

Paul Fleming, *An sich* (1636)

Abstract

Saxon-born Paul Fleming (1609-1640) was a physician by training, but he is best known as one of the leading poets of the German Baroque period despite his premature death at age 31. He wrote poems in both Latin and German, many of which reflect his thoughts and experiences during the Thirty Years' War. In this sonnet, "To Myself," the poet reminds himself to seize the day and every opportunity for happiness instead of letting himself be defeated by circumstances.

Source

Be then undismayed! Hold not all for lost!
Bypass no happiness, be above envy!
With self be content, and deem it no sorrow
If fortune, place and time together forswear you.

What saddens or comforts you, consider as fated,
Accept destiny! Regret nothing!
Do what must be done before you are bidden;
What you still may hope for is constantly re-born.

What shall one bemoan, what commend? His fortune and his
sorrow
Is each man himself. Observe all things,
For all is within you. Forsake vain folly,
And ere you go further, look within.

He who is his own master and can govern himself
Shall master the wide world and everything in it.

Translation: Frank G. Ryder

Source: Paul Fleming, "An sich," 1636. In *D. Paul Flemings Poetischer Gedichten So nach seinem Tode haben sollen herauß gegeben werden. Prodromus*, ed. Adam Olearius, Hamburg, 1641. Recording: *The Golden Treasury of German Verse*. Read by Henry Schnitzler. Spoken Arts (701), 1969. Internet Archive [https://archive.org/details/lp_the-golden-treasury-of-german-verse-xiiiith_henry-schnitzler/disc1/01.01.+Side+1:+Mein+\(Anonymous\);+Elegie+\(Walther+von+der+Vogelweide\);+Mahnung+\(Paul+Fleming\);+Eitelkeit+Der+Welt+\(Andreas+Gryphius\);+Abend+\(Andreas+Gryphius\);+Studentenlied+\(Christian+Gunther\);+An+Einen+Boten+\(Volkslied\);+Das+Rosenban...mp3](https://archive.org/details/lp_the-golden-treasury-of-german-verse-xiiiith_henry-schnitzler/disc1/01.01.+Side+1:+Mein+(Anonymous);+Elegie+(Walther+von+der+Vogelweide);+Mahnung+(Paul+Fleming);+Eitelkeit+Der+Welt+(Andreas+Gryphius);+Abend+(Andreas+Gryphius);+Studentenlied+(Christian+Gunther);+An+Einen+Boten+(Volkslied);+Das+Rosenban...mp3)

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