

A3c Staye Conick soule thy errante

Notes. This is yet another answer to “Goe soule the bodies guest”, rebutting the latter poem almost point by point. It survives in only one known manuscript copy and may not have been widely disseminated. The reference to the “Brave Sovereyne” as “She” confirms that it was written during Elizabeth’s reign. Prominent references to “atheism” and “Fortune” again demonstrate the link which contemporaries made between “Goe soule” and Sir Walter Raleigh. This poem’s awkward syntax makes it less successful as an example of poetic skill than some of the other replies to “Goe soule”, but the author’s scorn for Raleigh is passionate and direct.

Staye Conick soule thy errante

And lett the beste alone¹

The worst skornes forged warrante²

Thy Patron now is gonn

The lyes thou gave so hott

Returns into thy throte.

5

The Courte hathe settled suernes

In bannishinge sutche bouldnes:

The Churtche reteynes her puernes

Though Atheysts shewe theyr couldnes³

The Courte and Churtch though⁴

Turnes Lyes into thy face

10

The Potentates reply

Thow base by them advanced

Sinisterly sores hye

And at theyr actions glanced.⁵

They for this thanck-less parte

Turnes Lyes into thy harte.

15

States-men seeke common good

And shunn bothe hate and faction

20

Adventure welthe and blud
To maynteyn cuntryes action
And these with grete detest
Turnes Lyes into thy brest.

The Courtes attending trayne 25
Brave Sovereynes servyce tender
For vertues worth agayne
She⁶ recompence doth tender
The Lyes that these have hearde
They turne into thy bearde 30

Both zeale and Love thoue slan⁷
With thy envenomed tunge
Tyme motions fleshly dangers
To the thow dust and dunge
And till that thow be deade⁸ 35
Turnes Lyes uppon thy heade.

Age, Honor, Beuty, Favour
As lyekes the⁹ now thow changest
Thow all of change doest savoure
And in those humors raungest¹⁰ 40
These for reportes unkyende
Turnes Lyes into thy myende.

Detractor bothe from witt
And wisdoms sacred skill
A Curb¹¹ and cutting bitt¹² 45
Must reave¹³ thy wresting will
These lykewyse by assynement
Turnes Lyes into thy judgement

Phisick and Charitye
 Wronged by skill-less rayling¹⁴ 50
 Lawe termed enmity
 Fyends thy opinions fayling
 And for those termes unfitt
 Turnes Lyes into thy witt

Fortune was blyende to rayse the¹⁵ 55
 By nature, frendshipps foe
 Justice indeed delayse the
 From whither thow must goe
 And these whome thow doste mayme
 Trust¹⁶ lyes into thy name. 60

Thow art-less, gibes at Art
 And scoffes att schooles of lerning
 Schollers skorne this prowde parte
 And gives thee (witless¹⁷
 And f his sharpe contro¹⁸ 65
 Turne into thy hou¹⁹

Citty thy faythe hath proved,
 Cuntry, glad of thy assence²⁰
 Mannhoode and vertue moved
 To hear thy senceless sentence 70
 They, for thow art prone to stryfe
 Gives Lyes to all thy Lyefe.

Now Blabber soone repent the
 Of this thy Lyinge vayne
 Eatche state wil ells torment the 75
 When thow returnes agayne

Mean whyle unto thy shame
They Bastonade²¹ thy fame.

Source. Bodleian MS Tanner 306*, fol. 188r-v

Other known sources. Raleigh, *Poems* 42

A3c

- ¹ *Staye Conick...alone*: i.e. the “conick” soul should abandon its errand and cease criticizing the high and mighty. Although its general meaning is clear, the word “conick” is somewhat problematic. It may be “conical” (i.e. crooked or irregular in motion and purpose) or perhaps “cunning” (i.e. clever, sly).
- ² *The worst...warrante*: even the least honorable members of society (i.e. those most likely to be jealous of “the best” and willing to see them slandered) reject the claim to truth (made in “Goe soule the bodies gweste”) and recognize this criticism as unjustified. The “truth” claimed by the author of “Goe soule” is here described as being exposed as a “forged warrante”—hence “thy Patron” (i.e. the supposed “truth”) is claimed in the following line to be “now...gonn”.
- ³ *Though Atheysts...couldnes*: another allusion to the “atheism” which was so widely associated with Raleigh and his friends.
- ⁴ *The Courte and Churtch though*: this line is marred by a probable scribal error and a missing word at the end of the line, lost due to damage to the manuscript; read “The Courte and Churtch through grace”.
- ⁵ *Thow base...glanced*: although potentates advance base men, the actions of those who soar high by indirect means are censured.
- ⁶ *She*: i.e. Elizabeth I, the “brave Sovereyne”.
- ⁷ *slan*: damaged manuscript; read “slander”.
- ⁸ *Tyme motions...deade*: i.e. time brings fleshly dangers closer to thee, thou dust and dung, (and will continue to do so) until thou be dead.
- ⁹ *As lyekes the*: i.e. as it pleases thee.
- ¹⁰ *raungest*: ranges, roams about.
- ¹¹ *Curb*: a strap passing under the jaw of a horse and attaching to the ends of the bit.

- 12 *cutting bitt*: a form of bit which cuts the mouth of an unruly horse.
- 13 *reave*: remove, or take possession of, by force.
- 14 *skill-less rayling*: irrational and baseless criticizing. The use of the word “skill” here also suggests a contrast between the intellectual accomplishments required in medicine and the mere “rayling” of the author of “Goe soule the bodies guest”.
- 15 *Fortune was blyende to rayse the*: another allusion to Raleigh, who was strongly associated with “Fortune”, as the supposed author of “Goe soule the bodies guest”. During the period of his meteoric rise to royal favour in the mid-1580s, the connection between Raleigh and “Fortune” was made by his enemies to suggest that he had won success that was entirely undeserved by birth or honorable conduct. Raleigh’s subsequent career gave his association with “Fortune” even greater piquancy. As Sir Robert Naunton (writing several years after Raleigh’s execution) observed: “Sir Walter Raleigh was one that it seems fortune had picked out of purpose of whom to make an example or to use as a tennis ball thereby to show what she could do, for she tossed him up of nothing, and to and fro, and thence down to little more than wherein she found him, a bare gentleman” (71).
- 16 *Trust*: probable scribal error; “Thrust” would be a better reading.
- 17 *And gives thee* (*witless*: damaged manuscript; a word is missing from the end of this line).
- 18 *And f his sharpe contro*: damaged manuscript.
- 19 *Turne into thy hou*: damaged manuscript.
- 20 *assence*: perhaps the obsolete form of the word “essence”, here meaning “importance”.
- 21 *Bastonade*: bastinado; to thrash with a stick (*OED*). Cudgeling a gentleman in this manner was an extreme and calculated form of humiliation, reducing him to the level of a servant or child who could be punished in this way.
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