

# Epistle to Mrs. Tyler

By Christopher Smart

It ever was allow'd, dear Madam,  
Ev'n from the days of father Adam,  
Of all perfection flesh is heir to,  
Fair patience is the gentlest virtue;  
This is a truth our grandames teach,  
Our poets sing, and parsons preach;  
Yet after all, dear Moll, the fact is  
We seldom put it into practice;  
I'll warrant (if one knew the truth)  
You've call'd me many an idle youth,  
And styled me rude ungrateful bear,  
Enough to make a parson swear.

I shall not make a long oration  
In order for my vindication,  
For what the plague can I say more  
Than lazy dogs have done before;  
Such stuff is nought but mere tautology,  
And so take that for my apology.

First then for custards, my dear Mary,  
The produce of your dainty dairy,  
For stew'd, for bak'd, for boil'd, for roast,  
And all the teas and all the toast;  
With thankful tongue and bowing attitude,  
I here present you with my gratitude:  
Next for you apples, pears and plums  
Acknowledgment in order comes;  
For wine, for ale, for fowl, for fish—for  
Ev'n all one's appetite can wish for:  
But O ye pens, and O ye pencils,  
And all ye scribbling utensils,  
Say in what words and in what metre,  
Shall unfeign'd admiration greet her,  
For that rich banquet so refin'd  
Her conversation gave the mind;  
The solid meal of sense and worth,  
Set off by the desert of mirth;  
Wit's fruit and pleasure's genial bowl,  
And all the joyous flow of soul;  
For these, and every kind ingredient  
That form'd your love—your most obedient.