

## Whoso list to hunt

Undated sonnet written by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542), a poet in the service of Henry VIII. The poem is thought to be about Anne Boleyn, the “hind” or female deer fruitlessly pursued by the speaker. Wyatt’s individual poems went virtually unpublished in his lifetime, and no collections of his verse appeared in published form. “Whoso list to hunt” is part of the Egerton Manuscript, bequeathed by Francis Henry Egerton (1756-1829) to the British Library in 1829.

Whoso list to hunt, I know where is an hind,  
But as for me, alas, I may no more.  
The vain travail hath wearied me so sore.  
I am of them that farthest cometh behind.  
Yet may I, by no means, my wearied mind  
Draw from the deer but as she fleeth afore,  
Fainting I follow. I leave off therefore,  
Since in a net I seek to hold the wind.  
Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt,  
As well as I, may spend his time in vain:  
And graven with diamonds, in letters plain  
There is written, her fair neck round about,  
*Noli me tangere*, for Caesar’s I am,  
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.