

# Sting, 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 abus'd if thy sight be dimmed  
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 can'st not o'ercome her will  
Thy love will be thus fruitless ever

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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 Reason's 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  
Than for to live thus still tormented  
Dear, but remember it was I  
Who for thy sake did die contented

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