

tactless reminder stemming from compulsive prophetic insights do make his poems more individual. On the other hand, these very traits do greatly limit the literary as opposed to historical appeal of these works.

Eulogizers and especially poets laureate for famous warrior-kings have in every age been suspect. William Winstanley's judgement on Payne Fisher, which applies almost equally well to Wither, Waller, and Marvell, plainly holds true not only for the seventeenth century:

. . . it must be considered (saith Mr. Phillips) that Poets in all times have been inclinable to ingratiate themselves with the highest in Power by what Title soever.¹

Except for Fisher (along with other deservedly forgotten scribblers of his ilk), Cromwell seems to have been served more fairly than most. If Waller can be dubbed his official Virgil, and Marvell at some remove his rather detached Horace, then Wither can only qualify as his perversely relentless Cassandra!

¹ *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets*, 1687, p. 193.

Comment

The old ones
measure time
in minutes wrapped
for mailing.

Their days are
little parcels
never sent.

VIRGINIA BRADY YOUNG