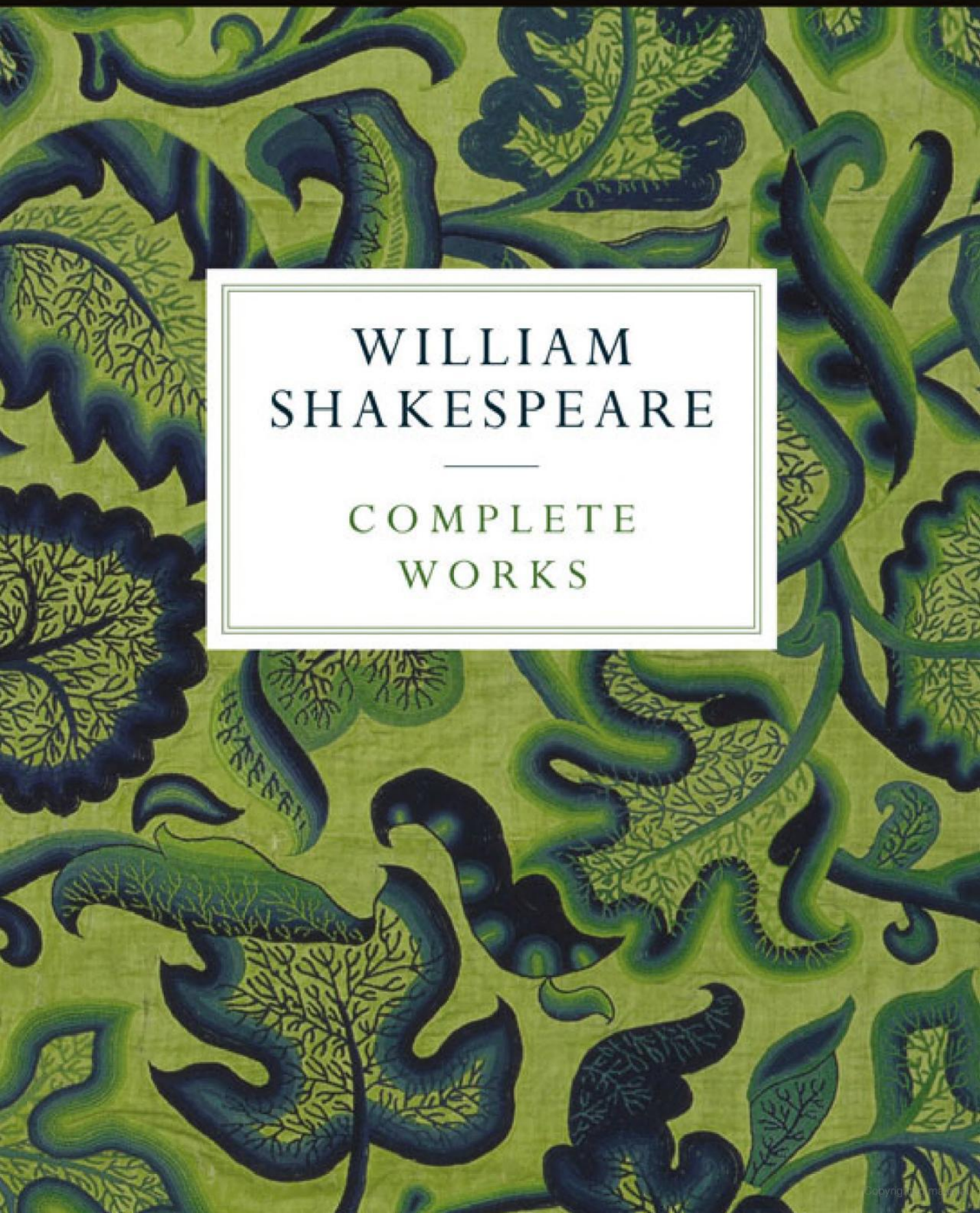
THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

COMPLETE WORKS

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE
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General Editors' Preface

This volume marks a milestone: the completion of the Third Series of the Arden Shakespeare. From the first volume of the First Series, Edward Dowden's edition of *Hamlet*, published in 1899, the Arden Shakespeare has been widely acknowledged as the pre-eminent Shakespeare edition, valued by scholars, teachers, students, actors and 'the great variety of readers' alike. The Third Series (Arden 3; General Editors: Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson, David Scott Kastan and H.R. Woudhuysen) began publication in 1995 and was completed early in 2020. This volume is the first collected edition of an entire series of Arden texts. The earlier 'complete' edition of the Arden Shakespeare included mixtures of Arden 2 and Arden 3 texts.

The third series of the Arden Shakespeare consists of 44 individual volumes, somewhat more, that is, than the 36 plays that appear in the 1623 Folio or even than the 37 or 38 plays usually claimed as Shakespeare's. Least controversial is the inclusion of edited versions of *The Sonnets* and Shakespeare's other *Poems*, most notably the two long narrative poems published separately in Shakespeare's lifetime, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Two collaborative plays written late in Shakespeare's career are included in the series, as has become common in other complete Shakespeares: *Pericles*, written with George Wilkins, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, written with John Fletcher. In this volume, those texts that have been corrected or revised since their first publication are printed in their most recent form.

Hamlet is the only play to appear in this volume in more than one text. The Prince says that 'a man's life is no more than to say "one"', but the text of Shakespeare's most complex play cannot adequately be represented singularly. We offer edited versions of all three early texts: Q1 (1603), Q2 (1604–5) and F (1623). There are various theories about the relationships between these: Q1, the shortest of the three, has often been dismissed as a shortened bootleg version, a 'memorial reconstruction' put together by actors or audience members, so despite being published first it would have been derived from one of the longer texts. In recent years, however, scholars have revived the notion that it represents Shakespeare's first draft. Q2, the longest text, appeared soon after Q1 and claims to be 'enlarged . . . according to the true and perfect Coppie'. F, the last text to be published, omits some 230lines that are present in Q2 but adds some 70 of its own; it has recently been regarded as an authorial revision. Most editors, like most theatre practitioners, offer a 'conflated' text, usually combining elements from Q2 and F, but in the absence of a consensus about the precise relationship between the texts it seems preferable to treat each as if it were an independent entity.

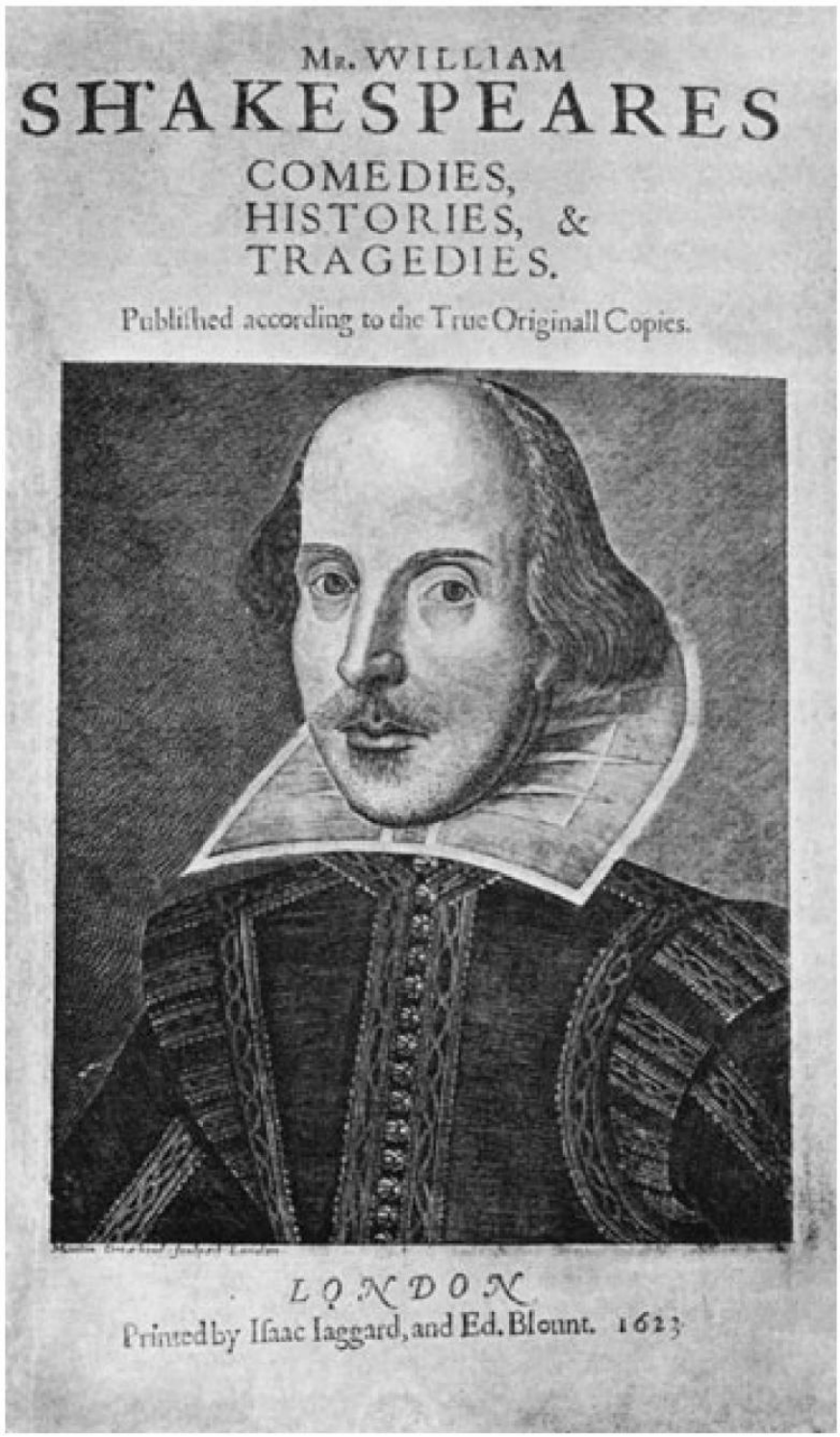
More controversial is the inclusion of three plays in which, if they are in some sense 'by' Shakespeare, his role is different from that in the collaborative plays which are now conventionally included in the canon. The editors of *Sir Thomas More*, *Edward III* and *Double Falsehood* each make the case for their play's inclusion in the Arden series. *Sir Thomas More*, a collaboration that was never published and exists in a unique manuscript now in the British Library, contains material now widely agreed to be by Shakespeare and likely written in his own hand. *Edward III*, published anonymously in 1596, was first identified as possibly by Shakespeare by Edward Capell in 1760, and increasingly scholars have agreed that the play was written by two collaborators, one of whom might well be Shakespeare on the basis of various kinds of stylistic analysis; and for the putatively Shakespearean portions there is no better candidate.

Double Falsehood has a more complex relationship to Shakespeare. This play was first performed in December 1727 and published early the next year. The title-page of the published version claims that it was 'Written Originally by *W. Shakespeare*' and is 'now Revised and Adapted to the Stage' by Lewis Theobald. The plot is based on the story of Cardenio, a character in *Don Quixote*, which was published in English in 1612. A play known as *Cardenio* (or *Cardenno* or *Cardenna*) was played at court twice in 1613 by the King's Men, Shakespeare's company. In 1653 Humphrey Moseley registered a large group of plays as his property, including 'The History of Cardenio, by Mr. Fletcher. and Shakespeare'. Although some have claimed *Double Falsehood* is a forgery, more likely it is what it claims to be: an eighteenth-century adaptation of a probably revised seventeenth-century play, which Shakespeare seems to have written in collaboration with John Fletcher. How far Shakespeare's contribution is buried beneath layers of revision is hard to know with certainty, but the likelihood of that contribution justifies its inclusion here.

If the understanding of the Shakespeare canon is thus expansive, the editorial work of the Arden texts is for the most part conservative: modernizing the spelling and punctuation of the early editions, normalizing capitalization, removing superfluous italics, regularizing (and not abbreviating) the names of characters, and rationalizing entrances and exits. Clarity and consistency are the goals of these procedures.

In certain play-texts there are typographical conventions specific to the textual understanding of the play. Superscript indicators are used in a number of plays to indicate the use of different source texts. In *King Lear*, the Arden 3 editor presents a single edited text based on the 1623 Folio, which incorporates words and passages present only in the 1608 Quarto. The conventions used to signal the differences between the two early texts are explained in the note on p. 751. Similar conventions are used for three passages in *Titus Andronicus* (see note on p. 1271). The various hands involved in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More* are indicated according to the system described on p. 1160.

For the most part, however, the goal of Arden 3 has been to present scrupulously edited texts designed to be accessible to modern readers. If there is some inescapable loss of the historical feel of the early printed texts resulting from the adoption of these modernizing editorial principles and conventions, it is justified by the removal of obstacles to understanding that Shakespeare never could have intended for his readers.



1 Title-page, with a portrait of Shakespeare engraved by Droeshout, from the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, edited by John Heminges and Henry Condell and printed by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, published in 1623

Introduction

WHY SHAKESPEARE?

What is 'Shakespeare'? A worldwide cultural phenomenon, a brand-name, a logo, an image that appears on T-shirts and credit cards, a mainstay of theatre, film and video production, a compulsory component of education, a label that sells thousands of books, a household name. Also an individual human being, born in a small English country town in 1564, a man who went to London and had a successful career as an actor, playwright and shareholder in the theatre. By all accounts an agreeable and modest man who did not seek to draw attention to himself, even by publishing his plays, though he does seem to have hoped that the fame of his *Sonnets* would outlive him. His surname has nevertheless become so familiar that his first name, William, does not need to be mentioned – is not indeed mentioned on the covers or title-pages of his works as published in 'The Arden Shakespeare': a person from another planet might work carefully through an entire volume in our series without discovering the first name of the author, but on our planet 'everyone' knows who he is. It has even become a kind of perverse tribute to him that periodically people attempt to prove that he didn't write anything after all, that the works ascribed to him were in fact written by somebody else entirely.

The names of some of this man's works have become so familiar themselves that we can even drop 'Shakespeare' without fear of being misunderstood when we talk of 'Orson Welles's *Othello*' or 'Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*'. Certain images have become instantly recognizable: a man dressed in black holding a skull 'means' *Hamlet*, a man talking to a woman above him on a moonlit balcony 'means' *Romeo and Juliet*. We quote Shakespeare all the time, sometimes unconsciously, using phrases that have dropped into common usage: 'to have one's pound of flesh' (*The Merchant of Venice* 1.3.147–8 and subsequently); 'to the manner born' (*Hamlet* Q2 1.4.15); 'more honoured in the breach than the observance' (*Hamlet* Q2 1.4.16); 'at one fell swoop' (*Macbeth* 4.3.222). Compilers of crossword puzzles and quiz games routinely rely on Shakespearean quotations and references.

Words and phrases from the plays and poems have provided the titles of hundreds of novels, plays and films: one might cite Edith Wharton's *The Glimpses of the Moon* (*Hamlet* Q2 1.4.53), William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (*Macbeth* 5.5.26), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (*The Tempest* 5.1.183), Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (*Timon of Athens* 4.3.434) and Christopher Isherwood's *All the Conspirators* (*Julius Caesar* 5.5.70), Agatha Christie's *By the Pricking of My Thumbs* – Ray Bradbury completed the rhyme with his *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (*Macbeth* 4.1.44–5) – and H.E. Bates's *The Darling Buds of May* (Sonnet 18.3). The plays are still being performed live all over the world, and film and video versions have made them accessible to millions of people who never go to the theatre. They continue to inspire adaptations and spin-offs such as Peter Greenaway's film *Prospero's Books* (1991), Gus Van Sant's film *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) and Alan Isler's novel *The Prince of West End Avenue* (1994), all of which assume a prior knowledge of a work by Shakespeare on the part of their viewers or readers.

How and why has this happened? Four hundred years after the heyday of Shakespeare's own dramatic career we find ourselves arguing about whether his extraordinary fame and influence were somehow inevitable, a direct result of the intrinsic qualities of his works themselves, or a piece of sustained hype, the manipulation of a myth by those with a personal stake in its perpetuation – performers, teachers, publishers, Stratford-upon-Avon hoteliers – and by those with a more general interest in promoting British 'high' culture: Shakespeare has been adopted as 'the Swan of Avon', the ultimate canonical figure who is taken to represent the genius and values of an entire nation.

Shakespeare did do well during his lifetime out of what was the nearest thing Elizabethan and Jacobean London had to a mass entertainment industry. Unlike other dramatists of the time, he did most of his work for a single theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, under Elizabeth I, who became the King's Men under James I. This stability in itself probably provided him with reasonably good working conditions and the opportunity to develop his projects with known performers and business associates; it made it relatively

easy for his plays to be collected and published after he died. Other dramatists, such as Thomas Middleton, who wrote for a number of different companies, had less chance of having their work collected or even identified.

The First Folio of Shakespeare's plays was published in 1623, seven years after his death, and reprinted in 1632, but in 1642 the theatres were closed, and were to remain closed for nearly twenty years during the Civil War and Commonwealth period, potentially jeopardizing the chances of Shakespeare or any other dramatist achieving lasting fame. With the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, however, the theatres reopened and Shakespeare's plays came back into the repertory, albeit in truncated and altered versions. During the eighteenth century his reputation was consolidated by the publication of a number of scholarly editions and monographs, the erection of a monument in Westminster Abbey (1741) and the promotion of Stratford-upon-Avon as his birthplace and the site of David Garrick's festival or 'Jubilee' (1769). While the plays were often rewritten wholesale for the contemporary stage, their texts were simultaneously being 'restored' with great care (and even more ingenuity) by editors who contributed largely to the 'canonization' of the author. This has essentially been the story of Shakespeare's reception and cultural survival ever since: we still (in the absence of manuscripts other than the possible contribution by Shakespeare to the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*) pursue the chimaera of 'what Shakespeare really wrote', while on the other hand treating his texts as endlessly adaptable, available for rewriting, rereading and reinterpreting by each generation.

The plays have turned out to be equally suitable for export, and Shakespeare has been enthusiastically appropriated by many countries around the world. In Germany, for example, Ferdinand Freiligrath's 1844 poem beginning '*Deutschland ist Hamlet*' ('Germany is Hamlet') spelt out a long-lasting identification of the character of Hamlet with the German Romantic self-image of a people capable of profound reflection but incapable of action. In the United States, on the other hand, Shakespeare became a kind of symbol of racial and cultural integration and democracy, perhaps especially during the period when silent films made his work accessible to people who did not know English. In Japan, which imported Shakespeare relatively late in the nineteenth century, he quickly came to represent the essence of westernization and modernization. All these countries now have thriving Shakespeare industries of their own.

The globalization of Shakespeare was of course assisted by the political and economic spread of the British Empire in the nineteenth century and by the continuing dominance of English as a worldwide language after the decline of that Empire. What remains remarkable is that Shakespeare is actually quite a difficult writer linguistically – much harder to read today than most of his contemporaries such as Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton or John Fletcher. His syntax is often complex, his figures of speech are elaborate and his ideas hard to grasp. Some of this may be offset by the larger patterns of satisfaction we find in his plots and characters, and indeed it could be said that the difficulty itself leaves room for our explanations and interpretations. Shakespeare still 'works' in the theatre, but at school we have to be taught to 'appreciate' Shakespeare: is this indoctrination or something more benign – an educational process involving the 'recognition' of intrinsic merit?

In his essay *Of the Standard of Taste*, written in 1742, the philosopher David Hume argued that there is such a thing as intrinsic excellence in literature and that it is the continuity of a work's reputation that proves it. What he calls 'catholic and universal beauty' in various art forms is demonstrated by 'the durable admiration which attends those works that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy'. To support this he claims that 'The same Homer who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and London'. Shakespeare can be said to have passed the survival test, but perhaps it is not 'the same Shakespeare' now as 400 years ago, and not 'the same Shakespeare' in Berlin, New York or Tokyo as in London or Stratford-upon-Avon. One of the secrets of Shakespeare's success may be his changeability, the openness of his works to take on new meanings in contexts he cannot have anticipated.

SHAKESPEARE: THE LIFE

William Shakespeare was a successful man of the emerging entertainment industry of Elizabethan England. He was an actor, a 'sharer' in the acting company (that is, no mere hireling, but a partner entitled to share in its profits) and, of course, a leading playwright and poet.

He began, however, more humbly. We know a remarkable amount, for this period, about Shakespeare and his family. He was born late in April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire. The parish church records his baptism on 26 April; his unrecorded birthdate is conventionally set three days earlier on 23 April, St George's Day (and also, apparently, the date of Shakespeare's death). He was the third of eight children; his father was John Shakespeare, a glover and later a wool merchant, and his mother was Mary Arden, daughter of a well-established farmer in the nearby village of Wilmcote. Though the records have not survived, we can safely assume that he attended the King's New School, the Stratford grammar school with its strenuous classically based curriculum, but we know for certain that at the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, also of Stratford, and that a daughter, Susanna, was born to them, as the parish records note, on 26 May 1583. On 2 February 1585 the register records the birth of twins, Hamnet and Judith.

Shakespeare was well established in London by the early 1590s as an actor and as a playwright. In 1592 a book appeared in which Robert Greene criticized an unnamed actor, 'an upstart Crow', for his presumption in writing plays, supposing himself 'as well able to bombast out a blanke verse' as any and imagining himself 'the onely Shake-scene in a countrey'. Since Greene's attack contains a parody of a line from *King Henry VI, Part 3*, it seems certain that it is Shakespeare that he aims at. By 1592, then, Shakespeare had already established himself in the theatre

and drawn the ire of a jealous rival. In 1594, Court records indicate payments to Shakespeare and two other sharers in the Lord Chamberlain's Men for 'twoe severall comedies or Enterludes shewed by them before her Majesty in Christmas tyme laste'. References to Shakespeare's activity in the theatre abound, and in 1598 Francis Meres claimed that Shakespeare could be compared with Seneca for the writing of tragedy and with Plautus for comedy, indeed that among English writers he was 'the most excellent in both kinds for the stage'. But he wrote nondramatic poetry as well. When a severe outbreak of plague beginning in the summer of 1592 forced the closing of the theatres until the spring of 1594, Shakespeare wrote two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, both dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, and printed by a former fellow-resident of Stratford, Richard Field, in 1593 and 1594, respectively; and an edition of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* was published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609.

But Shakespeare's primary work was in the theatre, and it was the theatre that made him a wealthy man. His money, however, came neither from commissions nor from royalties for his plays, but from his position as a sharer in the Lord Chamberlain's Men (who, with the accession of James to the throne in 1603, became the King's Men), by which he was entitled to one-tenth of the company's profits, a share handsome enough to permit him considerable investment in property. In 1597 he bought for £60 the substantial freehold house in Stratford known as New Place, the second largest dwelling in the town; in 1602, he purchased 107 acres of land in the manorial fields to the north of Stratford for £320, and later that year a cottage in Stratford in Chapel Lane; in 1605 he bought a half-interest in a Stratford tithe farm for an additional £440; and in 1613, with three other investors, he acquired a 'tenement' in Blackfriars for £140.

If Shakespeare's business dealings can be traced in the Stratford Court Rolls, his family's lives and deaths can be followed in the parish register. His son, Hamnet, died at the age of eleven and was buried on 11 August 1596. Shakespeare's father died in September 1601, his mother in 1608. Shakespeare's elder daughter, Susanna, married John Hall, a well-respected Stratford physician, in Holy Trinity church on 5 June 1607. His younger daughter, Judith, married Thomas Quiney on 10 February 1616. Shakespeare's wife, Anne, died on 6 August 1623; she had lived to see a monument to her husband installed in Holy Trinity, but died just before the publication of the First Folio of his plays, the more lasting monument to his memory.

Shakespeare himself had died in late April of 1616, and was buried on the north side of the chancel of Holy Trinity, having left a will written that January. He bequeathed ten pounds to 'the Poore of Stratford', remembered local friends and his extended family, and allotted 26*s*. 8*d*. each for memorial rings for his theatrical colleagues Richard Burbage, John Heminges and Henry Condell. He left £150 to his daughter Judith, and another £150 to be paid if 'shee or Anie issue of her bodie be Lyvinge' three years from the execution of the will, but the bulk of the estate was left to Susanna. His wife is mentioned only once, in an apparent afterthought to the document: 'Item I gyve unto my wief my second best bed with the furniture.' The bequest of the bed and bedding has led many to speculate that this was a deliberate slight, but English customary law provided the widow with a third of the estate, and the 'second best bed' was almost certainly their own, the best being saved for guests.

Yet in spite of the detailed records that remain, allowing us to trace major and minor events in the lives of Shakespeare and his family, as well as to see his vital presence in the life of the London stage, some critics have passionately held that the author of the plays was someone other than 'the man from Stratford'. It was not until the eighteenth century that anyone questioned Shakespeare's authorship, but since then many, including Mark Twain, Henry James and Sigmund Freud, have been attracted to the anti-Stratfordian heresy. Various candidates have been proposed. Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth, even Daniel Defoe (who was not born until 1660) have all been suggested as the 'real' author of 'Shakespeare's' plays and poems. The controversy, however, has little to recommend it except its unintended humour; anti-Stratfordian champions have sometimes had unfortunate names, including Looney, Battey and Silliman. Although usually energetically asserted, the belief that someone other than Shakespeare wrote the plays seemingly derives from simple, if unattractive, social snobbery: a certainty that only someone educated at university, the Inns of Court or at the Court would be capable of such artistry. The desire to give the plays a more socially distinguished origin than they in fact had at least attests to the importance they have come to assume in our culture. All in all, however, there seems little doubt that William Shakespeare, the glover's son from Stratford, wrote the plays that bear his name, though their greatness can hardly be illuminated or intensified by the evidence of the life of their author.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE THEATRE

At an unknown date between 1585 and 1591, William Shakespeare left Stratford-upon-Avon and became an actor and playwright. Early tradition holds that he was for a few years before this a country schoolmaster (which might help to explain his close knowledge of some Latin texts, including plays by Plautus and Seneca). In 1587 the Queen's Men visited Stratford shortly after they lost a leading actor, William Knell, killed in a duel at Thame in Oxfordshire. Whether or not this may be imagined as Shakespeare's opportunity to join the players, plays from the Queen's Men's repertoire were, on the evidence of later allusions in his plays, well known to him. His name is, however, more often associated with two other companies, Lord Strange's (Derby's) Men and its offshoot the Earl of Pembroke's Men, which collapsed in the summer of 1593. A new play, called 'harey the vj' and usually identified as *King Henry VI*, *Part 1*, was performed by Strange's Men at the Rose playhouse on 3 March 1592 and thereafter. *Titus Andronicus*, played by the Earl of Sussex's Men, followed on 23 January 1594: in

June two more performances of it were given by the Lord Admiral's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men. By June 1594 Shakespeare had become a leading member of a newly formed company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He would remain with them for the rest of his career. Of his repertoire as an actor we know almost nothing. His name heads the list of 'Principall Actors in all these Playes' prefaced to the First Folio in 1623. It had earlier appeared in the similar lists for Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Sejanus, His Fall* (1603), printed in the Jonson Folio of 1616. Beyond this, we have only late seventeenth-century traditions that he played Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*.

1594 saw the stabilization in London of the leading playing companies. The Admiral's Men, led by Edward Alleyn, under the management of Philip Henslowe, were at Henslowe's theatre, the Rose, on Bankside in Southwark (whose foundations were partially revealed by archaeologists in the spring of 1989, before being covered once more for the construction above them of an office block). The Chamberlain's Men, led by Richard Burbage and managed by his father, James, acted at the Theatre, north of the Thames, in Finsbury (not far from the modern Barbican Centre). The Theatre, built in 1576 for James Burbage, was the first building to be erected in the suburbs of London expressly for the presentation of plays. Henslowe's Rose followed in 1587; after it came the Swan (1595); the Globe (1599), replacing the Theatre and built with its structural timbers, bodily removed through London and across the River Thames from Finsbury to Southwark; the Fortune (1600), built in north London to replace the Rose; the Red Bull (1605); and the Hope

2 Portrait of Richard Burbage, 1567–1619, leading actor of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, theatre owner, entrepreneur, painter, business associate and friend of William Shakespeare

3 The Globe Theatre, as recreated in the 1990s on London's Bankside

(1614). The building of the Globe was an important event for Shakespeare, and we can see in the first plays he wrote for it, perhaps *As You Like It* and *King Henry V*, more surely *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*, a renewed awareness of the propositions that 'all the world's a stage' and that every man and woman is a performer in the wider theatre of the world. Not for nothing was it called the Globe.

Before 1576 plays had been performed, as they continued to be throughout the lifetime of Shakespeare, in a wide variety of locations, indoors and out. In London, the yards of coaching inns were used as theatres (and sometimes adapted for the purpose at considerable expense). Throughout the country the halls of schools, towns, colleges and noble houses were used for occasional performances by visiting players. Models for the public playhouses in London included inn yards as well as the baiting rings on the south bank used for bull- and bear-baiting. A large auditorium (with 20 sides and a diameter of 100 feet in the case of the Globe) had seats arranged in three galleries, and contained within it the separate structure of a stage and backstage building. The stage was covered by a canopy, or 'heavens', which could house winding-gear for lowering large properties or descending gods, and it was accessible from below through a trapdoor. At the back of the stage, behind a wall with two or three large doors in it, lay the 'tiring-house' (dressing rooms and wings combined), above which was a gallery, reached by a stair and divided into a number of 'rooms' or boxes, where the most important members of the audience could sit to see and to be seen. When necessary, one or more of these boxes could be used to represent a window, or walls, if required by action 'above' or 'aloft', and they may also have housed the musicians.

Indoor acting continued throughout the period at smaller 'private' playhouses, of which the earliest were set up in the halls of former monastic buildings within the city of London. Holding an audience of some 600 or 700 (against the 2,500–3,000 capacity attributed to the public playhouses) these theatres were used for plays appealing to a more restricted and wealthier audience. While you could stand in the yard at the Globe for a penny, the cheapest seat at the Blackfriars or St Paul's theatre would cost sixpence. The indoor playhouses were associated

4 View of London, engraving by Claes Jansz. Visscher, seventeenth century

with companies of boy players, composed of choristers of the Chapel Royal and of St Paul's Cathedral. The playhouses Shakespeare wrote for were the Theatre (and its substitute the Curtain), the Globe and, after 1608 or 1609, the Blackfriars private theatre.

During the lifetime of Shakespeare adult playing companies grew to a size and achieved a stability which justified the expense of building permanent theatres around London. Such companies consisted of some dozen to fifteen men and three to five boys, who trained as the apprentices of leading members and played female and juvenile roles. Earlier in the century, companies were much smaller – sometimes as small as three men and a boy – and playwrights had developed writing techniques to allow a cast of five to double in up to seventeen roles. Survival of such techniques accounts for the very large number of roles for Shakespeare's histories and tragedies, where most actors would have played two or more parts, some of them appearing for no more than a scene or two.

In sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe the prohibition of public acting by women and the convention of all-male casting were peculiar to England. Though easily accepted by audiences, the playing of female roles by boys led writers to emphasize the femininity of the women in their plays to an extent that the use of female performers would have rendered unnecessary. Shakespeare had much to do with the popularity of female roles in which a girl spends much of the action in male disguise. While this may have been an easier convention to accept when the role was played by a boy, it also meant that the performer's skill was required, not to impersonate a young man, but to keep the audience aware that 'he' was 'really' a girl under the male costume.


The Workes of William Shakespeare,
containing all his Comedies, Histories, and
Tragedies: Truely set forth, according to their first
ORIGINALL.

The Names of the Principall Actors
in all these Playes.

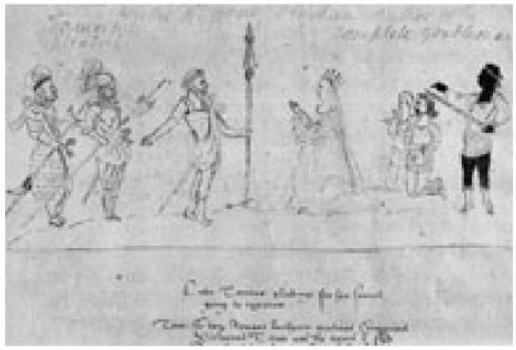
William Shakespeare.
Richard Burbadge.
John Hemmings.
Augustine Phillips.
William Kempe.
Thomas Pope.
George Bryan.
Henry Condell.
William Slye.
Richard Cowly.
John Lanman.
Samuell Crosse.
Alexander Cooke.

Samuell Gilburne.
Robert Armin.
William Ostler.
Nathan Field.
John Underwood.
Nicholas Tooley.
William Ecclestone.
Joseph Taylor.
Robert Benfield.
Robert Gough.
Richard Robinson.
John Shancke.
John Rice.

5 The principal actors in the King's Men, as listed in the First Folio of 1623

In the early Jacobean years the King's Men evidently had a boy or young man of exceptional talent, if we assume that the roles of Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra and Volumnia in *Coriolanus* may have been written for the same actor; the same must be true of such roles as Queen Margaret in the *King Henry VI* plays and Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* in the early 1590s, and of the comic heroines of *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* around the turn of the century.

As the plays indicate, the skills demanded of an actor included singing, dancing and sword-fighting as well as the rhetorician's arts of speech and significant gesture. We know little, however, about acting styles in the period; nevertheless, it is not fanciful to suppose that the changing style of the plays written between 1590 and 1620 reflects a change by actors from a broad style, dependent on resonant vocal delivery and confident use of expansive gesture, such as suited open-air playhouses, to a subtler and more intimate manner, less dependent on emphatic speech and allowing a wider range of gesture and even facial expression, which could register with most of the audience in the smaller space of a private playhouse. The contrast is clear if *The Tempest* is compared with the *King Henry VI* plays or *Titus Andronicus*.



6 The earliest illustration of a work by Shakespeare: a scene from *Titus Andronicus*, attributed to Henry Peacham, *c*. 1595, 1605 or 1615

It is likely that Shakespeare's own plays were instrumental in changing styles of acting between 1590 and 1614. He had the unparalleled good fortune to work in the same company for some twenty years, as actor and as principal dramatist. He wrote for actors who were also his business partners and co-owners of the playhouses they played in. We must presume that he had some say in how the plays he wrote for them were presented. The strength of the company is reflected in the demands his plays make on actors. The Jacobean plays, in particular, regularly require strong performances in ten or a dozen significant roles – a hard requirement for any company to fulfil. The identification of actor with role – the building of a 'character' – is a commonplace of modern theatre. In Shakespeare's time it seems to have been something of an innovation: indeed a 'character' would have been understood to mean a stock or stereotyped stage figure such as the old man, the melancholy lover or the country clown. Richard Burbage, Shakespeare's leading actor, attracted comment for (exceptionally) remaining in character when he came offstage during a performance. Not the least of Shakespeare's achievements was the writing of dramatic roles a few hundred lines in length which can reward close and subtle verbal, moral or psychological analysis, three-dimensional fictions which create the illusion of the authentically recognizable inconsistency of human individuals.

Career and chronology

We do not know the dates of composition of all of Shakespeare's plays. Such evidence as there is is circumstantial: dates when they (or works on which they are certainly based) were published, or dated references to, and comments on, early performances can narrow the limits for many of them, while a very few allude to datable events of the time. On such evidence, supported by internal features of style, metre and subject, the plays can be arranged, with varying degrees of certainty, in groups relating to five phases of his theatrical career.

First come the plays Shakespeare had probably already written before the forming of the Chamberlain's Men in the summer of 1594. These are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (perhaps written for their first season), *The Taming of the Shrew* and possibly *The Comedy of Errors*, the three parts of *King Henry VI*, *King Richard III* and *Titus Andronicus* and possibly *King Edward III*. Plays written for the new company at the Theatre in the five years from 1594 until the opening of the Globe in the autumn of 1599, in possible sequence of composition, are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Richard II*, *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, the two parts of *King Henry IV*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and (at some date before summer 1598) the lost *Love's Labour's Won*. *As You Like It* and *King Henry V* may belong in this group, though both show signs of having been written with the Globe in mind.

Plays for the Globe from 1599 until the death of Queen Elizabeth I in the spring of 1603 are *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello* and possibly *All's Well That Ends Well*. As a leading member of the King's Men, Shakespeare seems to have reduced his output from the previous average of two plays per year. His new plays from 1603 to 1608 were: *Measure for Measure*, *Timon of Athens*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles* and *Coriolanus*. He seems also to have revised *Sir Thomas More*. The final period, from the company's recovery of the indoor Blackfriars theatre for winter use in 1608–9 to 1613–14, saw composition of *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest* and three plays written in collaboration with John Fletcher: *King Henry VIII*, the lost *Cardenio* (traces of which may survive in *Double Falsehood*) and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

SHAKESPEARE IN PRINT

Shakespeare's literary career in his own lifetime appears strikingly to resist the very notions of artistic autonomy and authority that his name has come to represent. He had little direct financial interest in his plays. He wrote scripts to be performed, scripts that once they were turned over to the acting company no longer belonged to him in any legal sense and immediately escaped his artistic control, as staging requirements and actors' temperaments inevitably enforced their changes upon them. He involved himself with the printing and publication of none of them, and held no copyrights. In the absence of anything like modern copyright law, which in Britain dates only from 1709, the scripts belonged to the acting company (whose actors could exercise artistic control over them and sought to keep their property current).

Except that, as an experienced actor and sharer in his company, he could no doubt influence productions in a way that an independent playwright could not, Shakespeare's relation to the plays he wrote was in no way unusual. Like all playwrights, he wrote so that his plays could be acted; his words were intended in the first instance to be heard, not read. In spite of Ben Jonson's efforts to establish his own plays as a form of high culture, plays remained sub-literary, the piece-work of an emerging entertainment industry. Thomas Bodley called them 'baggage books' in 1612, and ordered his

librarian not to collect such 'riff-raff' or 'idle' books in order to protect his Oxford library against the 'scandal' that would be caused by their presence.

A play was generally written on demand for an acting company, and the completed script then belonged to the company that had commissioned and paid for it. Under certain circumstances, and with no necessary regard for the author's wishes or interests, the companies would sell their rights in a play to a publisher, who would have it printed in an edition of about 800 copies, usually in quarto format and selling for sixpence. The author would receive no money from the sale of the play manuscript or from any subsequent sale of books. Neither were the literary ambitions of the playwrights usually a factor in publication. Ben Jonson's aggressive effort to fashion himself as a literary figure is, of course, the exception that proves the rule; his 1616 Folio's characteristic 'The Author, B.I.' on the individual title-pages of plays in the volume is revealingly anomalous.

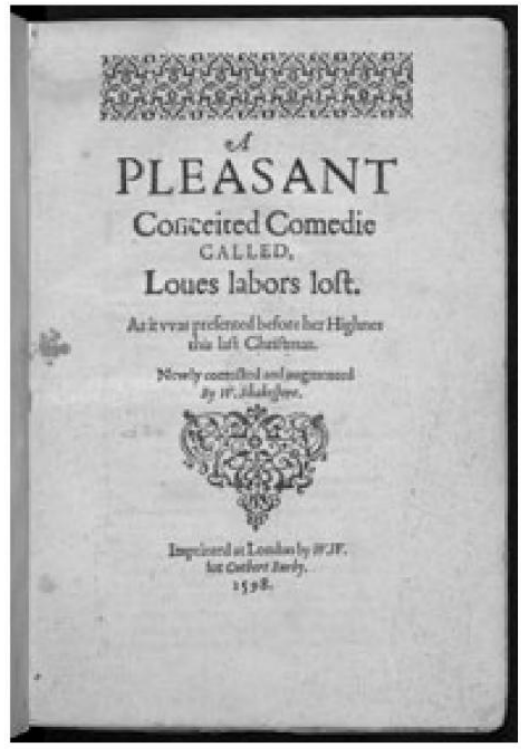
Shakespeare displayed no similarly proprietary artistic impulses. At the time of his death, eighteen plays had reached print (many in more than one edition), but he had prepared none of the texts for publication and had seen none through the press. The eighteen play-texts each appeared in a printed quarto or octavo volume; none has a dedication or an epistle from the author; none displays any sign of Shakespeare's direct interest or involvement in its printing. On the other hand, his two long poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), printed by his fellow-Stratfordian Richard Field, were obviously produced with care, and each was published with a signed dedication to the Earl of Southampton. The texts of the plays show nothing comparable.

In the course of Shakespeare's lifetime twenty different publishers brought forth editions of individual plays, but not one took any unusual care to ensure that the text was authoritative or the printing exact. The texts are of varied quality and provenance, some seemingly printed from manuscripts that appear authorial, others apparently from copy showing the inevitable cuts and interpolations of the theatre, still others printed from transcripts, as his fellow-playwright Thomas Heywood claimed, 'corrupt and mangled, (coppied onely by the eare)', reported texts reconstructing performances witnessed or acted. In any case, no manuscript of a Shakespeare play certainly survives (unless the contribution of the so-called 'Hand D' in the manuscript of *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* is indeed Shakespeare's own, in which case it bears witness to his work as collaborator, one of five playwrights involved in writing the play).

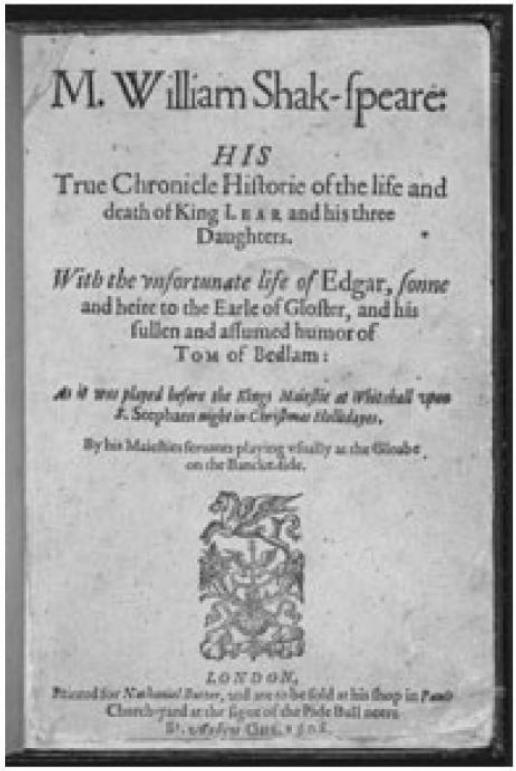
Though today Shakespeare's literary pre-eminence has made the publication of his plays a thriving cultural industry, his earliest publishers did not seem much to care about his authorship. The 1594 edition of *Titus Andronicus* omits Shakespeare's name from the title-page, giving information rather about the printer and where the play could be bought. The play was advertised – and title-pages were explicitly forms of advertising, pasted on posts and walls – not as by William Shakespeare but by the acting company that performed it: 'As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of *Darbie*, Earle of *Pembrooke*, and Earle of *Sussex* their Seruants.' When it was reprinted, first in 1600 and then in 1611, neither bibliographical scruple nor thought of commercial advantage led the publisher to add Shakespeare's name to the title-page.

Indeed, until 1598 none of Shakespeare's plays that appeared in print identified Shakespeare as its author. Not merely *Titus* or the early texts of *King Henry VI*, *Parts 2* and *3*, which could be thought immature efforts of a young playwright whose achievement did not yet merit nor permit a publisher to capitalize on his name on the title-page, but even his later and more successful plays failed to acknowledge or exploit Shakespeare's authorship of them. *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in 1597, identified only 'As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publiquely, by the right Honourable the L. of *Hunsdon* his Seruants'; and its next two printings, in 1599 and 1609, while claiming that the text has now been '*Newly corrected, augmented, and amended*', still made no mention of its author (or corrector), again only identifying the acting company that performed it as the source of its authority. *King Richard II* and *King Henry IV*, *Part 1* similarly first appeared with no mention of Shakespeare on the title-page, or anywhere else for that matter.

In fact, seven plays appeared before one was issued with Shakespeare's name. In 1598 Cuthbert Burby


A
PLEASANT
Conceited Comedie
CALLED,
Loues labors loſt.
As it vvas preſented before her Highnes
this laſt Chriſtmas.
Newly corrected and augmented
By W. Shakeſpere.
Imprinted at London by W.W.
for Cuthbert Burby.
1598.

7 Title-page of the First Quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1598, the earliest edition of a play to bear Shakespeare's name


M. William Shak-ſpeare:

HIS
True Chronicle Hiſtorie of the life and death of King LEAR and his three Daughters.

With the vnfortunate life of Edgar, *ſonne* and heire to the Earle of Gloſter, and his ſullen and aſſumed humor of TOM of Bedlam:

As it was played before the Kings Maieſtie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Chriſtmas Holidayes.

By his Maiesties ſeruants playing vſually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-ſide.

LONDON,
Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in Paules Church-yard at the ſigne of the Pide Bull neere St. Auſtins Gate. 1608.

8 Title-page of the First Quarto of *King Lear*, 1608

published *Love's Labour's Lost* with the title-page identifying the play in small type as 'Newly corrected and augmented *By W. Shakespere*'. Whatever this assertion meant, it was certainly no ardent proclamation of Shakespeare's authorship. The evidence of the early Quartos is, then, that Shakespeare had little or no direct interest in their publication and, what is perhaps more surprising, that his publishers had as little interest in him.

At least the latter would soon change. The 1608 'Pide Bull' Quarto (so called after the name of the shop where it was sold) of *King Lear* does indeed proudly assert Shakespeare's authorship, emblazoning his name across the title-page in a typeface substantially larger than any other. But the text, it must be said, shows no sign of Shakespeare's involvement in its publication. It is poorly printed. (It was the first play that its printer, Nicholas Okes, had attempted, and noticeably so.) An author overseeing the printing would have insisted on changes, but nonetheless the publisher, Nathaniel Butter, unmissably identified the printed play as Shakespeare's.

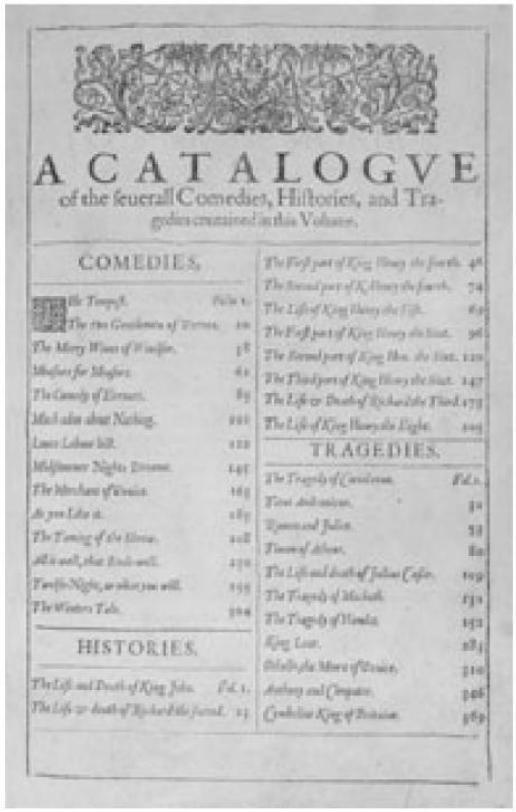
What had happened was not that Shakespeare's rights as an author had suddenly been recognized and were here being celebrated, but that Shakespeare's name was now of value to the publisher. For Butter, identifying his *King Lear* as 'M. William Shak-speare: *HIS* True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King LEAR' served to differentiate his property from another play about King Lear (*The True Chronicle History of King Leir*) that had been published in 1605 and was available on the bookstalls. Shakespeare's name functioned on the title-page at least as much to identify the play*book* as the play*wright*, though already it was becoming evident that Shakespeare's name could sell books. As the publisher of *Othello* in 1622 later asserted: 'the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke'.

But in truth it was only in 1623 with the publication of the First Folio edition of his plays that Shakespeare truly entered English literature as an author, though this, of course, was neither his own idea nor of any direct benefit to him. He had died in 1616, seven years before the Folio appeared, and to the end showed no sign of any literary ambition for his plays. But the Folio assumes that Shakespeare was indeed an author to be read and not merely the provider of scripts to be acted. The play-texts in the Folio are stripped of their theatrical association. Unlike the early Quartos, there is no mention in the Folio that any text is 'as it was played'. Indeed, though 'The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes' are listed, Shakespeare's own at the head of them, no acting company is ever mentioned by name; rather the texts are described, no doubt too confidently, as perfect and purely authorial, presented here exactly 'as he conceived them'.

It is not clear whose idea the collected volume was or even what was the precise motivation for it (beyond a general hope of making some money). The volume's two principal publishers, Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, apparently negotiated with two of Shakespeare's old friends and fellow-actors, John Heminges and Henry Condell, for the rights to the plays that had not yet been printed, and they then worked to secure the publishing rights to those that had. Eventually, they acquired them all (except for *Pericles*, which had been published in a Quarto in 1609 as the work of Shakespeare, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, not published until 1634 but identified then as the work of Shakespeare and John Fletcher), and the Folio was published in 1623. It includes thirty-six plays, eighteen of which had never before appeared in print, a dedication and an epistle, prefatory verses and an engraved title-page with a three-quarter-page portrait of Shakespeare and a facing poem.

Printing had begun early in 1622 and took about twenty-one months to complete. The volume sold for £1 with a plain calf binding, for somewhat less when more cheaply bound; and unbound, as many books were sold, it could be bought for 15*s*. Its very appearance in folio, a format usually reserved for theological or historical works or for collected editions of canonical authors, itself marked a major shift in the cultural positioning of Shakespeare – a shift confirmed within a few months of publication when Sir Thomas Bodley's library received a copy of the Folio from the Stationers' Company, had it bound in calf and placed it, chained, on a shelf.

Today it seems obvious that the Folio published by Blount and Jaggard was a necessary and appropriate memorial to England's greatest playwright, but at the time all that was clear to the publishers was that they had undertaken a complex and expensive project with no guarantee of recovering their considerable investment. In



A CATALOGVE
of the seuerall Comedies, Hiſtories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume.

COMEDIES.

HISTORIES.

TRAGEDIES.

9 The catalogue of thirty-five of Shakespeare's plays as listed in the First Folio, 1623

To the great Variety of Readers.

10 The second epistle, 'To the great Variety of Readers', prefacing the First Folio, 1623, and signed by John Heminges and Henry Condell

the event, of course, they did. The book sold well, and a second edition appeared only nine years later, remarkable evidence of its popularity. For later generations, with no financial stake, the book is of even greater value. Without the Folio the eighteen plays that first appeared in it might well have been lost; and without the Folio, Shakespeare might never have emerged as the singular figure of English literature he has become, for it is that book that first established Shakespeare as the author he never aspired to be.

The second epistle to the First Folio

By the autumn of 1623 John Heminges and Henry Condell were the senior surviving members of the King's Men. In April 1616 they and their colleague, Richard Burbage, who died in 1619, had been left small bequests in the will of William Shakespeare to buy memorial rings. The publication of the First Folio was a different kind of memorial to *'so worthy a Friend, & Fellow . . . as . . . our* SHAKESPEARE', as the dead dramatist is described in the first of two epistles prefaced to the volume and signed with the names of Heminges and Condell. In that epistle the book is dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Lord Chamberlain, and his brother Philip, Earl of Montgomery, and calls on them to act as guardians to Shakespeare's orphaned plays. The second epistle (reproduced here in facsimile) urged 'the great Variety of Readers' to buy 'these Playes', which 'have had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales' in the theatre.

The second paragraph made several claims that have important implications for actors, readers and editors of Shakespeare. Heminges and Condell asserted that they had done the best they could, in the absence of their dead friend, to collect and verify the texts of his plays for publication. Three of their claims have been the source of dispute and controversy, and need some qualification. The mention of adding 'all the rest' to the plays already in print leads readers to expect the Folio to contain the complete plays of Shakespeare. It does not. Not only are two collaborative late plays, *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, omitted, but the volume initially went on sale without *Troilus and Cressida* (as its absence from the 'Catalogue', or table of contents, testifies). *Troilus* was soon added to the volume – though not to the catalogue: its late arrival is best explained as the result of difficulties experienced by Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, the principal publishers, in obtaining permission to reprint it from the copyright holder, Henry Walley. Exclusion from the Folio is accordingly not conclusive evidence that a play may not have had Shakespeare's hand in it.

More teasing is the warning to readers against previous editions of the plays (half of which were already in print in quarto). What Heminges and Condell meant by 'diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them' has been much debated. They were clearly aware that some earlier quarto editions of plays by Shakespeare differed radically from the texts they were printing. Among those, a handful are conspicuous by the extent to which they differ from the texts printed in the Folio in length, wording, names and natures of characters, and even scenic sequence or particulars of action. They are *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), *The First Part of the Contention* (i.e. *King Henry VI*, *Part 2*) (1594), *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* (i.e. *King Henry VI*, *Part 3*) (1595), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *King Henry V* (1600), *Sir John Falstaff* (i.e. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) (1602) and *Hamlet* (1603). Modern scholarship (unhappily) has dubbed these the 'bad' Quartos. They do seem, however, to merit the description 'maimed, and deformed', at least in relation to their Folio counterparts (or to later 'good' Quartos in the cases of *Romeo* and *Hamlet*).

Variation in a further group of Quartos is less radical, though often pervasive. These are *King Richard III* (1597), *King Henry IV*, *Part 2* (1600), *Hamlet* (1604–5), *King Lear* (1608), *Troilus and Cressida* (1609) and *Othello* (1622). Where the seven 'bad' Quartos seem to demand exceptional circumstances of textual transmission, such as someone's attempt to reconstruct them from memory, to account for their very approximate resemblance to the equivalent 'good' texts, the other six may be adequately accounted for as products of the various usual processes of stage abridgement or adaptation, or of authorial revision, to which they may have been subjected.

What is clear is that Heminges and Condell cannot have intended a blanket condemnation of all earlier published versions, but that their focus must have been on the 'bad' texts and, to a lesser degree, on those plays which they could offer in texts reflecting a later stage in their evolution than that represented by the Quartos. They had no qualms about simply reprinting Quartos they found reliable, like *The Merchant of Venice* or *Much Ado About Nothing*, with the minimum of editorial intervention.

The myth of Shakespeare's fluency in composition originated in the Folio's second epistle. Where Heminges and Condell saw that fluency as a virtue, others, and especially Ben Jonson, demurred. Jonson was later to respond to the claim that Shakespeare rarely 'blotted' a line – that is, deleted and revised it – with the wish that he 'had blotted a thousand'. In his own contribution to the preliminary matter of the Folio, his verses 'To the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us', Jonson took pains to offer an alternative view of Shakespeare as a conscious and painstaking poetic craftsman, ready to:

> strike the second heat
> Upon the *Muses* anvile: turne the same
> (And himselfe with it) that he thinkes to frame;
> Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne;
> For a good *Poet's* made, as well as borne;
> And such wert thou.

Although nearly half of his plays had been printed in his lifetime, Shakespeare only became an author to be read as well as a dramatist to be performed seven years after his death, with the publication of his comedies, histories and tragedies in the First Folio. During the eighteen-year period between the closure of the theatres in 1642 and the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, his plays could only be read. The first published criticism of his work, in Margaret Cavendish's *Sociable Letters* (1664), reflects this shift, claiming that 'those that could Read his Playes, could not be so Foolish to Condemn them'. The shift was radical and irreversible. By 1660, the theatrical company Shakespeare wrote for was long dispersed, though survivors would act again and some had distant or second-hand memories of him. The split between progressive revision and adaptation of the plays for theatres with new facilities and constantly changing audiences, and an increasingly conservative scholarly concern to preserve or restore the plays as reading texts had begun. Shakespeare the book and Shakespeare the dramatist were set on their divergent paths.

SHAKESPEARE'S READING AND READING SHAKESPEARE

Elizabethan playwrights worked in a repertory system which constantly demanded new plays. Their sensible practice, encouraged by a literary climate which set store by creative imitation of existing models, was to base many, even most, of their plays on familiar stories. Shakespeare was no exception, other than in the range of subjects he dramatized. Almost all his plays can be shown to follow, broadly or closely, what scholars have designated as his 'sources' – that is, earlier works he had read or otherwise knew of. Often he combined material from two or more sources into a single play, particularly in his comedies. His reading was wide and multifarious: history – Greek, Roman and British; prose fiction (chiefly translated into English from continental originals); earlier plays, ancient and modern, in Latin, Italian and English; pamphlets and other ephemera – all were grist to his mill. He had favourite authors, such as Chaucer, Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney among English writers, or Michel de Montaigne, whose essays he seems to have known by the time he wrote *Hamlet* (about 1600). His Latin favourites were Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the comedies of Plautus, but he also knew Virgil, Seneca and Horace, and Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, written originally in Greek, were well known to him in Thomas North's English translation published in 1579. Playwrights of his own and the previous generation, notably John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, Robert Greene and Christopher Marlowe, had much to offer him by way of example, and he must also have learned from his interaction with such rivals as Ben Jonson and from his collaborators, John Fletcher and (less certainly) Thomas Middleton. And it goes without saying that he knew the plays that he had written. In many ways Shakespeare is his own most important source.

Reading Shakespeare 400 years later, we encounter the English language of a period now described as Early

Modern, before any notion of correctness of usage, whether of grammar, syntax, spelling or punctuation, had acquired wide currency, let alone authority. The primary language of education, both in schools and universities, was still Latin, a language which required the formal understanding of its rules and structures. Shakespeare had his own schooling in Latin, a schooling which included the standard subjects of grammar, logic and (most important of the three for an aspiring poet) rhetoric, the art of appropriate use of language for all practical and literary purposes. The fluidity of English in the late sixteenth century was a gift to a linguistically inventive generation of writers. Shakespeare did as much as any to exploit and extend the wide range of literary styles and linguistic registers available to him. His characters speak in all styles, from the artificial rhyming verse of *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Romeo and Juliet* to the uneducated prose of Dogberry or the regional dialect of Fluellen. It was to his plays that Samuel Johnson turned, while compiling his great *Dictionary* (1755), for illustrations of 'the diction of common life'.

Blank verse, already the norm of dramatic language in the 1580s, was adopted by Shakespeare and developed into the flexible and versatile medium of his Jacobean plays. The forging of a dramatic prose which could range from low comedy to Hamlet's philosophical musings or the inexhaustible improvisations of Falstaff was among his major stylistic achievements. The conciseness which is so marked a feature of his dramatic writing was learned, in part, from the experience of writing sonnets.

Readers of Shakespeare have long needed the assistance of a glossary to help with the unfamiliar vocabulary or idiom and the semantic changes which constitute one initial obstacle to full enjoyment and understanding. The glossary in this volume is based on the commentaries in the Arden editions whose texts are reprinted in it. It aims at giving answers to readers' most likely questions about meaning but makes no attempt at full explanation of the difficulty. Readers should always remember that Shakespeare's plays were written to be heard, not read – least of all silently read. The attempt at full understanding of linguistic detail and subtlety (if such an aim were attainable) should always be seen as secondary to the experience of the play as a whole. Fuller comprehension of detail will follow with subsequent rereadings. This is what Shakespeare's two friends and fellow actors, John Heminges and Henry Condell advised when, in the prefatory material to the 1623 Folio, they advised 'the great Variety of Readers' to "Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe: And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him'.

AFTERLIFE

While 'Shakespeare' has been a stable element in English culture for 400 years, and has been successfully exported to numerous other cultures, there is considerable variation in the reputation and influence of individual works. Each generation seems able to find something (its own image?) in 'Shakespeare', but it has always been possible to choose a different work or a different interpretation. Some plays, such as *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, have an almost continuous history of performance and appear regularly on school and college syllabuses; others, such as *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Pericles*, are rarely either performed or set for study; others again, such as *Cymbeline*, *King John* and *King Henry VIII*, were far more popular in the past than they are today. During his lifetime it would seem that Shakespeare's most highly esteemed tragedy was *Titus Andronicus*; for the next 350 years it was *Hamlet*; since about 1960 it has been *King Lear*, but *Othello* and *Macbeth* are becoming strong contenders. There is a similar degree of variation in the extent to which works have been adapted, translated and filmed. Broadly speaking, the 'afterlife' of the plays and poems has depended on and can be measured by four things: publication, performance, criticism, and adaptation and creative influence.

Publication

Publication is taken first as even performers need to read plays before they stage them. About half of Shakespeare's plays were published during his lifetime as single pocket-size volumes known from their method of printing and small size as Quartos. All the plays in the present volume apart from *Double Falsehood*, *King Edward III*, *Pericles*, *Sir Thomas More* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* were printed (or reprinted) after his death in the large-format 1623 First Folio. Until 1709 two separate traditions of publication continued independently of each other: the First Folio was followed by the Second (1632), Third (1663) and Fourth (1685) Folios – 'literary' collections of the almost-complete works which found their way into the libraries of individuals and institutions – while many of the Quartos were reprinted as play-texts, used by actors and bought by playgoers.

In 1709 Nicholas Rowe published *The Works of Mr William Shakespear, Revised and Corrected* in eight volumes, the first of a line of eighteenth-century edited texts. He based his text on the Folio but also began the tradition of including passages which had previously appeared only in the Quartos. He and later eighteenth-century editors also provided commentaries in which they often disagreed with each other over variant readings, emendations and interpretations. These editions were usually published by subscription and were relatively expensive, but cheap acting editions continued to be available, for example the rival sets published in the 1730s by Robert Walker and Jacob Tonson or Bell's Shakespeare (1773–4). The nineteenth century saw the publication of cheaper mass-market texts and, after the Bowdlers' *Family Shakespeare* (1807), a proliferation of expurgated texts explicitly aimed at women and children. In the twentieth century, Shakespeare continued to be big business for publishers and editors, with hot competition for school, college and university markets, and the consequent provision both of popular versions of Shakespeare and of increasingly specialist series such as the Cambridge *Shakespeare in Performance*, which provides detailed annotation of stage business, the Arden *Performance Editions*, which offer specific advice to theatre practitioners, and the Harvester *Shakespearean Originals*, which offer reprints of the earliest texts.

Shakespeare has also, of course, been translated into many languages. Some translations have become 'classics' in their own right – François-Victor Hugo's translations into French, August Wilhelm Schlegel's translations into German and Boris Pasternak's translations into Russian – but it has also seemed necessary for each generation to produce new translations (sometimes specifically commissioned for performance), just as each generation of English speakers produces new editions.

Performance

Our records of performances in Shakespeare's lifetime are poor, possibly because of the fire which destroyed the first Globe theatre (and presumably its papers) in 1613. The title-pages of play-texts sometimes give misleading information about whether plays were (or were not) performed and where; sometimes we have to rely on chance diary entries or on what we can deduce from passing references by contemporaries – evidence for pre-1623 performances is provided in the introductions to individual plays in this volume. We do know that no plays were performed from 1642, when the theatres were closed during the Civil War and the Commonwealth period, until they returned as staple fare when the theatres reopened at the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. At this time Shakespeare was popular but not as popular as the Jacobean dramatists Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. Two significant innovations in 1660 were the use of stage scenery and the introduction of female performers; before 1640 women's roles had been played by young male actors.

The Restoration theatres were relatively small, indoor and expensive, attracting patrons from upper- and middle-class circles. In this they were like the Blackfriars theatre, used by the King's Men before the Civil War, and unlike the large outdoor Globe which had cheap standing room for those who could not afford a seat. Attendance at a Shakespearean performance had thus become more of a minority pursuit, though touring companies continued to flourish in the British provinces and abroad in the eighteenth, nineteenth and indeed twentieth centuries. Shakespeare reached a mass market again with the invention of film and video in the twentieth century. The versions performed in the Restoration and in the eighteenth century were regularly cut (partly in order to allow time for changing the scenery and trimming the candles) and often substantially rewritten. Despite a first attempt by the famous actor David Garrick in the mid-eighteenth century to restore more of Shakespeare's lines, the performance tradition continued to give audiences far less of the texts than was available in published versions.

A fashion for historical accuracy and heavily pictorial staging in the nineteenth century further weighted the plays with unnecessary baggage, and it was not until the 1880s that, under the influence of William Poel, a serious attempt was made to return to fluid 'Elizabethan' staging with minimal props and scenery. In Britain in the twentieth century the performance of Shakespeare became institutionalized with the foundation of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (originally built 1879, rebuilt after a fire in 1932) and later, in 1961, of the Royal Shakespeare Company, which currently performs in three theatres in Stratford-upon-Avon (the main house having been redesigned again in 2007–10) and transfers some productions to London. It also undertakes national and international tours. Shakespeare's Globe, reconstructed on London's Bankside, offers outdoor performances in summer in its main space and indoor performances in

11 Antony Sher's Richard III, directed by Bill Alexander, Royal Shakespeare Company, 1984

12 Titania (Sarah Kestelman), Bottom (David Waller) and fairies in Peter Brook's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Royal Shakespeare Company, 1970

13 Graeme Rose as Horatio and Sally Mortemore as the Queen in Scene 14 of the Red Shift production by Jonathan Holloway of Q1 *Hamlet*, London and on tour, 1999–2000

14 Adrian Lester (Othello) and Olivia Vinall (Desdemona) in Nicholas Hytner's production of *Othello* at the National Theatre in London, 2013

winter in its smaller space, the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (a reconstruction of a theatre like the Blackfriars). Other performances are offered by London's National Theatre and by numerous other houses in London and elsewhere in Britain. Some of these are made available by live broadcasts to cinemas, both nationally and internationally.

Shakespeare's plays were widely performed in Europe from the very beginning (English actors toured to Germany, Poland and other countries), and a strong acting tradition grew up in America in the nineteenth century, but the silent cinema brought a new and powerful means of internationalization. Dozens of silent versions were made, in America, England, Germany, France and Italy, usually abbreviating the plots but often finding inventive ways of replacing Shakespeare's language with visual images. This tradition continued into the sound period after 1929 when, perhaps ironically, it has been precisely those films which have not been 'hampered' by Shakespeare's text which have been seen as the most successful screen versions: Akira Kurosawa's Japanese *Macbeth* (*Throne of Blood*, 1957), for example, and Grigori Kozintsev's Russian *Hamlet* (1964) and *King Lear* (1970). A few English-language directors have nevertheless managed to make creditable films, notably Laurence Olivier (*Henry V*, 1944; *Hamlet*, 1948; *Richard III*, 1955), Orson Welles (*Macbeth*, 1948; *Othello*, 1952; *Chimes at Midnight* (the Falstaff plays), 1966) and Kenneth Branagh (*Henry V*, 1989; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1993; *Hamlet*, 1996). Many Shakespeare films are commercially available on video and DVD.

Criticism

The first person to publish a critical essay on Shakespeare was Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, in 1664. A poet, dramatist and essayist, in effect she inaugurated a tradition of critical writing on Shakespeare by people who were themselves creative writers: John Dryden, Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and T.S. Eliot are examples of such influential critics whose work is still read today. While from the beginning Shakespeare was highly praised for his dramatic skills, particularly in the construction of lifelike characters, late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers were often critical of what they saw as his grammatical incorrectness, his undisciplined elaboration of metaphors and his carelessness with plotting and historical accuracy. During the nineteenth century the general tone became more adulatory and the focus on character increased: many studies treated Shakespeare's men and women as if they were real people or at least characters in realistic novels. The publication by famous performers of their reminiscences enhanced this tendency. At the same time, the introduction of English Literature as a subject for study at universities brought about a professionalization of criticism and resulted in the situation we have today where most Shakespeare criticism is written by people with full-time academic posts in university departments of English or Drama.

Modern criticism is diverse and alarmingly prolific: the journal *Shakespeare Quarterly* publishes listings which show that around 200 items (editions, translations, books and essays) are currently published every year on *King Lear*, and around 400 on *Hamlet*. As in the past, critics today aim in various ways to elucidate Shakespeare for audiences and readers. They study his language and the literary and dramatic conventions of his time. They explore the circumstances in which the texts were originally produced – how and where they were performed, how they were copied and printed. They are also perhaps more attentive than their predecessors were to the circumstances in which the texts are continually reproduced – how and why we keep rereading and even rewriting Shakespeare for our own purposes. Dominant in criticism in the late twentieth century were issues of power and gender: 'power' in the sense of Shakespeare's relation to and analysis of early modern political structures and also in the sense of the power of 'Shakespeare' as a cultural artefact; 'gender' in the sense of his representations of gender identity and sexual relations when seen from the perspective of the continuing struggle of women, gay men and lesbians for acceptance and equality. The twenty-first century has seen an

increasing focus on issues of racial identity and on the significance of Shakespeare in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Adaptation and creative influence

While he was still alive, some of Shakespeare's works were already exerting an influence on other writers. John Fletcher's play *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed* (1611) is a 'sequel' to *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Fletcher and Francis Beaumont's *Philaster* (1609) could not have been written without *Hamlet*; if we read the plays of the next generation of dramatists such as John Ford, Philip Massinger, Thomas Middleton and John Webster, we keep encountering echoes of Shakespeare in characters, situations, lines and phrases. In the Restoration period playwrights 'adapted' his plays for their own stage by cutting them and 'improving' the language, correcting Shakespeare's grammar and clarifying his difficult metaphors. They also began to rewrite the plays substantially, producing hybrids which are clearly dependent on their Shakespearean originals but sometimes very different in their handling of the plots. John Dryden and William Davenant's 1667 *The Enchanted Island*, for example, a version of *The Tempest*, introduces a sister for Miranda and Hippolito, a man who has never seen a woman; Dryden's 1678 *All for Love* is a version of *Antony and Cleopatra* in which Antony's wife Octavia confronts Cleopatra (who never wavers in her commitment to Antony); Nahum Tate's 1681 *King Lear* leaves Lear and Gloucester alive at the end and Cordelia about to marry Edgar.

In later centuries, the plays inspired works in other genres: operas, novels, films and musicals. Neither Henry Purcell's opera *The Fairy Queen* (1692) nor Benjamin Britten's opera (1960) would exist without *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Hamlet* inspired countless works in the nineteenth century, from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860–1) to Anton Chekhov's play *The Seagull* (1896); Cole Porter's musical *Kiss Me Kate* (1948) and Jerome Robbins's and Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (1957) depend on *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Romeo and Juliet* respectively. Looser cinematic adaptations include Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* (*Hamlet*, 1960) and Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (the Henry IV plays, 1991).

15 Petruccio (Howard Keel) whipping Katherina (Kathryn Grayson) in *Kiss Me Kate*, directed by George Sidney (MGM, 1953)

16 Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer perform the balcony scene in the 1961 film *West Side Story*, directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise

17 Akira Kurosawa's Japanese film version of *Macbeth*, *Throne of Blood*, 1957

In the late twentieth century *King Lear* inspired Kurosawa's film *Ran* (1984) and Jane Smiley's novel *A Thousand Acres* (1991); *The Tempest* inspired Suniti Namjoshi's poem sequence *Snapshots of Caliban* (1984) and Marina Warner's novel *Indigo* (1992). More recently, the Hogarth Press commissioned a series of retellings of Shakespeare's plays by well-known novelists, including *The Gap of Time* (*The Winter's Tale*) by Jeanette Winterson (2015), *Hag-Seed* (*The Tempest*) by Margaret Atwood (2016) and *Macbeth* by Jo Nesbo (2018). Outside this sequence, Ian McEwan's novel *Nutshell* (2016) is a retelling of *Hamlet*, while John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000) is a prequel to the same play.

Shakespeare's fame and influence began early and show no sign of abating. In the volume of his notebooks covering the years 1661–3, John Ward, vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon from 1662 to 1681, wrote of his most famous deceased parishioner:

> I have heard that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit without any art at all. hee frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days livd at Stratford: and supplied the stage with 2 plays every year and for that had an allowance so large that hee spent att the Rate of a thousand pounds 1000[l] a yeer as I have heard.

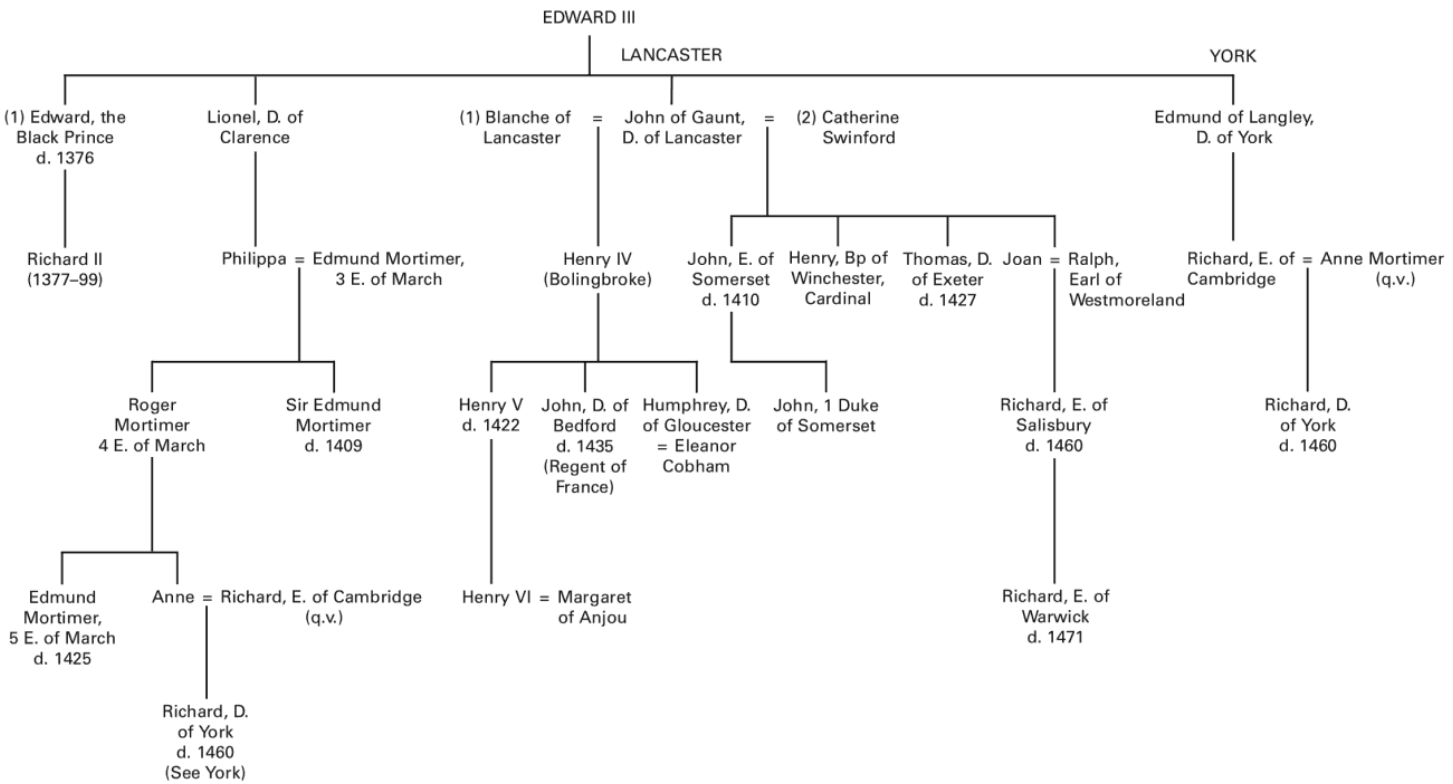
He continued with a note to himself: 'Remember to peruse Shakespeare's plays, and bee versed in them, that I may not bee ignorant in that matter'. We can think of no better advice to give our readers, and to repeat with it the encouragement of his first editors inviting the public to 'read, and censure' their volume of the collected works. 'Do so', they exhort frankly, 'but buy it first':

> Then, how odde soever your braines be, or your wisedomes, make your licence the same, and spare not. Judge your sixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your five shillings worth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But, what ever you do, Buy. Censure will not drive a Trade, or make the Jacke go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage at *Black-Ffriers*, or the *Cock-pit*, to arraigne Playes dailie, know, these Playes have had their triall alreadie, and stood out all Appeales, and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court than any purchas'd Letters of commendation.

Like Heminges and Condell and all our distinguished predecessor editors, we urge you to buy and read or reread Shakespeare, confident that 'if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him'.

18 Genealogical table showing the houses of York and Lancaster

THE HOUSES OF YORK AND LANCASTER



Shakespeare's Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint

On the evidence of Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, by 1598 Shakespeare was known to have written 'sugared sonnets' and to have circulated them among his 'private friends'. In 1599 four sonnets by him were printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim* together with a further collection of lyrical poems, several of which, despite a general title-page attribution of the small book to 'W. Shakespeare', are known to be the work of other poets. Two of those sonnets had already been printed in 1598, in the Quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the other two were to be numbered 138 and 144 in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, printed together with *A Lover's Complaint* in 1609. Surviving manuscript copies of various sonnets probably all date from later than Shakespeare's death in 1616 and none is earlier than the 1609 edition. The celebrated dedication of the *Sonnets* by their publisher T[homas] T[horpe] to 'Mr. W.H.' as 'the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets' will continue to provoke conjecture and controversy. The most plausible identifications of 'W.H.' are: William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, which fits if the poems are of early seventeenth-century date; Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, which only makes sense if they were written in the early 1590s; and William Shakespeare – assuming that the 'H' is a misprint for 'S'.

Though other views have long prevailed, the *Sonnets* can be seen as an authorized publication in which the 154 sonnets appear in a significant order determined by Shakespeare, and the *Complaint* (whose characters and situation bear some resemblance to those in *Troilus*, *Othello*, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*) is also a planned feature of the volume. Few of the sonnets admit of certain dating, but 138 and 144 were written before 1599 and 107 may well relate to the death of Queen Elizabeth I in the spring of 1603 and to the coronation of King James I in the following spring. This likelihood is a caution against too ready an assumption that all the sonnets must have been written in the mid-1590s, at the height of the sonneteering vogue. The final line of 94 occurs also in *King Edward III* (2.617), printed in 1596, but it remains unclear which was the debtor, and the possibility of common authorship cannot be ruled out.

The relationships and narrative implicit in Shakespeare's sonnets contrast strongly with the conventional pattern in which courtship of a woman by a male lover leads to acceptance (as in Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595)), or to a final rejection (as in Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1591)), or to the death of the lady and the continuance of celebration by her lover (as in the *Canzoniere* of Petrarch (1358–74)). Shakespeare's sonnets are poems of introspection in which no character but the poet has a name, which makes it easy for the reader to identify with him. Sonnets 1–126 are mainly addressed to a man younger and of higher social standing than the poet; sonnets 127–52 to an unfaithful mistress, whose other lovers include the young man. The last two sonnets, on the traditional theme of Cupid and Diana, stand apart from this pattern. In the *Complaint*, a young woman abandoned by a lying and faithless lover recounts her story to a stranger, re-enacting the seduction to which she concludes that she would still be vulnerable.

The earliest reprint of the sonnets, in the volume of Shakespeare's poems published by John Benson in 1640, rearranged them, changed many male pronouns to their female equivalents and added titles describing them in terms of address to a mistress. Interest in the sonnets waned until 1780, when Edmond Malone republished them in an influential edition. Nineteenth-century attempts to read them as Shakespeare's amatory autobiography have persisted throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but without reaching any stable conclusions. To Wordsworth's claim that 'With this key, Shakespeare unlocked his heart', Robert Browning's rejoinder was, 'Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!'. Oscar Wilde's notorious interest in the sonnets as homosexual love poems articulated a source of unease felt by many scholars and readers since 1780 and led to half a century of nervous evasion of any such unseemly possibility. The question that will always divide opinion is whether or not, and if so in what sense, these poems reflect the lived experience of their playwright-poet.

The Arden text is based on the 1609 First Quarto.

TO. THE. ONLY. BEGETTER. OF.
THESE. ENSUING. SONNETS.
Mr. W.H. ALL. HAPPINESS.
AND. THAT. ETERNITY.
PROMISED.
BY.
OUR. EVER-LIVING. POET.
WISHETH.
THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTURER. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

T.T.

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.

2

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tattered weed of small worth held:
Then being asked, 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 deserved 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.

3

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, unbless some mother.
For where is she so fair whose uneared 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 remembered not to be,
  Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

4

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 largesse 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 unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
  Which used, lives th'executor to be.

5

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 checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed 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 distilled, though they with winter
    meet,
  Leese but their show; their substance still lives
    sweet.

6

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee thy summer, ere thou be distilled:
Make sweet some vial, treasure thou some place
With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-killed.
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 refigured thee;
Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?
  Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair
  To be death's conquest and make worms thine
    heir.

7

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 climbed 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 high-most 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,
  Unlooked on diest, unless thou get a son.

8

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 unused the user so destroys it:
  No love toward others in that bosom sits
  That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,
Who for thyself art so unprovident;
Grant, if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
But that thou none lov'st is most evident:
For thou art so possessed with murd'rous 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 lodged 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.

11

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 endowed, she gave the more,
Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:
  She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
  Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

12

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 silvered 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.

14

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 aught 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.

15

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment;
That this huge stage presenteth naught but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and checked 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.

17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled 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 touched earthly faces.'
So should my papers (yellowed with their age)
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed 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.

18

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 dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st 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.

19

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-lived Phoenix in her blood;
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
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.

20

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 pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
  Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

21

So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirred 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 fixed in heaven's air:
  Let them say more that like of hearsay well,
  I will not praise, that purpose not to sell.

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old
So long as youth and thou are of one date;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
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.

23

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 right,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might:
O let my books 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
    expressed:
  O learn to read what silent love hath writ!
  To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

24

Mine eye hath played the painter, and hath steeled
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 pictured 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.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlooked 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 worth,
After a thousand victories once foiled,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled:
  Then happy I, that love and am beloved
  Where I may not remove, nor be removed.

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit:
To thee I send this written embassage,
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.

27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travail 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.

28

How can I then return in happy plight
That am debarred the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
But day by night and night by day oppressed,
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;
So flatter I the swart-complexioned 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.

29

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heav'n with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
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 remembered such wealth brings
  That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

30

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 (unused to flow)
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan th'expense of many a vanished 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 restored, and sorrows end.

31

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 stol'n from mine eye,
As interest of the dead, which now appear
But things removed 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 loved, I view in thee,
  And thou, all they, hast all the all of me.

32

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 outstripped 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.'

33

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 masked him from me now.
  Yet him for this, my love no whit disdaineth:
  Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun
    staineth.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day
And make me travail forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy brav'ry 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;
Th'offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's loss.
  Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
  And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

35

No more be grieved 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 these sins more than these 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.

36

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.

37

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 engrafted to this store:
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
That I in thy abundance am sufficed,
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.

38

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 invocate;
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.

39

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 dost deceive,
  And that thou teachest how to make one twain
  By praising him here who doth hence remain.

40

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 blamed, if thou thyself deceivest
By wilful taste of what thyself refusest.
I do forgive thy robb'ry, 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.

41

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 he 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 forced to break a twofold truth:
  Hers by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
  Thine by thy beauty being false to me.

42

That thou hast her it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved 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 knowst 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.

43

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,
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,
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.

44

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 removed 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 naughts by elements so slow
But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

45

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, oppressed with melancholy,
Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers returned 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.

46

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 pierced with crystal eyes;
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To find this title is empanelled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eyes' moiety, and the dear heart's part:
As thus, mine eyes' due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right, thy inward love of heart.

47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other;
When that mine eye is famished 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 no further 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.

48

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 locked 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 stol'n, I fear;
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

49

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,
Called to that audit by advised 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.

50

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 measured 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 loved 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.

51

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.

52

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 blessed
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph; being lacked, to hope.

53

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.

54

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 unwooed, 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 vade, by verse distils your truth.

55

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, besmeared 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.

56

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but today by feeding is allayed,
Tomorrow sharpened in his former might;
So, love, be thou; although today thou fill
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fullness,
Tomorrow 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 blessed may be the view;
  Or call it winter, which being full of care
  Makes summer's welcome thrice more wished,
    more rare.

57

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 naught,
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.

58

That god forbid, that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand th'account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal bound to stay your leisure.
O let me suffer, being at your beck,
Th'imprisoned 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.

59

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
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.

60

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 crowned
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.

61

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 tenor 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.

62

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 worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chopped with tanned 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.

63

Against my love shall be as I am now,
With time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn;
When hours have drained his blood, and filled his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travailed on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing, or vanished 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 wat'ry 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.

65

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 wrackful 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 o'er beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might:
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

66

Tired with all these for restful death I cry:
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
  Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
  Save that to die I leave my love alone.

67

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,
Beggared 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.

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were borne,
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.

69

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 crowned.
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own
In other accents do this praise confound,
By seeing further 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.

70

That thou art blamed 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 wooed of time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast passed by the ambush of young days,
Either not assailed, or victor, being charged;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy, evermore enlarged:
  If some suspect of ill masked not thy show
  Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

71

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.

72

O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived 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 shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

73

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 ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang;
In me thou seest 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 seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by;
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more
strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

74

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.

75

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
Or as sweet seasoned showers 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 bettered 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.

76

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 almost doth 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 nursed, delivered 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 invoked 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.

79

Whilst I alone did call upon thy aid
My verse alone had all thy gentle grace;
But now my gracious numbers are decayed,
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.

80

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 wracked, 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.

81

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.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint 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 enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days,
And do so love; yet when they have devised
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou, truly fair, wert truly sympathized
In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend;
  And their gross painting might be better used
  Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abused.

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.

84

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.

85

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
While comments of your praise richly compiled
Reserve your character with golden quill,
And precious phrase by all the Muses filed;
I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words,
And like unlettered clerk still cry 'Amen'
To every hymn that able spirit affords
In polished form of well-refined pen.
Hearing you praised, 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.

86

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 filled up his line,
  Then lacked I matter, that enfeebled mine.

87

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowst 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.

88

When thou shalt be disposed 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 concealed, 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.

89

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.

90

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 'scaped this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed 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,
Compared with loss of thee, will not seem so.

91

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.

92

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.

93

So shall I live, supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though altered 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.

94

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 used doth lose his edge.

96

Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness;
Some say thy grace is youth and gentle sport;
Both grace and faults are loved 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 esteemed,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated, and for true things deemed.
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.

97

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 removed 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 seemed 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.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laughed, and leaped 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 seemed it winter still, and, you away,
  As with your shadow I with these did play.

99

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 dyed.'
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair;
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red, nor white, had stol'n of both,
And to his robb'ry had annexed thy breath;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth,
A vengeful canker ate him up to death.
  More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
  But sweet, or colour, it had stol'n from thee.

100

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.

101

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?
Both truth and beauty on my love depends;
So dost thou, too, and therein dignified:
Make answer, Muse, wilt thou not haply say,
'Truth needs no colour with his colour fixed,
Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay,
But best is best if never intermixed'?
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 praised of ages yet to be.
  Then do thy office, Muse: I teach thee how
  To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

102

My love is strengthened, though more weak in
seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear.
That love is merchandised, 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.

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 overgoes 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.

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old;
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still: three winters cold
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen;
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet art green.
Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived;
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

105

Let not my love be called 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 today, tomorrow kind,
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;
Therefore my verse, to constancy confined,
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 lived alone,
Which three, till now, never kept seat in one.

106

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 beauties best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
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 looked 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.

107

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,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Uncertainties now crown themselves assured,
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.

108

What's in the brain that ink may character
Which hath not figured 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.

109

O never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed 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 ranged,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain;
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
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.

110

Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most
    dear,
Made old offences of affections new.
Most true it is that I have looked on truth
Askance and strangely; but by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now all is done, save 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 confined:
  Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
  Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

111

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 subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand;
Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed,
Whilst like a willing patient I will drink
Potions of eisell '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.

112

Your love and pity doth th'impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamped 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 steeled sense o'er-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 me thinks you're dead.

113

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-favoured 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 untrue.

114

Or whether doth my mind, being crowned 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 flatt'ry 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 poisoned, 'tis the lesser sin,
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

115

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 millioned accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to th' 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 uncertainty,
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?

116

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.

117

Accuse me thus: that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay,
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchased 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.

118

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 diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t'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.

119

What potions have I drunk of siren tears
Distilled 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 ruined love when it is built anew
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater:
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

120

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 passed 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 remembered
My deepest sense how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me then, tendered
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!
  But that your trespass now becomes a fee;
  Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

121

'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 salutation 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.

122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full charactered 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 razed oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be missed.
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.

123

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.

124

If my dear love were but the child of state
It might, for fortune's bastard, be unfathered,
As subject to time's love or to time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers
    gathered.
No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thralled discontent,
Whereto th'inviting time our fashion calls:
It fears not policy, that heretic,
Which works on leases of short-numbered 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 lived for crime.

125

Were't ought 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 mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render, only me for thee.
  Hence, thou suborned informer, a true soul
  When most impeached, stands least in thy control.

126

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 lover's 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 minute kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure:
She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure!
Her audit, though delayed, answered must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.
( )
( )

127

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 slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on nature's power,
Fairing the foul with art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes 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.

128

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 blessed than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

129

Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoyed 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 proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

130

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 damasked, 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 belied with false compare.

131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou knowst, 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.

132

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torment 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 beseem 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.

133

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 jail.
  And yet thou wilt, for I being pent in thee,
  Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

134

So now I have confessed that he is thine,
And I myself am mortgaged 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 learned 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.

135

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.

136

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,
Ay, 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.

137

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 anchored 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.

138

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 untutored 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 suppressed.
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 t' have years told:
  Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
  And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

139

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-pressed 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.

140

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 belied,
  Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go
    wide.

141

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 pleased 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 unswayed 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.

142

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 profaned their scarlet ornaments,
And sealed false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robbed 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 denied.

143

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 run'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.

144

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 coloured 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 turned 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.

145

Those lips that love's own hand did make
Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate',
To me, that languished for her sake;
But when she saw my woeful state,
Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue that, ever sweet,
Was used in giving gentle doom,
And taught it thus anew to greet:
'I hate' she altered with an end
That followed 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'.

146

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Feeding 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 nurseth the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
Th'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 ever more unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
At random from the truth vainly expressed:
  For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
  Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

148

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 vexed 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.

149

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.

150

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 raised love in me,
  More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

151

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 further 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 knowst 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 perjured 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 perjured eye,
  To swear against the truth so foul a lie.

153

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 borrowed 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 distempered guest,
  But found no cure; the bath for my help lies
  Where Cupid got new fire: my mistress' eye.

154

The little love-god lying once asleep,
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs, that vowed 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 warmed;
And so the general of hot desire
Was, sleeping, by a virgin hand disarmed.
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 diseased; 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 reworded
A plaintful story from a sist'ring vale,
My spirits t'attend this double voice accorded,
And down I laid to list the sad-tuned 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 plaited 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 peeped through lattice of seared 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 undistinguished woe,
In clamours of all size, both high and low.

Sometimes her levelled eyes their carriage ride,
As they did batt'ry to the spheres intend;
Sometime, diverted, their poor balls are tied
To th'orbed earth; sometimes they do extend
Their view right on; anon their gazes lend
To every place at once, and nowhere fixed,
The mind and sight distractedly commixed.

Her hair, nor loose, nor tied in formal plait,
Proclaimed in her a careless hand of pride;
For some untucked descended her sheaved 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 perused, sighed, tore and gave the flood;
Cracked many a ring of posied gold and bone,
Bidding them find their sepulchres in mud;
Found yet moe letters, sadly penned in blood,
With sleided silk, feat and affectedly
Enswathed and sealed to curious secrecy.

These often bathed she in her fluxive eyes,
And often kissed, and often gave to tear;
Cried, 'O false blood, thou register of lies,
What unapproved witness dost thou bear!
Ink would have seemed 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 grazed 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, privileged 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 applied
Which may her suffering ecstasy assuage,
'Tis promised in the charity of age.

'Father,' she says, 'though in me ye 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-applied
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;
O, one by nature's outwards so commended
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face;
Love lacked a dwelling, and made him her place;
And when in his fair parts she did abide
She was new-lodged and newly deified.

'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-bragged the web it seemed to wear;
Yet showed 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-tongued he was, and thereof free;
Yet if men moved 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 authorized 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 th' well-doing steed.

'But quickly on this side the verdict went:
His real habitude gave life and grace
To appertainings and to ornament,
Accomplished in himself, not in his case;
All aids, themselves made fairer by their place,
Came for additions; yet their purposed trim
Pieced not his grace, but were all graced 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 laugher 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;
Consent's bewitched, ere he desire have granted,
And dialogued for him what he would say,
Asked 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 th'imagination set
The goodly objects which abroad they find,
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assigned,
And labouring in moe pleasures to bestow them
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them.

'So many have, that never touched his hand,
Sweetly supposed 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,
Reserved 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 remained the foil
Of this false jewel and his amorous spoil.

'But ah! Who ever shunned by precedent
The destined ill she must herself assay,
Or forced examples 'gainst her own content,
To put the by-passed perils in her way?
Counsel may stop a while 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 forebode the sweets that seems 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 called unto,
Till now, did ne'er invite, nor never woo.

'"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 th' 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 my own was free,
And reigned 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 encrimsoned mood,
Effects of terror and dear modesty,
Encamped in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

'"And lo! Behold these talons of their hair,
With twisted metal amorously empleached,
I have received from many a several fair,
Their kind acceptance weepingly beseeched,
With th'annexions of fair gems enriched,
And deep-brained sonnets, that did amplify
Each stone's dear nature, worth and quality.

'"The diamond? Why, 'twas beautiful and hard,
Whereto his invised properties did tend:
The deep green emerald, in whose fresh regard
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend;
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend
With objects manifold; each several stone
With wit well-blazoned smiled, or made some moan.

'"Lo, all these trophies of affections hot,
Of pensived and subdued desires the tender,
Nature hath charged 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 empatron 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,
Planing 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.

'"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 immured,
And now to tempt all liberty procured.

'"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, disciplined, I dieted in grace,
Believed her eyes, when they t'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 batt'ry 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 wat'ry eyes he did dismount,
Whose sights till then were levelled 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 glazed 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 extincture hath.

'For lo, his passion, but an art of craft,
Even there resolved my reason into tears;
There my white stole of chastity I daffed,
Shook off my sober guards and civil fears,
Appeared to him as he to me appears,
All melting, though our drops this diff'rence bore:
His poisoned 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 veiled in them, did win whom he would maim.
Against the thing he sought he would exclaim;
When he most burned in heart-wished luxury
He preached pure maid, and praised cold chastity.

'Thus, merely with the garment of a grace,
The naked and concealed fiend he covered,
That th'unexperient gave the tempter place
Which, like a cherubin, above them hovered.
Who, young and simple, would not be so lovered?
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 glowed!
O, that forced thunder from his heart did fly!
O, that sad breath his spongy lungs bestowed!
O, all that borrowed motion, seeming owed,
Would yet again betray the fore-betrayed,
And new pervert a reconciled maid.'

Venus and Adonis; The Rape of Lucrece; The Passionate Pilgrim; 'The Phoenix and Turtle'

The first published works to name William Shakespeare as their author were two long narrative poems. *Venus and Adonis* was entered in the Stationers' Register in April 1593, a few days before its author's twenty-ninth birthday, *Lucrece* (or *The Rape of Lucrece*), a year later. Their printer, Richard Field, was, like Shakespeare, a native of Stratford-upon-Avon. Both poems were dedicated to Henry Wriothesley (probably pronounced 'Ris-ly', 'Rise-ly' or 'Rose-ly'), Earl of Southampton, a prominent member of the circle that surrounded Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, the rising star of the 1590s. The dedicatory epistle to *Venus and Adonis* describes it as 'the first heir of my invention' and vows to Southampton that if he likes it, it will be followed by 'some graver labour' as a more fitting gift. That 'graver labour', *Lucrece*, had gone through nine editions by 1655: *Venus and Adonis* – on this evidence the most popular of all Shakespeare's works in his own time – went through sixteen editions by 1640. A marginal note by Gabriel Harvey, made no later than February 1601, records that while *Venus and Adonis* delights 'The younger sort', *Lucrece* and *Hamlet* 'have it in them, to please the wiser sort'.

The poems complement each other. *Venus and Adonis* rewrites the classical myth, best known from Ovid's version in Book 10 of his *Metamorphoses*, turning it into a contest between Venus' passion for a sulky, adolescent Adonis and his greater passion for hunting the boar (which leads to his death). The poem has been interpreted as an erotic celebration of love, a satire on the indignities of sex or a platonic myth. What can safely be claimed is that it offers, in the predicament of Venus, a sharply defined embodiment of the urgency, perversity and contrariety of love – 'She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not loved' (610) – as well as justifying her prophecy that love will always be attended by disaster and that 'They that love best, their loves shall not enjoy' (1164).

Lucrece handles a crucial episode from early Roman history, in which the rape of the chaste wife of the Roman general Collatinus by the king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, and her subsequent suicide became the flint to fire the republican rebellion which expelled the Tarquin kings from Rome. This story, known to Shakespeare from Chaucer, Ovid and Livy, provided him with his first serious tragic theme, and his poem is replete with ideas and images that were to remain in his imagination for the rest of his career. Tarquin is his first self-destructive self-deceiver, whose lust destroys him as surely as it destroys his victim. The lengthy complaint of Lucrece is written in a familiar tradition of poems of female lamentation. After it, she likens her situation to the siege and fall of Troy, as represented in a picture, in Shakespeare's first extended treatment of that most familiar *topos* of tragic deceit, loss and suffering. The poem has provoked new interest and has found a new readership among modern feminists.

William Jaggard's unauthorized anthology *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 'By W. Shakespeare' (1599), contains only five poems which are certainly by him (three from *Love's Labour's Lost* (3, 5 and 16) and *Sonnets* 138 and 144 (1 and 2)). Shakespeare is known to have been displeased by the publication, as another author, Thomas Heywood (himself misappropriated by Jaggard in a later edition), has left on record.

'The Phoenix and Turtle' is Shakespeare's most enigmatic work. It was published in a book entitled *Love's Martyr* (1601), compiled and largely written by Robert Chester, who also commissioned contributions from other poets. Shakespeare's poem relates to the subject-matter of Chester's book and may call to mind the 'metaphysical' manner of John Donne, but it also belongs in a long tradition of bird poems whose most famous English examples include Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls* and the closing songs of Shakespeare's own *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The Arden text is based on the first editions of *Venus and Adonis* (1593), *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599) and Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1601).

Venus and Adonis

Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.

To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley,
Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield

Right Honourable

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden: only if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your honour's in all duty,
William Shakespeare

Even as the sun with purple-coloured face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,
And like a bold-faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

'Thrice fairer than myself,' thus she began,
'The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,
More white and red than doves or roses are;
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.

'Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,
And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;
If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed
A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know.
Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses,
And being set, I'll smother thee with kisses;

'And yet not cloy thy lips with loathed satiety,
But rather famish them amid their plenty,
Making them red and pale with fresh variety.
Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty:
A summer's day will seem an hour but short,
Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.'

With this she seizeth on his sweating palm,
The precedent of pith and livelihood,
And trembling in her passion, calls it balm,
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good.
Being so enraged, desire doth lend her force
Courageously to pluck him from his horse.

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,
Under her other was the tender boy,
Who blushed and pouted in a dull disdain,
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy;
She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,
He red for shame, but frosty in desire.

The studded bridle on a ragged bough
Nimbly she fastens – O, how quick is love!
The steed is stalled up, and even now
To tie the rider she begins to prove:
Backward she pushed him, as she would be thrust,
And governed him in strength, though not in lust.

So soon was she along as he was down,
Each leaning on their elbows and their hips;
Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown,
And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips,
And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,
'If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open.'

He burns with bashful shame: she with her tears
Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks;
Then with her windy sighs and golden hairs
To fan and blow them dry again she seeks.
He saith she is immodest, blames her miss;
What follows more she murders with a kiss.

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast,
Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,
Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,
Till either gorge be stuffed or prey be gone,
Even so she kissed his brow, his cheek, his chin,
And where she ends she doth anew begin.

Forced to content, but never to obey,
Panting he lies and breatheth in her face;
She feedeth on the steam as on a prey,
And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace,
Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,
So they were dewed with such distilling showers.

Look how a bird lies tangled in a net,
So fastened in her arms Adonis lies;
Pure shame and awed resistance made him fret,
Which bred more beauty in his angry eyes.
Rain added to a river that is rank
Perforce will force it overflow the bank.

Still she entreats, and prettily entreats,
For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale.
Still is he sullen, still he lours and frets,
'Twixt crimson shame and anger ashy pale.
Being red, she loves him best, and being white,
Her best is bettered with a more delight.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
And by her fair immortal hand she swears
From his soft bosom never to remove
Till he take truce with her contending tears,
  Which long have rained, making her cheeks all wet;
  And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,
Who, being looked on, ducks as quickly in;
So offers he to give what she did crave.
  But when her lips were ready for his pay,
  He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat
More thirst for drink than she for this good turn.
Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;
She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn.
  'O, pity,' 'gan she cry, 'flint-hearted boy!
  'Tis but a kiss I beg; why art thou coy?

'I have been wooed, as I entreat thee now,
Even by the stern and direful god of war,
Whose sinewy neck in battle ne'er did bow,
Who conquers where he comes in every jar;
  Yet hath he been my captive and my slave,
  And begged for that which thou unasked shalt have.

'Over my altars hath he hung his lance,
His battered shield, his uncontrolled crest,
And for my sake hath learned to sport and dance,
To toy, to wanton, dally, smile and jest,
  Scorning his churlish drum and ensign red,
  Making my arms his field, his tent my bed.

'Thus he that overruled I overswayed,
Leading him prisoner in a red-rose chain;
Strong-tempered steel his stronger strength obeyed,
Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.
  O, be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,
  For mast'ring her that foiled the god of fight!

'Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine –
Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red –
The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine.
What seest thou in the ground? Hold up thy head.
  Look in mine eyeballs, there thy beauty lies;
  Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?

'Art thou ashamed to kiss? Then wink again,
And I will wink; so shall the day seem night.
Love keeps his revels where there are but twain;
Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight.
  These blue-veined violets whereon we lean
  Never can blab, nor know not what we mean.

'The tender spring upon thy tempting lip
Shows thee unripe; yet mayst thou well be tasted.
Make use of time, let not advantage slip;
Beauty within itself should not be wasted.
  Fair flowers that are not gathered in their prime
  Rot and consume themselves in little time.

'Were I hard-favoured, foul, or wrinkled-old,
Ill-nurtured, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
O'erworn, despised, rheumatic and cold,
Thick-sighted, barren, lean and lacking juice,
  Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee;
  But having no defects, why dost abhor me?

'Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow,
Mine eyes are grey and bright and quick in turning,
My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow,
My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning;
  My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,
  Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.

'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear,
Or, like a fairy, trip upon the green,
Or, like a nymph, with long dishevelled hair,
Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen.
  Love is a spirit all compact of fire,
  Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire.

'Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie:
These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me;
Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky
From morn till night, even where I list to sport me.
  Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be
  That thou should think it heavy unto thee?

'Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?
Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?
Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,
Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.
  Narcissus so himself himself forsook,
  And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

'Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear:
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse.
  Seeds spring from seeds and beauty breedeth beauty;
  Thou wast begot: to get it is thy duty.

'Upon the earth's increase why shouldst thou feed,
Unless the earth with thy increase be fed?
By law of nature thou art bound to breed,
That thine may live when thou thyself art dead;
  And so in spite of death thou dost survive,
  In that thy likeness still is left alive.'

By this the love-sick queen began to sweat,
For where they lay the shadow had forsook them,
And Titan, tired in the midday heat,
With burning eye did hotly overlook them,
  Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,
  So he were like him and by Venus' side.

And now Adonis, with a lazy sprite,
And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,
His louring brows o'erwhelming his fair sight
Like misty vapours when they blot the sky,
  Souring his cheeks, cries, 'Fie, no more of love!
  The sun doth burn my face; I must remove.'

'Ay me,' quoth Venus, 'young, and so unkind?
What bare excuses mak'st thou to be gone!
I'll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind
Shall cool the heat of this descending sun.
  I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;
  If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears.

'The sun that shines from heaven shines but warm,
And lo, I lie between that sun and thee;
The heat I have from thence doth little harm,
Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me;
  And were I not immortal, life were done
  Between this heavenly and earthly sun.

'Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?
Nay, more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth.
Art thou a woman's son, and canst not feel
What 'tis to love, how want of love tormenteth?
  O, had thy mother borne so hard a mind,
  She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind!

'What am I, that thou shouldst contemn me this?
Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?
What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?
Speak, fair, but speak fair words, or else be mute.
  Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,
  And one for int'rest, if thou wilt have twain.

'Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,
Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,
Statue contenting but the eye alone,
Thing like a man, but of no woman bred!
  Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion,
  For men will kiss even by their own direction.'

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue
And swelling passion doth provoke a pause;
Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong;
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause.
  And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,
  And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometime she shakes her head, and then his hand,
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground.
Sometime her arms enfold him like a band:
She would, he will not in her arms be bound.
  And when from thence he struggles to be gone,
  She locks her lily fingers one in one.

'Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemmed thee here
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;
Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale:
  Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,
  Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

'Within this limit is relief enough,
Sweet bottom-grass and high delightful plain,
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:
  Then be my deer, since I am such a park;
  No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark.'

At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,
That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple:
Love made those hollows, if himself were slain
He might be buried in a tomb so simple;
  Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie,
  Why, there love lived, and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round enchanting pits,
Opened their mouths to swallow Venus' liking.
Being mad before, how doth she now for wits?
Struck dead at first, what needs a second striking?
  Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,
  To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn!

Now which way shall she turn? What shall she say?
Her words are done, her woes the more increasing;
The time is spent, her object will away,
And from her twining arms doth urge releasing.
  'Pity,' she cries, 'some favour, some remorse!'
  Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But lo, from forth a copse that neighbours by,
A breeding jennet, lusty, young and proud,
Adonis' trampling courser doth espy;
And forth she rushes, snorts and neighs aloud.
  The strong-necked steed, being tied unto a tree,
  Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder;
The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;
  The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,
  Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-pricked, his braided hanging mane
Upon his compassed crest now stand on end;
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send;
His eye which scornfully glisters like fire
Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty and modest pride;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who should say, 'Lo, thus my strength is tried,
And this I do to captivate the eye
Of the fair breeder that is standing by.'

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
His flatt'ring 'Holla' or his 'Stand, I say'?
What cares he now for curb or pricking spur,
For rich caparisons or trappings gay?
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look when a painter would surpass the life
In limning out a well-proportioned steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed:
So did this horse excel a common one
In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.

Round-hoofed, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Sometime he scuds far off and there he stares;
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather.
To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
And whe'er he run or fly they know not whether;
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feathered wings.

He looks upon his love and neighs unto her,
She answers him as if she knew his mind;
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,
She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind,
Spurns at his love and scorns the heat he feels,
Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then, like a melancholy malcontent,
He vails his tail that, like a falling plume,
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent;
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume.
His love, perceiving how he was enraged,
Grew kinder, and his fury was assuaged.

His testy master goeth about to take him,
When lo, the unbacked breeder, full of fear,
Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him,
With her the horse, and left Adonis there.
As they were mad, unto the wood they hie them,
Outstripping crows that strive to overfly them.

All swoln with chafing, down Adonis sits,
Banning his boist'rous and unruly beast.
And now the happy season once more fits
That love-sick love by pleading may be blest;
For lovers say the heart hath treble wrong
When it is barred the aidance of the tongue.

An oven that is stopped, or river stayed,
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage;
So of concealed sorrow may be said,
Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage.
But when the heart's attorney once is mute,
The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

He sees her coming, and begins to glow,
Even as a dying coal revives with wind,
And with his bonnet hides his angry brow,
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind,
Taking no notice that she is so nigh,
For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O, what a sight it was, wistly to view
How she came stealing to the wayward boy!
To note the fighting conflict of her hue,
How white and red each other did destroy!
But now her cheek was pale, and by and by
It flashed forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

Now was she just before him as he sat,
And like a lowly lover down she kneels;
With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat,
Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels:
His tend'rer cheek receives her soft hand's print,
As apt as new-fall'n snow takes any dint.

O, what a war of looks was then between them!
Her eyes petitioners to his eyes suing,
His eyes saw her eyes as they had not seen them;
Her eyes wooed still, his eyes disdained the wooing;
And all this dumb play had his acts made plain
With tears which chorus-like her eyes did rain.

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,
A lily prisoned in a gaol of snow,
Or ivory in an alabaster band:
So white a friend engirts so white a foe.
This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,
Showed like two silver doves that sit a-billing.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began:
'O fairest mover on this mortal round,
Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,
My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound;
For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,
Though nothing but my body's bane would cure thee!'

'Give me my hand,' saith he; 'why dost thou feel it?'
'Give me my heart,' saith she, 'and thou shalt have it:
O, give it me, lest thy hard heart do steel it,
And being steeled, soft sighs can never grave it;
Then love's deep groans I never shall regard,
Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.'

'For shame,' he cries, 'let go, and let me go;
My day's delight is past, my horse is gone,
And 'tis your fault I am bereft him so.
I pray you hence, and leave me here alone;
For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,
Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.'

Thus she replies: 'Thy palfrey, as he should,
Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire.
Affection is a coal that must be cooled;
Else, suffered, it will set the heart on fire.
The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none;
Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone.

'How like a jade he stood, tied to the tree,
Servilely mastered with a leathern rein!
But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee,
He held such petty bondage in disdain,
Throwing the base thong from his bending crest,
Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

'Who sees his true-love in her naked bed,
Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,
But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed,
His other agents aim at like delight?
Who is so faint that dares not be so bold
To touch the fire, the weather being cold?

'Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy;
And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,
To take advantage on presented joy.
Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee.
O, learn to love; the lesson is but plain,
And once made perfect, never lost again.'

'I know not love,' quoth he, 'nor will not know it,
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it.
'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it,
For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.

'Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinished?
Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?
If springing things be any jot diminished,
They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth.
The colt that's backed and burdened being young
Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong.

'You hurt my hand with wringing; let us part,
And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat.
Remove your siege from my unyielding heart;
To love's alarms it will not ope the gate.
Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flatt'ry,
For where a heart is hard they make no batt'ry.'

'What, canst thou talk?' quoth she, 'Hast thou a tongue?
O, would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing!
Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;
I had my load before, now pressed with bearing:
Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh sounding,
Ears' deep sweet music, and heart's deep sore wounding.

'Had I no eyes but ears, my ears would love
That inward beauty and invisible;
Or were I deaf, thy outward parts would move
Each part in me that were but sensible.
Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,
Yet should I be in love by touching thee.

'Say that the sense of feeling were bereft me,
And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch,
And nothing but the very smell were left me,
Yet would my love to thee be still as much;
For from the stillatory of thy face excelling
Comes breath perfumed, that breedeth love by smelling.

'But O, what banquet wert thou to the taste,
Being nurse and feeder of the other four!
Would they not wish the feast might ever last,
And bid Suspicion double-lock the door,
Lest Jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,
Should by his stealing in disturb the feast?'

Once more the ruby-coloured portal opened,
Which to his speech did honey passage yield;
Like a red morn, that ever yet betokened
Wrack to the seaman, tempest to the field,
Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds,
Gusts and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds.

This ill presage advisedly she marketh:
Even as the wind is hushed before it raineth,
Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,
Or as the berry breaks before it staineth,
Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,
His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down,
For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth:
A smile recures the wounding of a frown;
But blessed bankrupt that by loss so thriveth!
The silly boy, believing she is dead,
Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red;

And all amazed brake off his late intent,
For sharply he did think to reprehend her,
Which cunning love did wittily prevent:
Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her!
For on the grass she lies as she were slain,
Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks,
He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard,
He chafes her lips: a thousand ways he seeks
To mend the hurt that his unkindness marred.
He kisses her, and she by her good will
Will never rise, so he will kiss her still.

The night of sorrow now is turned to day:
Her two blue windows faintly she upheaveth,
Like the fair sun, when in his fresh array
He cheers the morn and all the earth relieveth;
And as the bright sun glorifies the sky,
So is her face illumined with her eye,

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fixed,
As if from thence they borrowed all their shine.
Were never four such lamps together mixed,
Had not his clouded with his brow's repine;
But hers, which through the crystal tears gave light,
Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

'O, where am I?' quoth she, 'In earth or heaven,
Or in the ocean drenched, or in the fire?
What hour is this? Or morn or weary even?
Do I delight to die, or life desire?
But now I lived, and life was death's annoy;
But now I died, and death was lively joy.

'O, thou didst kill me: kill me once again!
Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine,
Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain
That they have murdered this poor heart of mine;
And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,
But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

'Long may they kiss each other, for this cure!
O, never let their crimson liveries wear!
And as they last, their verdure still endure,
To drive infection from the dangerous year,
That the star-gazers, having writ on death,
May say, the plague is banished by thy breath.

'Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,
What bargains may I make, still to be sealing?
To sell myself I can be well contented,
So thou wilt buy, and pay, and use good dealing;
Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips
Set thy seal-manual on my wax-red lips.

'A thousand kisses buys my heart from me;
And pay them at thy leisure, one by one.
What is ten hundred touches unto thee?
Are they not quickly told and quickly gone?
Say for non-payment that the debt should double,
Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?'

'Fair queen,' quoth he, 'if any love you owe me,
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years.
Before I know myself, seek not to know me;
No fisher but the ungrown fry forbears.
The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
Or being early plucked is sour to taste.

'Look, the world's comforter with weary gait
His day's hot task hath ended in the west.
The owl, night's herald, shrieks: 'tis very late.
The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest,
And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light
Do summon us to part and bid good-night.

'Now let me say good-night, and so say you;
If you will say so, you shall have a kiss.'
'Good-night', quoth she, and ere he says adieu,
The honey fee of parting tendered is:
Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;
Incorporate then they seem: face grows to face.

Till breathless he disjoined, and backward drew
The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,
Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,
Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drouth.
He with her plenty pressed, she faint with dearth,
Their lips together glued, fall to the earth.

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,
And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth.
Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high
That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,
With blindfold fury she begins to forage;
Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage,
Planting oblivion, beating reason back,
Forgetting shame's pure blush and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint and weary, with her hard embracing,
Like a wild bird being tamed with too much handling,
Or as the fleet-foot roe that's tired with chasing,
Or like the froward infant stilled with dandling,
He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,
While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with temp'ring,
And yields at last to every light impression?
Things out of hope are compassed oft with vent'ring,
Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission:
Affection faints not like a pale-faced coward,
But then woos best when most his choice is froward.

When he did frown, O, had she then gave over,
Such nectar from his lips she had not sucked.
Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover:
What though the rose have prickles? Yet 'tis plucked.
Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast,
Yet love breaks through, and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him;
The poor fool prays her that he may depart.
She is resolved no longer to restrain him,
Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart,
The which by Cupid's bow she doth protest
He carries thence encaged in his breast.

'Sweet boy,' she says, 'this night I'll waste in sorrow,
For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.
Tell me, love's master, shall we meet tomorrow?
Say, shall we? Shall we? Wilt thou make the match?'
He tells her, no; tomorrow he intends
To hunt the boar with certain of his friends.

'The boar!' quoth she, whereat a sudden pale,
Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
Usurps her cheek; she trembles at his tale,
And on his neck her yoking arms she throws.
She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck,
He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love,
Her champion mounted for the hot encounter.
All is imaginary she doth prove:
He will not manage her, although he mount her;
That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy,
To clip Elysium, and to lack her joy.

Even so poor birds, deceived with painted grapes,
Do surfeit by the eye and pine the maw;
Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,
As those poor birds that helpless berries saw.
The warm effects which she in him finds missing
She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain, good queen, it will not be.
She hath assayed as much as may be proved;
Her pleading hath deserved a greater fee;
She's Love, she loves, and yet she is not loved.
'Fie, fie,' he says, 'you crush me, let me go;
You have no reason to withhold me so.'

'Thou hadst been gone,' quoth she, 'sweet boy, ere this,
But that thou told'st me thou wouldst hunt the boar.
O, be advised: thou knowst not what it is
With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,
Whose tushes never sheathed he whetteth still,
Like to a mortal butcher bent to kill.

'On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes that ever threat his foes;
His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret;
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes:
Being moved, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes his crooked tushes slay.

'His brawny sides, with hairy bristles armed,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter.
His short thick neck cannot be easily harmed:
Being ireful, on the lion he will venture.
The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him, part; through whom he rushes.

'Alas, he naught esteems that face of thine,
To which love's eyes pays tributary gazes;
Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips and crystal eyne,
Whose full perfection all the world amazes;
But having thee at vantage – wondrous dread! –
Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

'O, let him keep his loathsome cabin still;
Beauty hath naught to do with such foul fiends.
Come not within his danger by thy will;
They that thrive well take counsel of their friends.
When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,
I feared thy fortune, and my joints did tremble.

'Didst thou not mark my face? Was it not white?
Sawest thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye?
Grew I not faint, and fell I not down right?
Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,
My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,
But like an earthquake shakes thee on my breast.

'For where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy
Doth call himself Affection's sentinel;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry, "Kill, kill!"
Distemp'ring gentle Love in his desire,
As air and water do abate the fire.

'This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy,
This canker that eats up Love's tender spring,
This carry-tale, dissentious Jealousy,
That sometime true news, sometime false doth bring,
Knocks at my heart and whispers in mine ear
That if I love thee, I thy death should fear.

'And more than so, presenteth to mine eye
The picture of an angry chafing boar,
Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie
An image like thyself, all stained with gore;
Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed
Doth make them droop with grief and hang the head.

'What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,
That tremble at th'imagination?
The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,
And fear doth teach it divination:
I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,
If thou encounter with the boar tomorrow.

'But if thou needs wilt hunt, be ruled by me:
Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,
Or at the fox which lives by subtlety,
Or at the roe which no encounter dare.
Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
And on thy well-breathed horse keep with thy hounds.

'And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles,
How he outruns the wind, and with what care
He cranks and crosses with a thousand doubles.
The many musits through the which he goes
Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

'Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer:
Danger deviseth shifts, wit waits on fear.

'For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out.
Then do they spend their mouths; Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

'By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with list'ning ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still.
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

'Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way.
Each envious briar his weary legs do scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay:
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low never relieved by any.

'Lie quietly, and hear a little more;
Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise.
To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,
Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralize,
Applying this to that, and so to so,
For love can comment upon every woe.

'Where did I leave?' 'No matter where,' quoth he,
'Leave me, and then the story aptly ends.
The night is spent.' 'Why, what of that?' quoth she.
'I am', quoth he, 'expected of my friends;
And now 'tis dark, and going I shall fall.'
'In night', quoth she, 'desire sees best of all.

'But if thou fall, O, then imagine this:
The earth, in love with thee, thy footing trips,
And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.
Rich preys make true men thieves; so do thy lips
Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,
Lest she should steal a kiss and die forsworn.

'Now of this dark night I perceive the reason:
Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine
Till forging Nature be condemned of treason
For stealing moulds from heaven that were divine;
Wherein she framed thee in high heaven's despite,
To shame the sun by day and her by night.

'And therefore hath she bribed the Destinies
To cross the curious workmanship of nature,
To mingle beauty with infirmities,
And pure perfection with impure defeature,
Making it subject to the tyranny
Of mad mischances and much misery;

'As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,
Life-poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood,
The marrow-eating sickness whose attaint
Disorder breeds by heating of the blood,
Surfeits, imposthumes, grief and damned despair,
Swear Nature's death for framing thee so fair.

'And not the least of all these maladies
But in one minute's fight brings beauty under.
Both favour, savour, hue and qualities,
Whereat th'impartial gazer late did wonder,
Are on the sudden wasted, thawed and done,
As mountain snow melts with the midday sun.

'Therefore, despite of fruitless chastity,
Love-lacking vestals and self-loving nuns,
That on the earth would breed a scarcity
And barren dearth of daughters and of sons,
Be prodigal: the lamp that burns by night
Dries up his oil to lend the world his light.

'What is thy body but a swallowing grave,
Seeming to bury that posterity
Which by the rights of time thou needs must have,
If thou destroy them not in dark obscurity?
If so, the world will hold thee in disdain,
Sith in thy pride so fair a hope is slain.

'So in thyself thyself art made away;
A mischief worse than civil home-bred strife,
Or theirs whose desperate hands themselves do slay,
Or butcher sire that reaves his son of life.
Foul cank'ring rust the hidden treasure frets,
But gold that's put to use more gold begets.'

'Nay, then,' quoth Adon, 'you will fall again
Into your idle overhandled theme.
The kiss I gave you is bestowed in vain,
And all in vain you strive against the stream;
For, by this black-faced night, desire's foul nurse,
Your treatise makes me like you worse and worse.

'If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues,
And every tongue more moving than your own,
Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,
Yet from mine ear the tempting tune is blown.
For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,
And will not let a false sound enter there,

'Lest the deceiving harmony should run
Into the quiet closure of my breast;
And then my little heart were quite undone,
In his bedchamber to be barred of rest.
No, lady, no; my heart longs not to groan,
But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

'What have you urged that I cannot reprove?
The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger.
I hate not love, but your device in love,
That lends embracements unto every stranger.
You do it for increase: O, strange excuse,
When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse!

'Call it not love, for Love to heaven is fled
Since sweating Lust on earth usurped his name,
Under whose simple semblance he hath fed
Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame;
Which the hot tyrant stains and soon bereaves,
As caterpillars do the tender leaves.

'Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,
But Lust's effect is tempest after sun.
Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain;
Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done.
Love surfeits not; Lust like a glutton dies.
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.

'More I could tell, but more I dare not say;
The text is old, the orator too green.
Therefore, in sadness, now I will away;
My face is full of shame, my heart of teen:
Mine ears that to your wanton talk attended
Do burn themselves for having so offended.'

With this, he breaketh from the sweet embrace
Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,
And homeward through the dark laund runs apace;
Leaves Love upon her back deeply distressed.
Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky,
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye,

Which after him she darts, as one on shore
Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,
Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend;
So did the merciless and pitchy night
Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

Whereat amazed, as one that unaware
Hath dropped a precious jewel in the flood,
Or 'stonished as night-wand'rers often are,
Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood,
Even so confounded in the dark she lay,
Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled,
Make verbal repetition of her moans;
Passion on passion deeply is redoubled:
'Ay me!' she cries, and twenty times, 'Woe, woe!'
And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She marking them begins a wailing note
And sings extemporally a woeful ditty,
How love makes young men thrall, and old men dote;
How love is wise in folly, foolish witty.
Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,
And still the choir of echoes answer so.

Her song was tedious and outwore the night,
For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short:
If pleased themselves, others, they think, delight
In suchlike circumstance, with suchlike sport.
Their copious stories, oftentimes begun,
End without audience, and are never done.

For who hath she to spend the night withal
But idle sounds resembling parasites,
Like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call,
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?
She says, '"Tis so'; they answer all '"Tis so',
And would say after her if she said 'No'.

Lo, here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold
That cedar tops and hills seem burnished gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow:
'O thou clear god, and patron of all light,
From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow
The beauteous influence that makes him bright,
There lives a son that sucked an earthly mother
May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other.'

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove,
Musing the morning is so much o'erworn
And yet she hears no tidings of her love.
She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn:
Anon she hears them chant it lustily,
And all in haste she coasteth to the cry.

And as she runs, the bushes in the way
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,
Some twined about her thigh to make her stay;
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,
Like a milch-doe, whose swelling dugs do ache,
Hasting to feed her fawn hid in some brake.

By this she hears the hounds are at a bay;
Whereat she starts, like one that spies an adder
Wreathed up in fatal folds just in his way,
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder.
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds
Appals her senses and her spirit confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,
But the blunt boar, rough bear or lion proud,
Because the cry remaineth in one place,
Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud;
Finding their enemy to be so curst,
They all strain court'sy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,
Through which it enters to surprise her heart;
Who, overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,
With cold-pale weakness numbs each feeling part:
Like soldiers when their captain once doth yield,
They basely fly and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy,
Till, cheering up her senses all dismayed,
She tells them 'tis a causeless fantasy,
And childish error, that they are afraid;
Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no more.
And with that word she spied the hunted boar,

Whose frothy mouth, bepainted all with red,
Like milk and blood being mingled both together,
A second fear through all her sinews spread,
Which madly hurries her she knows not whither:
This way she runs, and now she will no further,
But back retires to rate the boar for murther.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways;
She treads the path that she untreads again.
Her more than haste is mated with delays,
Like the proceedings of a drunken brain,
Full of respects, yet naught at all respecting,
In hand with all things, naught at all effecting.

Here kennelled in a brake she finds a hound,
And asks the weary caitiff for his master;
And there another licking of his wound,
'Gainst venomed sores the only sovereign plaster;
And here she meets another sadly scowling,
To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling.

When he hath ceased his ill-resounding noise,
Another flap-mouthed mourner, black and grim,
Against the welkin volleys out his voice;
Another and another answer him,
Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,
Shaking their scratched ears, bleeding as they go.

Look how the world's poor people are amazed
At apparitions, signs and prodigies,
Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gazed,
Infusing them with dreadful prophecies;
So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,
And sighing it again exclaims on Death.

'Hard-favoured tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,
Hateful divorce of love,' – thus chides she Death –
'Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou mean
To stifle beauty and to steal his breath,
Who when he lived, his breath and beauty set
Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet?

'If he be dead – O no, it cannot be,
Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it –
O yes, it may; thou hast no eyes to see,
But hatefully at random dost thou hit.
Thy mark is feeble age, but thy false dart
Mistakes that aim and cleaves an infant's heart.

'Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,
And hearing him thy power had lost his power.
The Destinies will curse thee for this stroke;
They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower.
Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,
And not Death's ebon dart, to strike him dead.

'Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping?
What may a heavy groan advantage thee?
Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping
Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?
Now Nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,
Since her best work is ruined with thy rigour.'

Here overcome, as one full of despair,
She vailed her eyelids, who like sluices stopped
The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair
In the sweet channel of her bosom dropped;
But through the floodgates breaks the silver rain
And with his strong course opens them again.

O, how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow!
Her eye seen in the tears, tears in her eye:
Both crystals, where they viewed each other's sorrow,
Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still to dry;
But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain,
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throng her constant woe,
As striving who should best become her grief.
All entertained, each passion labours so
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,
But none is best. Then join they all together,
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

By this, far off she hears some huntsman hallow;
A nurse's song ne'er pleased her babe so well.
The dire imagination she did follow
This sound of hope doth labour to expel;
For now reviving joy bids her rejoice,
And flatters her it is Adonis' voice.

Whereat her tears began to turn their tide,
Being prisoned in her eye like pearls in glass;
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop beside,
Which her cheek melts, as scorning it should pass
To wash the foul face of the sluttish ground,
Who is but drunken when she seemeth drowned.

O hard-believing love, how strange it seems
Not to believe, and yet too credulous!
Thy weal and woe are both of them extremes;
Despair and hope makes thee ridiculous:
The one doth flatter thee in thoughts unlikely,
In likely thoughts the other kills thee quickly.

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought:
Adonis lives, and Death is not to blame;
It was not she that called him, all to naught.
Now she adds honours to his hateful name:
She clepes him king of graves, and grave for kings,
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

'No, no,' quoth she, 'sweet Death, I did but jest;
Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of fear
Whenas I met the boar, that bloody beast,
Which knows no pity but is still severe.
Then, gentle shadow – truth I must confess –
I railed on thee, fearing my love's decease.

''Tis not my fault: the boar provoked my tongue;
Be wreaked on him, invisible commander.
'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong;
I did but act, he's author of thy slander.
Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet
Could rule them both without ten women's wit.'

Thus hoping that Adonis is alive,
Her rash suspect she doth extenuate;
And that his beauty may the better thrive,
With Death she humbly doth insinuate:
Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs, and stories
His victories, his triumphs and his glories.

'O Jove,' quoth she, 'how much a fool was I
To be of such a weak and silly mind
To wail his death who lives and must not die
Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind!
For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,
And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again.

'Fie, fie, fond love, thou art as full of fear
As one with treasure laden, hemmed with thieves;
Trifles unwitnessed with eye or ear
Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves.'
Even at this word she hears a merry horn,
Whereat she leaps that was but late forlorn.

As falcons to the lure, away she flies:
The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light,
And in her haste unfortunately spies
The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight;
Which seen, her eyes, as murdered with the view,
Like stars ashamed of day, themselves withdrew.

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
And there, all smothered up, in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to creep forth again:
So at his bloody view her eyes are fled
Into the deep-dark cabins of her head,

Where they resign their office and their light
To the disposing of her troubled brain;
Who bids them still consort with ugly night,
And never wound the heart with looks again;
Who, like a king perplexed in his throne,
By their suggestion gives a deadly groan,

Whereat each tributary subject quakes,
As when the wind, imprisoned in the ground,
Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes,
Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound.
This mutiny each part doth so surprise
That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes;

And being opened, threw unwilling light
Upon the wide wound that the boar had trenched
In his soft flank, whose wonted lily white
With purple tears, that his wound wept, was drenched:
No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf or weed
But stole his blood and seemed with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth;
Over one shoulder doth she hang her head.
Dumbly she passions, franticly she doteth;
She thinks he could not die, he is not dead.
Her voice is stopped, her joints forget to bow;
Her eyes are mad that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly
That her sight, dazzling, makes the wound seem three;
And then she reprehends her mangling eye
That makes more gashes where no breach should be:
His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled;
For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

'My tongue cannot express my grief for one,
And yet,' quoth she, 'behold two Adons dead!
My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone,
Mine eyes are turned to fire, my heart to lead:
Heavy heart's lead, melt at mine eyes' red fire!
So shall I die by drops of hot desire.

'Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost!
What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?
Whose tongue is music now? What canst thou boast
Of things long since, or anything ensuing?
The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim;
But true sweet beauty lived and died with him.

'Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear!
Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you.
Having no fair to lose, you need not fear;
The sun doth scorn you, and the wind doth hiss you.
But when Adonis lived, sun and sharp air
Lurked like two thieves to rob him of his fair.

'And therefore would he put his bonnet on,
Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep;
The wind would blow it off and, being gone,
Play with his locks. Then would Adonis weep;
And straight, in pity of his tender years,
They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

'To see his face the lion walked along
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him;
To recreate himself when he hath sung,
The tiger would be tame and gently hear him;
If he had spoke, the wolf would leave his prey,
And never fright the silly lamb that day.

'When he beheld his shadow in the brook,
The fishes spread on it their golden gills;
When he was by, the birds such pleasure took
That some would sing, some other in their bills
Would bring him mulberries and ripe-red cherries:
He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

'But this foul, grim and urchin-snouted boar,
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,
Ne'er saw the beauteous livery that he wore;
Witness the entertainment that he gave.
If he did see his face, why then I know
He thought to kiss him, and hath killed him so.

''Tis true, 'tis true; thus was Adonis slain:
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,
Who did not whet his teeth at him again,
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there;
And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine
Sheathed unaware the tusk in his soft groin.

'Had I been toothed like him, I must confess,
With kissing him I should have killed him first.
But he is dead, and never did he bless
My youth with his; the more am I accurst.'
With this, she falleth in the place she stood,
And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale;
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold;
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
As if they heard the woeful words she told.
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,
Where lo, two lamps, burnt out, in darkness lies:

Two glasses, where herself herself beheld
A thousand times, and now no more reflect;
Their virtue lost wherein they late excelled,
And every beauty robbed of his effect.
'Wonder of time,' quoth she, 'this is my spite,
That, thou being dead, the day should yet be light.

'Since thou art dead, lo, here I prophesy:
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend.
It shall be waited on with jealousy,
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end;
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low,
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe.

'It shall be fickle, false and full of fraud,
Bud, and be blasted, in a breathing while;
The bottom poison, and the top o'erstrawed
With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile;
The strongest body shall it make most weak,
Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

'It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,
Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures;
The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,
Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures;
It shall be raging-mad and silly-mild,
Make the young old, the old become a child.

'It shall suspect where is no cause of fear;
It shall not fear where it should most mistrust;
It shall be merciful, and too severe,
And most deceiving when it seems most just;
Perverse it shall be where it shows most toward,
Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

'It shall be cause of war and dire events,
And set dissension 'twixt the son and sire;
Subject and servile to all discontents,
As dry combustious matter is to fire.
Sith in his prime death doth my love destroy,
They that love best their loves shall not enjoy.'

By this the boy that by her side lay killed
Was melted like a vapour from her sight,
And in his blood that on the ground lay spilled
A purple flower sprung up, chequered with white,
Resembling well his pale cheeks and the blood
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood.

She bows her head the new-sprung flower to smell,
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath,
And says within her bosom it shall dwell,
Since he himself is reft from her by death.
She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears
Green-dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

'Poor flower,' quoth she, 'this was thy father's guise –
Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire –
For every little grief to wet his eyes.
To grow unto himself was his desire,
And so 'tis thine; but know, it is as good
To wither in my breast as in his blood.

'Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;
Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right.
Lo, in this hollow cradle take thy rest,
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night;
There shall not be one minute in an hour
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower.'

Thus weary of the world, away she hies,
And yokes her silver doves, by whose swift aid
Their mistress, mounted through the empty skies
In her light chariot quickly is conveyed,
Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen
Means to immure herself and not be seen.

To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley,
Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield

The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your lordship's in all duty,
William Shakespeare

THE ARGUMENT

Lucius Tarquinius, for his excessive pride surnamed Superbus, after he had caused his own father-in-law Servius Tullius to be cruelly murdered, and, contrary to the Roman laws and customs, not requiring or staying for the people's suffrages, had possessed himself of the kingdom, went, accompanied with his sons and other noblemen of Rome, to besiege Ardea. During which siege the principal men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius, the king's son, in their discourses after supper every one commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom Collatinus extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia. In that pleasant humour they all posted to Rome; and intending by their secret and sudden arrival to make trial of that which every one had before avouched, only Collatinus finds his wife, though it were late in the night, spinning amongst her maids: the other ladies were all found dancing and revelling, or in several disports. Whereupon the noblemen yielded Collatinus the victory, and his wife the fame. At that time Sextus Tarquinius being inflamed with Lucrece' beauty, yet smothering his passions for the present, departed with the rest back to the camp; from whence he shortly after privily withdrew himself and was, according to his estate, royally entertained and lodged by Lucrece at Collatium. The same night he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her and early in the morning speedeth away. Lucrece, in this lamentable plight, hastily dispatcheth messengers, one to Rome for her father, another to the camp for Collatine. They came, the one accompanied with Junius Brutus, the other with Publius Valerius; and finding Lucrece attired in mourning habit, demanded the cause of her sorrow. She, first taking an oath of them for her revenge, revealed the actor and whole manner of his dealing and withal suddenly stabbed herself. Which done, with one consent they all vowed to root out the whole hated family of the Tarquins; and, bearing the dead body to Rome, Brutus acquainted the people with the doer and manner of the vile deed, with a bitter invective against the tyranny of the king: wherewith the people were so moved that, with one consent and a general acclamation, the Tarquins were all exiled, and the state government changed from kings to consuls.

From the besieged Ardea all in post,
Borne by the trustless wings of false desire,
Lust-breathed Tarquin leaves the Roman host,
And to Collatium bears the lightless fire
Which, in pale embers hid, lurks to aspire
  And girdle with embracing flames the waist
  Of Collatine's fair love, Lucrece the chaste.

Haply that name of 'chaste' unhapp'ly set
This bateless edge on his keen appetite;
When Collatine unwisely did not let
To praise the clear unmatched red and white
Which triumphed in that sky of his delight,
  Where mortal stars as bright as heaven's beauties
  With pure aspects did him peculiar duties.

For he the night before in Tarquin's tent
Unlocked the treasure of his happy state:
What priceless wealth the heavens had him lent
In the possession of his beauteous mate;
Reck'ning his fortune at such high-proud rate
  That kings might be espoused to more fame,
  But king nor peer to such a peerless dame.

O happiness enjoyed but of a few
And, if possessed, as soon decayed and done
As is the morning silver melting dew
Against the golden splendour of the sun,
An expired date, cancelled ere well begun!
  Honour and beauty, in the owner's arms,
  Are weakly fortressed from a world of harms.

Beauty itself doth of itself persuade
The eyes of men without an orator.
What needeth then apology be made
To set forth that which is so singular?
Or why is Collatine the publisher
  Of that rich jewel he should keep unknown
  From thievish ears, because it is his own?

Perchance his boast of Lucrece' sov'reignty
Suggested this proud issue of a king,
For by our ears our hearts oft tainted be.
Perchance that envy of so rich a thing,
Braving compare, disdainfully did sting
  His high-pitched thoughts, that meaner men
    should vaunt
  That golden hap which their superiors want.

But some untimely thought did instigate
His all-too-timeless speed, if none of those.
His honour, his affairs, his friends, his state,
Neglected all, with swift intent he goes
To quench the coal which in his liver glows.
  O rash false heat, wrapped in repentant cold,
  Thy hasty spring still blasts and ne'er grows old!

When at COLLATIUM this false lord arrived,
Well was he welcomed by the ROMAN dame,
Within whose face beauty and virtue strived
Which of them both should underprop her fame.
When virtue bragged, beauty would blush for shame;
  When beauty boasted blushes, in despite
  Virtue would stain that o'er with silver white.

But beauty, in that white intituled
From VENUS' doves, doth challenge that fair field.
Then virtue claims from beauty beauty's red,
Which virtue gave the golden age to gild
Their silver cheeks, and called it then their shield;
  Teaching them thus to use it in the fight,
  When shame assailed, the red should fence the white.

This heraldry in LUCRECE' face was seen,
Argued by beauty's red and virtue's white.
Of either's colour was the other queen,
Proving from world's minority their right.
Yet their ambition makes them still to fight,
  The sov'reignty of either being so great
  That oft they interchange each other's seat.

This silent war of lilies and of roses
Which TARQUIN viewed in her fair face's field
In their pure ranks his traitor eye encloses;
Where, lest between them both it should be killed,
The coward captive vanquished doth yield
  To those two armies that would let him go
  Rather than triumph in so false a foe.

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue,
The niggard prodigal that praised her so,
In that high task hath done her beauty wrong,
Which far exceeds his barren skill to show.
Therefore that praise which COLLATINE doth owe
  Enchanted TARQUIN answers with surmise,
  In silent wonder of still-gazing eyes.

This earthly saint, adored by this devil,
Little suspecteth the false worshipper;
"For unstained thoughts do seldom dream on evil";
"Birds never limed no secret bushes fear."
So guiltless she securely gives good cheer
  And reverent welcome to her princely guest,
  Whose inward ill no outward harm expressed.

For that he coloured with his high estate,
Hiding base sin in pleats of majesty;
That nothing in him seemed inordinate,
Save sometime too much wonder of his eye,
Which, having all, all could not satisfy;
  But, poorly rich, so wanteth in his store
  That, cloyed with much, he pineth still for more.

But she that never coped with stranger eyes
Could pick no meaning from their parling looks,
Nor read the subtle-shining secrecies
Writ in the glassy margents of such books.
She touched no unknown baits, nor feared no hooks,
  Nor could she moralize his wanton sight
  More than his eyes were opened to the light.

He stories to her ears her husband's fame
Won in the fields of fruitful Italy,
And decks with praises COLLATINE's high name
Made glorious by his manly chivalry
With bruised arms and wreaths of victory.
  Her joy with heaved-up hand she doth express,
  And wordless so greets heaven for his success.

Far from the purpose of his coming thither
He makes excuses for his being there.
No cloudy show of stormy blust'ring weather
Doth yet in his fair welkin once appear;
Till sable Night, mother of dread and fear,
  Upon the world dim darkness doth display,
  And in her vaulty prison stows the day.

For then is TARQUIN brought unto his bed,
Intending weariness with heavy sprite;
For after supper long he questioned
With modest LUCRECE, and wore out the night.
Now leaden slumber with life's strength doth fight,
  And every one to rest himself betakes,
  Save thieves and cares and troubled minds that wakes.

As one of which doth TARQUIN lie revolving
The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining;
Yet ever to obtain his will resolving,
Though weak-built hopes persuade him to abstaining.
Despair to gain doth traffic oft for gaining,
  And when great treasure is the meed proposed,
  Though death be adjunct, there's no death supposed.

Those that much covet are with gain so fond
That what they have not, that which they possess,
They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
And so by hoping more they have but less;
Or, gaining more, the profit of excess
  Is but to surfeit, and such griefs sustain,
  That they prove bankrupt in this poor-rich gain.

The aim of all is but to nurse the life
With honour, wealth and ease in waning age;
And in this aim there is such thwarting strife
That one for all or all for one we gage:
As life for honour in fell battle's rage;
  Honour for wealth; and oft that wealth doth cost
  The death of all, and all together lost.

So that in vent'ring ill we leave to be
The things we are for that which we expect,
And this ambitious foul infirmity,
In having much, torments us with defect
Of that we have; so then we do neglect
  The thing we have, and all for want of wit
  Make something nothing by augmenting it.

Such hazard now must doting TARQUIN make,
Pawning his honour to obtain his lust;
And for himself himself he must forsake.
Then where is truth, if there be no self-trust?
When shall he think to find a stranger just
  When he himself himself confounds, betrays
  To sland'rous tongues and wretched hateful days?

Now stole upon the time the dead of night,
When heavy sleep had closed up mortal eyes.
No comfortable star did lend his light,
No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries;
Now serves the season that they may surprise
  The silly lambs. Pure thoughts are dead and still,
  While lust and murder wakes to stain and kill.

And now this lustful lord leaped from his bed,
Throwing his mantle rudely o'er his arm,
Is madly tossed between desire and dread.
Th'one sweetly flatters, th'other feareth harm,
But honest fear, bewitched with lust's foul charm,
  Doth too-too oft betake him to retire,
  Beaten away by brainsick rude desire.

His falchion on a flint he softly smiteth,
That from the cold stone sparks of fire do fly,
Whereat a waxen torch forthwith he lighteth,
Which must be lodestar to his lustful eye,
And to the flame thus speaks advisedly:
  'As from this cold flint I enforced this fire,
  So LUCRECE must I force to my desire.'

Here, pale with fear, he doth premeditate
The dangers of his loathsome enterprise,
And in his inward mind he doth debate
What following sorrow may on this arise.
Then, looking scornfully, he doth despise
  His naked armour of still-slaughtered lust,
  And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust:

'Fair torch, burn out thy light, and lend it not
To darken her whose light excelleth thine;
And die, unhallowed thoughts, before you blot
With your uncleanness that which is divine.
Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine.
  Let fair humanity abhor the deed
  That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed.

'O shame to knighthood and to shining arms!
O foul dishonour to my household's grave!
O impious act including all foul harms!
A martial man to be soft fancy's slave!
True valour still a true respect should have;
  Then my digression is so vile, so base,
  That it will live engraven in my face.

'Yea, though I die the scandal will survive
And be an eyesore in my golden coat.
Some loathsome dash the herald will contrive
To cipher me how fondly I did dote,
That my posterity, shamed with the note,
  Shall curse my bones, and hold it for no sin
  To wish that I their father had not been.

'What win I if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
  Or what fond beggar, but to touch the crown,
  Would with the sceptre straight be strucken down?

'If COLLATINUS dream of my intent,
Will he not wake, and in a desp'rate rage
Post hither, this vile purpose to prevent?
This siege that hath engirt his marriage,
This blur to youth, this sorrow to the sage,
  This dying virtue, this surviving shame,
  Whose crime will bear an ever-during blame.

'O, what excuse can my invention make
When thou shalt charge me with so black a deed?
Will not my tongue be mute, my frail joints shake,
Mine eyes forgo their light, my false heart bleed?
The guilt being great, the fear doth still exceed;
  And extreme fear can neither fight nor fly,
  But coward-like with trembling terror die.

'Had COLLATINUS killed my son or sire,
Or lain in ambush to betray my life,
Or were he not my dear friend, this desire
Might have excuse to work upon his wife,
As in revenge or quittal of such strife.
  But as he is my kinsman, my dear friend,
  The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end.

'Shameful it is: ay, if the fact be known.
Hateful it is: there is no hate in loving.
I'll beg her love: but she is not her own.
The worst is but denial and reproving:
My will is strong, past reason's weak removing.
  Who fears a sentence or an old man's saw
  Shall by a painted cloth be kept in awe.'

Thus graceless holds he disputation
'Tween frozen conscience and hot-burning will,
And with good thoughts makes dispensation,
Urging the worser sense for vantage still;
Which in a moment doth confound and kill
All pure effects, and doth so far proceed
That what is vile shows like a virtuous deed.

Quoth he, 'She took me kindly by the hand,
And gazed for tidings in my eager eyes,
Fearing some hard news from the warlike band,
Where her beloved COLLATINUS lies.
O, how her fear did make her colour rise!
First red as roses that on lawn we lay,
Then white as lawn, the roses took away.

'And how her hand, in my hand being locked,
Forced it to tremble with her loyal fear!
Which struck her sad, and then it faster rocked
Until her husband's welfare she did hear,
Whereat she smiled with so sweet a cheer
That had NARCISSUS seen her as she stood
Self-love had never drowned him in the flood.

'Why hunt I then for colour or excuses?
All orators are dumb when beauty pleadeth;
Poor wretches have remorse in poor abuses;
Love thrives not in the heart that shadows dreadeth.
Affection is my captain, and he leadeth;
And when his gaudy banner is displayed,
The coward fights and will not be dismayed.

'Then childish fear avaunt! debating die!
Respect and reason wait on wrinkled age!
My heart shall never countermand mine eye:
Sad pause and deep regard beseems the sage.
My part is youth, and beats these from the stage.
Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize.
Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?'

As corn o'ergrown by weeds, so heedful fear
Is almost choked by unresisted lust.
Away he steals with open list'ning ear,
Full of foul hope and full of fond mistrust;
Both which, as servitors to the unjust,
So cross him with their opposite persuasion
That now he vows a league, and now invasion.

Within his thought her heavenly image sits,
And in the self-same seat sits COLLATINE.
That eye which looks on her confounds his wits,
That eye which him beholds, as more divine,
Unto a view so false will not incline,
But with a pure appeal seeks to the heart,
Which once corrupted takes the worser part;

And therein heartens up his servile powers,
Who, flattered by their leader's jocund show,
Stuff up his lust, as minutes fill up hours;
And as their captain, so their pride doth grow,
Paying more slavish tribute than they owe.
By reprobate desire thus madly led,
The ROMAN lord marcheth to LUCRECE' bed.

The locks between her chamber and his will,
Each one by him enforced, retires his ward;
But as they open they all rate his ill,
Which drives the creeping thief to some regard.
The threshold grates the door to have him heard;
Night-wand'ring weasels shriek to see him there:
They fright him, yet he still pursues his fear.

As each unwilling portal yields him way,
Through little vents and crannies of the place
The wind wars with his torch to make him stay,
And blows the smoke of it into his face,
Extinguishing his conduct in this case.
But his hot heart, which fond desire doth scorch,
Puffs forth another wind that fires the torch;

And being lighted, by the light he spies
LUCRETIA's glove, wherein her needle sticks.
He takes it from the rushes where it lies,
And, griping it, the needle his finger pricks,
As who should say, 'This glove to wanton tricks
Is not inured. Return again in haste;
Thou seest our mistress' ornaments are chaste.'

But all these poor forbiddings could not stay him;
He in the worst sense consters their denial:
The doors, the wind, the glove that did delay him
He takes for accidental things of trial;
Or as those bars which stop the hourly dial,
Who with a ling'ring stay his course doth let
Till every minute pays the hour his debt.

'So, so,' quoth he, 'these lets attend the time,
Like little frosts that sometime threat the spring
To add a more rejoicing to the prime,
And give the sneaped birds more cause to sing.
Pain pays the income of each precious thing.
Huge rocks, high winds, strong pirates, shelves and sands
The merchant fears, ere rich at home he lands.'

Now is he come unto the chamber door
That shuts him from the heaven of his thought,
Which with a yielding latch, and with no more,
Hath barred him from the blessed thing he sought.
So from himself impiety hath wrought,
That for his prey to pray he doth begin,
As if the heavens should countenance his sin.

But in the midst of his unfruitful prayer,
Having solicited th'eternal power
That his foul thoughts might compass his fair fair,
And they would stand auspicious to the hour,
Even there he starts. Quoth he, 'I must deflower.
The powers to whom I pray abhor this fact;
How can they then assist me in the act?

'Then love and fortune be my gods, my guide!
My will is backed with resolution.
Thoughts are but dreams till their effects be tried;
The blackest sin is cleared with absolution;
Against love's fire fear's frost hath dissolution.
The eye of heaven is out, and misty night
Covers the shame that follows sweet delight.'

This said, his guilty hand plucked up the latch,
And with his knee the door he opens wide.
The dove sleeps fast that this night-owl will catch.
Thus treason works ere traitors be espied.
Who sees the lurking serpent steps aside,
But she, sound sleeping, fearing no such thing,
Lies at the mercy of his mortal sting.

Into the chamber wickedly he stalks,
And gazeth on her yet unstained bed.
The curtains being close, about he walks,
Rolling his greedy eyeballs in his head.
By their high treason is his heart misled,
Which gives the watchword to his hand full soon
To draw the cloud that hides the silver moon.

Look as the fair and fiery-pointed sun
Rushing from forth a cloud bereaves our sight;
Even so, the curtain drawn, his eyes begun
To wink, being blinded with a greater light:
Whether it is that she reflects so bright
That dazzleth them, or else some shame
supposed,
But blind they are and keep themselves enclosed.

O, had they in that darksome prison died,
Then had they seen the period of their ill;
Then Collatine again by Lucrece' side
In his clear bed might have reposed still.
But they must ope, this blessed league to kill,
And holy-thoughted Lucrece to their sight
Must sell her joy, her life, her world's delight.

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under,
Coz'ning the pillow of a lawful kiss;
Who, therefore angry, seems to part in sunder,
Swelling on either side to want his bliss;
Between whose hills her head entombed is,
Where like a virtuous monument she lies,
To be admired of lewd unhallowed eyes.

Without the bed her other fair hand was,
On the green coverlet, whose perfect white
Showed like an April daisy on the grass,
With pearly sweat resembling dew of night.
Her eyes, like marigolds, had sheathed their light,
And canopied in darkness sweetly lay
Till they might open to adorn the day.

Her hair, like golden threads, played with her breath,
O modest wantons, wanton modesty!
Showing life's triumph in the map of death,
And death's dim look in life's mortality.
Each in her sleep themselves so beautify,
As if between them twain there were no strife,
But that life lived in death, and death in life.

Her breasts like ivory globes circled with blue,
A pair of maiden worlds unconquered,
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,
And him by oath they truly honoured.
These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred,
Who like a foul usurper went about
From this fair throne to heave the owner out.

What could he see but mightily he noted?
What did he note but strongly he desired?
What he beheld, on that he firmly doted,
And in his will his wilful eye he tired.
With more than admiration he admired
Her azure veins, her alabaster skin,
Her coral lips, her snow-white dimpled chin.

As the grim lion fawneth o'er his prey,
Sharp hunger by the conquest satisfied,
So o'er this sleeping soul doth Tarquin stay,
His rage of lust by gazing qualified,
Slacked, not suppressed; for standing by her side,
His eye, which late this mutiny restrains,
Unto a greater uproar tempts his veins.

And they, like straggling slaves for pillage fighting,
Obdurate vassals fell exploits effecting,
In bloody death and ravishment delighting,
Nor children's tears nor mothers' groans respecting,
Swell in their pride, the onset still expecting.
Anon his beating heart, alarum striking,
Gives the hot charge, and bids them do their
liking.

His drumming heart cheers up his burning eye,
His eye commends the leading to his hand;
His hand, as proud of such a dignity,
Smoking with pride, marched on to make his stand
On her bare breast, the heart of all her land,
Whose ranks of blue veins, as his hand did scale,
Left their round turrets destitute and pale.

They, must'ring to the quiet cabinet
Where their dear governess and lady lies,
Do tell her she is dreadfully beset,
And fright her with confusion of their cries.
She, much amazed, breaks ope her locked-up eyes,
  Who, peeping forth this tumult to behold,
  Are by his flaming torch dimmed and controlled.

Imagine her as one in dead of night
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking,
That thinks she hath beheld some ghastly sprite,
Whose grim aspect sets every joint a-shaking:
What terror 'tis! But she in worser taking,
  From sleep disturbed, heedfully doth view
  The sight which makes supposed terror true.

Wrapped and confounded in a thousand fears,
Like to a new-killed bird she trembling lies.
She dares not look; yet, winking, there appears
Quick-shifting antics, ugly in her eyes.
"Such shadows are the weak brain's forgeries,
  Who, angry that the eyes fly from their lights,
  In darkness daunts them with more dreadful sights."

His hand that yet remains upon her breast –
Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall! –
May feel her heart, poor citizen, distressed,
Wounding itself to death, rise up and fall,
Beating her bulk, that his hand shakes withal.
  This moves in him more rage and lesser pity,
  To make the breach and enter this sweet city.

First, like a trumpet doth his tongue begin
To sound a parley to his heartless foe,
Who o'er the white sheet peers her whiter chin,
The reason of this rash alarm to know,
Which he by dumb demeanour seeks to show.
  But she with vehement prayers urgeth still
  Under what colour he commits this ill.

Thus he replies: 'The colour in thy face,
That even for anger makes the lily pale
And the red rose blush at her own disgrace,
Shall plead for me and tell my loving tale.
Under that colour am I come to scale
  Thy never-conquered fort. The fault is thine,
  For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine.

'Thus I forestall thee, if thou mean to chide:
Thy beauty hath ensnared thee to this night,
Where thou with patience must my will abide,
My will that marks thee for my earth's delight,
Which I to conquer sought with all my might.
  But as reproof and reason beat it dead,
  By thy bright beauty was it newly bred.

'I see what crosses my attempt will bring,
I know what thorns the growing rose defends;
I think the honey guarded with a sting:
All this beforehand counsel comprehends.
But Will is deaf, and hears no heedful friends;
  Only he hath an eye to gaze on Beauty,
  And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law or duty.

'I have debated even in my soul
What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed;
But nothing can affection's course control,
Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.
I know repentant tears ensue the deed,
  Reproach, disdain and deadly enmity;
  Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy.'

This said, he shakes aloft his ROMAN blade,
Which like a falcon tow'ring in the skies
Coucheth the fowl below with his wings' shade,
Whose crooked beak threats if he mount he dies:
So under his insulting falchion lies
  Harmless LUCRETIA, marking what he tells
  With trembling fear, as fowl hear falcons' bells.

'LUCRECE,' quoth he, 'this night I must enjoy thee.
If thou deny, then force must work my way,
For in thy bed I purpose to destroy thee.
That done, some worthless slave of thine I'll slay
To kill thine honour with thy life's decay;
  And in thy dead arms do I mean to place him,
  Swearing I slew him, seeing thee embrace him.

'So thy surviving husband shall remain
The scornful mark of every open eye;
Thy kinsmen hang their heads at this disdain,
Thy issue blurred with nameless bastardy;
And thou, the author of their obloquy,
  Shalt have thy trespass cited up in rhymes
  And sung by children in succeeding times.

'But if thou yield, I rest thy secret friend:
The fault unknown is as a thought unacted.
"A little harm done to a great good end
For lawful policy remains enacted."
"The poisonous simple sometime is compacted
  In a pure compound; being so applied,
  His venom in effect is purified."

'Then, for thy husband and thy children's sake
Tender my suit: bequeath not to their lot
The shame that from them no device can take,
The blemish that will never be forgot,
Worse than a slavish wipe or birth-hour's blot;
  For marks descried in men's nativity
  Are Nature's faults, not their own infamy.'

Here with a cockatrice' dead-killing eye
He rouseth up himself, and makes a pause,
While she, the picture of pure piety,
Like a white hind under the gripe's sharp claws,
Pleads in a wilderness where are no laws
To the rough beast that knows no gentle right,
Nor aught obeys but his foul appetite.

But when a black-faced cloud the world doth threat,
In his dim mist th'aspiring mountains hiding,
From earth's dark womb some gentle gust doth get,
Which blow these pitchy vapours from their biding,
Hind'ring their present fall by this dividing;
So his unhallowed haste her words delays,
And moody PLUTO winks while ORPHEUS plays.

Yet, foul night-waking cat, he doth but dally
While in his hold-fast foot the weak mouse panteth;
Her sad behaviour feeds his vulture folly,
A swallowing gulf that even in plenty wanteth.
His ear her prayers admits, but his heart granteth
No penetrable entrance to her plaining:
"Tears harden lust, though marble wear with raining."

Her pity-pleading eyes are sadly fixed
In the remorseless wrinkles of his face;
Her modest eloquence with sighs is mixed,
Which to her oratory adds more grace.
She puts the period often from his place,
And midst the sentence so her accent breaks
That twice she doth begin ere once she speaks.

She conjures him by high almighty JOVE,
By knighthood, gentry and sweet friendship's oath,
By her untimely tears, her husband's love,
By holy human law and common troth,
By heaven and earth, and all the power of both,
That to his borrowed bed he make retire,
And stoop to honour, not to foul desire.

Quoth she, 'Reward not hospitality
With such black payment as thou hast pretended;
Mud not the fountain that gave drink to thee;
Mar not the thing that cannot be amended;
End thy ill aim before thy shoot be ended.
He is no woodman that doth bend his bow
To strike a poor unseasonable doe.

'My husband is thy friend: for his sake spare me;
Thyself art mighty: for thine own sake leave me;
Myself a weakling: do not then ensnare me;
Thou look'st not like deceit: do not deceive me.
My sighs like whirlwinds labour hence to heave thee.
If ever man were moved with woman's moans,
Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans:

'All which together, like a troubled ocean,
Beat at thy rocky and wrack-threat'ning heart,
To soften it with their continual motion;
For stones dissolved to water do convert.
O, if no harder than a stone thou art,
Melt at my tears, and be compassionate!
Soft pity enters at an iron gate.

'In TARQUIN's likeness I did entertain thee.
Hast thou put on his shape to do him shame?
To all the host of heaven I complain me.
Thou wrong'st his honour, wound'st his princely name.
Thou art not what thou seem'st, and if the same,
Thou seem'st not what thou art, a god, a king;
For kings like gods should govern everything.

'How will thy shame be seeded in thine age
When thus thy vices bud before thy spring?
If in thy hope thou dar'st do such outrage,
What dar'st thou not when once thou art a king?
O, be remembered, no outrageous thing
From vassal actors can be wiped away;
Then kings' misdeeds cannot be hid in clay.

'This deed will make thee only loved for fear,
But happy monarchs still are feared for love.
With foul offenders thou perforce must bear,
When they in thee the like offences prove.
If but for fear of this, thy will remove;
For princes are the glass, the school, the book,
Where subjects' eyes do learn, do read, do look.

'And wilt thou be the school where Lust shall learn?
Must he in thee read lectures of such shame?
Wilt thou be glass wherein it shall discern
Authority for sin, warrant for blame,
To privilege dishonour in thy name?
Thou back'st reproach against long-living laud,
And mak'st fair reputation but a bawd.

'Hast thou command? By him that gave it thee,
From a pure heart command thy rebel will.
Draw not thy sword to guard iniquity,
For it was lent thee all that brood to kill.
Thy princely office how canst thou fulfil
When patterned by thy fault foul Sin may say
He learned to sin, and thou didst teach the way?

'Think but how vile a spectacle it were
To view thy present trespass in another.
Men's faults do seldom to themselves appear;
Their own transgressions partially they smother.
This guilt would seem death-worthy in thy brother.
O, how are they wrapped in with infamies
That from their own misdeeds askance their eyes!

'To thee, to thee, my heaved-up hands appeal,
Not to seducing lust, thy rash relier.
I sue for exiled majesty's repeal;
Let him return, and flatt'ring thoughts retire.
His true respect will prison false desire,
And wipe the dim mist from thy doting eyne,
That thou shalt see thy state, and pity mine.'

'Have done,' quoth he. 'my uncontrolled tide
Turns not, but swells the higher by this let.
Small lights are soon blown out; huge fires abide,
And with the wind in greater fury fret.
The petty streams that pay a daily debt
To their salt sovereign, with their fresh falls' haste
Add to his flow, but alter not his taste.'

'Thou art', quoth she, 'a sea, a sovereign king,
And lo, there falls into thy boundless flood
Black lust, dishonour, shame, misgoverning,
Who seek to stain the ocean of thy blood.
If all these petty ills shall change thy good,
Thy sea within a puddle's womb is hearsed,
And not the puddle in thy sea dispersed.

'So shall these slaves be king, and thou their slave;
Thou nobly base, they basely dignified;
Thou their fair life, and they thy fouler grave;
Thou loathed in their shame, they in thy pride.
The lesser thing should not the greater hide:
The cedar stoops not to the base shrub's foot,
But low shrubs wither at the cedar's root.

'So let thy thoughts, low vassals to thy state –'
'No more,' quoth he. 'By heaven, I will not hear thee!
Yield to my love. If not, enforced hate
Instead of love's coy touch shall rudely tear thee.
That done, despitefully I mean to bear thee
Unto the base bed of some rascal groom
To be thy partner in this shameful doom.'

This said, he sets his foot upon the light,
For light and lust are deadly enemies:
Shame folded up in blind concealing night,
When most unseen, then most doth tyrannize.
The wolf hath seized his prey, the poor lamb cries,
Till with her own white fleece her voice controlled
Entombs her outcry in her lips' sweet fold.

For with the nightly linen that she wears
He pens her piteous clamours in her head,
Cooling his hot face in the chastest tears
That ever modest eyes with sorrow shed.
O, that prone lust should stain so pure a bed!
The spots whereof could weeping purify,
Her tears should drop on them perpetually.

But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,
And he hath won what he would lose again.
This forced league doth force a further strife;
This momentary joy breeds months of pain;
This hot desire converts to cold disdain:
Pure Chastity is rifled of her store,
And lust, the thief, far poorer than before.

Look as the full-fed hound or gorged hawk,
Unapt for tender smell or speedy flight,
Make slow pursuit, or altogether balk
The prey wherein by nature they delight,
So surfeit-taking TARQUIN fares this night:
His taste delicious, in digestion souring,
Devours his will that lived by foul devouring.

O deeper sin than bottomless conceit
Can comprehend in still imagination!
Drunken Desire must vomit his receipt
Ere he can see his own abomination.
While lust is in his pride, no exclamation
Can curb his heat or rein his rash desire,
Till like a jade Self-will himself doth tire.

And then with lank and lean discoloured cheek,
With heavy eye, knit brow and strengthless pace,
Feeble Desire, all recreant, poor and meek,
Like to a bankrupt beggar wails his case.
The flesh being proud, Desire doth fight with Grace,
For there it revels, and when that decays,
The guilty rebel for remission prays.

So fares it with this faultful lord of ROME,
Who this accomplishment so hotly chased;
For now against himself he sounds this doom,
That through the length of times he stands disgraced.
Besides, his soul's fair temple is defaced,
To whose weak ruins muster troops of cares,
To ask the spotted princess how she fares.

She says her subjects with foul insurrection
Have battered down her consecrated wall,
And by their mortal fault brought in subjection
Her immortality, and made her thrall
To living death and pain perpetual;
Which in her prescience she controlled still,
But her foresight could not forestall their will.

Ev'n in this thought through the dark night he stealeth,
A captive victor that hath lost in gain;
Bearing away the wound that nothing healeth,
The scar that will, despite of cure, remain;
Leaving his spoil perplexed in greater pain.
She bears the load of lust he left behind,
And he the burden of a guilty mind.

He like a thievish dog creeps sadly thence;
She like a wearied lamb lies panting there.
He scowls, and hates himself for his offence;
She, desperate, with her nails her flesh doth tear.
He faintly flies, sweating with guilty fear;
  She stays, exclaiming on the direful night;
  He runs, and chides his vanished loathed delight.

He thence departs, a heavy convertite;
She there remains, a hopeless castaway.
He in his speed looks for the morning light;
She prays she never may behold the day.
'For day', quoth she, 'night's scapes doth open lay,
  And my true eyes have never practised how
  To cloak offences with a cunning brow.

'They think not but that every eye can see
The same disgrace which they themselves behold;
And therefore would they still in darkness be,
To have their unseen sin remain untold.
For they their guilt with weeping will unfold,
  And grave, like water that doth eat in steel,
  Upon my cheeks what helpless shame I feel.'

Here she exclaims against repose and rest,
And bids her eyes hereafter still be blind.
She wakes her heart by beating on her breast,
And bids it leap from thence, where it may find
Some purer chest to close so pure a mind.
  Frantic with grief thus breathes she forth her spite
  Against the unseen secrecy of night:

'O comfort-killing Night, image of hell,
Dim register and notary of shame,
Black stage for tragedies and murders fell,
Vast sin-concealing chaos, nurse of blame,
Blind muffled bawd, dark harbour for defame,
  Grim cave of death, whisp'ring conspirator
  With close-tongued treason and the ravisher!

'O hateful, vaporous and foggy Night!
Since thou art guilty of my cureless crime,
Muster thy mists to meet the eastern light,
Make war against proportioned course of time;
Or if thou wilt permit the sun to climb
  His wonted height, yet ere he go to bed,
  Knit poisonous clouds about his golden head.

'With rotten damps ravish the morning air;
Let their exhaled unwholesome breaths make sick
The life of purity, the supreme fair,
Ere he arrive his weary noontide prick;
And let thy musty vapours march so thick
  That in their smoky ranks his smothered light
  May set at noon and make perpetual night.

'Were Tarquin Night, as he is but Night's child,
The silver-shining queen he would distain;
Her twinkling handmaids too, by him defiled,
Through Night's black bosom should not peep again.
So should I have co-partners in my pain;
  And fellowship in woe doth woe assuage,
  As palmers' chat makes short their pilgrimage.

'Where now I have no one to blush with me,
To cross their arms and hang their heads with mine,
To mask their brows and hide their infamy;
But I alone, alone must sit and pine,
Seasoning the earth with showers of silver brine,
  Mingling my talk with tears, my grief with groans,
  Poor wasting monuments of lasting moans.

'O Night, thou furnace of foul-reeking smoke,
Let not the jealous Day behold that face
Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak
Immodestly lies martyred with disgrace!
Keep still possession of thy gloomy place,
  That all the faults which in thy reign are made
  May likewise be sepulchred in thy shade!

'Make me not object to the tell-tale Day!
The light will show, charactered in my brow,
The story of sweet chastity's decay,
The impious breach of holy wedlock vow.
Yea, the illiterate, that know not how
  To cipher what is writ in learned books,
  Will quote my loathsome trespass in my looks.

'The nurse to still her child will tell my story,
And fright her crying babe with Tarquin's name.
The orator to deck his oratory
Will couple my reproach to Tarquin's shame.
Feast-finding minstrels, tuning my defame,
  Will tie the hearers to attend each line,
  How Tarquin wronged me, I Collatine.

'Let my good name, that senseless reputation,
For Collatine's dear love be kept unspotted.
If that be made a theme for disputation,
The branches of another root are rotted,
And undeserved reproach to him allotted,
  That is as clear from this attaint of mine
  As I ere this was pure to Collatine.

'O unseen shame, invisible disgrace!
O unfelt sore, crest-wounding private scar!
Reproach is stamped in Collatinus' face,
And Tarquin's eye may read the mot afar,
"How he in peace is wounded, not in war."
  "Alas, how many bear such shameful blows,
  Which not themselves but he that gives them knows!"

'If, COLLATINE, thine honour lay in me,
From me by strong assault it is bereft;
My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee,
Have no perfection of my summer left,
But robbed and ransacked by injurious theft.
In thy weak hive a wand'ring wasp hath crept,
And sucked the honey which thy chaste bee kept.

'Yet am I guilty of thy honour's wrack;
Yet for thy honour did I entertain him.
Coming from thee, I could not put him back,
For it had been dishonour to disdain him.
Besides, of weariness he did complain him,
And talked of virtue: O, unlooked-for evil,
When virtue is profaned in such a devil!

'Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrows' nests?
Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
"But no perfection is so absolute
That some impurity doth not pollute."

'The aged man that coffers up his gold
Is plagued with cramps and gouts and painful fits,
And scarce hath eyes his treasure to behold;
But like still-pining TANTALUS he sits,
And useless barns the harvest of his wits,
Having no other pleasure of his gain
But torment that it cannot cure his pain.

'So then he hath it when he cannot use it,
And leaves it to be mastered by his young,
Who in their pride do presently abuse it.
Their father was too weak and they too strong
To hold their cursed-blessed fortune long.
"The sweets we wish for turn to loathed sours
Even in the moment that we call them ours."

'Unruly blasts wait on the tender spring;
Unwholesome weeds take root with precious flowers;
The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing;
What virtue breeds iniquity devours.
We have no good that we can say is ours,
But ill-annexed opportunity
Or kills his life or else his quality.

'O Opportunity, thy guilt is great:
'Tis thou that execut'st the traitor's treason;
Thou sets the wolf where he the lamb may get;
Whoever plots the sin, thou point'st the season.
'Tis thou that spurn'st at right, at law, at reason;
And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,
Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.

'Thou mak'st the vestal violate her oath;
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thawed;
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murd'rest troth;
Thou foul abettor, thou notorious bawd!
Thou plantest scandal and displacest laud:
Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief,
Thy honey turns to gall, thy joy to grief!

'Thy secret pleasure turns to open shame,
Thy private feasting to a public fast,
Thy smoothing titles to a ragged name,
Thy sugared tongue to bitter wormwood taste;
Thy violent vanities can never last.
How comes it then, vile Opportunity,
Being so bad, such numbers seek for thee?

'When wilt thou be the humble suppliant's friend,
And bring him where his suit may be obtained?
When wilt thou sort an hour great strifes to end,
Or free that soul which wretchedness hath chained?
Give physic to the sick, ease to the pained?
The poor, lame, blind, halt, creep, cry out for thee,
But they ne'er meet with opportunity.

'The patient dies while the physician sleeps;
The orphan pines while the oppressor feeds;
Justice is feasting while the widow weeps;
Advice is sporting while infection breeds.
Thou grant'st no time for charitable deeds:
Wrath, envy, treason, rape, and murder's rages,
Thy heinous hours wait on them as their pages.

'When Truth and Virtue have to do with thee,
A thousand crosses keep them from thy aid:
They buy thy help, but Sin ne'er gives a fee;
He gratis comes, and thou art well apaid
As well to hear as grant what he hath said.
My COLLATINE would else have come to me
When TARQUIN did, but he was stayed by thee.

'Guilty thou art of murder and of theft,
Guilty of perjury and subornation,
Guilty of treason, forgery and shift,
Guilty of incest, that abomination:
An accessory by thine inclination
To all sins past and all that are to come,
From the creation to the general doom.

'Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night,
Swift subtle post, carrier of grisly care,
Eater of youth, false slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare;
Thou nursest all, and murd'rest all that are:
O, hear me then, injurious shifting Time,
Be guilty of my death, since of my crime!

'Why hath thy servant Opportunity
Betrayed the hours thou gav'st me to repose,
Cancelled my fortunes, and enchained me
To endless date of never-ending woes?
Time's office is to fine the hate of foes,
To eat up errors by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

'Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wake the morn and sentinel the night,
To wrong the wronger till he render right,
To ruinate proud buildings with thy hours,
And smear with dust their glitt'ring golden towers;

'To fill with worm-holes stately monuments,
To feed oblivion with decay of things,
To blot old books and alter their contents,
To pluck the quills from ancient ravens' wings,
To dry the old oaks' sap and cherish springs,
To spoil antiquities of hammered steel,
And turn the giddy round of fortune's wheel;

'To show the beldam daughters of her daughter,
To make the child a man, the man a child,
To slay the tiger that doth live by slaughter,
To tame the unicorn and lion wild,
To mock the subtle in themselves beguiled,
To cheer the ploughman with increaseful crops,
And waste huge stones with little water-drops.

'Why work'st thou mischief in thy pilgrimage,
Unless thou couldst return to make amends?
One poor retiring minute in an age
Would purchase thee a thousand thousand friends,
Lending him wit that to bad debtors lends.
O, this dread night, wouldst thou one hour come back,
I could prevent this storm and shun thy wrack!

'Thou ceaseless lackey to eternity,
With some mischance cross TARQUIN in his flight.
Devise extremes beyond extremity
To make him curse this cursed crimeful night.
Let ghastly shadows his lewd eyes affright,
And the dire thought of his committed evil
Shape every bush a hideous shapeless devil.

'Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances;
Afflict him in his bed with bedrid groans;
Let there bechance him pitiful mischances
To make him moan, but pity not his moans.
Stone him with hardened hearts harder than stones,
And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
Wilder to him than tigers in their wildness.

'Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.

'Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
And merry fools to mock at him resort;
Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
His time of folly and his time of sport;
And ever let his unrecalling crime
Have time to wail th'abusing of his time.

'O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad,
Teach me to curse him that thou taught'st this ill!
At his own shadow let the thief run mad,
Himself himself seek every hour to kill!
Such wretched hands such wretched blood should spill,
For who so base would such an office have
As sland'rous deathsman to so base a slave?

'The baser is he, coming from a king,
To shame his hope with deeds degenerate;
The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
That makes him honoured or begets him hate;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.
The moon being clouded presently is missed,
But little stars may hide them when they list.

'The crow may bathe his coal-black wings in mire,
And unperceived fly with the filth away;
But if the like the snow-white swan desire,
The stain upon his silver down will stay.
Poor grooms are sightless night, kings glorious day;
Gnats are unnoted wheresoe'er they fly,
But eagles gazed upon with every eye.

'Out, idle words, servants to shallow fools,
Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools,
Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
To trembling clients be you mediators:
For me, I force not argument a straw,
Since that my case is past the help of law.

'In vain I rail at Opportunity,
At Time, at TARQUIN, and uncheerful Night,
In vain I cavil with mine infamy,
In vain I spurn at my confirmed despite:
This helpless smoke of words doth me no right.
The remedy indeed to do me good
Is to let forth my foul-defiled blood.

'Poor hand, why quiver'st thou at this decree?
Honour thyself to rid me of this shame.
For if I die, my honour lives in thee;
But if I live, thou liv'st in my defame.
Since thou couldst not defend thy loyal dame,
And wast afeard to scratch her wicked foe,
Kill both thyself and her for yielding so.'

This said, from her betumbled couch she starteth,
To find some desp'rate instrument of death.
But this, no slaughterhouse, no tool imparteth
To make more vent for passage of her breath,
Which thronging through her lips so vanisheth
As smoke from Etna that in air consumes,
Or that which from discharged cannon fumes.

'In vain', quoth she, 'I live, and seek in vain
Some happy mean to end a hapless life.
I feared by Tarquin's falchion to be slain,
Yet for the self-same purpose seek a knife.
But when I feared I was a loyal wife;
So am I now – O no, that cannot be:
Of that true type hath Tarquin rifled me.

'O, that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.
To clear this spot by death, at least I give
A badge of fame to slander's livery,
A dying life to living infamy.
Poor helpless help, the treasure stol'n away,
To burn the guiltless casket where it lay!

'Well, well, dear Collatine, thou shalt not know
The stained taste of violated troth;
I will not wrong thy true affection so
To flatter thee with an infringed oath.
This bastard graff shall never come to growth:
He shall not boast who did thy stock pollute,
That thou art doting father of his fruit.

'Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought,
Nor laugh with his companions at thy state;
But thou shalt know thy int'rest was not bought
Basely with gold, but stol'n from forth thy gate.
For me, I am the mistress of my fate,
And with my trespass never will dispense,
Till life to death acquit my forced offence.

'I will not poison thee with my attaint,
Nor fold my fault in cleanly coined excuses;
My sable ground of sin I will not paint
To hide the truth of this false night's abuses.
My tongue shall utter all; mine eyes, like sluices,
As from a mountain spring that feeds a dale
Shall gush pure streams to purge my impure tale.'

By this, lamenting Philomel had ended
The well-tuned warble of her nightly sorrow,
And solemn night with slow sad gait descended
To ugly hell, when lo, the blushing morrow
Lends light to all fair eyes that light will borrow;
But cloudy Lucrece shames herself to see,
And therefore still in night would cloistered be.

Revealing day through every cranny spies,
And seems to point her out where she sits weeping;
To whom she sobbing speaks: 'O eye of eyes,
Why pry'st thou through my window? Leave thy peeping,
Mock with thy tickling beams eyes that are sleeping,
Brand not my forehead with thy piercing light,
For day hath naught to do what's done by night.'

Thus cavils she with everything she sees:
True grief is fond and testy as a child
Who, wayward once, his mood with naught agrees.
Old woes, not infant sorrows, bear them mild:
Continuance tames the one; the other wild,
Like an unpractised swimmer plunging still,
With too much labour drowns for want of skill.

So she, deep drenched in a sea of care,
Holds disputation with each thing she views,
And to herself all sorrow doth compare;
No object but her passion's strength renews,
And as one shifts, another straight ensues.
Sometime her grief is dumb and hath no words,
Sometime 'tis mad and too much talk affords.

The little birds that tune their morning's joy
Make her moans mad with their sweet melody,
"For mirth doth search the bottom of annoy;
Sad souls are slain in merry company;
Grief best is pleased with grief's society:
True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed
When with like semblance it is sympathized."

"'Tis double death to drown in ken of shore;
He ten times pines that pines beholding food;
To see the salve doth make the wound ache more;
Great grief grieves most at that would do it good;
Deep woes roll forward like a gentle flood
Who, being stopped, the bounding banks oerflows;
Grief dallied with nor law nor limit knows."

'You mocking birds,' quoth she, 'your tunes entomb
Within your hollow-swelling feathered breasts,
And in my hearing be you mute and dumb:
My restless discord loves no stops nor rests.
"A woeful hostess brooks not merry guests."
Relish your nimble notes to pleasing ears;
"Distress likes dumps when time is kept with tears."

'Come, PHILOMEL, that sing'st of ravishment,
Make thy sad grove in my dishevelled hair.
As the dank earth weeps at thy languishment,
So I at each sad strain will strain a tear,
And with deep groans the diapason bear;
For burden-wise I'll hum on TARQUIN still,
While thou on TEREUS descants better skill.

'And whiles against a thorn thou bear'st thy part,
To keep thy sharp woes waking, wretched I,
To imitate thee well, against my heart
Will fix a sharp knife to affright mine eye,
Who if it wink shall thereon fall and die.
These means, as frets upon an instrument,
Shall tune our heart-strings to true languishment.

'And for, poor bird, thou sing'st not in the day,
As shaming any eye should thee behold,
Some dark deep desert, seated from the way,
That knows not parching heat nor freezing cold,
Will we find out, and there we will unfold
To creatures stern sad tunes to change their kinds:
Since men prove beasts, let beasts bear gentle minds.'

As the poor frighted deer that stands at gaze,
Wildly determining which way to fly,
Or one encompassed with a winding maze
That cannot tread the way out readily,
So with herself is she in mutiny,
To live or die which of the twain were better,
When life is shamed and death reproach's debtor.

'To kill myself,' quoth she, 'alack, what were it,
But with my body my poor soul's pollution?
They that lose half with greater patience bear it
Than they whose whole is swallowed in confusion.
That mother tries a merciless conclusion
Who, having two sweet babes, when death takes one
Will slay the other and be nurse to none.

'My body or my soul, which was the dearer,
When the one pure the other made divine?
Whose love of either to myself was nearer,
When both were kept for heaven and COLLATINE?
Ay me! The bark pilled from the lofty pine,
His leaves will wither and his sap decay;
So must my soul, her bark being pilled away.

'Her house is sacked, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion battered by the enemy,
Her sacred temple spotted, spoiled, corrupted,
Grossly engirt with daring infamy.
Then let it not be called impiety,
If in this blemished fort I make some hole
Through which I may convey this troubled soul.

'Yet die I will not till my COLLATINE
Have heard the cause of my untimely death,
That he may vow in that sad hour of mine
Revenge on him that made me stop my breath.
My stained blood to TARQUIN I'll bequeath,
Which by him tainted shall for him be spent,
And as his due writ in my testament.

'My honour I'll bequeath unto the knife
That wounds my body so dishonoured.
'Tis honour to deprive dishonoured life;
The one will live, the other being dead.
So of shame's ashes shall my fame be bred,
For in my death I murder shameful scorn;
My shame so dead, mine honour is new born.

'Dear lord of that dear jewel I have lost,
What legacy shall I bequeath to thee?
My resolution, love, shall be thy boast,
By whose example thou revenged mayst be.
How TARQUIN must be used, read it in me:
Myself, thy friend, will kill myself, thy foe,
And for my sake serve thou false TARQUIN so.

'This brief abridgement of my will I make:
My soul and body to the skies and ground;
My resolution, husband, do thou take;
Mine honour be the knife's that makes my wound;
My shame be his that did my fame confound;
And all my fame that lives disbursed be
To those that live and think no shame of me.

'Thou, COLLATINE, shalt oversee this will.
How was I overseen that thou shalt see it!
My blood shall wash the slander of mine ill;
My life's foul deed, my life's fair end shall free it.
Faint not, faint heart, but stoutly say "So be it."
Yield to my hand; my hand shall conquer thee:
Thou dead, both die, and both shall victors be.'

This plot of death when sadly she had laid
And wiped the brinish pearl from her bright eyes,
With untuned tongue she hoarsely calls her maid,
Whose swift obedience to her mistress hies;
"For fleet-winged duty with thought's feathers flies."
Poor LUCRECE' cheeks unto her maid seem so
As winter meads when sun doth melt their snow.

Her mistress she doth give demure good-morrow
With soft slow tongue, true mark of modesty,
And sorts a sad look to her lady's sorrow,
For why her face wore sorrow's livery,
But durst not ask of her audaciously
Why her two suns were cloud-eclipsed so,
Nor why her fair cheeks overwashed with woe.

For much imaginary work was there:
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
That for ACHILLES' image stood his spear,
Griped in an armed hand; himself behind
Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind:
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head,
Stood for the whole to be imagined.

And from the walls of strong-besieged TROY
When their brave hope, bold HECTOR, marched to field,
Stood many TROJAN mothers, sharing joy
To see their youthful sons bright weapons wield;
And to their hope they such odd action yield
That through their light joy seemed to appear,
Like bright things stained, a kind of heavy fear.

And from the strand of DARDAN where they fought
To SIMOIS' reedy banks the red blood ran,
Whose waves to imitate the battle sought
With swelling ridges; and their ranks began
To break upon the galled shore, and than
Retire again, till meeting greater ranks
They join, and shoot their foam at SIMOIS' banks.

To this well-painted piece is LUCRECE come,
To find a face where all distress is stelled.
Many she sees where cares have carved some,
But none where all distress and dolour dwelled
Till she despairing HECUBA beheld,
Staring on PRIAM's wounds with her old eyes,
Which bleeding under PYRRHUS' proud foot lies.

In her the painter had anatomized
Time's ruin, beauty's wrack and grim care's reign.
Her cheeks with chaps and wrinkles were disguised;
Of what she was no semblance did remain.
Her blue blood changed to black in every vein,
Wanting the spring that those shrunk pipes had fed,
Showed life imprisoned in a body dead.

On this sad shadow LUCRECE spends her eyes,
And shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes,
Who nothing wants to answer her but cries
And bitter words to ban her cruel foes:
The painter was no god to lend her those,
And therefore LUCRECE swears he did her wrong
To give her so much grief and not a tongue.

'Poor instrument' quoth she, 'without a sound,
I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue
And drop sweet balm in PRIAM's painted wound,
And rail on PYRRHUS that hath done him wrong,
And with my tears quench TROY that burns so long,
And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
Of all the GREEKS that are thine enemies.

'Show me the strumpet that began this stir,
That with my nails her beauty I may tear.
Thy heat of lust, fond PARIS, did incur
This load of wrath that burning TROY doth bear:
Thy eye kindled the fire that burneth here,
And here in TROY, for trespass of thine eye,
The sire, the son, the dame and daughter die.

'Why should the private pleasure of some one
Become the public plague of many moe?
Let sin, alone committed, light alone
Upon his head that hath transgressed so;
Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe:
For one's offence why should so many fall,
To plague a private sin in general?

'Lo, here weeps HECUBA, here PRIAM dies,
Here manly HECTOR faints, here TROILUS swounds,
Here friend by friend in bloody channel lies,
And friend to friend gives unadvised wounds,
And one man's lust these many lives confounds.
Had doting PRIAM checked his son's desire,
TROY had been bright with fame, and not with fire.'

Here feelingly she weeps TROY's painted woes:
For sorrow, like a heavy-hanging bell,
Once set on ringing, with his own weight goes;
Then little strength rings out the doleful knell.
So LUCRECE, set a-work, sad tales doth tell
To pencilled pensiveness and coloured sorrow;
She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow.

She throws her eyes about the painting round,
And who she finds forlorn she doth lament.
At last she sees a wretched image bound,
That piteous looks to PHRYGIAN shepherds lent:
His face, though full of cares, yet showed content.
Onward to TROY with the blunt swains he goes,
So mild that patience seemed to scorn his woes.

In him the painter laboured with his skill
To hide deceit, and give the harmless show
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
A brow unbent that seemed to welcome woe,
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so
That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have.

But like a constant and confirmed devil
He entertained a show so seeming just,
And therein so ensconced his secret evil
That jealousy itself could not mistrust
False creeping craft and perjury should thrust
Into so bright a day such black-faced storms,
Or blot with hell-born sin such saintlike forms.

The well-skilled workman this mild image drew
For perjured SINON, whose enchanting story
The credulous old PRIAM after slew;
Whose words like wildfire burnt the shining glory
Of rich-built ILION, that the skies were sorry,
And little stars shot from their fixed places,
When their glass fell wherein they viewed their faces.

This picture she advisedly perused,
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill,
Saying some shape in SINON's was abused:
So fair a form lodged not a mind so ill.
And still on him she gazed, and gazing still,
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
That she concludes the picture was belied.

'It cannot be', quoth she, 'that so much guile' –
She would have said 'can lurk in such a look'.
But TARQUIN's shape came in her mind the while,
And from her tongue 'can lurk' from 'cannot' took.
'It cannot be' she in that sense forsook,
And turned it thus: 'It cannot be, I find,
But such a face should bear a wicked mind.

'For even as subtle SINON here is painted,
So sober-sad, so weary and so mild,
As if with grief or travail he had fainted,
To me came TARQUIN armed to beguild
With outward honesty, but yet defiled
With inward vice. As PRIAM him did cherish,
So did I TARQUIN, so my TROY did perish.

'Look, look, how list'ning PRIAM wets his eyes
To see those borrowed tears that SINON sheds!
PRIAM, why art thou old and yet not wise?
For every tear he falls a TROJAN bleeds:
His eye drops fire, no water thence proceeds;
Those round clear pearls of his that move thy pity
Are balls of quenchless fire to burn thy city.

'Such devils steal effects from lightless hell;
For SINON in his fire doth quake with cold,
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell.
These contraries such unity do hold
Only to flatter fools and make them bold;
So PRIAM's trust false SINON's tears doth flatter
That he finds means to burn his TROY with water.'

Here, all enraged, such passion her assails,
That patience is quite beaten from her breast.
She tears the senseless SINON with her nails,
Comparing him to that unhappy guest
Whose deed hath made herself herself detest.
At last she smilingly with this gives o'er:
'Fool, fool!' quoth she, 'his wounds will not be sore.'

Thus ebbs and flows the current of her sorrow,
And time doth weary time with her complaining.
She looks for night, and then she longs for morrow,
And both she thinks too long with her remaining.
Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining:
Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps,
And they that watch see time how slow it creeps.

Which all this time hath overslipped her thought
That she with painted images hath spent,
Being from the feeling of her own grief brought
By deep surmise of others' detriment,
Losing her woes in shows of discontent.
It easeth some, though none it ever cured,
To think their dolour others have endured.

But now the mindful messenger come back
Brings home his lord and other company,
Who finds his LUCRECE clad in mourning black,
And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles streamed, like rainbows in the sky:
These water-galls in her dim element
Foretell new storms to those already spent.

Which when her sad-beholding husband saw,
Amazedly in her sad face he stares:
Her eyes, though sod in tears, looked red and raw,
Her lively colour killed with deadly cares.
He hath no power to ask her how she fares.
Both stood like old acquaintance in a trance,
Met far from home, wond'ring each other's chance.

At last he takes her by the bloodless hand,
And thus begins: 'What uncouth ill event
Hath thee befall'n, that thou dost trembling stand?
Sweet love, what spite hath thy fair colour spent?
Why art thou thus attired in discontent?
Unmask, dear dear, this moody heaviness,
And tell thy grief, that we may give redress.'

Three times with sighs she gives her sorrow fire,
Ere once she can discharge one word of woe.
At length addressed to answer his desire,
She modestly prepares to let them know
Her honour is ta'en prisoner by the foe;
While COLLATINE and his consorted lords
With sad attention long to hear her words.

And now this pale swan in her wat'ry nest
Begins the sad dirge of her certain ending:
'Few words', quoth she, 'shall fit the trespass best,
Where no excuse can give the fault amending.
In me moe woes than words are now depending,
And my laments would be drawn out too long
To tell them all with one poor tired tongue.

'Then be this all the task it hath to say:
Dear husband, in the interest of thy bed
A stranger came, and on that pillow lay
Where thou wast wont to rest thy weary head;
And what wrong else may be imagined
By foul enforcement might be done to me,
From that, alas, thy LUCRECE is not free.

'For in the dreadful dead of dark midnight,
With shining falchion in my chamber came
A creeping creature with a flaming light,
And softly cried, "Awake, thou ROMAN dame,
And entertain my love; else lasting shame
On thee and thine this night I will inflict,
If thou my love's desire do contradict.

'"For some hard-favoured groom of thine,"
quoth he,
"Unless thou yoke thy liking to my will,
I'll murder straight, and then I'll slaughter thee,
And swear I found you where you did fulfil
The loathsome act of lust, and so did kill
The lechers in their deed: this act will be
My fame, and thy perpetual infamy."

'With this I did begin to start and cry;
And then against my heart he set his sword,
Swearing, unless I took all patiently,
I should not live to speak another word.
So should my shame still rest upon record,
And never be forgot in mighty ROME
Th'adulterate death of LUCRECE and her groom.

'Mine enemy was strong, my poor self weak,
And far the weaker with so strong a fear.
My bloody judge forbade my tongue to speak;
No rightful plea might plead for justice there.
His scarlet lust came evidence to swear
That my poor beauty had purloined his eyes;
And when the judge is robbed, the prisoner dies.

'O, teach me how to make mine own excuse!
Or, at the least, this refuge let me find:
Though my gross blood be stained with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind;
That was not forced, that never was inclined
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poisoned closet yet endure.'

Lo, here the hopeless merchant of this loss,
With head declined and voice dammed up with woe,
With sad-set eyes and wreathed arms across,
From lips new waxen pale begins to blow
The grief away that stops his answer so.
But, wretched as he is, he strives in vain:
What he breathes out his breath drinks up again.

As through an arch the violent roaring tide
Outruns the eye that doth behold his haste,
Yet in the eddy boundeth in his pride
Back to the strait that forced him on so fast,
In rage sent out, recalled in rage, being past;
Even so his sighs, his sorrows make a saw,
To push grief on, and back the same grief draw.

Which speechless woe of his poor she attendeth,
And his untimely frenzy thus awaketh:
'Dear lord, thy sorrow to my sorrow lendeth
Another power; no flood by raining slaketh.
My woe too sensible thy passion maketh
More feeling-painful. Let it then suffice
To drown one woe, one pair of weeping eyes.

'And for my sake, when I might charm thee so,
For she that was thy LUCRECE, now attend me:
Be suddenly revenged on my foe –
Thine, mine, his own. Suppose thou dost defend me
From what is past, the help that thou shalt lend me
Comes all too late, yet let the traitor die;
"For sparing justice feeds iniquity."

'But ere I name him, you fair lords', quoth she,
Speaking to those that came with COLLATINE,
'Shall plight your honourable faiths to me,
With swift pursuit to venge this wrong of mine;
For 'tis a meritorious fair design
To chase injustice with revengeful arms:
Knights, by their oaths, should right poor ladies'
harms.'

At this request with noble disposition
Each present lord began to promise aid,
As bound in knighthood to her imposition,
Longing to hear the hateful foe bewrayed.
But she, that yet her sad task hath not said,
The protestation stops. 'O, speak,' quoth she,
'How may this forced stain be wiped from me?

'What is the quality of my offence,
Being constrained with dreadful circumstance?
May my pure mind with the foul act dispense,
My low-declined honour to advance?
May any terms acquit me from this chance?
The poisoned fountain clears itself again;
And why not I from this compelled stain?'

With this they all at once began to say
Her body's stain her mind untainted clears;
While with a joyless smile she turns away
The face, that map which deep impression bears
Of hard misfortune, carved in it with tears.
'No, no,' quoth she, 'no dame hereafter living
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving.'

Here, with a sigh as if her heart would break,
She throws forth TARQUIN's name: 'He, he', she says,
But more than 'he' her poor tongue could not speak;
Till, after many accents and delays,
Untimely breathings, sick and short assays,
She utters this: 'He, he, fair lords, 'tis he
That guides this hand to give this wound to me.'

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed:
That blow did bail it from the deep unrest
Of that polluted prison where it breathed.
Her contrite sighs unto the clouds bequeathed
Her winged sprite, and through her wounds doth fly
Life's lasting date from cancelled destiny.

Stone-still, astonished with this deadly deed,
Stood COLLATINE and all his lordly crew,
Till LUCRECE' father, that beholds her bleed,
Himself on her self-slaughtered body threw;
And from the purple fountain BRUTUS drew
The murd'rous knife, and as it left the place,
Her blood in poor revenge held it in chase;

And bubbling from her breast, it doth divide
In two slow rivers, that the crimson blood
Circles her body in on every side,
Who like a late-sacked island vastly stood
Bare and unpeopled in this fearful flood.
Some of her blood still pure and red remained,
And some looked black, and that false TARQUIN stained.

About the mourning and congealed face
Of that black blood a wat'ry rigol goes,
Which seems to weep upon the tainted place;
And ever since, as pitying LUCRECE' woes,
Corrupted blood some watery token shows,
And blood untainted still doth red abide,
Blushing at that which is so putrefied.

'Daughter, dear daughter,' old LUCRETIUS cries,
'That life was mine which thou hast here deprived.
If in the child the father's image lies,
Where shall I live now LUCRECE is unlived?
Thou wast not to this end from me derived.
If children predecease progenitors,
We are their offspring, and they none of ours.

'Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new born;
But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
Shows me a bare-boned death by time outworn.
O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn,
And shivered all the beauty of my glass,
That I no more can see what once I was.

'O time, cease thou thy course and last no longer,
If they surcease to be that should survive.
Shall rotten death make conquest of the stronger,
And leave the falt'ring feeble souls alive?
The old bees die, the young possess their hive.
Then live, sweet LUCRECE, live again and see
Thy father die, and not thy father thee!'

By this, starts COLLATINE as from a dream,
And bids LUCRETIUS give his sorrow place;
And then in key-cold LUCRECE' bleeding stream
He falls, and bathes the pale fear in his face,
And counterfeits to die with her a space,
Till manly shame bids him possess his breath,
And live to be revenged on her death.

The deep vexation of his inward soul
Hath served a dumb arrest upon his tongue,
Who, mad that sorrow should his use control,
Or keep him from heart-easing words so long,
Begins to talk; but through his lips do throng
Weak words, so thick come in his poor heart's aid
That no man could distinguish what he said.

Yet sometime 'TARQUIN' was pronounced plain,
But through his teeth, as if the name he tore.
This windy tempest, till it blow up rain,
Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more.
At last it rains, and busy winds give o'er;
Then son and father weep with equal strife
Who should weep most, for daughter or for wife.

The one doth call her his, the other his,
Yet neither may possess the claim they lay.
The father says 'She's mine.' 'O, mine she is,'
Replies her husband: 'do not take away
My sorrow's interest; let no mourner say
He weeps for her, for she was only mine,
And only must be wailed by COLLATINE.'

'O,' quoth LUCRETIUS, 'I did give that life
Which she too early and too late hath spilled.'
'Woe, woe,' quoth COLLATINE, 'she was my wife;
I owed her, and 'tis mine that she hath killed.'
'My daughter' and 'My wife' with clamours filled
The dispersed air, who, holding LUCRECE' life,
Answered their cries, 'My daughter' and 'My wife'.

BRUTUS, who plucked the knife from LUCRECE' side,
Seeing such emulation in their woe,
Began to clothe his wit in state and pride,
Burying in LUCRECE' wound his folly's show.
He with the ROMANS was esteemed so
As silly jeering idiots are with kings,
For sportive words and utt'ring foolish things.

But now he throws that shallow habit by,
Wherein deep policy did him disguise,
And armed his long-hid wits advisedly,
To check the tears in COLLATINUS' eyes.
'Thou wronged lord of ROME,' quoth he, 'arise;
Let my unsounded self, supposed a fool,
Now set thy long-experienced wit to school.

'Why, COLLATINE, is woe the cure for woe?
Do wounds help wounds, or grief help grievous deeds?
Is it revenge to give thyself a blow
For his foul act by whom thy fair wife bleeds?
Such childish humour from weak minds proceeds.
Thy wretched wife mistook the matter so,
To slay herself, that should have slain her foe.

'Courageous ROMAN, do not steep thy heart
In such relenting dew of lamentations,
But kneel with me and help to bear thy part
To rouse our ROMAN gods with invocations
That they will suffer these abominations –
Since ROME herself in them doth stand disgraced –
By our strong arms from forth her fair streets chased.

'Now by the CAPITOL that we adore,
And by this chaste blood so unjustly stained,
By heaven's fair sun that breeds the fat earth's store,
By all our country rights in ROME maintained,
And by chaste LUCRECE' soul that late complained
Her wrongs to us, and by this bloody knife,
We will revenge the death of this true wife.'

This said, he struck his hand upon his breast,
And kissed the fatal knife to end his vow;
And to his protestation urged the rest,
Who, wond'ring at him, did his words allow.
Then jointly to the ground their knees they bow,
And that deep vow which BRUTUS made before
He doth again repeat, and that they swore.

When they had sworn to this advised doom
They did conclude to bear dead LUCRECE thence,
To show her bleeding body thorough ROME,
And so to publish TARQUIN's foul offence;
Which being done, with speedy diligence,
The ROMANS plausibly did give consent
To TARQUINS' everlasting banishment.

[13]

Beauty is but a vain and doubtful good,
A shining gloss that vadeth suddenly,
A flower that dies when first it gins to bud,
A brittle glass that's broken presently,
A doubtful good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, vaded, broken, dead within an hour.

And as goods lost are seld or never found,
As vaded gloss no rubbing will refresh,
As flowers dead lie withered on the ground,
As broken glass no cement can redress,
So beauty blemished once, for ever lost,
In spite of physic, painting, pain and cost.

[14]

Good-night, good rest, ah, neither be my share.
She bade good-night that kept my rest away
And daffed me to a cabin hanged with care,
To descant on the doubts of my decay.
'Farewell,' quoth she, 'and come again tomorrow.'
Fare well I could not, for I supped with sorrow.

Yet at my parting sweetly did she smile,
In scorn or friendship, nill I conster whether;
'T may be she joyed to jest at my exile,
'T may be again to make me wander thither:
'Wander', a word for shadows like myself,
As take the pain but cannot pluck the pelf.

Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east!
My heart doth charge the watch; the morning rise
Doth cite each moving sense from idle rest,
Not daring trust the office of mine eyes.
While Philomela sits and sings, I sit and mark,
And wish her lays were tuned like the lark.

For she doth welcome daylight with her ditty,
And drives away dark-dreaming night:
The night so packed, I post unto my pretty.
Heart hath his hope, and eyes their wished sight;
Sorrow changed to solace, and solace mixed with sorrow;
For why she sighed and bade me come tomorrow.

Were I with her, the night would post too soon,
But now are minutes added to the hours.
To spite me now, each minute seems a moon;
Yet not for me, shine sun to succour flowers!
Pack night, peep day; good day, of night now borrow;
Short night tonight, and length thyself tomorrow.

SONNETS

To Sundry Notes of Music

[15]

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,
That liked of her master, as well as well might be,
Till looking on an Englishman, the fairest that eye could see
Her fancy fell a-turning.
Long was the combat doubtful, that love with love did fight
To leave the master loveless, or kill the gallant knight;
To put in practice either, alas it was a spite
Unto the silly damsel.
But one must be refused; more mickle was the pain,
That nothing could be used to turn them both to gain,
For of the two the trusty knight was wounded with disdain,
Alas, she could not help it.
Thus art with arms contending was victor of the day,
Which by a gift of learning did bear the maid away.
Then, lullaby, the learned man hath got the lady gay,
For now my song is ended.

[16]

On a day (alack the day)
Love, whose month was ever may,
Spied a blossom passing fair,
Playing in the wanton air.
Through the velvet leaves the wind
All unseen, gan passage find;
That the lover (sick to death)
Wished himself the heaven's breath.
'Air,' quoth he, 'thy cheeks may blow;
Air, would I might triumph so.
But (alas) my hand hath sworn
Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
Vow (alack) for youth unmeet;
Youth, so apt to pluck a sweet.
Thou for whom Jove would swear
Juno but an Ethiope were,
And deny himself for Jove,
Turning mortal for thy love.'

[17]

My flocks feed not, my ewes breed not,
My rams speed not, all is amiss:
Love is dying, faith's defying,
Heart's denying, causer of this.
All my merry jigs are quite forgot,
All my lady's love is lost (God wot),
Where her faith was firmly fixed in love
There a nay is placed without remove.
One silly cross wrought all my loss;
Oh frowning fortune, cursed fickle dame,
For now I see inconstancy
More in women than in men remain.

In black mourn I, all fears scorn I;
Love hath forlorn me, living in thrall:
Heart is bleeding, all help needing,
O cruel speeding, fraughted with gall.
My shepherd's pipe can sound no deal,
My wether's bell rings doleful knell,
My curtal dog that wont to have played
Plays not at all, but seems afraid:
With sighs so deep, procures to weep,
In howling wise, to see my doleful plight.
How sighs resound through heartless ground,
Like a thousand vanquished men in bloody fight.

Clear wells spring not, sweet birds sing not,
Green plants bring not forth their dye;
Herds stands weeping, flocks all sleeping,
Nymphs back peeping fearfully.
All our pleasure known to us poor swains,
All our merry meetings on the plains,
All our evening sport from us is fled,
All our love is lost, for love is dead.
Farewell, sweet love, thy like ne'er was
For a sweet content, the cause of all my woe.
Poor Corydon must live alone;
Other help for him I see that there is none.

[18]

When as thine eye hath chose the dame,
And stalled the deer that thou shouldst strike,
Let reason rule things worthy blame,
As well as fancy, partial might.
Take counsel of some wiser head,
Neither too young, nor yet unwed.

And when thou com'st thy tale to tell,
Smooth not thy tongue with filed talk,
Lest she some subtle practice smell –
A cripple soon can find a halt –
But plainly say thou lov'st her well,
And set her person forth to sale.

And to her will frame all thy ways;
Spare not to spend, and chiefly there
Where thy desert may merit praise
By ringing in thy lady's ear:
The strongest castle, tower and town,
The golden bullet beats it down.

Serve always with assured trust,
And in thy suit be humble true;
Unless thy lady prove unjust,
Press never thou to choose anew:
When time shall serve, be thou not slack
To proffer, though she put thee back.

What though her frowning brows be bent,
Her cloudy looks will calm ere night:
And then too late she will repent
That thus dissembled her delight;
And twice desire, ere it be day,
That which with scorn she put away.

What though she strive to try her strength
And ban and brawl, and say thee nay,
Her feeble force will yield at length,
When craft hath taught her thus to say:
'Had women been so strong as men,
In faith, you had not had it then.'

The wiles and guiles that women work,
Dissembled with an outward show,
The tricks and toys that in them lurk,
The cock that treads them shall not know.
Have you not heard it said full oft,
A woman's 'nay' doth stand for naught?

Think women still to strive with men
To sin, and never for to saint;
There is no heaven: be holy then
When time with age shall them attaint.
Were kisses all the joys in bed,
One woman would another wed.

But soft, enough – too much, I fear –
Lest that my mistress hear my song;
She will not stick to round me on the ear,
To teach my tongue to be so long.
Yet will she blush, here be it said,
To hear her secrets so bewrayed.

[19]

Live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, by whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee a bed of roses,
With a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

Love's Answer

If that the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

[20]

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
Trees did grow, and plants did spring.
Every thing did banish moan,
Save the nightingale alone.
She (poor bird) as all forlorn,
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty,
That to hear it was great pity.
'Fie, fie, fie', now would she cry;
'Tereu, Tereu', by and by;
That to hear her so complain,
Scarce I could from tears refrain,
For her griefs so lively shown
Made me think upon mine own.
Ah, thought I, thou mourn'st in vain,
None takes pity on thy pain:
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee;
Ruthless bears, they will not cheer thee.
King Pandion, he is dead,
All thy friends are lapped in lead.
All thy fellow birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing.
Whilst as fickle fortune smiled,
Thou and I were both beguiled.
Everyone that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery.
Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find.
Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend;
But if store of crowns be scant,
No man will supply thy want.
If that one be prodigal,
Bountiful they will him call,
And with suchlike flattering:
'Pity but he were a king.'
If he be addict to vice,
Quickly him they will entice.
If to women he be bent,
They have at commandment;
But if Fortune once do frown,
Then farewell his great renown:
They that fawned on him before
Use his company no more.
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need;
If thou sorrow, he will weep;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep;
Thus of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part.
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

['The Phoenix and Turtle']

Let the bird of loudest lay
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be:
To whose sound chaste wings obey.

But thou shrieking harbinger,
Foul precurrer of the fiend,
Augur of the fever's end,
To this troop come thou not near.

From this session interdict
Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, feathered king:
Keep the obsequy so strict.

Let the priest in surplice white,
That defunctive music can,
Be the death-divining swan,
Lest the requiem lack his right.

And thou treble-dated crow,
That thy sable gender mak'st
With the breath thou giv'st and tak'st,
'Mongst our mourners shalt thou go.

Here the anthem doth commence:
Love and constancy is dead,
Phoenix and the Turtle fled,
In a mutual flame from hence.

So they loved as love in twain
Had the essence but in one,
Two distincts, division none:
Number there in love was slain.

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
Distance and no space was seen,
'Twixt this Turtle and his queen,
But in them it were a wonder.

So between them love did shine
That the Turtle saw his right
Flaming in the Phoenix' sight;
Either was the other's mine.

Property was thus appalled
That the self was not the same:
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was called.

Reason in itself confounded,
Saw division grow together,
To themselves yet either neither,
Simple were so well compounded,

That it cried, 'How true a twain
Seemeth this concordant one;
Love hath reason, Reason none,
If what parts can so remain.'

Whereupon it made this threne
To the Phoenix and the Dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene.

Threnos

Beauty, truth and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed, in cinders lie.

Death is now the Phoenix' nest,
And the Turtle's loyal breast
To eternity doth rest.

Leaving no posterity,
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

To this urn let those repair
That are either true or fair,
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

All's Well That Ends Well

The only early text of *All's Well That Ends Well* is that of the 1623 Folio. Judging from stylometric analyses and the repeated invocation of God, forbidden on stage after 1606, it was probably written 1605–6. On 8 November 1623, along with fifteen other plays 'not formerly entered to other men', it was entered in the Stationers' Register to the Folio's principal publishers, Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard. There is no record of early performance, but the play has been successful onstage in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Although *All's Well* appears as the twelfth of the comedies in the Folio, its genre has been a principal source of debate. A combination of fairy tale, romance, prodigal son play and sexual comedy, it was labelled a 'problem play' in 1896 by F.S. Boas, who classed it with *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* as of one a group of plays where 'the issues raised preclude a completely satisfactory outcome'. A persistent question for readers and viewers has been whether the play does, in fact, 'end well'. The main plot, the story of the curing of the king and the satisfying of apparently impossible conditions by the young heroine, is the stuff of folklore. Shakespeare seems to have read it in William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*, a translation of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*, where it appears as the ninth story on the third day. The heroine, Giletta of Narbonne, cures the French king of a painful fistula and demands, as her reward, the hand of Beltramo, Count of Rossiglione. The Count flees this unwanted marriage, but Giletta finds him and 'by policy' gets pregnant by him, 'which known to her husband, he received her again, and afterwards he lived in great honour and felicity'.

Shakespeare darkens the outline of this plot and sharpens the social particularity of its characters. Count Bertram, a fatherless adolescent proud of his nobility and determined to prove his manhood at war, away from his mother and her ward, who loves him, is callow and unwilling to marry 'a poor physician's daughter', while Helen's pursuit of the hostile Count, and especially her participation in the bed-trick she arranges, have seemed too overt about female desire in periods when virginal young women were expected to be less assertive. In general, reactions to the play over time have reflected the surrounding culture; the Victorians were distressed by its sexual content, but modern feminists have been attracted to its activist heroine.

Shakespeare's distinctive additions to the story include a fuller portrayal of the older generation: the dowager Countess, her friend Lord Lafeu and the King, who all support Helen. The action follows Helen's successive quests, first to cure the King and then to fulfil Bertram's challenge once he refuses to consummate the marriage, demanding that she '*get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off*' and show him '*a child begotten of thy body that I am father to*' (3.2.56–8), before she can call him husband.

The second plot, the exposure of Bertram's overly talkative follower, the significantly named Paroles, is entirely Shakespeare's. The scenes of Paroles's unmasking have traditionally been played as farce; in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they often dominated productions. Paroles is a foil to the Countess's Fool Lavatch, but more psychological readings of his relation to Bertram see him serving as a substitute father like Falstaff or even as a homoerotic companion. In any case, Bertram cannot accept Helen until he recognizes his follower as the knave he is and rejects him.

As the play ends, the heroine, presumed dead, reappears with Bertram's ring and 'quick' or pregnant. The King has been cured, and Bertram asks 'pardon'. Yet the happy ending is hedged with qualifications and uncertainties. In the final scene, Bertram lies repeatedly and only conditionally promises to love Helen, who describes herself as 'the shadow of a wife . . . The name and not the thing' (5.3.303–4). Even the King's apparently generous offer to Diana, 'Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower' (323), repeats the arbitrary imposition that caused Bertram's earlier flight. Hence the Epilogue can only acknowledge a final 'if': 'All yet seems well, and if it end so meet, / The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet' (328–9). This uncertainty is one source of the play's interest, as it complicates the wish-fulfilling logic of comedy itself.

The Arden text is based on the 1623 First Folio.

PAROLES Save you, fair queen.
HELEN And you, monarch.
PAROLES No.
HELEN And no.
PAROLES Are you meditating on virginity?
HELEN Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you. Let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?
PAROLES Keep him out.
HELEN But he assails, and our virginity, though valiant, in the defence yet is weak. Unfold to us some warlike resistance.
PAROLES There is none. Man, setting down before you, will undermine you and blow you up.
HELEN Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers-up. Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men?
PAROLES Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up. Marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase, and there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity, by being once lost, may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost. 'Tis too cold a companion. Away with't!
HELEN I will stand for't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.
PAROLES There's little can be said in't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity is to accuse your mothers, which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself, and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese, consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but lose by't. Out with't! Within t'one year it will make itself two, which is a goodly increase, and the principal itself not much the worse. Away with't!
HELEN How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?
PAROLES Let me see. Marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with lying; the longer kept, the less worth. Off with't while 'tis vendible. Answer the time of request. Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion, richly suited, but unsuitable, just like the brooch and the toothpick, which wear not now. Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek. And your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears: it looks ill, it eats drily; marry, 'tis a withered pear. It was formerly better, marry, yet 'tis a withered pear. Will you anything with it?
HELEN Not my virginity yet –
There shall your master have a thousand loves,
A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,
A phoenix, captain, and an enemy,
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;
His humble ambition, proud humility,
His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world
Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms
That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he –
I know not what he shall. God send him well!
The court's a learning place, and he is one –
PAROLES What one, i'faith?
HELEN That I wish well. 'Tis pity.
PAROLES What's pity?
HELEN
That wishing well had not a body in't
Which might be felt, that we the poorer born,
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,
Might with effects of them follow our friends
And show what we alone must think, which never
Returns us thanks.

Enter Page.

PAGE Monsieur Paroles, my lord calls for you. *Exit.*
PAROLES Little Helen, farewell. If I can remember thee, I will think of thee at Court.
HELEN Monsieur Paroles, you were born under a charitable star.
PAROLES Under Mars, I.
HELEN I especially think, under Mars.
PAROLES Why under Mars?
HELEN The wars hath so kept you under that you must needs be born under Mars.
PAROLES When he was predominant.
HELEN When he was retrograde, I think rather.
PAROLES Why think you so?
HELEN You go so much backward when you fight.
PAROLES That's for advantage.
HELEN So is running away when fear proposes the safety. But the composition that your valour and fear makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well.
PAROLES I am so full of businesses I cannot answer thee acutely. I will return perfect courtier, in the which my instruction shall serve to naturalize thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and thine ignorance makes thee away. Farewell. When thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast none, remember thy friends. Get thee a good husband, and use him as he uses thee. So, farewell.
Exit.
HELEN Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie
Which we ascribe to heaven. The fated sky
Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.

What power is it which mounts my love so high,
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings
To join like likes, and kiss like native things.
Impossible be strange attempts to those
That weigh their pains in sense and do suppose
What hath been cannot be. Who ever strove
To show her merit that did miss her love?
The King's disease – my project may deceive me,
But my intents are fixed and will not leave me. *Exit.*

1.2 *Flourish cornetts. Enter the* KING of France *with letters,* LORDS G. *and* E. *and divers Attendants.*

KING The Florentines and Senois are by th'ears,
Have fought with equal fortune, and continue
A braving war.
LORD G. So 'tis reported, sir.
KING Nay, 'tis most credible. We here receive it
A certainty vouched from our cousin Austria,
With caution that the Florentine will move us
For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend
Prejudicates the business, and would seem
To have us make denial.
LORD G. His love and wisdom,
Approved so to your majesty, may plead
For amplest credence.
KING He hath armed our answer,
And Florence is denied before he comes.
Yet for our gentlemen that mean to see
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave
To stand on either part.
LORD E. It well may serve
A nursery to our gentry, who are sick
For breathing and exploit.
KING What's he comes here?

Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU *and* PAROLES.

LORD G. It is the Count Roussillon, my good lord,
Young Bertram.
KING Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts
Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.
BERTRAM My thanks and duty are your majesty's.
KING I would I had that corporal soundness now
As when thy father and myself in friendship
First tried our soldiership. He did look far
Into the service of the time, and was
Discipled of the bravest. He lasted long,
But on us both did haggish age steal on,
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me
To talk of your good father. In his youth
He had the wit which I can well observe
Today in our young lords; but they may jest
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted
Ere they can hide their levity in honour.
So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness
Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,
His equal had awaked them, and his honour,
Clock to itself, knew the true minute when
Exception bid him speak, and at this time
His tongue obeyed his hand. Who were below him,
He used as creatures of another place,
And bowed his eminent top to their low ranks,
Making them proud of his humility,
In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man
Might be a copy to these younger times,
Which, followed well, would demonstrate them now
But goers backward.
BERTRAM His good remembrance, sir,
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb.
So in approof lives not his epitaph
As in your royal speech.
KING Would I were with him! He would always say –
Methinks I hear him now; his plausive words
He scattered not in ears, but grafted them
To grow there and to bear. 'Let me not live' –
This his good melancholy oft began
On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,
When it was out – 'Let me not live', quoth he,
'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses
All but new things disdain, whose judgements are
Mere fathers of their garments, whose constancies
Expire before their fashions.' This he wished.
I, after him, do after him wish too,
Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,
I quickly were dissolved from my hive
To give some labourers room.
LORD E. You're loved, sir.
They that least lend it you shall lack you first.
KING I fill a place, I know't. – How long is't, Count,
Since the physician at your father's died?
He was much famed.
BERTRAM Some six months since, my lord.
KING If he were living, I would try him yet.
– Lend me an arm. – The rest have worn me out
With several applications. Nature and sickness
Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, Count;
My son's no dearer.
BERTRAM Thank your majesty.
Flourish. Exeunt.

1.3 *Enter* COUNTESS, RINALDO *and* LAVATCH.

COUNTESS I will now hear. What say you of this gentlewoman?
RINALDO Madam, the care I have had to even your content I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours, for then we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

COUNTESS What does this knave here? [*to Lavatch*] Get you gone, sirrah. The complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe. 'Tis my slowness that I do not, for I know you lack not folly to commit them and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

LAVATCH 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

COUNTESS Well, sir.

LAVATCH No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned, but if I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may.

COUNTESS Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

LAVATCH I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS In what case?

LAVATCH In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage, and I think I shall never have the blessing of God till I have issue o'my body; for they say bairns are blessings.

COUNTESS Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

LAVATCH My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on by the flesh, and he must needs go that the devil drives.

COUNTESS Is this all your worship's reason?

LAVATCH Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such as they are.

COUNTESS May the world know them?

LAVATCH I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are, and indeed I do marry that I may repent.

COUNTESS Thy marriage sooner than thy wickedness.

LAVATCH I am out o'friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

COUNTESS Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

LAVATCH You're shallow, madam, in great friends, for the knaves come to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team, and gives me leave to in the crop. If I be his cuckold, he's my drudge. He that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend: *ergo*, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Chairbonne the puritan and old Poisson the papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one: they may jowl horns together like any deer i'th' herd.

COUNTESS Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave?

LAVATCH A prophet I, madam, and I speak the truth the next way:

[*Sings.*] For I the ballad will repeat,
Which men full true shall find:
Your marriage comes by destiny,
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS Get you gone, sir. I'll talk with you more anon.

RINALDO May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you. Of her I am to speak.

COUNTESS Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her – Helen, I mean.

LAVATCH [*Sings.*]

'Was this fair face the cause', quoth she,
'Why the Grecians sacked Troy?
Fond done, done fond,
Was this King Priam's joy?'
With that she sighed as she stood,
With that she sighed as she stood,
And gave this sentence then:
'Among nine bad if one be good,
Among nine bad if one be good,
There's yet one good in ten.'

COUNTESS What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah.

LAVATCH One good woman in ten, madam, which is a purifying o'th' song. Would God would serve the world so all the year! We'd find no fault with the tithe-woman if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth 'a? An we might have a good woman born but or every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well. A man may draw his heart out ere 'a pluck one.

COUNTESS You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you!

LAVATCH That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth. The business is for Helen to come hither.

Exit.

COUNTESS Well, now.

RINALDO I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

COUNTESS Faith, I do. Her father bequeathed her to me, and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds. There is more owing her than is paid, and more shall be paid her than she'll demand.

RINALDO Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wished me. Alone she was, and did communicate to herself, her own words to her own ears. She thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son. Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not extend his might only where qualities were level; Dian no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised without rescue in the first assault or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in, which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal, sithence in the loss that may happen it concerns you something to know it.

COUNTESS You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself. Many likelihoods informed me of this

before, which hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me. Stall this in your bosom; and I thank you for your honest care. I will speak with you further anon.

Exit Rinaldo.

Enter HELEN.

[*aside*] Even so it was with me when I was young.
If ever we are nature's, these are ours: this thorn
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong.
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,
Where love's strong passion is impressed in youth.
By our remembrances of days foregone,
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.
Her eye is sick on't; I observe her now.

HELEN What is your pleasure, madam?

COUNTESS You know, Helen, I am a mother to you.

HELEN Mine honourable mistress.

COUNTESS Nay, a mother.
Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother',
Methought you saw a serpent. What's in 'mother'
That you start at it? I say I am your mother,
And put you in the catalogue of those
That were enwombed mine. 'Tis often seen
Adoption strives with nature, and choice breeds
A native slip to us from foreign seeds.
You ne'er oppressed me with a mother's groan,
Yet I express to you a mother's care.
God's mercy, maiden! Does it curd thy blood
To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,
That this distempered messenger of wet,
The many-coloured Iris, rounds thine eye?
– Why, that you are my daughter?

HELEN That I am not.

COUNTESS I say I am your mother.

HELEN Pardon, madam;
The Count Roussillon cannot be my brother.
I am from humble, he from honoured name;
No note upon my parents, his all noble.
My master, my dear lord he is, and I
His servant live and will his vassal die.
He must not be my brother.

COUNTESS Nor I your mother?

HELEN You are my mother, madam; would you were –
So that my lord your son were not my brother –
Indeed my mother! Or were you both our mothers
I care no more for than I do for heaven,
So I were not his sister. Can 't no other
But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

COUNTESS
Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law.
God shield you mean it not! 'Daughter' and 'mother'
So strive upon your pulse! What, pale again?
My fear hath catched your fondness. Now I see
The mystery of your loneliness and find
Your salt tears' head, now to all sense 'tis gross:
You love my son. Invention is ashamed
Against the proclamation of thy passion
To say thou dost not. Therefore tell me true,
But tell me then 'tis so – for look, thy cheeks
Confess it t'one to th'other, and thine eyes
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours
That in their kind they speak it. Only sin
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,
That truth should be suspected. Speak: is't so?
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew;
If it be not, forswear't. Howe'er, I charge thee,
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,
To tell me truly.

HELEN Good madam, pardon me.

COUNTESS Do you love my son?

HELEN Your pardon, noble mistress.

COUNTESS Love you my son?

HELEN Do not you love him, madam?

COUNTESS Go not about. My love hath in't a bond
Whereof the world takes note. Come, come, disclose
The state of your affection, for your passions
Have to the full appeached.

HELEN Then I confess,
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,
That before you, and next unto high heaven,
I love your son.
My friends were poor but honest, so's my love.
Be not offended, for it hurts not him
That he is loved of me. I follow him not
By any token of presumptuous suit,
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him,
Yet never know how that desert should be.
I know I love in vain, strive against hope;
Yet in this captious and intenable sieve
I still pour in the waters of my love
And lack not to lose still. Thus, Indian-like,
Religious in mine error, I adore
The sun that looks upon his worshipper,
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,
Let not your hate encounter with my love
For loving where you do; but if yourself,
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,
Did ever in so true a flame of liking
Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian
Was both herself and Love, O then give pity
To her whose state is such that cannot choose
But lend and give where she is sure to lose;
That seeks not to find that her search implies,
But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies.

COUNTESS
Had you not lately an intent – speak truly –
To go to Paris?

HELEN Madam, I had.

COUNTESS Wherefore? Tell true.

HELEN I will tell truth, by grace itself I swear.
You know my father left me some prescriptions
Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading

And manifest experience had collected
For general sovereignty; and that he willed me
In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,
As notes whose faculties inclusive were
More than they were in note. Amongst the rest,
There is a remedy, approved, set down,
To cure the desperate languishings whereof
The King is rendered lost.

COUNTESS
This was your motive for Paris, was it? Speak.

HELEN My lord your son made me to think of this;
Else Paris, and the medicine, and the King
Had from the conversation of my thoughts
Haply been absent then.

COUNTESS But think you, Helen,
If you should tender your supposed aid,
He would receive it? He and his physicians
Are of a mind: he that they cannot help him,
They that they cannot help. How shall they credit
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,
Embowelled of their doctrine, have left off
The danger to itself?

HELEN There's something in't
More than my father's skill, which was the great'st
Of his profession, that his good receipt
Shall for my legacy be sanctified
By th' luckiest stars in heaven; and would your honour
But give me leave to try success, I'd venture
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure
By such a day, an hour.

COUNTESS Dost thou believe't?

HELEN Ay, madam, knowingly.

COUNTESS
Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love,
Means and attendants, and my loving greetings
To those of mine in court. I'll stay at home
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt.
Be gone tomorrow, and be sure of this:
What I can help thee to, thou shalt not miss. *Exeunt.*

2.1 *Enter the* KING, LORDS G. *and* E., *with divers young* Lords *taking leave for the Florentine war;* BERTRAM *and* PAROLES*; Attendants. Flourish cornetts.*

KING Farewell, young lords; these warlike principles
Do not throw from you. And you, my lords, farewell.
Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain all,
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received,
And is enough for both.

LORD G. 'Tis our hope, sir,
After well-entered soldiers, to return
And find your grace in health.

KING No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart
Will not confess he owes the malady
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords;
Whether I live or die, be you the sons
Of worthy Frenchmen. Let higher Italy
(Those bated that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy) see that you come
Not to woo honour but to wed it, when
The bravest questant shrinks. Find what you seek,
That fame may cry you loud. I say farewell.

LORD G. Health at your bidding serve your majesty!

KING Those girls of Italy, take heed of them.
They say our French lack language to deny
If they demand. Beware of being captives
Before you serve.

LORDS G. AND E. Our hearts receive your warnings.

KING Farewell. [*to Attendants*] Come hither to me.
[*Withdraws with Attendants.*]

LORD G. [*to Bertram*]
O my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

PAROLES 'Tis not his fault, the spark.

LORD E. O 'tis brave wars.

PAROLES Most admirable. I have seen those wars.

BERTRAM I am commanded here, and kept a coil with:
'Too young', and 'the next year', and ''tis too early'.

PAROLES
An thy mind stand to't, boy, steal away bravely.

BERTRAM I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn
But one to dance with. By heaven, I'll steal away!

LORD G. There's honour in the theft.

PAROLES Commit it, Count.

LORD E. I am your accessory, and so farewell.

BERTRAM
I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured body.

LORD G. Farewell, captain.

LORD E. Sweet Monsieur Paroles.

PAROLES Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin, good sparks and lustrous. A word, good mettles. You shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here on his sinister cheek. It was this very sword entrenched it. Say to him I live, and observe his reports for me.

LORD G. We shall, noble captain.

PAROLES Mars dote on you for his novices.
Exeunt Lords G. and E.
[*to Bertram*] What will ye do?

BERTRAM Stay the King.

PAROLES Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords. You have restrained yourself within the list of too cold an adieu. Be more expressive to them; for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there do muster true gait; eat, speak and move under the influence of the most received star, and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed. After them, and take a more dilated farewell.

BERTRAM And I will do so.

PAROLES Worthy fellows, and like to prove most sinewy swordmen. *Exeunt Bertram and Paroles.*

LAVATCH I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord, sir!' I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.
COUNTESS I play the noble housewife with the time, To entertain it so merrily with a fool.
LAVATCH O Lord, sir! Why, there't serves well again.
COUNTESS An end, sir! To your business: [*giving him a letter*] give Helen this,
And urge her to a present answer back.
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son.
This is not much.
LAVATCH Not much commendation to them.
COUNTESS Not much employment for you. You understand me?
LAVATCH Most fruitfully. I am there before my legs.
COUNTESS Haste you again. *Exeunt.*

2.3 *Enter* BERTRAM, LAFEU *and* PAROLES.

LAFEU They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.
PAROLES Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.
BERTRAM And so 'tis.
LAFEU To be relinquished of the artists –
PAROLES So I say, both of Galen and Paracelsus.
LAFEU Of all the learned and authentic fellows –
PAROLES Right, so I say.
LAFEU That gave him out incurable –
PAROLES Why, there 'tis; so say I too.
LAFEU Not to be helped.
PAROLES Right, as 'twere, a man assured of a –
LAFEU Uncertain life, and sure death.
PAROLES Just, you say well; so would I have said.
LAFEU I may truly say it is a novelty to the world.
PAROLES It is indeed. If you will have it in showing, you shall read it in what-do-ye-call there.
LAFEU [*Reads.*] 'A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.'
PAROLES That's it; I would have said the very same.
LAFEU Why, your dolphin is not lustier. 'Fore me, I speak in respect –
PAROLES Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange; that is the brief and the tedious of it, and he's of a most facinorious spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the –
LAFEU Very hand of heaven.
PAROLES Ay, so I say.
LAFEU In a most weak –
PAROLES And debile minister, great power, great transcendence, which should indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recovery of the King, as to be –
LAFEU Generally thankful.

Enter KING, HELEN *and Attendants.*

PAROLES I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the King.
LAFEU *Lustig*, as the Dutchman says. I'll like a maid the better whilst I have a tooth in my head. Why, he's able to lead her a coranto.
PAROLES *Mort du vinaigre!* Is not this Helen?
LAFEU 'Fore God, I think so.
KING Go call before me all the lords in court. *Exit Attendant.*
Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side,
And with this healthful hand, whose banished sense
Thou hast repealed, a second time receive
The confirmation of my promised gift,
Which but attends thy naming.

Enter four Lords.

Fair maid, send forth thine eye. This youthful parcel
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice
I have to use. Thy frank election make;
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.
HELEN To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress
Fall, when love please; marry, to each but one.
LAFEU I'd give bay curtal and his furniture,
My mouth no more were broken than these boys',
And writ as little beard.
KING Peruse them well:
Not one of those but had a noble father.
[*She addresses her to a Lord.*]
HELEN Gentlemen,
Heaven hath through me restored the King to health.
LORDS We understand it, and thank heaven for you.
HELEN I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest
That I protest I simply am a maid.
– Please it your majesty, I have done already.
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,
'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused,
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever,
We'll ne'er come there again.'
KING Make choice and see.
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.
HELEN Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,
And to imperial Love, that god most high,
Do my sighs stream. [*to 1 Lord*] Sir, will you hear my suit?
1 LORD And grant it.
HELEN Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.
LAFEU [*aside*] I had rather be in this choice than throw ambs-ace for my life.
HELEN [*to 2 Lord*]
The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes
Before I speak too threateningly replies.
Love make your fortunes twenty times above
Her that so wishes, and her humble love.
2 LORD No better, if you please.

HELEN My wish receive,
Which great Love grant, and so I take my leave.
LAFEU [*aside*] Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine, I'd have them whipped, or I would send them to th' Turk to make eunuchs of.
HELEN [*to 3 Lord*]
Be not afraid that I your hand should take,
I'll never do you wrong for your own sake.
Blessing upon your vows, and in your bed
Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed.
LAFEU [*aside*] These boys are boys of ice, they'll none have her. Sure, they are bastards to the English; the French ne'er got 'em.
HELEN [*to 4 Lord*]
You are too young, too happy and too good
To make yourself a son out of my blood.
4 LORD Fair one, I think not so.
LAFEU [*aside*] There's one grape yet. I am sure thy father drunk wine. But if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth of fourteen. I have known thee already.
HELEN [*to Bertram*] I dare not say I take you; but I give
Me and my service, ever whilst I live,
Into your guiding power. – This is the man.
KING
Why then, young Bertram, take her: she's thy wife.
BERTRAM
My wife, my liege? I shall beseech your highness
In such a business give me leave to use
The help of mine own eyes.
KING Knowst thou not, Bertram,
What she has done for me?
BERTRAM Yes, my good lord,
But never hope to know why I should marry her.
KING
Thou knowst she has raised me from my sickly bed.
BERTRAM But follows it, my lord, to bring me down
Must answer for your raising? I know her well:
She had her breeding at my father's charge.
A poor physician's daughter my wife? Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever.
KING 'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,
Of colour, weight and heat, poured all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stands off
In differences so mighty. If she be
All that is virtuous – save what thou dislik'st,
'A poor physician's daughter' – thou dislik'st
Of virtue for the name. But do not so.
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by th' doer's deed.
Where great additions swell 's, and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour. Good alone
Is good, without a name. Vileness is so:
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;
In these to Nature she's immediate heir,
And these breed honour. That is honour's scorn
Which challenges itself as honour's born
And is not like the sire. Honours thrive
When rather from our acts we them derive
Than our foregoers. The mere word's a slave
Debauched on every tomb, on every grave
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb
Where dust and damned oblivion is the tomb
Of honoured bones indeed. What should be said?
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,
I can create the rest. Virtue and she
Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.
BERTRAM I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.
KING
Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.
HELEN That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad.
Let the rest go.
KING My honour's at the stake, which to defeat
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift,
That dost in vile misprision shackle up
My love and her desert; that canst not dream
We, poising us in her defective scale,
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know
It is in us to plant thine honour where
We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt;
Obey our will, which travails in thy good.
Believe not thy disdain, but presently
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;
Or I will throw thee from my care forever
Into the staggers and the careless lapse
Of youth and ignorance, both my revenge and hate
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,
Without all terms of pity. Speak, thine answer.
BERTRAM Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit
My fancy to your eyes. When I consider
What great creation and what dole of honour
Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now
The praised of the King who, so ennobled,
Is as 'twere born so.
KING Take her by the hand,
And tell her she is thine; to whom I promise
A counterpoise, if not to thy estate
A balance more replete.
BERTRAM I take her hand.
KING Good fortune and the favour of the King
Smile upon this contract, whose ceremony
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,
And be performed tonight. The solemn feast
Shall more attend upon the coming space,
Expecting absent friends. As thou lov'st her,
Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.
Exeunt all but Paroles and Lafeu who stay behind, commenting of this wedding.
LAFEU Do you hear, monsieur? A word with you.
PAROLES Your pleasure, sir?

LAFEU Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.
PAROLES Recantation? My lord? My master?
LAFEU Ay. Is it not a language I speak?
PAROLES A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master?
LAFEU Are you companion to the Count Roussillon?
PAROLES To any count; to all counts; to what is man.
LAFEU To what is count's man. Count's master is of another style.
PAROLES You are too old, sir. Let it satisfy you, you are too old.
LAFEU I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which title age cannot bring thee.
PAROLES What I dare too well do, I dare not do.
LAFEU I did think thee for two ordinaries to be a pretty wise fellow. Thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass. Yet the scarves and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden. I have now found thee. When I lose thee again, I care not. Yet art thou good for nothing but taking up, and that thou'rt scarce worth.
PAROLES Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee –
LAFEU Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if – Lord have mercy on thee for a hen. So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well. Thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.
PAROLES My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.
LAFEU Ay, with all my heart, and thou art worthy of it.
PAROLES I have not, my lord, deserved it.
LAFEU Yes, good faith, every dram of it, and I will not bate thee a scruple.
PAROLES Well, I shall be wiser.
LAFEU Even as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at a smack o'th' contrary. If ever thou be'st bound in thy scarf and beaten, thou shall find what it is to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge, that I may say in the default, 'He is a man I know'.
PAROLES My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.
LAFEU I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor doing eternal. For doing I am past, as I will by thee, in what motion age will give me leave. *Exit.*
PAROLES Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off me, scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord. Well, I must be patient, there is no fettering of authority. I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with any convenience, an he were double and double a lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of – I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

Enter LAFEU.

LAFEU Sirrah, your lord and master's married. There's news for you. You have a new mistress.
PAROLES I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs. He is my good lord; whom I serve above is my master.
LAFEU Who? God?
PAROLES Ay, sir.
LAFEU The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o'this fashion? Dost make hose of thy sleeves? Do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee. Methink'st thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee. I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.
PAROLES This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.
LAFEU Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate. You are a vagabond and no true traveller. You are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you. *Exit.*
PAROLES Good, very good. It is so then. Good, very good. Let it be concealed awhile.

Enter BERTRAM.

BERTRAM Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!
PAROLES What's the matter, sweet heart?
BERTRAM
Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,
I will not bed her.
PAROLES What? What, sweet heart?
BERTRAM O my Paroles, they have married me!
I'll to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her.
PAROLES France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits
The tread of a man's foot. To th' wars!
BERTRAM There's letters from my mother. What th'import is, I know not yet.
PAROLES Ay, that would be known. To th' wars, my boy, to th' wars!
He wears his honour in a box unseen
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions!
France is a stable, we that dwell in't jades.
Therefore, to th' war!
BERTRAM It shall be so. I'll send her to my house,
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her
And wherefore I am fled, write to the King
That which I durst not speak. His present gift
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields
Where noble fellows strike. Wars is no strife
To the dark house and the detested wife.
PAROLES Will this capriccio hold in thee, art sure?
BERTRAM Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.
I'll send her straight away. Tomorrow,
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.
PAROLES
Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:

A young man married is a man that's marred.
Therefore away, and leave her bravely. Go!
The King has done you wrong; but hush, 'tis so.
Exeunt.

2.4 *Enter* HELEN *reading a letter and* LAVATCH.

HELEN My mother greets me kindly. Is she well?
LAVATCH She is not well, but yet she has her health. She's very merry, but yet she is not well. But, thanks be given, she's very well, and wants nothing i'th' world. But yet she is not well.
HELEN If she be very well, what does she ail that she's not very well?
LAVATCH Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.
HELEN What two things?
LAVATCH One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly. The other, that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly.

Enter PAROLES.

PAROLES Bless you, my fortunate lady.
HELEN I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.
PAROLES You had my prayers to lead them on, and to keep them on have them still. [*to Lavatch*] O my knave, how does my old lady?
LAVATCH So that you had her wrinkles and I her money, I would she did as you say.
PAROLES Why, I say nothing.
LAVATCH Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing. To say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing and to have nothing is to be a great part of your title, which is within a very little of nothing.
PAROLES Away, thou'rt a knave.
LAVATCH You should have said, sir, 'Before a knave thou'rt a knave'; that's, 'Before me thou'rt a knave'. This had been truth, sir.
PAROLES Go to, thou art a witty fool. I have found thee.
LAVATCH Did you find me in yourself, sir, or were you taught to find me?
PAROLES In myself.
LAVATCH The search, sir, was profitable, and much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.
PAROLES A good knave, i'faith, and well fed.
Madam, my lord will go away tonight.
A very serious business calls on him.
The great prerogative and rite of love,
Which as your due time claims, he does acknowledge,
But puts it off to a compelled restraint;
Whose want and whose delay is strewed with sweets,
Which they distil now in the curbed time
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy
And pleasure drown the brim.
HELEN What's his will else?
PAROLES
That you will take your instant leave o'th' King
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,
Strengthened with what apology you think
May make it probable need.
HELEN What more commands he?
PAROLES That, having this obtained, you presently
Attend his further pleasure.
HELEN In everything I wait upon his will.
PAROLES I shall report it so. *Exit.*
HELEN I pray you. – Come, sirrah. *Exeunt.*

2.5 *Enter* LAFEU *and* BERTRAM.

LAFEU But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.
BERTRAM Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.
LAFEU You have it from his own deliverance.
BERTRAM And by other warranted testimony.
LAFEU Then my dial goes not true. I took this lark for a bunting.
BERTRAM I do assure you, my lord, he is very great in knowledge, and accordingly valiant.
LAFEU I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes. I pray you, make us friends; I will pursue the amity.

Enter PAROLES.

PAROLES [*to Bertram*] These things shall be done, sir.
LAFEU Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?
PAROLES Sir!
LAFEU O, I know him well, ay, 'Sir'. He, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.
BERTRAM [*aside to Paroles*] Is she gone to the King?
PAROLES She is.
BERTRAM Will she away tonight?
PAROLES As you'll have her.
BERTRAM I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,
Given order for our horses, and tonight,
When I should take possession of the bride,
End ere I do begin.
LAFEU A good traveller is something at the latter end of a dinner; but one that lies three-thirds and uses a known truth to pass a thousand nothings with should be once heard and thrice beaten. God save you, captain.
BERTRAM Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?
PAROLES I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's displeasure.
LAFEU You have made shift to run into't, boots and spurs and all, like him that leaped into the custard; and out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer question for your residence.
BERTRAM It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.
LAFEU And shall do so ever, though I took him at's

prayers. Fare you well, my lord, and believe this of me: there can be no kernel in this light nut. The soul of this man is his clothes. Trust him not in matter of heavy consequence. I have kept of them tame, and know their natures. [*to Paroles*] Farewell, monsieur: I have spoken better of you than you have wit or will to deserve at my hand; but we must do good against evil. *Exit.*

PAROLES An idle lord, I swear.

BERTRAM I think not so.

PAROLES Why, do you not know him?

BERTRAM Yes, I do know him well, and common speech Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

Enter HELEN.

HELEN I have, sir, as I was commanded from you, Spoke with the King, and have procured his leave For present parting; only he desires Some private speech with you.

BERTRAM I shall obey his will. You must not marvel, Helen, at my course, Which holds not colour with the time, nor does The ministration and required office On my particular. Prepared I was not For such a business; therefore am I found So much unsettled. This drives me to entreat you That presently you take your way for home, And rather muse than ask why I entreat you, For my respects are better than they seem And my appointments have in them a need Greater than shows itself at the first view To you that know them not. This to my mother. [*Gives a letter.*] 'Twill be two days ere I shall see you, so I leave you to your wisdom.

HELEN Sir, I can nothing say, But that I am your most obedient servant –

BERTRAM Come, come, no more of that.

HELEN – And ever shall With true observance seek to eke out that Wherein toward me my homely stars have failed To equal my great fortune.

BERTRAM Let that go. My haste is very great. Farewell; hie home.

HELEN Pray, sir, your pardon.

BERTRAM Well, what would you say?

HELEN I am not worthy of the wealth I owe, Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is; But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal What law does vouch mine own.

BERTRAM What would you have?

HELEN Something, and scarce so much; nothing, indeed. I would not tell you what I would, my lord. Faith, yes: Strangers and foes do sunder and not kiss.

BERTRAM I pray you stay not, but in haste to horse.

HELEN I shall not break your bidding, good my lord. – Where are my other men? Monsieur, farewell. *Exit.*

BERTRAM Go thou toward home, where I will never come Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum. Away, and for our flight.

PAROLES Bravely. *Coraggio*! *Exeunt.*

3.1

Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, *the two French* LORDS G. *and* E., *with a troop of Soldiers.*

DUKE So that from point to point now have you heard The fundamental reasons of this war, Whose great decision hath much blood let forth And more thirsts after.

LORD G. Holy seems the quarrel Upon your grace's part; black and fearful On the opposer.

DUKE Therefore we marvel much our cousin France Would in so just a business shut his bosom Against our borrowing prayers.

LORD E. Good my lord, The reasons of our state I cannot yield But like a common and an outward man That the great figure of a council frames By self-unable motion; therefore dare not Say what I think of it, since I have found Myself in my incertain grounds to fail As often as I guessed.

DUKE Be it his pleasure.

LORD G. But I am sure the younger of our nation, That surfeit on their ease, will day by day Come here for physic.

DUKE Welcome shall they be; And all the honours that can fly from us Shall on them settle. You know your places well: When better fall, for your avails they fell. Tomorrow to the field. *Flourish. Exeunt.*

3.2

Enter COUNTESS *holding a letter and* LAVATCH.

COUNTESS It hath happened all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her.

LAVATCH By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

COUNTESS By what observance, I pray you?

LAVATCH Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

COUNTESS [*opening the letter*] Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

LAVATCH I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court. Our old ling and our Isbels o'th' country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o'th' court. The brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to love as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

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with the twigs that threatens them. I hope I need not to advise you further, but I hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

DIANA You shall not need to fear me.

Enter HELEN *dressed as a pilgrim.*

WIDOW I hope so. Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lie at my house; thither they send one another. I'll question her.
God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?

HELEN To Saint Jacques le Grand.
Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

WIDOW At the Saint Francis here beside the port.

HELEN Is this the way? [*A march afar*]

WIDOW Ay, marry, is't. Hark you, they come this way.
If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,
But till the troops come by,
I will conduct you where you shall be lodged,
The rather for I think I know your hostess
As ample as myself.

HELEN Is it yourself?

WIDOW If you shall please so, pilgrim.

HELEN I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

WIDOW You came, I think, from France?

HELEN I did so.

WIDOW Here you shall see a countryman of yours
That has done worthy service.

HELEN His name, I pray you?

DIANA The Count Roussillon. Know you such a one?

HELEN But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him.
His face I know not.

DIANA Whatsome'er he is,
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,
As 'tis reported, for the King had married him
Against his liking. Think you it is so?

HELEN Ay, surely, mere the truth. I know his lady.

DIANA There is a gentleman that serves the count
Reports but coarsely of her.

HELEN What's his name?

DIANA Monsieur Paroles.

HELEN O, I believe with him.
In argument of praise, or to the worth
Of the great count himself, she is too mean
To have her name repeated. All her deserving
Is a reserved honesty, and that
I have not heard examined.

DIANA Alas, poor lady.
'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife
Of a detesting lord.

WIDOW I warrant, good creature, wheresoe'er she is,
Her heart weighs sadly. This young maid might do her
A shrewd turn, if she pleased.

HELEN How do you mean?
May be the amorous count solicits her
In the unlawful purpose.

WIDOW He does indeed,
And brokes with all that can in such a suit
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid.
But she is armed for him, and keeps her guard
In honestest defence.

Drum and colours.
Enter BERTRAM, PAROLES *and the whole Army.*

MARIANA The gods forbid else!

WIDOW So, now they come:
That is Antonio, the Duke's eldest son;
That, Escalus.

HELEN Which is the Frenchman?

DIANA He,
That with the plume; 'tis a most gallant fellow.
I would he loved his wife. If he were honester,
He were much goodlier.
Is't not a handsome gentleman?

HELEN I like him well.

DIANA
'Tis pity he is not honest. Yond's that same knave
That leads him to these places. Were I his lady,
I would poison that vile rascal.

HELEN Which is he?

DIANA That jackanapes with scarves. Why is he melancholy?

HELEN Perchance he's hurt i'th' battle.

PAROLES Lose our drum? Well!

MARIANA He's shrewdly vexed at something. Look, he has spied us.

WIDOW [*to Paroles*] Marry, hang you!

MARIANA [*to Paroles*] And your curtsy, for a ring-carrier! *Exeunt Bertram, Paroles and Army.*

WIDOW
The troop is passed. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you
Where you shall host. Of enjoined penitents
There's four or five, to great Saint Jacques bound,
Already at my house.

HELEN I humbly thank you.
Please it this matron and this gentle maid
To eat with us tonight, the charge and thanking
Shall be for me. And, to requite you further,
I will bestow some precepts of this virgin
Worthy the note.

BOTH We'll take your offer kindly. *Exeunt.*

3.6

Enter BERTRAM *and the French* LORDS G. *and* E., *as at first.*

LORD E. Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his way.

LORD G. If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold me no more in your respect.

LORD E. On my life, my lord, a bubble.

BERTRAM Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

LORD E. Believe it, my lord. In mine own direct knowledge, without any malice, but to speak of him as

my kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality worthy your lordship's entertainment.

LORD G. It were fit you knew him, lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.

BERTRAM I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

LORD G. None better than to let him fetch off his drum, which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

LORD E. I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise him. Such I will have, whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy. We will bind and hoodwink him so that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversary's when we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at his examination. If he do not, for the promise of his life, and in the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgement in anything.

LORD G. O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum. He says he has a stratagem for't. When your lordship sees the bottom of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

Enter PAROLES.

LORD E. [*to Bertram and Lord G.*] O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of his design. Let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

BERTRAM How now, monsieur? This drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

LORD G. A pox on't! Let it go; 'tis but a drum.

PAROLES But a drum? Is't but a drum? A drum so lost! There was excellent command, to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers.

LORD G. That was not to be blamed in the command of the service. It was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

BERTRAM Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success. Some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum, but it is not to be recovered.

PAROLES It might have been recovered.

BERTRAM It might, but it is not now.

PAROLES It is to be recovered. But that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or *hic iacet*.

BERTRAM Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur! If you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise and go on. I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit. If you speed well in it, the Duke shall both speak of it and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

PAROLES By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

BERTRAM But you must not now slumber in it.

PAROLES I'll about it this evening, and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

BERTRAM May I be bold to acquaint his grace you are gone about it?

PAROLES I know not what the success will be, my lord, but the attempt I vow.

BERTRAM I know thou'rt valiant, and to the possibility of thy soldiership will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

PAROLES I love not many words. *Exit.*

LORD E. No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do, and dares better be damned than to do't?

LORD G. You do not know him, my lord, as we do. Certain it is that he will steal himself into a man's favour and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

BERTRAM Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that so seriously he does address himself unto?

LORD E. None in the world, but return with an invention and clap upon you two or three probable lies. But we have almost embossed him. You shall see his fall tonight; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

LORD G. We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him. He was first smoked by the old Lord Lafeu. When his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him, which you shall see this very night.

LORD E. I must go look my twigs. He shall be caught.

BERTRAM [*to Lord G.*] Your brother, he shall go along with me.

LORD G. As't please your lordship, I'll leave you. *Exit.*

BERTRAM
Now will I lead you to the house and show you
The lass I spoke of.

LORD E. But you say she's honest.

BERTRAM
That's all the fault. I spoke with her but once
And found her wondrous cold. But I sent to her
By this same coxcomb that we have i'th' wind
Tokens and letters, which she did re-send.
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature.
Will you go see her?

LORD E. With all my heart, my lord. *Exeunt.*

3.7 *Enter* HELEN *and the* WIDOW.

HELEN If you misdoubt me that I am not she,
I know not how I shall assure you further
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.
WIDOW Though my estate be fall'n, I was well born,
Nothing acquainted with these businesses,
And would not put my reputation now
In any staining act.
HELEN Nor would I wish you.
First, give me trust the count he is my husband,
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken
Is so from word to word. And then you cannot,
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,
Err in bestowing it.
WIDOW I should believe you,
For you have showed me that which well approves
You're great in fortune.
HELEN Take this purse of gold,
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,
Which I will over-pay and pay again
When I have found it. The count he woos your daughter,
Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,
Resolves to carry her. Let her in fine consent,
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.
Now his important blood will naught deny
That she'll demand. A ring the county wears
That downward hath succeeded in his house
From son to son some four or five descents
Since the first father wore it. This ring he holds
In most rich choice; yet, in his idle fire,
To buy his will it would not seem too dear,
Howe'er repented after.
WIDOW Now I see
The bottom of your purpose.
HELEN You see it lawful then. It is no more
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,
Herself most chastely absent. After,
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns
To what is passed already.
WIDOW I have yielded.
Instruct my daughter how she shall persever
That time and place with this deceit so lawful
May prove coherent. Every night he comes
With musics of all sorts, and songs composed
To her unworthiness. It nothing steads us
To chide him from our eaves, for he persists
As if his life lay on't.
HELEN Why then, tonight
Let us assay our plot, which if it speed,
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed,
And lawful meaning in a wicked act,
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact.
But let's about it. *Exeunt.*

4.1 *Enter* LORD G., *with five or six other* Soldiers *in ambush.*

LORD G. He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner. When you sally upon him, speak what terrible language you will. Though you understand it not yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to understand him, unless some one among us, whom we must produce for an interpreter.
1 SOLDIER Good captain, let me be th'interpreter.
LORD G. Art not acquainted with him? Knows he not thy voice?
1 SOLDIER No, sir, I warrant you.
LORD G. But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?
1 SOLDIER E'en such as you speak to me.
LORD G. He must think us some band of strangers i'th' adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another. So we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language, gabble enough and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! Here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

Enter PAROLES.

PAROLES Ten o'clock. Within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausive invention that carries it. They begin to smoke me, and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy, but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it, and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.
LORD G. [*aside*] This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.
PAROLES What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts and say I got them in exploit. Yet slight ones will not carry it. They will say, 'Came you off with so little?' And great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth and buy myself another of Bajazet's mute if you prattle me into these perils.
LORD G. [*aside*] Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?
PAROLES I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.
LORD G. [*aside*] We cannot afford you so.
PAROLES Or the baring of my beard, and to say it was in stratagem.
LORD G. [*aside*] 'Twould not do.
PAROLES Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

LORD G. [*aside*] Hardly serve.
PAROLES Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel –
LORD G. [*aside*] How deep?
PAROLES Thirty fathom.
LORD G. [*aside*] Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.
PAROLES I would I had any drum of the enemy's. I would swear I recovered it.
LORD G. [*aside*] You shall hear one anon.
PAROLES A drum now of the enemy's –
[*Alarum within*]
LORD G. *Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.*
ALL *Cargo, cargo, cargo, villianda par corbo, cargo.*
[*They seize Paroles and blindfold him.*]
PAROLES O, ransom, ransom! Do not hide mine eyes.
1 SOLDIER *Boskos thromuldo boskos.*
PAROLES I know you are the Muskos' regiment,
And I shall lose my life for want of language.
If there be here German or Dane, Low Dutch,
Italian or French, let him speak to me:
I'll discover that which shall undo the Florentine.
1 SOLDIER *Boskos vauvado*. I understand thee and can speak thy tongue. *Kerelybonto*, sir, betake thee to thy faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.
PAROLES O!
1 SOLDIER O, pray, pray, pray! *Manka revania dulche*.
LORD E. *Oscorbidulchos volivorco*.
1 SOLDIER The general is content to spare thee yet,
And hoodwinked as thou art, will lead thee on
To gather from thee. Haply thou mayst inform
Something to save thy life.
PAROLES O, let me live,
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,
Their force, their purposes. Nay, I'll speak that
Which you will wonder at.
1 SOLDIER But wilt thou faithfully?
PAROLES If I do not, damn me.
1 SOLDIER *Acordo linta*. Come on, thou art granted space. *Exit with Paroles guarded.*
[*A short alarum within*]
LORD G. Go tell the Count Roussillon and my brother,
We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled
Till we do hear from them.
2 SOLDIER Captain, I will.
LORD G. 'A will betray us all unto ourselves:
Inform on that.
2 SOLDIER So I will, sir.
LORD G. Till then I'll keep him dark and safely locked.
Exeunt.

4.2 *Enter* BERTRAM *and the maid called* DIANA.

BERTRAM
They told me that your name was Fontybell.
DIANA No, my good lord, Diana.
BERTRAM Titled goddess,
And worth it, with addition. But, fair soul,
In your fine frame hath love no quality?
If the quick fire of youth light not your mind,
You are no maiden but a monument.
When you are dead, you should be such a one
As you are now, for you are cold and stern,
And now you should be as your mother was
When your sweet self was got.
DIANA She then was honest.
BERTRAM So should you be.
DIANA No.
My mother did but duty, such, my lord,
As you owe to your wife.
BERTRAM No more o'that!
I prithee do not strive against my vows.
I was compelled to her, but I love thee
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever
Do thee all rights of service.
DIANA Ay, so you serve us
Till we serve you. But when you have our roses,
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves
And mock us with our bareness.
BERTRAM How have I sworn!
DIANA 'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,
But the plain single vow that is vowed true.
What is not holy, that we swear not by,
But take the high'st to witness. Then pray you tell me,
If I should swear by Jove's great attributes
I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths
When I did love you ill? This has no holding,
To swear by him whom I protest to love
That I will work against him. Therefore your oaths
Are words and poor conditions, but unsealed,
At least in my opinion.
BERTRAM Change it, change it!
Be not so holy-cruel. Love is holy,
And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts
That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,
But give thyself unto my sick desires,
Who then recovers. Say thou art mine, and ever
My love as it begins shall so persever.
DIANA I see that men may rope 's in such a snare
That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.
BERTRAM I'll lend it thee, my dear, but have no power
To give it from me.
DIANA Will you not, my lord?
BERTRAM It is an honour 'longing to our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors,
Which were the greatest obloquy i'th' world
In me to lose.
DIANA Mine honour's such a ring.
My chastity's the jewel of our house,
Bequeathed down from many ancestors,
Which were the greatest obloquy i'th' world
In me to lose. Thus your own proper wisdom
Brings in the champion honour on my part

Against your vain assault.
BERTRAM Here, take my ring.
My house, mine honour, yea, my life be thine,
And I'll be bid by thee.
DIANA
When midnight comes, knock at my chamber window;
I'll order take my mother shall not hear.
Now will I charge you in the band of truth,
When you have conquered my yet maiden bed,
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me.
My reasons are most strong, and you shall know them
When back again this ring shall be delivered.
And on your finger in the night I'll put
Another ring, that what in time proceeds
May token to the future our past deeds.
Adieu till then; then fail not. You have won
A wife of me, though there my hope be done.
BERTRAM
A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee. *Exit.*
DIANA
For which live long to thank both heaven and me!
You may so in the end.
My mother told me just how he would woo,
As if she sat in's heart. She says all men
Have the like oaths. He had sworn to marry me
When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,
Marry that will, I live and die a maid.
Only in this disguise I think't no sin
To cozen him that would unjustly win. *Exit.*

4.3 *Enter the two French* LORDS G. *and* E. *and some two or three* Soldiers.

LORD G. You have not given him his mother's letter?
LORD E. I have delivered it an hour since. There is something in't that stings his nature, for on the reading it he changed almost into another man.
LORD G. He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady.
LORD E. Especially, he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the King, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you.
LORD G. When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.
LORD E. He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence of a most chaste renown, and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour. He hath given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself made in the unchaste composition.
LORD G. Now, God delay our rebellion! As we are ourselves, what things are we!
LORD E. Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course of all treasons, we still see them reveal themselves till they attain to their abhorred ends, so he that in this action contrives against his own nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.
LORD G. Is it not meant damnable in us to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents? We shall not then have his company tonight?
LORD E. Not till after midnight, for he is dieted to his hour.
LORD G. That approaches apace. I would gladly have him see his company anatomized that he might take a measure of his own judgements, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit.
LORD E. We will not meddle with him till he come, for his presence must be the whip of the other.
LORD G. In the meantime, what hear you of these wars?
LORD E. I hear there is an overture of peace.
LORD G. Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.
LORD E. What will Count Roussillon do then? Will he travel higher, or return again into France?
LORD G. I perceive by this demand you are not altogether of his counsel.
LORD E. Let it be forbid, sir. So should I be a great deal of his act.
LORD G. Sir, his wife some two months since fled from his house. Her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jacques le Grand, which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she accomplished. And there residing, the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.
LORD E. How is this justified?
LORD G. The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true even to the point of her death. Her death itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place.
LORD E. Hath the count all this intelligence?
LORD G. Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, to the full arming of the verity.
LORD E. I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.
LORD G. How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses!
LORD E. And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.
LORD G. The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together. Our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.

Enter a Servant.

How now? Where's your master?
SERVANT He met the Duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave. His lordship will next morning for France. The Duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the King.

the world for no honest use. Therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

PAROLES O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

LORD G. That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends. [*Removes the blindfold.*] So, look about you. Know you any here?

BERTRAM Good morrow, noble captain.

LORD E. God bless you, Captain Paroles.

LORD G. God save you, noble captain.

LORD E. Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu? I am for France.

LORD G. Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Roussillon? An I were not a very coward, I'd compel it of you, but fare you well.

Exeunt Bertram and Lords G. and E.

1 SOLDIER You are undone, captain – all but your scarf, that has a knot on't yet.

PAROLES Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

1 SOLDIER If you could find out a country where but women were that had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent nation. Fare ye well, sir, I am for France too. We shall speak of you there.

Exit with Soldiers.

PAROLES Yet am I thankful. If my heart were great,
'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more,
But I will eat and drink and sleep as soft
As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,
Let him fear this; for it will come to pass
That every braggart shall be found an ass.
Rust sword, cool blushes, and Paroles live
Safest in shame. Being fooled, by fool'ry thrive.
There's place and means for every man alive.
I'll after them. *Exit.*

4.4 *Enter* HELEN, *the* WIDOW *and* DIANA.

HELEN
That you may well perceive I have not wronged you,
One of the greatest in the Christian world
Shall be my surety, 'fore whose throne 'tis needful,
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel.
Time was, I did him a desired office,
Dear almost as his life, which gratitude
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth
And answer thanks. I duly am informed,
His grace is at Marseilles, to which place
We have convenient convoy. You must know
I am supposed dead. The army breaking,
My husband hies him home, where, heaven aiding,
And by the leave of my good lord the King,
We'll be before our welcome.

WIDOW Gentle madam,
You never had a servant to whose trust
Your business was more welcome.

HELEN Nor you, mistress,
Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour
To recompense your love. Doubt not but heaven
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,
As it hath fated her to be my motive
And helper to a husband. But O, strange men,
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,
When saucy trusting of the cozened thoughts
Defiles the pitchy night! So lust doth play
With what it loathes for that which is away –
But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,
Under my poor instructions yet must suffer
Something in my behalf.

DIANA Let death and honesty
Go with your impositions, I am yours
Upon your will to suffer.

HELEN Yet, I pray you:
But with the word the time will bring on summer,
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,
And be as sweet as sharp. We must away.
Our wagon is prepared, and time revives us.
All's well that ends well; still the fine's the crown.
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown. *Exeunt.*

4.5 *Enter* LAVATCH, COUNTESS *and* LAFEU.

LAFEU No, no, no, your son was misled with a snipped-taffeta fellow there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy youth of a nation in his colour. Your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanced by the King than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

COUNTESS I would I had not known him. It was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love.

LAFEU 'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady. We may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb.

LAVATCH Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather the herb of grace.

LAFEU They are not herbs, you knave, they are nose-herbs.

LAVATCH I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass.

LAFEU Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or a fool?

LAVATCH A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

LAFEU Your distinction?

LAVATCH I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.

LAFEU So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

LAVATCH And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

LAFEU I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.

LAVATCH At your service.
LAFEU No, no, no.
LAVATCH Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as great a prince as you are.
LAFEU Who's that? A Frenchman?
LAVATCH Faith, sir, 'a has an English name, but his phys'nomy is more hotter in France than there.
LAFEU What prince is that?
LAVATCH The black prince, sir, alias the prince of darkness, alias the devil.
LAFEU Hold thee, there's my purse. I give thee not this to suggest thee from thy master thou talk'st of. Serve him still.
LAVATCH I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire, and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. But sure he is the prince of the world; let his nobility remain in's court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some that humble themselves may, but the many will be too chill and tender, and they'll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.
LAFEU Go thy ways. I begin to be aweary of thee, and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways. Let my horses be well looked to, without any tricks.
LAVATCH If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades' tricks, which are their own right by the law of nature. *Exit.*
LAFEU A shrewd knave and an unhappy.
COUNTESS So 'a is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him. By his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness, and indeed he has no pace but runs where he will.
LAFEU I like him well, 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the King my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter, which in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, did first propose. His highness hath promised me to do it; and to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it?
COUNTESS With very much content, my lord, and I wish it happily effected.
LAFEU His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able body as when he numbered thirty. 'A will be here tomorrow, or I am deceived by him that in such intelligence hath seldom failed.
COUNTESS It rejoices me that I hope I shall see him ere I die. I have letters that my son will be here tonight. I shall beseech your lordship to remain with me till they meet together.
LAFEU Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might safely be admitted.
COUNTESS You need but plead your honourable privilege.
LAFEU Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but, I thank my God, it holds yet.

Enter LAVATCH.

LAVATCH O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of velvet on's face. Whether there be a scar under't or no, the velvet knows, but 'tis a goodly patch of velvet. His left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.
LAFEU A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery of honour. So belike is that.
LAVATCH But it is your carbonadoed face.
LAFEU Let us go see your son, I pray you. I long to talk with the young noble soldier.
LAVATCH Faith, there's a dozen of 'em with delicate fine hats, and most courteous feathers which bow the head and nod at every man. *Exeunt.*

5.1 *Enter* HELEN, *the* WIDOW *and* DIANA, *with two Attendants.*

HELEN But this exceeding posting day and night
Must wear your spirits low. We cannot help it.
But since you have made the days and nights as one
To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,
Be bold you do so grow in my requital
As nothing can unroot you.

Enter a gentle AUSTRINGER.

In happy time!
This man may help me to his majesty's ear,
If he would spend his power. – God save you, sir.
AUSTRINGER And you.
HELEN Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.
AUSTRINGER I have been sometimes there.
HELEN I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen
From the report that goes upon your goodness,
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to
The use of your own virtues, for the which
I shall continue thankful.
AUSTRINGER What's your will?
HELEN That it will please you
To give this poor petition to the King,
And aid me with that store of power you have
To come into his presence.
AUSTRINGER The King's not here.
HELEN Not here, sir?
AUSTRINGER Not, indeed.
He hence removed last night, and with more haste
Than is his use.
WIDOW Lord, how we lose our pains!
HELEN All's well that ends well yet,
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.
I do beseech you, whither is he gone?
AUSTRINGER Marry, as I take it, to Roussillon,
Whither I am going.

HELEN I do beseech you, sir,
Since you are like to see the King before me,
Commend the paper to his gracious hand,
Which I presume shall render you no blame
But rather make you thank your pains for it.
I will come after you with what good speed
Our means will make us means.
AUSTRINGER This I'll do for you.
HELEN
And you shall find yourself to be well thanked,
Whate'er falls more. [*to Attendants*] We must to horse again.
Go, go, provide. *Exeunt.*

5.2 *Enter* LAVATCH *and* PAROLES.

PAROLES Good Monsieur Lavatch, give my Lord Lafeu this letter. I have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes. But I am now, sir, muddied in Fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.
LAVATCH Truly, Fortune's displeasure is but sluttish if it smell so strongly as thou speak'st of. I will henceforth eat no fish of Fortune's buttering. Prithee allow the wind.
PAROLES Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake but by a metaphor.
LAVATCH Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose, or against any man's metaphor. Prithee get thee further.
PAROLES Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.
LAVATCH Foh! Prithee stand away. A paper from Fortune's close-stool, to give to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself.

Enter LAFEU.

Here is a purr of Fortune's, sir, or of Fortune's cat – but not a musk cat – that has fallen into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure and, as he says, is muddied withal. Pray you, sir, use the carp as you may, for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort, and leave him to your lordship. *Exit.*
PAROLES My lord, I am a man whom Fortune hath cruelly scratched.
LAFEU And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with Fortune that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady, and would not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a *quart d'écu* for you. Let the justices make you and Fortune friends; I am for other business.
PAROLES I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.
LAFEU You beg a single penny more. Come, you shall ha't. Save your word.
PAROLES My name, my good lord, is Paroles.
LAFEU You beg more than one word then. Cock's my passion! Give me your hand. How does your drum?
PAROLES O my good lord, you were the first that found me.
LAFEU Was I, in sooth? And I was the first that lost thee.
PAROLES It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out.
LAFEU Out upon thee, knave! Dost thou put upon me at once both the office of God and the devil? One brings thee in grace, and the other brings thee out.
[*Trumpets sound.*]
The King's coming; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah, enquire further after me. I had talk of you last night; though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat. Go to, follow.
PAROLES I praise God for you. *Exeunt.*

5.3 *Flourish. Enter* KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, *the two French* LORDS G. *and* E., *with* Attendants.

KING We lost a jewel of her, and our esteem
Was made much poorer by it. But your son,
As mad in folly, lacked the sense to know
Her estimation home.
COUNTESS 'Tis past, my liege,
And I beseech your majesty to make it
Natural rebellion done i'th' blade of youth,
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,
O'erbears it, and burns on.
KING My honoured lady,
I have forgiven and forgotten all,
Though my revenges were high bent upon him,
And watched the time to shoot.
LAFEU This I must say –
But first I beg my pardon – the young lord
Did to his majesty, his mother and his lady
Offence of mighty note; but to himself
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife
Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes, whose words all ears took captive,
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorned to serve
Humbly called mistress.
KING Praising what is lost
Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither.
We are reconciled, and the first view shall kill
All repetition. Let him not ask our pardon.
The nature of his great offence is dead,
And deeper than oblivion we do bury
Th'incensing relics of it. Let him approach
A stranger, no offender; and inform him
So 'tis our will he should.
ATTENDANT I shall, my liege. *Exit.*
KING
What says he to your daughter? Have you spoke?
LAFEU All that he is hath reference to your highness.
KING
Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me

That sets him high in fame.

Enter BERTRAM.

LAFEU He looks well on't.
KING I am not a day of season,
For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail
In me at once. But to the brightest beams
Distracted clouds give way. So stand thou forth;
The time is fair again.
BERTRAM My high-repented blames,
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.
KING All is whole.
Not one word more of the consumed time.
Let's take the instant by the forward top;
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees
Th'inaudible and noiseless foot of time
Steals ere we can effect them. You remember
The daughter of this lord?
BERTRAM Admiringly, my liege. At first
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue;
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,
Which warped the line of every other favour,
Scorned a fair colour or expressed it stolen,
Extended or contracted all proportions
To a most hideous object. Thence it came
That she whom all men praised, and whom myself,
Since I have lost, have loved, was in mine eye
The dust that did offend it.
KING Well excused.
That thou didst love her strikes some scores away
From the great count. But love that comes too late,
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,
To the great sender turns a sour offence,
Crying, 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults
Make trivial price of serious things we have,
Not knowing them until we know their grave.
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,
Destroy our friends and after weep their dust.
Our own love, waking, cries to see what's done,
While shameful hate sleeps out the afternoon.
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin.
The main consents are had, and here we'll stay
To see our widower's second marriage day.
COUNTESS
Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless!
Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cease!
LAFEU Come on, my son, in whom my house's name
Must be digested; give a favour from you
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,
That she may quickly come. [*Bertram gives a ring.*]
By my old beard,
And ev'ry hair that's on't, Helen that's dead
Was a sweet creature. Such a ring as this,
The last that e'er I took her leave at court,
I saw upon her finger.
BERTRAM Hers it was not.
KING Now pray you let me see it, for mine eye,
While I was speaking, oft was fastened to't.
This ring was mine, and when I gave it Helen,
I bade her if her fortunes ever stood
Necessitied to help, that by this token
I would relieve her. Had you that craft to reave her
Of what should stead her most?
BERTRAM My gracious sovereign,
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,
The ring was never hers.
COUNTESS Son, on my life,
I have seen her wear it, and she reckoned it
At her life's rate.
LAFEU I am sure I saw her wear it.
BERTRAM You are deceived, my lord, she never saw it.
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,
Wrapped in a paper, which contained the name
Of her that threw it. Noble she was, and thought
I stood engaged; but when I had subscribed
To mine own fortune, and informed her fully
I could not answer in that course of honour
As she had made the overture, she ceased
In heavy satisfaction, and would never
Receive the ring again.
KING Plutus himself,
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,
Hath not in nature's mystery more science
Than I have in this ring. 'Twas mine, 'twas Helen's,
Whoever gave it you. Then if you know
That you are well acquainted with yourself,
Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement
You got it from her. She called the saints to surety
That she would never put it from her finger
Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,
Where you have never come, or sent it us
Upon her great disaster.
BERTRAM She never saw it.
KING Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour,
And mak'st conjectural fears to come into me
Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove
That thou art so inhuman – 'twill not prove so.
And yet I know not. Thou didst hate her deadly,
And she is dead, which nothing but to close
Her eyes myself could win me to believe
More than to see this ring. Take him away.
My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,
Having vainly feared too little. Away with him.
We'll sift this matter further.
BERTRAM If you shall prove
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,
Where yet she never was. *Exit guarded.*

Enter AUSTRINGER.

LAFEU Mine eyes smell onions, I shall weep anon.
[*to Paroles*] Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkerchief.
So I thank thee; wait on me home, I'll make sport with
thee. Let thy curtsies alone, they are scurvy ones.
KING Let us from point to point this story know,
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.
[*to Diana*] If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower,
Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower,
For I can guess that by thy honest aid
Thou kept'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.
Of that and all the progress, more and less,
Resolvedly more leisure shall express.
All yet seems well, and if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet. [*Flourish*]

EPILOGUE

The king's a beggar, now the play is done.
All is well ended, if this suit be won,
That you express content; which we will pay
With strife to please you, day exceeding day.
Ours be your patience, then, and yours our parts;
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.
Exeunt.