

[The Male Scold]

Methinks my neighbor's dog that barks at me,
And his own tongue that doggedly doth rail,
Is all alike. I can no difference see:
Both with confused noise my ears assail.
Perhaps in man thou didst for *reason* look—
Opinion makes thee grieve, that so mistook!

[On Marriage]

All married men desire to have good wives,
But few give good example by their lives.
They are our head – they would have us their heels.
This makes the good wife kick – the good man reels.
When God brought Eve to Adam for a bride,
The text says she was ta'en from out man's side—
A symbol of that side whose sacred blood¹
Flowed for His spouse, the church's saving good.
This is a mystery perhaps too deep
For blockish Adam, that was fallen asleep.

Southwell's verse is often eloquent in its defense of women, the poet's anger and wit having been sharpened by her own blockish husband. But it is clear also that Southwell's intellectual development owes something to literature by other women. Rachel Speght's *Muzzle for Melastomus* (q.v.), a text frequently echoed in Lady Anne's poetry, was one such influence. Yet Lady Anne was also her own most anxious censor. The picture that emerges when reading Southwell's rough drafts is that of a poet who was angry about the subjection of women, and yet fearful that her anger displeased God. Her divided impulse, both to express and to suppress her rage, is sometimes quite remarkable. For example, when speaking of adultery in "Precept VII," Southwell writes,

Then think, whatever seeming face we show,
We hold your sex our soul and body's foe.

—but the poet struck out her anger, revising the couplet to read:

Then think, whatever seeming face we carry,
'Tis better die a virgin than to marry.

¹ *that side . . . spouse*] i.e., of Christ, whose side was speared on the cross, and whose blood was shed for his bride, the Church