

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00378-0 - The Sonnets of Shakespeare: Edited from the Quarto
of 1609

William Shakespeare

Excerpt

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TO · THE · ONLIE · BEGETTER · OF ·
THESE · INSVING · SONNETS ·
MR W. H. ALL · HAPPINESSE ·
AND · THAT · ETERNITIE ·
PROMISED
BY
OVR · EVER-LIVING · POET ·
WISHETH ·
THE · WELL-WISHING
ADVENTVRER · IN ·
SETTING ·
FORTH ·

T. T.

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SONNETS

I

FROM fairest creatures we desire increase,
 That thereby Beauty's rose might never die,
 But, as the ripper should by time decease,
 His tender heir might bear his memory:
 But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes, 5
 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, 10
 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.

II

WHEN forty winters shall besiege thy brow
 And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
 Thy youth's proud livery, so gaz'd on now,
 Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
 Then, being ask'd where all thy beauty lies, 5
 Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
 To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
 Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
 How much more praise deserv'd thy beauty's use,
 If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine 10
 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.

I. 2. *beauties* Q: *Rose* (italics) Q: ↓.I. 6. *selfe substantiall* Q: hyph. Sew.II. 4. *totter'd* Q: *tatter'd* Gil.II. 7. *deepe sunken* Q: hyph. Gil.

II. 10-11. quot. Mal.

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SONNETS

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III

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, unless some mother. 5
 For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee 10
 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 remember'd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

IV

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 5
 The bounteous largess given thee to give?
 Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
 So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
 For, having traffic with thyself alone,
 Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive. 10
 Then how when nature calls thee to be gone?
 What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
 Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
 Which, used, lives, th' executor to be.

III. 8. *self loue* Q: hyph. Lin.
 III. 12. *goulded* 1640.

IV. 11. ...*how*,...*gone*, Q and vulg.:
 punct. Ed. ↓.
 IV. 12. *Audit* (ital.) Q.
 IV. 14. *thy executor* Cap.

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SONNETS

V

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 5
 To hideous winter and confounds him there,
 Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
 Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness everywhere.
 Then, were not summer's distillation left,
 A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass, 10
 Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
 Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
 But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
 Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

VI

THEN let not winter's ragged hand deface
 In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
 Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
 With Beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
 That use is not forbidden usury, 5
 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 refigur'd thee: 10
 Then what could Death do, if thou shouldst depart
 Leaving thee living in posterity?
 Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
 To be Death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

v. 7. *leau's Q.*
 vi. 1. *wragged Q.*

vi. 4. *beautits Q. selfe kil'd Q: hyph.*
 Gil.
 vi. 11, 14. *death...deaths Q: Death...*
Death's Ed.

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SONNETS

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VII

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty;
 And, having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill, 5
 Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
 Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
 Attending on his golden pilgrimage;
 But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
 Like feeble age he reeleth from the day, 10
 The eyes, fore duteous, now converted are
 From his low tract and look another way:
 So thou, thyself outgoing in thy noon,
 Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

VIII

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, 5
 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, 10
 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.'

VII. 3. *new appearing* Q: hyph. Mal.VII. 5. *steepe up* Q: hyph. Gil.VII. 9. *care* (for *car*) 1640.VII. 11. *'fore* vulg. ↓.VIII. 9. *Mark how one string... Q.* and vulg.: punct. Ed. ↓.VIII. 10. *Strike* Q (with space for a lost letter).VIII. 14. *quot.* Mal.

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SONNETS

IX

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 5
 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 10
 Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
 But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
 And, kept unus'd, the user so destroys it.
 No love toward others in that bosom sits
 That on himself such murderous shame commits.

X

FOR shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,
 Who for thyself art so unprovident!
 Grant, if thou wilt, thou art belov'd of many,
 But that thou none lov'st is most evident;
 For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate 5
 That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
 Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
 Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
 O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind!
 Shall hate be fairer lodg'd than gentle love? 10
 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.

IX. 1. *It is* 1640.X. 1. *For shame deny... Q: For shame!
deny... Sew.*

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XI

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; 5
 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: 10
 Look, whom she best endow'd she gave the more;
 Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:
 She carv'd thee for her seal, and meant thereby
 Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

XII

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
 When I behold the violet past prime,
 And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves, 5
 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, 10
 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.

XI. 6. *could* Q: *cold* 1640.

XII. 4. *or siluer'd ore* Q: *all silver'd o'er* Mal.: *o'er-silver'd* all sugg. Nicholson.
 But see note for *or silver'd o'er*.

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SONNETS

XIII

O, THAT you were yourself's! but, love, you are
 O, 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 5
 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 10
 Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
 And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
 O, none but unthrifths! Dear my love, you know
 You had a father; let your son say so.

XIV

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, 5
 Pointing to each his thunder, rain, and wind,
 Or say with princes if it shall go well,
 By oft predict that I in heaven find:
 But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
 And, constant stars, in them I read such art, 10
 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.

XIII. 1. *your selfe* Q: *yourself's* Ed. ↓. XIV. 4. *seasons* Q: *seasons' Cap.: season's*XIII. 7. *You selfe* Q: *your selfe* 1640. Ald.XIII. 13. *dare* 1640.

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SONNETS

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XV

WHEN I consider every thing that grows
 Holds in perfection but a little moment,
 That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
 When I perceive that men as plants increase, 5
 Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky,
 Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
 And wear their brave state out of memory;
 Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
 Sets you, most rich in youth, before my sight, 10
 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.

XVI

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, 5
 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 10
 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.

xv. 8. *were Q: wear Gil.*xvi. 10. *Which this (Times pencil or my pupill pen) Q.*

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SONNETS

XVII

WH O will believe my verse in time to come?
 If it were fill'd with your most high deserts—
 Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
 Which hides your life and shows not half your parts—
 If I could write the beauty of your eyes 5
 And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
 The age to come would say 'This poet lies;
 Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
 So should my papers, yellow'd with their age,
 Be scorn'd, like old men of less truth than tongue, 10
 And your true rights be term'd a 'poet's rage'
 And 'stretched metre' of an 'antique' song:
 But were some child of yours alive that time,
 You should live twice—in it and in my rhyme.

XVIII

SH ALL 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, 5
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; 10
 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.

- xvii. 1, 2. *Who...come | If it...deserts?* xvii. 14. *You should live twice in it,*
 Q: punct. Ed. ↓. *and...* Q: punct. Mal.
 xvii. 7, 8. quot. Coll. xviii. Omitted 1640.
 xvii. 11–12. quot. marks Ed. xviii. 11. *death* Q.
 xvii. 12. *miter* Q: *metre* Gil.