

KATE FALVEY

Drinking Daisies

Daisies, well known to almost every child,
are under the dominion of Venus.
A decoction made of them and drank,
helps to cure the wounds made
in the hollowness of the breast.

Wild wounds, long and deep gashed,
melancholy vapours from the spirits and blood,
green wounds, inward wounds, wounds and
hurts in the breast, bleeding wounds, old wounds,
wounds in the head. All manner of wounds.

The juice of the flowers when they weep
is a remedy against the bitings and stings
of venomous creatures and venerous dreams.
The tears, drank two or three spoonfuls at a time,
regulate the Imagination which runs at random

when Judgment is asleep, and forms any thought
according to the nature of the vapour sent up to it.
These vapours may exhale like nature, like the tongue
of an adder serpent and send up hurts to the brain,
causing troublesome sleep, and spoiling the eye-sight,

yet by their flying upward, seem to be
something aerial, more delightful,
or at least, less burdensome,
if the temperature of the air be ordinary.
They can be Fiddle-strings making celestial music.

Yet if you are troubled with strange fancies,
strange sights in the night time, some with voices,
drinking a crush of wild Daisy out of a cup made
of Ivy will help to ease such strange visions.
It is also good against dreams of blood.

ABOUT THE POEM

“Drinking Daisies” was created from the *Complete Herbal* by Nicholas Culpeper (1653). About the poem and the process of composing it, Kate Falvey writes:

Culling from Culpeper (I had to say this!) was like entering an ancient hothouse or a wildly overgrown enchanted garden. I’d browsed through his famous herbal before, but never before steeped myself (sorry) in his language of remedies and restoratives. My method was simple: don’t use any words not in the text itself, including the title. Keep phrases when possible but break up sentences into single words when transitions are needed. Try to work chronologically but backtrack when needed to fill in those pesky transitional words. I had a good time losing myself and finding my own way within the world of Culpeper’s words.

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