

Nvi2 Contemne not Gracious king our plaints and teares

Notes. This poem responds to James I's "O stay your teares yow who complaine", and is thus a rather neat example of how a royal performance designed to dampen the craze for "railing rymes" is subsumed into, and ends up stimulating, the manuscript culture of political versifying.

"An answer to the wiper away of the Peoples teares"

Contemne not Gracious King our plaints and teares

Wee are no babes the tymes us witness beares

Yet since our father yow doe represent¹

To be as babes to yow wee are content

T'is true yow can deject the proudest minde

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For pride is base and soone to fall inclinde

Yow can take downe the mightiest man alive

Who doth from man his mightines derive

Yes shides² of state will chipps of chance excell

though these in Courts and those in dungeons dwell

10

When soe yow please to imbrue your Royall hand

In blood of those that dare at bay to stande

But we must goe in saufetie to our grave

Our harts for raunsome of our heads yow have

O lett not then disdain but grace and love

15

Lengthen their dayes whose faith yow daily prove

Or might we dye then kill with your aspect

Which death & life in instant doth effecte.

Source. Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fol. 59r

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet.c.50., fol. 25v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet.26, fol. 20r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet.152, fol. 4r

¹ *our father yow doe represent*: alluding to James I's self-presentation as the nation's father in "O stay your teares" (an image ubiquitous in royal imagery from this period).

² *Shides*: planks. Shides of wood are thus greater in size than "chippes".