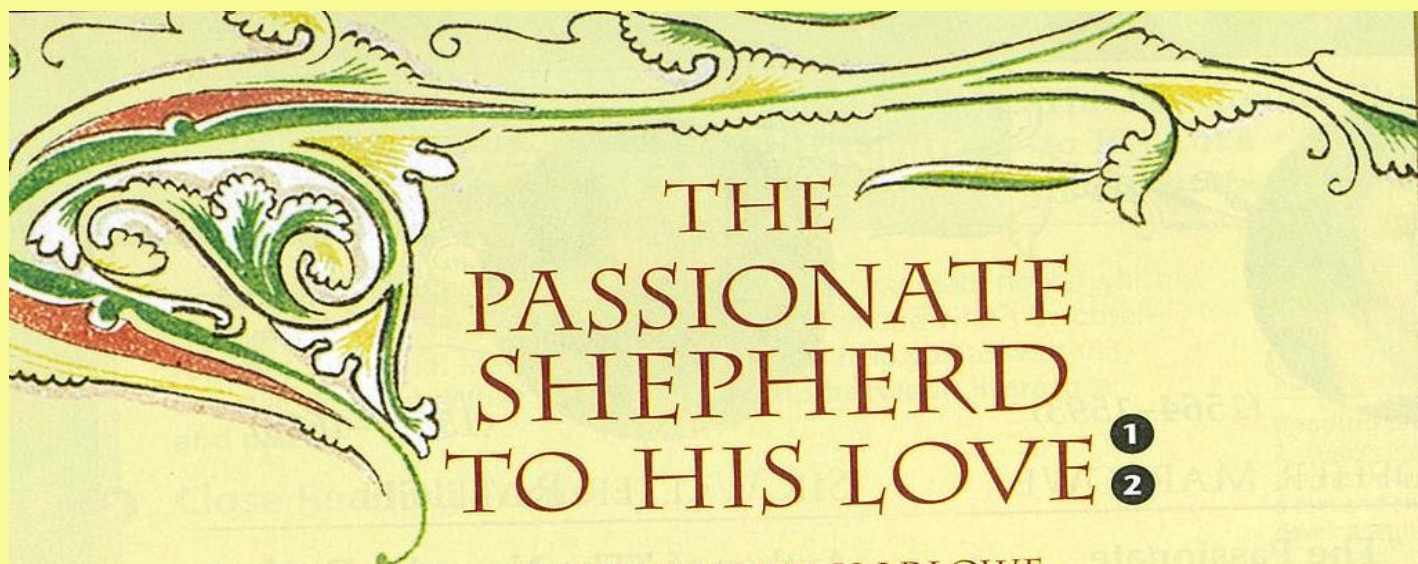
Sir Walter Raleigh is famed for having been a courtier, a navigator, a poet, and a historian.

**A Charmed Life** The half-brother of a famous sailor and an explorer, Raleigh began to satisfy his taste for adventure early in life, when he volunteered as a teenager for army service in France. A favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, he was given estates and prestigious appointments. In 1584, he set up a colony in Virginia.

**Disaster** When it was discovered that Raleigh had been secretly married to one of the queen’s maids of honor, he and his wife were imprisoned in the Tower of London for a time but then released. Following the queen’s death in 1603, Raleigh was accused of conspiring against King James I and was imprisoned again in the Tower, where he remained for thirteen years. He was eventually released to seek out gold along the Orinoco River in Venezuela. Despite a royal command not to engage in battle with Spain, Raleigh’s fleet entered Spanish territory. In the ensuing fight, Raleigh lost his son and was forced to return to England. There, Raleigh was executed for disobeying the king’s orders.

**Literary Achievements** Raleigh was a friend of some of the leading poets of his age, including Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. Like them, he wrote elegant verse, rich in vivid imagery and classical allusions. Among Raleigh’s numerous prose works is an ambitious book entitled *The History of the World* (1614), composed while he was in prison.





# THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

## Pastoral

Which details in this stanza idealize the landscape?

## Vocabulary

**melodious** (mə lō' dē əs)  
*adj.* sweet-sounding;  
tuneful; pleasing to hear

**madrigals** (ma' dri gəlz) *n.*  
short love poems set to  
music

## 5 ► Critical Viewing

The poem's speaker views the countryside as a luxurious source of pleasure and the perfect escape from urban life. Which details in this painting reflect such an ideal?

### CONNECT

Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove<sup>1</sup>  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

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

- 10 And I will make thee beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle<sup>2</sup>  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

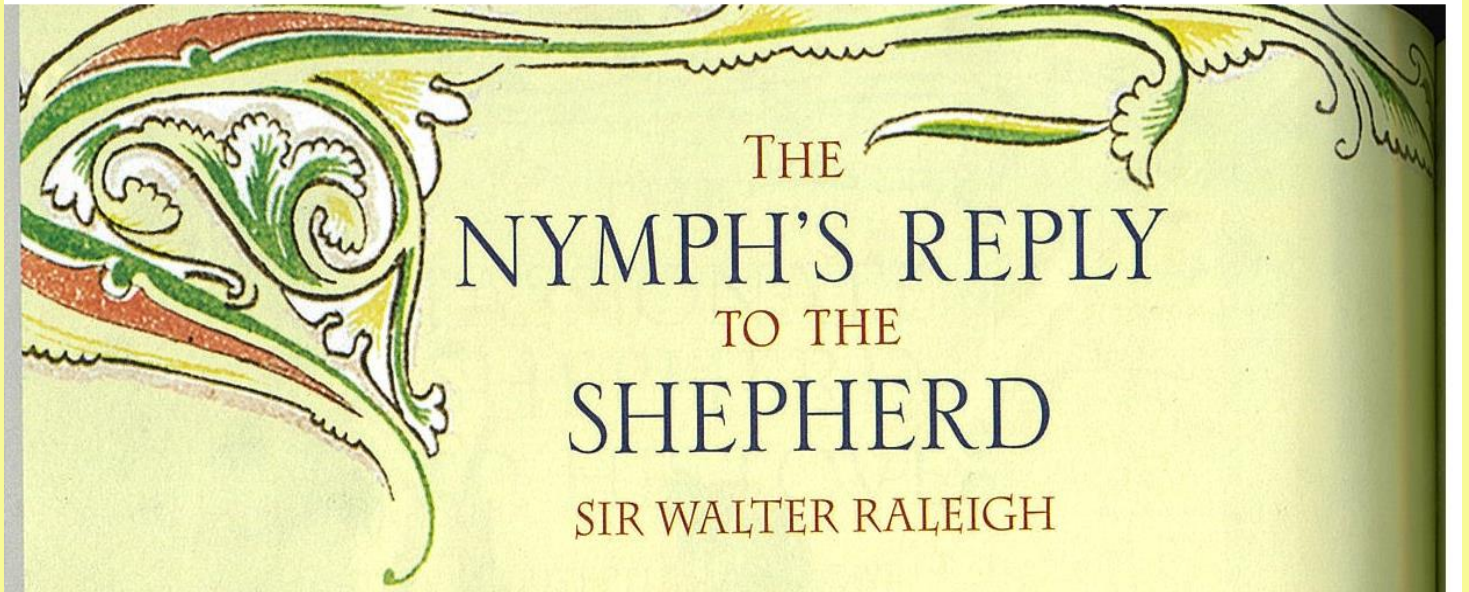
- 15 A gown made of the finest wool,  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

- A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs;  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
20 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.

1. **prove** experience.  
2. **kirtle** skirt.





# THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE SHEPHERD

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

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**BACKGROUND** "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" are examples of reply poems. Many poets travel in similar social circles, and their association with each other sometimes motivates them to construct poems in response to one another's work. In addition to Sir Walter Raleigh, for example, John Donne also wrote a reply poem, "The Bait," to Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." Such linkages can be found in many literary epochs and cultures: for example, twentieth-century Chinese poet Shu Ting composed a poem, titled "Also All," in response to Bei Dao's poem "All."

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## Analyzing Similar Themes

How do the first four lines of this poem compare with the opening lines of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"?

## Vocabulary

**reckoning** (rek' ən in) *n.*  
accounting

**gall** (gôl) *n.* bitter feeling;  
deep spite

**wither** (with' ər) *v.* dry up

- 6 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.
- 5 Time drives the flocks from field to fold,  
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,  
And Philomel<sup>1</sup> becometh dumb,  
The rest complains of cares to come.
- 7 The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
10 To wayward winter **reckoning** yields:  
A honey tongue, a heart of **gall**,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.
- 8 Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle,<sup>2</sup> and thy posies  
15 Soon break, soon **wither**, soon forgotten,  
▼ In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

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1. **Philomel** the nightingale.

2. **kirtle** skirt.



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

But could youth last and love still breed,  
Has joy no date<sup>3</sup> nor age no need,  
Then these delights my mind might move,  
To live with thee and be thy love.

3. date ending.

## Critical Reading



- 1. Key Ideas and Details (a)** In "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," what does the speaker ask his love to do in the first stanza? **(b) Interpret:** What kind of future life together does the speaker envision?
- 2. Key Ideas and Details (a)** What happens to the nightingale in line 7 of "The Nymph's Reply"? **(b) Compare and Contrast:** According to lines 5 through 8, in what ways is the nymph's world different from that of the shepherd? **(c) Analyze:** Which words in this stanza evoke a feeling of ruin or despair? Explain.
- 3. Key Ideas and Details (a)** According to lines 21–22 of "The Nymph's Reply," what might persuade the nymph to live with the shepherd? **(b) Speculate:** Do you think these lines would console the shepherd? **(c) Analyze:** How does the nymph present a realistic portrayal of time and change?
- 4. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** If you were the shepherd, what counterargument might you make in response to the "The Nymph's Reply"?
- 5. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** What is the good, if any, of using literature to imagine an ideal setting? In your answer, use at least two of these Essential Question words: *perfection, escape, pastoral, realistic*. [Connecting to the Essential Question: *What is the relationship between literature and place?*]

Cite textual evidence to support your responses.

