

It was a time when silly bees

Words ascribed to Robert, Earl of Essex

John Dowland

It was a time when sil-ly bees could speak;
Then thus I buzz'd when thyme - no sap would give:
"My liege, gods grant thy time - may nev-er end!

The first system of musical notation for the song. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The melody is written on a single staff, and the lyrics are placed below it. Below the lyrics, there are two staves of figured bass notation, with letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g) and rhythmic symbols (vertical lines and dots) indicating the harmonic accompaniment.

And in that time, I was a sil-ly bee
"Why should this bless-ed thyme to me be dry,
And yet vouch-safe to hear my plaint of thyme,

The second system of musical notation, continuing the melody and figured bass from the first system. It maintains the same key signature and time signature.

Who fed on thyme un-til my heart 'gan break, Yet nev-
Sith by this thyme the la-zy drone doth live, The wasp,
Which fruit-less flies have found to have a friend, And I,

The third system of musical notation, starting with a measure rest of 10 measures (indicated by a box containing the number 10) before the melody begins. It continues the melody and figured bass.

15

er found the time would fa- vour me. Of all the
the worm, the gnat the but- ter- fly?\" Mat- ed with
cast down when a- tom- ies do climb?\" The king re-

20

swarm I on- ly did not thrive,
grief, I kneel- ed on my knees
plied but thus: \"Peace, peev- ish bee!

Yet brought I wax and ho- ney to the hive.
And thus com- plain'd un- to the king of bees:
Thou'rt bound to serve the time, the thyme not thee.\"