Since first this Subject for Heroic Song
Pleas’d me long choosing, and beginning late.

--Paradise Lost 9.25-26

See how from far upon the Eastern road
The star-led Wizards haste with odors sweet:
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honor first, thy Lord to greet.

--Milton, “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” (1629)

His work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first.

--Dr. Johnson, Life of Milton

Nor did God merely breathe that spirit into man, but moulded it in each individual, and infused it throughout, enduing and embellishing it with its proper faculties.

--Milton, De doctrina Christiana (On Christian Doctrine), chapter 7

Is this the Seat our Conqueror has given?
And this the Climate we must change for Heaven?
These Regeions and this Realm my Wars have got;
This mournful Empire is the Loser's Lot.

--John Dryden, State of Innocence and Fall of Man: An Opera (cf. Paradise Lost 1.242-45)

For Spirits when they please
Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompound’d is thir Essence pure,
Not ti’d or manacl’d with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbersome flesh; but in what shape they choose
Dilated or condens’t, bright or obscure,
Can execute thir aery purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfil.

(PL 1.423-31)

Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy’st
(And pure thou were created) we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, union of pure with pure Desiring.

(PL 8.622-28)

Adam Unparadis’d
incubabat--brooded
monism, vitalism--see ch. 7 of The Christian Doctrine
iambic pentameter
end-stopped verse, enjambment

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