

D26 When that rich soul of thine (now Sainted) kept

Notes. This poem, one of four extant verses concerned to rebut the libels that circulated after the death of Robert Cecil, is attributed in the only known source to Richard Corbett. Although Corbett wrote several forceful anti-libels in response to subsequent scandals, his modern editors do not include this poem among his works. Like a number of other anti-libels, the poem uses stereotypical images of libellers as base, envious liars with no respect for justice or religion, to magnify the fame and virtue of the libellers' victim.

“Antidotum Cæcilianum”

When that rich soul of thine (now Sainted) kept
His seate on earth, my humble muse nere slept
Out of the sweet content where in shee dwelt
To sing thy worth, the effects whereof were felt
But now since death hath freedom given to thee 5
To see thy prayse made others flattery
And that each mouse on the dead lyon leapes
And every riming pen forgd matter heapes
On thy bright fame, casting thereon base durt
Uppon thy honourd herse winding more hurt 10
To thee then death or Hel could doe, I may
And must be bold (or sin) this truth to say
Each evidence thy foes bring speaks thy prayse
For what can more thy fame and glory rayse?
Then to be raild at by the worst of men? 15
Such as are outlawes live not in the ken
Of Justice or religion, but base slaves
Whose rimes and sins make their owne nests their graves
Twas meet thy vertues eminent and high
Should not unenvyed live, unslandred dy, 20
For then we mighte have feared thou hadst not been

So absolute a man, Now it is seen,
Even by those many shaddowes envy throwes,
That thy worth was substantial, not showes.

Source. Folger MS V.a.345, p. 107

D26
