
SUMMARY: *Greene's Funerals* (STC 1487) was entered in the Stationers' Register to the printer John Danter on 1 February 1594. The poems praise Greene and seek to rehabilitate his reputation after the damage wreaked on it by the pamphlets published after his death, particularly those written by Gabriel Harvey, who is alluded to in several of the poems. The identity of the 'R.B., gentleman' who appears on the title-page as the alleged author has never been determined. Given Danter's statement that the poems were published 'contrary to the author's expectation', and were to be sold at Danter's own house in Hosier Lane, and given that *Greene's News* had been printed in 1593 with a reverse set of initials on the title-page and the highly unusual statement that the work had been 'Commended to the press by B.R.', it seems likely that both 'B.R.' and 'R.B., gentlemen' are fictitious. Another aspect of *Greene's Funerals* which arouses suspicion is the claim that the prayer to the Trinity at the end of the tract was written by 'R.S.' (initials intended to invoke Robert Southwell or Richard Stanyhurst?) and uttered by Greene 'at the instant of his death'. Danter had been involved in the printing of two other pamphlets in 1592 concerning Greene's death, *Groatsworth* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*, in either of which Greene's last prayer could more fitly have been included. It seem unlikely that Danter would have held this prayer back from publication until 1594 had Greene's last words really consisted of this prayer in English hexameters, particularly since *The Repentance of Robert Greene* ends with 'Greene's Prayer in the Time of his Sickness'. It thus seems likely that the claim that Greene spoke this prayer to the Trinity as his dying words, as well as the claim that Greene is speaking, in his own voice, another poem by 'R.S.' printed at the end of the tract, are fictitious, and that *Groatsworth*, *The Repentance of Robert Greene*, *Kind-Heart's Dream*, *Greene's News* and *Greene's Funerals* are all part of a hoax concerning the death of Robert Greene in which the printer John Danter and his compositor, Henry Chettle, played key roles. The modern spelling version of *Greene's Funerals* below was prepared from the University of Michigan microfilm of the unique surviving copy in the Bodleian Library.

GREENE'S FUNERALS

By R.B., Gentleman

Printed at London by John Danter, and are to be sold at his house in Hosier Lane near
Holborn Conduit
1594

To the gentlemen readers, health

Gentle reader, I once read of a king that divided the day into three parts: the first he spent in prayer, the second in hearing of his subjects' causes, and the last in delight and pleasure of his body; so (gentle reader) I hope thou wilt spend one day's pleasure in reading this pamphlet wherein no curious theme is writ upon, but certain poems intituled *Greene's Funerals*, which, contrary to the author's expectation, I have now published, for it was his private study at idle times. Gentlemen, fine wits are quickened with one cup of pure wine where many would make them dull, and this small pamphlet may recreate your minds when large volumes would but cloy and weary you. Now if the author's pains and the printer's labour may be acceptable to thee (gentle reader), the one hath his hire and the other his desire.

Yours in all courtesy, John Danter

Sonnet I

Why should my pen presume to write his praise,
And he in perfect mould of virtue framed?
Why should my muse sing of his happy days,
And he the mark at which Dame Nature framed? [sic for 'aimed'?]
Why rather should I not such virtues show,
That such pure gold from dross each man may know?
But cease, my muse, why dost thou take in hand so great a task,
Which to perform a greater wit than Mercury's would ask?
For judgment Jove, for learning deep, he still Apollo seemed,
For fluent tongue, for eloquence, men Mercury him deemed;
For courtesy, suppose him Guy or Guyon's somewhat less;
His life and manners, though I would, I cannot half express.
Nor mouth, nor mind, nor muse can half declare
His life, his love, his laud, so excellent they were.

Sonnet II

Fortune hates not them that hate her,
Fortune loves not them that love her,
Fortune would and cannot rate her,
Fortune shall and must remove her,
And though fickle fortune smile,
It is but for a little while.

Greene loved Fortune, foolish man,
Foolish man, why loved he so?
And her foolish race he ran,
Foolish race that's run with woe,
Who then, alas, was less misused?
Now, alas, is more abused?

But let fools and foolish fellows
Bark and bite their belly-fill,
It is not spiteful Envy's bellows
That can kindle fire still;
No book pleases all that come,
None so bad but pleases some.

Sonnet III

Ye dainty damsels of Diane's train
That long to dally with your loved lords,

And you brave, gallant, high-resolved lords
That love to gaze upon your stately stars,
 He, he is dead that killed you with disdain,
 And often fed your friendly [sic for 'friendly'] hopes again.

He, he is dead that wrote of your delights,
That wrote of ladies and of paramours,
Of budding beauty and her branched leaves,
Of sweet content in royal nuptials,
 He, he is dead that killed you with disdain
 And often fed your friendly hopes again.

His gadding muse, although it ran of love
Yet did he sweetly moralize his songs,
Ne ever gave the loser cause to laugh,
Ne men of judgment for to be offended,
 But as he often killed them with disdain,
 So did he often feed their hopes again.

And though he often told of things to come,
In love more like a prophet than a poet,
Yet did he wisely interlace the one
With sages' sayings ever mixed among,
 And though he often fed their pleasing pain,
 Yet did he often kill them with disdain.

Wherefore ye dainty damsels of renown
That long to dally with your loved lords,
And you brave gallant, worthy, noble lords,
That love to dandle in your ladies' laps,
 Come hither, come, and lend your mouths to Fame
 That means to sound his never-dying name.

Sonnet IIII

Come from the Muses' well, Minerva,
 Come and bring a coronet
To crown his head that doth deserve
 A greater gift than Colinet.

Come from Bacchus' bower, Silenus,
 Come and bring some good-ale grout
For to sprinkle *Vino-plenus*
 All his foolish face about.

Come thou hither, sweet Amyntas,
 All on a silver-sounding swan,
 Come and teach this fond A-mint-ass
 Leave the game as he began.

Come thou hither, my friend so pretty,
 All riding on a hobby-horse,
 Either make thyself more witty,
 Or again renew thy force.

{Come and deck his brows with bays}
 {That deserves immortal praise.}

Sonnet V

Amend thy style who can; who can amend thy style
 For sweet conceit?
 Alas the while,
 That ever any such as thou shouldst die
 By Fortune's guile
 Amidst thy meat.
 Pardon (oh pardon) me that cannot show
 My zealous love,
 Yet shalt thou prove
 That I will ever write in thy behove
 Gainst any dare
 With thee compare.
 It is not Hodge-poke nor his fellow dear
 That I do fear,
 As shall appear.
 But him alone that is the Muses' own,
 And eke my friend,
 Whom to the end
 My muse must ever honour and adore.
 Do what I can
 To praise the man,
 It is impossible for me that am
 So far behind,
 Yet is my mind
 As forward as the best, if wit so would
 With will agree,
 But since I see
 It will not be,
 I am content my folly to confess,
 And pardon crave,

Which if I have,
 My fortunes greater than my former fall
 I must confess.

{But if he otherwise esteem of me}
 {Than as a friend, or one that honours thee,}
 {Then is my labour lost, my care consumed,}
 {Because I hate the hope that so presumed.}

Sonnet VI

Of tell-tales tell my muse,
 Of such as love to lie,
 Of such as use for to abuse
 Their friends, and no cause why.
 Of such and none but such
 My pen shall write his pleasure,
 And them at large I mean to touch
 When I have time and leisure.
 My rime is rude; what then?
 Yet will it serve the turn
 To notify such wicked men
 As do deserve to burn.
 As do deserve to burn, said I?
 Nay, worse, that ought to feel
 The raging force and cruelty
 Of old Ixion's wheel.
 But lest I should this mourning muse retain,
 I'll fall into another kind of vein.

Sonnet VII

Though perchance it seem to some but a toy and a trifle,
 Seem to some in vain to bestow but a part of an hour
 In penning poems, in honouring him with a poem,
 Yet I appeal to the pen of peerless poet Amyntas,
 Matchless Amyntas' mind, to the mind of matchless Amyntas,
 Sweet bonny Phyllis' love, to the love of sweet bonny Phyllis,
 Whether pen, or mind, or love, of Phyllis' Amyntas,
 Love, or mind, or pen, of pen-love-minder Amyntas.
 Think of him (perhaps) as some do think of Amyntas,
 Oh, that I might be loved of Phyllis' lover, Amyntas,
 Oh, that I might be thought, as I think of Phyllis' Amyntas,
 Oh, that I might be judged as I judge of Phyllis' Amyntas,

Then would I never care for such base beggarly make-books
 That inveigh against the dead like deadly maligners.
 What if he were a man as bad or worse than a hell-hound?
 As, shall I think that he was as bad or worse than a hell-hound,
 Yet it ill became sweet miudes [sic for 'minds'?] to haunt in Avernus,
 Ill became such cuts [sic for 'curs'?] to bark at a poor silly carcass;
 Some had cause to moan, and mourn, & murmur against him,
 Others none at all, yet none at all so against him.
 For myself I wish that none had written against him
 But such men which had just cause t' have written against him.

Sonnet VIII

Muse, give place to my moan, and moan give place to my musing,
 One for another's cause, and one for cause of another,
 First to behold him dead, last to behold him alive.
 And thou shepherd's swain that keeps thy sheep by the mountains,
 (Mountains) of Sicily, and sweet Arcadian island,
 Oh Meliboeus, leave, oh leave, any more to be mourning,
 For though his art be dead, yet shall it ever abide,
 Ever abide to the end, light as a light to the rest,
 Rest that have wrote of love and the delights of a lover.
 But by the sweet consent of Pan and Marsyas' offspring,
 Sweet consent of a saint so sweet, of a foul an [sic for 'and'?] a foul one,
 Greene's but a foolish man, and such as him do defend,
 Yet will I ever write both to defend and offend,
 For to defend his friends, and to offend his foes.

Sonnet IX

Greene is the pleasing object of an eye,
 Greene pleased the eyes of all that looked upon him,
 Greene is the ground of every painter's dye,
 Greene gave the ground to all that wrote upon him,
 Nay more, the men that so eclipsed his fame
 Purloined his plumes; can they deny the same?

Ah could my muse old Malta's poet pass
 (If any muse could pass old Malta's poet),
 Then should his name be set in shining brass,
 In shining brass for all the world to show it,
 That little children not as yet begotten
 Might royalize his fame when he is rotten.

But since my muse begins to vail her wings,
 And flutter low upon the lowly earth,
 As one that sugared sonnets seldom sings,
 Except the [sic for 'they'?] sound of sadness more than mirth,
 To tell the worth of such a worthy man
 I'll leave it unto those that better can.

Now may thy soul again go take his rest
 (His pleasant rest) in those eternal joys
 Where burning tapers shall attend the blest
 To light and lighten them from all annoys;
 Go then, poor poet, live and never die,
 Ever, yet never but in misery.

And as I came into the world unknown,
 Moved with compassion of thy piteous plaint,
 So will I now again myself go moan
 That durst presume thy praise in verse to paint,
 And if the Muses pardon mine so weak,
 I pass not of a pin what others speak.

Sonnet X

A catalogue of certain of his books.

Camilla for the first and second part,
 The *Card of Fancy* and his *Tully's Love*,
 His *Nunquam Sera*, and his *Nightingale*,
 His *Spanish Masquerado*, and his *'Change*,
 His *Menaphon* and *Metamorphosis*,
 His *Orpharion*, and the Denmark king,
 His *Censure*, and his *Love's Tritameron*,
 His *Disputation*, and the *Death* of him,
 That makes all England shed so many tears,
 And many more that I have never seen
 May witness well unto the world his wit,
 Had he so well, as well applied it.

Sonnet XI

When my loathed life had lost the light of Olympus,
 And descended down to the cursed caves of Avernus,
 Never more had I thought of men to be inly molested,
 But now, alas, I see my hope is vain,

My pleasure turned to eternal pain.
 For such foolish men as I had never abused,
 Never abused, alas, yet alas, had ever abused,
 Ever abused so, because so never abused,
 Not only seek to quench my kindled glory,
 But also for to mar my virtue's story,
 And though my life were lewd, oh how it grieves me to think it,
 Lewd as a life might be from all good counsel abandoned,
 And given over up [sic?] to the outcast sense of a sinner,
 Yet might my end have moved them to remorse,
 And not to wreak their teen on silly corse.

Sonnet XII

Father of heaven, for thy mercy's meekness,
 And thy sweet Son's sake, Christ the Redeemer,
 Pardon, oh pardon, sinful offender,
 Lord, I beseech him [sic?].

And though his age here on earth were a loathsome
 Puddle of filthiness, inly polluted
 With all abuse that can be devised,
 Yet was his ending,

Ending a mirror of a man molested,
 One overwhelmed with his iniquities,
 And to be holpen alone by thee, Jesus,
 Saviour of all men.

Sonnet XIII

A sweet prayer to the Trinity by R.S., and used of R.G. at the instant of his death

Trinity blessed, deity coequal,
 Unity sacred, God one eke in essence,
 Yield to thy servant pitifully calling,
 Merciful hearing.
 Virtuous living did I long relinquish,
 Thy will and prec[e]pts miserably scorning,
 Grant to me, sinful patient repenting,
 Healthful amendment.
 Blessed I judge him that in heart is healed,
 Cursed I know him that in health is harmed,
 Thy physic therefore to me, wretch unhappy,

Send, my Redeemer.
Glory to God the Father, and his only Son,
The protector of us earthy sinners,
Thy sacred Spirit, labourers' refreshing,
Still be renowned. Amen.

Sonnet XIII

Another poem borrowed of the same learned gentleman, R.S., R.G. speaketh

Lord, my dreary foes, why do they multiply,
Me for to ruinate? sundry be covetous.
Him shields not the Godhead, sundry say to my soul.
Th' art Lord most vigilant, wholly my succourer,
And in thee all my staying shall be harboured,
Th' art my most valiant victory glorious,
To our Lord loud I cried; from holy place heard he me.
In grave new buried scarce have I slumbered,
I rose to life again through God his holiness.
I fear not furious multitude infinite,
With compass labouring my body for to catch,
Rise, Lord omnipotent, help me, my champion,
Lord, thy dear radiant righteous equity
Hath squeezed(?) all my foes falsely me ransacking,
Our Lord participiates [sic] safety with happiness;
With gifts, heavenly Godhead, thy people amply bless.