

Koło Anglistów PWSZ  
*przedstawia*

**The Divine Infant's Timeline**  
St. Robert Southwell's poetry  
in Original Pronunciation  
with pantomime and music



from *Maconiae*, London **1595**

Robert Southwell was born in England around **1561** to an old Catholic family. As a boy he was stolen by a gypsy. He was soon recovered and grew into a short, handsome man, with gray eyes and red hair.

Even as a child, Southwell was attracted to the old religion and his love for Catholicism continued till his death.

Under English Protestantism it was a crime for any Englishman ordained as a Catholic priest to remain in England more than forty days at a time.

Young Southwell asked to be admitted into the Jesuit order. He was ordained a priest in at the age of **23**, in **1584**. Two years later, at his own request, he went as a missionary to England, well knowing the dangers he faced.

Spies reported Southwell's arrival in England. For six years they kept him under surveillance but did not arrest him. He assumed the alias *Cotton* and found employment as a chaplain to Lady Arundel.

Although he lived mostly in London, he traveled in disguise and preached secretly throughout England. He was captured and handed over to Richard Topcliffe, a notorious agent of the anti Catholic persecution.

Southwell was in prison for three years. Tortured thirteen times, he nonetheless refused to reveal the names of fellow Catholics. During his incarceration, he was allowed to write. His works had already circulated widely and seen print.

On February **21, 1595** at Tyburn, aged **34**, Southwell was hanged and quartered for treason, although no treasonous word or act had been shown against him.

Shakespeare read Southwell's poems. Ben Jonson said he would gladly destroy many of his own poems if he might thereby have written Southwell's best.

## OUR LADIE'S SALUTATION.

SPELL Eva backe and Ave shall yowe finde,  
The first beganne, the last reversd our harmes ;  
An angell's witching wordes did Eva blynde,  
An angell's Ave disinchauntes the charmes :  
Death first by woeman's weakenes entred in,  
In woeman's vertue life doth nowe beginn.

O virgin brest ! the heavens to thee inclyne,  
In thee their joy and soveraigne they agnize ;  
Too meane their glory is to match with thyne,  
Whose chaste receite God more then heaven did prize.  
Hayle fayrest heaven, that heaven and earth dost blisse,  
Where vertewes starres, God sonne of justice is ! *sun*

With hauty mynd to Godhead man aspid,  
And was by pride from place of pleasure chasd ;  
With lovinge mind our manhead God desird,  
And us by love in greater pleasure plaed ;  
Man labouring to ascend procurd our fall,  
God yelding to descend cut off our thrall.

## JOSEPHE'S AMAZEMENT.

WHEN Christ, by growth, disclosèd His descent  
    Into the pure receite of Marye's breste,  
Poore Joseph, straunger yet to God's intent,  
    With doubttes of jelious thoughtes was sore opprest ;  
And, wrought with divers fittes of feare and love,  
He nether can her free nor faultye prove.

And was (quoth he) my love so lightly pryed ?  
    And was our sacred league so soone forgott ?  
Could vowes be voyde, could vertues be despisd ?  
    Could such a spouse be staynd with such a spott ?  
O wretched Joseph ! that hast livd so long,  
Of faithfull love to reape so grevous wronge !

But who can fly from that his harte doth feele ?  
    What change of place can change implanted payne ?  
Removinge moves no hardnes from the steele ;  
    Sicke hartes, that shift no fittes, shift roomes in vayne.  
Where thought can see, what helps the closèd eye ?  
Where hart pursues, what gaynes the foote to flye ?

Yett still I tredd a maze of doubtfull end ;  
I goe, I come, she drawes, she drives away ;  
She woundes, she heales, she doth both marr and mend,  
    She makes me seeke and shunn, depart and stay ;  
She is a frende to love, a foe to loathe,  
And in suspence I hange betwene them both.

## THE VISITATION.

PROCLAYMÈD queene and mother of a God,  
The light of Earth, the soveraigne of saintes,  
With pilgrimm foote upp tiring hills she trodd,  
And heavenly stile with handmayds' toyle acquaints :  
Her youth to age, her helth to sicke she lends,  
Her hart to God, to neighbour hand she bendes.

A prince she is, and mightier prince doth beare,  
Yet pompe of princely trayne she would not have ;  
But doubtles heavenly quires attendant were,  
Her child from harme, her self from fall to save :  
Worde to the voyce, songe to the tune she bringes,  
The voyce her word, the tune her ditye singes.

Eternall lightes inclosèd in her breste  
Shott out such percing beames of burning love,  
That when her voyce her cosen's eares possest  
The force thereof did force her babe to move :  
With secreet signes the children greete ech other,  
But open praise ech leaveth to his mother.

## THE BURNING BABE (utwór śpiewany)

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,  
Surprised I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow ;  
And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,  
A pretty babe all burning bright did in the air appear ;  
Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed  
As though his floods should quench his flames which with his tears were fed.  
Alas, quoth he, but newly born in fiery heats I fry,  
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I !  
My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,  
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns ;  
The fuel justice layeth on, and mercy blows the coals,  
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,  
For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,  
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood.  
With this he vanished out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,  
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas day.

*Gdy stałem kiedyś w mroźną noc, dygocząc wśród zamieci,  
Znienacka jakiś dziwny żar w mym sercu płomień nieci:  
I kiedym podniósł trwożny wzrok, by ujrzeć, co się pali,  
Dziecię płonące niby stos zjawilo mi się w dali.  
Prażone przez straszliwy żar, z ocz słone lato zdroje,  
Na próżno pragnąc morzem łez płomienie zgasić swoje,  
„Zaledwim przyszedł na ten świat”, powiada, „w ogniu płonę,  
Lecz nikt nie przyjdzie, by w nim grzać swe serce wyziębione!  
Pierś ma niewinna – oto piec, opałem cierni jest goły,  
Miłość to żar, westchnienia – dym, hańba i ból – popioły;  
Podkłada Sprawiedliwość drew, a Litość w węgle dmucha,  
Żeliwem pieca zaś jest fałsz i brud ludzkiego ducha;  
Skoro więc zbawić ludzi mam, a żar mnie straszny spala,  
Roztopię się i własną krwią grzech zmyję, co ich kala.”  
To rzekłszy, Dziecię znikło gdzieś; wyrwany z osłupienia,  
Pojąłem nagle, że jest dzień Bożego Narodzenia.*

*(tłum. Stanisław Barańczak)*

## THE NATIVITY OF CHRISTE.

BEHOULD the father is His daughter's sonne,  
✓ The bird that built the nest is hatchd therein,  
The old of yeres an hower hath not outrunne,  
Eternall life to live doth nowe beginn,  
The Worde is dumm, the Mirth of heaven doth weepe,  
Mighte feeble is, and Force doth fayntely creepe.

O dyinge soules ! behould your living springe !  
O dazeled eyes ! behould your sunne of grace !  
Dull eares, attend what word this Word doth bringe !  
Upp, heavy hartes, with joye your joy embrace !  
From death, from darke, from deaphnesse, from des-  
payres,  
This Life, this Light, this Word, this Joy repaires.

Gift better then Him self God doth not knowe,  
Gift better then his God no man can see ;  
This gift doth here the giver given bestowe,  
Gift to this gift lett ech receiver bee :  
God is my gift, Him self He freely gave me,  
God's gift am I, and none but God shall have me.

Man altred was by synn from man to best ; *beast*  
Beste's foode is haye, haye is all mortall fleshe ; ✓  
Now God is fleshe, and lyes in maunger prest,  
As haye the brutest synner to refreshe :  
O happy feilde wherein this foder grewe,  
Whose taste doth us from beastes to men renewe ! ✓

## THE EPIPHANYE.

To blase the rising of this glorious sunne,  
A glittringe starre appeareth in the Easte,  
Whose sight to pilgrimm-toyles three sages wunne  
To seeke the light they long had in requeste ;  
And by this starre to nobler starr they pase,  
Whose armes did their desired sunne embrace.

Stall was the skye wherein these planettes shynde,  
And want the cloude that did eclipse their rayes ;  
Yet through this cloude their light did passage finde,  
And pered these sages' harts by secrett waies,  
Which made them knowe the Ruler of the skyes,  
By infant tongue and lookes of babish eyes.

Heaven at her light, Earth blusheth at her pride,  
And of their pompe these peeres ashamèd be ;  
Their crownes, their robes, their trayne they sett aside,  
When God's poore cotage, clowtes, and crewe, they  
All glorious thinges their glory nowe dispise, [see ;  
Sith God contempt, doth more then glory-prize.

Three giftes they bringe, three giftes they beare awaye ;  
For incense, myrrhe and gould, faith, hope and love ;  
And with their giftes the givers' hartes do stayer,  
Their mynde from Christ no parting can remove ;  
His humble state, his stall, his poore retynewe,  
They phansie more then all their rich revenewe.



## THE PRESENTATION.

To be redeem'd the world's Redeemer brought,  
Two selye turtle-doves, for ransome payes ;  
Oh ! ware with empyres worthy to be bought,  
This easye rate doth sounde, not drowne Thy praise !  
For sith no price can to Thy worth amounte,  
A dove, yea love, dew price Thou dost accounte.

Old Simeon cheap penyworth and sweete  
Obteyn'd, when Thee in armes he did embrace ;  
His weeping eyes Thy smyling lookes did meete,  
Thy love his hart, Thy kisses blissd his face :  
O eyes ! O hart ! meane sightes and loves avoyde,  
'Base not your selves, your best you have enjoy'd !

O virgin pure ! thou dost these doves presente  
As due to lawe, not as an equall price ;  
To buy such ware thou would'st thy life have spent ;  
The worlde to reach His worth coulde not suffice ;  
If God were to be bought, not worldly pelfe,  
But thou, wert fittest price next God Him self.

## THE FLIGHT INTO EGIPT.

ALAS ! our Day is forc'd to flye by nighte !

Light without light, and sunne by silent shade.

O Nature, blushe ! that suffrest such a wighte,

That in thy sunne this dark eclipse hath made ;

Day to his eyes, light to his steppes denye,

That hates the light which graceth every eye.

Sunne being fledd the starres do leese their light,

And shyninge beames in bloody streames they

A cruell storme of Herod's mortall spite [drenche ;

Their lives and lightes with bloody shoures doth

The tiran to be sure of murdringe one, [quench :

For feare of sparinge Him doth pardon none.

O blessèd babes ! first flowers of Christian Springe,

Who though untymely cropt fayre garlandes frame,

With open throates and silent mouthes you singe

His praise, Whome age permitts you not to name ;

Your tunes are teares, your instrumentes are swordes,

Your ditye death, and bloode in lieu of wordes !

## CHRISTE'S RETORNE OUT OF EGIPT.

WHEN Death and Hell their right in Herode clayme,  
Christ from exile returnes to natyve soyle,  
There with His life more deeply Death to mayme,  
Then Death did life by all the infantes spoyle.  
He shewd the parentes that their babes did mone,  
That all their lives were lesse then His alone.

But hearing Herod's sonne to have the crowne ;  
An impious offspring of a bloodye syre ;  
To Nazareth (of heaven belovèd) towne,  
Flower to a floure, He fittly doth retyre ;  
For floure He is and in a floure He bredd,  
And from a thorne nowe to a floure He fledd.

And well deservd this floure His fruite to vew,  
Where He invested was in mortall weede ;  
Where first unto a tender budd He grewe,  
In virgin branch unstaynd with mortall seede :

Yonge floure, with floures in floure well may He be,  
Ripe fruite, He must with thornes hange on a tree.

## CHRISTE'S CHILDHOODE.

TILL twelve yeres' age, how Christ His childhood spent  
All earthly pennes unworthy were to write ;  
Such actes to mortall eyes He did presente,  
Whose worth not men but angells must recite :  
No nature's blottes, no childish faultes defilde,  
Where Grace was guide, and God did play the childe.

In springing lockes lay couchèd hoary witt,  
In semblance younge, a grave and auncient port ;  
In lowly lookes high maiestie did sitt,  
In tender tunge, sound sence of sagest sort :  
Nature imparted all that she could teache,  
And God supplyd where Nature coulde not reach.

His mirth, of modest meane a mirrhour was,  
His sadnes, tempred with a mylde aspecte ;  
His eye, to trye ech action was a glasse,  
Whose lookes did good approue and bad correct ;  
His nature's giftes, His grace, His word, and deede,  
Well shew'd that all did from a God proceede.