

## From The Second Booke of The Faerie Queene

Contayning  
The Legend of Sir Guyon  
or  
Of Temperaunce

1

Right well I wote<sup>o</sup> most mighty Soveraine,  
That all this famous antique history,  
Of some th'abundance of an idle braine  
Will judgéd be, and painted forgery,  
Rather then matter of just<sup>o</sup> memory,  
Sith none, that breatheth living aire, does know,  
Where is that happy land of Faery,  
Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show,  
But vouch<sup>o</sup> antiquities, which no body can know.<sup>1</sup>

know

well-founded

affirm

2

But let that man with better sence advize,<sup>o</sup>  
That of the world least part to us is red:<sup>o</sup>  
And dayly how through hardy enterprize,  
Many great Regions are discoveréd,  
Which to late age<sup>2</sup> were never mentionéd.  
Who ever heard of th'Indian Peru?  
Or who in venturous vessell measuréd  
The Amazons huge river now found trew?  
Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever vew?<sup>3</sup>

consider  
known

3

Yet all these were, when no man did them know;  
Yet have from wisest ages hidden beene:  
And later times things more unknowne shall show.  
Why then should witlesse man so much misweene<sup>o</sup>  
That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?  
What if within the Moones faire shining spheare?  
What if in every other starre unscene

misjudge

1. So too, Ariosto (*Orlando Furioso* 7.1-2) warns that his story may not appeal to the ignorant or foolish and so directs his poem to those with intelligence and insight. The classic study of Book II is H. Berger, *The Allegorical Temper* (New Haven, 1967); see also Graziani 1990E.
2. I.e., to recent times.
3. Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom Elizabeth ("the Virgin Queen") in 1584 granted a patent to establish a "plantation" in America, twice attempted to settle a colony at Roanoke Island in Pamlico Sound. Although the Virginian project was not firmly established until 1607, the Dedication to the 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene* adds the words "and of Virginia" to her title, which in the 1590 edition reads "Queene of England, France and Ireland." Greenblatt 1980 finds here further evidence that Spenser's epic inscribes hopes, anxieties, and evasions accompanying the start of English colonialism. (Thus one answer to these rhetorical questions might be "kings Atahualpa and Powhatan.") Cain 1978 also associates Book II with the Americas, as does Krier 1990, 79-82.

Of other worldes he happily<sup>o</sup> should heare?  
He wonder would much more: yet such to some appeare. by chance

4

Of Faerie lond yet if he more inquire,  
By certaine signes here set in sundry place  
He may it find; ne let him then admire,<sup>o</sup>  
But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,  
That no'te<sup>o</sup> without an hound fine footing<sup>o</sup> trace.  
And thou, O fairest Princesse under sky,  
In this faire mirrhour maist behold thy face,  
And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery,  
And in this antique Image thy great auncestry.<sup>4</sup>

wonder

cannot/tracks

5

The which O pardon me thus to enfold  
In covert<sup>o</sup> vele, and wrap in shadowes light,  
That feeble eyes your glory may behold,  
Which else could not endure those beamés bright,  
But would be dazled with exceeding light.  
O pardon, and vouchsafe with patient eare  
The brave adventures of this Faery knight  
The good Sir Guyon gratioously to heare,  
In whom great rule of Temp'raunce<sup>5</sup> goodly doth appeare.

concealing

## Canto I

Guyon by Archimage abusd,<sup>o</sup>  
The Redcrosse knight awaytes,  
Findes Mordant and Amavia slaine  
With pleasures poisoned baytes. deceived

1

That cunning Architect<sup>1</sup> of cancred<sup>o</sup> guile,  
Whom Princes late displeasure left in bands,  
For falséd letters and subornéd wile,<sup>2</sup>  
Soone as the Redcrosse knight he understands,  
To beene departed out of Eden lands,  
To serve againe his soveraine Elfin Queene,  
His artes he moves, and out of caytives<sup>o</sup> hands

malignant

menials'

4. I.e., in Gloriana ("this faire mirrhour") is imaged Queen Elizabeth, and in the whole poem ("this antique Image") England and its ruler's high lineage.
5. "Temperance" infolds or evokes many related words and concepts: to temper (as when we plunge metal alternately into fire and cold water), temperament (the body's balance of humors), temporal (suggesting time and measured tempo), tempest (storms often symbolized the blows of fortune that the temperate and tempered person will meet with fortitude), and what we still call good or bad temper; compare moderate, mode, and mood. On how such concepts relate the body to music and physics, see L. Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony* (Baltimore, 1963).
1. I.e., Archimago, whose escape Spenser has foreshadowed in I.xii.36.
2. I.e., forged letters and perjured deceitfulness.