

The Ruines of Time

Edmund Spenser

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The Ruines of Time

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DEDICATED

To the right Noble and beautifull Ladie,

THE LA. M A R I E

COUNTESSE OF PEMBROOKE.

MOST Honourable and bountifull Ladie, there bee long sithens deepe sowed in my brest, the seede of most entire loue & humble affection vnto that most braue Knight your noble brother deceased; which taking roote began in his life time some what to bud forth: and to shew themselues to him, as then in the weaknes of their first spring. And would in their riper strength (had it pleased high God till then to drawe out his daies) spired forth fruit of more perfection. But since God hath disdeigned the world of that most noble Spirit, which was the hope of all learned men, and the Patron of my young Muses; *togeaether with him both their hope of anie further fruit was cut off: and also the tender delight of those their first blossoms nipped and quite dead. Yet sithens my late cumming into England, some frends of mine (which might much preuaile with me, and indeede commaund me) knowing with howe straight bandes of duetie I was tied to him: as also bound vnto that noble house, (of which the chiefe hope then rested in him) haue sought to reuiue them by vpbraiding me: for that I haue not shewed anie thankfull remembrance towards him or any of them; but suffer their names to sleep in silence and forgetfullnesse. Whome chieflie to satisfie, or els to auoide that fowle blot of vnthankfullnesse, as I haue conceiued this small Poeme, intituled by a generall name of the worlds Ruines: yet speciallie intended to the renowming of that noble race, from which both you and he sprong, and to the eternizing of some of the chiefe of them late deceased. The which I dedicate vnto your La. as whome it most speciallie concerneth: and to whome I acknowledge my selfe bounden, by manie singular fauours & great graces. I pray for your Honourable happinesse: & so humblie kisse your ha[n]des.*

Your Ladiships euer
humblie at commaund.
E.S.

THE RUINES OF TIME.

IT chaunced me on day beside the shore
Of siluer streaming *Thamesis* to bee,
Nigh where the goodly *Verlame* stood of yore,
Of which there now remains no memorie,
Nor anie little moniment to see,
By which the trauailer, that fares that way,
This once was she, may warned be to say.

There on the other side, I did behold
A Woman sitting sorrowfullie wailing,
Rending her yeolow locks, like wyrie golde,
About her shoulders careleslie downe trailing,
And streames of teares from her faire eyes forth railing.
In her right hand a broken rod she held,
Which towards heauen shee seemd on high to weld.

Whether she were one of that Riuers Nymphes,
Which did the losse of some dere loue lament,
I doubt; or one of those three fatall Impes,
Which draw the dayes of men forth in extent;
Or th' auncient *Genius* of that Citie Brent:
But seeing her so piteouslie perplexed,
I (to her calling) askt what her so vexed.

Ah what delight (quoth she) in earthlie thing,
Or comfort can I, wretched creature haue?
Whose happines the heauens enuying,
From highest staire to lowest step me draue,
And haue in mine owne bowels made my graue,
That of all Nations now I am forlorne,
The worlds sad spectacle, and fortunes scorne.

Much was I mooued at her piteous plaint,
And felt my heart nigh riuen in my brest
With tender ruth to see her sore constraint,
That shedding teares a while I still did rest,
And after did her name of her request.
Name haue I none (quoth she) nor anie being,
Bereft of both by Fates vniust decreeing.

I was that Citie, which the garland wore
Of *Britaines* pride, deliuer'd vnto me
By *Romane* Victors, which it wonne of yore;
Though nought at all but ruines now I bee,
And lye in mine owne ashes, as ye see:
Verlame I was; what bootes it that I was,
Sith now I am but weedes and wastfull gras?

O vaine worlds glorie, and vnstedfast state
Of all that liues, on face of sinfull earth,
Which from their first vntill their vtmost date
Tast no one hower of happines or merth,
But like as at the ingate of their berth,
They crying creep out of their mothers woomb,

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So wailing backe go to their wofull toomb.

Why then dooth flesh, a bubble glas of breath,
Hunt after honour and aduancement vaine,
And reare a trophee for deuouring death,
With so great labour and long lasting paine,
As if his daies for euer should remaine?
Sith all that in this world is great or gaie,
Doth as a vapour vanish, and decaie.

Looke backe, who list, vnto the former ages,
And call to count, what is of them become:
Where be those learned wits and antique Sages,
Which of all wisdomes knew the perfect somme:
Where those great warriors, which did ouercomme
The world with conquest of their might and maine,
And made one meare of th' earth & of their raine?

What nowe is of th' *Assyrian* Lyonesse,
Of whom no footing now on earth appeares?
What of the *Persian* Beares outrageousnesse,
Whose memorie is quite worne out with yeares?
Who of the *Grecian* Libbard now ought heares,
That ouerran the East with greedie powre,
And left his whelps their kingdomes to deuoure?

And where is that same great seuen headed beast,
That made all nations vassals of her pride,
To fall before her feete at her beheast,
And in the necke of all the world did ride?
Where doth she all that wondrous welth nowe hide?
With her owne weight downe pressed now shee lies,
And by her heaps her hugeness testifies.

O *Rome* thy ruine I lament and rue,
And in thy fall my fatall ouerthrowe,
That whilom was, whilst heauens with equall vewe
Deign'd to behold me, and their gifts bestowe,
The picture of thy pride in pompous shew:
And of the whole world as thou wast the Empresse,
So I of this small Northerne world was Princesse.

To tell the beawtie of my buildings fayre,
Adorn'd with purest golde and precious stone;
To tell my riches, and endowments rare
That by my foes are now all spent and gone:
To tell my forces matchable to none,
Were but lost labour, that few would beleuee,
And with rehearsing would me more agreeue.

High towers, faire temples, goodly theaters,
Strong walls, rich porches, princelie pallaces,
Large streetes, braue houses, sacred sepulchers,
Sure gates, sweete gardens, stately galleries,
Wrought with faire pillours and fine imageries
All those (*ô pitie*) now are turnd to dust,
And ouergrowen with black obliuions rust.

Theretoo for warlike power, and peoples store,

The Ruines of Time

In *Brittanie* was none to match with mee,
That manie often did abie full sore:
Ne *Troynouaunt*, though elder sister shee,
With my great forces might compared bee;
That stout *Pendragon* to his perill felt,
Who in a seige seauen yeres about me dwelt.

But long ere this *Bunduca* Britonesse
Her mightie hoast against my bulwarkes brought,
Bunduca, that victorious conqueresse,
That lifting vp her braue heroïck thought
Bove womens weaknes, with the *Romanes* fought,
Fought, and in field against them thrice preuailed:
Yet was she foyld, when as she me assailed.

And though at last by force I conquer'd were
Of hardie *Saxons*, and became their thrall;
Yet was I with much bloodshed bought full deere,
And prizde with slaughter of their Generall:
The moniment of whose sad funerall,
For wonder of the world, long in me lasted;
But now to nought through spoyle of time is wasted.

Wasted it is, as if it neuer were,
And all the rest that me so honord made,
And of the world admired eu'rie where,
Is turnd to smoake, that doth to nothing fade;
And of that brightnes now appeares no shade,
But greislie shades, such as doo haunt in hell.
With fearfull fiends, that in deep darknes dwell.

Where my high steeples whilom vsde to stand,
On which the lordly Faulcon wont to towre,
There now is but an heap of lyme and sand,
For the Shricke-owle to build her baleful bowre:
And where the Nightingale wont forth to powre
Her restles plaints, to comfort wakefull Louers,
There now haunt yelling Mewes & whining Plouers.

And where the christall *Thamis* wont to slide
In siluer channell, downe along the Lee,
About whose flowrie bankes on either side
A thousand Nymphes, with mirthfull iollitee,
Were wont to play, from all annoyance free;
There now no riuers course is to be seene,
But moorish fennes, and marshes euer greene.

Seemes, that that gentle Riuer for great griefe
Of my mishaps, which oft I to him plained;
Of for to shunne the horrible mischiefe,
With which he saw my cruell foes me pained,
And his pure streames with guiltles blood oft stained,
From my vnhappy neighborhood farre fled,
And his sweete waters away with him led.

There also where the winged ships were seene
In liquid waues to cut their fomie waie,
And thousand Fishers numbred to haue been,

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In that wide lake looking for plenteous praie
Of fish, which they with baits vsde to betraie,
Is now no lake, nor anie fishers store,
Nor euer ship shall saile there anie more.

They all are gone, and all with them is gone,
Ne ought to me remaines, but to lament
My long decay, which no man els doth mone,
And mourne my fall with dolefull dreriment.
Yet it is comfort in great languishment,
To be bemoned with compassion kinde,
And mitigates the anguish of the minde.

But me no man bewaileth, but in game,
Ne sheddeth teares from lamentable eie:
Nor anie liues that mentioneth my name
To be remembred of posteritie,
Saue One that maugre fortunes iniurie,
And times decay, and enuies cruell tort,
Hath writ my record in true-seeming sort.

Cambden the nourice of antiquitie,
And lanterne vnto late succeeding age,
To see the light of simple veritie,
Buried in ruines, through the great outrage
Of her owne people, led with warlike rage;
Cambden, though Time all monuments obscure,
Yet thy iust labours euer shall endure.

But whie (vnhappie wight) doo I thus crie,
And grieue that my remembrance quite is raced
Out of the knowledge of posteritie,
And all my antique monuments defaced?
Sith I doo dailie see things highest placed,
So soone as fates their vitall thred haue neuer borne.

It is not long, since these two eyes beheld
A mightie Prince, of most renowned race,
Whom *England* high in count of honour held,
And greatest ones did serue to gaine his grace;
Of greatest ones he greatest in his place,
Sate in the bosome of his Soueraine,
And *Right and loyall* did his worde maintaine.

I saw him die, I saw him die, as one
Of the meane people, and brought foorth on beare,
I saw him die, and no man left to mone
His dolefull fate, that late him loued deare:
Scarse anie left to close his eylids neare;
Scarse anie left vpon his lips to laie
The sacred sod, or *Requiem* to saie.

O trustlesse state of miserable men,
That builde your blis on hope of earthly thing,
And vainly thinke your selues halfe happy then,
When painted faces with smooth flattering
Doo fawne on you, and your wide praises sing,
And when the courting masker louteth lowe,

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Him true in heart and trustie to you trow.

All is but fained, and with oaker die,
That euerie shower will wash and wipe away,
All things doo change that vnder heauen abide
And after death all friendship doth decaie.
Therefore what euer man bearest worldlie sway,
Liuing, on God, and on thy selfe relie;
For when thou diest, all shall with thee die.

He now is dead, and all is with him dead,
Saue what in heauens storehouse he vplaid:
His hope is faild, and come to passe his dread,
And euill men, now dead, his deedes vpbraid:
Spite bites the dead, that liuing neuer baid.
He now is gone, and whiles the Foxe is crept
Into the hole, the which the Badger swept.

He now is dead, and all his glorie gone,
And all his greatnes vapoured to nought,
That as a glasse vpon the water is shone,
Which vanisht quite, so soone as it was sought:
His name is worne alreadie out of thought,
Ne anie Poet seekes him to reuiue;
Yet manie Poets honourd him aliuie.

Ne doth his *Colin*, carelesse *Colin Cloute*,
Care now his idle bagpipe vp to raise,
Ne tell his sorrow to the listning rout
Of shepherd groomes which wont his songs to praise:
Praise who so list, yet I will him dispraise,
Vntill he quite him of his guiltie blame:
Wake shepherds boy, at length awake for shame.

And who so els did goodnes by him gaine,
And who so els his bounteous minde did trie,
Whether he shepherd be, or shepherds swaine,
(for manie did, which doo it now denie)
Awake, and to his Song a part applie:
And I, the whilest you mourne for his decease,
Will with my mourning plaints your plaint increase.

He dyde, and after him his brother noble Peere,
His brother Prince, his brother noble Peere,
That whilst he liued, was of none enuyde,
And dead is now, as liuing, counted deare,
Deare vnto all that true affection beare:
But vnto thee most deare, ô dearest Dame,
His noble Spouse, and Paragon of fame.

He whilst he liued, happie was through thee,
And being dead is happie now much more;
Liuing, that lincked chaunst with thee to bee,
And dead, because him dead thou dost adore
As liuing, and thy lost deare loue deplore.
So whilst that thou, faire flower of chastitie,
Dost liue, by thee thy Lord shall neuer die.

Thy Lord shall neuer die, the whiles this verse

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Shall live, and surely it shall liue for euer:
For euer it shall liue, and shall rehearse
His worthie praise, and vertues dying neuer,
Though death his soule doo from his bodie seuer.
And thou thy selfe herein shalt also liue;
Such grace the heauens doo to my verses giue.

Ne shall his sister, ne thy father die,
Thy father, that good Earle of rare renowne,
And noble Patrone of weak pouertie;
Whose great good deeds in countrey and in towne
Haue purchast him in heauen an happie crowne;
Where he now liueth in eternall blis,
And left his sonne t' ensue those steps of his.

He noble bud, his Grandsires liuelie hayre,
Vnder the shadow of thy countenance
Now ginnes to shoote vp fast, and flourish fayre,
In learned artes and goodlie gouernance,
That him to highest honour shall aduaunce.
Braue Impe of *Bedford*, grow apace in bountie,
And count of wisdom more than of thy Countie.

Ne may I let thy husbands sister die,
That goodly Ladie, sith she eke did spring
Out of his stocke, and famous familie,
Whose praises I to future age doo sing,
And fourth out of her happie womb did bring
The sacred brood of learning and all honour;
In whom the heauens powrde all their gifts vpon her.

Most gentle spirite breathed from aboue,
Out of the bosome of the makers blis,
In whom all bountie and all vertuous loue
Appeared in their natiue propertis,
And did enrich that noble breast of his,
With treasure passing all this worldes worth,
Worthie of heaven it selfe, which brought it forth.

His blessed spirite full of power diuine
And influence of all celestiall grace,
Loathing this sinfull earth and earthlie slime,
Fled backe too soone vnto his natiue place.
Too soone for all that did his loue embrace,
Too soone for all this wretched world, whom he
Robd of all right and true nobilitie.

Yet ere his happie soule to heauen went
Out of this fleshlie g[ao]le, he did deuise
Vnto his heauenlie maker to present
His bodie, as a spotles sacrifice;
And chose, that guiltie hands of enemies
Should powre forth th' offering of his guiltles blood:
So life exchanging for his countries good.

O noble spirite, liue there euer blessed,
The worlds late wonder, and the heauens new ioy,
Liue euer there, and leaue me here distressed

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With mortall cares, and cumbrous worlds any.
But where thou dost that happines enjoy,
Bid me, ô bid me quicklie come to thee,
That happie there I maie thee alwaies see.

Yet whilst the fates affoord me vitall breath,
I will it spend in speaking of thy praise,
And sing to thee, vntill that timelie death
By heauens doome doo ende my earthlie daies:
Thereto doo thou my humble spirite raise,
And into me that sacred breath inspire,
Which thou there breathest perfect and entire.

Then will I sing, but who can better sing,
Than thine owne sister, peerles Ladie bright,
Which to thee sings with deep harts sorrowing,
Sorrowing tempered with deare delight;
That her to heare I feele my feeble spright
Robbed of sense, and rauished with ioy:
O sad ioy made of mourning and any.

Yet will I sing, but who can better sing,
Than thou thy selfe, thine owne selves valiance,
That whilst thou liuedst, madest the forrests ring,
And fields resownd, and flockes to leap and daunce,
And shepheards leaue their lambs vnto mischaunce,
To runne thy shrill *Arcadian* Pipe to heare:
O happie were those dayes, thrice happie were.

But now more happie thou, and wretched wee,
Which want the wonted sweetnes of thy voice,
Whiles thou now in *Elisian* fields so free,
With *Orpheus*, and with *Linus* and the choice
Of all that euer did in rimes reioyce,
Conuersest, and doost heare their heauenlie layes,
And they heare thine, and thine doo better praise.

So there thou liuest, singing euermore,
And here thou liuest, being euer song
Of vs, which liuing loued thee afore,
Which now thee worship, mongst that blessed throng
Of heauenlie Poets and Heroes strong.
So thou both here and there immortall art,
And euerie where through excellent desart.

But such as neither of themselues can sing,
Nor yet are sung of others for reward,
Die in obscure obliuion, as the thing
Which neuer was, ne euer with regard
Their names shall of the later age be heard,
But shall in rustie darknes euer lie,
Vnles they mentiond be with infamie.

What booteth it to haue beene rich alieu?
What to be great? what to be gracious?
When after death no token doth suruiue
Of former being in this mortall hous,
But sleepes in dust dead and inglorious,

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Like beast, whose breath but in his nostrils is,
And hath no hope of happinesse or blis.

How manie great ones may remembred be,
Which in their daise most famoslie did flourish;
Of whome no word we heare, nor signe now see,
But as things wipt out with a sponge to perishe,
Because they liuing cared not to cherishe
No gentle wits, through pride or couetize,
Which might their names for ever memorize.

Prouide therefore (ye Princes) whilst ye liue,
That of the *Muses* ye may friended bee,
Which vnto men eternitie do giue;
For they be daughters of Dame memorie
And *Ioue* the father of eternitie,
And do those men in golden thrones repose,
Whose merits they to glorifie do chose.

The seuen fold yron gates of grislie Hell,
And horrid house of sad *Proserpina*,
They able are with power of mightie spell
To breake, and thence the soules to bring awai
Out of dread darknesse, to eternall day,
And them immortall make, which els would die
In foule forgetfulnesse, and nameles lie.

So whilome raised they the puissant brood
Of golden girt *Alcmena*, for great merite,
Out of the dust, to which the *Oetoean* wood
Had him consum'd, and spent his vitall spirite:
To highest heauen, where now he doth inherite
All happinesse in *Hebes* siluer bowre,
Chosen to be her dearest Paramoure.

So raisde they eke faire *Ledaes* warlick twinnes,
And interchanged life vnto them lent,
That when th'one dies, th' other then beginnes
To shew in Heauen his brightnes orient;
And they, for pittie of the sad wayment
Which *Orpheus* for *Eurydice* did make,
Her back againe to life sent for his sake.

So happie are they, and so fortunate,
Whome the *Pierian* sacred sisters loue,
That freed from bands of implacable fate
And power of death, they liue for aye aboue,
Where mortall wreakes their blis may not remoue:
But with the Gods, for former vertues meede,
On *Nectar* and *Ambrosia* do feede.

For deeds doe die, how euer noblie donne,
And thoughts of men do as themselues decay,
But wise wordes taught in numbers for to runne,
Recorded by the *Muses*, liue for ay;
Ne may with storming showers be washt away,
Ne bitter breathing windes with harmfull blast,
Nor age, nor envie shall them euer wast.

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In vaine doo earthly Princes then, in vaine
Seeke with Pyramides, to heauen aspired;
Or huge Colosses, built with costlie paine;
Or brasen Pillours, neuer to be fired,
Or Shrines, made of the mettall most desired;
To make their memories for euer liue:
For how can mortall immortalitie giue.

Such one *Mausolus* made, the worlds great wonder,
But now no remnant doth thereof remaine:
Such one *Marcellus* but was torne with thunder:
Such one *Lisippus*, but is worne with raine;
Such one King *Edmond*, but was rent for gaine.
All such vaine moniments of earthlie masse,
Deuour'd of Time, in time to nought doo passe.

But fame with golden wings aloft doth flie,
Aboue the reach of ruinous decay,
And with braue plumes doth beate the azure skie,
Admir'd of base-borne men from farre away:
Then who so will with vertuous deeds assay
To mount to heauen, on *Pegasus* must ride,
And with sweete Poets verse be glorifide.

For not to haue been dipt in *Lethe* lake,
Could saue the sonne of *Thetis* from to die;
But that blinde bard did him immortall make
With verses, dipt in deaw of *Castalie*:
Which made the Easterne Conqueror to crie,
O fortunate yong-man, whose vertue found
So braue a Trompe, thy noble acts to sound.

Therefore in this halfe happie I doo read
Good *Meliboe*, that hath a Poet got,
To sing his liuing praises being dead,
Deseruing neuer here to be forgot,
In spight of enuie that his deeds would spot:
Since whose decease, learning lies vnregarded,
And men of armes doo wander vnrewarded.

Those two be those two great calamities,
That long agoe did grieue the noble spright
Of *Salomon* with great indignities;
Who whilome was aliuie the wisest wight.
But now his wisdom is disproued quite;
For he that now welds all things at his will,
Scorns th' one and th' other in his deeper skill.

O grieve of griefes, gall of all good heartes,
to see that vertue should dispised bee
Of him, that first was raisde for vertuous parts,
And now broad spreading like an aged tree,
Lets none shoot vp, that nigh him planted bee:
O let the man, of whom the Muse is scorned,
Nor aliuie, nor dead be of the Muse adorned.

O vile worlds trust, that with such vaine illusion
Hath so wise men bewicht, and ouerkest,

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That they see not the way of their confusion,
O vainesse to be added to the rest,
That do my soule with inward grieffe infest:
Let them behold the piteous fall of mee:
And in my case their owne ensample see.

And who so els that sits in highest seate
Of this worlds glorie, worshipped of all,
Ne feareth change of time, nor fortunes threate,
Let him behold the horror of my fall,
And his owne end vnto remembrance call;
That of like ruine he may warned bee,
And in himselfe be moou'd to pittie mee.

Thus hauing ended all her piteous plaint,
With dolefull shrikes shee vanished away,
That I through inward sorrowe wexen faint,
And all astonished with deepe dismay,
For her departure, had no word to say:
But fate long time in sencelesse sad affright,
Looking still, if I might of her haue sight.

Which when I missed, hauing looked long,
My thought returned greeued home againe,
Renewing her complaint with passion strong,
For ruth of that same womans piteous paine;
Whose wordes recording in my troubled braine,
I felt such anguish wound my feeble heart,
That frozen horror ran through euerie part.

So inlie greeuing in my groning brest,
And deepe mizing at her doubtfull speach,
Whose meaning much I labor'd forth to wreste,
Being aboute my slender reasons reach;
At length by demonstration me to teach,
Before mine eies strange sights presented were,
Like tragicke Pageants seeming to appeare.

1.

I SAW an Image, all of ma[ss]ie gold,
Plac'd on high vpon an Altare faire,
That all, which did the same from farre beholde,
Might worship it, and fall on lowest staire.
Not that great Idoll might with this compaire,
To which the *Assyrian* tyrant would haue made
The holie brethren, falslie to haue praid,

But th' Altare, on the which this Image staid,
Was (ô great pitie) built of brickle clay,
That shortly the foundation decaid,
With showres of heauen and tempests worne away,

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Then downe it fell, and low in ashes lay,
Scorn'd of euerie one, which by it went;
That I it seeing, dearelie did lament.

2.

Next vnto this a statelie Towre appeared,
Built all of richest stone, that might bee found,
And nigh vnto the Heauens in height vpreared,
But placed on a plot of sandie ground:
Not that great Towre, which is so much renownd
For tongues confusion in holie writ,
King *Ninus* worke, might be compar'd to it.

But ô vaine labours of terrestriall wit,
That buildes so stronglie on so frayle a soyle,
As with each storme does fall away, and flit,
And giues the fruit of all your trauailes toyle
To be the pray of Tyme, and Fortunes spoyle:
I saw this Towre fall sodainelie to dust,
That nigh with grieffe thereof my heart was Brust.

3.

Then did I see a pleasant Paradize,
Full of sweete flowres and daintiest delights,
Such as on earth man could not more deuize,
With pleasures choyce to feed his cheerefull sprights;
Not that, which *Merlin* by his Magicke slights
Made for the gentle squire, to entertaine
His fayre *Belphoebe*, could this gardine staine.

But ôshort pleasure bought with lasting paine,
Why will hereafter anie flesh delight
In earthlie blis, and ioy in pleasures vaine,
Since that I sawe this gardine wasted quite,
That where it was scarce seemed anie sight?
That I, which once that beautie did beholde,
Could not from teares my melting eyes with-holde.

4.

Soone after this a Giaunt came in place,

The Ruines of Time

Of wondrous power, and of exceeding stature,
That none durst vewe the horror of his face,
Yet was he milde of speach, and meeke of nature.
Not he, which in despight of his Creatour
With railing tearmes defied the Iewish hoast,
Might with this mightie one in hugenes boast.

For from the one he could to th' other coast,
Stretch his strong thighes, and th' Occæan ouerstride,
And reach his hand into his enemies hoast.
But see the end of pompe and fleshlie pride;
One of his feete vnwares from him did slide,
That downe hee fell into the deepe Abisse,
Where drownd with him is all his earthlie blisse.

5.

Then did I see a Bridge, made all of golde,
Ouer the Sea from one to other side,
Withouten prop or pillour it t' vpholde,
But like the colour'd Rainbowe arched wide:
Not that great Arche, which *Traian* edifide,
To be a wonder to all age ensuing,
Was matchable to this in equall vewing.

But (ah) what bootes it to see earthlie thing
In glorie, or in greatnes to excell,
Sith time doth greatest things to ruine bring?
This goodlie bridge, one foote not fastned well,
Gan faile, and all the rest downe shortlie fell,
Ne of so braue a building ought remained,
That grieve thereof my spirite greatly pained.

6.

I saw two Beares, as white as anie milke,
Lying together in a mightie caue,
Of milde aspect, and haire as soft as silke,
That saluage nature seemed not to haue,
Nor after greedie spoyle of blood to craue:
Two fairer beasts might not elsewhere be found,
Although the compast world were sought around.

But what can long abide aboue this ground

The Ruines of Time

In state of blis, or stedfast happinesse?
The Caue, in which these Beares lay sleeping sound,
Was but earth, and with her owne weightinesse,
Vpon them fell, and did vnwares oppresse,
That for great sorrow of their sudden fate,
Henceforth all wor[l]ds felicitie I hate.

¶ Much was I troubled in my heauie spright,
At sight of these sad spectacles forepast,
That all my senses were bereaued quight,
And I in minde remained sore agast,
Distraught twixt feare and pitie; when at last
I heard a voyce, which loudly to me called,
That with the suddain shrill I was appalled.

Behold (said it) and by ensample see,
That all is vanitie and grieffe of minde,
Ne other comfort in this world can be,
But hope of heauen, and heart to God inclinde;
For all the rest must needs be left behinde:
With that it bad me, to the other side
To cast mine eye, where other sights I spide[.]

1.

¶ VPON that famous Riuers further shore,
There stood a snowie Swan of heauenlie hiew,
And gentle kinde, as euer Fowle afore;
A fairer one in all the goodlie crieu
Of white *Strimonian* brood might no man view:
There he most sweetly sung the prophecie
Of his owne death in dolefull Elegie.

At last, when all his mourning melodie
He ended had, that both the shores resounded,
Feeling the fit that him forewarnd to die,
With loftie flight aboue the earth he bounded,
And out of sight to highest heauen mounted:
Where now he is become an heauenly signe;
There now the ioy is his, here sorrow mine.

2.

Whilst thus I looked, loe adowne the *Lee*,
I saw an Harpe stroong all with siluer twyne,
And made of golde and costlie yuorie,
Swimming, that whilome seemed to haue been

The Ruines of Time

The harpe, on which *Dan Orpheus* was seene
Wylde beasts and forrests after him to lead,
But was th' Harpe of *Philisides* now dead.

At length out of the Riuer it was reard
And borne aboute the cloudes to be diuin'd,
Whilst all the way most heauenly noyse was heard
Of the strings, stirred with the warbling wind,
That wrought both ioy and sorrow in my mind:
So now in heauen a signe it doth appeare,
The Harpe well knowne beside the Northern Beare.

3.

Soone after this I saw, on th' other side,
A curious Coffe made of *Heben* wood,
That in it did most precious treasure hide,
Exceeding all this baser worldes good:
Yet through the ouerflowing of the flood
It almost drowned was, and done to nought,
That sight thereof much grieu'd my pensiuie thought.

At length when most in perill it was brought,
Two Angels downe descending with swift flight,
Out of the swelling streame it lightly caught,
And twixt their blessed armes it carried quight
Aboute the reach of anie liuing sight:
So now it is transform'd into that starre,
In which all heauenly treasures are.

4.

Looking aside I saw a stately Bed,
Adorned all with costly cloth of gold,
That might for anie Princes couche be red,
And deckt with daintie flowres, as if it shold
Be for some bride, her ioyous night to hold:
Therein a goodly Virgine sleeping lay;
A fairer wight saw neuer summers day.

I heard a voyce that called farre away
And her awaking bad her quickly dight,
For lo her Bridegrome was in readie ray
To come to her, and seeke her loues delight:

The Ruines of Time

With that she started vp with cherefull sight,
When suddeinly both bed and all was gone,
And I in languor left there all alone.

5.

Still as I gazed, I beheld where stood
A Knight all arm'd, vpon a winged steed,
The same that was bred of *Medusaes* blood,
In which *Dan Perseus* borne of heauenly see,
The faire *Andromeda* from perill freed:
Full mortally this Knight ywounded was,
That streames of blood foorth flowed on the gras.

Yet was he deckt (small ioy it was to him alas)
With manie garlands for his victories,
And with rich spoyles, which late he did purchas
Through braue atcheiuements from his enemies:
Fainting at last through long infirmities,
He smote his steed, that straight to heauen him bore,
And left me here his losse for to deplore.

6.

Lastly I saw an Arke of purest golde
Vpon a brazen pillour standing hie,
Which th' ashes seem'd of some great Prin[c]e to hold,
Enclosde therein for endles memorie
Of him, whom all the world did glorifie:
Seemed the heauens with the earth did disagree,
Whether should of those ashes keeper bee.

At last me seem'd wing footed *Mercurie*,
From heauen descending to appease their strife,
The Arke did beare with him about the skie,
And to those ashes gaue a second life,
To liue in heauen, where happines is rife:
At which the earth did grieue exceedingly,
And I for dole was almost like to die.

L'Enuoy.

Immortall spirite of *Philisides*,

The Ruines of Time

Which now art made the heauens ornament,
That whilome wast the worlds chiefst riches;
Giue leaue to him that lou'de thee to lament
His losse, by lacke of thee to heauen hent,
And with last duties of this broken verse,
Broken with sighes, to decke thy sable Herse.

And ye faire Ladie th' honor of your daies,
And glorie of the world, your high thoughts scorne;
Vouchsafe this moniment of his last praise,
With some few siluer dropping teares t'adorne:
And as ye be of heauenlie off-spring borne,
So vnto heauen let your high minde aspire,
And loath this drosse of sinfull worlds desire.

FINIS.