

Piii16 Might Teares Revive thee I could wish to be

Notes. This ambitious poem combines a number of themes, ranging from attacks on popular perceptions of the Duke, to an unusually heightened depiction of the immense scope of Buckingham's power as a favourite. The verse concludes with a forceful evocation of Buckingham's virtue, courtesy and bravery, and an appreciation of his physical and spiritual beauty.

Might Teares Revive thee I could wish to be

Dissolvd & melted like to Nyobe¹

But just conceived Rage, & bitter woe

Drye up the brackish² streames they cannot flowe.

And can it be amidst thy troupes³ one Arme

5

Could plot such mischeife & enact such harme?

Maye such a massacre be wrought & He

Not Thunderstrooke by th omnipotencie

Where was Joves Lightning⁴ when this deede was done

how chance his Arme shrunck not, grew deade & num?

10

Ah powerfull God forgive wee ought not pry

Into thy hidden secret Mistery

Wee cannot knowe the suns transparent beames

By his own face but by his guilding streames

Too glorious soe Gods Judgments are, & showne

15

In their effects, by which his pleasure's knowne,

World-famed Cesar⁵ fetching his Renowne

Far from those parts where scarce proud Rome was knowne

Heaping up wealth & Glory to the state

By publique hands was slaine, & publique Fate

20

Greatenes howere acheivd doth drawe along

Envy & malice from the stupid throng

The Knyges⁶ People whoe beloe doe vew

Things done above doe alwaies judge untrue

Treason to them if't be put home & done	25
Is cald faire Justice, when the Righteous doome ⁷	
If it fall shorte they terme it Policy	
And a waie to Roote out true Nobilitie	
Under this last fell this same Lord with them	
That hate noe facts but as they hate the men	30
But wiser saye that truly judge these times	
It was the peoples Scandall not his Crimes	
In this confusion did the Kings choyce hand	
Set him above his foes, gave him command	
And power by which he got the day	35
of the inconstant multitude, for they	
Began to find now virtues in the Man	
The Honord Greate and matchles Buckingham	
Where was the man amongst us did not then	
Call him both Greate and Good, I & condemne	40
Their censures by thy Judgment when thy eye	
Alone could chuse such worthe & dignity	
Whoe was held wise that did not seeke to hold	
A place from him, all Fathers that were old	
Thought it Inheritance enough to give	45
Their children if he knew them, for to live	
For thou hadst raisd him to that Eminency	
That but thy selfe none was soe greate & high	
Ah dreaded Lord did ever one day see	
Any in woe and Glory like to thee	50
Evn as Apollo ⁸ in his burning throne	
Thow shinst at morne for men to gaze upon	
The daies & Howers on each hand did attend	
Expecting when thou wouldst employment send	
The seasons did awaite thee, Heate and Cold	55

Autumne and Spring yeares Months daies manifold
 All seemd at thy direction, Nobles bow
 The Gentry are ambitious but to knowe
 What is thy pleasure And the yeomen stand
 More ready to obey then thou comand 60
 Thy howse did seeme a Temple thither flye
 The People all to know their desteny
 Nor doth the Marygold with more devotion
 Attend the sun then did the coarte thy motion
 And can such distance be twixt Life and Death 65
 And doth all Pompe forsake as with our breath
 Shall wee bring back noe more unto the Tombe
 Then what wee brought from our poore Mothers wombe
 doe all our spangles⁹ leave us at the grave
 And shall wee have noe more then vassalls¹⁰ have? 70
 And doe the wormes smell out noe difference
 Betwixt Perfumes high prise & meerely sence
 how dare they venture on an Honord skin
 Mighty and Lorded: Noble all within
 Ah vaine conceipts the king can have noe more 75
 Of Birth and Death then Beggers at the dore
 Nor God nor Nature doth respect a Person
 For State or wealth but for Religion
 Naie our best freinds like Bees refuse that flower
 Which death hath but usurpt one litle hower 80
 Thy mighty Pallace had not roome for steps
 That did attend thee, nor soe many becks¹¹
 Hadst thou as they had waies to put them to
 And could one stroke these glories all undoe
 Thow seemst another Atlas¹² of our State 85
 The World upon thy able shoulders sate

One hand held Spaine, another hand held France¹³
 Doubtfull to which thy Army should advance
 In expectation did both Kingdomes stand
 On which should fall thy fatall firebrand 90
 Ships were prepard for sword, & ships for fire
 And hardy men to act thy high desire
 For without boast wee may averre for soothe¹⁴
 England hath men whose valor's canon prooffe
 Our Kingdomes Body did crye out for warre 95
 And art thou then condemned to prepare
 Wee have noe walls but seas nor forts for Rest
 But whats conteyned in a valiant brest
 Better then meete a Foe, then staie at home
 And enterteine th'Enemy with our owne 100
 Whoe warres abroad doth on advantage playe
 But they that fight at home, have but one daye
 Nor are our actions judgd by the event
 They best deserve that doe the best attempt
 It lyes not in our power to make the end 105
 God only doth in that our arts commend
 In peace He was all Grace & Curtesy
 Noble and full of magnanimity
 Whether his hat or sword did more imply
 his able hand deserves a History¹⁵ 110
 As full of valor as of curteous parts
 Th one conquering, th other sealing harts
 What durst he not unlesse fowle injuries
 As farre from them as farre from cowardise
 Warre tooke not from him Mildnes, nor soft peace 115
 A virtuous & couragious Haughtines
 Stout harted Ajax¹⁶ and the wise Uliesses¹⁷

In this full man might have enjoyd their wishes
 Nor was the Grecians sacrificise drawne on
 With greater showts & approbation 120
 When they let out their walls to let that in
 old Priamus himselfe encouraging¹⁸
 Then this greate Duke when to the feild he came
 As if he were their Life their Fate their flame
 That thow hadst outside more then common men 125
 I shall not neede to trouble much my Pen
 To set it downe, each eye will find a tounge
 To blase abroad thy knowne Perfection,
 To me, me thought thow didst appeare as one
 Whome nature made for men to gaze upon 130
 That shee must fix their eyes to boast hir Arte
 Symetry and Beauty framing every parte,
 And yet I had not time to note each linn¹⁹
 Soe I desird to knowe what was within
 But then as I have seene a cabinet 135
 Soe rich with pearles, with sparckling Jems soe set
 That other Jewell I expected none
 When sodainely unto my eyes there shone
 A Jewell soe exceeding rare and bright
 That all unwares it tooke away my sight 140
 Which seemd all flame all fire as if each stone
 Were a full sun at height in his horrison
 Soe did thy Inward virtues take away
 All thought of that same gawdy flesh & claye
 compared with thy sowle thy bodies frame 145
 did then like brasse & rust upon the same
 nor could I avoe²⁰ my selfe to make retorne
 To leave that sight for which we now all mourne

But all these praises are but like sweete meate
Which at a deere freinds funerall wee doe eate²¹
Memorialls of our losses, therefore reape
My sadder muse, & lett him rest in peace.

150

Source. PRO SP 16/114/69

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¹ *Nyobe*: after her fourteen children had been slaughtered by the gods Apollo and Diana, the grieving Niobe was metamorphosed into a rock that shed tears.

² *brackish*: darkened, muddied.

³ *amidst thy troupes*: Felton was a lieutenant in the expeditionary force that went under Buckingham's command to the Ile de Ré in 1627.

⁴ *Joves Lightning*: Jove, king of the gods, used the lightning bolt as a weapon. Here the poet is wondering why Felton's deed was not immediately followed by divine judgement on the criminal.

⁵ *World-famed Cesar*: i.e. Julius Caesar, assassinated in 44 BC.

⁶ *Knyges*: scribal error; read "Kynges".

⁷ *doome*: judgement.

⁸ *Apollo*: the sun god.

⁹ *spangles*: literally, the glittering metallic strips decorating costumes; figuratively, the earthly pomp and splendour nullified by death.

¹⁰ *vassalls*: used here in a general sense to connote inferiors, the low-born.

¹¹ *becks*: commands.

¹² *Atlas*: in classical mythology, Atlas held up the heavens.

¹³ *One hand held Spaine...France*: at the time of Buckingham's death, England was at war with both Spain and France.

¹⁴ *soothe*: i.e. sooth; truth.

¹⁵ *Whether his hat...deserves a History*: this couplet establishes a theme that is then extended over the next few lines, that Buckingham was an exemplar both of courtesy—here symbolized by his mastery of the range of coded gestures for the removal and replacement of the hat—and of skill in battle—here symbolized by his swordsmanship.

¹⁶ *Stout harted Ajax*: Ajax was a Greek hero in the Trojan War, brave (“Stout harted”) but not wise.

¹⁷ *wise Ulisses*: Greek hero of the Trojan War, Ulysses (or Odysseus), known for his cunning.

¹⁸ *Nor was the Grecians...himselſe encouraging*: allusion to the fateful moment when the Trojans brought the wooden horse—ostensibly left as a religious sacrifice by the Greeks—into their city. “Priamus” is King Priam of Troy. The poet is probably thinking of the cheering and singing described in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, book 2.

¹⁹ *linn*: probably a poetic contraction of “lineament” (a portion of the body).

²⁰ *avoe*: i.e. avow.

²¹ *sweete meate...wee doe eate*: dinners were a traditional accompaniment of funerals.
