

# "Rosania to Lucasia on her Letters"

By Katherine Philips

*Transcription, correction, editorial commentary, and markup by Students  
and Staff at The University of Virginia, John O'Brien, Sara Brunstetter*

Rosania to *Lucasia on her Letters* , <sup>Title</sup>

1 Ah strike outright, or else forbear,  
2 Be more kind, or more severe;  
3 For in this checquer'd, <sup>Checkered</sup> mixture I  
4 Cannot live, and would not die,  
5 And must I neither? tell me why?  
  
6 When thy Pen thy kindness tells,  
7 My heart transported leaps and swells.

8 But when my greedy eye does stray  
9 Thy threat'ned absence to survey,  
10 That heart is struck and faints away.  
  
11 To give me title to rich land,  
12 And the fruition to withstand,  
13 Or solemnly to send the key  
14 Of treasures I must never see,  
15 Would it contempt or bounty be?  
  
16 This is such refin'd distress,  
17 That thy sad Lovers sigh for less,  
18 Though thou their hopes hast overthrown,  
19 They lose but what they ne're have known,  
20 But I am plunder'd from my own.  
  
21 How canst thou thy Rosania prize,  
22 And be so cruel and so wise?  
23 For if such rigid policy  
24 Must thy resolves dispute with me,  
25 Where then is friendship's victory?  
  
26 Kindness is of so brave a make  
27 'Twil rather death then, <sup>n004</sup> bondage take,  
28 So that if thine no power can have,  
29 Give it and me one common grave,  
30 But quickly either kill or save.

## Footnotes

Title "Rosania" refers to Mary Aubrey, a friend of Philips's from childhood. "Lucasia" refers to Ann Owen, who was Philips's closest friend and the person to whom many of her poems are addressed. This poem, unusually, sees Philips take the voice of someone other than herself, imagining two members of her coterie writing to each other.

Checkered Checkered or full of alteration and varying character (Oxford English Dictionary).

n004 than