Can She Excuse My Wrongs

John Dowland

Can she excuse my wrongs with virtue's cloak?
shall I call her good when she proves unkind?
Are those clear fires which vanish into smoke?
must I praise the leaves where no fruit I find?

No, no: where shadows do for bodies stand,
thou may'st be abused if thy sight be dim.
Cold love is like to words written on sand,
or to bubbles which on the water swim.

Wilt thou be thus abused still,
seeing that she will right thee never?
if thou canst not overcome her will,
thy love will be thus fruitless ever.

Was I so base, that I might not aspire
Unto those high joys which she holds from me?
As they are high, so high is my desire:
If she this deny what can granted be?

If she will yield to that which reason is,
It is reasons will that love should be just.
Dear make me happy still by granting this,
Or cut off delays if that I die must.

Better a thousand times to die,
then for to live thus still tormented:
Dear but remember it was I
Who for thy sake did die contented.

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