

Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti*

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About Spenser

Edmund Spenser was an English poet best known for *The Faerie Queene*, an epic poem and fantastical allegory celebrating the Tudor dynasty and Elizabeth I. He is recognized as one of the premier craftsmen of nascent Modern English verse and is often considered one of the greatest poets in the English language.

Amoretti in short

Amoretti is a sonnet cycle written by Edmund Spenser in the 16th century. The cycle describes his courtship and eventual marriage to Elizabeth Boyle. Amoretti was first published in 1595 in London by William Ponsonby. It was printed as part of a volume entitled *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*.

The story behind Amoretti

The word 'Amoretti' means 'little love poems.' The Amoretti sonnets were written to Elizabeth Boyle, Spenser's second wife, during their courtship. Because the sonnets were all written to one woman, this was unusual. Also, many Petrarchan sonnets of the day were written to unattainable women, some of whom were married to other men. The poets didn't exactly expect to win the hearts of these women, but rather worshiped them from a far.

Spenser, however, clearly adored Elizabeth and focused every poem upon her. In addition, other sonnets of the time displayed moods of despair over winning the woman's heart, but Spenser's honest feelings for just one attainable woman sets these sonnets apart.

Summary of Amoretti

Amoretti is a sonnet-cycle tracing the suitor's long courtship and eventual wooing of his beloved. The work begins with two sonnets in which the speaker addresses his own poetry, attempting to invest his words with the power to achieve his goal. From the third sonnet through the sixty-second sonnet, the speaker is in an almost constant state of emotional turmoil and frustrated hopes. His beloved refuses to look favorably upon his suit, so his reaction ranges from despairing self-deprecation to angry tirade against her stubbornness.



Most often the speaker dwells upon his beloved's beauty, both inner and outer, and the overpowering effects this beauty has upon him. He uses a variety of motifs to explicate his feelings and thoughts toward the subject of his ardor: predator and prey, wartime victor and captive, fire and ice, and hard substances that eventually soften over long periods of time. Each of these is intended to convey some aspect of his beloved's character or his own fears and apprehensions.



THANK YOU