

# **On a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes**

Thomas Gray

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'Twas on a lofty vase's side,  
Where China's gayest art had dyed  
The azure flowers that blow;  
Demurest of the tabby kind,  
The pensive Selima reclined,  
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;  
The fair round face, the snowy beard,  
The velvet of her paws,  
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,  
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,  
She saw; and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide  
Two angel forms were seen to glide,  
The Genii of the stream:  
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue  
Thro' richest purple to the view  
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:  
A whisker first and then a claw,  
With many an ardent wish,  
She stretch'd in vain to reach the prize.  
What female heart can gold despise?  
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent  
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,  
Nor knew the gulf between.  
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled.)  
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,  
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood  
She mew'd to ev'ry wat'ry god,  
Some speedy aid to send.

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No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd:  
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard.  
A Fav'rite has not friend!

From hence, ye Beauties undeceived,  
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,  
And be with caution bold.  
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes  
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;  
Nor all that glisters, gold.