

Men Don't Get Flowers till They Die

by [Mike Wilson](#) (December 2024)



Woman among the Flowers (Odilon Redon, 1910)

Men Don't Get Flowers till They Die

Women get flowers on Valentine's Day.
They seem to like them a lot,
maybe more than they like men,
but men don't get flowers till they die.

Women get flowers on birthdays,
at least after their periods begin,
and even after their periods end,
but men don't get flowers till they die.

Women get flowers for no reason at all,
or for some made-up reason that's silly,
to flatter them and make them smile,
but men don't get flowers till they die.

Men are the pig oppressors in this world,
even after their ding-dongs grow limp.
It's lonely at the top, keeping everybody down,
and men don't get flowers till they die.

Flowers in vases beside the coffin
like bottles of champagne at a ship launch.
Goodbye men! Hope you enjoy the flowers!
All you had to do was die to get them!

The Pagans Might Be Winning

Valentine of Terni was beheaded, third century,
for healing a pagan. (Note to self: don't heal

pagans, they will be ungrateful in a big way).
The healing part is how he earned his saint badge.

The chopped-off head part is a rabbit's foot.
A Brittany bishop in the eleventh century
used Valentine's skull to prevent plagues,
halt fires, and ward off demon possessions.
Churches in Prague, Dublin, Madrid, Glasgow,
Poland, Malta, and even the isle of Lesbos
claim to carry a sliver of his skull in their quivers.
That's a lot of people thinking this Terni guy's
noggin is lucky, though it wasn't so lucky for him.

So how did pagan-healing and head-chopping
become a day for candy, flowers, and kisses?
A throwaway line in Parlement of Fowles
by Chaucer went viral in the 14th century:
For this was on seynt Volantynys day.
Whan euery bryd comyth there to chese his make.

Lords and ladies picked it up and ran with it,
writing love notes to each other like sparrows
partner-picking with an eye to laying an egg.
Valentine's Day just happens to be on the calendar
around the time nature gets sex-crazy.

Valentine of Terni probably never dreamed
his pagan-healing and subsequent head-chopping
would spawn a day to celebrate spawning.
I think the pagans are winning.

I Write The Iliad, a Dream Poem

I sit in Literature class inside a snow globe
taking a two-hour test and the assignment is

write ten poems of no less than 6000 lines each
and everyone freaks but I stay calm I say
they must mean 6000 words each which is less
and I'm sitting in the back row behind a little
fort of books on my desk one of which is the
Bible when a biggy guy with a figgy face in the
row in front of me turns around and I show it
to him he's neither impressed nor unimpressed
I really like that guy and I study the Bible's
aura and observe other books don't have that
except perhaps the Koran and realize my past
lives are bleeding into this one and I wake
thinking that 6000 words times ten means they
have to write The Iliad or The Divine Comedy
in two hours to pass the test that's too funny
I shake with laughter I can't control and the
bed bounces but I clench my chest so I won't
disturb my wife and go back to sleep and wake
with pain in my chest though I don't remember
I bet I just dreamed the opposite to balance the
first dream but regardless I will write The Iliad
in words that pour and flow from me like lava

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Mike Wilson's work has appeared in many magazines including *The Gravity of the Thing*, *Mud Season Review*, *The Pettigru Review*, *Still: The Journal*, and in Mike's book, *Arranging Deck Chairs on the Titanic*, political poetry for a post-truth world. Mike's awards include the League of Minnesota Poets Award, the Maine Poets Society Award, and the Chaffin/Kash Prize of the Kentucky State Poetry Society. Mike lives in Lexington, Kentucky

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