

## VENUS AND ADONIS

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

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

Right Honourable,

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

Your Honour's in all duty,  
William Shakespeare.

*Dedication*] In 'Shakespeare's Dedication', J. Middleton Murry constructs a theory of Shakespeare's relationship with Southampton, based upon this dedication and that of

*Lucrece*, supported by occurrences of 'dedicate' and 'dedication' in the plays (*John Clare and Other Studies* (1950), pp. 45-57).

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*the historic  
present*

Even as the sun with purple-colour'd face  
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,  
Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase;  
Hunting he lov'd, but love he laugh'd to scorn:  
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
And like a bold-fac'd suitor 'gins to woo him.

5

1. *purple-colour'd*] In Elizabethan English 'purple' often meant a colour ruddier and brighter than in modern usage. Pooler points out that Shakespeare often uses it of blood (*R2*, III. iii. 94; *R3*, IV. iv. 277; see also *John*, II. i. 322, and *Cæs.*, III. i. 158), though also of grapes (*MND.*, III. i. 170) and violets (*Per.*, IV. i. 16). The Latin *purpureus* was also applied to a variety of colours, since it originally expressed only extreme brightness of colour. However, there is no need to explain away the 'purple-colour'd face' of this rising sun. The epithet could be conventionally applied to dawn, as in Spenser's:

Now when the rosy fingered morning faire

Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,  
Had spread her purple robe through  
deawy aire (*F.Q.*, I. ii. 7).

But Shakespeare's conceit has the touch which is to animate his whole poem: Spenser's frigid mythological colours are replaced by something fresher and livelier, an image *seen* as poetic and therefore given a touch of exaggeration.

2. *weeping*] Shakespeare's mythology is often a carefree variation on pagan lore. If dawn is personified in classical poetry her lover is always Tithonus, not the sun. But compare *3H6*, II. i. 21 f.:

See how the morning opes her golden gates

And takes her farewell of the glorious sun!

And for a fully developed Shakespearean myth of the same sort see Sonnet xxxiii.

3. *Rose-cheek'd Adonis*] The same words occur in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, I. 91-3:

The men of wealthy Sestos, every year,

For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,

Rose-cheek'd Adonis, kept a solemn feast.

Since the date of composition of the poem, left unfinished at Marlowe's death in 1593, is unknown, and it was not published until 1598, we can only conjecture that Shakespeare 'perhaps remembered' it (Malone). But *Hero and Leander* was very probably known to Shakespeare in manuscript; no other narrative poem of these years shows a combination of wit and sensuous beauty comparable to that we find in *Venus and Adonis*.

*hied him*] hastened. The verb could be used either with the reflexive pronoun, as here and in *Pilgr.*, XII. 11, or without it, as in *Rom.*, III. ii. 138.

5. *Sick-thoughted*] Love-sick makes amain] hastens. 'Amain' meant originally 'with all one's strength', but

- “Thrice fairer than myself,” thus she began,  
 “The field’s chief flower, sweet above compare;  
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,  
 More white and red than doves or roses are: 10  
 Nature that made thee with herself at strife,  
 Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.  
*alight from*
- “Vouchsafe, thou wonder, to alight thy steed,  
 And rein his proud head to the saddle-bow;  
 If thou wilt deign this favour, for thy meed 15  
 A thousand honey secrets shalt thou know.  
 Here come and sit, where never serpent hisses,  
 And being set, I’ll smother thee with kisses.  
*seated*
- “And yet not cloy thy lips with loath’d satiety,  
 But rather famish them amid their plenty, 20  
 Making them red, and pale, with fresh variety:  
 Ten kisses short as one, one long as twenty.  
 A summer’s day will seem an hour but short,  
 Being wasted in such time-beguiling sport.”

19. satiety] *sacietie* Q1-5; *satiety* Q6. 24. time-beguiling] Q1-4; time-beguiling Q5.

came to convey the idea of speed. The past and the historic present are used indifferently throughout the poem, as in this stanza; the predominance of the latter contributes to its vividness and speed.

8. *above compare*] This originally meant ‘without or above compeer or rival’, but, in association with the verb ‘compare’, it suggested a new substantive, as in Sonnet xxi, ll. 5-6:

Making a complement of proud  
 compare

With sun and moon, with earth  
 and sea’s rich gems.

V9. Stain] Superior beauty or excellence is thought of as casting a stain or shadow on what it surpasses. Pooler quotes Lyly, ed. Bond, III, p. 142:

My Daphne’s brow inthrones the  
 Graces,

My Daphne’s beauty stains all faces  
 and Sidney’s ‘sun-staying excellencie’  
 (*The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*,  
 ed. A. Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1912),

p. 7). The feminine quality of Adonis’ beauty is stressed by Shakespeare.

11-12. *Nature . . . life*] Nature strove to surpass herself in making Adonis, and having achieved perfection intends to let the world die with him. The hyperbole is repeated, with a similar conceit, in ll. 953-4.

13. *alight*] alight from.

14. *rein . . . saddle-bow*] i.e. to curb the horse, so that it might not stray.

16. *honey*] sweet. See also ll. 452, 538.

18. *set*] seated.

20. *famish them*] Malone compares *Ant.*, II. ii. 241-3.

21. *red, and pale*] Adonis’ lips will be alternately stung to redness by the ‘ten kisses short as one’, and drained of their colour by the ‘one long as twenty’.

24. *wasted*] spent; often used in no depreciatory sense, as in *Mer.V.*, III. iv. 12:

companion  
 That do converse and waste the  
 time together.

sign  
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strength & energy

With this she seizeth on his sweating palm,  
The precedent of pith and livelihood,  
And trembling in her passion, calls it balm,  
Earth's sovereign salve to do a goddess good:  
Being so enrag'd, desire doth lend her force  
Courageously to pluck him from his horse. 30

Over one arm the lusty courser's rein,  
Under her other was the tender boy,  
Who blush'd and pouted in a dull disdain,  
With leaden appetite, unapt to toy:  
She red and hot as coals of glowing fire,  
He red for shame, but frosty in desire. 35

The studded bridle on a ragged bough  
Nimble she fastens—O how quick is love!—  
The steed is stalled up, and even now  
To tie the rider she begins to prove try 40  
Backward she push'd him, as she would be thrust,  
And govern'd him in strength, though not in lust.

with heavy sense

the head gear of the harness

rough

with  
of the  
pull

32. her] Q1; the Q7-16.

25. *sweating palm*] A moist palm was reckoned a sign of a sensuous disposition; see *Oth.*, iii. iv. 36-9, cited by Malone, and *Ant.*, i. ii. 52 f.: 'if an oily palm be not a fruitful prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear'. See also ll. 143-4 below. Adonis' coldness is all the more distressing to Venus because he has the physical marks of an ardent lover.

26. *precedent*] sign, example, proof; Shakespeare's meaning hovers between these senses, as in *Lr.*, ii. iii. 13:

The country gives me proof and precedent

Of Bedlam beggars.

And *Tit.*, v. iii. 44:

A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;

A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant.

*pith and livelihood*] strength and energy. 'Pith' means 'marrow', the full development of which signifies maturity and hence strength. Compare *H5*, iii, Prologue, 21:

Guarded with grandsires, babies, and old women

Either past or not arrived to pith or puissance.

29. *enrag'd*] roused by desire.

30. *pluck*] pull.

34. *leaden appetite*] heavy senses. *unapt to toy*] unwilling or unfit for love's play.

37. *ragged*] rough. 'Ragged' is used by Shakespeare where we would use 'rugged'. See *Gent.*, i. ii. 121:

Unto a ragged, fearful-hanging rock also *R2*, v. v. 20-2; and *R3*, iv. i. 101-2. One 'ragged bough' here conveys the whole scene, the goddess and the youth reclining in the shade of some trees. The picture is suggested by Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 555-9 (see Baldwin, *op. cit.*, p. 13).

39. *stalled up*] tethered as in a stall.

40. *prove*] try, test. See *Ado*, i. iii. 75: Shall we go prove what's to be done? and *1H6*, ii. ii. 58. See also l. 608 below.

So soon was she along as he was down,  
 Each leaning on their elbows and their hips;  
 Now doth she stroke his cheek, now doth he frown, 45  
 And 'gins to chide, but soon she stops his lips,  
 And kissing speaks, with lustful language broken,  
 "If thou wilt chide, thy lips shall never open."

He burns with bashful shame, she with her tears  
 Doth quench the maiden burning of his cheeks; 50  
 Then with her windy sighs and golden hairs  
 To fan and blow them dry again she seeks.  
 He saith she is immodest, blames her miss;  
 What follows more, she murders with a kiss. *misbehavior*

Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast, 55  
 Tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone,  
 Shaking her wings, devouring all in haste,  
 Till either gorge be stuff'd or prey be gone:  
 Even so she kiss'd his brow, his cheek, his chin,  
 And where she ends she doth anew begin. 60

Forc'd to content, but never to obey,

54. murders] Q3; murthers Q1,2,4-6; smothers Q7-16.  
 leather Q2,4,5.

56. feathers] Q1;

43.-So soon . . . down] He was no sooner stretched out than she was lying at his side.

47. with lustful language broken] Her words are broken by the kisses with which she mingles them. Compare Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 559:

Sic ait, ac mediis interserit oscula  
 verbis.

47, 48. broken, open] Similar imperfect rhymes are found in ll. 451, 453, ll. 565, 567, and in *Lucr.*, ll. 1357, 1358.

53. miss] misbehaviour. Pooler refers to Lyly, *Woman in the Moone*, iv. i. 151:

Pale be my lookes to witness my  
 amisse

and Malone to Sonnet xxxv:

Myself corrupting, salving thy  
 amiss.

But 'miss' is not a contraction of 'amiss', since it occurs frequently in

Middle English and later (see O.E.D.).

55. sharp by fast] her appetite keen from fasting.

56. Tires] tears ravenously. Nares explains: 'A term in falconry; from *tirer*, French, to drag or pull. The hawk was said to tire on her prey, when it was thrown to her, and she began to pull at it and tear it'. Verity compares *3H6*, i. i. 268 f.: like an empty eagle

Tire on the flesh of me and of my  
 son!

The animation of Shakespeare's image is very striking. See *Lucr.*, l. 543 n.

61. Forc'd to content] Malone, Steevens, R. H. Case, and others have tried to determine whether 'content' is a substantive meaning 'acquiescence', or a verb, and if a verb, whether active ('to content Venus') or passive ('to content himself'). Other passages show that the word had not been limited to

Panting he lies and breatheth in her face.  
 She feedeth on the steam as on a prey,  
 And calls it heavenly moisture, air of grace,  
 Wishing her cheeks were gardens full of flowers,  
 So they were dew'd with such distilling showers. 65

Look how a bird lies tangled in a net,  
 So fasten'd in her arms Adonis lies;  
 Pure shame and aw'd resistance made him fret,  
 Which bred more aw'd beauty in his angry eyes:  
 Rain added to a river that is rank  
 Perforce will force it overflow the bank. <sup>intimidated</sup>  
 Still she entreats, and prettily entreats, <sup>lowers</sup> <sup>to overflowing</sup>  
 For to a pretty ear she tunes her tale.  
 Still is he sullen, still he lours and frets,  
 'Twi<sup>70</sup>x crimson shame and anger ashy pale. <sup>ash-colored</sup>  
 Being red, she loves him best, and being white,  
 Her best is better'd with a more delight. <sup>deadly pale</sup>

62. breatheth] Q1; breathing Q5. 74. ear] Q1; care Q13; air conj. Malone.  
 75. still he] Q1; still she Q4-6.

the meanings of 'happy or happiness, satisfied or satisfaction', but could carry the idea of submission or passivity. See *Oth.*, III. iv. 120:

So I shall clothe me in a forced content.

63. prey] 'That which is procured or serves as food' (O.E.D.).

64. grace] A free gift or act of mercy by God.

66. *So they were*] provided that they were. See Abbott, § 133.

*distilling*] forming from mist or steam.

67. *Look how*] just as. 'Look' emphasizes 'the correspondence of relative and antecedent', here 'how' and 'so' (O.E.D.). See also ll. 289, 299, 925, and *Lucr.*, ll. 372, 694. But *Ven.*, l. 529, and *Lucr.*, l. 1548, show Shakespeare modifying this ancient idiom. Compare Sonnet xxxvii. 13:

Look what is best, that best I wish in thee.

69. *aw'd*] intimidated.

70.] Malone compares *Tw. N.*, III. i. 157 f.:

O! what a deal of scorn looks beautiful

In the contempt and anger of his lip.

71. *rank*] full to overflowing. Compare *John*, v. iv. 54, and Drayton, *Polyolbion*, ix. 139:

And with stern Aeolus' blasts, like

Thetis waxing rank,

She only over-swells the surface of her bank.

72. *Perforce . . . force*] For the tag 'force perforce', which underlies this phrase, see *John*, III. i. 142, and elsewhere.

74. *ear*] Malone yielded to the taste of his time in suggesting that this was a mistake for 'air'. Shakespeare's freedom to refer to such physical, even homely, details as Adonis' ears gives his poem life.

76.] He alternately blushes for shame and turns pale with rage.

78. *more*] greater in degree. O.E.D. quotes Heywood, 2nd Pt *Iron Age*, IV. i: Lets flye to some strong Cittadell, For our more safety.

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;  
 And by her fair immortal hand she swears, 80  
 From his soft bosom never to remove  
 Till he take truce with her contending tears,  
 Which long have rain'd, making her cheeks all wet:  
 And one sweet kiss shall pay this comptless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin, *inestimable* 85  
 Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,  
 Who being look'd on, ducks as quickly in:  
 So offers he to give what she did crave,  
 But when her lips were ready for his pay,  
 He winks, and turns his lips another way.

Never did passenger in summer's heat *traveller* 90  
 More thirst for drink than she for this good turn.  
 Her help she sees, but help she cannot get;  
 She bathes in water, yet her fire must burn.  
 "Oh pity," gan she cry, "flint-hearted boy," 95  
 'Tis but a kiss I beg, why art thou coy?

82. take] Q1; takes Q5,6. 84. comptless] Q1-6; countless Q7-16. 94. her] Q1; in Q7-16.

82. take truce] make peace, come to terms. Compare *John*, iii. i. 17:

With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce.

*contending tears*] tears making war on him.

84. *comptless*] *inestimable*. This is the Latinized spelling common in the 16th and 17th cents.; but see also *Tit.*, v. iii. 159:

O were the summe of these that I should pay

Countlesse and infinit, yet would I pay them.

86. *dive-dapper*] Another name for the dabchick, or little grebe (*podiceps minor*, according to Harting, *Ornithology of Shakespeare*, p. 258). *Di-dapper* is the form in some dialects (see Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, vol. II, pp. 67 and 94).

87. *Who*] Frequently used where we would use 'which'. See ll. 306, 630, 857, 891, 956, 968, 984, etc.; and Abbott, § 264.

*ducks as quickly in*] Note the colloquial quality here.

89. *his pay*] What he is to pay her.

90. *winks*] 'Wink' is 'here akin to *wince*, formerly also *winch*, . . . to start aside' (Wyndham). The word vividly combines two meanings: that Adonis, having screwed up his resolution for the kiss, flinches at the last moment; and that as he does so, he blinks and averts his face. In l. 121 the word means simply to close the eyes, its usual Elizabethan sense. See *Lucr.*, l. 375, and *Cym.*, v. iv. 195, II. iii. 27 and iv. 89.

91. *passenger*] traveller, wayfarer.

93-4.] The myth of Tantalus, up to his chin in water, yet unable to drink (see *F.Q.*, II. vii. 57-60) may have been in Shakespeare's mind when he thought of the offered kiss which at the last moment flees from Venus' lips. Malone's interpretation of the 'water' as Venus' tears seems nonsense.

Handwritten notes in the left margin: "16" with an arrow pointing to "She bathes in water"; "32 cant?" with an arrow pointing to "take truce"; "Tantalus" with an arrow pointing to "passenger"; "12/16" with an arrow pointing to "comptless"; "3/10/14" with an arrow pointing to "Who".

Handwritten notes in the right margin: "inestimable" next to "comptless"; "85" next to "Upon this promise"; "traveller" next to "passenger"; "90" next to "Never did passenger"; "95" next to "'Tis but a kiss".

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

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

110 "Thus he that overru'd I oversway'd,  
 Leading him prisoner in a red rose chain:  
 Strong-temper'd steel his stronger strength obey'd,  
 Yet was he servile to my coy disdain.  
 Oh be not proud, nor brag not of thy might,  
 For mast'ring her that foil'd the god of fight!

115 "Touch but my lips with those fair lips of thine—  
 Though mine be not so fair, yet are they red—  
 The kiss shall be thine own as well as mine.  
 What see'st thou in the ground? hold up thy head,  
 Look in mine eye-balls, there thy beauty lies:  
 Then why not lips on lips, since eyes in eyes?

120 106. toy] *Q1*; coy *Q4-16*. 119. there] *Q1*; where *Q5-16*. 120. in] *Q1*; on *Q7-16*.  
 100. jar] fight, trial of strength.  
 Compare *Err*, i. 1. 11.  
 104. uncontrolled crest] his helmet  
 which had never bowed in submission.  
 107. churlish] The adjective conveys  
 the rough or rude 'speech' of the drum  
 110.] Malone compared this famous  
 line to a passage from Ronsard, itself  
 an imitation of Anacreon:  
 Les Muses hieront un jour  
 De chaisnes de roses Amour  
 (Livre xiv, Ode xxiii)

and suggested that this and other odes  
 by Anacreon may have been trans-  
 lated into English, and echoed by  
 Shakespeare here and elsewhere (for  
 118.] Compare 'the murye wordes  
 Charles.  
 That did but lately foil the sinewy  
 wrestler  
*MT*, ii. 13-14: the wrestler  
 114. foil'd] overthrew. Compare  
*Abbott*, § 406.  
 113. nor brag not] Double negatives  
 are frequent in Shakespearian Eng-  
 lish. See *Abbott*, § 406.

113. nor brag not] Double negatives  
 are frequent in Shakespearian Eng-  
 lish. See *Abbott*, § 406.

*overthrown*



“Art thou asham’d to kiss? then wink again,  
 And I will wink; so shall the day seem night.  
 Love keeps his revels where there are but twain;  
 Be bold to play, our sport is not in sight.  
 These blue-vein’d violets whereon we lean  
 Never can blab, nor know not what we mean. 125

“The tender spring upon thy tempting lip  
 Shows thee unripe; yet mayst thou well be tasted.  
 Make use of time, let not advantage slip;  
 Beauty within itself should not be wasted. 130  
 Fair flowers that are not gather’d in their prime  
 Rot, and consume themselves in little time.

“Were I hard-favour’d, f<sup>ngly</sup>oul, or wrinkled old,  
 Ill-nurtur’d, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,  
 O’erworn, despised, rheumatic and cold, 135  
Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,  
 Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not for thee;  
 But having no defects, why dost abhor me?

123. are] *Q1*; be *Q2,4-16*. 126. not] *Q1*; they *Q7-16*. 134. Ill-nurtur’d] *Q1*; Ill natur’d *Q9,10*.

of the Host to Chaucer’, *Cant. Tales*, B. 1885-7.

121. *wink*] See l. 90 n.

126. *blab*] tell tales, betray. Compare *Tw. N.*, i. ii. 61, and *2H6*, iii. i. 154:

Beaufort’s red sparkling eyes blab  
 his heart’s malice.

127. *The tender spring*] the down that will become a beard. See l. 487.

129-30.] These lines introduce a topic relating *Venus and Adonis* to the first group of Shakespeare’s Sonnets (i-vi). See M. G. Bradbrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-2. A commonplace of Greek and Roman lyric poetry, the exhortation to enjoy beauty and youth while time allowed became even more frequent in French and Italian poetry of the 16th cent., and consequently in Elizabethan poetry.

*advantage*] opportunity.

133-6.] With this catalogue compare *Err.*, iv. ii. 19-21:

He is deformed, crooked, old and  
 sere,

Ill-fac’d, worse-bodied, shapeless  
 everywhere;

Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt,  
 unkind.

133. *hard-favour’d*] hard-featured. See l. 931 and *Lucr.*, l. 1632.

*foul*] ugly. Compare *Oth.*, ii. i. 141-2:

There’s none so foul and foolish  
 thereunto

But does foul pranks which fair and  
 wise ones do.

135. *O’erworn*] worn out with age. Compare Sonnet lxxiii:

With Time’s injurious hand crush’d  
 and o’erworn.

*rheumatic*] The accent is on the first syllable, as in *MND.*, ii. i. 105.

136. *Thick-sighted*] with bad eyesight. Compare *Cæs.*, v. iii. 21:

My sight was ever thick.

*lacking juice*] See l. 25 n.

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“Thou canst not see one wrinkle in my brow,  
 Mine eyes are grey and bright and quick in turning. 140  
 My beauty as the spring doth yearly grow,  
 My flesh is soft and plump, my marrow burning.  
 My smooth moist hand, were it with thy hand felt,  
 Would in thy palm dissolve, or seem to melt.

“Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear, 145  
 Or like a fairy trip upon the green,  
 Or like a nymph, with long dishevell'd hair,  
 Dance on the sands, and yet no footing seen.  
 Love is a spirit all compact of fire, *was posed.*  
 Not gross to sink, but light, and will aspire. 150

“Witness this primrose bank whereon I lie:  
 These forceless flowers like sturdy trees support me.  
 Two strengthless doves will draw me through the sky  
 From morn till night, even where I list to sport me.

*wish to take my pleasure*

142. plump] *Q1*; plumbe *Q5,6*; plum *Q7-10,12*. 152. These] *Q1*; The *Q9-11*,  
 13-16.

140. *grey*] Most commentators agree with Malone: ‘What we now call *blue* eyes were in Shakespeare’s time called *grey* eyes, and were considered as eminently beautiful’. Compare l. 482, and *Rom.*, ii. iv. 47:

Thisbe, a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose.

143. *Mysmoothmoist hand*] See l. 25 n.

145. *enchant*] The word has its full meaning of ‘to charm by means of song’.

148. *footing*] footprint. Compare *Tp.*, v. i. 34:

And ye that on the sands with  
 printless foot

Do chase the ebbing Neptune,  
 and Ben Jonson, *The Vision of Delight* (Herford and Simpson, *Works*, vol. VII, p. 470):

And thence did *Venus* learne to  
 lead

Th’ *Idalian* Braules, and so <to>  
 tread

As if the wind, not she did walke;  
 Nor prest a flower, nor bow’d a  
 stalke.

149. *compact*] composed. Compare *ATL.*, ii. vii. 5:

If he, compact of jars, grow musical,  
 We shall have shortly discord in the  
 spheres.

All living things were believed to be composed of the four ‘elements’, fire, air, water, and earth, in varying proportions. Compare *Ant.*, v. ii. 291:

I am fire, and air; my other elements  
 I give to baser life.

150. *gross to sink*] heavy and so bound to sink.

*aspire*] rise up, float.

151. *Witness this primrose bank*] Let this bank bear witness. Compare *MND.*, i. i. 215.

152. *forceless*] frail, strengthless.

154. *list*] wish. O.E. *lystan* was an impersonal transitive verb used with accusative or dative; this survived into the 16th cent., as in *F.Q.*, i. vii. 35. But the personal construction Shakespeare uses also became common. Compare Milton, *P.L.*, viii. 75.

*to sport me*] to take my pleasure.

Is love so light, sweet boy, and may it be 155  
That thou should think it heavy unto thee?

“Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?  
Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?  
Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected;  
Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft. 160  
Narcissus so himself himself forsook,  
And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

“Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,  
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,  
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear: 165  
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse.  
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth beauty;  
Thou wast begot, to get it is thy duty.

156. should] *Q1*; shouldst *Q2,4-16*. 160. on] *Q1*; of *Q4-16*. 168. wast] *Q1*; wert *Q5-16*.

156. heavy] tiresome.

157. to . . . affected] in love with.

158. seize . . . left] take possession of love by taking hold of your left hand. 'Seize' and 'seizure' are often used of clasping hands. See *John*, III. i. 241, and *Rom.*, III. iii. 35:

more courtship lives

In carrion-flies than Romeo; they  
may seize

On the white wonder of dear Juliet's  
hand.

160. on] of.

161-2.] Sidney Lee objected that Narcissus did not drown himself; but drowning is implied in the passage he quoted from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (I. 74-6):

[he] leapt into the water for a kiss  
Of his own shadow, and despising  
many,

Died ere he could enjoy the love of  
any.

It appears also in earlier poetry (see Baldwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-21), and *Lucr.*, II. 265-6. Golding (III. 522-4) was certainly known to both Marlowe and Shakespeare:

like a foolish noddie  
He [Narcissus] thinks the shadow

that he sees, to be a lively bodie.

Astraighted like an ymage made of  
Marble stone he lyes,

There gazing on his shadow still  
with fixed staring eyes.

For 'shadow' meaning reflection or image see *R3*, I. i. 264, and *John*, II. i. 498:

The shadow of myself formed in her  
eye.

166. to themselves] for themselves.

Compare I. 1180, and Sonnet xciv:

The summer's flower is to the  
summer sweet,

Though to itself it only live and  
die.

168. Thou . . . duty] This and the following lines repeat the theme of the first seventeen Sonnets, that 'fairest creatures' have a duty to reproduce their kind. Pooler quotes a parallel from Sidney (*The Last Part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* [1593], ed. A. Feuillerat, p. 80):

Thy father justly may of thee  
complane,

If thou doo not repay his deeds for  
thee,

In granting unto him a grandsires  
gaine.

“Upon the earth’s increase why shouldst thou feed,  
 Unless the earth with thy increase be fed? 170  
By law of nature thou art bound to breed,  
 That thine may live when thou thyself art dead;  
 And so in spite of death thou dost survive,  
 In that thy likeness still is left alive.”

By this the love-sick queen began to sweat,  
 For where they lay, the shadow had forsook them;  
 And Titan, tired in the mid-day heat,  
 With burning eye did hotly overlook them, *survey*  
 Wishing Adonis had his team to guide,  
 So he were-like him and by Venus’ side. 180

And now Adonis with a lazy sprite,  
 And with a heavy, dark, disliking eye,  
 His louring brows o’erwhelming his fair sight,  
 Like misty vapours when they blot the sky:  
 Souring his cheeks, cries, “Fie, no more of love! 185  
The sun doth burn my face, I must remove.”

“Ay me,” quoth Venus, “young, and so unkind!  
 What bare excuses mak’st thou to be gone!  
 I’ll sigh celestial breath, whose gentle wind

Thy common-wealth may rightly  
 grieved be,  
 Which must by this immortal be  
 preserved,  
 If thus thou murder thy posteritie.  
 169. *increase*] fruits or other natural  
 products. Compare Sonnet i, l. 1.  
 177. *Titan*] the sun-god.

*tired*] Shakespeare’s mythology is  
 seldom satisfactory to pedants, and  
 Boswell suggested that this meant  
 ‘attired’. Other commentators have  
 been more liberal, and Pooler says:  
 ‘Shakespeare may have remembered  
 the difficulties of the sun’s course as  
 enumerated in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*  
 bk. ii, but more probably he fancifully  
 represented it as feeling what it  
 inflicts’.

178. *overlook*] survey, look down  
 on.  
 180. *So*] For this construction see  
 also ll. 65-6.

183. *louring*] frowning. See l. 75.  
*sight*] eyes or gaze. The brows drawn  
 down over the eyes are clearly pic-  
 tured here and in the next line.

185. *Souring his cheeks*] Compare *R2*,  
 II. i. 169:  
 made me sour my patient cheek  
 Or bend one wrinkle on my  
 sovereign’s face.

Malone quotes *Cor.*, iv. vi. 58 f., ‘some  
 news is come that turns their coun-  
 tenances’; but what is meant here is  
 the expression of somebody tasting  
 something sour, which first affects the  
 lines of mouth and cheek.

187. *young, and so unkind*] Compare  
*Lr.*, I. i. 108:

So young, and so untender?  
 Both phrases have a proverbial ring.

188. *bare*] inadequate, poor. See  
*1H4*, III. ii. 13:

Such poor, such bare, such lewd,  
 such mean attempts.

fruits, produces

Apollo 822  
 Sam Geed

frowning

Shall cool the heat of this descending sun. 190  
 I'll make a shadow for thee of my hairs;  
 If they burn too, I'll quench them with my tears.

"The sun that shines from heaven shines but warm,  
 And lo I lie between that sun and thee:  
 The heat I have from thence doth little harm, 195  
 Thine eye darts forth the fire that burneth me;  
 And were I not immortal, life were done,  
 Between this heavenly and earthly sun. *Adonis*

*Apoll*  
 "Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel?  
 Nay more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth; 200  
 Art thou a woman's son and canst not feel  
 What 'tis to love, how want of love tormenteth?  
 O had thy mother borne so hard a mind,  
 She had not brought forth thee, but died unkind.

"What am I that thou shouldst contemn me this, *thus* 205  
 Or what great danger dwells upon my suit?  
 What were thy lips the worse for one poor kiss?  
 Speak, fair, but speak fair words, or else be mute.  
 Give me one kiss, I'll give it thee again,  
 And one for int'rest, if thou wilt have twain. 210

"Fie, lifeless picture, cold and senseless stone,  
 Well-painted idol, image dull and dead,  
 Statue contenting but the eye alone,  
 Thing like a man, but of no woman bred!

190. heat] *Q1*; heart *Q5*. 198. and] *Q1*; and this *Q8,12*. 203. hard] *Q1*;  
 bad *Q2-4,16*. 211. lifeless] livelesse *Q1*. 213. contenting] *Q1*; contemning  
*Q5*.

199. *obdurate*] The accent is on the second syllable. See *Lucr.*, l. 429, and *Tit.*, II. iii. 160, *2H6*, IV. vii. 122, *3H6*, I. iv. 142:

200. *relenteth*] grows soft.

201. *a woman's son*] Compare Sonnet xli:

And when a woman woos, what  
 woman's son  
 Will sourly leave her, till she have  
 prevail'd?

204. *unkind*] Commonly used of

women who refused to make love; see l. 310. Efforts to extract some further meaning are misguided. Venus' argument is another commonplace for wooers. Compare *All's W.*, IV. ii. 9 f.:  
 now you should be as your mother  
 was

When your sweet self was got.

205. *this*] *thus*. This form occurs in Middle English and later, but this would appear to be the latest recorded instance (see O.E.D.).

Thou art no man, though of a man's complexion, 215  
 For men will kiss even by their own direction."

This said, impatience chokes her pleading tongue,  
 And swelling passion doth provoke a pause.  
 Red cheeks and fiery eyes blaze forth her wrong;  
Being judge in love, she cannot right her cause. 220  
 And now she weeps, and now she fain would speak,  
 And now her sobs do her intendments break.

Sometime she shakes her head, and then his hand,  
 Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground.  
 Sometime her arms infold him like a band: 225  
 She would, he will not in her arms be bound.  
 And when from thence he struggles to be gone,  
 She locks her lily fingers one in one.

"Fondling," she saith, "since I have hemm'd thee here  
 Within the circuit of this ivory pale, *pencil* 230  
 I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer:  
 Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale;  
 Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry,  
 Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie.

223, 225. Sometime] *Q1*; Sometimes *Q4-16*. 230. the] *Q1*; this *Q8,12*.  
 231. a] *Q1*; the *Q4-16*. deer] *deare Q1*. 232. on] *Q1*; in *Q8,12*.

215. *complexion*] outward appearance. 'Complexion' meant in the first place 'temperament' or 'natural disposition', supposed to be determined by the combination of the 'four humours' (blood, bile, phlegm, melancholy). This 'natural disposition' showed in a person's face and physique. See *Wiv.*, v. v. 9: 'You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love of Leda: O omnipotent love! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose!'

217. *pleading*] There is a play upon the legal sense, which develops into the conceit of l. 220.

219. *blaze forth*] proclaim; originally 'to proclaim with a trumpet', but this becomes fused with the associations of aflaming fire, as in *Cæs.*, ii. ii. 31:

The heavens themselves blaze forth  
 the death of princes.

220. *Being . . . cause*] A paradox is

intended: 'she is judge in all disputes of love, yet she cannot obtain justice in her own cause.'

222. *intendments*] what she intends to say.

229. *Fondling*] foolish one. Pooler quotes Lyly, *Woman in the Moone*, ii. i. 230:

But fondling as I am why grieve  
 I thus?

*hemm'd*] enclosed: more often used with adverbial extension, *in*, *round*, or *about*; see l. 1022. Compare *P.L.*, iv. 979.

230-1.] Waller adapts the conceit in the lines *On a Girdle*:

The pale which held that lovely  
 deer.

The word-play on 'deer' was hackneyed.

*pale*] fence. The 'ivory pale' is Venus' linked arms.

39

4p  
 "Within this limit is relief enough, 235  
 Sweet bottom grass and high delightful plain,  
 Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,  
 To shelter thee from tempest and from rain:  
 Then be my deer, since I am such a park,  
 No dog shall rouse thee, though a thousand bark." 240

drive from cover  
 ✓ At this Adonis smiles as in disdain,

That in each cheek appears a pretty dimple;  
 Love made those hollows, if himself were slain,  
 He might be buried in a tomb so simple,  
 Foreknowing well, if there he came to lie, 245  
 Why there love liv'd, and there he could not die.

These lovely caves, these round enchanting pits,  
 Open'd their mouths to swallow Venus' liking:  
 Being mad before, how doth she now for wits?  
 Struck dead before, what needs a second striking? 250  
 Poor queen of love, in thine own law forlorn,  
 To love a cheek that smiles at thee in scorn!

Now which way shall she turn? what shall she say?  
 Her words are done, her woes the more increasing;  
 The time is spent, her object will away, 255

247. these] Q1; those Q7-13. 253. she say] Q1; we say Q5,6.

235-40.] Even Adonis could not but smile at this and the preceding stanza (l. 241), and it was this sort of witticism which made *Venus and Adonis* so popular with the genteel readers of its day. The passage was often quoted by contemporaries; see Heywood, *Fair Maid of the Exchange* (Pearson, ii. 55).  
 235. *this limit*] this precinct.

*relief*] pasture. Pooler quotes *Master of Game* (Reprint 1909, p. 14, n.): 'Relief, which denoted the act of arising and going to feed, became afterwards the term for the feeding itself.'  
 236. *bottom*] valley. See *AYL.*, iv. iii. 79.

237. *brakes*] thickets.

240. *rouse*] drive from cover. The word was a technical term in hunting, but the examples quoted by Pooler show that such 'terms of venery' were

more loosely used than such scholars as Wyndham would admit: 'So in Shakespeare, "rouse" is used of the lion [*IH4*, i. iii. 198]; of the panther, [*Tit.*, i. ii. 21]; and . . . of the night-owl . . . [*Tw. N.*, ii. iii. 60].'

242. *That*] so that. See Abbott, § 283.

243. *if himself were slain*] so that if he himself were slain.

245-8.] Echoed by Crashaw in *Love's Horoscope* (*The Delights of the Muses*, 1646).

248. *liking*] desire.

251. *in thine own law forlorn*] unhappy in a matter supposedly under your own rule.

253. *what . . . say?*] Compare the last words of Book II of *Troilus and Criseyde*: 'O mighty god, what shal he seye?'

255. *her object*] Adonis.

And from her twining arms doth urge releasing.  
 "Pity," she cries, "some favour, some remorse!"  
 Away he springs, and hasteth to his horse.

But lo from forth a copse that neighbours by,  
 A breeding jennet, lusty, young and proud, 260  
 Adonis' trampling courser doth spy,  
 And forth she rushes, snorts and neighs aloud:  
 The strong-neck'd steed being tied unto a tree,  
 Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.

Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,  $\frac{D}{2} = \frac{D}{4} = \frac{D}{8}$  265  
 And now his woven girths he breaks asunder;  
 The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,  
 Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;  
 The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,  
 Controlling what he was controlled with. 270

belt

His ears up-prick'd, his braided hanging mane  
 Upon his compass'd crest now stand on end;  
 His nostrils drink the air, and forth again  
 As from a furnace, vapours doth he send;

266. girths] *Q1-4*; girts *Q5-16*. 269. crusheth] *Q1*; crushes *Q6-16*. his] *Q1*; hir *Q2*. 272. stand] *Q1*; stands *Q7-16*.

257. *remorse*] mercy, tenderness. See *Lucr.*, ll. 269 and 562.

259. *neighbours by*] lies nearby.

260. *jennet*] a small Spanish horse. O.E.D. quotes *Sgr. of lowe Degre*, ll. 749-50.

*Jennettes* of Spayne, that ben so wyght,

Trapped to the ground with velvet bright.

267. *bearing*] Pooler compares *1H4*, v. iv. 92:

this earth that bears thee dead

Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.

See also *H5*, Prol., ll. 26 f.:

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them

Printing their proud hooves i' th' receiving earth.

*wounds*] Compare *R2*, iii. ii. 7:

Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs.

263-70.] Marlowe's *Hero and*

*Leander*, II. 141-5, provides another spirited horse as an image of the violence of sexual desire:

For as a hot proud horse highly disdains

To have his head controll'd but breaks the reins,

Spits forth the ringled bit, and with his hooves

Checks the submissive ground: so he that loves,

The more he is restrained, the worse he fares.

271. *braided*] divided into locks.

*mane*] The use of singular noun with plural verb in the next line has often been pointed out (Malone, Bell, Wyndham, and others). See I. 517 and n.

272. *compass'd*] arched. '*A compass'd ceiling* is a phrase yet in use' (Malone). Shakespeare has 'a compass'd window' for 'a bow window' in *Troil.*, I. ii. 120.



His eye which scornfully glisters like fire 275  
Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometime he trots, as if he told the steps,  
With gentle majesty and modest pride;  
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,  
As who should say "Lo thus my strength is tried: 280  
And this I do to captivate the eye  
Of the fair breeder that is standing by."

*female*  
What recketh he his rider's angry stir, *cares for* *stop*  
His flattering "holla" or his "Stand, I say"?  
What cares he now for curb or pricking spur, 285  
For rich caparisons or trappings gay?  
He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,  
For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

*painting*  
Look when a painter would surpass the life  
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed, 290  
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,  
As if the dead the living should exceed:  
So did this horse excel a common one,  
In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone.

277. Sometime] Q1; Sometimes Q5-16. 281. this] Q1; thus Q5-16. 286.  
trappings] Q1; trapping Q5. 293. this] Q1; his Q8, 10-16.

275. *glisters*] glitters.

276. *courage*] sexual inclination, lust  
(Onions).

277. *told*] counted. See l. 520.

279. *curvets*] 'A term of the manege  
. . . from Italian *corvetta* = a curvet;  
*corvo* = a raven. The horse was made  
to rear and prance forward with his  
hind legs together, and this action was  
likened to the hopping of a raven'  
(Wyndham).

280. *tried*] tested, proved.

282. *breeder*] female. See 3H6, II. i.  
41-2:

Nay, bear three daughters: by your  
leave I speak it,  
You love the breeder better than the  
male.

283. *stir*] exertion, excitement.  
Compare *Gent.*, v. iv. 13:

What hallowing and what stir is  
this today?

See *Lucr.*, l. 1471, and *R2*, II. iii. 51.  
*recketh*] cares for. Compare Spenser,  
*Sheph. Cal.*, October, l. 29:

What wreaked I of wintrye ages  
waste.

284. *holla*] Explained by Malone as  
'a term of the manege', as in *ATL*, III.  
ii. 257: 'Cry "holla" to thy tongue,  
I prithee: it curvets unseasonably'.  
Wyndham adds: 'Holla = stop, as in  
the pleasant Elizabethan ditty, "Holla,  
my Fancy, whither wilt thou stray?"'  
290. *limning out*] drawing, painting.  
291.] See l. 9. Compare *Tim.*, I. i.  
37 f.:

It tutors nature: artificial strife  
Lives in these touches, livelier than  
life.

294. *bone*] frame. Compare *Troil.*,  
III. iii. 172:

High birth, vigor of bone, desert in  
service.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, <sup>2<sup>d</sup> chance 2<sup>d</sup></sup> fetlocks shag and long, 295  
 Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,  
 High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong,  
 Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:

Look what a horse should have he did not lack,  
 Save a proud rider on so proud a back. 300

Sometime he scuds far off, and there he stares;  
 Anon he starts at stirring of a feather.

To bid the wind a base he now prepares,  
 And where he run or fly, they know not whether,

296. eye] *Q1*; eyes *Q7-16*. 302. starts] *Q1*; stares *Q8, 10-16*.

295-8.] Dowden speaks for those who are unable to enter into the spirit of the poem: 'This passage of poetry has been admired; but is it poetry or a paragraph from an advertisement of a horse sale? It is part of Shakespeare's study of an animal, and he does his work thoroughly.' Bush finds here 'the minute, self-defeating realism of the tyro' (*Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition*, p. 148). But the light, sharp details of this description are swept forward as swiftly as all else in this episode, and as the episode itself is swept forward in the poem. The most obvious literary source is Virgil's description of a well-bred horse in the *Georgics*, III. 75-94. As Baldwin points out (*op. cit.*, p. 24), the episode of the stallion and mare was probably suggested by a later passage in the same book (*Georgics*, III. 266-8). Elizabethan treatises on horsemanship, deriving in most cases from Italian originals, embodied an ideal of the horse's physique which derived both from the experience of centuries, and from the aesthetic conceptions of Greek and Roman and Renaissance art and poetry. Thus Shakespeare might have remembered the description in Blundeville's *The Foure Chiefest Offices belonging to Horsemanshippe* (1565), which derived from Federico Grisone, *Ordini di Cavalcare* (1550): 'Round hooves, short pasterns with long fewer lockes, Broade breast, great eies, short and slender head, wide

nostrils, the creast rising, short ears, strong legs, criske mane, long and bushy tail, great round buttocks' (quoted in *Shakespeare's England*, vol. II, p. 413). But there is nothing literary or dry in Shakespeare's picture; it is the work of someone who has studied horses, read the authorities, and discussed the points with true interest and enjoyment.

*shag*] rough, untrimmed. Compare *2H6*, III. i. 367:

Like a shag-hair'd crafty kern.

301. *scuds*] runs smoothly and swiftly.

*stares*] stands and stares. The idea of a fixed or searching gaze implies standing still.

302.] Compare *All's W.*, v. iii. 232: 'every feather starts you', and *R3*, III. v. 7.

303. *bid . . . a base*] challenge the wind to a chase. The reference is to a country game: 'it is played by two sides, who occupy contiguous "bases" or "homes"; any player running out from his "base" is chased by one of the opposite side, and, if caught, made a prisoner. . . to bid base: to challenge to a chase in this game. . .' (O.E.D.). Compare *Gent.*, I. ii. 97:

Indeed I bid the base for Proteus  
 and *Cym.*, v. iii. 19 f.

304. *where*] whether. Compare *Tp.*, v. i. 111, 122, and *Err.*, IV. i. 60. For 'whether' meaning 'which of the two' O.E.D. quotes Massinger, *Parlt. Love*,

For through his mane and tail the high wind sings, 305  
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feather'd wings.

He looks upon his love, and neighs unto her:  
She answers him, as if she knew his mind.  
Being proud, as females are, to see him woo her,  
She puts on outward strangeness, seems unkind, 310  
Spurns at his love, and scorns the heat he feels,  
Beating his kind embracements with her heels.

Then like a melancholy malcontent,  
He vails his tail that like a falling plume  
Cool shadow to his melting buttock lent;  
He stamps, and bites the poor flies in his fume. 315  
His love perceiving how he was enrag'd,  
Grew kinder, and his fury was assuag'd.

His testy master goeth about to take him,  
When lo the unback'd breeder, full of fear, 320  
Jealous of catching, swiftly doth forsake him;  
With her the horse, and left Adonis there:  
As they were mad unto the wood they hie them,  
Outstripping crows that strive to overfly them.'

All swoln with chafing, down Adonis sits, 325  
Banning his boist'rous and unruly beast.  
And now the happy season once more fits  
That love-sick love by pleading may be blest;

305. through] Q1; thogh Q5. 315. buttock] Q1-4; buttocks Q5-7, Q9-16.  
317. was] Q1; is Q4-16. 319. goeth] Q1; goes Q9-16. 325. chafing] Q1;  
chasing Q5-8, 12, 16.

i. v, 'I am troubled with the toothach,  
or with love, I know not whether.'

310. *outward strangeness*] a show of  
indifference. Pooler quotes Lyly,  
*Euphues* (ed. Bond, i. 200): 'The  
Gentlewoman . . . gave hym suche a  
colde welcome that he repented that he  
was come . . . he uttred this speach.  
Faire Ladye, if it be the guise of *Italy*  
to welcome straungers with strangnes,  
I must needes say the custome is  
strange and the cuntrye barbarous.'

314. *vails*] droops. See l. 956.

316. *fume*] irritation.

319. *testy*] angry, tetchy.

*goeth about*] tries.

320. *unback'd*] not broken to a rider.

321. *Jealous of catching*] afraid of  
being caught.

323-4.] These two lines show mag-  
nificently Shakespeare's concise evoca-  
tion of landscape. See also ll. 813-16.

*overfly*] fly faster or farther. But the  
word also gives an image of the crows  
flying overhead, as the horses flee.

325. *swoln with chafing*] bursting with  
rage.

326. *Banning*] cursing.

Adonis  
120  
D.L.  
2

droops

irritation  
315

angry

cursing

For lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong,  
When it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue/ 330

*closed*  
An oven that is stopp'd, or river stay'd,  
Burneth more hotly, swelleth with more rage:  
So of concealed sorrow may be said  
Free vent of words love's fire doth assuage;  
But when the heart's attorney once is mute, *tongue* 335  
The client breaks, as desperate in his suit.

*goes bankrupt.*  
He sees her coming, and begins to glow,  
Even as a dying coal revives with wind;  
And with his bonnet hides his angry brow,  
Looks on the dull earth with disturbed mind, 340  
Taking no notice that she is so nigh,  
For all askance he holds her in his eye.

O what a sight it was, wistly to view *intently*  
How she came stealing to the wayward boy!  
To note the fighting conflict of her hue, 345  
How white and red each other did destroy!  
But now her cheek was pale, and by and by  
It flash'd forth fire, as lightning from the sky.

Now was she just before him as he sat,  
And like a lowly lover down she kneels;  
With one fair hand she heaveth up his hat, *lifts* 350

348. as] *Q1*; and *Q9-11, 13-15*. 350. lowly] *Q1*; slowly *Q5*.

330. *barr'd*] forbidden.  
*aidance*] help. See *2H6*, III. ii. 165.  
331. *stopp'd*] stopped up, closed.  
Compare *F.Q.*, I. ii. 34:  
He oft finds med'cine who his griefs  
imparts,  
But double griefs afflict concealing  
harts,  
As raging flames who striveth to  
suppresse  
and *Tit.*, II. iv. 36 f.:  
Sorrow concealed, like an oven  
stopp'd,  
Doth burn the heart to cinders  
where it is.  
334. *vent*] utterance.  
335. *the heart's attorney*] the tongue.  
'Attorney' for 'advocate' was not  
used after Shakespeare's time (see

O.E.D.). Compare *R3*, IV. iv. 126 f.:  
Why should calamity be full of  
words  
Windy attorneys to their client  
woes.  
336. *breaks*] goes bankrupt. The  
word-play may be compared to *Rom.*,  
III. ii. 57.  
339. *bonnet*] hat. See l. 351.  
342. *all askance . . . eye*] he watches  
her only surreptitiously.  
343. *wistly*] intently. See *Lucr.*,  
I. 1355.  
345-6.] Compare the lengthy conceit  
in *Lucr.*, II. 52-73.  
351. *heaveth*] lifts. The effort implied  
in the modern use was not a necessary  
accompaniment of this word; see  
l. 482, and *Lucr.*, I. 111. Pooler quotes

Her other tender hand his fair cheek feels:

His tend'rer cheek receives her soft hand's print,  
As apt as new-fall'n snow takes any dint.

Impression

Oh what a war of looks was then between them!

355

Her eyes petitioners to his eyes suing,

His eyes saw her eyes, as they had not seen them,

Her eyes woo'd still, his eyes disdain'd the wooing;

And all this dumb play had his acts made plain

its

With tears, which chorus-like her eyes did rain.

360

Full gently now she takes him by the hand,

A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow,

Or ivory in an alabaster band:

So white a friend engirts so white a foe.

This beauteous combat, wilful and unwilling,

Show'd like two silver doves that sit a-billing.

kissing  
love  
365  
milk

352. cheek] *Q1*; cheeks *Q7-16*.

cheek] cheek, *Q1-4*; cheeks *Q5-16*.

366. two] *Q1*; to *Q5,6,8,10-16*.

353. tend'rer] tender *Q1*; tender *Q2-5*.

365. unwilling] *Q1*; willing *Q5,6*.

Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*  
(Works, ed. Bullen, v, p. 94), v. i. 116:

Look up an't please your worship;  
heave those eyes.

354. *dint*] impression.

359-60.] This conceit of the dumb-show accompanied by a 'chorus' cannot be pressed for too precise a meaning. Any actor who commented on the action from without could be called a 'chorus' by the Elizabethans. Compare the 'chorus' in *Henry V* and *Pericles*.

*his*] 'Its' did not replace 'his' until after Shakespeare began to write. See Abbott, § 228.

362-3.] Perhaps a reminiscence of Ovid's description of Salmacis bathing: see Golding, iv. 438:

As if a man an Ivorie Image or a  
Lillie white

Should overlay or close with glasse.

According to M. C. Bradbrook: 'The lily, the snow, the ivory and the alabaster are all chosen for their chilly whiteness, which has nothing in common with that of flesh. They are all symbols of chastity. . . The ideas of

death and chastity are precisely the opposite to those suggested in this passage. Again there is a direct contrast to the warm flexuous restraint of Venus' melting palm in the *hardness* of the ivory and alabaster which *binds* it, in the idea of imprisonment in a *gaol*, and the besieging force *engirting* the enemy. The passage is built on sensuous opposites: it is a definition by exclusion' (*op. cit.*, p. 64). Miss Bradbrook finds this a deliberate use of 'the heraldic manner' (see also *Lucr.*, ll. 52-70 n.). But this interpretation is forced. The ivory, lily, snow, alabaster, had been used in similar contexts by scores of poets whose thoughts were far from death or chastity (see the description of the naked Angelica in *Orlando Furioso*, x. 96-8). These conventional hyperboles go back to Greek poetry. Shakespeare revivifies them by conceits; but they remain simple, not paradoxical, in effect.

364. *engirts*] encloses. See *Lucr.*, l. 221.

366. *Show'd*] looked, made a picture.

Once more the engine of her thoughts began:

“O fairest mover on this mortal round, <sup>living creature on earth</sup>  
 Would thou wert as I am, and I a man,  
 My heart all whole as thine, thy heart my wound! 370  
 For one sweet look thy help I would assure thee,  
 Though nothing but my body's bane would cure thee.”

“Give me my hand,” said he, “why dost thou feel it?”

“Give me my heart,” saith she, “and thou shalt have it.

O give it me lest thy hard heart do steel it, <sup>turn to</sup> 375  
 And being steel'd, soft sighs can never grave it. <sup>steel.</sup>

Then love's deep groans I never shall regard, <sup>engrave.</sup>  
 Because Adonis' heart hath made mine hard.”

“For shame,” he cries, “let go, and let me go:

My day's delight is past, my horse is gone, 380  
 And 'tis your fault I am bereft him so.

I pray you hence, and leave me here alone,

For all my mind, my thought, my busy care,  
 Is how to get my palfrey from the mare.”

Thus she replies: “Thy palfrey as he should, 385  
 Welcomes the warm approach of sweet desire.

Affection is a coal that must be cool'd;  
 Else, suffer'd, it will set the heart on fire.

The sea hath bounds, but deep desire hath none;  
 Therefore no marvel though thy horse be gone. 390

368. on] Q1; of Q6,12; in Q8. 371. thy] Q1; my Q9-11,13-16. 385. he]  
 Q1; she Q9-10,11,13-15.

367. the engine of her thoughts] her tongue. Compare l. 335, and Tit., iii. i. 82:

O that delightful engine of her thoughts,  
 That blabbed them with such pleasing eloquence,  
 Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage.

368. mover . . . round] living creature on earth. Compare Cor., i. v. 45:

See here these movers that do prize their hours

At a crack'd drachme!

370. thy heart my wound] This ellipti-

cal expression is more effective than 'thy heart with my wound', or 'thine with my wound' (which would have been metrically possible).

375. steel] turn to steel.

376. grave] engrave, cut into.

381. bereft him] deprived of him.

382. hence] go hence.

387. coal] ember. See l. 338.

388. suffer'd] left to burn. Compare 3H6, iv. viii. 8:

A little fire is quickly trodden out;  
 Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench.

389.] Compare Rom., ii. ii. 133-4.

“How like a jade he stood tied to the tree,  
 Servilely master'd with a leathern rein!  
 But when he saw his love, his youth's fair fee, *reward*  
 He held such petty bondage in disdain,  
 Throwing the base thong from his bending crest, 395  
Enfranchising his mouth, his back, his breast.

*Selling free*  
 “Who sees his true-love in her naked bed,  
 Teaching the sheets a whiter hue than white,  
 But when his glutton eye so full hath fed,  
 His other agents aim at like delight? 400  
 Who is so faint that dares not be so bold  
 To touch the fire, the weather being cold?”

*timid*  
 “Let me excuse thy courser, gentle boy,  
 And learn of him, I heartily beseech thee,  
 To take advantage on presented joy;  
 Though I were dumb, yet his proceedings teach thee. 405  
 O learn to love, the lesson is but plain,  
 And once made perfect, never lost again.”  
*a large powerful horse*  
*only an easy one*

391. the] *Q1*; a *Q6-16*.  
 seeks *Q2-5*.

392. rein] *raine Q1*; reign *Gildon*.

397. sees] *Q1*;

391. *jade*] an inferior or spiritless horse.

393. *fee*] due reward. The word was often used to mean something due as by right, as in Herbert, *The Discharge*, l. 21:

Only the present is thy part and fee.

396. *Enfranchising*] setting free.

397. *in her naked bed*] undressed and in bed. The phrase is common in 16th-cent. English; well-known examples are Hieronymo's line in *The Spanish Tragedy*, II. v. 1:

What out-cries pluck me from my naked bed?

and Edwardes's song:

When going to my naked bed as one that would have slept.

O.E.D. says: 'Orig. used with reference to the custom of sleeping entirely naked; in later use denoting the removal of the ordinary wearing apparel.'

398. *Teaching . . . white*] Compare *Rom.*, I. v. 48, and *Cym.*, II. ii. 15 f.:  
 fresh lily,

And whiter than the sheets!

400. *agents*] senses or organs.

397-400.] Malone first referred to a similar passage in *The Phoenix' Nest*, 1593 (ed. H. E. Rollins, p. 22):

Who hath beheld faire Venus in  
 hir pride,

Of nakednes all Alablaster white,  
 In Iuorie bed, straight laid by Mars  
 his side,

And hath not been enchanted with  
 the sight . . .

405. *on*] Compare 'having some advantage on' in *Cæs.*, v. iii. 6, and Sonnet lxiv:

When I have seen the hungry ocean  
 gain

Advantage on the kingdom of the  
 shore.

*presented*] offered.

407. *but plain*] only an easy one.

"I know not love," quoth he, "nor will not know it,  
 Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it. 410  
 'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it:  
 My love to love is love but to disgrace it,  
 For I have heard, it is a life in death,  
 That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.

*In the same breath*

"Who wears a garment shapeless and unfinish'd? 415  
 Who plucks the bud before one leaf put forth?  
 If springing things be any jot diminish'd,  
 They wither in their prime, prove nothing worth;  
 The colt that's back'd and burden'd being young,  
 Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong.

*saddled grows*

"You hurt my hand with wringing, let us part,  
 And leave this idle theme, this bootless chat;  
 Remove your siege from my unyielding heart,  
 To love's alarms it will not open the gate.  
 Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears, your flatt'ry, 425  
 For where a heart is hard they make no batt'ry."

*attempt successful*

"What, canst thou talk?" quoth she, "hast thou a tongue?  
 O would thou hadst not, or I had no hearing!

424. alarms] Q1; alarum Q5; alarm Q6-16.

411. 'Tis much . . . owe it] 'To accept (or bestow) love involves great obligations, which I do not wish to undertake.'

412. (My love . . . disgrace it] 'What I feel towards love is only a strong desire to scorn it.'

414. and all but with a breath] in the same breath.

417. springing] growing.

419. back'd] broken in, saddled. See l. 320.

being young] while yet young.

420. waxeth] grows.

421. wringing] squeezing. Commentators say that the word conveyed less force than it would to us; but Adonis does not seem to think so. Pooler quotes Guilpin's *Skialetheia*, Ep. 38 (Reprint, p. 14):

He's a fine fellow . . .

Who piently jets, can caper, daunce and sing,  
 Play with his mistris fingers, her hand wring.

422. bootless chat] useless discussion.

424. alarms] attacks.

426. batt'ry] Originally the word meant no more than a violent attempt to break into a military position, but it acquired the associations of a successful entry. See 3H6, m. i. 37:

Her sighs will make a battery in his breast

and *Per.*, v. i. 47:

She questionless with her sweet harmony

And other chosen attractions, would allure

And make a battery through his deafen'd ports

Which now are midway stopp'd.



alluring

Thy mermaid's voice hath done me double wrong;  
 I had my load before, now press'd with bearing: 430  
 Melodious discord, heavenly tune harsh-sounding,  
 Ears' deep sweet music, and heart's deep sore wounding!

"Had I no eyes but ears, my ears would love  
 That inward beauty and invisible;  
 Or were I deaf, thy outward parts would move 435  
 Each part in me that were but sensible:  
 Though neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor see,  
 Yet should I be in love by touching thee.

"Say that the sense of feeling were bereft me,  
 And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch, 440  
 And nothing but the very smell were left me,  
 Yet would my love to thee be still as much;  
 For from the stillitory of thy face excelling  
 Comes breath perfum'd, that breedeth love by smelling.

"But oh what banquet wert thou to the taste,  
 Being nurse and feeder of the other four! <sup>the other four senses</sup>  
 Would they not wish the feast might ever last,

432. Ears'] Eares Q1-4; Earths Q5-16.  
 16. 447. might] Q1; should Q3-16.

439. feeling] Q1; reason Q9-11, 13-

429. *mermaid's voice*] alluring voice.  
 See l. 777 and *Lucr.*, l. 1411. Many  
 passages in Shakespeare associate  
 dangerously seductive song with mer-  
 maids. Compare *MND.*, II. i. 150-4,  
 and *Err.*, III. ii. 45-7:

O! train me not, sweet mermaid,  
 with thy note,  
 To drown me in thy sister flood of  
 tears:

Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will  
 dote.

430. *press'd with bearing*] weighed  
 down with carrying it. Compare *Oth.*,  
 III. iv. 177:

I have this while with leaden  
 thoughts been press'd.

431.] When Shakespeare uses rhe-  
 torical devices such as this oxymoron,  
 he follows contemporary taste in lay-  
 ing them on pretty heavily. See *Lucr.*,  
 l. 79.

433-50.] Wyndham points out that  
 Chapman has a similar but lengthier  
 treatment of the five senses in *Ovid's*  
*Banquet of Sense* (1595).

435. *parts*] limbs or features; but  
 perhaps with a play on the meaning of  
 'parts' as 'accomplishments'.

436. *sensible*] sensitive, i.e. capable  
 of receiving impressions.

441-4.] Compare l. 1178.

443. *stillitory*] a still. For the appli-  
 cation of the word to a face see  
 Chaucer, *Cant. Tales*, G. 580: 'his for-  
 head dropped as a stillatoric.'

*excelling*] surpassingly beautiful.

444.] Compare Marlowe, *Hero and*  
*Leander*, I. 21 f.:

Many would praise the sweet smell  
 as she past,  
 When 'twas the odour which her  
 breath forth cast.

446. *the other four*] i.e. senses.

a still  
 calmness  
 calm

And bid suspicion double-lock the door,  
 Lest jealousy, that sour unwelcome guest,  
 Should by his stealing in disturb the feast?" 450

Once more the ruby-colour'd portal open'd,  
 Which to his speech did honey passage yield,  
 Like a red morn that ever yet betoken'd  
 Wrack to the seaman, tempest to the field,  
 Sorrow to shepherds, woe unto the birds, 455  
 Gusts and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds.

*ill*  
*omen*  
 This ill presage advisedly she marketh:  
 Even as the wind is hush'd before it raineth,  
 Or as the wolf doth grin before he barketh,  
 Or as the berry breaks before it staineth, 460  
 Or like the deadly bullet of a gun,  
 His meaning struck her ere his words begun.

And at his look she flatly falleth down,  
 For looks kill love, and love by looks reviveth:  
*medic* A smile recures the wounding of a frown. 465  
 But blessed bankrout, that by love so thriveth!  
 The silly boy, believing she is dead,  
 Claps her pale cheek, till clapping makes it red.

And all amaz'd brake off his late intent,  
 For sharply did he think to reprehend her, *repro* 470

455. to] Q1; to the Q5,6. 456. Gusts] Q1; Gust Q6-16. 460. staineth] Q1; straineth Q5. 464. kill] Q1; kils Q5. 466. love] Qq; losse conj. Walker. 469. all amaz'd] Q1; all in a maze Q5; in a maze Q6-11, 13-15.

448. *double-lock*] lock by two turns of the key.

452. *honey*] sweet.

453-6.] This piece of weather-lore is very ancient (see St Matthew xvi. 2-3). Verity refers to Chapman's *Hero and Leander*, iii. 177 f.:

And after it a foul black day befell,  
 Which ever since a red morn doth foretell.

456. *flaws*] blasts of wind.

457. *advisedly*] attentively, consciously; see *Lucr.*, l. 1527.

*marketh*] notes, observes.

459. *grin*] bare his teeth.

463. *flatly*] The literal sense is she

'falls flat'. But also present is the meaning 'without more ado', as in 'deny flatly' or 'flatly refuse'.

465. *recures*] remedies, heals. Pooler quotes Lyly, *Woman in the Moone*, ii. i. 21:

And this my hand that hurt thy tender side  
 Shall first with herbes recure the wound it made.

466. *love*] Walker conjectured 'loss'. The meaning would then be that as Venus collapses ('becomes bankrupt'), her very collapse brings her profit, in the attention she receives from Adonis.

Which cunning love did wittily prevent:  
 Fair fall the wit that can so well defend her!  
 For on the grass she lies as she were slain,  
 Till his breath breatheth life in her again.

He wrings her nose, he strikes her on the cheeks, 475  
 He bends her fingers, holds her pulses hard,  
 He chafes her lips; a thousand ways he seeks  
 To mend the hurt that his unkindness marr'd.

He kisses her, and she by her good will  
Will never rise, so he will kiss her still. 480

The night of sorrow now is turn'd to day:  
 Her two blue windows faintly she up-heaveth,  
 Like the fair sun when in his fresh array  
 He cheers the morn, and all the earth relieveth;  
 And as the bright sun glorifies the sky, 485  
So is her face illumin'd with her eye.

Whose beams upon his hairless face are fix'd,  
 As if from thence they borrow'd all their shine.

484. earth] *Q1*; world *Q2-5*.

471. *wittily*] ingeniously.

472. *Fair fall*] May good fortune follow. Compare *John*, i. i. 78:

Fair fall the bones that took the  
 pains for me!

475. *wrings*] See l. 421 n. No doubt the milder meaning appears here.

478. *To mend . . . marr'd*] A good example of Shakespearian 'portman-teau' English. It combines the meaning that Adonis tries 'to repair the damage that he caused by unkindness', with a popular jingle and antithesis between 'mend' and 'mar'.

479. *by her good will*] cheerfully, willingly.

480. *so*] if, on condition that.

482. *blue windows*] Are these Venus' eyes, or her eyelids? 'Window' occurs elsewhere in Shakespeare as a metaphor for both; see *LLL.*, v. ii. 848:

Behold the window of my heart, my  
 eye  
 and *Cym.*, ii. ii. 22:

the flame o' the taper

Bows toward her and would  
 underpeep her lids,

To see the enclosed lights, now  
 canopied

Under these windows, white and  
 azure laced

With blue of heaven's own  
 tinct.

But in these passages, and also in *Ant.*, v. ii. 319, we are left in no doubt as to which application is meant; here the scale is tipped in favour of 'eyelids' by 'blue', which provides a link with the lines in *Cymbeline*. For this interpretation see also 'Windows in Shakespeare', by Kathleen Tillotson, in *G. Tillotson, Essays in Criticism and Research*, p. 204; and compare the note to ii. ii. 21-3 in *New Arden Cym.*, ed. J. M. Nosworthy.

*up-heaveth*] See l. 351.

488. *shine*] See also l. 728, for this word as a noun.

129  
vexation

Were never four such lamps together mix'd,  
Had not his clouded with his brow's repine; 490  
But hers, which through the crystal tears gave light,  
Shone like the moon in water seen by night.

"O where am I?" quoth she, "in earth or heaven?  
Or in the ocean drench'd, or in the fire?  
What hour is this, or morn, or weary even? 495  
Do I delight to die, or life desire?  
But now I liv'd, and life was death's annoy;  
But now I died, and death was lively joy.

"O thou didst kill me, kill me once again!  
Thy eyes' shrewd tutor, that hard heart of thine, 500  
Hath taught them scornful tricks, and such disdain,  
That they have murder'd this poor heart of mine;  
And these mine eyes, true leaders to their queen,  
But for thy piteous lips no more had seen.

"Long may they kiss each other for this cure! 505  
Oh never let their crimson liveries wear,  
And as they last, their verdour still endure,

500. Thy] Q1; The Q5. 506. never] Q1; neither Q5. 507. verdour] Q1;  
verdure Q5-16.

490. *repine*] discontent, vexation.  
See ll. 181-4.

494. *drench'd*] plunged, immersed.  
Compare *Gent.*, i. iii. 79:

Thus have I shunned the fire for  
fear of burning

And drench'd me in the sea where  
I am drown'd.

497-8.] Adonis showed nothing but  
unkindness until Venus swooned.

497. *annoy*] torment, pain. Compare  
*R3*, v. iii. 156:

Good angels guard thee from the  
boar's annoy.

498. *lively*] living, life-giving.

500. *shrewd*] sharp, harsh.

505. *kiss each other*] Pooler quotes  
Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella*, 1591,  
xlili:

With either lip he doth the other  
kisse.

506. *crimson liveries wear*] red colours

wear out, or fade. Compare Sonnet  
lxxvii:

Thy glass will show thee how thy  
beauties wear.

See also *Mer. V.*, ii. i. 2.

507. *verdour*] freshness, fragrance:  
the sense of 'greenery' or 'greenness'  
had not yet ousted a number of other  
applications. Shakespeare generally  
uses the word in metaphor, as in *Tp.*,  
i. ii. 87:

The ivy that had hid my princely  
trunk

And suck'd my verdure out on't.

Compare also *Gent.*, i. i. 49:

The young and tender wit

Is turn'd to folly . . .

Losing his verdure even in the  
prime.

The spelling in Q1 indicates the Eliza-  
bethan pronunciation, which is essen-  
tial to the music of the line.

To drive infection from the dangerous year:  
 That the star-gazers, having writ on death,  
 May say, the plague is banish'd by thy breath. 510

"Pure lips, sweet seals in my soft lips imprinted,  
 What bargains may I make, still to be sealing?  
 To sell myself I can be well contented,  
 So thou wilt buy, and pay, and use good dealing:  
 Which purchase if thou make, for fear of slips,  
 Set thy seal manual on my wax-red lips. 515

"A thousand kisses buys my heart from me,  
 And pay them at thy leisure, one by one,  
 What is ten hundred touches unto thee?  
 Are they not quickly told and quickly gone? 520  
 Say for non-payment that the debt should double,  
 Is twenty hundred kisses such a trouble?"

"Fair queen," quoth he, "if any love you owe me,

519. touches] *Q1*; kisses *Q7-16*. 522. hundred] *Q1*; thousand *Q4-6*.

508.] 'The poet evidently alludes to a practice of his own age, when it was customary, in time of the plague, to strew the rooms of every house with rue and other strong smelling herbs, to prevent infection' (Malone).

509. *the star-gazers, having writ on death*] compilers of almanacs who have prophesied an epidemic.

510. *the plague*] Epidemics of the plague in Shakespeare's time were common, and it is impossible to use this passage to establish the date of composition of the poem. However, Shakespeare brought out *Venus and Adonis* at a time when the theatres were closed, owing to the plague of 1592-3; and Wyndham has taken these lines to be a topical allusion: 'In 1592 . . . the theatres were closed on account of the Plague from July to December. . . It is probable therefore, that Shakespeare wrote the poem during the enforced idleness of the second half of the year 1592.'

511. *sweet seals*] Kisses are 'seals of

love' in the song in *Meas.*, iv. i. Compare *Gent.*, ii. ii. 7:

And seal the bargain with a holy  
 kiss.

and *Str.*, iii. ii. 125:

And seal the title with a lovely kiss!

515. *slips*] Examples are quoted by Pooler, of 'slips' for counterfeit money; see *Rom.*, ii. iv. 51. But there is no need here for more than the ordinary sense of 'error'.

517. *buys*] Shakespeare constantly uses a singular verb with a plural subject; see Abbott § 333.

519. *touches*] touches of the lips.

520. *told*] counted. See l. 277.

521.] Malone explains that an established form of contract is meant: 'The poet was thinking of a conditional bond's becoming forfeited for non-payment; in which case, the entire penalty (usually the double of the principal sum lent by the obligee) was formerly recoverable at law.'

523. *owe*] bear. This sense of 'owe' is obsolete except in *to owe a grudge*.

Adonis  
with

Measure my strangeness with my unripe years.  
 Before I know myself, seek not to know me; 525  
 No fisher but the ungrown fry for bears;  
 (The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,  
 Or being early pluck'd, is sour to taste.

"Look the world's comforter with weary gait 7 tempo  
 His day's hot task hath ended in the west; rhythm 530  
 The owl, night's herald, shrieks, 'tis very late;  
 The sheep are gone to fold, birds to their nest,  
 And coal-black clouds that shadow heaven's light  
 Do summon us to part, and bid good night.

"Now let me say good night, and so say you; offered 535  
 If you will say so, you shall have a kiss."  
 "Good night," quoth she, and ere he says adieu,  
 The honey fee of parting tender'd is:  
 Her arms do lend his neck a sweet embrace;  
 Incorporate then they seem, face grows to face. 540

Till breathless he disjoin'd, and backward drew  
 The heavenly moisture, that sweet coral mouth,  
 Whose precious taste her thirsty lips well knew,  
 Whereon they surfeit, yet complain on drouth. 2/2 along lit  
 He with her plenty press'd, she faint with dearth, 545  
 Their lips together glued, fall to the earth.

Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,  
 And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth.  
 Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,

533. And] Q1; The Q5-16. 544. drouth] Q1; drough Q5; droughth Q6-8.  
 547. the] Q1; his Q5,6; her Q7-16.

524. *strangeness*] coldness, diffidence;  
 see l. 310. The sense is, 'Account  
 for my diffidence by my unripe  
 years.'

526. *fry*] young fish.

529. *the world's comforter*] the sun.  
 Compare *Tim.*, v. i. 134:

Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn.

See also l. 799.

538. *tender'd*] offered.

540. *Incorporate*] made into one body.  
 Compare *MND.*, III. ii. 207:

As if our hands, our sides, voices,  
 and minds,  
 Had been incorporate. So we grew  
 together. . .

*grows to*] Compare *H8*, r. i. 9 f.:  
 they clung

In their embracement, as they  
 grew together.

544. *on*] of. See *Abbott*, § 181; and  
 l. 160.

545. *press'd*] oppressed. See l. 430.

546. *glued*] Compare *Tit.*, II. i. 41.

Paying what ransom the insulter willeth; 550  
 Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high  
 That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry.

And having felt the sweetness of the spoil,  
 With blindfold fury she begins to forage;  
 Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil, 555  
 And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage,  
 Planting oblivion, beating reason back,  
 Forgetting shame's pure blush and honour's wrack.

Hot, faint and weary with her hard embracing,  
 Like a wild bird being tam'd with too much handling, 560  
 Or as the fleet-foot roe that's tir'd with chasing,  
 Or like the froward infant still'd with dandling:  
 He now obeys, and now no more resisteth,  
 While she takes all she can, not all she listeth.

What wax so frozen but dissolves with temp'ring,  
 And yields at last to very light impression?  
 Things out of hope are compass'd oft with vent'ring,  
 Chiefly in love, whose leave exceeds commission: 565

560. with] Q1; by Q8,12. 564. While] Q1; Whiles Q7,8.

550. *insulter*] one who boasts his triumph. Compare *ATL.*, III. v. 36.

551. *vulture thought*] ravenous imagination. Compare *Lucr.*, I. 556.

*pitch*] set at a certain level or point.

553. *spoil*] plunder.

554. *forage*] eat greedily, or glut oneself. Compare *H5*, I. II. 108-10:

Whiles his most mighty father on a hill

Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp

Forage in blood of French nobility.

556. *careless*] reckless.

557. *Planting oblivion*] establishing oblivion. Compare *LLL.*, IV. III. 349:

And plant in tyrants mild humility.

558. *wrack*] wreck.

559. *hard*] close.

562. *froward*] fretful, wilful.

564. *listeth*] wishes. See I. 154 n.

565. *temp'ring*] moulding, or working. According to Malone, 'It was the custom formerly to seal with soft wax,

which was *tempered* between the fingers, before the impression was made.' See *2H4*, IV. III. 140: 'I have him already tempering between my finger and thumb, and shortly will I seal with him.' Pooler quotes also Lyly (ed. Bond, I. 187): 'the tender youth of a childe is lyke the temperings of new waxe apt to receive any form.'

567. *out of hope*] beyond hope.

*compass'd*] achieved.

568. *whose leave exceeds commission*] Pooler paraphrases: 'which intemperately exceeds its instructions, is given an inch and takes an ell'. But if this were the full meaning, Shakespeare might as well have written 'whose commission exceeds leave'. The phrase is too compressed to yield a single or wholly logical sense. Perhaps what is suggested is that 'venturing', active daring, usually succeeds in matters of love, because passivity ('leave'), the yielding to one's own or

*desire*  
 Affection faints not like a pale-fac'd coward,  
 But then woos best when most his choice is froward. 570

*had forsake*  
 When he did frown, O had she then gave over,  
 Such nectar from his lips she had not suck'd.  
 Foul words and frowns must not repel a lover;  
 What though the rose have prickles, yet 'tis pluck'd.  
 Were beauty under twenty locks kept fast, *22* 575  
 Yet love breaks through, and picks them all at last.

For pity now she can no more detain him;  
 The poor fool prays her that he may depart.  
 She is resolv'd no longer to restrain him,  
 Bids him farewell, and look well to her heart, 580  
 The which by Cupid's bow she doth protest  
 He carries thence engaged in his breast.

*imprisoned, spend*  
 "Sweet boy," she says, "this night I'll waste in sorrow,  
 For my sick heart commands mine eyes to watch.  
 Tell me, love's master, shall we meet tomorrow?  
 Say, shall we, shall we? wilt thou make the match?" 585  
 He tells her no, tomorrow he intends  
 To hunt the boar with certain of his friends. *agreement bargain*

"The boar," quoth she: whereat a sudden pale,

574. prickles] Q1-5, 12; pricks Q6-11, 13-16. 'tis] Q1; is it Q6-15; it is Q16.

582. thence] Q1; then Q8, 12.

to another's desire, there plays so large a part.

569. Affection] desire.

570. his choice] the object of his choice.

froward] wilful, obstinate.

571. had . . . gave over] Compare l. 176, 'had forsook'.

573. Foul] hard, unpleasant.

575-6.] See O.D.E.P., p. 390.

578. poor fool] Malone compares Lear's remark 'And my poor fool is hang'd' (which he takes to refer to Cordelia) and explains that this 'was formerly an expression of tenderness'. Porter suggests that 'some scorn of him and envy of his chance speaks in this endearing term'.

581. by Cupid's bow] Compare MND., i. i. 169:

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow.

583. waste] See note to l. 24.

584. watch] stay awake. Compare Sonnet lxi, ll. 13-14:

For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,

From me far off, with others all too near.

586. make the match] make an agreement or bargain. Compare Mer. V., III. i. 46: 'There I have another bad match'.

589. pale] paleness. Malone cites the following from *The Shepherd's Song of Venus and Adonis* (H.C. in England's



Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose, 590  
 Usurps her cheek; she trembles at his tale,  
 And on his neck her yoking arms she throws.  
 She sinketh down, still hanging by his neck;  
 He on her belly falls, she on her back.

Now is she in the very lists of love, 595  
 Her champion mounted for the hot encounter.

All is imaginary she doth prove; experience  
 He will not manage her, although he mount her:  
 That worse than Tantalus' is her annoy, torment.  
 To clip Elizium and to lack her joy. 600

Even so poor birds deceiv'd with painted grapes  
 Do surfeit by the eye and pine the maw:

591. cheek] *Q1*; cheekes *Q5-16*.  
 her] *Q1*; manage he *Q4,5*.

593. by] *Q1*; on *Q5-16*.

598. manage

*Helicon*) in proof of Shakespeare's knowledge of that poem:

At the name of boare  
 Venus seemed dying:  
 Deadly-colour'd pale  
 Roses overcast.

590. *Like lawn . . . rose*] Lawn was a kind of fine linen, resembling cambric. Herrick provides the closest parallel:

Like to a twi-light, or that simpring  
 dawn,  
 That roses show, when misted o're  
 with lawn.

(*To Anthea Lying in Bed*)

But these effects of white and red especially delighted the Elizabethans. Feuillerat quotes from Lodge, *Scillaes Metamorphoses*, 1589:

An Yuorie shadowed front . . .  
 Next which her cheekes appeerd  
 like crimson silk,  
 Or ruddie rose bespred on whitest  
 milk.

For the contrast of roses and lawn see also *Lucr.*, ll. 258-9.

595. *lists*] strips of cloth marking off the enclosed space where tournaments or other contests were to be held: the word was used to mean the ground or space itself. The next line completes the metaphor.

597-8.] The two lines must be taken together if we are to find the right meaning. As Kittredge says, 'All that she experiences is mere imagination', because Adonis will not do his part. *prove*] experience.

*manage her*] ride her, put her through her paces. The term is technical, and from the stable, like the total metaphor here.

599-600.] Pooler compares *Romeus and Juliet*, ll. 339-40 (see G. Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 1, p. 295):

The lot of Tantalus is Romeus lyke  
 to thine  
 For want of foode amid his foode,  
 the myser styll doth pine.

The punishment of Tantalus was, however, one of the most used stories from classical mythology; see *Lucr.*, l. 858, and *F.Q.*, II. vii. 57-60.

*annoy*] torment.  
*clip*] embrace, clasp.

601-2.] Malone notes: 'Our authour alludes to the celebrated picture of Zeuxis, mentioned by Pliny': Holland's Pliny translated the passage as follows (vol. II, p. 535): 'Zeuxis for prooffe of his cunning, brought upon the scaffold a table, wherein were

Even so she languisheth in her mishaps,  
 As those poor birds that helpless berries saw.  
 The warm effects which she in him finds missing 605  
 She seeks to kindle with continual kissing.

But all in vain; good queen, it will not be.  
 She hath assay'd as much as may be prov'd:  
 Her pleading hath deserv'd a greater fee;  
 She's love, she loves, and yet she is not lov'd. 610

"Fie, fie," he says, "you crush me; let me go,  
 You have no reason to withhold me so."

*I wish you had gone without telling me*

"Thou hadst been gone," quoth she, "sweet boy, ere this,  
 But that thou told'st me, thou wouldst hunt the boar.  
 Oh be advis'd, thou know'st not what it is, 615

With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore,  
 Whose tushes never sheath'd he whetteth still,  
 Like to a mortal butcher, bent to kill.

*tusk  
of swine*

*deadly*

"On his bow-back he hath a battle set

616. javelin's] javelings Q1-4. 619. bow-back] Q1; bow back Q2-5.

clusters of grapes so lively painted that the very birds of the air flew flocking thither for to bee pecking at the grapes'. This tale of artistic prowess could have been read by Shakespeare in Tottel's *Miscellany*, Lodge's *Rosalynde*, Greene's *Dorastus and Fawnia*, and elsewhere.

pine the maw] starve their stomach.  
 For this active use of 'pine' see R2, v. i. 77:

towards the north

Where shivering cold and sickness  
 pines the clime.

604. *helpless]* affording no help.  
 Compare *Err.*, II. i. 38-9:

So thou, that hast no unkind mate  
 to grieve thee,

With urging helpless patience  
 wouldst relieve me:

and R3, I. ii. 13. See also *Lucr.*, I. 1027.

605. *effects]* There may be some confusion with 'affects', i.e. desires or emotions; see *Lucr.*, I. 251. But 'effects' is appropriate enough to Adonis' situation.

608. *assay'd . . . prov'd]* Feuillerat observes that 'these words have the same meaning, that of putting a metal to the test'. But the technical application is a mere shadow, and the sense is really no more than 'she has tried everything in her power'.

615. *be advis'd]* take heed.

616. *churlish]* rough, boorish. Compare *ATL.*, II. i. 7.

617. *tushes]* tusks. Compare Golding, VIII. 384:

Among the greatest Oliphants in  
 all the land of Inde.

A greater tush than had this Boare,  
 ye shall not lightly finde.

618. *mortal]* deadly. See I. 953, and *Lucr.*, I. 364 and I. 724. Compare R2, III. ii. 21:

a lurking adder

Whose double tongue may with  
 a mortal touch

Throw death upon thy sovereign's  
 enemies.

*bent]* determined.

619. *bow-back]* hunched or arched

Of bristly pikes that ever threat his foes; 620  
 His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret,  
 His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes;  
 Being mov'd, he strikes whate'er is in his way,  
 And whom he strikes his crooked tushes slay. 625

"His brawny sides with hairy bristles armed 625  
 Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter;  
 His short thick neck cannot be easily harmed;  
 Being ireful, on the lion he will venture.  
 The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,  
 As fearful of him, part; through whom he rushes. 630

"Alas, he naught esteems that face of thine,  
 To which love's eyes pays tributary gazes;  
 Nor thy soft hands, sweet lips and crystal eyne,  
 Whose full perfection all the world amazes:  
 But having thee at vantage—wondrous dread!— 635  
 Would root these beauties as he roots the mead.

"Oh let him keep his loathsome cabin still!  
 Beauty hath naught to do with such foul fiends.

627. easily] *Q1*; easily *Q5,6*. 628. venture] venter *Qg*. 632. love's eyes] *Q1*;  
 loves eie *Q7-10*.

back. See Tennyson, *Princ.*, vi. 339.  
*battle*] fighting force drawn up.

Compare *1H4*, iv. i. 129:

What may the king's whole battle  
 reach unto?

The description of the boar was  
 thought by Malone to owe something  
 to Golding, viii. 379-80:

And like a front of armed Pikes set  
 close in battle ray,

The sturdy bristles on his back  
 stooede staring up alway.

Baldwin tries to determine the exact  
 relationship to this and to the original  
 (*op. cit.*, pp. 33-6).

621. fret] rage.

623. *Being mov'd*] once roused to  
 anger. Compare *Rom.*, i. i. 7: 'I strike  
 quickly being moved'.

626. *better proof*] stronger armour.  
 'Proof' was used of armour which had  
 been tested and found impenetrable.

Shakespeare uses it as a substantive:  
 see *Ham.*, iii. iv. 38:

If it be made of penetrable stuff,  
 If damned custom have not brass'd  
 it so

That it be proof and bulwark  
 against sense.

631-3.] See Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 547-9.

633. *eyne*] See also *Lucr.*, ll. 643,  
 1229.

635. *having thee at vantage*] getting a  
 position of superiority over you. Com-  
 pare *F.Q.*, iii. vii. 51:

Me seely wretch she so at vantage  
 caught.

636. *root*] root up, or dig up with the  
 snout (used of swine).

637. *cabin*] den or cave. O.E.D.  
 quotes Stanyhurst, *Aeneis*, i. 23:

A cel or cabban by nature formed,  
 is vnder.

638. *fiends*] evil beings, enemies.

*to tell the truth*

Come not within his danger by thy will:  
 They that thrive well, take counsel of their friends. 640  
 When thou didst name the boar, not to dissemble,  
 I fear'd thy fortune, and my joints did tremble. *to tell*

"Didst thou not mark my face, was it not white?  
 Saw'st thou not signs of fear lurk in mine eye?  
 Grew I not faint, and fell I not downright? 645  
 Within my bosom, whereon thou dost lie,  
 My boding heart pants, beats, and takes no rest,  
 But like an earthquake, shakes thee on my breast."

"For where love reigns, disturbing jealousy  
 Doth call himself affection's sentinel; *to tell the truth* 650  
 Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,  
 And in a peaceful hour doth cry 'Kill, kill!'  
 Distemp'ring gentle love in his desire,  
 As air and water do abate the fire.

"This sour informer, this bate-breeding spy, *mischief-making* 655  
 This canker that eats up love's tender spring,

644. eye] *Q1*; eyes *Q3-5*. 653. in] *Q1*; with *Q5-16*. 654. do] *Q1*; doth  
*Q5-16*. 655. bate-breeding] *Q1*; bare-breeding *Q5,6*.

639. *within his danger*] within reach of his power to do harm. Compare *Mer. V.*, iv. i. 180:

You stand within his danger, do you not?

641. *not to dissemble*] to tell the truth.

642. *fear'd*] feared for. Compare *Tit.*, ii. iii. 305:

Fear not thy sons; they shall do well enough.

643. *mark*] note.

645. *downright*] straightway, directly.

647. *boding*] foreboding.

649. *jealousy*] solicitude or anxiety.

651. *suggesteth*] incites. The word was often used of insinuating, or prompting to, evil. Compare *H5*, ii. ii. 114, *Oth.*, ii. iii. 358, and *Lucr.*, l. 37 n.

652. *Kill, kill!*] Malone first pointed out that this was the word given to an English army for a general assault on

the enemy. See *Lr.*, iv. vi. 191, and *Cor.*, v. vi. 131. Pooler quotes Drayton, *The Battle of Agincourt*:

Whilst scalps about like broken pot sherds fly,  
 And kill, kill, kill, the conqu'ring English cry.

653. *Distemp'ring*] disturbing, diluting.

655. *bate-breeding*] mischief-making. 'Bate' for 'strife' survived only in this alliterative phrase; compare *2H4*, ii. iv. 271: 'And breeds no bate with telling of discreet stories'.

656. *canker*] canker-worm or caterpillar. Compare *MND.*, ii. ii. 3:

Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds.

See also *Rom.*, ii. iii. 30:

Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

*spring*] young shoot or bud. Malone compares *Err.*, iii. ii. 3:

This carry-tale, dissentious jealousy,  
That sometime true news, sometime false doth bring,  
Knocks at my heart, and whispers in mine ear,  
That if I love thee, I thy death should fear. 660

And more than so, presenteth to mine eye  
The picture of an angry chafing boar,  
Under whose sharp fangs on his back doth lie  
An image like thyself, all stain'd with gore;  
Whose blood upon the fresh flowers being shed, 665  
Doth make them droop with grief and hang the head.

What should I do, seeing thee so indeed,  
That tremble at th' imagination?  
The thought of it doth make my faint heart bleed,  
And fear doth teach it divination: 670  
I prophesy thy death, my living sorrow,  
If thou encounter with the boar tomorrow.

But if thou needs wilt hunt, be rul'd by me:  
Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,  
Or at the fox which lives by subtlety, 675  
Or at the roe which no encounter dare;  
Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,  
And on thy well-breath'd horse keep with thy hounds.

668. tremble] *Q1*; trembling *Q4-16*.

Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot.

657. *carry-tale*] tale-bearer. Compare *LLL.*, v. ii. 464:

Some carry-tale, some please-man,  
some slight zany.

662. *angry chafing*] The two words are practically synonymous, but 'angry' is perhaps adverbial: 'angrily chafing'.

670. *divination*] Prophetic warnings of this sort are a common dramatic device. See *Rom.*, iii. v. 54-6, and *Ham.*, v. ii. 222-38.

672. *encounter with*] meet as an adversary.

673. *be rul'd by me*] take my advice.

674. *Uncouple*] loose your hounds. The term is found in hunting treatises

and also in common use; Pooler quotes Topsis, *Four-footed Beasts*, 1658. Compare *MND*, iv. i. 112-13:

My love shall hear the music of my hounds.

Uncouple in the western valley;  
let them go.

674-6.] See Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 537-9: Hortaturque canes tutaque animalia praedae,

Aut pronos lepores aut celsum in cornua cervum

Aut agitat dammas.

676. *dare*] Shakespeare often interchanges third person singular and plural forms of this verb. See Abbott, § 361.

677. *fearful*] timid.

678. *well-breath'd*] sound in wind.

18. 22. 20. 21. shoot  
39 runs beyond

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

500 680  
500 1/2 2 1/2  
2 1/2 1/2 1/2

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

685

Keeps company with  
690

680. Mark] Q1; Make Q5. 684. to] Q1; t' Q6-16. 685. a] Q1; the Q5-16.

679. on foot] in motion.

purblind] The hare has weak sight. Pooler quotes from Topsisel (ed. 1658, p. 208): 'The eyelids coming from the brows, are too short to cover their eyes and therefore this sense is weak in them; and besides their over-much sleep, their fear of Dogs and swiftness, causeth them to see the less.'

680. overshoot] Q1 'overshut' is said by O.E.D. to be an obsolete form of overshoot, 'to shoot or run beyond'. Pooler quotes Turberville's *Booke of Hunting*, 1576: '[The hounds] are hote, and doe quickly overshoot the track or path of the chace which they undertake' (ed. Clarendon Press, 1908, p. 11).

682. cranks] twists, turns suddenly. Compare *IH4*, iii. i. 98:

See how this river comes me  
cranking in,  
And cuts me from the best of all  
my land  
A huge half-moon, a monstrous  
candle out.

683. musits] gaps or round holes in a hedge or fence. 'A hare's muse (French *musse*) is still the common and only term for the round hole made in a fence through which a hare traces her run. *Musit* is from the Fr. diminutive *mussette*' (Wyndham). Pooler says that 'muse' and 'muset' 'were, however,

occasionally used of the hare's form and, figuratively, of any lurking place, as well as of the hole or short tunnel through which she passes', and cites Topsisel, p. 212: 'a quick smelling Hound, which raiseth the Hare out of her muse.'

684. amaze] bewilder.

685-8.] Pooler quotes from Turberville's *Booke of Hunting*, 1576: 'And I have seen hares oftentimes runne into a flock of sheepe in the field when they were hunted, and woulde never leave the flocke, untill I was forced to couple up my houndes, and folde up the sheepe or sometimes drive them to the Cote: and then the hare would forsake them. . . I have seene that would take the grounde like a Coney . . . when they have been hunted' (ed. 1908, p. 165).

687. earth-delving conies] rabbits that make burrows.

keep] dwell.

688. in their yell] i.e. in full cry. The hounds yelp most loudly when in full pursuit of the quarry.

689. sorteth with] keeps company with. Compare *LLL*, i. i. 258: 'sorted and consorted . . . with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female'.

690. shifts] tricks, evasions. Compare *John*, iv. iii. 7:

"For there his smell with others being mingled,  
 The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,  
 Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled  
 With much ado the cold fault cleanly out;  
 Then they do spend their mouths: echo replies, 695  
 As if another chase were in the skies.

"By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,  
 Stands on his hinder-legs with list'ning ear,  
 To hearken if his foes pursue him still.  
 Anon their loud alarums he doth hear; 700  
 And now his grief may be compared well  
 To one sore sick, that hears the passing bell.

700. their] *Q1*; with *Q4,5*.

If I get down and do not break my  
 limbs,  
 I'll find a thousand shifts to get  
 away.

*waits on*] attends, goes with. See *Lucr.*, l. 275.

693. *Ceasing their clamorous cry*] Pooler quotes from *The Master of Game* (circa 1406-11) to show that this was 'a sign of good hounds', and that hounds were to be trained not to give tongue except when they were on the scent (Reprint, 1909, pp. 107 and 110).

*singled*] distinguished the scent from that of other animals. Pooler again refers to *Master of Game*, and to Turberville (p. 35): 'there is difference between the scent of a Harte and a Hynde, as you may see by experience that hounds do oftentimes single that one from that other'.

694. *cold fault*] loss of scent. "Fault" is defect *sc.* of scent, and strictly speaking, it is the scent not the fault which is cold, whether from being mixed with that of other beasts than "the chase", or from the nature of the ground, or from the lapse of time. Hounds were said to "fail" or to be "at default" when they lost the scent' (Pooler).

695. *spend their mouths*] yelp, give tongue. Compare *Troil.*, v. i. 98, *Oth.*,

i. ii. 48, and *H5*, ii. iv. 69:  
 coward dogs  
 Most spend their mouths when what  
 they seem to threaten  
 Runs far before them.

695-6.] Compare *Tit.*, ii. iii. 17-19, and *MND.*, iv. i. 117-20:

Never did I hear  
 Such gallant chiding; for, besides  
 the groves,  
 The skies, the fountains, every  
 region near  
 Seem'd all one mutual cry.

697. *Wat*] 'A familiar term among sportsmen for a hare; why, does not appear. Perhaps for no better reason than *Philip*, for a sparrow, *Tom*, for a cat, and the like' (Nares, *Glossary*, 1822). The first example in O.E.D. dates from about 1500, the last from 1692.

698.] Pooler compares Topsisel, p. 211: 'When she [the hare] hath left both Hunters and Dogs a great way behind her, she getteth to some hill or rising of the earth, there she raiseth herself upon her hinder legs, like a Watch-man in his Tower, observing how far or near the enemy approacheth.'

700. *Anon*] soon.  
*alarums*] war-cries or battle-cries.

702. *passing bell*] 'The bell which rings at the hour of departure, to

"Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch  
 Turn, and return, indenting with the way. *zigzagging*  
 Each envious briar his weary legs do scratch, 705  
 Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay:

✓ ( For misery is trodden on by many,  
 And being low, never reliev'd by any. ) *oh! 2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17/18/19/20/21/22/23/24/25/26/27/28/29/30/31/32/33/34/35/36/37/38/39/40/41/42/43/44/45/46/47/48/49/50*

"Lie quietly, and hear a little more;  
 Nay, do not struggle, for thou shalt not rise. 710  
 To make thee hate the hunting of the boar,  
 Unlike myself thou hear'st me moralise,  
 Applying this to that, and so to so,  
 For love can comment upon every woe. *break off*

"Where did I leave?" "No matter where," quoth he; 715  
 "Leave me, and then the story aptly ends:  
 The night is spent." "Why, what of that?" quoth she.  
 "I am," quoth he, "expected of my friends,  
 And now 'tis dark, and going I shall fall."  
 "In night," quoth she, "desire sees best of all. 720

"But if thou fall, oh then imagine this:

704.] indenting] Q1; intending Q5. 705. do] Q1; doth Q5-16. 712. my-  
 self] my selfe Q1; thy selfe Q4-8,12.

obtain prayers for the passing soul'  
 (Johnson).

704. *indenting*] zigzagging. The expression originated with the practice of drawing up a legal or business document in duplicate and then dividing it into two pieces by a zigzag or toothed line; the tallying or fitting of the two sections was thought to guarantee the authenticity of the whole. The metaphorical use is illustrated by Pooler in quotations from Drayton's *Polyolbion*, i. 158, and Topsel, p. 212: "The Dogs . . . run along with a gallant cry, turning over the doubtful footsteps; now one way, now another, like the cuts of Indentures . . ." Compare also Golding, vii. 1016:

[the fox] doubling and indenting  
 still avoydes his enmies lipes.

705. *envious*] spiteful.

712. *moralise*] teach by example or

illustration, i.e. 'applying this to that'. The idea of a didactic treatise is sustained in 'comment' in l. 714. See also *Lucr.*, l. 104.

715. *leave*] break off. Compare *Arden of Feversham*, iii. vi. 72:

Do you remember where my tale  
 did leave?

Compare also *3H6*, ii. ii. 168:

Yet know thou, since we have  
 begun to strike,  
 We'll never leave, till we have  
 hewn thee down.

716. *aptly*] suitably.

718. *expected of*] expected by. See Abbott, § 170.

720.] Compare *Rom.*, iii. ii. 8:

Lovers can see to do their amorous  
 rites  
 By their own beauties.

See also *Hero and Leander*, i. 191:  
 dark night is Cupid's day.



The earth in love with thee thy footing trips,  
And all is but to rob thee of a kiss.

Rich preys make true men thieves; so do thy lips

Make modest Dian cloudy and forlorn,  
Lest she should steal a kiss and die forsworn.

"Now of this dark night I perceive the reason:

Cynthia for shame obscures her silver shine,  
Till forging nature be condemn'd of treason,  
For stealing moulds from heaven, that were divine; 730  
Wherein she fram'd thee, in high heaven's despite,  
To shame the sun by day and her by night.

"And therefore hath she brib'd the destinies

To cross the curious workmanship of nature,  
To mingle beauty with infirmities 735  
And pure perfection with impure defeature,  
Making it subject to the tyranny  
Of mad mischances and much misery.

"As burning fevers, agues pale and faint,  
Life-poisoning pestilence and frenzies wood! 740

724. true men] true-men Q1; rich-men Q4; rich men Q5-16. 738. mad] Q1;  
sad Q7-16.

722. *footing*] step. The word is used variously by Shakespeare: for 'foot-print' (l. 148 above), for 'footfall' (*Mer. V.*, v. i. 24), for 'foot' or 'feet' in *2H6*, iii. ii. 87.

724. *preys*] booty, spoils.

*true men*] honest men; generally used as the opposite of 'thieves' as in *Meas.*, iv. ii. 46: 'Every true man's apparel fits your thief', *LLL.*, iv. iii. 187, and *1H4*, ii. ii. 102.

725. *cloudy*] gloomy, sullen. Compare *1H4*, iii. ii. 83:

such aspect

As cloudy men use to their  
adversaries.

The metaphorical sense is here combined with the literal image of the clouded moon in a way which carries out the half-jocular 'conceit' of the stanza. See also *Lucr.*, l. 1084.

726. *forsworn*] having broken her  
vow of chastity.

727-32.] Venus continues to pile up conceits and hyperboles, one growing out of another.

728. *shine*] See l. 488.

729. *forging*] counterfeiting. The word 'moulds' in the next line brings out the metaphor from forged money.

731-2.] 'She' in l. 731 is Nature; 'her' in l. 732 is the moon.

734. *cross*] thwart.

*curious*] cunning, elaborate.

736. *defeature*] disfigurement. Compare *Err.*, ii. i. 98, and v. i. 299:

And careful hours, with Time's  
deformed hand,

Have written strange defeatures in  
my face.

739. *agues*] fevers, characterized by fits of shivering.

740. *wood*] mad. Pooler quotes Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, 'Franticke Companion, lunatick and wood'

The marrow-eating sickness whose attain  
 Disorder breeds by heating of the blood;  
 Surfeits, imposthumes, grief and damn'd despair,  
 Swear nature's death, for framing thee so fair.

aspect

virgins

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

745

indifferent

→ 2/21 1/21  
 Adonis  
 750  
 1/21 2/21  
 2/21

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

755

→ 2/21 2/21  
 1/21  
 2/21

“What is thy body but a swallowing grave,

746. fight] *Q1*; sight *Q6-16*.      748. impartial] *Q1*; imperiall *Q5-16*.      754.  
 dearth] *Q1*; death *Q5,6,8,12*.      sons] *Q2-16*; suns *Q1*.

(*Plays and Poems*, ed. Churton Collins (Oxford, 1905), vol. 1, p. 249).

741. marrow-eating sickness] Either phthisis or syphilis may be meant. See *Troil.*, v. i. 19-23, and the article on 'Medicine' in *Shakespeare's England*, vol. 1.

attain] infection. Compare *H5*, iv. Chor. 39:

But freshly looks and overbears  
 attain

With cheerful countenance.

743. Surfeits] illnesses caused by excessive eating or drinking.

imposthumes] abscesses, or accumulations of poisonous matter. Compare *Troil.*, v. i. 20-8, where 'bladders full of imposthumes' are included among 'the rotten diseases of the south'.

744. Swear nature's death] vow to bring about Nature's death.

745-6.] Even the least serious of these ailments 'after a momentary en-

gagement subdues beauty' (Malone).

747. favour] aspect or countenance. hue] The word could mean 'shape' as well as 'colour'; see Sonnet xx, l. 7:

A man in hue, all hues in his  
 controlling.

748. impartial] indifferent, i.e. not swayed by desire.

late] lately.

749. done] destroyed. Compare *Lucr.*, l. 23.

751. despite of] in defiance of.

752. vestals] virgins or nuns: the word originally meant one of the priestesses who tended the sacred fire in the Temple of Vesta at Rome. See *Per.*, iv. v. 7:

Shall's go hear the vestals sing?

755. Be prodigal] spend what you have. 'The lamp that burns by night' is an Ovidian witticism for beauty and love.

757-62.] The first group of the Sonnets (particularly iv-vi) plays with

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

since

207  
207  
- 207  
760

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

their mischievous

eat away  
765  
770

deprives

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

Adonis

760. dark] Q1; their Q5-16.  
butchers sire Q5-11, 13-16.

765. do] Q1; to Q4.5.

766. butcher sire] Q1;

the same ideas. Malone compares  
Sonnet iii, l. 7:

who is he so fond will be the tomb  
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?

758, 760. *posterity, obscurity*] This  
loose kind of rhyme has drawn severe  
reprobation from some critics. Dodge  
(University of Wisconsin, *Sh. Studies*,  
1916) remarks: 'What we have here is  
a bygone mode of rhyming so alien to  
our main traditions that we can hard-  
ly believe it was ever recognized by  
reputable moderns'. But see *Lucr.*, ll.  
352, 354.

762. *Sith*] since.

764-6.] Compare R3, v. v. 25 f.:  
The father rashly slaughtered his  
own son;

The son, compell'd, been butcher  
to the sire.

766. *reavés*] deprives. Compare *All's*  
*W.*, v. iii. 86:

Had you that craft to reave her  
Of what should stead her most?

767. *frets*] eats away.

768.] Venus is recurring to com-  
monplace arguments for enjoying  
beauty, her 'idle over-handled theme'.  
Her last metaphor had been used in  
*Hero and Leander*, l. 232-6:

What difference betwixt the  
richest mine  
And basest mould, but use? for  
both, not us'd,  
Are of like worth. Then treasure is  
abus'd,

When misers keep it: being put to  
loan,

In time it will return us two for one.

Compare *Rom.*, III. v. 226.

769. *you will fall*] you are determined  
to fall.

773. *foul*] ugly as well as impure. For  
the conceit see also *Lucr.*, l. 674.

774. *treatise*] discourse. Compare  
*Mac.*, v. v. 12, and *Ado*, l. i. 317:

But lest my liking might too sudden  
seem,

I would have salv'd it with a longer  
treatise.

"If love have lent you twenty thousand tongues, 775  
 And every tongue more moving than your own,  
 Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's songs,  
 Yet from my heart the tempting tune is blown;  
 For know, my heart stands armed in mine ear,  
 And will not let a false sound enter there; 780

"Lest the deceiving <sup>enclosure</sup> harmony should run  
 Into the quiet closure of my breast,  
 And then my little heart were quite undone,  
 In his bedchamber to be barr'd of rest.  
 No, lady, no; my heart longs not to groan, 785  
 But soundly sleeps, while now it sleeps alone.

"What have you <sup>argued</sup> urg'd that I cannot <sup>refute</sup> reprove? <sup>bol in 2222</sup>  
 The path is smooth that leadeth on to danger. <sup>bol opp to</sup>  
 I hate not love, but your device in love <sup>conduct</sup>. <sup>at 12119</sup>  
 That lends embracements unto every stranger. 790  
 You do it for increase: O strange excuse,  
 When reason is the bawd to lust's abuse!

"Call it not love, for love to heaven is fled,  
 Since sweating lust on earth usurp'd his name;  
 Under whose simple semblance he hath fed  
 Upon fresh beauty, blotting it with blame;  
 Which the hot tyrant stains and soon bereaves,  
 As caterpillars do the tender leaves. 795

779. mine] Q1; my Q7-11, 13-16. 788. on to] Q1; unto Q5-16. 794.  
 usurp'd] usurpt Q1; usurpe Q5.

777. the wanton mermaid's songs] See  
 l. 429 n.  
 778. blown] blown away.  
 782. closure] enclosure. Compare  
 R3, m. iii. 11: 'the guilty closure of thy  
 walls', and Sonnet xlviiii:  
 Within the gentle closure of my  
 breast.  
 784. barr'd of rest] kept from rest.  
 787. urg'd] argued.  
 reprove] refute. Compare 2H6, m. i.  
 40:  
 Reprove my allegation, if you can:  
 Or else conclude my words  
 effectual.

789. device] conduct, with a sugges-  
 tion of ingenuity or cunning. In *ATL.*,  
 i. i. 174, 'full of noble device' illustrates  
 the innocent meaning of the word, as  
 'invention' or 'faculty of devising'.  
 791. increase] procreation, breed-  
 ing.  
 795. simple semblance] innocent ap-  
 pearance.  
 797-8.] Compare 2H6, m. i. 89 f.:  
 Thus are my blossoms blasted in  
 the bud,  
 And caterpillars eat my leaves  
 away.  
 bereaves] takes away.

'Love comforteth like sunshine after rain,  
 But lust's effect is tempest after sun; 800  
 Love's gentle spring doth always fresh remain,  
 Lust's winter comes ere summer half be done;  
 Love surfeits not, lust like a glutton dies;  
 Love is all truth, lust full of forged lies.

"More I could tell, but more I dare not say: 805  
 The text is old, the orator too green. *Young*  
 Therefore in sadness, now I will away; *vexation*  
 My face is full of shame, my heart of teen,  
 Mine ears that to your wanton talk attended  
 Do burn themselves, for having so offended." 810

With this he breaketh from the sweet embrace *lawn*  
 Of those fair arms which bound him to her breast,  
 And homeward through the dark laund-runs apace;  
 Leaves love upon her back deeply distress'd.  
 Look how a bright star shooteth from the sky, 815  
 So glides he in the night from Venus' eye;

Which after him she darts, as one on shore  
 Gazing upon a late embarked friend,  
 Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,  
 Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend: 820  
 So did the merciless and pitchy night  
 Fold in the object that did feed her sight.

813. laund] lawnd Q1-4; lawnes Q5-15; lanes Q16. 814. love] Q1; Love Q4

799-802.] Compare *Lucr.*, ll. 48-9.

806. *green*] young, inexperienced. Compare *John*, III. iv. 145:

How green you are and fresh in  
 this old world.

See also *Pilgr.*, IV, l. 2.

807. *in sadness*] in earnest, truly. See *Rom.*, I. i. 205:

Tell me in sadness, who is that you  
 love.

808. *teen*] vexation, sorrow. Compare *R3*, IV. i. 95:

Eighty odd years of sorrow have  
 I seen,

And each hour's joy wrack'd with  
 a week of teen.

810.] Compare *Cym.*, I. vi. 141, and *Ado.*, III. i. 107: 'What fire is in my ears?'

813. *laund*] lawn, an open space of untilled ground in a wood. Pooler quotes Drayton, *Polyolbion*, XIII. 89:

And near to these our thicks the  
 wild and frightful herds . . .

Feed finely on the launds.

815-16.] Coleridge's comment on these lines is important in his appreciation of the poem. See p. xviii above.

819-20.] Compare *Oth.*, II. i. 12.

*Adonis's  
 earnest*

137

Whereat amaz'd, as one that unaware  
 Hath dropp'd a precious jewel in the flood,  
 Or 'stonish'd as night-wand'ers often are, 825  
 Their light blown out in some mistrustful wood:  
Even so confounded in the dark she lay,  
 Having lost the fair discovery of her way.

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,  
 That all the neighbour caves, as seeming troubled, 830  
 Make verbal repetition of her moans;  
 Passion on passion deeply is redoubled:  
"Ay me," she cries, and twenty times, "Woe, woe,"  
And twenty echoes twenty times cry so.

She marking them, begins a wailing note, 835  
 And sings extemporally a woeful ditty:  
 How love makes young men thrall, and old men dote,  
 How love is wise in folly, foolish witty.  
 Her heavy anthem still concludes in woe,  
 And still the quire of echoes answer so. 840

825. 'stonish'd] bewildered, confounded. See *H5*, v. i. 40.

826. *mistrustful*] fearful, rousing anxiety.

828. *fair discovery*] Steevens, Malone, and later commentators have taken this phrase to mean 'Adonis', and have therefore argued that the true reading is 'discoverer', or that 'discovery' could be used for 'discoverer', as 'divorce' for 'divorcer' (l. 932), or 'conduct' for 'body-guard' in *Tw. N.*, iii. iv. 265. The line is lighter and more attractive without this literal meaning. Adonis has been compared to a star, a jewel, and a lamp, all set against darkness and confusion, and all this is resumed in the word 'fair'. But the 'discovery of her way' evokes a path lit and opened up through surrounding darkness, and we lose this image, and the natural grace of the idiom, if we force an unusual construction on 'discovery'.

829-52.] This passage was probably suggested, as Pooler, Feuillerat, and Bullough point out, by Ovid's descrip-

tion of the lamentations of Narcissus repeated by Echo (*Metam.*, iii. 495-8):

Quotiensque puer miserabilis  
 [Narcissus] 'cheu'  
 Dixerat, haec [Echo] resonis  
 iterabat vocibus 'cheu';  
 Cumque suos manibus percusserat  
 ille lacertos,  
 Haec quoque reddebat sonitum  
 plangoris eundem.

832. *Passion*] lamentation, expression of deep emotion. Compare *John*, iii. iv. 38:

O! that my tongue were in the  
 thunder's mouth!  
 Then with a passion would I shake  
 the world,

and *Mer. V.*, ii. viii. 12:

I never heard a passion so confus'd,  
 So strange, outrageous, and so  
 variable,  
 As the dog Jew did utter in the  
 streets.

833. *Ay me*] See *Ham.*, iii. iv. 51, and *Ant.*, iii. vi. 76.

837. *thrall*] captive.

Her song was tedious, and outwore the night,  
For lovers' hours are long, though seeming short.  
If pleas'd themselves, others they think delight  
In such like circumstance, with such like sport.

Their copious stories oftentimes begun,  
End without audience, and are never done.

845

For who hath she to spend the night withal,  
But idle sounds resembling parasites,  
Like shrill-tongu'd tapsters answering every call,  
Soothing the humour of fantastic wits?

850

She says "'Tis so," they answer all "'Tis so,"  
And would say after her, if she said "No."

Lo here the gentle lark, weary of rest,  
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,  
And wakes the morning, from whose silver breast  
The sun ariseth in his majesty;

855

Who doth the world so gloriously behold  
That cedar tops and hills seem burnish'd gold.

Venus salutes him with this fair good-morrow,  
"Oh thou clear god, and patron of all light,  
From whom each lamp and shining star doth borrow  
The beauteous influence that makes him bright:

860

There lives a son that suck'd an earthly mother,  
May lend thee light, as thou dost lend to other."

843. others] *Q1*; other *Q8, 12*. 851. says] *Q1*; said *Q5-16*. 863. There] *Q1*;  
Their *Q5*.

841. *outwore*] outlasted. Compare  
*F.Q.*, iii. xii. 29:

All that day she outwore in  
wandering

And gazing on that Chambers  
ornament.

844. *circumstance*] lengthy or deliber-  
ate or detailed affairs or descrip-  
tions.

847. *who . . . withal*] For this con-  
struction see Abbott, §§ 274 and 196.  
'Withal' for 'with' is common when  
the preposition is not followed by its  
object and is placed at the end of the  
sentence.

849. *tapsters answering every call*] The

comparison recalls the joke played on  
Francis in *1H4*, ii. iv.

854. *moist*] dewy.

*cabinet*] dwelling, lodging. Pooler  
quotes Lyly, *Woman in the Moone*, iv. i.  
162: 'For he hath thrust me from his  
cabinet', where a cottage is meant.

853-8.] The charm of the stanza has  
made it hackneyed, yet it must be  
admired as one of the poem's masterly  
transitions.

858.] Echoed by Dryden in *The  
State of Innocence*, Act v, l. 140.

863.] Shakespeare has chosen to  
forget the fabulous circumstances of  
Adonis' birth (Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 503-14).

This said, she hasteth to a myrtle grove, 865

Musing the morning is so much o'erworn,  
And yet she hears no tidings of her love;  
She hearkens for his hounds and for his horn.

*approaches*

Anon she hears them chant it lustily,  
And all in haste she coasteth to the cry. 870

And as she runs, the bushes in the way,  
Some catch her by the neck, some kiss her face,  
Some twine about her thigh to make her stay;  
She wildly breaketh from their strict embrace,

*flight*

Like a milch doe, whose swelling dugs do ache, 875  
Hasting to feed her fawn, hid in some brake.

*2-1/2*

By this she hears the hounds are at a bay,  
Whereat she starts like one that spies an adder  
Wreath'd up in fatal folds just in his way,  
The fear whereof doth make him shake and shudder: 880  
Even so the timorous yelping of the hounds  
Appals her senses and her spirit confounds.

For now she knows it is no gentle chase,

868. his hounds] Q1; hounds Q5. 873. twine] Q7-16; twin'd Q1-6. 882. Appals] Q1; Appales Q5.

866-7.] wondering that, although so much of the morning is passed, she hears nothing of her lover.

869. *chant it*] give tongue. The expression recalls 'the musical confusion' of baying hounds in *MND.*, iv. i. 112-24. For 'it' as an indefinite object see Abbott, § 226.

870. *coasteth*] approaches. 'Coast', among other meanings, seems to have associations with hunting. Pooler says: 'It is a favourite word of Turberville's, often in the sense of running parallel with an animal in order to get ahead of it.' The implication of the word, in all uses, is that movement is sidelong, uncertain, or groping. Here such a sense is appropriate, since Venus moves towards the cry, her only guide, which is itself in movement.

874. *strict*] close, tight.

875-6.] 'Perhaps the most perfect

example of implied emotion in the poem is the description of Venus hurrying to save Adonis, driven by purely animal instinct' (Bradbrook, *op. cit.*, p. 64). Compare *AYL.*, II. vi. 128 f.:

Whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn

And give it food.

See also *Lucr.*, l. 581 n.

877. *By this*] by this time.

*at a bay*] The situation when a hunted animal is driven to turn upon the hunters. A passage from Turberville shows that it can be applied to either the quarry or the hounds: 'A great Bore... wil sildome keepe houndes at a Baye, unless he be forced; and if he do stand at Baye, the huntsmen must ride in unto him' (Pooler).

883-5.] Root and Feuillerat refer this to Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 539-41:

A fortibus abstinet apris



But the blunt boar, rough bear, or lion proud,  
 Because the cry remaineth in one place, 885  
 Where fearfully the dogs exclaim aloud;  
 Finding their enemy to be so curst, *vicious*  
 They all strain court'sy who shall cope him first.

This dismal cry rings sadly in her ear,  
 Through which it enters to surprise her heart; 890  
 Who overcome by doubt and bloodless fear,  
 With cold pale weakness numbs each feeling part:  
 Like soldiers when their captain once doth yield,  
 They basely fly, and dare not stay the field.

Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy, *remain on the field.*  
 Till cheering up her senses all dismay'd, *a fit of ecstacy* 895  
 She tells them 'tis a causeless fantasy,  
 And childish error, that they are afraid;  
 Bids them leave quaking, bids them fear no more,  
 And with that word, she spied the hunted boar: 900

896. all dismay'd] *Q1*; sore dismaid *Q4-16*; sore-dismay'd *Malone*. 897.  
 them] *Q1*; him *Q7,8*. 899. bids] *Q1*; will's *Q9-11,13-16*.

Raptoresque lupos armatosque  
 unguibus ursos  
 Vitat et armenti saturatos caede  
 leones.

887. *curst*] malevolent, vicious.  
 Compare *Ado*, II. i. 25:

God sends a curst cow short horns.

888. *strain court'sy*] exaggerate politeness, hold back to let another go first.

Hounds were said to 'strain courtesy' when they shrank from closing with the quarry: 'I have seene Greyhounds which . . . would not refuse the wilde Bore, nor the Wolfe, and yet they would streyen curtesie at a Foxe' (Turberville, *Noble Art of Venerie*, 1576, ed. 1908, p. 188). The expression was used sarcastically of anyone who hesitated to take the lead in a dangerous action. Pooler closely analyses the term, giving examples of an opposite sense, in which 'straining courtesy' is applied to something which might be taken as a breach of good manners. So in *Rom.*, II. iv. 55, Romeo speaks of

having broken his appointment: 'Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy'.

*cope him*] attack him, encounter him as an opponent. Compare *Lucr.*, I. 99.

889. *dismal*] unlucky, boding misfortune.

892. *each feeling part*] senses and sense-organs.

893-4.] M. C. Bradbrook points out the resemblance to *Hero and Leander*, I. 121-2 (*op. cit.*, p. 65).

894. *stay the field*] remain on the field of battle, fight the battle out.

895. *ecstasy*] fit of emotion, loss of self-control. The word retained its Greek sense of 'being out of oneself'. Compare *Err.*, IV. iv. 54, and *Ham.*, II. i. 102:

This is the very ecstasy of love,  
 and II. i. 168:

That unmatch'd form and feature  
 of blown youth  
 Blasted with ecstasy.

Whose frothy mouth bepainted all with red,  
 Like milk and blood being mingled both together,  
 A second fear through all her sinews spread,  
 Which madly hurries her she knows not whither.

This way she runs, and now she will no further, 905  
 And back retires, to rate the boar for murder.

A thousand spleens bear her a thousand ways,  
 She treads the path that she untreads again;  
 Her more than haste is mated with delays checked.  
 Like the proceedings of a drunken brain, 910  
 Full of respects, yet naught at all respecting,  
 In hand with all things, naught at all effecting.

Here kennell'd in a brake she finds a hound,  
 And asks the weary caitiff for his master; wretch  
 And there another licking of his wound, 915  
 'Gainst venom'd sores the only sovereign plaster.  
 And here she meets another sadly scowling,  
 To whom she speaks, and he replies with howling. 22/226

When he hath ceas'd his ill-resounding noise,  
 Another flap-mouth'd-mourner, black and grim, 920  
 Against the welkin volleys out his voice;  
 Another and another answer him,  
 Clapping their proud tails to the ground below,  
 Shaking their scratch'd ears, bleeding as they go.

901. bepainted] Q1; be painted Q5. 909. mated] Q1; marred Q9-11,13-16.  
 911. respects] Q1; respect Q3-16. 913. she] Q1; he Q4. 919. hath] Q1;  
 had Q7-16.

903. sinews] Perhaps in the obsolete sense of 'nerves'.

906. rate] scold.

907. spleens] morbid fears, angers, or griefs.

909. mated with] checked, frustrated. The reference is to chess. Compare *Mac.*, v. i. 86: 'My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight'.

911.] 'Full of consideration, and yet really considering nothing' (Pooler). 'Respects' means 'matters seriously weighed or observed'. Malone comments: 'This is one of our authour's

nice observations. No one affects more wisdom than a drunken man'.

912. In hand with all things] taking everything in hand, occupying himself with everything.

914. caitiff] wretch; used with affectionate contempt.

920. flap-mouth'd] with loose hanging-lips. In *The Master of Game* 'great lips and well hanging down' are one of the points of 'a running hound' (Pooler).

921. welkin] sky. See *Lucr.*, l. 116 and n.

Look how the world's poor people are amazed 925  
 At apparitions, signs and prodigies,  
 Whereon with fearful eyes they long have gazed,  
 Infusing them with dreadful prophecies:  
 So she at these sad signs draws up her breath,  
 And sighing it again, exclaims on death. 930

“Hard-favour'd tyrant, ugly, meagre, lean,  
 Hateful divorce of love,” thus chides she death:  
 “Grim-grinning ghost, earth's worm, what dost thou mean,  
 To stifle beauty and to steal his breath?  
 Who when he liv'd, his breath and beauty set 935  
 Gloss on the rose, smell to the violet.

“If he be dead,—O no, it cannot be,  
 Seeing his beauty, thou shouldst strike at it,—  
 O yes, it may, thou hast no eyes to see,  
 But hatefully at randon dost thou hit: 940  
 Thy mark is feeble age, but thy false dart  
 Mistakes that aim, and cleaves an infant's heart.

“Hadst thou but bid beware, then he had spoke,  
 And hearing him, thy power had lost his power.  
 The destinies will curse thee for this stroke: 945  
 They bid thee crop a weed, thou pluck'st a flower.”

940. randon] *Q1-6*; *randome Q7-16*.  
*Q7,9-13,15*; *pluktst Q8,14*.

946. pluck'st] *pluckst Q1-6*; *plucktst*

928. *Infusing them*] As Pooler says, ‘It may be doubted whether *them* denotes the world's poor people or the apparitions’. Warburton assumes the latter sense: ‘Shakespeare was well acquainted with the nature of popular superstition. . . Here he plainly tells us that signs in the heavens gave birth to prophecies on the earth . . . by infusing fancies into the crazy imagination of the people. . .’ It is doubtful whether here ‘infusing’ has such 18th-cent. precision.

930. *sighing it again*] letting her breath out again.

*exclaims on*] reproaches, denounces. Compare *1H6*, iii. iii. 60:

Besides, all French and France  
 exclaim on thee,  
 Doubting thy birth and lawful  
 progeny.

931. *Hard-favour'd*] with a hard or ugly face.

933. *earth's worm*] There is no need to find the meaning ‘serpent’ in ‘worm’ as in *Ant.*, v. ii, and elsewhere. Death and worms went together. Shakespeare has perhaps given the association a new twist by a conceit, that Death is a kind of ‘worm in the bud’ to earth or earthly life. But this is not clear, and the expression is no less effective for its lack of definition.

Love's golden arrow at him should have fled,  
And not death's ebon dart to strike him dead.

"Dost thou drink tears, that thou provok'st such weeping?  
What may a heavy groan advantage thee? 950  
Why hast thou cast into eternal sleeping

Those eyes that taught all other eyes to see?.

Now nature cares not for thy mortal vigour,  
Since her best work is ruin'd with thy rigour."

deadly  
power

Here overcome, as one full of despair,  
She vail'd her eyelids, who like sluices stopp'd 955  
The crystal tide that from her two cheeks fair  
In the sweet channel of her bosom dropp'd;  
But through the flood-gates breaks the silver rain,  
And with his strong course opens them again. 960

160

O how her eyes and tears did lend and borrow!

Her eye seen in the tears, tears in her eye:  
Both crystals where they view'd each other's sorrow,  
Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still to dry;  
But like a stormy day, now wind, now rain, 965  
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again.

Variable passions throngh her constant woe,  
As striving who should best become her grief; 970  
All entertain'd, each passion labours so,  
That every present sorrow seemeth chief,  
But none is best: then join they all together,  
Like many clouds consulting for foul weather.

competing

962. Her eye] *Q1*; Her eies *Q6-16*. 968. who] *Q1*; which *Q7-16*. 969.  
passion labours] *Q1*; passions labour *Q5,6*.

947-8.] The dart, of death was often coupled with the dart of love in Renaissance poetry and art. 'Ebon' probably means no more than 'black', though ebony wood could be used for a bow, if not for an arrow: see *F.Q.*, 1, Prol. 3:

Lay now thy deadly Heben bowe  
apart.

950. *advantage*] help, profit.

953. *mortal vigour*] deadly power.

Nature no longer cares how destructive Death may be.

956. *vail'd*] lowered. See l. 314. Pooler quotes *Lust's Dominion*, i. iii. 4: 'vailing my knees to the cold earth'.

*sluices*] floodgates.

963. *crystals*] The conceit derives from the notion of a magic crystal, 'in which one in sympathy with another could see the scene of his mistress' (Wyndham).

968. *striving*] competing.

969. *entertain'd*] received or admitted.

972. *consulting*] The conceit is that

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

975

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

sluttish 980

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

985

990

Now she unweaves the web that she hath wrought:  
 Adonis lives, and death is not to blame;  
 It was not she that call'd him all to naught;

death

worthless

973. holla] *Malone*; hallow *Q1-4,6*; hollow *Q5,7-16*. 975. dire] *Q1*; drie *Q5-8,12*. 981. sometimes] *Q1*; sometime *Q6-16*. 988. makes] *Q1*; make *Q7-16*. 990. In] *Q1*; The *Q4,5*; With *Q6-16*. 991. hath] *Q1*; had *Q7-16*. 992. to] *Q1*; too *Q5-11,13*.

clouds gather and plot to cause a storm.

973. *By this*] See l. 877 n.

975. *The dire imagination*] The death of Adonis, which she was following, led by the sound of the hunt.

979. *turn their tide*] ebb.

980. *pearls in glass*] See ll. 362-3.

981. *orient*] Jewels were often called 'orient', with some confusion between their associations with the East and the literal meaning of the word applied to the rising sun. Pooler quotes Harrison's *Description of England*, 1577, III. xii: 'Pearls are called orient, because of the clearenesse, which resembleth the colour of the cleere aire before the rising of the sun'.

985-8.] The total meaning is obvious enough, but it is difficult to gloss the first two lines. Two alternatives appear: (i) 'O sceptical love, that seems so wary of believing, and yet is too credulous!' (ii) 'O sceptical love, that seems so wary of believing, and yet (too credulous!), thy weal and woe', etc. Compare *Hero and Leander*, II. 221 f.:

Love is too full of faith, too credulous,

With folly and false hope deluding us.

992. *to blame*] to be blamed, blame-worthy.

993. *all to naught*] worthless, vile. Pooler points out that Swift uses the

Now she adds honours to his hateful name:

She clepes him king of graves, and grave for kings, 995  
Imperious supreme of all mortal things.

"No, no," quoth she, "sweet death, I did but jest;  
Yet pardon me, I felt a kind of fear  
Whenas I met the boar, that bloody beast,  
Which knows no pity, but is still severe: 1000

Then, gentle shadow,—truth I must confess,—  
I rail'd on thee, fearing my love's decease.

"'Tis not my fault, the boar provok'd my tongue:  
Be wreak'd on him, invisible commander.

'Tis he, foul creature, that hath done thee wrong: 1005

I did but act, he's author of thy slander.

Grief hath two tongues, and never woman yet  
Could rule them both, without ten women's wit."

Thus hoping that Adonis is alive,  
Her rash suspect she doth extenuate; 1010

And that his beauty may the better thrive,  
With death she humbly doth insinuate; *flatter*  
Tells him of trophies, statues, tombs, and stories  
His victories, his triumphs and his glories.

"O love," quoth she, "how much a fool was I, 1015

To be of such a weak and silly mind,  
To wail his death who lives, and must not die  
'Till mutual overthrow of mortal kind!

For he being dead, with him is beauty slain,  
And beauty dead, black Chaos comes again. 1020

994. honours] *Q1*; honour *Q6-16*. 996. Imperious] *Q1*; Imperiall *Q6-16*.  
1000. no] *Q1*; not *Q8*. 1002. my] *Q1*; thy *Q4,5*. decease] *decesse Q1*.

phrase in *Mrs Harris's Petition*: 'So she  
roar'd like a Bedlam, as tho' I had  
call'd her all to nought'. 'All to' may  
be adverbial, intensifying the follow-  
ing word, as in 'all-to-torn' or 'all-to-  
rent'.

995. *clepes*] names.  
996. *supreme*] ruler. The accent is on  
the first syllable. The word as a sub-  
stantive occurs again in *Phoen.*, l. 51.

999. *Whenas*] when.  
1001. *shadow*] spectre.

1004. *Be wreak'd*] be revenged.

1006. *author*] inventor, originator.

1010. *suspect*] suspicion.

1012. *insinuate*] flatter, insinuate  
*herself*.

1013. *stories*] relates.

1018. *mutual*] common, as in 'a  
mutual friend'.

1020.] With this hyperbole com-  
pare *Rom.*, i. i. 222 f., and *Oth.*, iii. iii.  
91 f., as well as various lines in the  
Sonnets. Here the cosmic application

"Fie, fie, fond love, thou art as full of fear  
 As one with treasure laden, hemm'd with thieves!  
 Trifles unwitnessed with eye or ear  
 Thy coward heart with false bethinking grieves."  
 Even at this word she hears a merry horn, 1025  
 Whereat she leaps that was but late forlorn.

As falcons to the lure, away she flies;  
 The grass stoops not, she treads on it so light,  
 And in her haste unfortunately spies  
 The foul boar's conquest on her fair delight: 1030  
 Which seen, her eyes as murder'd with the view,  
 Like stars asham'd of day, themselves withdrew.

Or as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,  
 Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,  
 And there all smother'd up in shade doth sit, 1035  
 Long after fearing to creep forth again:  
 So at his bloody view her eyes are fled  
 Into the deep dark cabins of her head.

Where they resign their office and their light  
 To the disposing of her troubled brain, 1040  
 Who bids them still consort with ugly night

1021. as] *Q1*; so *Q4-16*.  
*11, 13-16*; are *Q1, 2, 12*.

1027. falcons] *Q1*; falcon *Q7-16*.  
 1040. her] *Q1*; their *Q8, 12*.

1031. as] *Q3-*

*always*  
*leap*  
*conspire*  
*with*  
 of the conceit recalls the loose Platonic tradition within which Shakespeare wrote, best represented in English by Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes*. Baldwin devotes a chapter to this passage seen in relation to Neo-Latin poets, and to Shakespeare's reading of Golding's Ovid (*op. cit.*, pp. 49-72).

1022. *hemm'd*] surrounded. See l. 229 n.

1023. *unwitnessed with*] unconfirmed by.

1024. *bethinking*] the action of thinking, considering.

1026. *leaps*] jumps for joy. See Sonnet xcviij, l. 4, and *LLL.*, iv. iii. 148:

How will he triumph, leap and  
 laugh at it!

1027. *lure*] A 'lure' was a term of fal-

conry, usually meaning a bundle of feathers with bits of flesh attached, representing a bird, and used to train falcons or to tempt them to return to the falconer. It came also to mean the falconer's call or whistle to the bird to return.

1028.] Steevens first cited *Aeneid*, vii. 808 f. The lightness of Venus was a commonplace; see l. 148 n.

1032. *asham'd of day*] put to shame by day.

1033-4.] Compare *LLL.*, iv. iii. 338:

Love's feeling is more soft and  
 sensible

Than are the tender horns of  
 cockled snails.

1038. *cabins*] See l. 637 n.

1041. *still consort with*] *always keep-*

And never wound the heart with looks again;  
 Who like a king perplexed in his throne  
 By their suggestion, gives a deadly groan.

Whereat each tributary subject quakes, 1045  
 As when the wind imprison'd in the ground,  
 Struggling for passage, earth's foundation shakes;  
 Which with cold terror doth men's minds confound.  
 This mutiny each part doth so surprise  
 That from their dark beds once more leap her eyes: 1050

And being open'd threw unwilling light  
 Upon the wide wound that the boar had trench'd *cut*  
 In his soft flank, whose wonted lily-white  
 With purple tears that his wound wept, was drench'd.  
 No flower was nigh, no grass, herb, leaf or weed, 1055  
 But stole his blood and seem'd with him to bleed.

This solemn sympathy poor Venus noteth;  
 Over one shoulder doth she hang her head.  
 Dumbly she passions, frantically she doteth:  
 She thinks he could not die, he is not dead. 1060  
 Her voice is stopp'd, her joints forget to bow,  
 Her eyes are mad, that they have wept till now.

Upon his hurt she looks so steadfastly  
 That her sight dazzling makes the wound seem three;

1051. light] *Q1*; night *Q4,5*; sight *Q7-16*. 1052. trench'd] trencht *Q1*;  
 drencht *Q4,5*. 1054. was] *Q7-11,13-16*; had *Q1-6*.

company with. Compare *MND.*, iii.  
 ii. 387:

They willfully themselves exile from  
 light,  
 And must for aye consort with  
 black-brow'd night.

1046-8.] Subterranean wind was  
 supposed to be the cause of earth-  
 quakes. See *1H4*, iii. i. 28-33. The  
 theory came from Aristotle and Pliny.

1052. trench'd] *cut*. Compare *Mac.*,  
 iii. iv. 27:

With twenty trenched gashes on  
 his head.

1054. purple tears] See l. 1 n. for  
 purple'.

1059. passions] suffers, expresses  
 passion. Compare *Gent.*, iv. iv. 174:  
 Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning  
 For Theseus' perjury and unjust  
 flight.

1062.] Her eyes are distracted to  
 think that they have wept already,  
 now that they have true cause to  
 weep.

1063-8.] These hallucinations are  
 convincing symptoms of extreme grief  
 or hysteria.

1064. dazzling] Compare *3H6*, ii. i.  
 25:

Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three  
 suns?



cut  
lacinate

And then she reprehends her mangling eye, 1065  
 That makes more gashes, where no breach should be.  
 His face seems twain, each several limb is doubled,  
 For oft the eye mistakes, the brain being troubled.

"My tongue cannot express my grief for one,  
 And yet," quoth she, "behold two Adons dead! 1070  
 My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone;  
 Mine eyes are turn'd to fire, my heart to lead.  
 Heavy heart's lead melt at mine eyes' red fire!  
 So I shall die by drops of hot desire.

"Alas, poor world, what treasure hast thou lost! 1075  
 What face remains alive that's worth the viewing?  
 What tongue is music now? what canst thou boast  
 Of things long since, or any thing ensuing?  
 The flowers are sweet, their colours fresh and trim,  
 But true sweet beauty liv'd and died with him. 1080

"Bonnet nor veil henceforth no creature wear:  
 Nor sun nor wind will ever strive to kiss you.  
 Having no fair to lose, you need not fear:  
 The sun doth scorn you and the wind doth hiss you.  
 But when Adonis liv'd, sun and sharp air 1085  
 Lurk'd like two thieves to rob him of his fair.

"And therefore would he put his bonnet on,  
 Under whose brim the gaudy sun would peep:  
 The wind would blow it off, and being gone,  
Play with his locks; then would Adonis weep, 1090

1073. eyes' red fire] eyes red fire Q1; eyes red as fire Q4; eies as red as fire Q5;  
 eyes, as fire Q7-15. 1080. with] Q1; in Q4,5,7-16. 1081. nor] Q1;  
 or Q7-11,13-16.

1078. *ensuing*] following, and so,  
 future.

1079. *trim*] in good condition.

1083. *fair*] beauty. Pooler quotes  
 from Greene's *Menaphon* (*Plays and  
 Poems*, ed. Churton Collins, vol. II,  
 p. 257):

No frost their faire, no wind doth  
 wast their power,  
 But by her breath her beauties doo  
 renew.

1084. *hiss you*] Compare *Rom.*, i. i.  
 117:

He swung about his head, and cut  
 the winds,  
 Who, nothing hurt withal, hiss'd  
 him in scorn.

1085. *sharp air*] cold air.

1088. *gaudy*] bright. Compare *2H6*,  
 iv. i. i.

1089. *being gone*] the bonnet being  
 gone.

And straight, in pity of his tender years,  
They both would strive who first should dry his tears.

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

of  
orphans  
1095

“When he beheld his shadow in the brook,  
The fishes spread on it their golden gills; 1100  
When he was by, the birds such pleasure took  
That some would sing, some other in their bills  
Would bring him mulberries and ripe red cherries:  
He fed them with his sight, they him with berries.

But this foul, grim, and urchin-snouted boar, 1105  
Whose downward eye still looketh for a grave,  
Ne’er saw the beauteous livery that he wore;  
Witness the entertainment that he gave. reception  
If he did see his face, why then I know  
He thought to kiss him, and hath kill’d him so. 1110

’Tis true, ’tis true, thus was Adonis slain:  
He ran upon the boar with his sharp spear,  
Who did not whet his teeth at him again,  
But by a kiss thought to persuade him there;

get ready  
for attack

1095. sung] *Q14*; song *Q1-13*. 1099. his] *Q1*; the *Q5*. the] *Q1*; a *Q9-11*.  
13-16. 1113. did] *Q1*; would *Q2-16*.

1094. *fear*] frighten. Compare *3H6*,  
v. ii. 2:

For Warwick was a bug that fear’d  
us all.

1105. *urchin-snouted*] snouted like a  
hedgehog, i.e. looking down on the  
ground.

1107. *livery*] dress, outward appear-  
ance. The word suggests bright colour.

1108. *entertainment*] reception.

1110.] This conceit goes back to  
Theocritus, *Id.*, xxx. 26-31, which is  
among the *Sixte Idyllia* translated by  
E. D. in 1588; but the fancy had  
already been reproduced in several

16th-cent. poems, such as Minturno’s  
epigram *De Adoni ab apro interempto*,  
and Tarchagnota’s *L’Adone* (1550).  
No Elizabethan poet reading up the  
myth could fail to come across some  
version of this bauble. A. T. Hatto  
argues that Shakespeare has added  
associations from medieval poetry,  
including *Troilus and Criseyde*, v. 177-8.  
In his view the boar has erotic signi-  
ficance, as an accepted symbol of  
prepotent virility (see “Venus and  
Adonis”—and the Boar’, *Modern Lan-  
guage Review*, vol. xli, pp. 353-61).

1114. *to persuade him there*] This may

pushing  
with  
the nose

And nuzzling in his flank, the loving swine  
Sheath'd unaware the tusk in his soft groin. 1115

"Had I been tooth'd like him, I must confess,  
With kissing him I should have kill'd him first.  
But he is dead, and never did he bless  
My youth with his; the more am I accurst." 1120  
With this she falleth in the place she stood,  
And stains her face with his congealed blood.

She looks upon his lips, and they are pale;  
She takes him by the hand, and that is cold.  
She whispers in his ears a heavy tale, 1125  
As if they heard the woeful words she told.  
She lifts the coffer-lids that close his eyes,  
Where lo, two lamps burnt out in darkness lies.

Two glasses where herself herself beheld  
A thousand times, and now no more reflect;  
Their virtue lost, wherein they late excell'd, 1130  
And every beauty robb'd of his effect.  
"Wonder of time," quoth she, "this is my spite,  
That thou being dead, the day should yet be light. (

190 "Since thou art dead, lo here I prophesy,  
Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend:  
It shall be waited on with jealousy,  
Find sweet beginning, but unsavoury end; 1135  
Ne'er settled equally, but high or low,  
That all love's pleasure shall not match his woe. 1140

"It shall be fickle, false and full of fraud;  
Bud, and be blasted, in a breathing while;

1116. the] Q1; his Q2-16. 1120. am I] Q1; I am Q4-16. 1125. ears] Q1; care,  
Q5-16. 1126. they] Q1; he Q6-16. 1134. thou] Q1; you Q5-16. 1136. on]  
Q1; in Q5. 1139. but] Q1; too Q6-16. 1142. Bud, and] Q1; And shall Q5-16.

mean 'to persuade him to stay there',  
or 'to be reconciled to him there'.

1115. *nuzzling*] pushing with the  
nose, or nestling into.

1115-16.] Feuillerat compares  
Ovid, *Metam.*, x. 715 f.:

Trux aper insequitur totosque sub  
inguine dentes

Abdidit et fulva moribundum  
stravit harena.

1127. *coffer-lids*] lids to treasure-  
chests. Compare *Tw. N.*, i. v. 268.

1133. *spite*] grief. Compare *Err.*, iv.  
ii. 8.

1142. *in a breathing while*] in one  
breath. Compare *R3*, i. iii. 60:

The bottom poison, and the top o'erstraw'd  
 With sweets that shall the truest sight beguile;  
 The strongest body shall it make most weak, 1145  
 Strike the wise dumb, and teach the fool to speak.

*It shall be sparing, and too full of riot,*  
 Teaching decrepit age to tread the measures; *dance.*  
 The staring ruffian shall it keep in quiet,  
 Pluck down the rich, enrich the poor with treasures; 1150  
 It shall be raging mad, and silly mild,  
 Make the young old, the old become a child.

"It shall suspect where is no cause of fear,  
 It shall not fear where it should most mistrust;  
 It shall be merciful, and too severe, *charitable* 1155  
 And most deceiving when it seems most just;  
 Perverse it shall be, where it shows most toward;  
 Put fear to valour, courage to the coward.

"It shall be cause of war and dire events,  
 And set dissension 'twixt the son and sire; 1160  
 Subject and servile to all discontents,  
 As-dry combustious matter is to fire.  
 Sith in his prime death doth my love destroy,  
 They that love best, their loves shall not enjoy."

By this the boy that by her side lay kill'd 1165  
Was melted like a vapour from her sight,  
And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,  
A purple flower sprung up, checker'd with white, *anemone*

1143. o'erstraw'd] ore-strawd Q1; ore-straw Q5. 1144. truest] Q1; sharpest Q5-16. 1157. shows] Q1; seems Q7-16. 1162. combustious] Q1; combustions Q3,4. 1164. loves] Q1; love Q5-16. 1168. purple] Q1; purpld Q4. purpul'd Q5.

Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing-while.  
 1143. o'erstraw'd] strewn. Compare Herbert, *Easter*, l. 19:  
 I got me flowers to straw thy way.  
 1147.] It shall be both niggardly and prodigal.  
 1148. tread the measures] dance.  
 1149. staring] truculent. Compare Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 586-7:

And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,  
 Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.  
 1157. toward] docile, tractable. Compare *Shr.*, v. ii. 183:  
 'Tis a good hearing when children are toward.  
 1168. A purple flower] The species remains vague, but Shakespeare no doubt meant to follow *Metam.*, x. 731-9,

Resembling well his pale cheeks and the blood  
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood. 1170

She bows her head, the new-sprung flower to smell,  
Comparing it to her Adonis' breath,  
And says within her bosom it shall dwell,  
Since he himself is reft from her by death.

She crops the stalk, and in the breach appears 1175  
Green-dropping sap, which she compares to tears.

"Poor flower," quoth she, "this was thy father's guise, <sup>habit</sup>  
Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling sire,—  
For every little grief to wet his eyes;  
To grow unto himself was his desire, 1180  
And so 'tis thine; but know, it is as good  
To wither in my breast as in his blood.

"Here was thy father's bed, here in my breast;  
Thou art the next of blood, and 'tis thy right.  
Lo in this hollow cradle take thy rest; 1185  
My throbbing heart shall rock thee day and night:  
There shall not be one minute in an hour  
Wherein I will not kiss my sweet love's flower."

✓ Thus weary of the world, away she hies,  
And yokes her silver doves, by whose swift aid 1190  
Their mistress mounted through the empty skies,  
In her light chariot quickly is convey'd,  
Holding their course to Paphos, where their queen  
Means to immure herself and not be seen.

} shut up or  
enclose FINIS

1183. in] Q1; is Q4-16. 1185. Lo] Q1; Low Q5,6. 1187. in] Q1; of Q7-16.

where the anemone springs from Adonis' blood. Compare *MND.*, II. i. 166-7.

1175. *crops the stalk*] breaks the flower off by the stalk.

*breach*] the break in the stalk.

1177. *guise*] habit.

1180.] See l. 166.

1189-94.] Nothing in *Venus and Adonis* is better than this last stanza. The poem has been given its beauty by its speed, by sudden fancies and dart-

ing digressions which have kept it in constant movement; and by changes of perspective and sudden widening views such as ll. 811-16. All these effects are combined in these last six lines, and Venus vanishes with a flutter in clear skies. Compare *Tp.*, IV. i. 92-4: I met her Deity  
Cutting the clouds towards Paphos,  
and her son  
Dove-drawn with her.