

D12 O Ladies, ladies howle & cry

Notes. Croft (“*Reputation*” 58, 61) quotes from and contextualizes parts of this poem.

“A Song”

O Ladies, ladies howle & cry,
For you have lost your Salisbury.
He that of late was your protection,
He is now dead by your infection.¹
Come with your teares bedew his lockes, 5
Death kild him not; it was the pockes.²

Lett Suffolke now, & Walsingham.³
Leave their adulterous lives for shame:
Or else their Ladships must know,
There is noe helpe in Doctor Poe.⁴ 10
For though the man be very cunning,
He canne not stay the poxe⁵ from running.

And now these lecherous wretches all,
Which plotted worthy Essex fall,⁶
May see by this foule loathsome end, 15
How foulie then they did offend.
And as they all deserv'd this curse,
Oh lett them all die soe, & worse.

And lett all, that abuse the King,
Themselves to greatnes soe to bring, 20
Be forc'd to travell to the bath,⁷
To purge themselves of filthie froath:
And when they back againe returne,
Then lett the pockes their bowells burne.

Soe shall the King, & state be blest, 25
And subjects all shall live in rest,
All which long time have been abused
By tricks, which divellish whores have used.
But now the cheife is gone before,
I hope to see the end of more. 30

Source. Bodleian MS Tanner 299, fols. 11v-12r

Other known sources. Folger MS V.a.345, p. 36 (first stanza only)

D12

¹ *infection*: syphilis.

² *pockes*: syphilis.

³ *Suffolke...Walsingham*: Cecil's two alleged lovers, Audrey, Lady Walsingham, wife of Sir Thomas Walsingham and Mistress of the Robes to Queen Anne (Croft, "Reputation" 58), and Catherine Howard, Countess of Suffolk, wife of Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk.

⁴ *Doctor Poe*: Leonard Poe, one of Cecil's physicians.

⁵ *poxe*: syphilis.

⁶ Cecil was frequently accused, both at the time and in the libellous epitaphs, of engineering the fall and 1601 execution of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex

⁷ *the bath*: Cecil died on his return journey from taking the waters at Bath.
