

Richard Graves

Devonne Alden, Simon Fraser University

Richard Graves (1715-1804) was born at Mickleton Manor in Mickleton, Gloucestershire to parents Richard and Elizabeth Morgan. His education began at a school ran by the local curate, William Smith. At the age of thirteen, he moved to John Roysse's Grammar School in Abingdon, Berkshire. On scholarship, he then attended Pembroke College, Oxford, during which time his father died. In his work *Recollection of Some Particulars in the Life of the Late William Shenstone*, Graves described himself as having the reputation of a "tolerably good Grecian" (13), or Greek scholar. William Shenstone (who also has a poem in this anthology) was a close friend whose relationship with Graves was a significant part of his college years. He graduated with his Bachelors in July 1736 and kept in touch with Shenstone until William's death in 1763. During his last year at Oxford, Graves was elected to a Fellowship at All Souls. He left for London to study under anatomist Dr. Frank Nicholls during the years 1738 and 1739, before falling ill from a bad fever.

Graves then returned to Oxford, where he completed his Masters in 1740 and was ordained in the Church of England in 1741. He was made curate of Tissington, Derbyshire by William Fitzherbert and was the family chaplain at Tissington Hall for three years. Afterwards, he decided to move closer to Oxford and he became curate of Aldworth in 1744, where he stayed at a farmer's home. That farmer had a daughter whom Graves fell in love with. Her name was Lucy Bartholomew, and they eloped around the end of 1746. The marriage was frowned upon, as Graves was of higher social standing than Lucy. At first, friends and family did not approve of the marriage. In total they had four children. In 1749, he could no longer hide his marriage and ceased to be a Fellow of All Souls. His finances most likely increased when he was called to be the rector of Claverton, near Bath, Somerset. In Claverton, Graves opened a school and taught for about thirty years. He bought the manor of Combe-Monkton in 1772, before being presented with the living of Croscombe in 1802. He was known for his love of Bath, walking there daily. He died two years later in 1804 after a long and mostly happy life.

Richard Graves is most known for his three-volume work *The Spiritual Quixote* (1773), a satiric picaresque novel on Methodism. He wrote of his own romance with Lucy through the narrator in vol. ii and mirroring the characters Mr. Rivers and Charlotte Woodville.⁶⁶ Lucy was known to have been a kind woman, welcome wherever Graves was.

⁶⁶ Jane Austen used this plot as the basis for the story of Edward Ferrars's relationship with Lucy Steele in *Sense and Sensibility*; see Ford pp. 84–86

His poem, “The Parting: Written Some Years after Marriage,” is in ballad meter, i.e. quatrains alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter with a rhyme scheme of abab. It was first published in Robert Dodsley’s *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands. Vol. IV* in 1758. This was approximately ten years after his marriage to Lucy. However, he wrote it while she was at a boarding school in London and he had to return to his parish.

Further Reading

Duckenfield, Bridget. *College Cloisters: Married Bachelors*. Cambridge Scholars, 2013.

Ford, Susan Allen. “Mrs. Dashwood’s Insight: Reading Edward Ferrars and *Columella; or, The Distressed Anchoret*.” *Persuasions*, vol. 33, 2011, pp. 75–88.

References

Graves, Richard, *Recollection of Some Particulars in the Life of the Late William Shenstone*. London, 1788.

Oakleaf, David. “Graves, Richard (1715-1804).” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford UP, 2004.

The Parting: Written some Years after Marriage⁶⁷

I

THE rising sun thro' all the grove
Diffus'd a gladsome⁶⁸ ray:
My Lucy⁶⁹ smil'd, and talk'd of love,
And every thing look'd gay.⁷⁰

II

But oh! the fatal⁷¹ hour was come 5
That forc'd me from my dear:
My Lucy then thro' grief was dumb,⁷²
Or spoke but by a tear.

III

Now far from her and bliss I roam,
All nature wears a change: 10
The azure⁷³ sky seems wrapt in gloom,
And every place looks strange.

IV

Those flow'ry fields, this verdant⁷⁴ scene,

⁶⁷ *A Collection of Poems in Six Volumes. By Several Hands. Vol. IV.* London: printed by J. Hughes, for R. and J. Dodsley, 1763 [1st ed. 1758], pp. 329–330.

⁶⁸ *Gladsome*: pleasant.

⁶⁹ *Lucy*: Graves's wife, whom he is leaving behind in London to return to his job near Oxford.

⁷⁰ *Gay*: cheerful.

⁷¹ *Fatal*: inevitable.

⁷² *Dumb*: silent, speechless.

⁷³ *Azure*: a clear, light blue.

⁷⁴ *Verdant*: green.

Yon⁷⁵ larks⁷⁶ that towering⁷⁷ sing, 15
 With sad contrast increase my spleen⁷⁸
 And make me loath the spring.

V

My books that wont to sooth my mind
 No longer now can please:
 There only those amusement find 20
 That have a mind at ease.

VI

Nay life itself is tasteless grown
 From Lucy whilst I stray:
 Sick of the world I muse alone
 And sigh the live-long day.



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⁷⁵ *Yon*: over there.

⁷⁶ *Larks*: the Eurasian skylark.

⁷⁷ *Towering*: while they fly high.

⁷⁸ *Spleen*: “excessive dejection or depression of spirits” (*OED*).