John Milton: The Prose Works

Thomas N Corns

John Milton, English scholar and classical poet, is one of the major figures of Western literature. He was born in 1608 into a prosperous London family. By the
John Milton Sr. worked as a scrivener, a legal secretary whose duties included preparation and notarization of documents, as well as real estate transactions and moneylending. Milton’s father was also a composer of church music, and Milton himself experienced a lifelong delight in music. The family’s financial prosperity afforded Milton to be taught classical languages, first by private tutors at home, followed by entrance to St. Paul’s School at age twelve, in 1620. In 1625, Milton was admitted to Christ’s College, Cambridge.

Diekhoff, John. Milton on Himself: Milton's Utterances Upon Himself and His Works. Oxford: OUP, 1939. Reprinted, London: Cohen & West, 1965. The Complete Prose Works of John Milton. Revised Ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Next, came his prose work inspired by his Puritanism and his political sympathies. His three greatest works belong to the last group. First Group—Shorter Poems At Horton, Milton studied Greek, Latin, English, French, and Italian poets. His pastoral shorter poem L Allegro (the happy man) describes the joy of life in the country in spring season. The IL Penseroso (the thoughtful man) describes his study during the day and his visits to a church in the evenings of autumn season. Lyric Poets Apart from John Milton there were other several lyric-writers who have left us sweet songs. One of them was Richard Lovelace, who wrote To Althea, from Prison and To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars. One of the best living lyric poets of that time was Robert Herrick.