THE TUDOR • SHAKESPEARE

THE SONNETS
The Tudor Shakespeare

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THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON IN THE TOWER OF LONDON

From the painting at Welbeck Abbey
Sonnets

AND

A Lover's Complaint

[29.]

EDITED BY

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Introduction

SONNETS

Text.—In 1598 appeared a little book by Francis Meres, which undertook to give lists of the chief English writers and their works. Here we find mentioned Shakespeare’s “sugred sonnets among his private friends,”—the earliest evidence, aside from a few sonnets introduced into Love’s Labour’s Lost and other early plays, that he had interested himself in the sonnet form. In 1599 the piratical publisher Jaggard included in a collection called The Passionate Pilgrim three of the sonnets from Love’s Labour’s Lost, and two others, which were to appear ten years later in a quarto volume published by Thomas Thorpe. This quarto bore the following title-page: “Shake-speare’s Sonnets. Never before Imprinted. At London. By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by John Wright, dwelling at Christ Church gate. 1609.” It contained one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, followed by A Lover’s Complaint. In 1640 a second edition of the sonnets was issued, arranged in an entirely different order, and with some additional matter. The quarto of 1609 is the basis of all modern editions.

There is no evidence—but rather good cause to believe the contrary—that the collection of 1609 was published with Shakespeare’s knowledge or consent; on the other hand, little reason appears for doubting that most,
if not all, the sonnets included in it were actually his. The publisher dedicated it to a Mr. W. H., whom he called "the only begetter" of the sonnets. This Mr. W. H. has never been identified, and it remains uncertain whether we are to understand from the dedication that he was the young gentleman who seems to have inspired a large number of the sonnets, or only the person who procured the manuscript and made possible their publication. Either interpretation presents difficulties; the weight of criticism inclines to the former.

_Date._—Obviously we have no external evidence to guide us to the date of composition of the sonnets, beyond the remark of Meres which indicates that some of them were circulating in manuscript before 1598. Since we can have no assurance that they were arranged for publication in chronological order, even the dating of individual sonnets would prove nothing for the whole series; and there is little internal evidence of a solid character. Some sonnets suggest the more immature style of Shakespeare's earlier plays; others that of his maturer period. One sonnet (107) has been thought, but without certainty, to refer to the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. Some critics believe that the Earl of Southampton was the young gentleman who in the first group of sonnets is urged to marry, and this theory implies that that group was written between 1594 and 1598. Others hold that he was the Earl of Pembroke, a theory which implies a later date. In the absence of definite evidence to the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that the sonnets were written at various intervals during Shakespeare’s literary
career, beginning at least as early as the period of *Love's Labour's Lost* (that is, about 1591), but most numerously in the period during which the form was exceedingly popular in England, especially about 1594–1596.

*The Vogue of the Sonnet.* — Some understanding of this sonnet fashion, represented by a large number of Elizabethan poets, is indispensable for the placing of Shakespeare's practice in the right perspective. Rising in Italy, and passing into France, the art of the sonnet came into England through imitation of the poetry of both countries, and its practice there was imitative to a degree which becomes more impressive the more one studies the text of the sonnets of the age. One result was a clearly marked type of sonnet sequence, usually named for a lady whose charms were the theme of the poet (Stella, Diana, Idea, Phyllis, what you will), and whose coldness was represented as stirring his passion to the utmost, yet not too profoundly to find expression in conceits marked by every form of ingenious artifice. Of this type the sonnets of Sidney, called *Astrophel and Stella*, are at once the most characteristic and the noblest example in England; and through them Italian and French modes of imagination and style were handed on to later poets. A single instance will serve as well as a hundred. It was a re-

1 The details of this imitativeness have been worked out with much zeal by Sir Sidney Lee, first in his *Life of Shakespeare*, later in his Introduction to the collection of Elizabethan Sonnets in the new edition of *An English Garner*, and still more recently in the volume called *The French Renaissance in England*. 
Reflection of Petrarch's that his lady Laura, though her beauty must some day yield to time and death, would be immortalized by his verse, which should defy the tooth of time and outlive memorials of stone or brass. Horace indeed, and other ancient writers, had expressed similar expectations. The French sonneteers took up the theme in turn, and every English poet of the sonneteering age repeated it, as in Spenser's

My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,

Drayton's

Ensuing ages yet my rhymes shall cherish;

and Daniel's

This may remain thy lasting monument.

When, therefore, we find Shakespeare in like manner affirming that

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

we shall be on our guard against taking his sayings too seriously, true indeed though they have proved.

The Question of Continuity.—But, admitting these conventionalities which make the sonnets of Shakespeare analogous to the others of the age, it does not follow that the series as a whole is to be viewed as one of the conventional sequences of the period. In the first place, it was not published as a sequence. It bears no title drawn from a lady's name; it contains no mention of such a
name. Only a few of the sonnets celebrate an unrequited love,—the chief theme of the Renaissance sonneteers. When we look more closely, we perceive that a number of them are addressed to a man,—not an unprecedented, but still an unconventional circumstance. We discover further that of some of those addressed to a woman (or women) the tone is not that of passionate gallantry, but of satire or invective. Certain sonnets on abstract moral themes, others on conventional aspects of love and beauty, are scattered among still others which seem to deal with particular occasions and ephemeral circumstances, such as must remain largely meaningless except to those immediately concerned. In short, the more one studies the collection, while—as we have seen—the analogies it exhibits to the conventional sequences of the age become clearer, it is equally true that the differences between it and those conventional sequences become also increasingly plain. The certainty that this is not a sequence of the ordinary type leads to the suspicion that it may not be, speaking accurately, a sequence at all.

Opinions differ widely at this point, regarding the extent to which the series of sonnets as published in 1609 is to be read consecutively or with the assumption that they appear in the order in which the poet wished them to stand. Not to enter into the argument in detail, a brief outline of the contents of the collection, made without prejudice on the question of the arrangement, will indicate how far we find obvious and necessary connection between neighboring sonnets, and at the same time may be useful as a guide to the reader.
Introduction

Nos. 1–17 are clearly connected in a short series; they are addressed to a young man of beauty and distinction, who is urged by the poet to marry on the ground that he should perpetuate his charms through offspring.

Nos. 18–19 form a pair on the conventional theme of a friend or lover made immortal through the praise of poetry.

Nos. 20–25 seem to be individual compositions, whether addressed to the same or different friends, without significant arrangement. No. 20 is addressed to a young man whose beauty is such that the poet playfully regrets that he cannot be loved as a woman. No. 21 is a declaration that the poet will not praise his love in the exaggerated terms of the sonneteers, but with simple truth. No. 22 is a love-sonnet based on a familiar “conceit” of the period,—the exchange of hearts; No. 24 on another familiar conceit, the conflict of eye and heart. Nos. 23 and 25 deal with love, again, in terms that suggest nothing as to the person addressed.

Nos. 26–28 seem to be connected, as written during a period of absence, and it has been thought that Nos. 29–32 belong to the same group. Sonnets 29 and 30, which are among the greatest of Shakespeare’s lyrics, are parallel studies of the same theme; they may have been written at the same time, or perhaps are more naturally regarded as having been brought together because of similarity of subject.

Nos. 33–35 deal with something like an estrangement caused by a fault which appears to have been committed by the person addressed. Nos. 40–42 are similar in tone, but with the difference that here the fault is specifically described as the stealing of the affections of a woman beloved by the poet. The incident is treated rather playfully than tragically, and the friend’s unfaithfulness is set at naught on the ground that “my friend and I are one.” Oddly enough, these two groups of sonnets are interrupted by four (Nos. 36–39) which have nothing to do with the matter of the faithless friend, and one of which (36) has to do with some fault on the poet’s own part; the other three are conventional sonnets of love and praise, No. 39 being again a sonnet in absence.

In Nos. 43–45, 48, and 50–52, the theme of absence recurs;
these sonnets give an impression of continuity, and seem to have reference to a journey which the poet has made away from home. But the group is interrupted by Nos. 46-47, another pair on the conventional conceit of eye and heart, and by No. 49, on a new theme,—the possibility that the friend addressed may some day turn against the poet.

No. 53 is a single sonnet on love and beauty; Nos. 54-55 form another pair on the "eternizing" power of poetry.

Nos. 56-58 form another absence group, but in this case it is the friend, not the poet, who has gone away; No. 61 appears to attach itself to the same group. It is separated from its fellows, however, by No. 59, a general sonnet of love and praise, and No. 60, another sonnet on the triumph of poetry over time.

No. 62 stands in no obvious connection with any other; it develops the conceit that "self-love" is really friend’s-love.

Nos. 63-65 again take up the war of poetry against time and mortality.

Nos. 66-68 describe the present evil times, contrasting the friend’s perfection as a kind of remnant of better days.

Nos. 69-70 seem to form a pair, dealing obscurely with some scandal from which the friend addressed has suffered.

Nos. 71-74 form a striking and unique group, anticipating the poet’s death; they would form a magnificent close to a formal series, and some have thought that they were so intended.

Nos. 75-77 are individual; the first two renew the theme of personal praise, while the third appears to have been sent to the friend with the gift of an album or blank-book.

Nos. 78-80 and 82-87 introduce a new and interesting theme. The friend addressed is now not so much a friend as a patron, and rival poets, one in particular, are threatening to take the place of the writer in his affections. The series is interrupted by No. 81, another conventional sonnet of the "eternizing" type.

Nos. 88-93 again deal with estrangement, but now in terms of friendship rather than of the relation of patronage; and they seem to treat not so much of any actual rupture as of the hypothetical decay of loyalty, the possibility of which had been touched upon in Sonnet 49.
Nos. 94–96 treat obscurely, again, of a fault on the friend's part, and suggest a close connection with the matter of Nos. 69–70.

Nos. 97–99 may be read continuously, as on the common theme of absence at different seasons; or they may have been brought together because of this similarity.

Nos. 100–103 are continuous, forming a kind of letter of apology for a preceding silence.

Nos. 104–108 are individually distinct, but three or four of them are apparently addressed to the same beautiful youth who was conspicuous in the earlier portion of the collection. No. 106 is a new study of the conceit that the friend's beauty is an heirloom of better days. No. 107 is in part a conventional sonnet of "eternizing," but in part seems to have reference (see the Notes) to a time when outside events had threatened the poet's friend or friendship.

Nos. 109–112 and 117–120 seem to treat of a common theme, an estrangement following absence, during which the poet has undergone bitter experience; he admits himself at fault, but professes his love to be indestructible. It may be that Nos. 113–116 are to be read in the order in which they stand, and in the same connection, but they are not of a character to be placed with definiteness. Nos. 113–114 form a fairly conventional pair of sonnets in absence. No. 115 celebrates the perpetual growth of which love is capable, and No. 116 reverts to the triumph of love over time.

Nos. 121–125 may form a continuation of the preceding group, the letter of penitence and devotion. No. 121 seems to allude to spying slanderers from whom the poet has suffered. No. 122, perhaps wholly isolated, refers to a gift (a note-book) which the poet has received and in turn given away; its iteration of his "lasting memory" may perhaps connect it with its successor. Nos. 123–124 deal again with love overcoming time. No. 125 further celebrates the security of a love which is concerned with essentials, not externals.

No. 126 is not a true sonnet, but a poem in six couplets, and has frequently been called an "envoy" or conclusion to the whole collection up to this point. It is addressed to
"my lovely boy," presumably the same person as the "lovely youth" of No. 54 and the "sweet boy" of 108, and tells him that, though for the present his beauty still escapes the hand of Time, Nature will in the end insist on her sovereignty and surrender him to age. In other words, it returns to a thought conspicuous in the sonnets standing near the beginning of the collection; but it is a very unfit envoy for those immediately preceding, and may well be thought of as inserted here by a puzzled editor who knew no better place for it.

No. 127 is the first of what has frequently been called the Second Series of the Sonnets, including all the remainder save the last two. For this "series" no other unity can be claimed than arises from the circumstance that one finds here all the sonnets certainly addressed to women. This first one is in praise of brunette beauty, rarely admired in Shakespeare's time.

No. 128 is conventional in tone, and is addressed to a lady playing the virginals; she is not clearly to be identified with the subject of any other sonnet.

No. 129 is a moral epigram on lust.

No. 130 treats ironically, in the mood of No. 21, of the usual hyperboles of sonneteers, and again refers to a dark-haired mistress.

Nos. 131–132 address the dark mistress directly, praising her charms, in the first instance with a cynical turn, in the second by means of various conceits.

Nos. 133–134 apparently refer to the incident of the lady and the unfaithful friend which formed the theme of Nos. 40–42, but are addressed to the lady.

Nos. 135–136 play on the poet's name of Will (see Notes), and the first of them may be interpreted as a continuation of the theme of the two preceding.

Nos. 137–138, and again 141 and 142, are addressed to a false and guilty mistress; but they are interrupted by a pair of sonnets, Nos. 139–140, on a mistress who is not called false or guilty, but who appears rather to be conventionally unkind and proud.

Nos. 143–144 seem to refer again (the first doubtfully, the
second with more certainty) to the incident of Nos. 40–42 and 133–134. No. 144, in its account of the poet's "two loves," is the key-sonnet for the group in question, and, some will have it, for the entire collection.

No. 145 is a trifling pleasantry, in octosyllabics, wholly unconnected.

No. 146 is a moral epigram on the soul and body.

Nos. 147–152 together deal with a stormy and guilty love, and are naturally associated with Nos. 137–138 and 141–142, though far more tragic in tone.

Nos. 153–154 are epigrams on Cupid, based on an ancient source (see Notes).

Such an outline reveals the fact that there is no obvious or necessary continuity in the collection as a whole. It is quite possible, of course, to read connectedly successive sonnets which have been separated in the foregoing analysis, by supplying some link, often of a very simple character. But on the other hand there are many breaks, changes of tone, and contradictions in detail, which make the consecutiveness of the whole a more than doubtful hypothesis. Clearly a large number of pairs and trios of sonnets belong together, and there appear two or three short series which may well be thought of as having been written and despatched to the person addressed in the manner of a letter. Certain subjects and persons seem to reappear now and again, with interspersed matter for which it is impossible to postulate any definite persons or circumstances. A natural explanation of all these facts would seem to be something like the following: whoever arranged Shakespeare's sonnets in their present order found them in various unarranged manuscript copies, but in sheets on which two or three connected sonnets were
frequently preserved together, and, in some cases, short manuscripts embodying longer series. He placed at the beginning of the collection the longest of these apparent series, in some cases brought together sonnets on similar themes, but in general undertook no topical arrangement, except that he left to the end those few sonnets which clearly had reference to women, together with a few others of different character from the majority of the collection.

The Question of Autobiography. — Related to the matter of the continuity of the sonnets, yet quite distinct from it, is the question of their autobiographical character, or, as it is frequently but unfortunately phrased, their sincerity. Opinions have differed widely as to whether we have in these poems the records of individual experiences of Shakespeare, dramatic imaginings of the experiences of others, or purely artificial exercises in a conventional form. If one knew the facts of the poet’s life in some detail, or if on the other hand we knew the precise dates and order of the sonnets, we might come to definite conclusions; as it is, the problem must remain largely a matter of conjectural interpretation. So far, then, as concerns any hope of conclusive proof, it might well be dismissed from consideration; but it is kept alive by certain interesting questions involved in it, as to the uses made of the sonnet in Shakespeare’s time, and as to the nature of the self-revelation of poets.

The chief argument against the personal character of the sonnets is drawn from the view that they form one of
many sequences in an age when every poet was writing sonnet sequences. They make use of the same conventional conceits; they indulge in the same hyperbolical descriptions of beauty and professions of devotion. From this it is inferred that the substance of them is imaginary. This is the view of Sir Sidney Lee, who draws from the general statement that "genuine emotion, or the writer's personal experience, very rarely inspired the Elizabethan sonnet," the corollary that Shakespeare was doing little more "than produce dramatically the illusion of a personal confession." But the general statement is open to much question. There is evidence tending to show that certain important Elizabethan sequences — notably those by Sidney and Spenser, Shakespeare's chief predecessors in this field — were inspired by direct experience. And if we look beyond this particular fashion, we soon discover that the artificiality of a form does not prevent its use for very real personal feeling. While some natures seek expression for deep feeling in informal ways, rejecting the pomp of funeral or wedding as suggestive of insincerity through its conventionality, others seek to give their joy or sorrow the most impressive and memorable expression by committing it to highly elaborate forms. We may not, then, assume that emotion committed to a conventional type is thereby to be judged impersonal or unreal. But further, even if the Elizabethan sequences in general were to be regarded as so insincere as to shut out the probability of their sincerity, we have seen that Shakespeare's sonnets are to be distinguished, in important ways, from the others of the period, and may never have been regarded by him as a formal sequence at all.
A second argument against the personal character of these sonnets is drawn from our conception of Shakespeare as a highly objective artist. His dramas have been scrutinized for centuries for evidences of his character and opinions; but when all is said there is little evidence for any theory which attempts to reconstruct the individual Shakespeare. If, then, owing to his objectivity as a writer, we cannot even conjecture his opinions, how much less can we hope to discern the experiences of his intimate life! This is argued with some plausibility. On the other hand it must be recalled that we know relatively little of Shakespeare as a lyrical poet, and further that these lyrics in sonnet form are not, so far as we can judge, a part of the work which he wrote for others than “his private friends.”

Considerations like these, which meet the chief arguments against the personal interpretation, have led most readers and critics to follow the natural suggestions of the style and manner of the sonnets themselves, and to view them as bringing us closer to the personality of Shakespeare than any of his other writings. But one should distinguish between the sincere expression of an emotional experience and the accurate autobiographical rendering of minute objective details. Much of the emotional life of any man is other than a replica of outer fact, and this must be doubly true of poets. One may suppose, then, that the sonnet beginning,

When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,

faithfully represents the poet’s very mood and feeling when it was written, without being at all certain that he
was just then in disgrace with men's eyes, much less seeking to identify the occasion. We may suppose that the tumult of passionate love, shadowed by unholy elements and embittered by the more sinister aspects of the mystery of sex, was poignantly real to him when some of the more painful sonnets were composed, without therefore feeling bound to set down definite conjectures regarding an intrigue with a dark lady, much less indulging in impertinent as well as impossible efforts to learn her name. After all, the only aspect of the question with which we have any just concern as readers of Shakespeare's poems, is their essential sincerity as distinguished from biographical veracity.

**Form, Style, and Content.** — It remains to consider briefly the form, style, and content of the sonnets, apart from those troublesome matters which have stirred up so much critical debate ever since the collection began to be studied.

The form of Shakespeare's sonnets is what is known as the English (to be distinguished from the Italian) type, in which the fourteen lines are divided, not into two main parts, octave and sestet, but into four slighter parts, three quatrains and a couplet. This distinction affects not merely the rime-scheme of the typical form, but goes deeper, into the mode in which the sonnet treats its theme. Thus, in the Italian bipartite sonnet, the thought is very commonly set forth in two main aspects, — sometimes coördinate, sometimes with one related to the other as analogue or corollary. In the English sonnet, on the other hand, the normal structure represents a progressive
movement, through three successive aspects of the theme, to a brief and pointed conclusion. Of this type Sonnets 30 and 73 are perfect representatives.

Of the style of the sonnets it may be said, in general, that it is as like that of Shakespeare's plays as could be expected of any lyrical work, and—as has already been hinted—suggests at different times the qualities of Shakespeare's dramatic style as it has been traced in the different periods of his career. Sonnets like the concluding pair, the playful tales of Cupid, or No. 91, with its simple but vivid style, or again like No. 53, with its reminder of the poet's early love of the Adonis myth, and its elaboration of intricate phrasing, distinctly suggest the early Shakespearean style. Those of the opening series, to the youth who is urged to wed, suggest the style of the earlier middle period, with its more closely woven thought, straightforward progress, but still sensuous vividness. The highest development of this mature and symmetrical style of Shakespeare's middle period would seem to be represented in the great sonnet on the consolation of friendship (No. 29), and that on life's autumnal twilight (No. 73). Here every line is rich in both form and substance, yet never so weighted with either as to make one pause, puzzled or startled, over the salient elements of either. Finally, from the still later period, we may conjecture, come the crowded lines of Nos. 64 and 65, of No. 30, and the more difficult compactness of No. 107. To this later manner, too, belongs the moral earnestness of such sonnets as No. 146 and No. 150.

It must not be supposed that stress can be placed on
these distinctions of style as a valid test for the dating of sonnets, unless in extreme cases and with wholly tentative judgment; for the sonnet is too brief a poem to give scope for the operation of those laws of chance on which all such tests depend. The characteristics which seem to appertain to the different periods have been pointed out, not for the sake of their bearing on questions of date or order, but because of their intrinsic interest for the reader of the poems and the plays.

The subject-matter of these sonnets has already been pretty well described in outlining them with a view to observing the character of the collection and the evidence of continuity. We have seen, for example, that it is distinguished from most of the sonnet collections of its age in making relatively little of the love of man for woman. On the other hand, in treating (through at least a considerable, if uncertain, number of the sonnets) the theme of the love of man for man, Shakespeare was following another Renaissance practice, which, though not fully naturalized in England, was sufficiently familiar on the Continent. Some have traced evidence of his interest in this theme, in certain of the dramas, — The Merchant of Venice, for example, a play probably written in the same period as a good part of the sonnets. However it be explained, this admittedly exotic, un-English theme stands out conspicuous in the collection, enriched and emphasized with a wealth of passionate imagery not elsewhere devoted to it in literature.

On the other hand, a reactionary and satiric mood, opposed to the romantic devotion almost universally
characteristic of the sonnet sequences, appears interwoven now and then with the other,—and, what is most remarkable, is especially connected with the poet’s treatment of woman. The significance of this must be considered to have been grossly exaggerated by critics of the sonnets; for, as has appeared in our outline of their contents, those concerned in the legend of the "dark lady" are, when scrutinized without prejudice, neither so numerous, so connected, nor so tragic as one has been led to suppose. And the playful tone of Sonnets 21 and 130 is far more characteristic of Shakespeare’s manner of reacting from the extravagances of romantic enthusiasm, as we know it in his plays, than the dark cynicism of Nos. 147 and 152. Yet these last, with a few others like them, still confront us; and the prevalent conjecture may be right in associating them with the puzzling disillusionment and dissonance with which woman and the love of woman are treated in Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida.

But altogether apart from the personal element, entangled as it is with the futile effort to interpret it in terms of individual experience, are the themes which make the sonnets, like the plays, possessions "not of an age, but for all time." The chief of these themes, transcending and including the rest, might be stated in some such phrase as the conflict of Love, Beauty, and Time. Whatever else we may know or not know of Shakespeare’s personal feelings during the period when a great part of the sonnets were written, it is certain that he had for some reason been deeply impressed by the flight of the precious
things that go with youth, and was disposed to count every
wrinkle on the brow of either himself or his friends.
Throughout the collection the reader is likely to find him-
self conscious of a relentless warfare in progress against
the dread, impending figure of old Time.¹ Now Love
and Beauty are leagued against him; now they call
Poetry to their aid, and its promises are infinitely daring,
yet after all are felt to be hollow and illusory; now Beauty
itself begins to fail, and Love is left to battle alone. Mean-
time other enemies come to the aid of Time, such as
Scandal, Lust, and Infidelity, whose presence makes the
struggle more saddening, if not more hopeless. And the
end? The question recalls us from this somewhat fan-
tastic representation of the sequence to the fact that we
have found it not to be a sequence, after all, and so to
have no formal end. But the note of victory is at any
rate louder than the sounds of defeat; and it is perhaps
not too fantastic to find the thematic terminus of the
sonnets in No. 116:

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;

(Beauty, in other words, now lies dead on the field; yet —)

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

¹ Cf. G. H. Palmer, *Intimations of Immortality in the Son-
nets of Shakspere*, Boston, 1912.
A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

A Lover’s Complaint followed the Sonnets in the quarto of 1609, with a separate heading: "A Lover’s Complaint, by William Shake-speare." It is not known to have been printed elsewhere during Shakespeare’s lifetime, nor are there extant any contemporary allusions confirming his authorship or giving evidence of the date when it was written. If genuine, it remains perhaps the least well known of Shakespeare’s poems.

Most critics have accepted the poem as Shakespeare’s, though some question has been raised on the ground of the especially large number of words that appear to have been newly coined by the writer (acture, credent, fluxive, enpatron, phraseless, invisid, are examples), and Sir Sidney Lee regards it as the work of an inferior poet. On the other hand, it is difficult to point out another poet of the period who was capable of a style at once so fluent and so compact, so sensuous and yet so psychologically penetrating. The obvious resemblances, in theme and manner, to the poems Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece, have led to the prevalent opinion that A Lover’s Complaint was probably written in the early period in which those works appeared (1593-1594), though Delius (Shakespeare Jahrbuch, xx) finds evidence of a later date in passages parallel to certain of the plays.

xxv
The theme of the poem, the plaint of a deserted maiden, was familiar in the pastoral poetry of the sixteenth century, and the pastoral element is made to furnish the setting here, — a hillside, a river, a maiden with disheveled hair and hat of straw, and an aged cattle-herder to hear her story. This, however, is soon left behind, and the real interest of the narrative confined to the wiles of the resistless Don Juan who caused the maiden’s downfall. In the embellishment of her tale the poet pursues the method of Venus and Adonis and Lucrece, of Lodge’s Glaucus and Scylla and Marlowe’s Hero and Leander, — a method resulting in a kind of “lyrical ballad,” of which it may be said that the action is important not (as in Wordsworth’s formula) as it gives rise to feeling, but as it furnishes opportunity for rich elaboration of both sensuous and reflective detail.

The stanza employed is the old seven-line “rime royal,” used by Chaucer for much of his narrative verse, and elsewhere by Shakespeare in The Rape of Lucrece.

Finally, one may recall a pleasant observation of Steevens’s, to the effect that certain lines in the eighteenth stanza of the Complaint are worthy of being inscribed on Shakespeare’s tomb as descriptive of his own superlative powers:

To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will.
SONNETS

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF THESE INSUING SONNETS.
MR. W. H. ALL HAPPINESSE.
AND THAT ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.

BY.
OUR EVER-LIVING POET.

WISHETH.
THE WELL-WISHING.

ADVENTURER IN.

SETTING.

FORTH.

T. T.
Sonnets

1

FROM fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the riper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.
When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held.
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use
If thou couldst answer, "This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,"
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.
Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
Now is the time that face should form another;
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, un bless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose un ear'd womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime;
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see
Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.
But if thou live, rememb'red not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.
Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank she lends to those are free.
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
For having traffic with thyself alone,
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.
Then how, when Nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which, used, lives the executor to be.
Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds him there,
Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness everywhere;
Then, were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.
Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
That use is not forbidden usury
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
That's for thyself to breed another thee,
Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
If ten of thine ten times refigr'd thee:
Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.
Lo! in the orient when the gracious light
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
Attending on his golden pilgrimage;
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
From his low tract and look another way:
So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,
Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.
Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing;
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: “Thou single wilt prove none.”
9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?
Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;
The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep
By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.
Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
   No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murderous shame commits.
For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,  
Who for thyself art so unprovident.  
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,  
But that thou none lov'st is most evident;  
For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate
That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,  
Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate  
Which to repair should be thy chief desire.  
O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind!  
Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love?  
Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,  
Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:  
Make thee another self, for love of me,  
That beauty still may live in thine or thee.
As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st  
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;  
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st  
Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest.  
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase;  
Without this, folly, age, and cold decay.  
If all were minded so, the times should cease  
And threescore year would make the world away.  
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,  
Harsh, featureless, and rude, barrenly perish:  
Look, whom she best endow'd she gave the more;  
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish.  
    She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby  
    Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.
When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green, all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard;
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.
13

O that you were yourself! but, love, you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live:
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease
Find no determination; then you were
Yourself again after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O, none but unthrifts! Dear my love, you know
You had a father: let your son say so.
Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck;
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,
'Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find:
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate:
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.
When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.
16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours,
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this time’s pencil, or my pupil pen,
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.
To give away yourself keeps yourself still,
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.
Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, "This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces."
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song:
   But were some child of yours alive that time,
   You should live twice, in it and in my rhyme.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.
Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion’s paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger’s jaws,
And burn the long-liv’d phoenix in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleets,
And do whate’er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:
O, carve not with thy hours my love’s fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty’s pattern to succeeding men.
Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.
A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false women's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.
So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air:
   Let them say more that like of hearsay well;
   I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.
My glass shall not persuade me I am old, 5
So long as youth and thou are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold, 10
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me:
How can I then be elder than thou art?
O, therefore, love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself but for thee, will;
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;
Thou gav'st me thine, not to give back again.
As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart,
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burden of mine own love's might.
O, let my looks be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love and look for recompense
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O, learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.
Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath steel'd
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;
My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,
And perspective it is best painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill
To find where your true image pictur'd lies;
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me
Are windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art;
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.
Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd.
Then happy I, that love and am beloved
Where I may not remove nor be removed.
Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit;
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul’s thought, all naked, will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove me.
Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,  
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
But then begins a journey in my head,  
To work my mind, when body’s work’s expired;  
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,  
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,  
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,  
Looking on darkness which the blind do see;  
Save that my soul’s imaginary sight  
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,  
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,  
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.  
   Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,  
For thee and for myself no quiet find.
How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarr'd the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eas'd by night,
But day by night, and night by day, oppress'd?
And each, though enemies to either's reign,
Do in consent shake hands to torture me;
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day, to please him thou art bright
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven; 10
So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night,
When sparkling stars twire not, thou gild'st the even:
   But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
   And night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger.
When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee; and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love rememb'red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
   But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.
Thy bosom is endeared with all hearts
Which I by lacking have supposed dead;
And there reigns love and all love's loving parts,
And all those friends which I thought buried.
How many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stolen from mine eye
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things remov'd that hidden in thee lie!
Thou art the grave where buried love doth live,
Hung with the trophies of my lovers gone,
Who all their parts of me to thee did give,
That due of many now is thine alone.
   Their images I lov'd I view in thee,
   And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.
If thou survive my well-contented day,  
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,  
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey 
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,  
Compare them with the bett'ring of the time,  
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,  
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,  
Exceeded by the height of happier men.  

O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:  
"Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,  
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,  
To march in ranks of better equipage;  
But since he died and poets better prove,  
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."
Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region-cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.
Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o’ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?
’Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace.
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:
The offender’s sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence’s cross.
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.
No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done:
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
All men make faults, and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense—
Thy adverse party is thy advocate—
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence.
Such civil war is in my love and hate
That I an accessory needs must be
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.
Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one:
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name:
    But do not so; I love thee in such sort
    As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.
As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrailed to this store:
So then I am not lame, poor, not despis'd,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am suffic'd
And by a part of all thy glory live.

Look, what is best, that best I wish in thee:
This wish I have; then ten times happy me!
How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.
O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is’t but mine own when I praise thee?
Even for this let us divided live,
And our dear love lose name of single one,
That by this separation I may give
That due to thee which thou deserv’st alone.
O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,
And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
By praising him here who doth hence remain!
Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all;  
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?  
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;  
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.  
Then if for my love thou my love receivest,  
I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;  
But yet be blam'd, if thou thyself deceivest  
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.  
I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,  
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;  
And yet, love knows, it is a greater grief  
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.  
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,  
Kill me with spites; yet we must not be foes.
Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,  
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,  
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,  
For still temptation follows where thou art.  
Gentle thou art and therefore to be won;  
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;  
And when a woman woos, what woman's son  
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed?  
Ay me! but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,  
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,  
Who lead thee in their riot even there  
Where thou art forc'd to break a twofold truth:  
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,  
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.
That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I lov'd her dearly;
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her:
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suff'ring my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross.
But here's the joy; my friend and I are one;
Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone.
When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And darkly bright are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright, 5
How would thy shadow’s form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day, 10
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.
If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,  
Injurious distance should not stop my way;  
For then, despite of space, I would be brought,  
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.  
No matter then although my foot did stand  
Upon the farthest earth remov’d from thee;  
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land  
As soon as think the place where he would be.  
But, ah! thought kills me that I am not thought,  
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,  
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,  
I must attend time’s leisure with my moan,  
Receiving nought by elements so slow  
But heavy tears, badges of either’s woe.
The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy.
Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me:
This told, I joy; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.
Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,—
A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes—
But the defendant doth that plea deny
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To side this title is impanneled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part;
As thus: mine eye's due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right thy inward love of heart.
Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other.
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast
And to the painted banquet bids my heart.
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part.
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away art present still with me,
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them and they with thee;
Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.
How careful was I, when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That to my use it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust!
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou, best of dearest and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art,
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part;
    And even thence thou wilt be stolen, I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.
Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
Whenas thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Call'd to that audit by advis'd respects;
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity,—
Against that time do I ensconce me here
Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
And this my hand against myself uprear,
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
Since why to love I can allege no cause.
How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek, my weary travel’s end,
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
"Thus far the miles are measur’d from thy friend!"
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov’d not speed, being made from thee.
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide;
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind:
My grief lies onward and my joy behind.
Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer when from thee I speed:
From where thou art why should I haste me thence?
Till I return, of posting is no need.
O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind;
In winged speed no motion shall I know:
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace;
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,
Shall neigh — no dull flesh — in his fiery race;
But love, for love, thus shall excuse my jade:
Since from thee going he went wilful-slow,
Towards thee I'll run, and give him leave to go.
So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.

Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.

So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.

Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.
What is your substance, whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
Is poorly imitated after you;
On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring and foison of the year;
The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear;
And you in every blessed shape we know.
In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you, for constant heart.
O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, by verse distils your truth.
Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.
Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharp'ned in his former might.
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fulness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dullness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which being full of care
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare.
Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
Save, where you are how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love that in your will
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill
That god forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O, let me suffer, being at your beck,
The imprison'd absence of your liberty;
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will; to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
    I am to wait, though waiting so be hell;
    Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.
If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil’d,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burden of a former child!
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done!
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we are mended, or whe’er better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.
Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow;
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.
Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenour of thy jealousy?
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great;
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake;
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake.
   For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
   From me far off, with others all too near.
Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye
And all my soul and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,
No shape so true, no truth of such account;
And for myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all words surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity,
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee, myself, that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.
Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life:
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.
64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.
Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.
Tir’d with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm’d in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplac’d,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgrac’d,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall’d simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tir’d with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.
Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
And with his presence grace impiety,
That sin by him advantage should achieve
And lace itself with his society?
Why should false painting imitate his cheek
And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins?
For she hath no exchequer now but his,
And, proud of many, lives upon his gains.
   O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had
In days long since, before these last so bad.
Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn, 
When beauty liv’d and died as flowers do now, 
Before these bastard signs of fair were born, 
Or durst inhabit on a living brow; 
Before the golden tresses of the dead, 
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away, 
To live a second life on second head; 
Ere beauty’s dead fleece made another gay. 
In him those holy antique hours are seen, 
Without all ornament, itself and true, 
Making no summer of another’s green, 
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new; 
And him as for a map doth Nature store, 
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.
Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend;
All tongues, the voice of souls, give thee that due,
Utt'ring bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd;
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own
In other accents do this praise confound
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds;
Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.
That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of Time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy evermore enlarg'd:
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.
No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And mock you with me after I am gone.
O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit liv'd in me, that you should love,
After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart:
O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
    For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
    And so should you, to love things nothing worth.
That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.
But be contented: when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me:
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead,
The coward conquest of a wretch’s knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.
So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet-season’d showers are to the ground;
And for the peace of you I hold such strife
As ’twixt a miser and his wealth is found;
Now proud as an enjoyer, and anon
Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure;
Now counting best to be with you alone,
Then better’d that the world may see my pleasure;
Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
And by and by clean starved for a look;
Possessing or pursuing no delight,
Save what is had or must from you be took.
Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
Or gluttoning on all, or all away.
Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?
O, know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
   For as the sun is daily new and old,
   So is my love still telling what is told.
77

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste;
The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
And of this book this learning mayst thou taste.
The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show
Of mouthed graves will give thee memory;
Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
Time's thievish progress to eternity.
Look, what thy memory cannot contain
Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find
Those children nurs'd, deliver'd from thy brain,
To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.

These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book.
78

So oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse.
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing
And given grace a double majesty.
Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine and born of thee:
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art and dost advance
As high as learning my rude ignorance.
Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid,
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace,
But now my gracious numbers are decay'd
And my sick Muse doth give another place.
I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen,
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
He robs thee of and pays it thee again.
He lends thee virtue and he stole that word
From thy behaviour; beauty doth he give
And found it in thy cheek; he can afford
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.
Then thank him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee thou thyself dost pay.
O, how I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth use your name,
And in the praise thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tied, speaking of your fame!
But since your worth, wide as the ocean is,
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My saucy bark, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,
Whilst he upon your soundless deep doth ride:
Or, being wreck'd, I am a worthless boat,
He of tall building and of goodly pride.
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this: my love was my decay.
Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men’s eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o’er-read,
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse
When all the breathers of this world are dead;

You still shall live — such virtue hath my pen —
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.
I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attain't o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise,
And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love; yet when they have devis'd
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou truly fair wert truly sympathiz'd
In true plain words by thy true-telling friend;
And their gross painting might be better us'd
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abus'd.
83

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to your fair no painting set;
I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
The barren tender of a poet's debt:
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That you yourself being extant well might show
How far a modern quill doth come too short,
Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
This silence for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory, being dumb;
For I impair not beauty being mute,
When others would give life and bring a tomb.
    There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
    Than both your poets can in praise devise.
Who is it that says most, which can say more
Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?
In whose confine immured is the store
Which should example where your equal grew.
Lean penury within that pen doth dwell
That to his subject lends not some small glory;
But he that writes of you, if he can tell
That you are you, so dignifies his story.
Let him but copy what in you is writ,
Not making worse what nature made so clear,
And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
Making his style admired everywhere.
You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.
My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise, richly compil'd,
Reserve their character with golden quill
And precious phrase by all the Muses fil'd.
I think good thoughts whilst other write good words,
And like unlettered clerk still cry "Amen"
To every hymn that able spirit affords
In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
Hearing you prais'd, I say, "'Tis so, 'tis true,"
And to the most of praise add something more;
But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.

Then others for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.
Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,  
Bound for the prize of all too precious you, 
That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse, 
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew? 
Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write 
Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead? 
No, neither he, nor his compeers by night 
Giving him aid, my verse astonished. 
He, nor that affable familiar ghost 
Which nightly gulls him with intelligence, 
As victors of my silence cannot boast; 
I was not sick of any fear from thence:
    But when your countenance fill'd up his line, 
Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.
Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
 Comes home again, on better judgement making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.
When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
Upon thy side against myself I'll fight
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
With mine own weakness being best acquainted,
Upon thy part I can set down a story
Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted,
That thou in losing me shall win much glory:
And I by this will be a gainer too;
For bending all my loving thoughts on thee,
The injuries that to myself I do,
Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.
Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence;
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I'll myself disgrace: knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle and look strange,
Be absent from thy walks; and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I, too much profane, should do it wrong,
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
    For thee against myself I'll vow debate,
    For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.
Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:
Ah, do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purpos'd overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite,
But in the onset come; so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compar'd with loss of thee will not seem so.
Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their bodies' force,
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest:
But these particulars are not my measure;
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be;
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast;
Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take
All this away and me most wretched make.
But do thy worst to steal thyself away,
For term of life thou art assured mine,
And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.
Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.
I see a better state to me belongs
Than that which on thy humour doth depend;
Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.
O, what a happy title do I find,
Happy to have thy love, happy to die!
But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not.
So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd new;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place:
For there can live no hatred in thine eye,
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange;
But heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell;
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
  How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
  If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show!
They that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow,  
They rightly do inherit heaven’s graces  
And husband nature’s riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.  
The summer’s flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die,  
But if that flower with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:  
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;  
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.
95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise;
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee,
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turns to fair that eyes can see!

Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege;
The hardest knife ill-us'd doth lose his edge.
Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness;
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport;
Both grace and faults are lov'd of more and less;
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray
If like a lamb he could his looks translate!
How many gazers mightst thou lead away
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state!
But do not so; I love thee in such sort
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.
How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time,
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burden of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease.
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans and unfathered fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
   Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
    That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.
From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress’d in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh’d and leap’d with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue
Could make me any summer’s story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily’s white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem’d it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.
The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair:
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.
Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget’st so long
To speak of that which gives thee all thy might?
Spend’st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
Dark’ning thy power to lend base subjects light?
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem
And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
Rise, resty Muse, my love’s sweet face survey,
If Time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time’s spoils despised everywhere.
   Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life;
   So thou prevent’st his scythe and crooked knife.
O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dy’d?
Both truth and beauty on thy love depends;
So dost thou too, and therein dignifi’d.
Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say,
“Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix’d;
Beauty no pencil, beauty’s truth to lay;
But best is best, if never intermix’d”? 
Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
Excuse not silence so; for ’t lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be prais’d of ages yet to be.

Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
To make him seem long hence as he shows now.
My love is strength'ned, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear;
That love is merchandiz'd whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new and then but in the spring
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.
105

103

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,
That, having such a scope to show her pride,
The argument all bare is of more worth
Than when it hath my added praise beside!
O, blame me not, if I no more can write!

Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
Dulling my lines and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?

For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit
Your own glass shows you when you look in it.
To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey’d,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers’ pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn’d
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn’d,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace perceiv’d;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv’d:
   For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred:
   Ere you were born was beauty’s summer dead.
105

Let not my love be call’d idolatry,  
Nor my beloved as an idol show,  
Since all alike my songs and praises be  
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.  
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,  
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;  
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin’d,  
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.  
“Fair, kind, and true” is all my argument,  
“Fair, kind, and true” varying to other words;  
And in this change is my invention spent,  
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.  
“Fair,” “kind,” and “true,” have often liv’d alone,  
Which three till now never kept seat in one.
When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
   For we, which now behold these present days,
   Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.
Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endur'd,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assur'd,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
   And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
    When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.
What's in the brain that ink may character
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit?
What's new to speak, what new to register,
That may express my love or thy dear merit?
Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine,
I must each day say o'er the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallowed thy fair name.
So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age,
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page,
Finding the first conceit of love there bred
Where time and outward form would show it dead.
O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie.
That is my home of love; if I have rang'd,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.
Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
Made old offences of affections new;
Most true it is that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely: but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays prov'd thee my best of love.
Now all is done, have what shall have no end:
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confin'd.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.
O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdu'd
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
Pity me, then, and wish I were renew'd;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
    Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye
    Even that your pity is enough to cure me.
Your love and pity doth the impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all the world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
You are so strongly in my purpose bred
That all the world besides, methinks, are dead.
Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind;
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out;
For it no form delivers to the heart
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch:
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch;
For if it see the rud’st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet favour or deformed’st creature,
The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature.
   Incapable of more, replete with you,
   My most true mind thus maketh mine [eye] untrue.
Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery?
Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy,
To make of monsters and things indigest
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best,
As fast as objects to his beams assemble?
O, 'tis the first; 'tis flattery in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up:
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup.
If it be poison'd, 'tis the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.
Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer;
Yet then my judgement knew no reason why.
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of alt'ring things;
Alas, why, fearing of time's tyranny,
Might I not then say, "Now I love you best,"
When I was certain o'er incertaintie,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest?
Love is a babe; then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow.
Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
    If this be error and upon me proved,
    I never writ, nor no man ever loved.
Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay,
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereeto all bonds do tie me day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchas'd right;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof surmise accumulate;
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your wakened hate,
Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.
Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge,
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseas'd ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured:
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.
What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
Distill’d from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win!
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never!
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better;
And ruin’d love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuk’d to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.
That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow which I then did feel
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time,
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.
O, that our night of woe might have rememb'red
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me, then tend'red
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!
But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.
'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed
When not to be receives reproach of being,
And the just pleasure lost which is so deemed
Not by our feeling but by others’ seeing.
For why should others’ false adulterate eyes
Give saluation to my sportive blood?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own;
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel;
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown;
  Unless this general evil they maintain,
 All men are bad, and in their badness reign.
Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
Beyond all date, even to eternity;
Or at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to raz'd oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more.
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.
No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change.  
Thy pyramids built up with newer might  
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;  
They are but dressings of a former sight.  
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire  
What thou dost foist upon us that is old,  
And rather make them born to our desire  
Than think that we before have heard them told.  
Thy registers and thee I both defy,  
Not wond'ring at the present nor the past,  
For thy records and what we see doth lie,  
Made more or less by thy continual haste.  
This I do vow and this shall ever be;  
I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.
If my dear love were but the child of state,  
It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,  
As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,  
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.  
No, it was builded far from accident;  
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
Under the blow of thralled discontent,  
Where to the inviting time our fashion calls;  
It fears not policy, that heretic,  
Which works on leases of short-numb'red hours,  
But all alone stands hugely politic,  
That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.  
To this I witness call the fools of Time,  
Which die for goodness, who have liv'd for crime.
Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborn'd informer! A true soul
When most impeach'd stands least in thy control.
O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle, hour;
Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st;
If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May Time disgrace and wretched minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure;
Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.
In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profan'd, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' brows are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem:
   Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
   That every tongue says beauty should look so.
How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.
The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjur'd, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe;
Before, a joy propos'd; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.
My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she beli'd with false compare.
Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my dear doting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone.
And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face,
One on another's neck, do witness bear
Thy black is fairest in my judgement's place.
    In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
    And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.
Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me, 
Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain, 
Have put on black and loving mourners be, 
Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain. 
And truly not the morning sun of heaven 
Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east, 
Nor that full star that ushers in the even 
Doth half that glory to the sober west, 
As those two mourning eyes become thy face. 
O, let it then as well besem thy heart 
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace, 
And suit thy pity like in every part. 
Then will I swear beauty herself is black 
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.
Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me!
Is’t not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet’st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
And my next self thou harder hast engrossed:
Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken;
A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossed.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom’s ward,
But then my friend’s heart let my poor heart bail;
Whoe’er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my gaol:
And yet thou wilt; for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.
So, now I have confess'd that he is thine
And I myself am mortgag'd to thy will,
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still.
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous and he is kind;
He learn'd but surety-like to write for me
Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a friend came debtor for my sake;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
   Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me:
   He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.
Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.
    Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;
    Think all but one, and me in that one Will.
If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
*Will* will fulfil the treasure of thy love,
Aye, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
In things of great receipt with ease we prove.
Among a number one is reckoned none:
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be;
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.
Make but my name thy love and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me, for my name is *Will*. 
Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is take the worst to be.
If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgement of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
And to this false plague are they now transferred.
When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told:
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.
O, call not me to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
Wound me not with thine eye but with thy tongue,
Use power with power and slay me not by art.
Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere, but in my sight,
Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside:
What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might
Is more than my o'er-press'd defence can bide?
Let me excuse thee: ah! my love well knows
Her pretty looks have been mine enemies,
And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
That they elsewhere might dart their injuries.
Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,
Kill me outright with looks and rid my pain.
Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain,
Lest sorrow lend me words, and words express
The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
If I might teach thee wit, better it were,
Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so;
As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,
No news but health from their physicians know;
For if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee;
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.
That I may not be so, nor thou beli’d,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go wide.
In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note;
But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in despite of view is pleas'd to dote;
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted,
Nor tender feeling, to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone:
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be:
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.
Love is my sin, and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving:
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine,
That have profan'd their scarlet ornaments
And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robb'd others' beds' revenues of their rents.
Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
Whom thine eyes woo as mine importune thee:
Root pity in thy heart, that when it grows
Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.

If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
By self-example mayst thou be deni'd!
Lo! as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay,
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind;
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will,
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.
Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;
But being both from me, both to each friend,
I guess one angel in another's hell:
    Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
    Till my bad angel fire my good one out.
Those lips that Love's own hand did make
Breath'd forth the sound that said, "I hate,"
To me that languish'd for her sake;
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue that ever sweet
Was us'd in giving gentle doom,
And taught it thus anew to greet:
"I hate," she alter'd with an end,
That follow'd it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who like a fiend
From heaven to hell is flown away;
"I hate" from hate away she threw,
And saved my life, saying "not you."
Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Thrall to] these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.
147

My love is as a fever, longing still
For that which longer nurteth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
Desire is death, which physic did except.
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly express'd;
   For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright,
   Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.
O me, what eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight!
Or, if they have, where is my judgement fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O, how can Love's eye be true,
That is so vex'd with watching and with tears?
No marvel then, though I mistake my view;
The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.
O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.
Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
When I against myself with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of myself, all tyrant, for thy sake?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend?
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon?
Nay, if thou lour'st on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?
What merit do I in myself respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?
But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind;
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.
O, from what power hast thou this powerful might
With insufficiency my heart to sway?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill,
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantise of skill
That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds?
Who taught thee how to make me love thee more
The more I hear and see just cause of hate?
O, though I love what others do abhor,
With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:
   If thy unworthiness rais'd love in me,
   More worthy I to be belov'd of thee.
Love is too young to know what conscience is;
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:
For, thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
My soul doth tell my body that he may
Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,
But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride,
He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her "love" for whose dear love I rise and fall.
152

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;
In act thy bed-vow broke and new faith torn
In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee,
When I break twenty? I am perjur'd most;
For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
And all my honest faith in thee is lost,
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,
And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see;
For I have sworn thee fair; more perjur'd I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie!
Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep.
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of Love
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure: the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire — my mistress' eyes.
154

The little Love-god lying once asleep
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd;
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarm'd.
This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseas'd; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove:
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.
A Lover's Complaint

From off a hill whose concave womb re-worded
A plaintful story from a sist'ring vale,
My spirits to attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd tale;
Ere long espied a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.

Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun,
Whereon the thought might think sometime it saw
The carcass of a beauty spent and done.
Time had not scythed all that youth begun,
Nor youth all quit; but, spite of heaven's fell rage,
Some beauty peep'd through lattice of sear'd age.

Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne,
Which on it had conceited characters,
Laund'ring the silken figures in the brine
That seasoned woe had pelleted in tears,
And often reading what contents it bears;
As often shrieking undistinguish'd woe
In clamours of all size, both high and low.
Sometimes her level’d eyes their carriage ride,
As they did battery to the spheres intend;
Sometimes diverted their poor balls are tied
To the orbed earth; sometimes they do extend
Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
To every place at once, and, nowhere fix’d,
The mind and sight distractedly commix’d.

Her hair, nor loose nor tied in formal plat,
Proclaim’d in her a careless hand of pride;
For some, untuck’d, descended her sheav’d hat,
Hanging her pale and pined cheek beside;
Some in her threaden fillet still did bide,
And true to bondage would not break from thence,
Though slackly braided in loose negligence.

A thousand favours from a maund she drew,
Of amber, crystal, and of beaded jet,
Which one by one she in a river threw,
Upon whose weeping margent she was set,
Like usury, applying wet to wet,
Or monarch’s hands that lets not bounty fall
Where want cries some, but where excess begs all.

Of folded schedules had she many a one,
Which she perus’d, sigh’d, tore, and gave the flood;
Crack’d many a ring of posied gold and bone,
Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
A Lover's Complaint

Found yet moe letters sadly penn'd in blood,  
With sleided silk feat and affectedly  
Enswath'd, and seal'd to curious secrecy.

These often bath'd she in her fluxive eyes,  
And often kiss'd, and often gan to tear:  
Cried, "O false blood, thou register of lies,  
What unapproved witness dost thou bear!  
Ink would have seem'd more black and damned here!"  
This said, in top of rage the lines she rents,  
Big discontent so breaking their contents.

A reverend man that graz'd his cattle nigh —  
Sometime a blusterer, that the ruffle knew  
Of court, of city, and had let go by  
The swiftest hours, observed as they flew —  
Towards this afflicted fancy fastly drew,  
And, privileg'd by age, desires to know  
In brief the grounds and motives of her woe.

So slides he down upon his grained bat,  
And comely-distant sits he by her side;  
When he again desires her, being sat,  
Her grievance with his hearing to divide:  
If that from him there may be aught appli'd  
Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,  
'Tis promis'd in the charity of age.
"Father," she says, "though in me you behold
The injury of many a blasting hour,
Let it not tell your judgement I am old;
Not age, but sorrow, over me hath power.
I might as yet have been a spreading flower,
Fresh to myself, if I had self-appli'd
Love to myself and to no love beside.

"But, woe is me! too early I attended
A youthful suit — it was to gain my grace —
Of one by nature's outwards so commended,
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face.
Love lack'd a dwelling, and made him her place;
And when in his fair parts she did abide,
She was new lodg'd and newly deifi'd.

"His browny locks did hang in crooked curls;
And every light occasion of the wind
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls.
What's sweet to do, to do will aptly find.
Each eye that saw him did enchant the mind,
For on his visage was in little drawn
What largeness thinks in Paradise was sawn.

"Small show of man was yet upon his chin;
His phoenix down began but to appear
Like unshorn velvet on that termless skin,
Whose bare out-bragg'd the web it seem'd to wear;
A Lover's Complaint

Yet show'd his visage by that cost more dear;
And nice affections wavering stood in doubt
If best were as it was, or best without.

"His qualities were beauteous as his form,
For maiden-tongu'd he was, and thereof free;
Yet, if men mov'd him, was he such a storm.
As oft 'twixt May and April is to see,
When winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be.
His rudeness so with his authoriz'd youth
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

"Well could he ride, and often men would say,
'That horse his mettle from his rider takes.
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes!'
And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by the well-doing steed:

"But quickly on this side the verdict went:
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament,
Accomplish'd in himself, not in his case:
All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Came for additions; yet their purpos'd trim
Piec'd not his grace, but were all grac'd by him.
"So on the tip of his subduing tongue
All kind of arguments and question deep,
All replication prompt and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep.
To make the weeper laugh, the laughier weep,
He had the dialect and different skill,
Catching all passions in his craft of will;

"That he did in the general bosom reign
Of young, of old; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted.
Consents bewitch’d, ere he desire, have granted,
And dialogu’d for him what he would say,
Ask’d their own wills, and made their wills obey.

"Many there were that did his picture get,
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind;
Like fools that in the imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assign’d;
And labouring in moe pleasures to bestow them
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them:

"So many have, that never touch’d his hand,
Sweetly suppos’d them mistress of his heart.
My woeful self, that did in freedom stand,
And was my own fee-simple, not in part,
What with his art in youth, and youth in art,
Threw my affections in his charmed power,
Reserv'd the stalk and gave him all my flower.

"Yet did I not, as some my equals did,
Demand of him, nor being desired yielded;
Finding myself in honour so forbid,
With safest distance I mine honour shielded.
Experience for me many bulwarks builded
Of proofs new-bleeding, which remain'd the foil
Of this false jewel, and his amorous spoil.

"But, ah, who ever shunn'd by precedent
The destin'd ill she must herself assay?
Or forc'd examples, 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-past perils in her way?
Counsel may stop awhile what will not stay;
For when we rage, advice is often seen
By blunting us to make our wits more keen.

"Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood,
That we must curb it upon others' proof;
To be forbod the sweets that seem so good,
For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.
O appetite, from judgement stand aloof!
The one a palate hath that needs will taste,
Though Reason weep, and cry, 'It is thy last.'
"For further I could say, 'This man's untrue,'
And knew the patterns of his foul beguiling;
Heard where his plants in others' orchards grew,
Saw how deceits were gilded in his smiling;
Knew vows were ever brokers to defiling;
Thought characters and words merely but art,
And bastards of his foul adulterate heart.

"And long upon these terms I held my city,
Till thus he gan besiege me: 'Gentle maid,
Have of my suffering youth some feeling pity,
And be not of my holy vows afraid.
That's to ye sworn to none was ever said;
For feasts of love I have been call'd unto,
Till now did ne'er invite, nor never vow.

"'All my offences that abroad you see
Are errors of the blood, none of the mind;
Love made them not; with acture they may be,
Where neither party is nor true nor kind.
They sought their shame that so their shame did find;
And so much less of shame in me remains,
By how much of me their reproach contains.

"'Among the many that mine eyes have seen,
Not one whose flame my heart so much as warmed,
Or my affection put to the smallest teen,
Or any of my leisures ever charmed.
Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harmed;
Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,
And reign'd, commanding in his monarchy.

"'Look here, what tributes wounded fancies sent me,
Of pallid pearls and rubies red as blood;
Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me
Of grief and blushes, aptly understood
In bloodless white and the encrimson'd mood;
Effects of terror and dear modesty,
Encamp'd in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

"'And, lo, behold these talents of their hair,
With twisted metal amorously impleach'd,
I have receiv'd from many a several fair,
Their kind acceptance weepingly beseech'd,
With the annexions of fair gems enrich'd,
And deep-brain'd sonnets that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

"'The diamond,—why, 'twas beautiful and hard,
Where to his invis'd properties did tend;
The deep-green emerald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend;
The heaven-hu'd sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold: each several stone,
With wit well blazon'd, smil'd or made some moan.
“'Lo, all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensiv'd and subdu'd desires the tender,
Nature hath charg'd me that I hoard them not,
But yield them up where I myself must render,
That is, to you, my origin and ender;
For these, of force, must your oblations be,
Since I their altar, you enpatron me.

"'O, then, advance of yours that phraseless hand,
Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise;
Take all these similes to your own command,
Hallowed with sighs that burning lungs did raise;
What me, your minister, for you obeys,
Works under you; and to your audit comes
Their distract parcels in combined sums.

"'Lo, this device was sent me from a nun,
Or sister sanctified, of holiest note;
Which late her noble suit in court did shun,
Whose rarest havings made the blossoms dote;
For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,
But kept cold distance, and did thence remove
To spend her living in eternal love.

"'But, O my sweet, what labour is't to leave
The thing we have not, mast'ring what not strives,
Playing the place which did no form receive,
Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves?
She that her fame so to herself contrives,
The scars of battle scapeth by the flight,
And makes her absence valiant, not her might. 245

"'O, pardon me, in that my boast is true.
The accident which brought me to her eye
Upon the moment did her force subdue,
And now she would the caged cloister fly.
Religious love put out Religion's eye.
Not to be tempted, would she be immur'd,
And now, to tempt, all liberty procur'd.

"'How mighty then you are, O, hear me tell!
The broken bosoms that to me belong
Have emptied all their fountains in my well,
And mine I pour your ocean all among.
I strong o'er them, and you o'er me being strong,
Must for your victory us all congest,
As compound love to physic your cold breast.

"'My parts had power to charm a sacred nun,
Who, disciplin'd, ay, dieted in grace,
Believ'd her eyes when they to assail begun,
All vows and consecrations giving place.
O most potential love! vow, bond, nor space,
In thee hath neither sting, knot, nor confine,
For thou art all, and all things else are thine.
"'When thou impressest, what are precepts worth
Of stale example? When thou wilt inflame,
How coldly those impediments stand forth
Of wealth, of filial fear, law, kindred, fame!

Love's arms are peace, 'gainst rule, 'gainst sense, 'gainst shame,
And sweetens, in the suff'ring pangs it bears,
The aloes of all forces, shocks, and fears.

'Now all these hearts that do on mine depend,
Feeling it break, with bleeding groans they pine;
And supplicant their sighs to you extend,
To leave the battery that you make 'gainst mine,
Lending soft audience to my sweet design,
And credent soul to that strong-bonded oath
That shall prefer and undertake my troth.'

'This said, his watery eyes he did dismount,
Whose sights till then were levell'd on my face;
Each cheek a river running from a fount
With brinish current downward flowed apace.
O, how the channel to the stream gave grace!
Who glaz'd with crystal gate the glowing roses
That flame through water which their hue encloses.

'O father, what a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!
But with the inundation of the eyes
What rocky heart to water will not wear?
What breast so cold that is not warmed here?
O cleft effect! cold modesty, hot wrath,
Both fire from hence and chill extinture hath.

"For, lo, his passion, but an art of craft,
Even there resolv'd my reason into tears;
There my white stole of chastity I daff'd,
Shook off my sober guards and civil fears;
Appear to him, as he to me appears,
All melting; though our drops this difference bore,
His poison'd me, and mine did him restore.

"In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,
Of burning blushes, or of weeping water,
Or swooning paleness; and he takes and leaves,
In either's aptness, as it best deceives,
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
Or to turn white and swoon at tragic shows;

"That not a heart which in his level came
Could scape the hail of his all-hurting aim,
Showing fair Nature is both kind and tame;
And, veil'd in them, did win whom he would maim.
Against the thing he sought he would exclaim;
When he most burn'd in heart-wish'd luxury,
He preach'd pure maid, and prais'd cold chastity.
“Thus merely with the garment of a Grace
The naked and concealed fiend he cover’d;
That the unexperient gave the tempter place,
Which like a cherubin above them hover’d.
Who, young and simple, would not be so lover’d?
Ay me! I fell; and yet do question make
What I should do again for such a sake.

“O, that infected moisture of his eye,
O, that false fire which in his cheek so glow’d,
O, that forc’d thunder from his heart did fly,
O, that sad breath his spongy lungs bestow’d,
O, all that borrowed motion seeming ow’d,
Would yet again betray the fore-betray’d,
And new pervert a reconciled maid!”
Notes
SONNETS

Dedication. On this see the Introduction, page viii. T. T. is Thomas Thorpe, the publisher. Of those who identify Mr. W. H. with the young man addressed in many of the sonnets, some interpret the initials as standing for William Herbert, the personal name of the Earl of Pembroke; others as for Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, — on the assumption that the initials were reversed as a blind. On the other hand, Sir Sidney Lee, though believing that Southampton was addressed in many of the sonnets, thinks that the Dedication had no reference to him, and that "Mr. W. H." may stand for William Hughes, a well-known stationer of the period.

1, 6. self-substantial fuel. Fuel of the same substance as the flame.

1, 14. by the grave and thee. By means of your death, and of your conduct in leaving no child.

2, 11. sum my count and make my old excuse. Complete my account with the world and be an excuse for my age. Old is probably a noun (cf. 68, 12).

5, 9. summer's distillation. Compare Midsummer-
Night's Dream, I. i. 76-78: "But earthlier happy is the rose distilled."

8, 1. Music to hear. Thou who art music to the ear.

8, 7-8. confounds in singleness, etc. Makest into a single sound that which should be a harmony.
9, 10. his. Its.

11, 4. convertest. Was pronounced convartest; so deserts in 17, 2.

11, 11. the more. Apparently parallel to the biblical saying, “To him that hath shall be given;” but it is possible that we should read (with Malone and other editors) “thee more.”

12, 9. question make. Consider, ponder, discuss.

14, 9. from thine eyes. Cf. Love’s Labour’s Lost, IV. iii. 302, and Sidney’s Astrophel and Stella, XXVI.

15, 4. in secret influence comment. Like spectators; yet influence usually had reference to power exerted by the stars.

15, 11. debateth. Contends (in the action of the following line).

16, 7. your living flowers. Some editors read you (i.e., for you).

16, 9. lines of life. Playfully applicable both to lineage and the lines drawn by artist or poet; Wyndham thinks also to the “line of life” of palmistry.

16, 10. this time’s pencil. The art of this age, with possible reference to a particular portrait (“painted counterfeit”) of the youth addressed.

17, 12. stretched metre. Over-wrought verse.

20, 7. A man in hue, etc. A much-discussed line. Hue may mean form rather than color. Because “a man in hue” seems to give the opposite meaning to that expected, emendations have been proposed, as “a maiden hue” by Beeching. The fact that hues is italicized and capitalized in the Quarto (Hews) has led some to think it a play on the name of the youth addressed (Hughes, in
modern spelling). For the meaning of all hues in his \textit{controlling}, the best comment, as Wyndham suggests, is \textit{Sonnet 53}.

21, 1. that \textit{Muse}. This may be a purely typical or general allusion to the sonneteering of the period, or it may be the first mention of the rival poet treated of in \textit{Sonnets 78–80}, etc. Mr. Arthur Acheson believes the sonnet to be an attack on Chapman’s \textit{The Amorous Zodiac} (1595), in which the poet described the beauties of his mistress under the forms of the twelve celestial signs, and so used “heaven itself for ornament.” (\textit{Shakespeare and the Rival Poet}, 1903.)

21, 13. like of hearsay well. Are fond of the praise of general rumor.

23, 5. for fear of trust. Distrustful of myself.

23, 12. more hath more express’d. Hath expressed more praises and more often.

24, 1. steel’d. Engraved (?). It is very likely that we should read \textit{stell’d}, which appears in the text of \textit{Lucrece} (1444): “a face where all distress is stell’d.” This word is not familiar, but may have meant “fixed.”

24, 4. perspective. The intricate conceit is of a type familiar in the period. Cf. Constable’s \textit{Diana} (1594), First Decade, Sonnet 5:

\begin{verbatim}
Thine eye, the glass where I behold my heart,
Mine eye, the window through the which thine eye
May see my heart.
\end{verbatim}

25, 4. Unlook’d for. This may mean either “unnoticed” or “contrary to expectation.”

25, 5. princes’ favourites. This passage (through line
12) has been thought to have reference to the Earl of Essex, who in 1599 fell into disgrace after his unsuccessful Irish expedition.

26, 8. all naked. Refers to the duty which is to find refuge in the friend’s thought. On bestow, see Glossary.


28, 14. length. Some editors emend to strength.

30, 1-2. sessions . . . summon. The figure of a legal summons.

30, 10-11. tell . . . account. The figure of book-keeping; tell means “count.”

31, 12. That due of many. So that what belonged to many.

33, 12. region cloud. A familiar meteorological term for the clouds of the upper region of the air.

34, 12. offence’s cross. Cf. 42, 12.

35, 8. Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are. Ob-scure; the text is doubtful. Steevens’s interpretation is safest: “Making the excuse more than proportioned to the offence.”

37, 3. dearest spite. The effect of dear in Elizabethan English is often simply to intensify whatever idea is in the noun it modifies.

37, 7. Entitled in thy parts. Having a claim to a place in thy character. Parts is an heraldic term for “the places in a shield on which armorial devices are borne.” (Wyndham.)

37, 10. shadow. “Often in Shakespeare contrasted with substance to express the particular sort of unreality of which ‘substance’ expresses the reality.” (Beeching.)
40, 5. For my love. For may be paraphrased either by "as" or "in place of." In line 6 it means "because." Note the play on the two meanings of love, — the affection and the person.

40, 8. By wilful taste, etc. Obscure. What thyself refuseth may be the poet's love, which the friend is — in a sense — tasting in sharing his mistress.

41, 4. Still. Always.

43, 4. Bright in dark directed. Directed toward that which is bright in the dark (bright-in-dark having the effect of an adverb).


44, 9. Thought . . . thought. The first thought means melancholy; the second has the usual meaning.

44, 11. Of earth and water wrought. The poet feels that of the four "elements" of which all creatures were said to be composed, his body is characterized by the heavier ones, earth and water; for the others, see 45, 1.

44, 14. Badges of either's woe. Alluding, perhaps, as Beeching suggests, to the salt and water as representative of the two elements just mentioned.


46, 1. Eye and heart. This conceit (treated also in 47) was conventional in the sonnets of the period. Cf., for example, Constable's Diana (1594), Sixth Decade, Sonnet 7:

My Heart mine Eye accuseth of his death, . . .
Mine Eye affirms my Heart's unconstant faith, etc.
'46, 9. side. As this is an unfamiliar word in the transitive meaning, some editors read "'cide" (decide).

48, 5. to whom. In comparison with whom.

49, 8. reasons find of settled gravity. Probably this means the same as the lawful reasons of line 12; or, possibly, reasons for the gravity of behavior described in lines 5–6.


49, 11. against myself. This idea is further developed in Sonnet 88.

51, 1, 6. slow offence. The offence of slowness; similarly, swift extremity means the extreme of swiftness.

51, 8. no motion shall I know. I shall not realize that I am moving.

51, 11. neigh. Need has been conjectured, the parenthetical dashes (which are not in the Quarto) being omitted.

51, 14. go. Walk (as commonly).

52, 4. For. To avoid.

53, 2. shadows. See note on 37, 10.

54, 5. canker-blooms. The contrast between the two flowers is again used in Much Ado, I. iii. 28, and I Henry IV, I. iii. 176.

54, 14. by verse distils. Distils was in good use intransitively, but many editors read "my verse."

55, 1–14. On the theme, see Introduction, page x.

55, 13. that. In which.

56, 11. Come daily to the banks. That is, each in loneliness to his own bank (apparently of some bay or estuary).

58, 6. The imprison'd absence of your liberty. "The
separation from you, which is proper to your state of freedom, but which to me is imprisonment.” (Dowden.)

58, 7. tame to sufferance. Submissive to suffering.

58, 11. To. Some editors read Do, with a pause at the end of l. 10.

59, 12. revolution. The state of affairs brought around by the revolution of the ages.

60, 5. Nativity. Like the sun, moving upward toward the meridian. The passage involves an allusion to the astrological course of the symbols of human destiny.

60, 7. Crooked. Malign.


60, 13. times in hope. Future times.

62, 7. do define. The subject “I” must be understood.

63, 1. Against. Parallel with for such a time (line 9).

63, 5. steepy night. The dark and steep descent of old age.

64, 8. Increasing store with loss and loss with store. Now the abundance of the one being increased by the other's loss, now its loss being renewed through the other’s increase.

64, 9–10. state. See Glossary, for different meanings.

64, 13. which. Refers to thought.

65, 2. But sad mortality o'ersways their power. Elliptical for “have no power except what mortality o'ersways.”

66, 11. simplicity. Folly.

67, 12. proud of many, etc. “Nature, while she boasts of many beautiful persons, really has no treasure of beauty except his.” (Dowden.)

69, 14. The soil. The Quarto reads solye, which has been explained as for soyle, soil (see Glossary), or for solve, with the same meaning. Neither word is known else-where as a noun.

70, 6. woo’d of Time. Both text and meaning are doubtful. Time may mean “the times,” “the world of your contemporaries,” or Time personified.

73, 12. Consum’d with that which it was nourish’d by. Choked by the ashes of the same substance that formerly made it bright.

74, 1. fell arrest. Cf. *Hamlet*, V. ii. 347: “This fell sergeant, Death, is strict in his arrest.”

74, 11. a wretch’s knife. This has puzzled the com-mentators, suggesting to some the anticipation of a vio-lent death. Most probably, however, the knife is that of Death; cf. the “cruel knife” of Age in 63, 10.

77, 4. this book. A blank-book, apparently, pre-sented by the poet; though some have thought that it may refer to the Ms. book in which the preceding sonnets were written. This learning means the lessons to be re-corded in the book.

78, 4. under thee. Under thy auspices.

78, 7. the learned’s wing. The rival poet (see 79, 7) is called learned and graceful in contrast with Shakespeare’s profession of ignorance (ll. 6 and 14). Cf. also 80, 2, 7.

79, 5. thy lovely argument. The theme of thy love-liness.

81, 4. in me each part. Every quality of mine.

81, 12. breathers of this world. Those now alive.

82, 8. Some fresher stamp, etc. Some image better cor-responding to the ever increasing greatness of the facts.
83, 5. slept in your report. Ceased from your praise.
83, 7. modern. Ordinary.
84, 3. whose. Refers to you. In you is shut up all the wealth from which the description of any one equal to you might be drawn.
85, 3. reserve their character. Obscure. The phrase should mean "preserve their written form." Receive and deserve have been proposed as emendations; the former yields the best sense.
85, 7. able spirit. Cf. 80, 2.'
85, 14. speaking in effect. Which have the quality of speech.
86, 5. by spirits taught. This, with the passage on the ghost in lines 9–10, suggests a possibility of identifying the rival poet, but no real success in doing so has been accomplished. Minto proposed Chapman as the poet here referred to, on the basis of a passage in the Dedication of his The Shadow of Night (1594), in which he speaks of Skill as a "heavenly familiar," sought "with invocation, fasting, watching." (See also the views of Acheson, in the note on Sonnet 21.) Others have thought Marston or Drayton the more probable claimant.
87, 3. charter . . . releasing. A legal conceit, as in lines 4, 5–8, etc.
87, 7. cause . . . wanting. Cf. the same thought in 49, 13–14.
87, 11. upon misprision growing. Arising from negligence (a technical ground for forfeiture).
88, 3. against myself I'll fight. Cf. 49, 11–12.
89, 6. set a form upon desired change. "Give a be-
coming appearance to the change which you desire." (Dowden.)

92, 10. on thy revolt doth lie. Depends on (the question of) your desertion.

94, 8. Others but stewards of their excellence. "Beautiful persons who are not self-possessed are declared to have no ownership in their beauty, because it is always being spent by them at the command of . . . passions." (Beeching.)

94, 14. Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds. This line occurs in the play of Edward III (1596), of which Shakespeare may have been part author. It is uncertain whether we are to regard the play as borrowing from the sonnet, or the sonnet from the play.

95, 12. all things turns, etc. Turns to beauty all that eyes can see.

96, 3. more and less. Great and small.

96, 13, 14. These lines are repeated from the end of Sonnet 36, where they are more naturally in place.

97, 5. time remov'd. Time of absence.

98, 7. summer's story. Malone suggested that this means "some gay fiction," quoting Cymbeline, III. iv. 12: "If it be summer news, smile to it."

99, 1. The forward violet, etc. This must be viewed as an extra line prefixed to the regular quota of the sonnet.

100, 11. satire. Rebuke.

101, 6. with his colour fix'd. The first colour is artificial coloring, the second natural beauty. Fix'd is the technical term of painting; so also lay in line 7.

107, 4. Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom. Though it may be thought doomed to expire at the end of a limited term.
107, 5. eclipse. This and the following lines are commonly thought to refer to some event of more than personal interest; most generally, perhaps, to the death of Queen Elizabeth (1603), after which Southampton was released from imprisonment; by others to the revolt of Essex (1601), the Peace of Vervins (1598), etc. In part the interpretation depends on the word endur'd, which may mean either "undergone" or "safely emerged from." The latter would seem from line 6 to be the more natural meaning; but those who interpret the eclipse as the death of Elizabeth explain the sad augurs as those who anticipated calamitous results to the nation.

107, 8. olives of endless age. Sir Sidney Lee, accepting the interpretation just discussed, points out that King James I was "constantly said to have entered on his inheritance . . . 'with a whole forest of olives about him, for he brought not peace to this kingdom alone' but to all Europe." (Life of Shakespeare, p. 148.) In like manner he explains the balmy time of line 9 as an allusion to the fact that "James came to England in a springtime of rarely rivalled clemency, which was reckoned of the happiest augury."

107, 10. My love. Some understand this as meaning the friend addressed, but it more probably means "my love for you."

108, 13. the first conceit. The original conception. Love is forever superior to age because its inward idea (conceit) is unchanged by "outward form."

109, 7. exchang'd. Altered.

110, 2. made myself a motley. Often, but doubtfully, understood as referring to the poet’s profession as an actor. See Glossary.
110, 4. old. Long-standing.
110, 8. worse essays. Trials of inferior friendships.
111, 4. public means. This phrase, and what it works in (line 7), seem, more clearly than the preceding sonnet, to refer to the poet’s profession. Public manners may mean “manners no higher than those of the crowd;” Beeching suggests “a popularity-hunting temper.”
111, 12. correct correction. Apparently, a not very logical expression for “accomplish correction.”
112, 4. o’ergreen. Not a familiar expression; it is uncertain whether the image is drawn from the art of the decorator or of the gardener, or of either.
112, 7–8. There is no one else who seems to me alive, or to whom I am alive, who can change my fixed state of mind either for better or worse.
113, 3. part his function. This probably means “abandon (depart from) its function;” perhaps rather, divide (perform only a part of) it. In either case there is a play on the similarity of part and partly.
113, 14. mine [eye] untrue. If eye be not supplied, untrue must be regarded as a noun, the phrase meaning, “is the cause of my untruthfulness in misreporting what I see.”
114, 12. to his palate doth prepare. Like a king’s cup-bearer; even if the wine is poisoned, it is what both the king and his servitor enjoy.
115, 13. might I not. I might not, — in answer to the question in line 10. Some editors, however, read as another question, putting an interrogation mark at the end of line 14.
116, 8. Whose worth’s unknown, etc. “A mystical
assertion that, as the unknown worth and occult influence of a star is in excess of the practical service it affords to mariners, so has Love an eternal value immeasurably superior to the accidents of Time.” (Wyndham.) This passage bears a resemblance to Sonnet 43 of Drayton’s Idea (1605). —

So doth the plowman gaze the wandering star, etc., —

and some have supposed (Sir Sidney Lee, for example) that Shakespeare borrowed the image; but the prevalent opinion inclines to view Drayton as borrower, on the assumption that Shakespeare’s sonnets were known to him in manuscript.


117, 6. time. This perhaps means “the life of the times,” or, as Dowden suggests, “temporary occasion.” Cf. note on 70, 6.

118, 12. rank of goodness. The equivalent of sick of welfare in line 7. Rank was a familiar medical term with reference to repletion.

120, 4. nerves. Muscles or sinews (as commonly).

120, 9. our night of woe. Some emend to one night or your night.

121, 3, 4. so deemed, etc. Judged vile. The idea is repeated in line 8.

121, 6. Give salutation to. Gaze at. The general sense seems to be: Why should others, themselves impure, point the finger at my slighter weaknesses?

121, 14. in their badness reign. Obscure. Beeching suggests: “What makes kings of men is but a higher de-
gree of badness.” Or, reign may mean “exult” (Schmidt).

122, 3. idle rank. Set of blank pages.
122, 9. retention. Means of retaining records.
123, 2. pyramids. Used vaguely for large structures.
123, 4. dressings of a former sight. New instances of what has been seen before.
123, 7. make them born to our desire. Pretend that they are created for us.
124, 1. state. Circumstances, — the Fortune of line 2 and the accident of line 5.
124, 4. weeds . . . flowers. The former refers back to the hate of line 3, the latter to the love.
124, 8. our fashion calls. Tempts our manner of life.
124, 11. all alone stands hugely politic. Has its own great policy, capable of standing alone. The good sense of politic is contrasted with the bad sense of policy.
124, 12. grows. As the meaning is not what is expected, the reading glows has been proposed.
124, 14. die for goodness, etc. Obscure. Dowden suggests: “Whose death was a virtue since their life was a crime.” Beeching thinks the passage to be an allusion to the Jesuit conspirators of the Gunpowder Plot (1605); more probably Time’s fools are all those whose love is what the foregoing lines have said that the poet’s love is not.

125, 1. bore the canopy. A figure apparently explained by the next line: to bear a canopy is to honor the outward by the outward (in contrast with the idea of line 9).
125, 4. which proves. This may refer to eternity
(ironically said to prove short); but it is possible that the antecedent is *bases*, in spite of the singular form of the verb.

125, 13. *informer*. Obscure. Perhaps a personal allusion, related to the indignant tone of *Sonnet* 121, on spying critics; perhaps only the personification of the criticism implied in lines 1–4; perhaps an apostrophe to Time, to whom the terms of line 14 are appropriate.

126, 1–12. This poem in couplets, not a sonnet, is commonly called the "envoy" to the preceding series; but see Introduction, pp. xiv, xv.

126, 8. *wretched minutes kill*. Destroy them, agents of Time.

126, 10. *still keep*. Always keep back.

127, 1. *black*. Of dark complexion. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. iii. 247, "Thy love is black as ebony," and the following lines, where a conceit parallel to lines 9–14 is developed.


129, 1. *expense of spirit*. The predicate, *lust* being the subject.


130, 4. *If hairs be wires*. An allusion to the conventional description of ladies' hair. For example, see Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, Sonnet 48: "Her hairs no grace of golden wires want."

130, 11. *go*. Walk (as commonly).


heart of line 11; and all that is in me (line 14) means: and my friend’s heart (will also be in thy power).

134, 3. other mine. Other self of mine.
134, 11. came. Who became.

135, 1. Will. In this and the following sonnet the italics of the Quarto (which are followed exactly in the present text) call attention to the fact that the word is playfully used with reference to the name of the poet, and perhaps also to that of the unfaithful friend. But it is not at all certain that the type is correctly used in every instance. Thus in line 1 the Will may be simply the common noun. If the friend’s name is Will, he may be connected with the “Mr. W. H.” of the Dedication. For arguments against the implication of a second Will, see Lee’s Life of Shakespeare, page 424. There is a further punning on the secondary meaning of will in the sense of sensual desire; cf. especially 135, 5 and 136, 3.

135, 13. Let no unkind, etc. Obscure. Some editors omit the comma, and explain unkind as “unkindness”; others, with the same punctuation, read the second no as a noun (no unkind “No”). If the comma is retained we must suppose that no object of kill is expressed.

136, 8. one is reckon’d none. An allusion to an old saying that “one is no number.”

137, 9. a several plot. An enclosed plot, as opposed to a common, open to all.

138, 1–14. This sonnet is one of those which had been printed in The Passionate Pilgrim (1599), but with a text differing in many respects.

140, 5. wit. Wisdom.
140, 6. tell me so. Profess to love.

141, 6. to base touches prone. Ordinarily subject to temptation.

141, 11. Who leaves unsway’d the likeness of a man. Who refers to my foolish heart, which abandons the government of my body to become thy heart’s slave.

142, 2. Hate of my sin, etc. Your hatred of my sinful love, assumed as a virtue, is really based on your faithless love (of others).

142, 13. what thou dost hide. That is, pity.

143, 13. Will. See note on 135. It is doubtful, again, whether the italics are correct in suggesting Will as the name of the man pursued by the lady.

144, 1–14. This sonnet (like 38) was first printed, with variations, in The Passionate Pilgrim. Like Sonnet 116, this curiously resembles one of Drayton’s (No. 22 in the Idea of 1599), beginning:

An evil spirit your beauty haunts me still.

144, 11. from me. Absent from me. The Passionate Pilgrim reads to me.

145, 1–14. The only sonnet in the series (but not the only one of the period) in four-stress verse.


146, 1. sinful earth. The body. Cf. Merchant of Venice, V. i. 65, where “this muddy vesture of decay” is said to “close in” the harmony of immortal souls.

146, 2. [Thrall to.] One of many suggested emendations. The Quarto reads —

My sinful earth these rebel powers that thee array.
The words to be supplied, to correct the obvious blunder, depend in part on whether *array* means "invest" (like a garment) or "harass."

146, 11. terms divine. Heavenly limits of time; hence, eternity.

147, 8. which physic did except. *Which* refers to Desire, and is the object of *except.*

147, 9. past care. An allusion to a proverb (also used in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 28): "Past cure is past care."

148, 1. what eyes hath Love, etc. Cf. Sonnet 137.

149, 4. all tyrant. Myself having become altogether a tyrant. If *tyrant* is followed by a comma, *for thy sake* modifies *forgot;* if not, it should probably be taken with *all tyrant,* but with little difference of meaning. Beeching, however, reads "all-tyrant," *i.e.*, the person addressed, a meaning possible even without the hyphen.

150, 2. With insufficiency. Even with your defects.

150, 5. becoming of. Cf. note on 127, 13. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. 243, it is said of the queen: "Vilest things become themselves in her."

152, 11. to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness. "To shed a more favorable light on thee, I shut my eyes." (Wyndham.)

153, 1-14. This sonnet, and No. 154, studies of the same theme, are paraphrases of a Greek epigram of the fifth century, which had been translated into Latin in the sixteenth.

153, 11. bath. Medicinal baths; cf. 154, 11-12.
A LOVER’S COMPLAINT

22. levell’d eyes their carriage ride. Cf. Sonnet 121, 9. The carriage is that of a piece of ordnance.
40-42. wet to wet, etc. For the conceit, cf. As You Like It, II. i. 42-49.
61. fancy. Usually, love; here, person in love.
64. grained bat. Wooden staff.
88. to do will aptly find. Will readily find some to do it.
91. What largeness thinks in Paradise was sawn. Largeness apparently means “the largest imagination.” It is uncertain whether sawn is for seen or sown, — probably the former.
93. phœnix down. The meaning is uncertain; probably, the down of this rare and beautiful creature.
96. show’d his visage. His face appeared.
97. nice. Over-particular.
108. noble by the sway. Showing his nobility in the way he submits to his rider’s rule.
118. Came for additions. Counted as additions. The Quarto reads can, which Wyndham defends as meaning “are effective,” “count for”; but the context seems to require the past tense.
127. That. So that.
132. dialogu’d for him, etc. Imagined a conversation with him, supplying his words.

139–140. labouring in moe pleasures . . . owe them. Exert themselves to find pleasurable use for them more than the rheumatic owner is able to do. The construction of labouring is loose; it is quite possibly a corruption for labour.

142. them. Themselves.

144. not in part. Contrasted with the complete possession of fee-simple.

153–154. foil of this false jewel. The foil of a jewel was the goldleaf over which it was set, especially in the case of an inferior stone whose apparent value it was desired to increase.

157–158. forc’d examples . . . perils in her way. Made use of the experience of others, against her desires, to make past dangers a hindrance to her present conduct.

173. brokers. Panders.

182. vow. We should probably emend to woo, with Dyce and other editors.

185. with acture they may be. They may exist as the result of merely external conduct. The word acture is not known elsewhere.

197. fancies. Cf. note on l. 61.

204. talents. Of uncertain meaning. Familiar chiefly as the name of a gold coin, it may refer here to locks of golden hair, or, more probably, to lockets containing hair.

224. I their altar, you enpatron me. I being their altar, you are the patron in whose honor it is set up.

229. What me . . . obeys. “That which serves under me as your steward.” (Wyndham.)
231. in combined sums. Cf. 253–256.

234. noble suit in court did shun. Left the court to avoid the wooing of noblemen.

235. Whose rarest havings, etc. "Whose accomplishments were so extraordinary that the flower of the young nobility were passionately enamored of her." (Malone.)

236. richest coat. Most distinguished lineage.

241. Playing the place, etc. The word playing is doubtless an error, having been read from the following line. Malone's emendation, paling, is plausible: "fencing in a heart which had received no impression."

252. to tempt. Some editors put the comma after all, meaning "to try the whole experience of love"; but the context makes the meaning "to tempt others" preferable.

271. are peace. We should very likely read are proof, which Malone proposed. If not, the meaning appears to be: "give peace to its followers, in spite of rule," etc.

281. dismount. Again the figure of artillery.

311. kind and tame. The phrase is perhaps suggested by the image of a deer submitting to be shot.

312. veil'd in them. That is, in the strange forms of line 303.

327. motion seeming ow'd. Emotion which he pretended to have.
My dear Mr. [Name],

I am writing to request a few favors on behalf of [Recipient's name]. The [Specific Request] is crucial to the success of our project. Furthermore, the [Additional Request] is essential for the timely completion of the task.

I understand the importance of confidentiality and assure you that I will handle any information provided with the utmost discretion.

I would greatly appreciate your consideration of these requests. I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
Textual Variants

The text in the present edition is based upon the first Quarto, and the following list records the more important variations from that version.

12. 4. all] Malone; or Q.
16. 10. this . . pen] Massey conj.; this (Times pensel or my pupill pen) Q.
19. 5. fleets] Dyce; fleet'st Q.
20. 7. hue, all hues] hew all Hews Q.
23. 9. looks] Sewell; books Q.
24. 1. steel'd] steeld Q; stell'd Capell Ms.
25. 9. fight] Theobald conj.; worth Q.
26. 12; 27. 10; 35. 8 (twice); 37. 7; 43. 11; 45. 12; 46. 3, 8, 13, 14; 69. 5; 70. 6; 128. 11, 14. thy] their Q.
31. 8. thee] Gildon; there Q.
34. 12. cross] Malone (Capell Ms.); losse Q.
40. 7. thyself] Gildon; this selfe Q.
41. 8. she] Tyrwhitt conj.; he Q.
47. 10. art] Malone (Capell Ms.); are Q.
11. not] ed. 1640; nor Q.
51. 10. perfect'st] Dyce; perfects Q.
54. 14. etc. fade] vade Q.
56. 13. Or] Tyrwhitt conj.; As Q.
57. 13. will] Will Q.
Textual Variants

65. 12. of] Malone; or Q.
69. 3. due] Tyrwhitt conj. ; end Q.
14. soil] Capell Ms. and Delius conj.; solye Q.
76. 7. tell] Capell Ms.; fel Q.
77. 1. wear] Sewell; were Q.
10. blanks] Theobald conj.; blacks Q.
102. 8. her] Housman; his Q.
106. 12. skill] Tyrwhitt conj.; still Q.
112. 14. besides, methinks, are] Capell Ms.; besides me thinkes y’are Q.
113. 6. latch] Capell Ms.; lack Q.
125. 13. informer] Informer Q.
127. 9. brows] Staunton and Brae conj.; eyes Q.
132. 2. torments] ed. 1640; torment Q.
144. 6. side] Passionate Pilgrim; sight Q.
146. 2. [Thrall to] Anon. conj.; My sinfull earth Q.

L. C. 51. gan] Malone; gauue Q.
118. Came] Sewell; Can Q.
251. immur’d] Gildon; enur’d Q; inur’d ed. 1640.
260. nun] Capell Ms.; Sunne Q.
Glossary

accord, consent; L. C. 3.
action, force; 65, 4.
acture, outward action; L. C. 185.
adjunct, aid; 122, 13.
advised, deliberate; 49, 4.
aggravate, increase; 146, 10.
amiss, fault; 35, 7; 151, 3.
annexions, additions; L. C. 208.
antiquity, old age; 62, 10; 108, 12.
approve, prove; 42, 8; 70, 5; 147, 7.
argument, subject-matter; 38, 3; 76, 10; 79, 5; etc.
array, invest (or harass); 146, 2.
art, science; 14, 10; 66, 9: artifice; 68, 14; 125, 11;
attaint, crime; 82, 2.

bare, bareness; L. C. 95.
beated, battered; 62, 10.
bestow, find place for; 26, 8: find use for; L. C. 139.
blazon, description (of a coat-of-arms); 106, 5.
blench, aberration; 110, 7.
brave, beautiful, fine; 12, 2; 15, 8: defy; 12, 14.
bravery, splendor; 34, 4.
canker-bloom, dog-rose; 54, 5.
carcanet, jeweled collar; 52, 8.
cautel, deceit; L. C. 303.
censure, judge; 148, 4.
character, writing, written form; 59, 8; 85, 3; L. C. 16,
174: put in written form; 108, 1; 122, 2.
charter, privilege; 58, 9; 87, 3.
check, rebuke, repulse; 15, 6; 58, 7; 136, 1.
chopped, seamed; 62, 10.
civil, seemly; L. C. 298.
cleft, double, contradictory; L. C. 298.
comment, discuss, moralize; 15, 4; 89, 2.
compare, comparison; 35, 6.
compile, compose; 78, 9; 85, 2.
conceit, thought, idea; 15, 9; 26, 7.
conceited, fanciful; L. C. 16.
congest, combine; L. C. 258.
contracted, betrothed; 1, 5; 56, 10.
convert, change; 11, 4; 14, 12.
craft, skill; L. C. 126, 295.
curious, critical; 38, 13.

daff, doff; L. C. 297.
dateless, eternal; 30, 6; 153, 6.
debate, conflict; 89, 13: contend; 15, 11.
defeat, deprive; 20, 11: destroy; 61, 11.
denote, show; 148, 7.
depart, leave; 11, 2.
determinate, expired; 87, 4.
determination, end; 13, 6.
dispense with, excuse; 112, 12.
distract, separate; L. C. 231.

eager, bitter; 118, 2.
eisel, vinegar; 111, 10.
enlarged, at large; 70, 12.
except, refuse; 147, 8.
expense, waste, loss; 30, 8; 129, 1.
expiate, end the account of; 22, 4.
extern, outward (public) conduct; 125, 2.
Glossary

fair, beauty; 16, 11; 18, 7, 10; 21, 4; 68, 3; 83, 2; 95, 12.
fame, make famous; 84, 11.
favor, countenance, appearance; 125, 5: token, L. C. 36.
feat, skilfully; L. C. 48.
fell, fatal; 74, 1.
fester, decay; 94, 14.
fitted, made to start; 119, 7.
fond, foolish; 3, 7: doting; 84, 14.
forbod, forbidden; L. C. 164.
foregone, past; 30, 9.
forward, early; 99, 1.
frank, generous; 4, 4.
free, liberal; 4, 4.
frequent, intimate; 117, 5.

gaze, object gazed at; 5, 2.
gore, injure; 110, 3.
gust, taste; 114, 11.

halt, limp; 89, 3.
haunt, resort; L. C. 130.
heavy, gloomy; 50, 1; 98, 4.
hive, hat; L. C. 8.
husbandry, thrift; 13, 10.

ill-wresting, maliciously misinterpreting; 140, 11.
impleached, entwined; L. C. 205.
indigest, formless; 114, 5.
tend, undertake; 27, 6.
interest, due portion; 31, 7; 74, 3.
invised, invisible (?) ; L. C. 212.

jacks, keys (of the virginal); 128, 5, 13.
lace, adorn; 67, 4.
latch, catch; 113, 6.
leese, lose; 5, 14.
level, aim; 117, 11; 121, 9; L. C. 22, 282, 309.
limbeck, still; 119, 2.
livery, dress; 2, 3: L. C. 105.
luxury, lasciviousness; L. C. 314.

main, expanse; 60, 5; 64, 7.
makeless, without mate; 9, 4.
manage, horsemanship; L. C. 112.
margent, brink; L. C. 39.
master, possess; 106, 8.
maund, basket; L. C. 36.
misprision, negligence; 87, 11.
moiety, share; 46, 12.
motley, jester; 110, 2.
mouthed, yawning; 77, 6.

napkin, handkerchief; L. C. 15.
note, reputation; L. C. 233.
noted, familiar; 76, 6.

obsequious, devoted; 31, 5; 125, 9.
office, duty; 101, 13.
owe, own; 18, 10; 70, 14; L. C. 140, 327.

partake, take part; 149, 2.
pelleted, formed into drops; L. C. 18.
Philomel, the nightingale; 102, 7.
phraseless, ineffable; L. C. 225.
post, travel rapidly; 51, 4.
predict, prophetic sign; 14, 8.
prefer, present; L. C. 280.
prevent, anticipate (and so hinder); 100, 14.
prick, mark, designate; 20, 13.
prime, spring; 97, 7.
proud-pied, brilliantly particolored; 98, 2.
prove, find; 72, 4; 136, 7; 153, 7: test; 117, 13.

qualify, moderate; 109, 2.
quest, inquest; 46, 10.
quietus, acquittance; 126, 12.

rack, cloud-fragments; 33, 6.
ragged, rough; 6, 1.
rack, coarse; 69, 12; 121, 12; L. C. 307: plethoric; 118, 12.
receipt, amplitude; 136, 7.
record, memory; 59, 5.
recure, recover; 45, 9.
remember, remind; 120, 9.
remove, leave one's place; 116, 4.
render, surrender; 125, 12; 126, 12.
reserve, preserve; 32, 7; 85, 3.
respect, regard; 36, 5; reason; 49, 4.
resty, sluggish, obstinate; 100, 9.
re-word, echo; L. C. 1.
rondure, circle; 21, 8.
ruffle, commotion; L. C. 58.

scant, slight; 117, 1.
schedule, paper; L. C. 43.
seconds, flour of inferior quality; 125, 11.
seeing, semblance; 67, 6.
separable, separating; 36, 6.
several, individual; 137, 9.
side, settle (?); see note, 46, 9.
sleided, untwisted; L. C. 48.
soil, solution (?); 69, 14.
stain, darken; 33, 14; 35, 3.
state, condition; 15, 8; 29, 2, 10, 14; 64, 9; 92, 7; 118, 11; 124, 1; etc.: greatness; 64, 10; 96, 12.
statute, security; 134, 9.
steel, engrave; see note, 24, 1.
store, increase; 11, 9; 14, 12: abundance; 37, 8; 64, 8; etc.
strain, kind; 90, 13.
subdue to, bring into conformity with; 111, 6.
subscribe, submit; 107, 10.
sufferance, suffering; 58, 7.
suggest, tempt; 144, 2.
suit, clothe; 127, 10; 132, 12.
suspect, suspicion; 70, 3, 13.
sympathized, matched; 82, 11.

table, that on which a picture is drawn; 24, 2.
tables, tablets, note-book; 122, 1, 12.
teen, trouble; L. C. 192.
termless, indescribable; L. C. 94.
tire, head-dress; 53, 8.
translate, change; 96, 8, 10.
trim, guise; L. C. 118.
twire, twinkle; 28, 12.

undertake, guarantee; L. C. 280.
uneared, unploughed; 3, 5.
unfair, deprive of beauty; 5, 4.
unhappily, wickedly; 66, 4.
unrespected, unheeded; 43, 2.
untrimmed, stripped of ornament; 18, 8.

virtue, power; 81, 13.
warrantise, guarantee, security; 150, 7.
weed, garment; 2, 4; 76, 6.
wilfully, daringly; 80, 8.
will, lust; 135 and 136, passim (see notes).
wink, close the eyes; 43, 1; 56, 6.
wrack, ruin; 126, 5.
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