

D25 Oh that such wisdom that could steere a state

Notes. This poem, one of four extant defences of Robert Cecil, is discussed and partly quoted in Croft ("Reputation" 64).

Oh that such wisdom that could steere a state,
Should now be valued at so cheape a rate!

The burden that this one so easely bore
Was deemed waight enough for thousands more
As Envy blusht in all that understoode

Who from a crime surmised¹ his fame redeemd
So nobly, that it now for vertue seem'd,

Fate of our age! See how this dead man ly's
Bitten and stung by Court and Cittie flyes²

His wisdomes questioned, and now all can find
And scoff at to greate vices in his mind.

Att this greate Pillars fall when all thus laugh,
Dreads not the whole world the nexte Epitaph

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Source. Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 5r-v

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 96r; Nottingham MS Portland PW V 37, p. 9

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¹ *a crime surmised*: probably a reference to Cecil's alleged role in engineering the destruction of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.

² *Court and Cittie flyes*: Cecil's critics and libellers.
