

On Shakespeare, 1630

BY JOHN MILTON

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones,
The labor of an age in pilèd stones,
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet, VV. SHAKESPEARE.

What neede my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an Age in piled stones
Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid
Vnder a starre-ypointing Pyramid?
Deare Sonne of Memory, great Heire of Fame,
What needst thou such dull witnesse of thy Name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thy selfe a lasting Monument:
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring Art
Thy easie numbers flow, and that each part,
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Booke,
Those Delphicke Lines with deepe Impresion tooke
Then thou our fancy of her selfe bereaving,
Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving,
And so Sepulcher'd in such pompe dost lie
That Kings for such a Tombe would wish to die.