

## Piii20 When in the brazen leaves of fame

*Notes. This is one of two elegies on Buckingham written by Thomas Carew, who was to become one of the preeminent court poets of the 1630s. (See also “Reader when these dumbe stones have told”.) Both poems were published in Carew’s 1640 Poems and both are analyzed perceptively by G. Hammond (51-53). Carew depicts Felton as a “Cloudy sullen soul” animated by “blinded zeale”, a phrase that links the assassin to a pejoratively imagined Puritanism. The concluding lines may refer to the magnificent monument erected to Buckingham in Westminster Abbey by his widow, Katherine Villiers, Duchess of Buckingham. If this is so, the poem may not have been finished until the time of the tomb’s completion in the early 1630s.*

### “On the Duke of Buckingham”

When in the brazen<sup>1</sup> leaves of fame  
the life, the death of Buckingham  
Shallbe recorded, if Truths hand  
Incize the story of our land,  
Posterity shall see a faire  
structure, by the studious care  
of two Kings<sup>2</sup> raised, that did no lesse  
their wisdom then their power expresse;  
By blinded zeale, whose doubtfull light  
made murders scarlett roabe seeme white,  
Whose vaine deluding phantomes charmed  
A Cloudy sullen soule, and armed  
a desperate hand thirsty of blood,  
Torne from the faire Earth where it stood;  
So the Majestick fabrick fell  
his actions let our Annalls tell,  
wee write no Chronicle; this pyle  
weares only sorrowes face and style,  
which even the envy which did wayte

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upon his flourishing estate 20  
 turned to soft pittie of his death,  
 now payes his Hearse; but that cheape breath  
 shall not blow heere, nor th'unpure brine  
 Puddle those streames that bathe this shrine.  
 These are the pious obsequies<sup>3</sup> 25  
 dropt from his Chaste wives pregnant eyes  
 In frequent shewers, and were alone  
 by her congealing sighes made stone;  
 on which the Carver did bestow  
 these formes, and characters of woe, 30  
 So hee the fashion only lent  
 whilst she wept all the Monument.

**Source.** BL MS Harley 6917, fols. 20v-21r

**Other known sources.** Carew, *Poems* 96; Carew, *Poems of Thomas Carew* 57; Bodleian MS Don. b.9, fol. 33r; Rosenbach MS 1083/17, fol. 65r

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<sup>1</sup> *brazen*: brass, brass-like.

<sup>2</sup> *two Kings*: James I and Charles I.

<sup>3</sup> *obsequies*: mourning rituals.