

you to favor, to instruct you truly of that which is too irksome for my pen to tell you. I beseech you that—as God and many more know—how innocent I am in this case, so you will believe me that if I had bid aught I would have bid by it.<sup>4</sup> I am not so base minded that fear of any living creature or prince should make me afraid to do that<sup>5</sup> were just or, done, to deny the same. I am not of so base a lineage nor carry so vile a mind; but as not to disguise fits most a king, so will I never dissemble my actions but cause them show even as I meant them. Thus assuring yourself of me that, as I know this was deserved, yet if I had meant it I would never lay it on others' shoulders, no more will I not damnify<sup>6</sup> myself that thought it not. The circumstance it may please you to have of this bearer. And for your part, think you have not in the world a more loving kinswoman nor a more dear friend than myself, nor any that will watch more carefully to preserve you and your estate.<sup>7</sup> And who shall otherwise persuade you, judge them more partial to others than you. And thus in haste, I leave to trouble you, beseeching God to send you a long reign. The 14 of February, 1587.

Your most assured, loving sister and cousin,  
*Elizabeth R.*

1587

1834

### Verse Exchange between Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh<sup>1</sup>

#### [RALEGH TO ELIZABETH]

Fortune hath taken away my love,  
My life's joy and my soul's heaven above.  
Fortune hath taken thee away, my princess,  
My world's joy and my true fantasy's mistress.

- 5 Fortune hath taken thee away from me;  
Fortune hath taken all by taking thee.  
Dead to all joys, I only live to woe:  
So is Fortune become my fantasy's foe.

- 10 In vain, my eyes, in vain ye waste your tears;  
In vain, my sights,<sup>2</sup> the smoke of my despair,  
In vain you search the earth and heaven above.  
In vain you search, for Fortune keeps my love.

- 15 Then will I leave my love in Fortune's hand;  
Then will I leave my love in worldings' band,<sup>3</sup>  
And only love the sorrows due to me—  
Sorrow, henceforth, that shall my princess be—

4. I.e., if I had commanded her death, I would have abided by my decision. ("Bid" is a form of the past participle of both "bid" and "bide.")

5. I.e., the thing that.

6. Wrong.

7. Position.

1. This exchange, which exemplifies the poetic

banter that sometimes passed between the queen and her favorites, took place about 1587, when Raleigh believed that the rapid rise of the earl of Essex in Elizabeth's favor entailed a diminution of his own standing with her.

2. Sighs?

3. Bond.

- And only joy that Fortune conquers kings.  
Fortune, that rules the earth and earthly things,  
Hath taken my love in spite of virtue's might:  
20 So blind a goddess did never virtue right.

With wisdom's eyes had but blind Fortune seen,  
Then had my love, my love forever been.  
But love, farewell—though Fortune conquer thee,  
No fortune base nor frail shall alter me.

#### [ELIZABETH TO RALEGH]

- Ah, silly Pug,<sup>4</sup> wert thou so sore afraid?  
Mourn not, my Wat,<sup>5</sup> nor be thou so dismayed:  
It passeth fickle Fortune's power and skill  
To force my heart to think thee any ill.  
5 No Fortune base, thou sayest, shall alter thee?  
And may so blind a witch so conquer me?  
No, no, my Pug, though Fortune were not blind,  
Assure thyself she could not rule my mind.  
Fortune, I know, sometimes doth conquer kings,  
10 And rules and reigns on earth and earthly things,  
But never think Fortune can bear the sway  
If virtue watch, and will her not obey.  
Ne chose I thee by fickle Fortune's rede,<sup>6</sup>  
Ne she shall force me alter with such speed  
15 But if to try this mistress' jest with thee,<sup>7</sup>  
Pull up thy heart, suppress thy brackish tears,  
Torment thee not, but put away thy fears.  
Dead to all joys and living unto woe,  
Slain quite by her that ne'er gave wise men blow,  
20 Revive again and live without all dread,  
The less afraid, the better thou shalt speed.<sup>8</sup>

ca. 1587

ca. 1600?

### Speech to the Troops at Tilbury<sup>1</sup>

My loving people, I have been persuaded by some that are careful of<sup>2</sup> my safety, to take heed how I committed myself to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I tell you that I would not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear! I have so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. Wherefore I am come among you at this time but for my

4. An endearment, which Elizabeth used as her pet name for Raleigh.

5. Short for Walter.

6. Decision.

7. Since "thee" has nothing to rhyme with, and since the line is hard to construe, it seems likely that there is a line missing before or after this one. "But if": unless I do it.

8. Succeed.

1. Delivered by Elizabeth on August 9, 1588, to the land forces assembled at Tilbury (in Essex) to repel the anticipated invasion of the Spanish Armada, a fleet of warships sent by Philip II. The Armada was defeated at sea and never reached England, a miraculous deliverance and sign of God's special favor to Elizabeth and to England, in the general view.

2. Anxious about.

recreation and pleasure, being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live and die amongst you all,<sup>3</sup> to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honor and my blood even in the dust: I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too<sup>4</sup>—and take foul scorn that Parma<sup>5</sup> or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm. To the which, rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will venter<sup>6</sup> my royal blood; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of your virtue in the field. I know that already for your forwardness<sup>7</sup> you have deserved rewards and crowns;<sup>8</sup> and I assure you in the word of a prince you shall not fail of them. In the meantime, my lieutenant general<sup>9</sup> shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject; not doubting but by your concord in the camp and valor in the field, and your obedience to myself and my general, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God and of my kingdom.

1588

1654

**The "Golden Speech"** A speech to Elizabeth's last Parliament, delivered November 30, 1601, and here given as recorded by one of the members. The designation "Golden Speech" stems from the headnote to a version of the speech printed near the end of the Puritan interregnum (1659?): "This speech ought to be set in letters of gold, that as well the majesty, prudence, and virtue of this royal queen might in general most exquisitely appear, as also that her religious love and tender respect which she particularly and constantly did bear to her Parliament in unfeigned sincerity might (to the shame and perpetual disgrace and infamy of some of her successors) be nobly and truly vindicated."

The royal prerogatives included the right to grant or sell "letters patent," which gave the recipient monopoly control of some branch of commerce. (Sir Walter Raleigh, for example, was given the exclusive right, for a period of thirty years, to license all taverns.) Discontent with the monopolies—which had resulted in higher prices for a wide range of commodities, including such basic ones as salt and starch—came to a head in the Parliament of 1601. Under parliamentary pressure (and in return for a subsidy granted to her treasury), Elizabeth agreed to revoke some of the most obnoxious patents and to allow the courts to rule freely on charges brought against the holders of others. She invited members of Parliament who wished to offer thanks for this largess to come to her in a body, and on November 30 received about 150 of them at Whitehall palace. After effusive remarks by the speaker of the House of Commons (Sir John Croke), the queen responded more or less as recorded here. (Elizabeth revised the speech for publication; and none of the surviving versions of it—which differ considerably—was printed earlier than about 1628.)

3. In another version of the speech (based, like this one, on an auditor's memory) the sentence up to this point reads: "And therefore I am come amongst you, as you see at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live or die amongst you all."

4. An allusion to the concept of the king's (or queen's) two bodies, the one natural and mortal, the other an ideal and enduring political construct.

"Stomach": valor.

5. Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma, allied with (the king of) Spain and expected to join with him in the invasion of England.

6. Venture, risk.

7. The crown was an English coin. "Forwardness": eagerness.

8. The earl of Leicester led the English troops. Elizabeth's great and powerful favorite, he died just a month later.

## The "Golden Speech"<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Speaker, we have heard your declaration and perceive your care of our estate,<sup>2</sup> by falling into the consideration of a grateful acknowledgment of such benefits as you have received; and that your coming is to present thanks unto us, which I accept with no less joy than your loves can have desire to offer such a present.

I do assure you that there is no prince that loveth his subjects better, or whose love can countervail<sup>3</sup> our loves. There is no jewel, be it of never so rich a price, which I set before this jewel—I mean your loves. For I do more esteem it than any treasure or riches: for that we know how to prize, but love and thanks I count unvaluable.<sup>4</sup> And though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with your loves. This makes me that I do not so much rejoice that God hath made me to be a queen, as to be a queen over so thankful a people. Therefore I have cause to wish nothing more than to content the subjects, and that is a duty which I owe. Neither do I desire to live longer days than that I may see your prosperity, and that is my only desire. And as I am that person that still,<sup>5</sup> yet under God, hath delivered you, so I trust, by the almighty power of God, that I shall be His instrument to preserve you from envy, peril, dishonor, shame, tyranny, and oppression, partly by means of your intended helps, which we take very acceptable because it manifesteth the largeness of your loves and loyalties unto your sovereign.

Of myself I must say this: I never was any greedy, scraping grasper, nor a strait, fast-holding prince, nor yet a waster. My heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for my subjects' good. What you bestow on me, I will not hoard it up, but receive it to bestow on you again. Yea, my own properties I account yours to be expended for your good, and your eyes shall see the bestowing of all for your good. Therefore render unto them from me, I beseech you, Mr. Speaker, such thanks as you imagine my heart yieldeth but my tongue cannot express.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish you and the rest to stand up; for I shall yet trouble you with longer speech.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Speaker, you give me thanks, but I doubt<sup>7</sup> me that I have more cause to thank you all than you me; and I charge you to thank them of the Lower House<sup>8</sup> from me. For had I not received a knowledge from you, I might have fallen into the lapse of an error only for lack of true information.

Since I was queen yet did I never put my pen to any grant, but that upon pretext and semblance made unto me, it was both good and beneficial to the subject in general, though a private profit to some of my ancient servants who had deserved well. But the contrary being found by experience, I am exceedingly beholding to such subjects as would move the same at the first.<sup>9</sup> And I am not so simple to suppose but that there be some of the Lower House whom these grievances never touched; and for them I think they speak out of zeal to

1. We print only the words of the queen, omitting various interpolations, as well as opening remarks by the speaker of the Parliament.

2. Rank, position.

3. Match.

4. Invaluable.

5. Continually.

6. Up to this point, the assemblage had been kneeling.

7. Fear.

8. The House of Commons.

9. I.e., those members of the House of Commons who had raised the issue of monopolies in previous sessions.