

# It was a time when silly bees

Words ascribed to Robert, Earl of Essex

John Dowland

Cantus

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!

Altus

Tenor

Bassus

Lute

5

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,

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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, -

Figured Bass: a d d r a | f e d a r f e | e b a r d f

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- 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-

Figured Bass: d r a a | f d d r b | a | f e d a

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

Figured Bass:  
 a r b r r a e r a a  
 r b r r a e r a a  
 r b r r a e r a a

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."

Figured Bass:  
 a a b b a a f e a a  
 a a b b a a f e a a  
 r r a r r a r r a r