

I11 O had thy name bene causer of thy death

Notes. The only extant copy of this verse is in the commonplace book of William Davenport of Bramhall, Cheshire, where it is one of a handful of libels attributed to “E.K.” or “Ed. Kel.”. The poem was transcribed by Davenport alongside other news items on Raleigh’s Guiana voyage and execution.

“Off the Lyffe & Death of Sir Waterr Rawleye Knight. made by Ed. Kel. 1618”

O had thy name¹ bene causer of thy death
or had thy harte growne aged with thy yeares
then had thou yett injoyed now wished breath
or drencht in honor wee had spared these teares
but Neptunes² feare, thou wouldste with him contend 5
agreed with Ulcane³ he should be thyne Ende
Once livedst thou great, beloved but small
yet great ones did thee greatlye use
now greatlye loved, beinge not at all
who cann thy fates in this excuse 10
fortune then used thee as her game
beinge as unconstant as thy name⁴
Some men mistaken, cald the Machevylle⁵
it was thy witt that that suspicion bredd 15
some demed thee Atheist, childe of wordlye wille
which now good Cristian calle thee beinge dead
thy last confession⁶ made them trulye sorrie
wich earst desired to have reade thy fatall storie.
Englands great Generall,⁷ gave thee lyffe
which thou injoyedst to see him deade, 20
Croakte Lorde of factions, bread that stryffe.⁸
havinge thee & others, then misledd
tow thinges thou didste, now causers off thy ruthe⁹

against thy Kinge, thy wisdome & thy truth
to world, to witt, to valoure, & to welth
thou badest farewell, as vaine & transitorie
on Earth thou foundste noe harborrowghe of healthe
havige bent thy course unto a higher glorie
the gracious porte thou chooise for glorious gaine
was trust in him,¹⁰ who for thy soule was slayne.

25

30

Source. CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 14v

I 11

- ¹ *thy name*: perhaps an allusion to the frequent puns on Raleigh's name as "Raw Lie" (see Section A).
- ² *Neptunes*: god of the sea; but potentially also an allusion to a contemporary figure threatened by Raleigh's power.
- ³ *Ulcanne*: Vulcan, god of fire; possibly an allusion to a contemporary plotting Raleigh's destruction.
- ⁴ *unconstant as thy name*: again, probably referring either to the "Raw Lie" pun on Raleigh's surname, or to the pun on his first name as "Water".
- ⁵ *Machevylle*: Machiavel; a follower of Machiavelli's amoral political counsel. One poet had branded Raleigh a "Machiavell" for his plotting to bring down Essex in 1601 (Trevelyan 338).
- ⁶ *last confession*: Raleigh's reputation-restoring scaffold-speech, which repudiated the charges of Machiavellism and atheism.
- ⁷ *Englands great Generall*: Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.
- ⁸ *Croakte Lorde...stryffe*: in transcribing the poem, William Davenport inserts here a marginal note identifying the crooked lord of factions as "Lord of Salisburie" (Robert Cecil), who was widely alleged to have manipulated Essex's enemies in order to destroy him.
- ⁹ *tow thinges...thy ruthe*: in transcribing the poem, William Davenport inserts here the marginal note, "his conspiracie against the Kinge with Cobbam & Graye and uppon the Iland voaydge for not [*illegible word*] upp to his generall with his shippinge. the Earle of Essex beinge generall". The "conspiracie against the Kinge" was the offence for which Raleigh was convicted of treason in 1603 (see Section B). Raleigh's conduct during Essex's 1597 "Islands Voyage" infuriated many of Essex's commanders, some

of whom demanded that Raleigh be executed for contravening the chain of command. These disputes are described by Trevelyan (296-309).

¹⁰ *him*: Christ.

