

**1861**

**ODE TO DAMON**

**Lewis Carroll**

**Carroll, Lewis (pen name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-1898) - English novelist, poet, photographer, and mathematician, best known for his fantastical childrens' classics. He was a mathematical lecturer at Oxford. Ode to Damon (1861) - One of Lewis Carroll's poems. Opening lines: "Oh, do not forget the day when we met / At the fruiterer's shop in the city:..."**

## ODE TO DAMON

**(From Chloe, who Understands His Meaning.)**

“OH, do not forget the day when we met  
At the fruiterer’s shop in the city:  
When you said I was plain and excessively vain,  
But I knew that you meant I was pretty.

“Recollect, too, the hour when I purchased the flour  
(For the dumplings, you know) and the suet;  
Whilst the apples I told my dear Damon to hold,  
(just to see if you knew how to do it).

“Then recall to your mind how you left me behind,  
And went off in a ‘bus with the pippins;  
When you said you’d forgot, but I knew you had not;  
(It was merely to save the odd threepence!).

“Don’t forget your delight in the dumplings that night,  
Though you said they were tasteless and doughy:  
But you winked as you spoke, and I saw that the joke  
(If it was one) was meant for your Chloe!

“Then remember the day when Joe offered to pay  
For us all at the Great Exhibition;  
You proposed a short cut, and we found the thing shut,  
(We were two hours too late for admission).

“Your ‘short cut’, dear, we found took us seven miles round  
(And Joe said exactly what we did):  
Well, I helped you out then- it was just like you men  
Not an atom of sense when it’s needed!

“You said ‘What’s to be done?’ and I thought you in fun  
(Never dreaming you were such a ninny).  
‘Home directly!’ said I, and you paid for the fly,  
(And I think that you gave him a guinea).

“Well, that notion, you said, had not entered your head:  
You proposed ‘The best thing, as we’re come, is  
(Since it opens again in the morning at ten)  
To wait’ - Oh, you Prince of all dummies!

“And when Joe asked you ‘Why, if a man were to die,  
Just as you ran a sword through his middle,  
You’d be hung for the crime?’ and you said ‘Give me time!’  
And brought to your Chloe the riddle

“Why, remember, you dunce, how I solved it at once  
(The question which Joe had referred to you),  
Why, I told you the cause, was ‘the force of the laws’,  
And you said ‘It had never occurred to you.’

“This instance will show that your brain is too slow,  
And (though your exterior is showy),  
Yet so arrant a goose can be no sort of use  
To society- come to your Chloe!

“You’ll find no one like me, who can manage to see  
Your meaning, you talk so obscurely:  
Why, if once I were gone, how would you get on?  
Come, you know what I mean, Damon, surely.”

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**THE END**