

## H10 Poore Pilote thou hast lost thy Pinke

*Notes.* This is one of a number of poems, composed both in 1613-14 and 1615-16, that depict Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, and his wife, Frances Howard, as respectively the master or pilot of a boat (a “pink”), and as the boat itself. This libel is discussed by Lindley (161-62), Bellany (Politics 169), and McRae (Literature 54-55).

Poore Pilote thou hast lost thy Pinke<sup>1</sup>

And by her leake<sup>2</sup> downe to the bottome sinke,

Thy lands bee gone, alas they weare not thyne

Thy house likewise, another sayes is myne

Then wheare’s thy witt, alas tis 2 yeares dead<sup>3</sup>

And wher’s thy wife, another did her wedd.<sup>4</sup>

Art thou a man or butt the simple part

Nothing thyne owne butt thy aspyring hart.

Rawley thy howse,<sup>5</sup> Westmerland thy lands<sup>6</sup>

Overburye thy witt, Essex thy wife demands,

Like Æsops gey,<sup>7</sup> each bird will pluck a feather

And thou strip’t nak’t exposed to winds an weather

Butt yet thy freinds to keepe thee from the coulde

Have mud’e<sup>8</sup> the upp in London’s strongest houlde.<sup>9</sup>

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**Source.** BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 72r

**Other known sources.** “Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript” 64; Bodleian MS Don. c.54, fol. 22v; Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 6; Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1048, fol. 64r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 17v; BL MS Sloane 2023, fol. 58v; CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 11r; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 98v

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<sup>1</sup> *Pilote...Pinke*: the pilot is Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset; the pink, or boat, is Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset.

- <sup>2</sup> *leake*: the pun here depends on the association of “leakiness” with female sexual incontinence.
- <sup>3</sup> *witt...dead*: Carr’s “wit” is Sir Thomas Overbury, murdered in the Tower in 1613.
- <sup>4</sup> *wife...wedd*: refers to Frances Howard’s first marriage to Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex.
- <sup>5</sup> *Rawley thy howse*: Carr had received the house and estate at Sherborne—which had been confiscated from Sir Walter Raleigh after his conviction for treason in 1603—as a royal gift in 1608. Carr sold the estate back to the Crown when James I decided to grant it to his eldest son, Henry. After Henry’s death in 1612, Carr purchased Sherborne back from the Crown.
- <sup>6</sup> *Westmerland thy lands*: late in 1613, James I granted Carr substantial lands in the north-east of England that had been taken by the Crown from the Earls of Westmoreland in 1569.
- <sup>7</sup> *Æsops gey*: an allusion to Aesop’s fable of the jackdaw dressed in borrowed feathers.
- <sup>8</sup> *mud’e*: mewed, confined.
- <sup>9</sup> *London’s strongest houlde*: the Tower of London.
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