

# The Lie By Sir Walter Raleigh

Go, soul, the body's guest,  
Upon a thankless errand;  
Fear not to touch the best;  
The truth shall be thy warrant.  
Go, since I needs must die,  
And give the world the lie.

Say to the court, it glows  
And shines like rotten wood;  
Say to the church, it shows  
What's good, and doth no good.  
If church and court reply,  
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates, they live  
Acting by others' action;  
Not loved unless they give,  
Not strong but by a faction.  
If potentates reply,  
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,  
That manage the estate,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice only hate.  
And if they once reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell them that brave it most,  
They beg for more by spending,  
Who, in their greatest cost,  
Seek nothing but commending.  
And if they make reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion;  
Tell love it is but lust;  
Tell time it is but motion;  
Tell flesh it is but dust.  
And wish them not reply,  
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it daily wasteth;  
Tell honor how it alters;  
Tell beauty how she blasteth;  
Tell favor how it falters.  
And as they shall reply,  
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles  
In tickle points of niceness;  
Tell wisdom she entangles  
Herself in overwiseness.  
And when they do reply,  
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;  
Tell skill it is pretension;  
Tell charity of coldness;  
Tell law it is contention.  
And as they do reply,  
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;  
Tell nature of decay;  
Tell friendship of unkindness;  
Tell justice of delay.  
And if they will reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,  
But vary by esteeming;  
Tell schools they want profoundness,  
And stand too much on seeming.  
If arts and schools reply,  
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;  
Tell how the country erreth;  
Tell manhood shakes off pity;  
Tell virtue least preferreth.  
And if they do reply,  
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I  
Commanded thee, done blabbing—  
Although to give the lie  
Deserves no less than stabbing—  
Stab at thee he that will,  
No stab the soul can kill.