

B5 Wilye watt, wylie watt

Notes. This poem dates from Raleigh's dramatic fall from office and arrest for treason in the summer of 1603.

Wilye watt,¹ wylie watt
Wats² thou not & know thou what
Looke to thy forme and quat³
in towne & Citie

Freshe Houndes⁴ are on thy taile
that will pull downe thy saile
and make thy hart & quaile
Lord for the pittie

5

Lordshipp is flagg'd and fled
Captainshipp newly sped
Dried is the Hogsheads hed⁵
wily watt wylie

10

Make the best of thy plea
least the rest goe awaie
and thou brought for to saie
wily beguilie

15

For thy skaunce⁶ and pride
thy bloudy minde beside
and thy mouth gaping wide
mischievous machiavell⁷

20

Essex for vengeance cries⁸
his bloud upon thee lies
mountinge above the skies

damnable fiend of hell
mischievous matchivell

25

Source. BL Add. MS 22601, fol. 63r

Other known sources. Raleigh, *Poems* 186

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¹ *watt*: Wat; abbreviated form of Walter.

² *Wats*: pun on Wat/Walter, and “wot”, know.

³ *quat*: squat or crouch; cower.

⁴ *Fresh Houndes*: i.e. Raleigh’s prosecutors.

⁵ *Lordshipp...Hogsheads hed*: reference to Raleigh’s dramatic losses at the beginning of James I’s reign. Before his implication in the Bye and Main Plots, Raleigh had lost his office as Captain of the Guard (the “Captainshipp”) and his lucrative monopoly to license wine-sellers and wine imports (“Dried is the Hogsheads [i.e. the wine cask’s] hed”). The flight of “Lordshipp” may refer to Raleigh’s loss of lands as a result of his treason conviction.

⁶ *skaunce*: skance; a sidelong glance.

⁷ *machiavell*: follower of the supposedly amoral and atheistic creeds of the Italian Niccolò Machiavelli.

⁸ *Essex for vengeance cries*: Raleigh was alleged to have engineered the fall and 1601 execution of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. Raleigh’s plotting against Essex is the main subject of the contemporary poem on Raleigh’s fall, “To whome shall cursed I my Case complaine”.
