RICHARD EDWARDS
ca. 1523–1566

Edwards was a poet, playwright, musician, and Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal. His lyrical poems were not published until a decade after his death. In the “Amantium Irae” the general characteristics of much midcentury poetry are illustrated: the didactic emphasis, which in this case involves elaboration of a proverb, and the verse form—“fourteeners,” or rhymed couplets of seven feet or fourteen syllables. Note that the fourteener couplet could as easily be printed as a ballad stanza, with alternating four- and three-foot lines.

Amantium Irae Amoris Redintegratio Est¹

In going to my naked bed,² as one that would have slept,
I heard a wife sing to her child, that long before had wept;
She sighéd sore, and sang full sweet to bring the babe to rest,
That would not rest but criéd still, in sucking at her breast.
She was full weary of her watch,³ and grieveéd with her child,
She rockéd it and rated⁴ it, until on her it smiled.
Then did she say, “Now have I found this proverb true to prove,
The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.”

Then took I paper, pen, and ink, this proverb for to write,
In register for to remain of such a worthy wight.
As she proceeded thus in song unto her little brat⁵
Much matter uttered she of weight, in place whereas she sat;
And proved plain there was no beast, nor creature bearing life,
Could well be known to live in love, without discord and strife.
Then kisséd she her little babe, and sware, by God above,
“The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.”

She said that neither king, ne prince, ne lord could live aright,
Until their puissance they did prove, their manhood, and their might;
When manhood shall be matchéd so, that fear can take no place,
Then weary works makes warriors each other to embrace,
And leave their force that failéd them, which did consume the rout⁶
That might before have livéd their time and nature out.
Then did she sing, as one that thought no man could her reprove,
“The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.”

She said she saw no fish, ne fowl, nor beast within her haunt
That met a stranger in their kind,⁷ but could give it a taunt.
Since flesh might not endure, but rest must wrath succeed,

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1. This poem was first printed in an anthology, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*; the title is translated by the last line of each stanza.
2. I.e., bed without curtains.
3. Vigil.
4. Scolded.
5. A child (but without any connotation of contempt).
6. Great number of people.
7. Group in nature.
And force the fight to fall to play, in pasture where they feed,
So noble nature can well end the works she hath begun,
And bridle well that will not cease her tragedy in some.
Thus in her song she oft rehearsed, as did her well behove,
“The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.”

“I marvel much, pardy,” quoth she, “for to behold the rout,
To see man, woman, boy, and beast, to toss the world about;
Some kneel, some crouch, some beck, some check, and some can
smoothly smile,
And some embrace others in arms, and there think many a wile;
Some stand aloof at cap and knee, some humble, and some stout,
Yet are they never friends indeed until they once fall out!”
Thus ended she her song, and said, before she did remove,
“The falling out of faithful friends, renewing is of love.”