

An Ode, On the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell

John Dryden

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Late Servant to his Majesty, and Organist of the Chapel Royal, and of
St. Peter's Westminster

I

MARK how the Lark and Linnet Sing,
 With rival Notes
They strain their warbling Throats,
 To welcome in the Spring.
But in the close of Night,
When Philomel begins her Heav'nly lay,
 They cease their mutual spite,
 Drink in her Music with delight,
And list'ning and silent, and silent and list'ning,
 And list'ning and silent obey.

II

So ceas'd the rival Crew when Purcell came,
They Sung no more, or only Sung his Fame.
Struck dumb they all admir'd the God-like Man,
 The God-like Man,
 Alas, too soon retir'd,
 As He too late began.
We beg not Hell, our Orpheus to restore,
 Had He been there,
 Their Sovereign's fear
 Had sent Him back before.
The pow'r of Harmony too well they know,
He long e'er this had Tun'd their jarring Sphere,
 And left no Hell below.

III

The Heav'nly Choir, who heard his Notes from high,
Let down the Scale of Music from the Sky:
 They handed him along,
And all the way He taught, and all the way they Sung.
 Ye Brethren of the Lyre, and tuneful Voice,
 Lament his Lot: but at your own rejoice.
 Now live secure and linger out your days,
 The Gods are pleas'd alone with Purcell's Lays,
 Nor know to mend their Choice.

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