Though all my wares be trash, the heart is true,
The heart is true,
The heart is true.

Great gifts are guiles and look for gifts again;
My trifles comes as treasures from my mind.
10 It is a precious jewel to be plain;
Sometimes in shell the orient pearls we find.
Of others take a sheaf, of me a grain,
Of me a grain,
Of me a grain.

Within this pack pins, points, laces, and gloves,
And divers toys° fitting a country fair.
But in my heart, where duty serves and loves,
Turtles and twins, court's brood,° a heavenly pair.
Happy the heart that thinks of no removes,
20 Of no removes,
Of no removes.
1600

toys both small objects and "fancies": compare our contemporary notions counter at a store
Turtles and twins . . . brood turtle-doves and the "heavenly pair" of twins, Castor and Pollux of the constellation Gemini, were emblems of true love and constancy; the latter were the "brood" of Jove as the swan, and Leda

SIR THOMAS WYATT
1503–1542

"A hand that taught what might be said in rhyme," his follower, Surrey, said of him. Wyatt's inaugurating role in the establishment of Elizabethan poetic conventions is a strange one. Like many originators who forge the stylistic models from which others will work, there is a kind of awkwardness and tentativeness about even his best work. Wyatt, born in Kent and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, was a courtier and diplomat whose travels to Italy and France in 1526 and 1527 acquainted him with the High Renaissance abroad. He served Henry VIII in various capacities, and was charged with treason, and acquitted, a year before his death. Wyatt's poems are of two sorts. The first—lyrics in short, tight stanzas of eight-syllable lines or less, written in an earlier tradition of song continued from the later fifteenth century—represents what the Elizabethan critic Puttenham called the poetry of the "courtly makers." These poems are metrically regular in the accentual-syllabic tradition which, after Chaucer, was lost (save by the Scottish poets) in all but the short lines of song meters. (We must remember that iambic pentameter had virtually to be rediscovered in the Tudor period. Chaucer was known and admired devoutly, but his iambic pentameter line was misread, even as late as Spenser's time, as a rough, accentual, four-beat "riding rhyme.") The second sort, Wyatt's translations and adaptations of Petrarch, not only brought the sonnet form to English but also sought to work out, from the Italian eleven-syllable line, a viable English equivalent. Wyatt's sonnets are written in a peculiar mixture of syllabic and accentual lines, but the majority of those lines move toward the normative verse pattern which he was able to bequeath to his follower, the Earl of Surrey.

I Find No Peace°

I find no peace and all my war is done;
I fear and hope, I burn and freeze like ice;
I fly above the wind, yet can I not arise,
And naught I have and all the world I seize on;
That° looseth nor locketh holdeth me in prison,
And holdeth me not yet can I scape nowise;
Nor letteth me live nor die at my devise,°
And yet of death it giveth none occasion.
Without eyen° I see, and without tongue I plain;
10 I desire to perish, and yet I ask health;
I love another, and thus I hate myself;
I feed me in sorrow, and laugh in all my pain.
Likewise displeaseth me both death and life,
And my delight is causer of this strife.
from ms. 1913

My Galley Chargèd with Forgetfulness°

My galley chargèd with forgetfulness
Through sharp seas, in winter night doth pass
Tween rock and rock;° and eke° mine enemy, alas,
That is my lord steereth with cruelness.
And every oar a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forcèd sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
10 Hath done the wearied cords° great hinderance;
Wreathèd with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain
Drownèd is reason that should me consort,
And I remain despairing of the port.
from ms. 1913

Farewell, Love

Farewell, Love, and all thy laws forever,—
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more;
Senec° and Plato call me from thy lore,

I Find No Peace from Petrarch (*In Vita*, Sonnet XC), helping to establish the subsequently popular vogue for talking in paradoxes, particularly about love—in a tradition going back before Petrarch to Sappho and Catullus—and represented in its clichéd form by poems like "Tichborne's Elegy" (see above)
that that which (love)
devise plan
eyen eyes

My Galley . . . Forgetfulness from Petrarch (*In Vita*, Sonnet CXXXVII)
tween rock and rock a reminiscence of Homeric navigational dangers; the whole poem transforms Horace's "Ship of the state" (*Odes* I.14) into a ship of self
eke also
cords rigging
Senec Seneca, the Roman Stoic philosopher and tragedian

20 But since that I so kindely° am served,
I fain would know what she hath deserved.
from ms. 1913

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY
1517–1547

Soldier, courtier from the time of his youth, in and out of favor with King Henry VIII who married, then beheaded, Surrey's cousin Catherine, the poet was finally executed himself, for treason, in 1547. He appears to have done translations into English verse when young, and was an admirer and younger friend of Wyatt. His own poems left a more palpable legacy than Wyatt's. The sonnets in Tottel's Miscellany (1557) are of the quatrain and couplet sort which became the standard English model. His is the first English blank verse, perhaps derived from an acquaintance with Italian poetry in this meter, and used with neoclassical appropriateness for a translation of two books of Virgil's *Aeneid*, published after his death, in 1557. Surrey's sonnets lack the experimental vigor of Wyatt's which appealed so much to the tastes of poetic modernism in the 1930's and '40's; they are marked instead by the smoothness and sophistication in handling the form used later by Shakespeare, the balance and measure of syntax and verse unit, and the absorption of classical styles and their lessons for English, which make him such a direct precursor of Sir Philip Sidney.

Alas, So All Things Now Do Hold Their Peace°

Alas, so all things now do hold their peace,
Heaven and earth disturbed in no-thing;
The beasts, the air, the birds their song do cease,
The nightès chair° the stars about do bring.
Calm is the sea: the waves work less and less;
So am not I, whom love, alas, doth wring,
Bringing before my face the great increase
Of my desires, whereat I weep and sing
In joy and woe as in a doubtful ease;
10 For my sweet thoughts sometime do pleasure bring,
But by and by the cause of my disease°
Gives me a pang that inwardly doth sting,
When that I think what grief it is again
To live and lack the thing should rid my pain.
1557

kindely appropriately. Rather, sarcastic, of course, and Tottel's version of the last two lines uses the word in its modern sense, making it negative, and coarsening the tone: "But since that I unkindly so am served, How like you this? What hath she now deserved?"
Alas . . . peace a version of Petrarch's sonnet (*In Vita*, Sonnet CLXIV) which is, itself, worked up from the well-known set piece by Virgil translated below
nightès chair car, or chariot, of the night, i.e. the Great Bear; "nightes" is disyllabic
disease uneasiness

From Virgil's Aeneid

[The Night-Piece°]

It was then night: the sound and quiet sleep
Had through the earth the wearied bodies caught;
The woods, the raging seas were fallen to rest;
When that the stars had half their course declined
The fields whist;° beasts and fowls of divers hue,
And what so that in the broad lakes remained,
Or yet among the bushy thicks° of briar
Laid down to sleep by silence of the night,
110 Gan 'suage their cares, mindless of travels past.
Not so the sprite of this Phoenician:°
Unhappy she, that on no sleep could chance,
Nor yet night's rest enter in eye or breast.
Her cares redouble; love doth rise and rage again,°
And overflows with swelling storms of wrath.
1557

[The Trojan Horse°]

'The Greeks' chieftains, all irkèd with the war
Wherein they wasted had so many years
20 And oft repulsed by fatal destiny,
By the divine science of Minerva
A huge horse made, high raisèd like a hill,
For their return a feignèd sacrifice:
The fame whereof so wandered it at point.°
Of cloven fir compacted were his ribs;
In the dark bulk they closed bodies of men
Chosen by lot, and did enstuff° by stealth
The hollow womb with armèd soldiers.
There stands in sight an isle, hight° Tenedon,
30 Rich, and of fame, while Priam's kingdom stood;
Now but a bay, and road unsure for ship.
Hither them secretly the Greeks withdrew,
Shrouding themselves under the desert shore.
And, weening° we they had been fled and gone
And with that wind had fet the land of Greece,
Troyè discharged her long continued dole.
The gates cast up, we issued out to play,
The Greekish camp desirous to behold,
The places void, and the forsaken coasts.

The Night-Piece a famous passage in Virgil, *Aeneid* IV.522–28 contrasting the quiet of night with Dido's anxiety when she knows Aeneas will desert her. It was imitated by Petrarch in the sonnet adapted by Surrey given above.
whist were silent
thicks thickets
this Phoenician Dido, queen of Carthage
Her cares . . . again This is a deliberate alexandrine, or twelve-syllable line.
The Trojan Horse This section is narrated by Aeneas at Dido's court.
at point aptly
enstuff to garrison with soldiers
hight named
weening knowing

40 Here Pyrrhus' band; there fierce Achilles pight;°
Here rode their ships; there did their battles join.
Astonied, some the scatheful gift beheld,
Behight° by vow unto the chaste Minerve,
All wondering at the hugeness of the horse.
  The first of all Timoetes gan advise
Within the walls to lead and draw the same,
And place it eke amid the palace court:
Whether of guile, or Troyès fate it would.
Capys, with some of judgment more discreet,
50 Willed it to drown, or underset with flame
The suspect present of the Greeks' deceit,
Or bore and gauge the hollow caves uncouth:
So diverse ran the giddy people's mind.
  Lo, foremost of a rout that followed him,
Kindled Laocoön° hasted from the tower,
Crying far off: "O wretched citizens!
What so great kind of frenzy fretteth you?
Deem ye the Greeks our enemies to be gone?
Or any Greekish gifts can you suppose
60 Devoid of guile? Is so Ulysses known?
Either the Greeks are in this timber hid,
Or this an engine is to annoy our walls,
To view our towers, and overwhelm our town.
Here lurks some craft. Good Troyans, give no trust
Unto this horse, for whatsoever it be,
I dread the Greeks—yea, when they offer gifts!"
And with that word, with all his force a dart
He lancèd then into that crooked womb
Which trembling stuck, and shook within the side:
70 Wherewith the caves gan hollowly resound.
And, but for Fates, and for our blind forecast,
The Greeks' device and guile had he descried:
Troy yet had stood, and Priam's towers so high.'

. . .

1557

Love That Doth Reign and Live Within My Thought

Love, that doth reign and live within my thought,°
And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast° look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace
10 Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,°
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain,
  Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:
  Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

1557

pight pitched (of tents)
Behight consecrated
Laocoön Son of Priam (king of Troy) and a priest of Apollo, he was punished by Athena for his attempts to warn the Trojans about the Wooden Horse, and died, with his sons, in the coils of two great serpents.
Love . . . thought adapted from the same Petrarchan sonnet (*In Vita*, Sonnet XCI) as Wyatt's "The Long Love That in My Thought Doth Harbour"

shamefast modest
plain lament

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
1554–1586

If the humanist ideal of the fulfilled human being was a wisely and gracefully educated aristocrat, Sir Philip Sidney was almost the perfect courtier. A man who could stand for the condition of humanity, not by exemplifying a random sample but as a mirror and a mold of all the virtues, should possess many cultivated skills (as Castiglione argued in *Il Cortegiano*) tempered with that *sprezzatura*, or aristocratic carelessness, which would distinguish him from a professional, a mere hired hand. English humanist educators had prescribed formal intellectual training as being necessary to the art of government; and the arts of literature as they might be practiced in courtly poetry, certainly, were free of the taint of base handicrafts and household help that painting, architecture, and professional music-making still kept. Sidney was able in his short life to unite some of the separate concerns of court and university by informing his originally recreational writing with a range of purposes and concerns shared by his teachers and his friends like Spenser and Fulke Greville; and indeed, under the pressure of these concerns, moral and aesthetic, two of these projects actually got, in a sense, out of hand. His prose romance (now called *The Old Arcadia*) gave way, in his later rewriting of it, to something so much more complex that he could not complete it. His sonnet sequence, *Astrophel and Stella*, created a model not only for what would become a national literary fashion in the last decade of the century but also for an association of form, mythological and narrative elements, and tone of personal voice which would continue to influence English lyric poetry in the century after his death.
  Sidney was born to an important family; his uncles were the Earls of Leicester and Warwick, his mother, an unusually well educated lady for her day, who was able to assist with the basic education of her son and his sister (later the Countess of Pembroke) at Penshurst, the family castle in Kent (see Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst"). Sidney later went to Shrewsbury School and to Oxford, but left his college, Christ Church, without taking a degree, in 1571. Thereafter he traveled extensively abroad assisting on diplomatic missions, fought in Ireland, and met many learned and influential men who would reinforce his commitments to the skills of knowledge, and to Protestantism. It was in that cause, as much as in the nationalist one, that he would die in Holland,

...g wounded at the Battle of Zutphen fighting the Spanish forces of his godfather, King Philip of Spain.

Sidney's friendships in England and abroad were literary as well as courtly and diplomatic, and the concern for the establishment of an English national literature which is apparent in his *Defence of Poesie* was deeply rooted in more than merely the contemporary arguments about style and form (poetic meter, in particular, was an important issue) that dominated critical writing about literature in his day. In 1578 he wrote an entertainment (somewhere between a masque and a pageant) for Queen Elizabeth's visit to the Earl of Leicester; in that year, too, he began work on the *Arcadia,* "This idle work of mine," as he referred to it, "this child which I am loth to father," his *sprezzatura* minimizing what must have been, even in a work probably designed at first to amuse his sister, a very deep commitment to a literary program. Based on an Italian prototype, the *Arcadia* of Sannazaro (1501), in alternating passages of prose and verse as well as on the five-act structure of classical comedy, Sidney's work uses the idyllic setting of pastoral tradition, the shipwrecks, abductions by pirates, usurpations, and mistaken identities of the Alexandrian romances like Heliodorus' *Aethiopian Romance,* for its plot. But its literary center is in the dialogues and debates, in the most rhetorical of prose styles, on such subjects as reason and passion, the active as opposed to the contemplative life, the duties of kingship, and other academic set pieces. Fully as important were the interspersed poems, on a variety of subjects and in a variety of forms and meters, including adaptations of Greek and Latin quantitative meter in the fashionably experimental way. Sidney finished *The Old Arcadia* in 1580; two years later, he began work on its never-to-be-finished revision to be called (from the title of its first posthumously published version) *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590), or *The New Arcadia.* It represented a new mode of seriousness, introducing just the confusion of genres which the *Defence* so deplored (it is, perhaps, a good candidate for Polonius's "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" in *Hamlet*). After finishing two books and part of a very long third one, Sidney abandoned the project; it was reissued with some slight changes and the added last three books of *The Old Arcadia.* There was perhaps no way in which Sidney could handle the transformation of the brilliant but limited genre of the first book without the kind of fundamental re-thinking of the nature of a literary form which resulted in many of Shakespeare's plays, and *The Faerie Queene.*

The sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella,* started in 1581, probably finished the following year, circulated widely, like many poems of their age, in manuscript, and finally appeared in three unauthorized but influential editions in 1591. The first full Petrarchan sequence in English, it adopts both the Petrarchan fiction (Astrophil or -phel means "star-lover" in Greek; Stella is Latin for "star") and the meta-fiction, namely that the fiction exists merely to veil a literal autobiographical situation. In fact, the Petrarchan mythology exists to provide a muse, a psychology, and a set of relations and images; the use of biography is to support that myth. Penelope Devereux, to whom Sidney was briefly engaged when she was quite young, was the daughter of the Earl of Essex; she eventually married Lord Rich, rather unhappily. The identification of Stella with her is unquestioned, and if threads of "story" are carefully analyzed, some relation between them and possible meetings, confrontations, and partings in the lives of Sidney and Penelope during 1581–82 may be discerned. In several sonnets there are puns on her name (she "Hath no misfortune but that Rich she is," etc.) that would become almost mandatory in subsequent sonnet collections. Still, the Stella of the sequence is a mythical muse of lyric poetry, and of English lyric poetry struggling to justify itself in the light of antiquity and of Continental mastery of the classical tradition. Sidney's use not only of Petrarchan imagery but also of patternings of linguistic surface and depth which he had learned from the Renaissance study of rhetoric, is reinforced in these poems by a constant sense of personal presence, of a tone of voice of a speaker in a situation, which will lay the groundwork for the new kind of lyric of speech that first appears so dramatically in the poetry of John Donne.

Ye Goatherd Gods°

STREPHON Ye goatherd gods, that love the grassy mountains,
Ye nymphs that haunt the springs in pleasant valleys,
Ye satyrs joyed with free and quiet forests,
Vouchsafe your silent ears to plaining music,
Which to my woes gives still an early morning,
And draws the dolour on till weary evening.

KLAIUS O Mercury, foregoer to the evening,
O heavenly huntress° of the savage mountains,
O lovely star, entitled of the morning,°
10 While that my voice doth fill these woeful valleys,
Vouchsafe your silent ears to plaining music,
Which oft hath Echo tired in secret forests.

STREPHON I, that was once free burgess° of the forests,
Where shade from sun, and sport I sought at evening,
I, that was once esteemed for pleasant music,
Am banished now among the monstrous mountains
Of huge despair, and foul affliction's valleys,
Am grown a screech owl to myself each morning.

KLAIUS I, that was once delighted every morning,
20 Hunting the wild inhabiters of forests,
I, that was once the music of these valleys,
So darkened am that all my day is evening,
Heartbroken so that molehills seem high mountains
And fill the vales with cries instead of music.

STREPHON Long since, alas, my deadly swannish music°
Hath made itself a crier of the morning,

Ye Goatherd Gods One of the songs (No. 71) from the *Old Arcadia,* sung by Strephon and Klaius, two foreign swains united by their love for Urania, who has left Arcadia, commanding them to remain there. A double sestina, it expands the original 39-line form that traditionally uses only the six terminal words of its first stanza as terminals throughout (permutations of their order generate the subsequent stanzas). The brilliance and fame of this poem depend upon the resonant evocations of overtones of meaning in the repetitions of *mountains—valleys—forests—music—morning—evening.*

huntress Diana (Artemis), virgin moon goddess

O lovely . . . morning Lucifer, the Morning Star

burgess free citizen

deadly swannish music The swan was supposed to sing only at its death.

use, so are they not all the mind may stretch itself unto. Who knows whether I feed not my mind with higher thoughts? Truly, as I know not all the particularities, so yet see I the bounds of all those knowledges; but the workings of the mind I find much more infinite than can be led unto by the eye, or imagined by any that distract their thoughts without themselves; and in such contemplations, or as I think more excellent, I enjoy my solitariness, and my solitariness perchance is the nurse of these contemplations. Eagles we see fly alone, and they are but sheep which always herd together. Condemn not therefore my mind sometime to enjoy itself, nor blame not the taking of such times as serve most fit for it.'

And here Pyrocles suddenly stopped, like a man unsatisfied in himself, though his wit might well have served to have satisfied another. And so looking with a countenance as though he desired he should know his mind without hearing him speak, and yet desirous to speak, to breathe out some part of his inward evil, sending again new blood to his face, he continued his speech in this manner.

'And lord, dear cousin,' said he, 'doth not the pleasantness of this place carry in itself sufficient reward for any time lost in it, or for any such danger that might ensue? Do you not see how everything conspires together to make this place a heavenly dwelling? Do you not see the grass, how in color they excell the emeralds, every one striving to pass his fellow, and yet they are all kept in an equal height? And see you not the rest of all these beautiful flowers, each of which would require a man's wit to know, and his life to express? Do not these stately trees seem to maintain their flourishing old age, with the only happiness of their seat being clothed with a continual spring, because no beauty here should ever fade? Doth not the air breathe health which the birds (both delightful both to the ear and eye) do daily solemnize with the sweet consent of their voices? Is not every echo here a perfect music? And these fresh and delightful brooks, how slowly they slide away, as, loath to leave the company of so many things united in perfection, and with how sweet a murmur they lament their forced departure. Certainly, certainly, cousin, it must needs be, that some goddess this desert belongs unto, who is the soul of this soil, for neither is any less than a goddess worthy to be shrined in such a heap of pleasures, nor any less than a goddess could have made it so perfect a model of the heavenly dwellings.'

And so he ended with a deep sigh, ruefully casting his eye upon Musidorus, as more desirous of pity than pleading.

1580

From Astrophel and Stella

I

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,°
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe:
Studying inventions fine,° her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.°
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
10 Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame Study's blows;
And others' feet° still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
  Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite:
  'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart, and write!'°

II

Not at the first sight, nor with a dribbed° shot,
Love gave the wound which, while I breathe, will bleed;
But known worth did in mine° of time proceed,
Till, by degrees, it had full conquest got.
I saw, and liked; I liked, but lovèd not;
I loved, but straight did not what Love decreed:
At length to Love's decrees I, forced, agreed,
Yet with repining at so partial lot.°
Now even that footstep° of lost liberty
10 Is gone, and now, like slave-born Muscovite,
I call it praise to suffer tyranny;
And now employ the remnant of my wit
  To make myself believe that all is well,
  While, with a feeling skill,° I paint my hell.

III

Let dainty wits cry on the Sisters nine,°
That bravely masked, their fancies may be told;
Or, Pindar's apes,° flaunt they in phrases fine,
Enamelling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold;
Or else let them in statelier glory shine,
Ennobling new-found tropes° with problems old;

Loving . . . show This opening sonnet of the sequence is an original text about the notion of originality in English poetry (see Herbert's "Jordan II" for an elaboration on it); it is one of six sonnets in alexandrines, twelve-syllabled lines adapted from the standard French meter, in the collection.

inventions fine *Inventio* (here not the personified process, as in l. 8, but its results) is the first of the three phases of composition—with *dispositio*, or structure, and *elocutio*, or style—recognized in the Renaissance; these "fine" inventions, obviously, will not do for Stella's poet.
sunburned brain Astrophel's study of courtly verse ("Oft turning others' leaves") accounts for his "sunburned brain," for this striking phrase refers to an accepted Elizabethan figure for poetic imitation. Sidney draws out what is implied in the metaphor from Thomas Wilson's *Art of Rhetoric*, the parched sense of the man who has walked too long in the sun of the ancients.
feet metrical feet as well
'Fool . . . write' that is, look in your heart and find Stella's image there and write from that image, that source and origin of true poetry (that poetry, in fact, will be Petrarchan)
dribbed dribbled, random
mine tunnel dug to undermine fortified walls: just so time undermines emotional resistance
repining . . . lot complaining of a judgment so unfair to my side of the case
footstep footprint
feeling skill the skill bred of feeling; a skill that is itself sensible of the emotions it depicts
Let . . . nine "Let weaker, foppish minds appeal to the Muses." The strategy in this sonnet will be to authenticate Stella as the true Muse by rejecting the artifices of literature, particularly of all the fashionable theories of poetry of Sidney's day.
Pindar's apes French lyric poets like Ronsard, claiming to ape Pindar, the Greek master of choral lyric, by their use of the term "ode" and the "flowers" of rhetorical art.
tropes figures of thought (see Rhetoric in the Glossary)

Or with strange similes° enrich each line,
Of herbs or beasts which Ind or Afric hold.
For me, in sooth, no Muse but one I know;
10 Phrases and problems from my reach do grow,
And strange things cost too dear for my poor sprites.°
How then? Even thus: in Stella's face I read
What love and beauty be; then all my deed
But copying is, what, in her, Nature writes.

V

It is most true that eyes are formed to serve
The inward light,° and that the heavenly part
Ought to be king, from whose rules who do swerve,
Rebels to nature, strive for their own smart.
It is most true, what we call Cupid's dart
An image is, which for ourselves we carve
And, fools, adore in temple of our heart,
Till that good god make church and churchmen starve.
True, that true beauty virtue is indeed,
10 Whereof this beauty can be but a shade,°
Which elements with mortal mixture breed.
True, that on earth we are but pilgrims made,°
And should in soul up to our country move.
True, and yet true that I must Stella love.

XIV

Alas, have I not pain enough, my friend,
Upon whose breast a fiercer gripe doth tire°
Than did on him who first stole down the fire,°
While Love on me doth all his quiver spend—
But with your rhubarb° words ye must contend,
To grieve me worse, in saying that Desire
Doth plunge my well-formed soul even in the mire
Of sinful thoughts, which do in ruin end?
If that be sin which doth the manners° frame,
10 Well stayed with truth in word and faith of deed,
Ready of wit, and fearing naught but shame;
If that be sin, which in fixed hearts doth breed
A loathing of all loose unchastity,
Then love is sin, and let me sinful be.

strange similes the over-elaborate prose style and exotic comparisons of the so-called Euphuistic style (see the selection from John Lyly)
sprites spirits
inward light reason, which ought to rule over the whole person; yet love, by another convention, enters at the eye and imprints the beloved's image on the heart
shade image or picture; a standard Platonic theme
pilgrims made the medieval notion of life as a mere pilgrimage to the eternal life beyond death
gripe doth tire grip does rip
him who . . . fire Prometheus, punished by being chained to a rock with a vulture to lunch on his liver
rhubarb used as a bitter laxative
manners moral style

XV

You that do search for every purling spring
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus° flows,
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
Near thereabouts, into your poesy wring;°
You that do dictionary's method° bring
Into your rhymes, running in rattling rows;
You that poor Petrarch's long deceasèd woes
With newborn sighs and denizened° wit do sing:
You take wrong ways; those far-fet° helps be such
10 As do bewray° a want of inward touch,°
And sure at length stolen goods do come to light;
But if, both for your love and skill, your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
Stella behold, and then begin to indite.

XX

Fly, fly, my friends—I have my death wound—fly!
See there that boy, that murdering boy, I say,
Who, like a thief, hid in dark bush doth lie
Till bloody bullet get him wrongful prey.°
So tyrant he no fitter place could spy,
Nor so fair level in so secret stay,°
As that sweet black which veils the heavenly eye;
There himself with his shot he close° doth lay.
Poor passenger,° pass now thereby I did,
10 And stayed, pleased with the prospect of the place,
While that black hue from me the bad guest hid;
But straight I saw motions of lightning grace,
And then descried the glistering of his dart;
But ere I could fly thence, it pierced my heart.

XXV

The wisest scholar of the wight most wise°
By Phoebus' doom, with sugared sentence says
That Virtue, if it once met with our eyes,
Strange flames of love it in our souls would raise;
But, for that° man with pain this truth descries,

Parnassus the other Greek mountain of inspiration, on which were Delphi (Apollo's oracle) and the Castalian spring, like the Hippocrene spring on Mt. Helicon sacred to the Muses
poesy wring twist into your wreath, work into your poem
dictionary's method alliterative, lame lines, as below
denizened naturalized into English. Sidney, as a devout Petrarchan, is prophetically attacking his own weaker imitators-to-be, and doing so as part of a Petrarchan strategy—only a vision of the Lady is sufficiently heavenly inspiration, and all literary methods are to be shunned.
far-fet farfetched
bewray betray
inward touch true imagination
Till . . . prey For the image of the "hunter hunted" see "Ye Goatherd Gods."
so fair . . . stay get such a good aim in so secret a place
close secretly
passenger passer-by
wight most wise wisest man: Socrates (declared so by Apollo, see next line); his wisest scholar, Plato
for that because

While he each thing in sense's balance weighs,
And so nor will nor can behold those skies
Which inward sun° to heroic mind displays,
Virtue of late, with virtuous care to stir
10 Love of herself, takes Stella's shape, that she
To mortal eyes might sweetly shine in her.
It is most true; for since I her did see,
Virtue's great beauty in that face I prove,°
And find the effect, for I do burn in love.

XXVI

Though dusty wits dare scorn astrology,
And fools can think those lamps of purest light°
—Whose numbers, ways, greatness, eternity,
Promising wonders, wonder do invite—
To have for no cause birthright in the sky
But for to spangle the black weeds° of night;
Or for some brawl° which in that chamber high
They should still dance to please a gazer's sight.
For me, I do Nature unidle° know,
10 And know great causes great effects procure;
And know those bodies high reign on° the low.
And if these rules did fail, proof makes me sure,
Who oft forejudge my after-following race°
By only those two stars in Stella's face.

XXVIII

You that with allegory's curious frame
Of others' children changelings use to make,°
With me those pains, for God's sake, do not take;
I list° not dig so deep for brazen fame.
When I say Stella, I do mean the same
Princess of beauty, for whose only sake
The reins of Love I love, though never slack,
And joy therein, though nations count it shame.
I beg no subject to use eloquence,°
10 Nor in hid ways do guide philosophy;
Look at my hands for no such quintessence;°
But know that I in pure simplicity
Breathe out the flames which burn within my heart,
Love only reading unto me this art.

inward sun See Sonnet V, l. 2n.
prove try out
lamps . . . light the stars
weeds garments
brawl branle, a ring-dance, hence appropriate to the spheres' rotation
Nature unidle Nature to be active
reign on rule over, with a pun on "rain (influence—see Astrology in the Glossary) down on"
race life, seen as a pursuit of a goal
You that . . . make you who misread poems by taking them allegorically
list wish
I beg . . . eloquence I'm not out of ideas to use my style for
quintessence Aside from the four earthly elements, there was ether, a non-material essence which pervaded all matter, and which the alchemists labored unsuccessfully to extract.

XXXIII

I might—unhappy word—oh me, I might,
And then would not, or could not, see my bliss;
Till now wrapped in a most infernal night,
I find how heavenly day (wretch) I did miss.
Heart, rent° thyself, thou dost thyself but right;
No lovely Paris made thy Helen his;
No force, no fraud robbed thee of thy delight,
Nor Fortune of thy fortune author is;
But to myself myself did give the blow,
10 While too much wit, forsooth, so troubled me
That I respects° for both our sakes must show;
And yet could not, by rising morn, foresee
How fair a day was near—oh punished eyes,
That I had been more foolish, or more wise!

XLIX

I on my horse, and Love on me, doth try
Our horsemanships, while by strange work I prove
A horseman to my horse, a horse to Love,
And now man's wrongs in me, poor beast, descry.°
The reins wherewith my rider doth me tie
Are humbled thoughts, which bit of reverence move,
Curbed in with fear, but with gilt boss° above
Of hope, which makes it seem fair to the eye.
The wand° is will; thou, fancy, saddle art,
10 Girt fast by memory; and while I spur
My horse, he spurs with sharp desire my heart;
He sits me fast, however I do stir;
And now hath made me to his hand so right
That in the manege° myself takes delight.

LXXI

Who will in fairest book of Nature know
How virtue may best lodged in beauty be,
Let him but learn of love to read in thee,
Stella, those fair lines which true goodness show.
There shall he find all vices' overthrow,
Not by rude force, but sweetest sovereignty
Of reason, from whose light those night-birds° fly,
That inward sun° in thine eyes shineth so.
And, not content to be perfection's heir
10 Thyself, dost strive all minds that way to move,
Who mark in thee what is in thee most fair.

rent tear
respects due regard
man's wrongs . . . descry I perceive marks of a rider's cruelty on me
boss ornamental gold stud on the bit
wand whip
manege art of horsemanship
night-birds the vices
inward sun here, as throughout these sonnets, reason; cf. Sonnets V and XXV

So while thy beauty draws the heart to love,
As fast thy virtue bends that love to good.
But, ah, Desire still cries, 'Give me some food.'

1591

DEFENCE OF POESIE

In 1579 Stephen Gosson (1554–1624), having been converted to the prevailing Puritan view that all the arts were pernicious, published "a pleasant invective" against them entitled *The School of Abuse;* and, presuming on Sidney's more cultivated Puritan sympathies, dedicated it to him. Sidney, says Gabriel Harvey, scorned him for his labor, "if at least it be in the goodness of that nature to scorn." Thomas Lodge published a *Defence* (1579), and Sidney reacted in the present work, first published after his death in 1595, but probably written about 1582. Sidney had better things to do than to reply in detail to Gosson, who merely provided the occasion for what is recognized as the most distinguished work of Elizabethan criticism and literary theory, its only rival, Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie* (1589), being less brilliant and speculative, though very useful.

Sidney planned the work carefully on the lines of a classical forensic defense, but concealed the rigidity of its organization under a flow of easy civilized prose. He also, in gentlemanly manner, refrained from a parade of learning, though he evidently knew the leading Continental critics J. C. Scaliger and A. S. Minturno and was at home with the classics. His argument is notable for its emphasis not only on the superior power of poetry to instruct, but on its inspiration, a doctrine he has to deal with at its source in Plato. It is this power which enables the poet to surpass philosophers and historians in his service to society and to morality. And it is this power which surpasses even the one which Sidney sees in the poet, who, "lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like: so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, and enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit." Sidney combines with his views on inspiration a notable defense of the utility of fiction, not only because it avoids the generalities of the philosopher and the insignificant particularities of the historian but also because it can speak without necessarily making assertions: *now, for the poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth.* Apart from this subtle defense of fiction, Sidney's most penetrating idea may be that the poet (though, following Aristotle, he calls him an imitator of nature) is in fact a creator, a second nature, dealing with essential ideas and not their copies. Here, as elsewhere, he manipulates the conflicting texts of Plato in favor of poetry. For the rest, his lively and good-humored attack on the poet-haters, and his survey, cool but not bitter, of the contemporary English literary scene, are conducted with an easy and unaffected elegance rather rare in the English prose of the period.

From Defence of Poesie

[The opening is light and anecdotal in manner, establishing the easy tone of a lively gentleman's conversation. Sidney then continues the work by speaking of the antiquity of poetry, and its dignity as the source of other forms of knowledge.]

First, truly, to all them that professing learning inveigh against poetry may justly be objected that they go very near to ungratefulness, to seek to deface that which, in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges. And will they now play the hedgehog that, being received into the den, drove out his host, or rather the vipers, that with their birth kill their parents? Let learned Greece in any of her manifold sciences be able to show me one book before Musaeus, Homer, and Hesiod,[1] all three nothing else but poets. Nay, let any history be brought that can say any writers were there before them, if they were not men of the same skill, as Orpheus, Linus,[2] and some other are named, who, having been the first of that country that made pens deliverers of their knowledge to their posterity, may justly challenge to be called their fathers in learning, for not only in time they had this priority (although in itself antiquity be venerable) but went before them, as causes to draw with their charming sweetness the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge, so as Amphion was said to move stones with his poetry to build Thebes, and Orpheus[3] to be listened to by beasts—indeed stony and beastly people.[4] So among the Romans were Livius Andronicus and Ennius.[5] So in the Italian language the first that made it aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch.[6] So in our English were Gower and Chaucer, after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed, to beautify our mother tongue, as well in the same kind as in other arts.

This did so notably show itself, that the philosophers of Greece durst not a long time appear to the world but under the masks of poets. . . . And truly, even Plato,[7] whosoever well considereth shall find that in the body of his work, though the inside and strength were philosophy, the skin as it were and beauty depended most of poetry: for all standeth upon dialogues, wherein he feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak of such matters, that if they had been set on the rack they would never have confessed them, besides his poetical

1. Musaeus (non-historical), supposed to have been a pupil of Orpheus (see Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*); Hesiod, 7th-century B.C., author of the didactic *Works and Days*.
2. Non-historical poet.
3. Amphion made the rocks, and Orpheus the trees, follow his harp and do his bidding.
4. An allegorical interpretation of the story; see the section The Renaissance Ovid.
5. L. Andronicus, Latin poet and playwright of 3rd century B.C.; Ennius, Latin epic poet, 239–169 B.C.
6. Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) used the vernacular for his *Commedia*, which included much contemporary learning; Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), humanist scholar and writer of tales; Francesco Petrarca (1304–74), learned poet and humanist.
7. Plato was cited by the opponents of poetry because he excluded poets from his *Republic* as liars; but he himself used fictive dialogues and myths in his philosophy. Medieval and Renaissance theories of allegory and of biblical interpretation frequently used the image of shell and kernel to stand for literal ("outer") meaning and inner, or figurative, truth.

But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd
Upon the pillours of Eternity,
That is contrayr to *Mutabilitie*:
For, all that moveth, doth in *Change* delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth° hight:> *called*
O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.°

1609

Amoretti

Amoretti means "little cupids"; Spenser's sonnet sequence, published in 1595 with the *Epithalamion*, is not only a collection of "little loves" (or expressions thereof), but a carefully constructed series of glimpses into the quasi-fictional sonnet world, part private and autobiographical, part mythological and shared with Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, and Shakespeare. Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle before the publication of the collection, and the poems seem to comprehend this cycle of courtship and marriage, interlaced with the cycle of the secular and liturgical year and even of phases of poetic work (numbers 33 and 80 refer to the unfinished *Faerie Queene*). Spenser's form combines French and English verse traditions in linking the sonnet quatrains with common rhymes (the interlocking of *The Faerie Queene* stanza) and maintaining or breaking the octave-sestet division at will (abab bcbc cdcd ee). Rhetorically less dynamic than the sonnets of Sidney or Shakespeare, they nevertheless present in a subtle way a variety of tones and stances.

From Amoretti

I

Happy ye leaves° when as those lilly hands,
which hold my life in their dead doing> might, *killing*
shall handle you and hold in loves soft bands,
lyke captives trembling at the victors sight.
And happy lines, on which with starry light,
those lamping> eyes will deigne sometimes to look *flashing*
and reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,> *spirit*
written with teares in harts close> bleeding book. *secret*
And happy rymes bath'd in the sacred brooke,
10 of *Helicon*° whence she derivèd is,
when ye behold that Angels blessèd looke,
my soules long lackèd foode, my heavens blis.

Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,
whom if ye please, I care for other none.

1595

XV

Ye tradefull Merchants, that with weary toyle,
do seeke most pretious things to make your gain;
and both the Indias° of their treasures spoile,
what needeth you to seeke so farre in vaine?
For loe my love doth in her selfe containe
all this worlds riches that may farre be found,
if Saphyres,° loe her eies be Saphyres° plaine,> *clear*
if Rubies, loe hir lips be Rubies sound:
If Pearles, hir teeth be pearles both pure and round;
10 if Yvorie, her forhead yvory weene;> *beautiful*
if Gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
if silver, her faire hands are silver sheene.
But that which fairest is, but few behold,
her mind adornd with vertues manifold.

1595

XVI

One day as I unwarily did gaze
on those fayre eyes my loves immortall light:
the whiles my stonisht hart stood in amaze,
through sweet illusion of her lookes delight.
I mote> perceive how in her glauncing sight, *could*
legions of loves° with little wings did fly:
darting their deadly arrowes fyry bright,
at every rash beholder passing by.
One of those archers closely> I did spy, *secretly*
10 ayming his arrow at my very hart:
when suddenly with twincle> of her eye, *blink*
the Damzell broke his misintended dart.
Had she not so doon, sure I had bene slayne,
yet as it was, I hardly> scap't with paine. *scarcely*

1595

LIV

Of this worlds Theatre° in which we stay,
My love lyke the Spectator ydly sits

God of Sabbath God of Hosts
Sabaoths sight Spenser may mean "grant me sight of the Lord on the last day," but more probably he means *Sabbath* in the sense of eternity—the stillness that will follow the tumult of the six days of the world's history.
leaves pages of the book of the *Amoretti;* similarly the "lines" and "rymes"
the sacred . . . Helicon the fountain of Hippocrene on Mt. Helicon, sacred to the Muses, the mythical "source" (which word itself originally means "spring") of poetry, here "sacred" because of the Petrarchan heavenly associations with the sonneteer's muse
Indias both East and West Indies
Saphyres This blazon of the Lady's beauties may stem from the comparisons of those of the beloved to rare artifacts in the Song of Songs 5:10–16, but it also reflects a contemporary convention: it is hard to believe that Shakespeare's Sonnet CXXX is not, particularly in ll. 3–4, parodying this poem.
loves The "amoretti," little cupids, fly along the "eyebeams" which interlock two lovers' gazes (see Donne, "The Ecstasy," for a complex use of this lore; behind Spenser's use of it lies the serious doctrine in his own *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*, ll. 231–45).
worlds Theatre The *theatrum mundi* commonplace, likening reality to a play, God to the author and director, the world to a set, and people to actors (the final curtain is, inevitably, Apocalypse), goes back originally to Plato; it is most familiar through Jaques's "All the world's a stage" speech in *As You Like It*, although it is uncommon in Petrarchan sonnets.

beholding me that all the pageants° play,
disguysing diversly my troubled wits.
Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,
and mask in myrth lyke to a Comedy:
soone after when my joy to sorrow flits,
I waile and make my woes a Tragedy.
Yet she beholding me with constant eye,
10 delights not in my merth> nor rues my smart:° *mirth*
but when I laugh she mocks, and when I cry
she laughs, and hardens evermore her hart.
What then can move her? if nor merth nor mone,> *moan*
she is no woman, but a sencelesse stone.

1595

LXIII

After long stormes and tempests sad assay,°
Which hardly I endurèd heretofore:
in dread of death and daungerous dismay,
with which my silly barke° was tossèd sore:
I doe at length descry the happy shore,
in which I hope ere long for to arryve;
fayre soyle it seemes from far and fraught with store°
of all that deare and daynty is alyve.
Most happy he that can at last atchyve
10 the joyous safety of so sweet a rest:
whose least delight sufficeth to deprive
remembrance of all paines which him opprest.
All paines are nothing in respect of this,
all sorrowes short that gaine eternall blisse.

1595

LXIV

Comming to kisse her lyps, (such grace I found)
me seemd I smelt a gardin of sweet flowres:°
that dainty odours from them threw around
for damzels fit to decke their lovers bowres.
Her lips did smell lyke unto Gillyflowers,
her ruddy cheekes lyke unto Roses red:
her snowy browes lyke budded Bellamoures,
her lovely eyes lyke Pincks> but newly spred. *carnations*
Her goodly bosome lyke a Strawberry bed,
10 her neck lyke to a bounch of Cullambynes:> *columbine*
her brest lyke lillyes, ere theyr leaves be shed,
her nipples lyke yong blossomd Jessemynes.> *jasmines*

pageants parts in the productions
rues my smart pities my sorrow
sad assay painful encounter (with storms)
silly barke innocent or simple ship: this is a commonplace (see Wyatt's "My Galley Chargèd with Forgetfullness")
fraught with store bounteously supplied
gardin of sweet flowres another sort of blazon or catalogue, going back to another source in Song of Songs (4:12–15), describing the lover as an enclosed garden

Such fragrant flowres doe give most odorous smell,
but her sweet odour did them all excell.

1595

LXXV

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,> *beach*
but came the waves and washèd it away:
agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
but came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.> *prey*
Vayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay,
a mortall thing so to immortalize,
for I my selve shall lyke to this decay,
and eek> my name bee wypèd out lykewize. *also*
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devize> *contrive*
10 to dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
my verse your vertues rare shall eternize,°
and in the hevens wryte your glorious name.
Where whenas death shall all the world subdew,
our love shall live, and later life renew.

1595

Epithalamion

Epithalamion was published with the *Amoretti* in 1595. An epithalamion is a marriage song, and Spenser combines conventional features of the genre with strong personal applications, for he wrote the poem about his own wedding, to his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle. The wedding songs of Catullus are the type, and, as in Jonson in the masque *Hymenaei* and Herrick later, there are ceremonies and figures belonging more to a Roman than an English wedding; but Spenser, in the Renaissance manner, blends with these purely Christian figures, and also breaks with tradition in making the bridegroom the singer of the song.

In apparently freely flowing stanzas, Spenser invokes the Muses and follows the events of the wedding day, much in the Latin manner; the effect is of controlled abundance, an ordered joy appropriate to marriage and that desire of generation which is the honorable gift of the earthly Venus. And this effect is not impaired by the knowledge, recently achieved, that the poem has an elaborate hidden numerological structure. A. Kent Hieatt has demonstrated that the twenty-three stanzas and the envoy stand for the hours of the day, the last eight being the night hours, for the day of the wedding is the summer solstice. The day hours have the refrain, "The woods shall to me answer"; the night hours, "The woods no more shall answer." There are 365 long lines, one for each day of the year. There are other evidences of strict design, but the demands it made on Spenser did not prevent his achieving what C. S. Lewis calls "festal sublimity," any more than similar patterns, even more recently discovered in *The Faerie Queene*, cramp or diminish it.

eternize Poetry's ability to perpetuate beautiful lives in myth even longer than can statues or inscriptions in stone is an old theme (cf. Shakespeare's Sonnet LV: "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments"), and especially suited to the delight sonnet sequences took in referring to themselves.

Two distincts, division none:°
Number there in love was slain.°

Hearts remote, yet not asunder;
30 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
40 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°
50 To the phoenix and the dove,
Co-supremes° and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene:

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,

Two . . . none two distinct, but not divided, persons. Scholastically the terms are used of the relations between the three persons of the Trinity.
Number . . . slain Mathematically it is said that "one is no number," so when two become one, number is slain.
But . . . wonder in any other case but theirs it would have been a marvel
right love returned, as was due to him
mine selfhood (not "source of wealth")
Property the natural order in which each thing is itself
self . . . same splits up "selfsame" in order to emphasize the uniqueness of this situation.
Single . . . called not one, because their persons remain distinct; not two, because they are not divided
confounded because these matters defy normal logic
grow together resolve into unity
yet either neither expresses, unparaphraseably, the positive and negative of each selfhood in this relation.
Simple . . . compounded The substance of the soul is simple, but here a compound retains the qualities of the simple.
How true . . . one This harmonious "one" is really a new kind of two, with the integrity of unity.
Love . . . remain Love is more reasonable than reason if it can give to the compound and divide the virtues of the simple unity.
threne funeral song; from the Greek, *threnos*
Co-supremes joint rulers

Leaving no posterity:
60 '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.

1601 1601

The Sonnets

Shakespeare's sonnets were written over an indeterminate period and published together in 1609, after the vogue of sonneteering was over. Unlike Spenser's *Amoretti* or Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* they revolve about no central mythical lady, named and constantly invoked; instead, we have a constellation of three figures providing a far greater ironic and dramatic range than the traditional relation of lover-poet to lady-muse. A blond young aristocrat, a dark lady, and a rival poet, none totally trustworthy, all ambiguously admirable, inhabit these sonnets, which, throughout, are haunted by the theme of time and its effects on people, things and buildings, human relationships. They attracted much misguided critical attention because of the belief that they were autobiographical and because of the mystery (but probably trivial import) of the dedication to an unknown "Mr. W. H." Their compact language, range of tone, profound word-play, and intense moral vision are unsurpassed by any of the regular sonnet sequences of Sidney, Spenser, or Drayton. The early poems of the cycle urge the young man to marry and have children; later on, there is a group addressed to the lady; toward the end, obvious complications occur.

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 o'er-silvered all 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

Truth . . . be henceforth there can be only the appearance, not the reality, of truth
count . . . time mark the passage of the hours
brave resplendent, finely attired
past prime faded
girded up with a girdle about his waist, the image being that of an old man being carried to his grave
And summer's . . . beard the green corn, now ripe, harvested, the imagery making the sheaves a conceited image of death

That thou among the wastes of time° must go, (10)
Since sweets° and beauties do themselves forsake°
And die as fast they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed° to brave° him when he takes thee hence.

XVIII

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 owest,° (10)
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines° to time thou growest:°
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XIX

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—
Oh carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow
Nor draw no lines there with thine ántique° pen; (10)
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.

wastes of time the things time has destroyed
sweets blossoms
forsake undo
breed offspring
brave defy
day may mean the period (or season) of a summer, as in the expression "in my day"
date the period of a lease
untrimmed stripped of beauty
that . . . owest that beauty thou possessest (ownest)
lines such as the lines of this poem and the other sonnets
growest becomes a part of
phoenix . . . blood The first three lines describe Time's action on living things that change and die; the phoenix also comes to the end of its years, although it is instantly reborn from its own funeral pyre.
sweets flowers
ántique ancient, with a play on "antic" or "fantastic"

XX

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, (10)
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.

XXIX

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,°
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless° cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
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, (10)
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.

XXX

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,

master-mistress both the oxymoron "boy-girl" and, as if unhyphenated, "sovereign mistress"
rolling roving
hue form
defeated defrauded
one thing male sex
pricked selected; also "prick" as in modern slang for penis
use sexual practice
state Here, as in all the sonnets, the meaning shifts from "condition in life" through "state of being" (l. 10) to "stately."
bootless unavailing
like him like yet another person
sullen dull, heavy
sessions of a law court. The legal conceit turns on words like "dateless," "cancelled," "expense," "account," etc., and suggests the poet being called to account, as steward, for the estate of his life.
dateless endless

And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense° of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,°
10 And heavily° from woe to woe tell° o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd 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.

XXXIII

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 fórlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:°
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
10 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.

LIII

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:
10 The one doth shadow of your beauty show,
The other as your bounty doth appear,
And you in every blessèd shape we know.

expense loss
foregone gone by
heavily sadly
tell reckon
dear friend the first use of this term in the *Sonnets*
Flatter brighten, cheer up (as the sovereign's smile would a courtier)
rack drifting; a mass of clouds driven before the wind; cf. *The Tempest* IV.i.156
this disgrace i.e. the concealing clouds
triumphant glorious
region region of the air
stain grow dim
strange shadows external, foreign images. The word-play is on "shadow and substance" meaning "appearance vs. reality"; in l. 10, the word takes on its modern sense of "cast shade."
Adonis See notes to *Venus and Adonis*, above.
On Helen's . . . set put the best makeup on the face of the most beautiful woman ever
tires attire, costume, dress
foison autumnal harvest

In all external grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you for constant heart.

LV

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
10 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 judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this,° and dwell in lovers' eyes.

LXIV

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down razed,
And brass eternal° slave to mortal° rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store° with loss and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,°
10 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.

LXVI

Tired with all these for restful death I cry
As to behold Desert° a beggar born,
And needy Nothing trimmed in jollity,°

unswept . . . time The stone bore an inscription to the dead man, the letters of which had become obscured ("sluttish" = dirty) in the course of time.
wasteful destructive
broils battles
Nor . . . sword "Destroy" is understood.
quick lively
oblivious bringing to oblivion
praise glory
wear . . . out outlast
this these lines of poetry
brass eternal Eternal brass as opposed, syntactically, to "mortal rage"—this patterning of noun-adjective: adjective-noun, called chiasmus, is typically Elizabethan.
mortal both "deadly" and "subject to death"
store abundance
state condition; also "estate"; also "grandeur" (as in the next line)
Desert a personification of one who is deserving
jollity fine costume

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 disablèd,
And Art made tongue-tied by Authority,
10 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.

LXXIII

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 see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest:
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by:°
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

LXXXVI

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 astonishèd:
He, nor that affable familiar ghost°
10 Which nightly gulls° him with intelligence,°

Faith fidelity; also True Religion
strumpeted called a whore
Doctor-like pedant-like
controlling also with a sense of rebuking, censuring
Simplicity stillness
Bare . . . sang The trees are likened to arching ruins, half-opened to the sky, of the choirs of gothic monastery churches; the sweet birds literally sang in the summer trees, and, figuratively, sang as choir boys, perhaps, in the choir stalls of the church in the image; notice the sequence in the quatrains of autumn—sundown—dying fire.
Consumed . . . by "consumed with life," as with passion; also perhaps consumed by the nourishing fire; the image is one of embers hotter than they look
his some rival poet: George Chapman has been suggested
inhearse entomb
familiar ghost some spirit attending the rival; perhaps a poetic predecessor
gulls deceives
intelligence secret information

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.

LXXXVII

Farewell—thou art too dear° for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowest 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.°
Thy self thou gavest, thy own worth then not knowing;
10 Or me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking:°
So thy great gift, upon misprision° growing,
Comes home again on better judgment making.°
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

XCIV

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,
Unmovèd, 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,
10 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.°

XCVII

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!—

that "that this was true"
dear expensive; also, "aristocratic"
estimate worth
charter privilege
determinate ended
patent grant of a monopoly
is swerving returns to you
mistaking overestimating
misprision misjudgment
on better judgment making on your judging better
show look as if they could do
heaven's graces the favors of heaven
husband . . . expense protect from wastefulness
stewards officials who manage estates for the owners; "their" refers to "they" in l. 1
outbraves makes a finer show than
Lilies . . . weeds a line from an old play

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° burthen of the prime,°
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease.
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
10 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.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,°
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then in the blazon° of sweet beauty's best—
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow—
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
10 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.

CVII

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 cónfined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,°
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives° of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
10 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:

time removed time of separation
increase offspring, crops
wanton playful; luxuriant
prime spring
wait on attend, as at court
wights people
blazon poetic cataloguing of a person's beauties and virtues, publicly displayed
lease period or term of lease

The mortal moon . . . endured Some historical crisis has passed—whether the Spanish Armada, sailing in a crescent (defeated in 1588), a lunar eclipse, or some crisis of the Queen—making "mortal" mean "deadly" or "able to die."
olives olive branch of peace (ever since the dove flew back to Noah's ark with one when the flood had abated)
insults o'er triumphs over

And thou in this shalt find thy monument
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

CXVI

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.°
Oh no! it is an ever-fixèd mark°
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.°
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
10 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.

CXXI

'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°
10 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.

CXXIX

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame°
Is lust° in action; and till action, lust°

Let . . . impediments an echo of the marriage service. The "impediments" are change of circumstance (l. 3) and inconstancy (l. 4).
bends . . . remove withdraws when its object does
an . . . mark a beacon
height be taken altitude be known
bending bent; also "causing the grass of youthful beauty to bend"
bears it out endures
so deemed either "vile," in which case the unjust condemnation of the love by outsiders wrecks its pleasure; or "just pleasure," in which case the outsiders ("others") approve of the love although the sonneteer doesn't

Give salutation . . . blood mockingly hail my sexual activity
I am that I am I am what I am (apparently echoing the words of God from the burning bush to Moses, Exodus 3:14)
level aim a weapon
bevel crooked
rank lewd
general evil i.e. the following moral formula: "All men are bad . . ." etc.
The expense . . . shame abstractly, characterizing lust; concretely, sexual "spending" (orgasm) to no purpose in a shameful waste (the theme of *post coitum triste*—"sorrow after sex")
lust grammatical subject of the first sentence

Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude,° cruel, not to trust;
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd 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;
10 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.

CXXX

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
10 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.

CXXXV

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,
10 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.

rude brutal
in proof experienced
dun tan. The whole poem is an anti-blazon, actually a Petrarchan "anti-Petrarchan" device.
roses damasked pink roses, but also perhaps patterned in the symbolic colors of passion and purity
reeks emanates (with no sense of "stinks")
Will volition; desire; passionate feeling ("wit and will" meant something like "thought and feeling"); the auxiliary verb; and, in this sonnet, both the poet's own name, and sexual member (but of both sexes—as if modern slang "dick" meant both penis and vagina)

Let no unkind no fair° beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

CXXXVIII

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
Unlearnèd 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?°
10 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
Oh, love's best habit° is in seeming trust,
And age, in love,° loves not to have years told.
Therefore I lie with her,° and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

CXLIV

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
10 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.°

CXLVI

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,°
(Foiled by)° these rebel powers that thee array,°
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,

fair legitimate
made of truth "faithful to me," as well as "truth-telling"
she lies "sleeps around," as well as "tells lies"
Simply like a simpleton, unconditionally, absolutely
unjust unfaithful
habit costume
in love also, "in re love"
lie with her "lie to her"; also, "sleep with her"
suggest me still tempt me ever
fair light-haired and -complexioned; beautiful; honest (modern "fair" as "just")
coloured ill a brunette
hell the prison zone in barley-break, a game like prisoner's base; also, as in a story in the *Decameron* of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), "the devil in hell" as his sexual member in hers
fire . . . out reject him; also, to give him venereal disease (only when the friend shows signs of this will it be clear that he slept with her)
earth flesh, body
(Foiled by) an emendation; the original phrase is a misprint
array both "deck out" and "afflict"