



Tears, Bezoars and Blazing Comets: Gender and Politics in Hester Pulter's Civil War Lyrics

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Abstract

Hester Pulter composed her verse during the 1640s and 1650s in a kind of royalist retirement at her country home of Broadfield, Hertfordshire, and her biographical isolation is mirrored in a poetic preoccupation with loss. Contributing to the sense that her verse might encapsulate a 'female aesthetic' of retreat (a phrase that has been used of male, royalist devotional writers) is the predominance in her verse of a discourse of sighs and tears. In this paper, however, I will argue that the sighs and tears of Pulter's lyrics in fact constitute a significant, gendered, female reaction to political events. In a self-construction drawing on Francis Quarles' emblematic representation of Esther, Hester Pulter constructs a notion of godly fame, in which her poetic sighs and tears provide a consolatory example for other royalist readers.

A royalist poet of mid-seventeenth-century England, Hester Pulter was unknown to the modern reader until Mark Robson's discovery of her one manuscript volume of verse and prose in the University of Leeds Library in 1996. Pulter's verse is at present only available in selections in two anthologies – the Oxford *Early Modern Women Poets* and the Perdita project's *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Poetry*¹ – but it is fair to say that her verse is causing some excitement not only in early modern women's writing circles but also amongst early modern scholars of royalist writing, devotional writing and the lyric more generally.² Brotherton Collection, MS Lt q 32 contains two series of poems and an incomplete prose romance, *The Unfortunate Florinda*; the first poem series consists largely of occasional and devotional lyrics, and the second is a set of purely poetic emblems (there is no picture or motto). Pulter wrote between the early 1640s and about 1665, and although she wrote in a kind of rural retirement at her country house in Hertfordshire, her occasional lyrics are potent royalist commentaries, informed by a deeply personal, and gendered, female reaction to the political events of the English mid-century. I am going to focus in this paper on a selection of poems that are concerned with death and grief, arguing that death and grief in Pulter's verse are overtly both personal and political, and that Pulter's poetic tears constitute a peculiarly *female* political act.

Pulter (1607?–1678)³ was the daughter of Sir James Ley, the first Earl of Marlborough; one of her sisters was Lady Margaret Ley, the addressee of Milton's 'Sonnet X. To the Lady Margaret Ley', and the Milton connection (which can be dated to about 1643–4⁴) suggests that Margaret held impeccably Parliamentary convictions. Hester, in contrast, married a Hertfordshire man, Arthur Pulter, who may have been royalist or may have wished to remain neutral: we are told by Sir Henry Chauncy that 'shortly after the breaking forth of the late civil war, [Arthur] declin'd all publick Employment, liv'd a retired life, and thro' the Importunity of his Wife, began to build a very fair House of Brick upon this Mannor'.⁵ Pulter appears to have resided and written throughout the Civil Wars and Interregnum at this manor of Broadfield in Hertfordshire, and it is clear that she saw her situation there as one of enforced solitude. She writes in one poem that she is 'shut up in a Countrey Grange', 'tide to one Habitation' and 'buried, thus alive' (f. 79^r); a number of poems address daughters who are apparently absent from the estate, inviting them in one instance to 'Come my Deare Children to this Lonely Place' (f. 56^r); and she construes Broadfield's garden, which features prominently in her verse, as bereft and empty.

Pulter's retreat to Broadfield and her poetic preoccupations with isolation and loss evoke the critical paradigm of royalist retirement during the Civil Wars and Interregnum, a paradigm that is often invoked in relation to male, royalist, devotional poets such as Herrick, Vaughan and Traherne. According to this paradigm, defeated royalists in the mid-century retired into the countryside and into the writing of verse, with the writing of devotional verse signalling a double retreat from the world.⁶ Add to this the facts that Pulter was female, that she wrote predominantly in the supposedly 'female' modes of familial and devotional verse, and that she wrote exclusively in manuscript, and it would seem that she might be a woman writer of the Civil Wars and Interregnum whose verse exemplifies feminine passivity and retreat.

Pulter's elegy 'Vpon the Death of my deare and lovely Daughter I[ane] P[ulter]', however, is one apparently domestic occasional verse that suggests otherwise (see poem 1 in the Appendix).⁷ Pulter had some 15 children, all but two of whom predeceased her, and this elegy on the death of a much-loved 20-year-old daughter opens with a deeply personal appeal:

All you that haue indulgent Parents been
 And have your Children in perfection seen
 Of youth and bevtv; lend one Teare to mee
 And trust mee I will doe as much for thee
 Unless my own grieffe doe exhaust my store 5
 Then will I sigh till I suspire noe more.

Pulter dwells on the two years that have passed since Jane's death, before describing the red spots of smallpox spreading on Jane's skin 'Like Lilly

leaves, sprinkled with Damask Rose' (l.44). At this point, she inserts in the margin a pointing finger device which takes us back to a previous page, where these additional lines are inserted, an alteration of the simile's vehicle:

[Like Lilly leaves, sprinkled with Damask Rose
 Or as A stately Hert to Death pursued 45
 By Ravening Hounds, his eyes with tears bedewed
 An Arrow sticking in his trembling breast
 He's lost condition, to the life exprest
 Soe trips hee or'e the Lawns on trodden snow
 And from his side his guiltles blood doth flow 50
 Soe did the spots upon her faire skin shew
 Like drops of blood upon unsull'd snow]

This insertion has already been the subject of an article in the *Times Literary Supplement*: Peter Davidson believes that Pulter must have read Andrew Marvell's 'The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn',⁸ in which a naive female speaker laments the death of her pet, which has been shot by 'wanton troopers riding by'. Davidson also draws attention to other similarities between the poems: a location in 'a place of flowers'; 'images of cold whiteness'; and, at the conclusion of both poems, weeping mourners turning to stone like Niobe.

'The Nymph Complaining' has of course been seen as alluding in its central scenario of the faun shot by 'wanton troopers' to the hunting of Charles I to death; thus, Davidson's argument highlights the political nature of the stag image in Pulter's inserted lines. Pulter's exact source remains open to debate: if she had read 'The Nymph Complaining', she must have done so in manuscript, in 1647, the year in which it was likely composed. Marvell's scenario is believed to allude to Fanshawe's translation of Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*, first published in 1647; 1647 is also two years after Jane's death, the time-period alluded to in Pulter's elegy, and so the time-frame of responses, of Marvell to Fanshawe, and of Pulter to Marvell, is tight.⁹ Sir John Denham also famously used the image of the hunted hart for Charles I in *Cooper's Hill*, although that was not until the 1655 edition of the poem (in the first, 1642, edition, the image figured the Earl of Stafford). Whatever her source, Pulter in fact uses the image of the hart or stag throughout her manuscript, and she makes its political connotations explicit in her 25th emblem poem:

Soe have I seen a Hart with Hounds opprest
 An Arrow sticking in her quivering Breast
 If shee goes on her guiltless blood still Flows
 If shee stands still shee Fals amongst her foes
 Soe have I known (oh sad) the Best of kings
 (Ay mee the thought of this such horreur brings
 (To my sad soul) his Princely spirit posed
 In strange Delemmas every where inclosed (f. 107^v).

Pulter's inserted image in the elegy on Jane is, in the context of her manuscript as a whole, indisputably political. Lois Potter and Nigel Smith both discuss the generic pressures placed on the elegy by the regicide, tracing the encroachment on the personal of the public and political.¹⁰ So, Pulter's poem on Jane's death illustrates the irruption of political concerns into the most personal of domestic occasional elegies.

Pulter's manuscript also contains several elegies on explicitly political events: there is one on the imprisonment of Charles I and three on his death, alongside a number of other politically inflected lyrics. In these explicitly political elegies we see a reverse process from that which I have just traced in the elegy on Jane, as Pulter treats political events through a 'female aesthetic' of weeping. Pulter's political occasional verses (see poems 2–4 in the Appendix) all engage in contemporary royalist culture through their construction of Charles I as a Christ-like martyr. 'Upon the imprisonment of his Sacred Majestie' describes Charles in the fifth tercet as a 'Job like saint', renowned for his 'Piety and Patience', and in 'On the Same', Pulter's second elegy on Charles' execution, the comparison is extended. Lines 10–11 describe the regicides as having 'call'd in Jews into their Aid / Who their Redeemer and their King betray'd'. There are numerous imagistic and verbal parallels between Pulter and other royalist poets in her fusion of Charles and Christ,¹¹ and Steven Zwicker has summarized the royalist elegiac response to Charles I's execution as transforming him 'into Christ in the Passion' (this is a configuration that also marks royalist prose, sermon literature and iconography).¹²

What I wish to consider more carefully here is the way in which Pulter's political engagement in these lyrics may be affected by her female sex. James Loxley has explored the voice of the royalist poet as 'the synecdoche of resistance'; he argues that a commonplace comparison between writing and fighting settles in royalist verse into an 'homology', in which polemical verse fulfils the obligation of service to the King and his cause.¹³ Loxley points out in a discussion of Katherine Philips that such action (or writing as action) is gendered male, with the dangers of falling away from a life of action being depicted as androgyny or effeminacy. Lois Potter, along related lines, has also argued that Charles's Christ-like qualities as a passive martyr were 'essentially an embarrassment' to a royalist faction desiring active victory, and that they were eventually relegated in poems such as Marvell's 'to the world of romance and female suffering'.¹⁴ Loxley concludes that in the case of Katherine Philips, 'the eruption into the voice of royalist polemic becomes the emergence into manhood'.¹⁵ He substantively erases the ontological connection between Philips's sexed body and the political act, and thereby erases any difficulties that could be seen as inherent in a female poet's composition of royalist polemic.

Loxley's view of Philips is worth outlining here because it serves as a pertinent counterpoint to Pulter's case: the discrepancy between Pulter's

female sex and her engagement in the heavily gendered sphere of political writing cannot be counter-theorized so easily. Pulter's elegy on Jane's death is connected, through its familial occasionality, to a reality that is ontologically prior to it. It is a child-loss poem, and it remains primarily just that. Political comment comes in the form of a simile that is interjecting, both conceptually and physically. Lois Potter, again, describes Marvell's feminization of the political subject in 'The Nymph Complaining': in his poem, the stag that is Charles I becomes 'a pet fawn', and the poem appeals to 'pathetic, feminine, safely inactive' emotions.¹⁶ Pulter's 'stately hert', in the elegy on Jane's death, is feminised, his eyes 'with tears bedewed' as he loses condition and his life in a parallel with the dying virginal daughter. But in the elegies on Charles, feminine tearfulness is less the state of the Christ-like martyr than that of his female followers: feminine sighs and tears constitute a reactive female state rather than a quality of the martyred king himself.

Pulter's elegies on Charles' imprisonment and death are in fact permeated by the sighs and tears of female followers. 'Upon the imprisonment of his Scared Majestie' concludes 'Then ask noe more why I'm in tears dissolv'd, / Whilst our good king with sorrow is involv'd / To pray and weep for him I am resolv'd'.¹⁷ 'On the Horrid Murther of that incomparable Prince King Charles the First' opens with the exhortation 'Let none presume to weep, tears are to weak / Such an unparrild loss as this to speak', but the poem is in fact structured around a specifically female *duty* to weep and grieve in the extreme for the executed king. 'Poor village Girles' weep at the loss of 'such a Prince', and the poem concludes 'When such a king in such a manner dies / Let us suspire our soules, weep out our eyes'. 'On the same' then opens 'Let none sigh more for Lucas or for Lisle':¹⁸ the speaker instructs the reader to turn weeping grief from these royalist martyrs of 1648 to the monarch himself.

'On the same' can be seen to encapsulate weeping reaction *as* female political action. At line 38, the weeping speaker is transformed into the bride of Christ:

Iust as our Martyrd king his spirit fled
The spouse of Christ hung down her virgin head
And sighing said my Faiths defender's Dead 40
Then trickling tears down on her trembling breast
Shee said (Ay mee) when shall I safely rest
At which a voice from Heaven said weep noe more
Nor my Heroick Champions Death Deplore
A second Charles shall all thy Ioyes restore. 45

Charles' loss and its corollary, the absence of 'faith's defender', are met with the tears of the English church (female, as the spouse of Christ) and of its individual female members. It is a scene which recalls Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, in which Christ's female followers are privileged in recognizing Christ's true nature and weeping for his crucifixion.¹⁹

Pulter's women's tears are an act of faith and constancy to the ongoing political cause. The final lines of 'On the same' associate not only execution and crucifixion, but restoration and resurrection: the concluding poetic consolation is that 'A second Charles shall all thy Ioyes restore'.

In Pulter's political elegies, I suggest, a *re*-action of sighs and tears constitutes a form of political action gendered female – and one final lyric serves to explicate further Pulter's notion of the significance of poetic tears. 'The weepinge wishe' not only contains imagery of sighs and tears, but construes itself and Pulter's occasional lyrics more generally *as* sighs and tears – or, more precisely, as sighs and tears that are transformed into restoratives for her friends. Pulter also uses a terminology of sad sighs to describe her lyrics on the title pages to her two poem series: she entitles the first series 'Poems Breathed forth By the Nobel Hadassas' (f. 1^v), and the emblems are 'The sighes of a sad soule Emblematically breath'd forth by the noble Hadassah' (f. 90^r). (Hadassah, like Hester, is a variant of the biblical 'Esther', rendering 'Hadassah' a kind of pseudonym for herself.)²⁰

'The weepinge wishe' (see poem 5 in the Appendix) describes her lyrics not just as sighs, but also explicitly as tears:

O that the tears that tricle from mine eyes
 Were plac'd as blazeinge Commetts in the skies
 Then would their numerous and illustrous raise
 Turn my sad nights into the brightest dayes
 O that the sighs that breath from my sad soule 5
 Might Flie above the highest starr or Pole
 Unto that God that vews my dismalle story
 Even Hee that crowns my dieinge hopes with Glory

Line five, describing 'the sighs that breath from my sad soule', echoes those title pages' terminology very precisely, and the stanza as a whole articulates a remarkable poetic ambition (whether or not that was ever fulfilled). Pulter wishes that her poems 'Might Flie above the highest starr or Pole', or be 'plac'd as blazeinge Commetts', so they might illuminate dark days. Line 11 describes 'Hadassahs more resplendent Fame': this phrase also occurs in one of Pulter's other poems,²¹ but I believe that 'The weepinge wishe' reveals its origin and the fact that it encapsulates a very public notion of Hester/Esther/Hadassah's 'fame'.

There are striking parallels between 'The weepinge wishe' and a Francis Quarles emblem on the biblical verse of Esther 7.3, first printed in his enormously popular *Emblemes* (1635). Quarles' emblem poem describes 'Hester, whose teares condole / The razed City's the Regen'rate Soule': the tears of Quarles' Esther have a regenerative power, just as Pulter wishes for the tears that are her poems, when the third stanza sees her wishing that these tears might serve as 'a cordiall to my Friends'. Quarles' Esther is in addition a 'Captive maid', a description that must have seemed particularly apt to Pulter, who described herself as 'shut up in a COUNTRY grange'. It is also possible that Pulter's wish for her sighs to 'Flie above

the highest starr or Pole' echoes the first lines of Quarles' emblem, which describe 'the great *Assuerus*, whose command / Doth stretch from Pole to Pole'.²²

'The weepeinge wishe' evokes an audience of royalist friends as it imbues Pulter's aesthetic of female weeping with a female, royalist, godly 'fame'. Pulter's numbing grief, the tears which caused her, at the end of the elegy on Jane's death, to 'turn a Niobe', are alluded to in lines 15–16, where her 'abortive tears descend in vaine', unable to return her deceased children to her. Her exhortations to village girls not to weep at the death of Charles, however, belied an aesthetic of weeping as the appropriate female response to political losses, and in 'The weepeinge wishe', those tears are far from futile. Pulter wishes here that her 'tears' – the poems themselves – may be prolific, as they are a restorative for her beloved friends: she describes them at line 17 as a bezoar, which is a medicinal, a counter-poison or antidote. In its literal meaning, a bezoar was a concretion found in the stomach of a mountain goat that was believed to have medicinal properties. Jayne Archer's article, published with this, explores Pulter's extensive alchemical knowledge and its influence on her poetry. In 'The weepeinge wishe', Pulter uses an alchemical reference to depict her tears condensing down into a medicinal antidote, and to describe her resulting lyrics as bezoars for her friends.

'The weepeinge wishe' is dated January 1665: as such, it is one of Pulter's latest poems. It has also been added in her own autograph, and it has been inserted onto what would once have been blank pages between the first series of poems and the emblems. These physical factors increase the temptation to read the poem as a kind of poetic manifesto, a summation of the preceding poems' emphasis. The friends to which the poem refers are, no doubt, personal associates who would empathize with Pulter's prolific loss of offspring: the description of her own 'abortive tears' and the expressed hope that her tears might 'make [her friends] live' assure us of this. But the fact that the poem dates from after the Restoration need not detract from a political significance, particularly if it is read as a summation of Pulter's poetic enterprise. Personal and political grief are, as we have seen, intertwined in Pulter's elegiac verse, and in 'The weepeinge wishe', Pulter's aesthetic of female weeping, the 'sighes' and 'tears' that are her poems, and the act of writing itself all take on 'public' roles, the lyrics being held up as 'blazinge Commetts', a 'cordiall' or bezoars to sustain her personal and political friends.

Appendix

1.

**Ypon the Death of my deare and lovely Daughter I[ane] P[ulter]
[Jane Pulter, baptized May 1 1625.**

Buried October 8 1645, æt 20]

All you that haue indulgent Parents been
 And have your Children in perfection seen
 Of youth and bevy; lend one Teare to mee
 And trust mee I will doe as much for thee
 Unless my own griefe doe exhaust my store 5
 Then will I sigh till I suspire noe more
 Twice hath the Earth Thrown Cloris Mantle by
 Imbroidred or'e with Curious Tapistry
 And twice hath seem'd to mourn unto our sight
 Like Iewes, or Chinesses in snowey white 10
 Since shee laid down her milkey limbs on Earth
 Which dying gave her virgin soul new birth
 Yet still my heart is overwhelm'd with griefe
 And tears (he las) gives sorrow noe reliefe
 Twice hath sad Philomele left of to sing 15
 Her mortifying sonnets to the Spring
 Twice at the Silvian Choristers desire
 Shee hath lent her Musick to compleate their Quire
 Since aldevouring Death on her tooke seasure
 And Tellus Wombe involv'd soe rich a Treasure 20
 Yet styl my heart is overwhelm'd with griefe
 And time nor teares will give my woes reliefe
 Twelve times hath Phebe horned seemd to fight
 As often fil'd them with her Brothers light
 Since shee did close her sparkling Diamond eyes 25
 Yet my sad heart for her still pineing Dies
 Through the Twelve houses hath the illustrious sun
 With splendentie his Annuall Iorney Run
 Twice hath his firey furious Horses Hurld
 His blazing Chariot to the lower World 30
 Shewing his luster to the wondring eyes
 Of our (now soe well known) Antipodies
 Since the brack of her spotles virgin story
 Which now her soule doth end in endles Glory
 Yet my afflicted sad forsaken soule 35
 For her in tears and Ashes still doth Rowle
 O could a ffeavour spot her snowey skin
 Whose virgin soule was scarcely soyld with sin
 Aye mee it did, soe haue I som times seene
 Faire Maydens sit incircled on A green 40
 White Lillies spread when they were making Poses
 Upon them scatter leaves of Damask Roses.
 E'ne soe the spots upon her faire skin shew
~~Like drops of blood upon unsoiled snow~~
 [Like Lilly leaves, sprinkled with Damask Rose
 Or as A stately Hert to Death pursued 45
 By Ravening Hounds, his eyes with tears bedewed
 An Arrow sticking in his trembling breast
 He's lost condition, to the life exprest

Soe trips hee or'e the Lawns on trodden snow
 And from his side his guiltles blood doth flow 50
 Soe did the spots upon her faire skin shew
 Like drops of blood upon unsull'd snow
 But what a heart had I, when I did stand
 Holding her forehead with my Trembling hand
 My Heart to Heaven with her bright spirit flies 55
 Whilst shee (ah mee) closed up her louely eyes
 Her soule being seated in her place of birth
 I turnd a Niobe as shee turn'd earth.

2.

**Upon the imprisonment of his Sacred Majestie
 that unparaleld Prince King Charles the First**

Why I sit sighing here ask mee noe more
 My sacred soveraigns thraldom I deplore
 Iust Nemesis (whom they pretend to Adore)
 Put on thy sable blood-besprinkled Gown
 And thy o're flowing vengence thunder Down 5
 On these Usurpers of our Cæsars Crown
 They have his sacred Person now in hold
 They haue their king, and Countrey bought & sould
 And hope of Glory all for Cursed Gold
 Then seeing they eternity thus sleight 10
 Let Acharons fierce Ishew them afright
 Till endles horrour doth their souls benight
 Then let our Iob like saint rise from the Ground
 For Pietie and Patience soe renown'd
 That for the best of kings hee may be Crownd 15
 Then ask noe more why I'm in tears dissolv'd
 Whilst our good king with sorrow is involv'd
 To pray and weep for him I am resolv'd.

3.

**On the Horrid Murther of that incomparable
 Prince, King Charles the First**

Let none presume to weep, tears are to weak
 Such an unparrild loss as this to speak
 Poor village Girles doe soe express their grief
 And in that sad expression find relief
 When such a Prince in such a manner Dies 5
 Let us (ay mee) noe more drop tears but eyes
 Nor let none dare to sigh or strike their breast
 To shew a grief, that soe transcends the rest
 Plebeans soe each vulgar loss deplore
 Wee doo too little if wee doo noe more 10

When such a king in such a manner dies
 Let us suspire our soules, weep out our eyes.

4.

On the same

Let none sigh more for Lucas or for Lisle
 Seing now the very soule of this sad Isle
 (At which trembling invades my soule) is Dead
 And with our sacred soveraign spirits fled 5
 To Heaven, where smileing he looks down
 And sees these Monsters struggling for his Crown
 Whilst his illustrious brows adorn'd with Glory
 Expects the finis of their Tragick story
 How could they doe it; sure they were afraid
 And therefore call'd in Iews into their Aid 10
 Who their Redeemer and their King betray'd
 Oh Horrid villains could they doe this deed
 To wound that Heart for whom all should bleed
 And noble Capell let it bee thy Glory
 Though dead to live in his unparrild story 15
 Take it not ill that wee could scarce deplore
 This kingdoms loss in thee when full before
 Thy loss Heroick kinsman wounded deep
 Had wee had power left to sigh or weep
 Senceles wee were of private desolation 20
 Iust like a Fload after an Inundation
 Thus Nile doth proudly swell to loose her name
 And bee involved in the Oceans fame
 Thus stately Volgas in the Caspian tost
 And Natures great design in thee is lost 25
 Soe Mercury surrounds the purest Gold
 And Phœbus beams doth Hermes light infould
 Hiding his Raidient Fulgour from our sight
 Soe is thy splendencie out shin'd by light
 Thy pardon greatest soul grant I presume 30
 Not to ad odours to thy choice perfume
 I onely doe it to illustrate forth
 By his great vertue thy transcendent worth
 Heroick Prince now rais'd aboue their hate
 Thou tramplest over Death and advers fate 35
 And as one fate your bodyes did dissolve
 Soe imMortality shall both involve
 Iust as our Martyrd king his spirit fled
 The spouse of Christ hung down her virgin head
 And sighing said my Faiths defender's Dead 40
 Then trickling tears down on her trembling breast
 Shee said (Ay mee) when shall I safely rest
 At which a voice from Heaven said weep noe more

Nor my Heroick Champions Death Deplore
A second Charles shall all thy Ioyes restore. 45

5.

The weepinge wishe

O that the tears that tricle from mine eyes
Were plac'd as blazeinge Commetts in the skies
Then would their numerous and illustrous raise
Turn my sad nights into the brightest dayes
O that the sighs that breath from my sad soul 5
Might Flie above the highest starr or Pole
Unto that God that vews my dismalle story
Even Hee that crowns my dieinge hopes with Glory

O that my tears that fall down to the earth
Might give some noble unknown Flower berth 10
Then would Hadassahs more resplendent Fame
Out live the Famous Artimitius name
The Iris tricles tears from her sad eyes
And from their salt her ofspringe doth arise
But my abortive tears descend in vaine 15
For I can never see those Ioyes againe

Hart's briny tears a Beazur doth condense
Oh lett mine eyes whole Flouds of tears dispence
That I a cordiall to my Friends maye give:
Then tho I die, yett I maye make them live 20
I gladly would this good to them impart
Tho in the doeinge itt itt breaks my hart
Then lett my dieinge tears a Cordiall prove
Seeinge I my Friends above my liffe do love.

Notes

Note on transcription: Poems are transcribed from Lady Hester Pulter, *Poems Breath'd forth By The Nobel Hadassas*, University of Leeds Library, Brotherton Collection MS Lt q 32. Capitalization, punctuation and spelling have not been standardized, but abbreviations have been silently expanded. ~~Strikethrough~~ covers words which have been scored out by the author or scribe (where significant); [half square brackets] enclose additions or insertions which have been made by the author or scribe (where significant).

¹ J. Stevenson and P. Davidson, eds., *Early Modern Women Poets, 1520–1700: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 187–95; J. S. Millman and G. Wright, eds., *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 110–27.

² Discussions of Pulter in print to date include Sarah Ross, extracts from Pulter's *The Unfortunate Florinda* and her 20th emblem poem, in *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550–1700*, ed. H. Ostovich and E. Sauer (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 302–4, 389–91; M. Robson, 'Swansongs: Reading Voice in the Poetry of Lady Hester Pulter', *English Manuscript Studies* 9 (2000), pp. 238–56; P. Davidson, 'Green Thoughts. Marvell's Gardens: Clues to Two Curious Puzzles', *Times Literary Supplement* 5044 (3 December 1999), pp. 14–15; S. Nixon, "'Aske me no more" and the Manuscript Verse Miscellany', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), pp. 97–9, 129–30.

³ Pulter's manuscript contains conflicting statements alluding to her date of birth and age, but it is most likely that she was aged 40 in 1647 (f. 48^r). Cotteder parish register records her burial, 9 April 1678.

⁴ Edward Phillips asserts that Milton spent time in the company of Ley and her husband in the autumn and winter of 1643–4, after the departure of his wife, Mary Powell; he describes Margaret as 'a woman of great wit and ingenuity', who 'had a particular honour for [Milton], and took much delight in his company'. See D. Masson, *The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time*, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1873), vol. 3, pp. 56–7. 'Sonnet X' was first published in the 1645 edition of Milton's poems.

⁵ H. Chauncy, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, new ed., 2 vols. (Dorking: Kohler and Coombes, 1975), vol. 1, p. 145.

⁶ Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday describe this paradigm in their Introduction to *Literature and the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 7, 15–16. James Loxley discusses 'the poetry of retirement' in *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (London: Macmillan, 1997), esp. pp. 192–241; and see also R. Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism, 1628–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Loxley cites Earl Miner's defining study, *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971).

⁷ 'Vpon the Death of my deare and lovely Daughter' has also been anthologized in Stevenson and Davidson, *Early Modern Women Poets*, pp. 191–3.

⁸ Davidson, 'Green Thoughts', pp. 14–15.

⁹ Davidson's argument is in part based on a misdating of Pulter's elegy to 1648. Elizabeth Clarke, however, has also argued that Pulter is likely to have read Marvell's poetry in manuscript, believing that her lyric 'The Larke' echoes 'Upon Appleton House' ('The Larke', International Conference on Andrew Marvell, University of Oxford (November 2003)).

¹⁰ L. Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 191; N. Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 287–94.

¹¹ John Quarles' *Englands Complaint* describes Charles as 'a second Iob, whose patience can / Outvie the base indignities of man' (*Fons Lachrymarum; or A Fountain of Tears* (1648), p. 20). See also *The Monument of Charles the First, King of England* (1649), where Charles is 'Patient as Iob'; [F. Gregory], *An Elegie upon the Death of Our Dread Sovereign Lord King Charls the Martyr* (1649), republished in *The Last Counsel of a Martyred King to His Son* (1660). Anna Cromwell Williams is another woman writing in manuscript who composes an elegy on Charles and uses Christ-like imagery. In her 'Verces upon King Charles the first', 'Christ dyed for Charles; & when hee pleased to call / Charles suffered death reciprocal'; in the poem's concluding line, Charles is the Cavaliers' 'Leftenant; Christ their Gennerall' (British Library, MS Harl. 2311, fols 25^{r-v}).

¹² S. N. Zwicker, *Dryden's Political Poetry: The Typology of King and Nation* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1972), pp. 48–9, 50–3. Helen W. Randall explores the casting of Charles as Christ in sermon literature in 'The Rise and Fall of a Martyrology: Sermons on Charles I', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 10 (1946), pp. 135–67. See also Wilcher, *Writing of Royalism*, pp. 292–3.

¹³ J. Loxley, 'Unfettered Organs: the Polemical Voices of Katherine Philips', in *'This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. E. Clarke and D. Clarke (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 230–48.

¹⁴ Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing*, p. 212.

¹⁵ Loxley, 'Unfettered Organs', p. 245.

¹⁶ Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing*, p. 193.

¹⁷ For the relationship of this lyric to the widely circulated 'Aske me no more', see Nixon, "'Ask me no more'".

¹⁸ Pulter is referring to her own earlier elegy, 'On those two unparraleld friends, Sir George Lisle and Sir Charles Lucas' (f. 13^v).

¹⁹ S. Woods, ed., *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); see ll. 961–1000.

²⁰ Pulter's titles also evoke the tradition of devotional ejaculatory lyrics popularized by Herbert's *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), 'breathing forth' constituting a form of spiritual ejaculation.

²¹ Pulter writes elsewhere:

Then let me ever have a splendent fame
Or let me loos Hadassah my lov'd Name (f. 109^v; ll. 15–16).

²² F Quarles, *Emblemes* (1635), p. 209. Quarles' earlier *Hadassa: or The History of Queene Ester: With Meditations thereupon, Diuine and Morall* (1621) has very little to do with Queen Esther herself, and does not appear to have influenced Pulter.

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14 Gender and Politics in Hester Pulter's Civil War Lyrics

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