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The Beginning of Love

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The Beginning of Love
Augusta Holyfield

I
She felt a pain in her soul
She had no control of her eyes,
She babbled "Daphnis" over and over
She neglected food
 lay awake all night
 forgot about her herd

Now she laughs
Now she cries
Then she sleeps
Then she springs up
Pale face, burning with blush again

Alone, she said to herself:
"Now I am sick, what is this disease?
I suffer, but I see no wound.
I grieve, but I haven't lost any sheep.
I burn, but I'm sitting in the shade.

How many times have thorns scratched me
 And I don't weep?
How many times have bees stung me
 And I don't cry out?
But now this that pierces my heart is sharper than all that!

Daphnis is beautiful (but so are flowers)
His pipes play beautiful music (but so do nightingales)
But those are just words to me
If only I could be his pipe, so that he would blow on me.
If only I could be his goat, so that he would lead me to pasture.

Oh wicked spring!
You make only Daphnis beautiful.
I bathe in vain!

I am lost, beloved Nymphs.

But you don't save a girl raised beside you.
Who will offer you garlands after me?
Who will bring up the poor lambs?
Who will look after the chirping grasshopper
which I worked so hard to catch
so that chattering in the grotto
I would be lulled to sleep.

Now, because of Daphnis,
I lie awake.
The grasshopper sings in vain.”

II

And for the first time, he was in awe that her hair was golden,
And her eyes were big, just like a cow's,
And her face is whiter than goat's milk, truly,
As if before he had been blind,
but then, for the first time, he acquired eyes.

So he didn't eat, except for a single bit.
And he doesn't drink, except to wet his lips.
He was silent, when before he had chattered like a grasshopper.
He didn't work, although he was more energetic than the goats.
He ignored the herd, threw down his pipes.
His face was paler than summer grass.

For Chloe alone, he was talkative.
And if he was ever away from her,
He babbled this to himself,

“What has Chloe's kiss done to me?
Her lips are softer than roses and her mouth is sweeter than honeycomb.
Her kiss stings sharper than a bee.
Often I have kissed baby goats,
Often I have kissed just-born puppies and calves,
But this kiss is new.
My breath catches
 my heart skips
 My soul melts
But nevertheless I wish to kiss again.

Oh wretched victory!

Oh new sickness!

I don't know how to say your name!

Did Chloe drink poison before she kissed me?

Then how did she not die?

How the nightingales sing, while my pipes are silent.

How the young goats leap, while I sit still.

How the flowers bloom, while I weave no garlands.

The violets and the hyacinths blossom, but Daphnis withers.”