

Pii17 Wants hee a grave whom heavens doe cover? was hee

Notes. Whether this poem pre-dates or post-dates the far-better known “Heere uninterr’d suspends (though not to save” is impossible to determine. The poem does, however, closely echo the political sentiments of that poem, and opens with a paraphrase of the line from Lucan’s Pharsalia which is sometimes appended in Latin to versions of the more widely copied work.

“On John Felton”

Wants hee a grave whom heavens doe cover?¹ was hee

Unfortunate in his Catastrophe?

Because hee did not trust a marble stone

With that which needs not feare oblivion

No, no, his tombe like to his fact is high

Outspringing ægips pride;² the deity.

That heaven should be his tombe ’twas thought most meet

Ah, heaven his tombe, the aire his winding sheet³

A roome then it no lesser could suffice

The actor of so great an enterprise

Which were just or unjust bad or good

Whats that to any blood repayed blood

Whose carcassee for the crawling wormes too good

Doth gorge the Eagells and the faulcons brood

Here felton hung a spectacle of dread

A pendant sword ore proud ambitions head

Whom here the winds embalme with fragrant sents

To whom sad clouds contribute their laments

And time each night upon his tombe presents

A thousand lights which burnes till day appeare

And then his requiem sung by winged quiers.

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Other known sources. Bodleian MS CCC 328, fol. 63v; Beinecke MS Osborn Box 12 no. 5, fol. 20r

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- ¹ *Wants hee a grave...cover*: “they obtaine / Heavens coverture, that have no urnes at all” (Lucan N7r).
 - ² *ægips pride*: the pride of Egypt; excessive pomp and arrogance.
 - ³ *winding sheet*: the cloth sheet wrapped around a corpse before burial.
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