

Just Another Quince

*She threw a quince at me;
In requital I gave her a bright girdle-gem.
No, not just as requital;
But meaning I would love her for ever.
She threw a tree-peach at me;
As requital I gave her a bright greenstone.
No, not just as requital;
But meaning I would love her for ever.
She threw a tree-plum at me;
In requital I gave her a bright jet-stone.
No, not just as requital;
But meaning I would love her for ever.*

—Translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley.

“I Kissed the Bride in Bed”

31st July, 1665. So to dinner, and very merry we were; but in such a sober way as never almost any wedding was in so great families; but it was much better. After dinner company divided, some to cards, others to talk. . . . At night to supper, and so to talk; and which methought, was the most extraordinary thing, all of us to prayers as usual, and the young bride and bridegroom too; and so, after prayers, soberly to bed; only I got into the bridegroom's chamber while he undressed himself, and there was very merry, till he was called to the bride's chamber, and into bed they went. I kissed the bride in bed, and so the curtains drawn with the greatest gravity that could be, and so goodnight. But the modesty and gravity of this business was so decent, that it was to me indeed ten times more delightful than if it had been twenty times more merry and jovial.

—Samuel Pepys: *Diary*.

The Trouble and Strife

*Man may escape from rope and gun;
Nay, some have outliv'd the doctor's pill:
Who takes a woman must be undone,
That basilisk is sure to kill.
The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets,
So he that tastes woman, woman, woman,
He that tastes woman, ruin meets.*

—John Gay: *Beggar's Opera*.