

It was a time when silly bees could speak

John Dowland 1563-1626
Text Robert, Earl of Essex

It was a time when sil - ly Bees could speak, And in that
Then thus I buzzed when time no sap would give: Why should this
My liege, Gods grant thy time may ne - ver end, And yet vouch-

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6 time bles sed time to me be dry, Who fed on time un -
safe to hear my plaint of time, Sith by this time the have
time I was, I was a sil - ly Bee, Who fed on time un - til my
bles sed time to me be dry, Sith by this time the la - zy
safe to hear, to hear my plaint of time, Which fruit less flies have found to

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11 til my heart 'gan break, Yet ne - ver found the time, the time would fa - vor
la - zy drone doth live, The wasp, the worm, the gnat, the but - ter -
found to have a friend, And I cast down when A - to - mies do

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drone, the drone doth live, The wasp, the worm, the gnat, the but - ter -
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fly? Mat - ed with grief I kneel - ed on my knees,
climb. The king re - plied but thus: Peace, pee - - - vish Bee,

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Yet brought I wax and hon - - - ey to the the hive.
And thus com - plained un - to the king, the king of bees:
Thou'rt bound to serve the time, the time not thee.

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Einst konnten die törichten Bienen sprechen, und zu der Zeit war ich eine törichte Biene,
Die sich von der Zeit ernährte, bis mein (jetzt ist der Dichter aus der dritten Person in die erste gerutscht)
Herz zu brechen begann. Aber ich hatte nie das Gefühl, dass die Zeit auf meiner Seite war.
Nur ich im ganzen Schwarm gedieh nicht, obwohl ich Wachs und Honig in the Korb brachte.

Und da begann ich, folgendermaßen zu summen, als die Zeit keinen Saft lieferte:
Warum sollte diese gesegnete Zeit in Bezug auf mich dürr sein,
Wo doch die faule Drohne von dieser Zeit lebt, die Wespe, der Wurm, die Mücke, der Schmetterling?
Eins mit dem Kummer (to mate ist eigentlich der Geschlechtsakt bei Tieren) kniete ich auf meinen Knien
Und beschwerte mich folgendermaßen beim Bienenkönig (wirklich, nicht Königin):

Mein Fürst, mögen die Götter geben, dass Deine Zeit nie ein Ende finden wird,
Und sei doch gnädig genug, meine Beschwerde über die Zeit anzuhören,
(bezieht sich immer noch auf Zeit) Eine Zeit, die sich für nachkommenlose Fliegen
(dazu sollte man wissen, dass eine Fliege namens fruit fly ein besonders beliebtes
Laborobjekt in der Genetik ist, weil sie sich so schnell fortpflanzt) als Freund erwiesen hat,
Und ich werde niedergeschlagen, wenn kleinwinzige Tiere aufsteigen.
Der König erwiderte aber mit diesen Worten: Friede, nörgelnde Biene,
Dein Schicksal besteht darin, der Zeit zu dienen, nicht anders herum (also: die Zeit dient nicht dir).
(Übersetzung: Irene Auerbach)