When I was otherwise
William Byrd (c.1540-1623)







Source: William Byrd, Songs of sundrie natures... (London, 1589-1610), no. 30 (31 in 1610 edition).

As watermen which on the Thames do row, Look to the East, but West keeps on the way, My Sovereign sweet, her countenance settled so, To feed my hope while she her snares might lay, And when she saw, that I was in her danger, Good God, how soon she proved then a ranger.

I could not choose but laugh although too late, To see great craft deciphered in a toy, I love her still, but such conditions hate, Which so profanes my Paradise of joy. Love whets the wits, whose pain is but a pleasure, A toy, by fits, to play withal at leisure.

