

John Fletcher
All you vain delights



Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
 Wherein you spend your folly!
 There's nought in this life sweet,
 If man were wise to see 't,
 But only melancholy;
 O sweetest melancholy!

Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chained up without a sound!

Fountain-heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley:
Nothing 's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.¹



¹ A song from "The Nice Valour," act III, scene 3.