

The Complete Works (Middle English Texts)

William Dunbar



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Scottish poet William Dunbar is usually considered one of the most important figures of fifteenth-century British literature, and may lay claim to being the finest lyric poet writing in English in the century and half between the death of Chaucer in 1400 and the appearance of Tottel's Miscellany in 1557. Dunbar's poems offer vivid depictions of late medieval Scottish society and serve up a striking pageant of colorful figures at the court of James IV (r. 1488-1513), with which he was associated for much of his adult life. The poems are remarkable both for their diversity and variability and for their multiplicity of voices, styles, and tones. The great variety of poems within Dunbar's canon includes religious hymns of exaltation, moral poems on a wide range of serious themes, comic and parodic poems of extreme salaciousness and scatological coarseness, general satires against the times, and satires with much more specific targets, often a single individual.

This edition of eighty-four poems attributed to Dunbar includes extensive background material and explanatory notes that are sure to be of interest to students and Dunbar enthusiasts alike. The edition is rounded out with textual notes, an index of first lines, and a glossary.



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