

## 1: The lives of the most eminent English poets; (v.2/4) | Great Writers Inspire

*Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (), alternatively known by the shorter title *Lives of the Poets*, is a work by Samuel Johnson comprising short biographies and critical appraisals of 52 poets, most of whom lived during the eighteenth century.

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Regier bio Samuel Johnson. Poets learn from the lives of poets how unpoetic life can be. Johnson believed that poetry should engage interest and that criticism should too. He told Boswell, "People in general do not willingly read, if they can have any thing else to amuse them. His cuts, quips, and judgments about poems and poets have been quoted gratefully. Many poets owe him what survival they have, his books outlasting theirs. Learned poets and ardent bibliophiles proud of their libraries should promptly acquire the set. Harold Bloom as close to an American Johnson as we have asserts that the Lives have "no rival in the English language. In three representatives of a combination of London printers and booksellers informed Johnson that they intended to pool their resources to undertake a major publication: *The Works of the English Poets* in 56 volumes. To trump Bell whose set would run to volumes , they invited Johnson [End Page ] to write brief prefaces for each of fifty-two poets. Johnson was sixty-eight, palsied, asthmatic, lame with gout, losing his hearing, taking opium, and fretful about how long he had to live, yet he readily consented. The project suited his taste, skills, reputation, and financial needs. Johnson was famously tardy with his most important works and the prefaces were no exception. He accepted the commission, thinking it would be quick and easy; his publishers assumed that he would provide prefaces to accompany each of their 56 volumes. Instead, Johnson took four years to complete his work; the prefaces appeared in two separate sets and spanning ten volumes entitled *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical*. The ten volumes were sold first to purchasers of the larger series, and then later in as four stand-alone volumes, retitled *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*. Johnson published a revised edition of the Lives in , the edition chosen for the copytext for the new Oxford set. Aside from its few trifling typos, my sole complaint with the new edition is that headers for the textual and explanatory notes are imprecise, making them less accessible than they ought to be. The explanatory notes are simply wonderful: You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

## 2: Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets

*The lives of the most eminent English poets and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.*

Well, I seem to have begun a Project, for better or worse. Johnson spends many pages criticizing the metaphysical poets, of whom considers he Cowley the last representative. I read them mostly with pleasure. After death I nothing crave, Let me alive my pleasures have: All are Stoics in the grave. This put me in mind of an old blues line: To me, this gives a somewhat modern feel to a poem written in the 17th century. According to Johnson, "Denham is deservedly considered as one of the fathers of English poetry," but I had never heard of him before reading this short essay. Johnson is fairly liberal in his praise of Denham, and includes passages from several of his poems. I had nothing by him on shelves, so I downloaded a collection of his poems into my Kindle. Paradise Lost is another story, though - more on that later. I was more distressed by the fact that he wrote a tract called A Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the Best Means to Prevent the Growth of Popery, in which he argued that Catholics are "not to be permitted the liberty of either public or private worship. I read Paradise Lost several years ago, and somewhat to my surprise enjoyed the experience. But this time around, I did read several of his sonnets, which Johnson found wanting. I thought they were pretty good, but what do I know? This Samuel Butler is not to be confused with the 19th-century novelist, of course. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, was apparently quite the party animal, in addition to being a talented poet; Johnson says that "he excelled in that noisy and licentious merriment which wine incites. Johnson seems to take grim satisfaction in the fact that he only lived to age And here is "Epitaph on Charles II" in its entirety: Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King, Whose word no man relies on, Who never said a foolish thing, Nor ever did a wise one. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous, and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and he may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature. Otway apparently died at 33 after choking on a piece of bread. Edmund Waller was a much a politician as a poet; he served in Parliament and was involved in a plot against Cromwell. When the plot was discovered, he apparently avoided execution by informing on his fellow plotters. He was exiled to France, but later pardoned by Cromwell. Johnson admires his wit, but not his character. As a young widower, Waller courted Lady Dorothea Sidney with verse, but she rejected him and married someone else. Later in life, widowed herself, she met Waller and asked when he would again write such verses for her. He replied, "When you are as young, madam, and as handsome as you were then. Very short essays on three mostly-forgotten poets. The entry on Pomfret is less than a page and a half long. The Earl of Dorset was another wild one; Johnson relates an incident in which Dorset and an equally drunken group of friends exposed themselves on a balcony until there were driven inside by a rock-throwing crowd. Johnson holds John Philips in high esteem, as a writer and a person; this is a fairly long essay, although Johnson reproduces a large part of essay by Edmund Smith, which takes up a good bit of the entry. Another very short entry. William Walsh was "known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself. And frankly, this essay really tried my patience. I abandoned it for a couple of weeks before completing my reading. Johnson has much praise and a few reservations , but spends much of his essay on accounts of nasty disputes Dryden had with other writers. I found all of this unpleasant and uninteresting to read. But more positively, Johnson gives Dryden credit for modernizing English verse - a statement which must be considered in the context of its time, of course. But I enjoyed "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham," an elegy for a fellow poet who died too young. And how could I not like "A Song for St. On to book two. In the poetical works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critic can exercise his powers. They are often humourous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what the author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they consist of "proper words in proper places. Johnson hit the

## LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS pdf

nail on the head. But this was "easy," obvious poetry, for the most part. Nothing wrong with that; I like "easy" poetry. The now-forgotten William Broome was a friend of Alexander Pope, until money issues drove them apart. I found this all tiresome and depressing. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be give. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight. Christopher Pitt was once well-regarded for his translations from the Latin, but is mostly forgotten these days. Johnson seems to admire him, and quotes his epitaph:

### 3: The Lives Of the Most Eminent English Poets by Johnson, Samuel

*To ask other readers questions about Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, please sign up. Be the first to ask a question about Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets 9/15/ Well, I seem to have begun a Project, for better or worse. I recently reread 84, Charing Cross Road, and was struck by.*

### 4: Talk:Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets - Wikipedia

*The Lives of the most eminent English Poets: with critical Observations on their works. Vol II by Johnson, Samuel. and a great selection of similar Used, New and Collectible Books available now at [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)*

### 5: Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets | Revolv

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### 6: Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets | Penny's poetry pages Wiki | FANDOM powered by Wikia

*When he was done, he reviewed the lives and work of fifty-two poets - most of whom have gone on to oblivion. This edition (Folio Society, ) presents Johnson's essa LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS. ().*

### 7: Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets - Wikipedia

*Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets () is a work by Samuel Johnson, comprising short biographies and critical appraisals of 52 poets, most of whom lived during the eighteenth century.*

### 8: The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets

*Lives of the most eminent English poets, with critical observations on their works; to which are added the 'Preface to Shakespeare' and the review of 'The origin of evil' in English , James Parker and Co.*

### 9: The lives of the most eminent English poets | Open Library

*A Dictionary of Quotations, in Most Frequent Use Taken Chiefly From the Latin and French, but Comprising Many From the Greek, Spanish, and Italian Languages, Translated Into English by D. E. Macdonnel.*

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