

# THE EPITAPH

IN FORM OF A BALLADE

WHICH VILLON MADE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS COMPANIONS  
WHEN EXPECTING TO BE HANGED WITH THEM



BROTHERS who yet are living, mortal men,  
Speak not of us with wrath and bitter tongue,  
Since if your souls for us are filled with pain  
The more will God's grace fall your hearts among.  
You see us here upon the gibbets hung :  
The flesh that we too much did glorify

Has long been putrid and devoured : and dry  
As dust and ashes now our bleached bones be.  
Let no man then our hideous shapes decry,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Brothers, speak not, we pray you, with disdain  
Of us poor five or six by law upstrung.  
It is not every man who has his brain  
Clear and well-seated, as has oft been sung.  
Make ye then intercession for our wrong  
To him whose death from Hell our souls did buy,  
Saving us from the flames that never die,  
That fresh may flow the fount of His pity.  
We are dead : let none to vex our spirits try,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Our bodies have been washed and drenched by rain,  
Dried up and blackened by the sun ; a throng  
Of ravens and of crows our eyes have ta'en  
And pluckt the brows and beards whereto they clung.



*THE SAVOY*

Never are we at rest, forever swung  
By every wind that shifts and passes by,  
Pecked by the sharp beaks of the crow and pye  
And dinted like a thimble, as you see,  
Have naught to say to them that with us vie,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Prince Jesus, Lord who reignest in the sky,  
Grant that to Hell's fierce mouth we draw not nigh :  
Toward such a place no love or wish have we.  
Men, mock not us because we hang so high,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

THEODORE WRATISLAW.