

Pi36 The Argument is cold and sencelesse clay

Notes. Presented as the murdered Duke's posthumous confession, this extremely ambitious three-part poem effectively recapitulates Buckingham's crimes through a loosely biographical account of his rise, triumph and ultimate fall. Holstun offers a reading of the poem as part of an exploration of how the assassination poems "repeatedly evoke the language and forms of Renaissance tragedy" (183).

"Upon the Duke"

The Argument

The Argument is cold and sencelesse clay,

A breathles subject, very night and day,

The cold too furious, hot Ambition speaks.

The senceles to the sensuall (breathles) breaks

Silence, and preacheth unto mortall breath,

Day of the night, and night is taught of death.

Suppose but then you heard his Umbra's¹ crie,

Instructing all from Slave to Majestie.

Stay (Mortalls) then, in's name,² at whose commaund

Sol's restlesse spheare did quickly stopp and stand

As fixt,³ and lend mee your Attention:

Happie the Eares that suck in such prevention

Of future Evills. Had I hearkened to,

Or well observ'd (as wise men now will doe

My Storie) the fresh and obvious Fates

Of soveraigne and domestique Potentates

Knitt up in blood, I might have hearkened still

To better secrets, of my Makers will,

Than State-Pollicie, and so shin'd true

Honours Starr, to follow, not to eschue.

Then patiently addresse your ears awhile,

5

10

15

20

Oh heare mee not with a remorselesse smile
At myne extorted plaints; but rather greive
You are as I, Sonnes of deluded Eve.⁴

Protasis⁵

No sooner had discretion brought mee in 25
On this worlds Theater, with naked chinne,⁶
E're Art had squar'd my rough opinion
To fitt mee for a Monarch's Minion,⁷
Or prie into the Arke of State Affaires,⁸
Or to descend⁹ true Honours craggie staires, 30
Or furrough on the churlish Ocean,¹⁰
Or tread a march in warlike motion,
Or Pietie (the soule of all the rest)
Had taught mee first to love my countrie best;
But affectation of a higher state 35
(The sinne that first of all the heavens did hate)
Tooke up my utmost thoughts; And, of my time
On Earth, I spent the very pith and prime
In the pursuite thereof, And on that Theame
By day I studied, and at night did dreame, 40
Wasting the lampe of comtemplation
On present good, whilst Moderation
And Mediocritie in Earthly things¹¹
(Which the sweetest contentation brings)
I view'd as Mottoe's of dejected mindes: 45
Tis poore Philosophie that noething findes
But bare Notions of some good heereafter:
This moved Epicurus¹² unto laughter:
But through the open Gate of all Excesse,
In Luxurie and Voluptuousnes, 50
To tread the broad path of a stately dance,

With Musique, Banquetts, and a Ladies glance,
 This did I think the Milkie way¹³ to bliss:
 The straite and narrow Path I strove to misse.
 With this bad sophistrie¹⁴ my list'ning will 55
 Was quicklie caught, and snared fast, untill
 Nature her Forces did combine with Art
 To gett possession of my Soveraignes heart
 (The Center) whence I meant to stretch the Lynes
 Of my desires (Ambitions) and designes 60
 To the Circumference of earthly fame,
 Still coveting a great (not a good) Name.
 For Fates, or Philtres,¹⁵ worse direction,
 Wonne my disposers¹⁶ deare Affection
 That I was entertain'd with great applause; 65
 And though, on my part, shape¹⁷ was all the cause,
 Yet was I lodged like some Oracle
 In's Royall heart, and sett on Pinnacle
 Of honour; whence, with the perspective glasse
 Of favour, I behelld the flower and grasse 70
 Of worldly Pompe; the smooth delightfull plaines
 Of pleasures, treasures, offices and gaines,
 Promotions hills, and the risinge bancks
 Upon the River of Rewards and thanks.
 And what I saw, I seized on. More yet; 75
 I saw and searcht the Royall Cabbinett
 Of seacrets, And from his rich Wisdomes Myne
 I digg'd those Gemms that made my Actions shine.
 My dexteritie in state passages,
 My splendour in forraigne Ambassages, 80
 My large Revenues, and extreme Expence,
 Whether of Bountie or Magnificence,

With those high Favours to my kindred done,¹⁸
 Were by the beames dispersed from his sunne
 Of rare Learning, and Liberalitie, 85
 Exceeding my desert or quallitie
 But Goodnes powred on a gracelesse heart
 Like wholesome herbe to Poison doth convert
 In the Vipers brest, Not halfe soe hatefull
 To heaven or Earth, as is the man ungratefull. 90
 And such was I. For that Iberian Fox,¹⁹
 That Balaam that layd England stumbling blocks,²⁰
 Warn'd mee of my most slipperie condition,
 Much subject unto Majesties suspicion
 And distast: which soon would gett strong head, 95
 If once Affection were but altered,
 Upon my Fault, Or some seducing Face,
 As in myne and my Predecessors case
 Fell out;²¹ Soe that it were discretions deed
 To have two Kings to Frend²² upon a need, 100
 That if I were collapsed in disgrace,
 I might be sure of a retyring place.
 To this old Sirens song²³ I did agree;
 And to bee sure of two Friends I made three;²⁴
 For true assurance of whose loves fruition, 105
 I did requite it with a blanke commission,²⁵
 With other courtesies which were noe lesse
 Than meritorious, As his Holinesse²⁶
 Knowes well enough. Thus I from favour drew
 Disloyaltie; and having gotten new 110
 Supporting hopes, cast off the old one cleane,
 And on the yonger Propp began to leane
 Thus was I haunted with distracting charmes,

To seek new Arts t'increase my Native harmes.
 Now underpropt from my deserved fall, 115
 And well defended by the Cædar tall
 From Justice stroke (which sought and sued long
 For some redresse of groaning Subjects wrong)²⁷
 The Flood of my Ambition swelld soe high,
 It overflow'd the bankes of Modestie, 120
 And with the torrent of unbridled will
 Swept all away, It spared not to spill
 The lives and blood of myne own country men,²⁸
 And if I loved One, I hated Tenn,
 Like to that Tyrant²⁹ that would often boast 125
 To make and marr Mankinde hee studied most.
 Nor was I read in Spanish Politiques,
 Onely I learn'd some of the Guises³⁰ tricks.
 Thus was Justice topsie turvie turn'd,
 The Commons greived, and the Gentry mourn'd: 130
 And for my Peeres (they were not my compeeres)³¹
 Though farr my betters both in blood and yeares)
 I galled and gulld their noble spiritts,
 And with whisp'ring scandaliz'd their Meritts:
 Yet, coadjutors³² to my Ends I found: 135
 Of English Nobles, all were never sound.
 Thus did my Pride upon Oppressions Winges
 Surmount all Presidents that Storie sings.³³
 But as the Comets borrowed fires light
 Blazeth more, and shineth farr more bright 140
 Then the true fier of the fixed starr,
 Because it is removed farr
 From sight; Soe my Ambitions blazon³⁴
 Gave a brighter lustre to bee gaz'd on

By purblinde³⁵ worldlings, then true honour gott 145
 By due desert, free from Revenges shott.
 Catastrophe³⁶
 But, oh, the candle of my Glorie's out,
 The Comet's vanisht, And Astraea's skout,³⁷
 Inexorable Nemesis,³⁸ blood-hound
 Of direfull fate, long hunted, lurking found 150
 Mee under the covert of dissimulation,
 And hipocrasies abhomination,
 Covered with a glorious pretence
 Of the distressed Rochellers defence.³⁹
 Oh gross contempt to heavens connyving Eye, 155
 And to my Masters sweet simplicitie.
 But had I stabd Don Olivares⁴⁰ dead,
 Or the French Cardinall⁴¹ basely poisoned,
 It had been better, then thus to despite
 And plott the Ruine of heavens Favourite, 160
 Reform'd Religion: Oh, my Sinons Art,⁴²
 To seeme to bee and not to bee in heart;
 Of all Impieties, suparlative;
 Had this sinne not been myne, perhapps alive
 I had been still, and to olld Age remayn'd, 165
 Although myne honour was most fowlie stayn'd
 With other crimes: For, Mercies Influence
 Drops of the pretious Balme of Indulgence
 Upon the deepest sin-stabbd souls, save those
 Who are Truths seeming Friends, yet Foes: 170
 Such halting, juggling, and newtralitie,
 Sure is the greatest sin in qualitie.
 For see Manasses in Idolatrie,
 In Witchcraft, in bloodshedd, and in tyranny

Deeplie plung'd, and in a desperate case; 175
 Yet whilst hee was, in heart as well as face
 Averse to truth, hee mercie found at last,
 His Errors heald, and all his sorrowes past.⁴³
 But oh, Beehold fourth Henry, the French King,
 The warning-Peece of Princes, wavering: 180
 Oh! See his hopes, come to the highest flood,
 Ebbing (like mine) soe sodainly in blood.⁴⁴
 And thus, I, Cacus-like⁴⁵ (Monster of Men)
 Was dragg'd, and haled from theevish denne
 Of lying and Equivocation,⁴⁶ 185
 Winding, and false tergiversation,⁴⁷
 But⁴⁸ the Herculean power and force
 Of justice; which (before I was a corpse)
 Had, in the courts of heaven and Earth, complain'd
 Shee was soe Nose-wip'd,⁴⁹ slighted and disdain'd, 190
 Under honours cloake soe closely muffled,
 And in my rare Projects soe shuffled,
 That noble courage 'gan to faint and reele,
 And faith it self the very symptomes feelee
 Of base despaire, to see the monstrous birth 195
 Of Nimrods race⁵⁰ swarme on our English Earth.
 But I my self gan stronglie to conclude,
 The Lambe⁵¹ th Almighty Lyon could delude,
 And that my Artlesse deere Medea's Art⁵²
 Divine decrees could frustrate quite, and thwart. 200
 This Impunity Presumption bredd,
 Atheisme lurkes in a presumptuous head.
 But oh! The glittering sword is now unsheath'd;
 The Witches With⁵³ by Vengeance hand is wreath'd.
 Justice (like Tamerlayne) hath now display'd 205

His sable flagg,⁵⁴ since Mercie was repay'd
 Thus with contempt; And now (alas) too late
 I finde and feele what 'tis to prove ingrate.
 To grace my countrie and my Soveraigne,
 What late I feared most, now full faine 210
 Would come to (Parliament), and soone submitt
 On knees unto my poorest Opposite,
 And for their honours sake bee much more bolld
 To spill my blood, then I was to gett their golld.
 O happie, yea thrice happie is the corpse 215
 Dissociated by the Axe, Nor worse
 Is to bee thought their constellation
 Whom the Rope calls unto Meditation
 Of dissolution;⁵⁵ O Mercy rare,
 To feed the pamper'd flesh with crusts of care, 220
 And sorrowes soppes, steeped in Angells Wine
 (Teares) for transgressions: Who would repine
 At such diasaster! when mutuall Greife
 Presented to the soule, yealds some Releife
 To the fainting spiritt, And dearest loves 225
 Are oft exchang'd with kisses, teares, and gloves
 At parting; whilst the Tenor⁵⁶ sadlie tolls,
 Begging sweet pardon for their fleeting souls.
 But I, ah, lamentable wretched I
 (Favours Mirror) not soe favourablie 230
 Dealt with as the pinion'd, shack'ld slave,
 Nor once permitted to intreate or crave
 Forgiveness, Nor my dying hands or Eyes
 Once to lift up unto th'offended Skies,
 But sodainly thus to bee snatchd away 235
 From Friends, and hopes, and such a golden Pray:

Oh sad Catastrophe, Oh dismall houre,
 Wherein one stabb cut off the thredd and flowre
 Of life and Age: Oh broken confidence
 In any creature subject unto sence: 240
 Oh my sweet Millions, goodlie Treasures:
 Oh all my profitts, dignities, and pleasures,
 Like to the dust by sodaine Whirlwinds caught,
 Disper'st and scatter'd, even with a thought:
 Oh bitterest dissociation: 245
 Oh depth of Justice, Retalliation,
 For their bellowing blood which lowdlie cries,
 Ree was a most perfidious Enterprize,
 Prologue unto Rochells woeful Storie,
 Sounding Brittaines shame, and Babells glorie:⁵⁷ 250
 Nor is the sorrow least of all the other,
 That, for my death, none saies, Alas my Brother.
 Nay hearke; The thundring Jubile of Joy,
 Ecchoyng from the mouth of every Boy,
 At my destruction: But, oh the Gall; 255
 My Murtherer's lamented. Hearke! they call
 Him, Noble Roman; second Curtius;⁵⁸
 Undaunted Scævola;⁵⁹ that dared thus
 T'expose himself, to torment, shame, and death,
 To spoile his countries spoiler of his breath. 260
 Oh Miserie! Where are you then, my Lords,
 Whose tongues were lately sharper then your swords?
 What! Not a word? Oh strange silentium:⁶⁰
 And you, my black-mouthed Prophetts; what all dumbe?
 You that of late such Metaphysiques tolld, 265
 The Kings Prerogative could turne to gold
 All it toucht,⁶¹ like the tatter'd Chymists stone:⁶²

Howle my tragick fall, in a mournfull tone
 Come write my Elegie: Oh scorned hearse,
 (Like to my name) not graced with a verse, 270
 Nor one white line?⁶³ O strange Antipathie;
 Heavens and Hearts are all at odds with mee.
 Go, temporizing Friends⁶⁴ then, write your owne
 Black Epitaphs: yourselves learne to bemoane:
 Sing your own Dirges to your guiltie soules: 275
 Goe croking Froggs into your wonted holes
 Of carnall confidence: but yet, bee sure
 Long you shall not subsist safe or secure:
 Th'all-searching hand will finde and pull you thence:
 The hornes of th' Altar were a poore defence 280
 For bloodie Joab.⁶⁵ Justice hath begun:
 Some Friends (I feare) must bleed ere shee hath done.
 Who naked crimes with favour's figg-tree-leaves
 Hopeth to hide, his wretched soul deceives,
 As silly Bird is cousin'd with lyme-twiggs,⁶⁶ 285
 Or Fancie with your Lordshipps Perrywiggs.⁶⁷
 Farewell to Favours; bidd them first adiew,
 And then (like shadowes) they will follow you.
 Learne him to feare that can your glories drowne,
 And make you wretched with one cloudie frowne. 290
 I sent Aurora⁶⁸ breathing from the East:
 I must bee gone: Faine would I tell the rest,
 To rapp your mindes with Admiration,
 What my intentive cogitation
 Dalli'd with; And who were of the knott 295
 That did with me my Stratagems complott.
 But time prevents. I will remaine your debtor,
 Till the Post comes with the next false letter.

Mount Pegasus:⁶⁹ Adiew my clymbing Frends.

How sodainly the soaring Larke descends.

300

Source. BL MS Sloane 826, fols. 171r-178r

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 145

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¹ *his Umbra's*: his ghost's.

² *in's name*: in His (i.e. God's) name.

³ *at whose commaund...As fixt*: in the book of Joshua, God stops the sun ("Sol's restlesse spheare") in its tracks, thus prolonging daylight and allowing Joshua's army to complete the slaughter of the Amorites (Joshua 10.12-14).

⁴ *Sonnes of deluded Eve*: Buckingham's shade here addresses his audience as fellow sinners, all descendants of Adam and Eve whose transgressions brought original sin into the world.

⁵ *Protasis*: in Greek drama, the protasis was the introduction to a play. It was followed, in theory, by an epitasis and a conclusion, the "catastrophe". This transcription of the poem includes a heading for the catastrophe but not for the epitasis.

⁶ *naked chinne*: i.e. without a beard. A beardless chin could signify youth in general, but could also hint at effeminacy.

⁷ *Minion*: favourite.

⁸ *the Arke of State Affaires*: the secrets of state—usually known by their Latin term, *arcana imperii*—reserved in principle only for the King and his closest counsellors.

⁹ *descend*: "ascend" is a better reading (Bodleian MS Malone 23).

¹⁰ *furrough on the churlish Ocean*: sail the rough seas. Buckingham became Lord Admiral in 1619.

¹¹ *Moderation...in Earthly things*: Buckingham here recounts his rejection of the fundamental moral principle of the Golden Mean, articulated in Aristotle's *Ethics* and long since absorbed into Christian teaching, which holds that moderation ("Mediocritie") in all things is the key to the virtuous life.

¹² *Epicurus*: ancient Greek philosopher, some of whose followers argued (distorting Epicurus's actual

teachings) that the pursuit and enjoyment of sensual pleasure was the supreme good.

¹³ *Milkie way*: the *OED* gives three contemporary definitions of “Milky Way”: the galaxy, a glistening path to heaven, and “a region of a woman’s breast”. The latter two seem to work best here.

¹⁴ *sophistrie*: i.e. sophistry; “specious but fallacious reasoning” (*OED*).

¹⁵ *Philtres*: magical potions.

¹⁶ *my disposers*: the King’s; here referring to James I.

¹⁷ *shape*: physical appearance.

¹⁸ *high Favours to my kindred done*: the rewards—of title, office, lucrative marriages and lands—showered on Buckingham’s kin were a source of considerable contemporary critique (see Section L).

¹⁹ *Iberian Fox*: i.e. Spanish fox; in this case probably the notorious Spanish ambassador to England, Don Diego de Sarmiento, Count Gondomar.

²⁰ *That Balaam....stumbling blocks*: Gondomar is compared here to Balaam, who appears in different guises in scripture, both as a corrupt, false prophet, and (in Numbers 22-24) as a heroic figure who, at God’s urging, refused the request of King Balak of the Moabites to curse the Israelites. The particular allusion here is to the negative image of Balaam in Revelation 2.14: “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication”.

²¹ *As in myne...Fell out*: Buckingham recalls how Gondomar warned him how easy it is to supplant one royal favourite with another, alluding to how Buckingham himself had displaced James’s previous favourite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, in 1614-15.

²² *To have two Kings to Frend*: Gondomar advises Buckingham to acquire a second royal protector—the King of Spain—as insurance against losing James I’s favour.

²³ *this old Sirens song*: i.e. Gondomar’s advice. Classical mythology described the songs of the sirens as irresistibly seductive.

²⁴ *I made three*: this seems to mean that Buckingham added a third protector, who appears in this case, as the following lines indicate, to have been the Pope.

²⁵ *I did requite...blanke commission*: i.e. Buckingham thanked his sponsors by giving them free rein to act in England as they wished. “[B]lanke commission” here probably means something like a “*carte blanche*”.

- ²⁶ *his Holinesse*: the Pope, Buckingham's "third" friend.
- ²⁷ *And well defended...groaning Subjects wrong*: royal authority ("the Cædar tall") protected Buckingham from parliamentary attempts to bring him to account in 1626 and 1628.
- ²⁸ *It spared not...country men*: possibly an allusion either to the poisoning allegations against Buckingham or to the lives lost during the Ré expedition of 1627.
- ²⁹ *that Tyrant*: "Lewis 11 of France" (marginal note). Louis XI was a notoriously devious monarch.
- ³⁰ *the Guises*: the Guise family led the ultra-Catholic factions during the sixteenth-century French wars of religion.
- ³¹ *compeeres*: this could mean "equals" or, perhaps more likely in this case, "companions".
- ³² *coadjutors*: assistants.
- ³³ *Presidents that Storie sings*: "the precedents that history records".
- ³⁴ *blazon*: heraldic shield.
- ³⁵ *purblinde*: in contemporary usage, this could mean either partially or totally blind.
- ³⁶ *Catastrophe*: in Greek drama, the catastrophe was the conclusion of a play.
- ³⁷ *Astraea's skout*: scout of the goddess of justice.
- ³⁸ *Nemesis*: goddess of vengeance, punisher of crime, and here clearly an agent of justice.
- ³⁹ *glorious pretence...Rochellers defence*: at the time of his murder, Buckingham was preparing a fleet to sail to the aid of the beleaguered Huguenots of La Rochelle.
- ⁴⁰ *Don Olivares*: Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares, was the chief minister of Philip IV, King of Spain.
- ⁴¹ *the French Cardinall*: Armand du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister of Louis XIII, King of France.
- ⁴² *Sinons Art*: the art of deceit. Sinon was the Greek prisoner who convinced the Trojans to let the Trojan horse into their city; he later helped release the Greek soldiers from the horse under cover of night. The implication here is that using Sinon's skills of deception, Buckingham had connived in the ruin of Protestantism.

- ⁴³ *For see Manasses...all his sorrowes past*: allusion to the biblical story of the Israelite King Manasseh, who is depicted in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33 as an idolater who “used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards” (2 Kings 21.6), and who “shed innocent blood very much” (2 Kings 21.16). The account in 2 Chronicles, however, records that, held as a captive in Babylon, Manasseh repented and prayed to God. After God restored him to his throne, Manasseh destroyed the idols he had erected (2 Chronicles 33.11-20).
- ⁴⁴ *Beehold fourth Henry...sodainly in blood*: Henri IV of France had converted to Catholicism in 1593 in order to secure the French throne. The implication of these lines is that the King’s 1610 assassination was a punishment for this religious betrayal.
- ⁴⁵ *Cacus-like*: in classical myth, the thieving giant Cacus was eventually killed by Hercules.
- ⁴⁶ *Equivocation*: the use of deliberately misleading language. In contemporary understanding, the masters of equivocation were the Catholic priests who believed that, under interrogation, it was licit to say one thing while meaning another.
- ⁴⁷ *tergiversation*: literally, back-turning, but with implications of betrayal and deception.
- ⁴⁸ *But*: probable scribal error; read “By” (cf. Bodleian MS Malone 23).
- ⁴⁹ *Nose-wip’d*: mistreated, insulted, disdained.
- ⁵⁰ *Nimrods race*: the biblical Nimrod was “a mighty one in the earth” and “a mighty hunter”, the founder of cities (Genesis 10.8-12). In this period, Nimrod was often taken to be a tyrant.
- ⁵¹ *The Lambe*: this is almost certainly a pun on the name of John Lambe, the notorious astrologer-physician and convicted witch who was believed to be an associate of the Duke.
- ⁵² *my Artlesse deere Medea’s Art*: Medea, the spurned wife of Jason, was known for skill in magic and poison. Buckingham’s “deere Medea” is presumably his mother, Mary Compton, Countess of Buckingham, who was commonly accused of witchcraft by the Duke’s critics.
- ⁵³ *With*: i.e. withe; a wand of willow.
- ⁵⁴ *Justice (like Tamerlayne)...His sable flagg*: in Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great, Part One*, the near-Eastern warrior-king Tamburlaine flies a black (“sable”) flag to signal his intent to slaughter his enemy without mercy (see, e.g., the speech of the Messenger, 4.1.47-63).
- ⁵⁵ *O happie...Of dissolution*: these lines introduce a lengthy section of the poem in which Buckingham laments that his sudden assassination left him no time to repent before death, a troubling point that was admitted even by those who praised Felton’s actions. In this opening, and in the lines that follow, the Duke compares his lot unfavourably with that of condemned felons—whether sentenced to die by

beheading (“Dissociated by the Axe”) or by hanging (“the Rope”)—who were usually given spiritual counsel before their death to prepare them for a public confession and repentance.

⁵⁶ *the Tenor*: a type of bell.

⁵⁷ *Justice, Retalliation...Babells glorie*: suggestion that Buckingham’s death avenged the blood of those who died during the disastrous 1627 expedition to the Ile de Ré, the failure of which led to the continued suffering of the beleaguered Huguenots of La Rochelle. “Babells glorie” presumably refers to the glory of the Catholic enemy.

⁵⁸ *Curtius*: Mettius Curtius threw himself into a chasm in the Roman forum as a patriotic sacrifice for the city.

⁵⁹ *Scaevola*: after being captured in an attempt to assassinate the leader of Rome’s enemies, the patriot hero Mucius Scaevola thrust his own right hand into a fire, so amazing his intended victim that he released him and eventually negotiated peace with the Romans. The link between Felton and Scaevola is also made in “Why: is our Age turn’d coward, that no Penn”.

⁶⁰ *silentium*: silence.

⁶¹ *my black-mouthed Prophetts...All it toucht*: Buckingham here laments the silence of those who might have been expected to become his apologists. By identifying these “black-mouthed Prophetts” with those who had recently made elevated claims for the scope of the royal prerogative (the royal power to act above or beyond the law), the poet may be alluding to the preachers—in particular, Robert Sibthorpe and Roger Manwaring—who had given controversial sermons in 1627 defending the royal authority to levy the extra-parliamentary forced loan.

⁶² *Chymists stone*: i.e. the alchemists’ stone, that would transmute base metals into gold.

⁶³ *Oh scorned hearse...one white line?*: commendatory elegies were customarily attached to funeral hearses.

⁶⁴ *temporizing Friends*: fair-weather friends.

⁶⁵ *The hornes...For bloodie Joab*: King David’s nephew Joab was killed, on Solomon’s orders, for the murders of Abner and Amasa. Attempting in vain to escape his fate, Joab had “fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar” (1 Kings 2.28-34).

⁶⁶ *lyme-twiggs*: twigs coated with a sticky form of sap known as lime and used to trap small birds.

⁶⁷ *Perrywiggs*: i.e. periwigs; wigs.

⁶⁸ *Aurora*: goddess of the dawn.

⁶⁹ *Pegasus*: mythical winged horse.