

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 24 August 1527 and proved 27 August 1527, of Thomas Lee, maternal grandfather of the poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592). For a more detailed discussion of the poet's family, see the will of William Watson (d.1559), TNA PROB 11/43, ff. 26-7.

LM: Testamentum Thome Lee

In the name of God, Amen. The 24th day of the month of August the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred twenty and seven and the 19th year of the reign of King Henry the 8th, I, Thomas Lee, citizen and merchant tailor of London, being of good and whole mind, laud and praises therefore be to Almighty God, howbeit somewhat being visited by th' hands of my Maker or Creator, Almighty God, make and ordain this my present testament and last will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I bequeath and commend my soul to Almighty God, my Creator and Saviour, and to his Blessed Mother, Our Lady Saint Mary Virgin, to Saint John Baptist, my patron, and to all the celestial company of heaven, and my body to be buried within the parish church of Saint John Evangelist in Watling Street of London where now I am a parishioner there where it may most honestly and conveniently be done;

And I bequeath to the high altar of the said parish church of Saint John for my tithes negligently forgotten, if any such be or were, in discharge of my soul, 53s 4d;

Item, I bequeath to Thomas Edmond, my brother, to pray for my soul, 3s 4d;

Item, to Beatrix, my sister, 53s 4d, to pray for my soul;

Item, I bequeath to every of my servants being in my house the day of the making of this my testament, being good and doing their diligent service to mine executrice underwritten, to every of them 40s apiece;

Also I will that every one of my children shall have his or their portion of my goods according to the ancient custom of this noble City, and furthermore I will that every of my said children shall be heir or heirs to the other, one after another, of his or their said portion or portions that shall fortune to decease of that their part or portion or parts or portions of the said goods unto the last liver of my said children;

And if it fortune all my said children to decease, as God forbid, before any of them have had any part or portion of my said goods, then I will that all those their parts and portions, or that part & portion of my said goods [+that shall] fortune to remain of all the parts and portions of my said children or to any of them or to my said last child living, in the name of all my children shall be distributed in deeds of charity and pity to the

pleasure of Almighty God for the health of my soul, my father and mother's soul, my said children's souls, and all Christian souls;

Item, I bequeath towards the building of the steeple of the said parish church of Saint John Evangelist, £3 6s 8d;

Also I will that mine executrice underwritten incontinently after my decease do cause an honest priest of good name and conversation to sing, pray and say Mass daily with other divine service in the said parish church of Saint John Evangelist, and there to pray for my soul and the souls before rehearsed by the space of 7 whole years then next & immediately, and the same priest to have yearly for his salary during every of the same 7 years £6 13s 4d;

Also I bequeath to every of the prison-houses of Newgate, Ludgate, King's Bench and Marshalsea, that is to say, to the prisoners being within every of the said prison-houses, 10s apiece, equally amongst them to be distributed and divided by the discretion of mine executrice underwritten or by her assigns;

Also I bequeath towards the making and mending of highways about the City of London where most need shall be thought by discretion of mine executrice the sum of £5;

Also I will that the convents of the houses or monasteries of the Friars Minors and Crossed Friars of the City of London be at my burial the day of my decease, and either of them to have for their labours and to say a trigintal of Masses in their said convent churches the morrow following for my soul, 10s;

Also whereas I have a lease under the Chapter seal of the Cathedral Church of Saint Paul in London of the messuage with th' appurtenances wherein I now dwell, set, lying and being in the parish of Saint John Evangelist in Watling Street aforesaid for term of certain years yet to come, I will that Elizabeth, my wife, shall have the same term of her life, paying, finding and doing as I am bound to do, as more at large is expressed in the same indenture, and after the decease of the said Elizabeth, I will that the terms then to come in the said lease of the said messuage shall remain to Thomas Lee, my son, and to his assigns term of his life, paying, finding and doing as I am bound to do, and after the decease of the foresaid Thomas, my son, I will that then all the term of years then to come by the said lease shall remain to my daughter, Annes [=Anne], and to her assigns, paying, finding and doing as I am bound to do, and after the decease of the same my wife and two children, that then all that state and term of years of the said messuage with th' appurtenances coming by reason of the said lease for term of years shall remain to the children of William Witlock, my wife's children by her other husband, one after another as they be in age, beginning at the eldest first, and so forth to the said years by the said lease by [sic] fully finished, ended and determined;

And if my said children and the said children of the said William Whitlock fortune to decease before the said lease for term of years be finished and ended, then I will that mine executrice underwritten or her executors sell my said lease and the years then to come in

the said messuage with th' appurtenances, and the money coming of the sale thereof to be distributed and dealt in deeds of pity and charity for the health of my soul, my wives [=wife's?] souls, my father and mother's souls, my children's souls, my wife's children's souls, and all Christian souls where most need shall be thought by them, as they will answer afore God;

Also I will that mine executrice underwritten make to my Company in the common hall an honest repast or refecton;

Also by this my present testament and last will I revoke and disannul all other testaments and wills by me or by any other person for me heretofore made by writing, mouth or afore witness, and that this my present testament and last will shall be and is my very testament and last will and none other, and that it be firm and stable and stand in strength and virtue;

The rest and residue of all my goods, chattels and debts and other my goods movable and unmovable, after my debts paid, mine expenses funerals done, and this my present testament and last will fulfilled with the legacies therein contained, I give and bequeath them wholly to Elizabeth, my wife, she to dispose them in deeds of mercy, charity and pity for my soul and the souls aforesaid and all Christian souls, which said Elizabeth of this my present testament and last will I make and ordain my sole executrice;

In witness whereof to this my present testament and last will I have set my seal, given the day and years above-written in the presence of Sir John Smyth and William Goodwyn.

Probatum fuit testamentum supracripti defuncti Coram prefatis Commissarijs in ecclesia Cathedrali domini Pauli London xxvijo Die mensis Augusti Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo xxvijo Iuramento Elizabethae Relicte & executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate In persona Richardi ffelde procuratoris sui in hac parte Ac approbatum & insinuatum Et commissa fuit administracio auctoritate prefatorum Reuerendissimorum patrium omnium & singulorum bonorum Iurium et creditorum dicti defuncti prefate Elizabethae In persona dicti procuratoris De bene & fideliter administrando Ac de pleno & fideli Inventario secundo die post festum sancti Edwardi proximum futurum exhibendo Necnon de plano et vero compoto reddendo Ad sancta dei Euangelia In debita iuris forma Iurati

[=The testament of the above-written deceased was proved before the forenamed Commissioners in the Cathedral Church of the Lord Paul, London, on the 27th day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 27th by the oath of Elizabeth, relict & executrix named in the same testament, in the person of Richard Field, proctor on her behalf, and probated & entered, and administration was granted by the authority of the forenamed Most Reverend Fathers of all & singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased to the forenamed Elizabeth in the person of the said proctor,

sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well & faithfully administer [+the same], and to exhibit a full & faithful inventory on the second day after the feast of Saint Edward next to come, and also to render a plain and true account.]