

# Song: “You charm'd me not with that fair face”

By John Dryden

*from An Evening's Love*

You charm'd me not with that fair face  
Though it was all divine:  
To be another's is the grace,  
That makes me wish you mine.

The Gods and Fortune take their part  
Who like young monarchs fight;  
And boldly dare invade that heart  
Which is another's right.

First mad with hope we undertake  
To pull up every bar;  
But once possess'd, we faintly make  
A dull defensive war.

Now every friend is turn'd a foe  
In hope to get our store:  
And passion makes us cowards grow,  
Which made us brave before.

Notes:

The epigraph of this poem was originally omitted in the changeover to the new website. Because of this, reciting the epigraph is optional for the 2019-2020 Poetry Out Loud season.



Born in Northamptonshire into a political Puritan family, poet, playwright, and critic John Dryden was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Dryden's poetry, often shaped by heroic couplets, is steeped in classical and scientific references even as it is grounded in the political landscape of his time. Upon Charles II's return to power in 1660, Dryden published "Astraea Redux," a long poem in heroic couplets welcoming the king, the first of many public poems in support of the monarchy. He was appointed poet laureate in 1668, and royal historiographer in 1670.

