

#### My name is William Shakespeare

My name is William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) and I was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. I'm often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "the Bard"). My extant works, including collaborations, consist of some 39 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of uncertain authorship. My plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

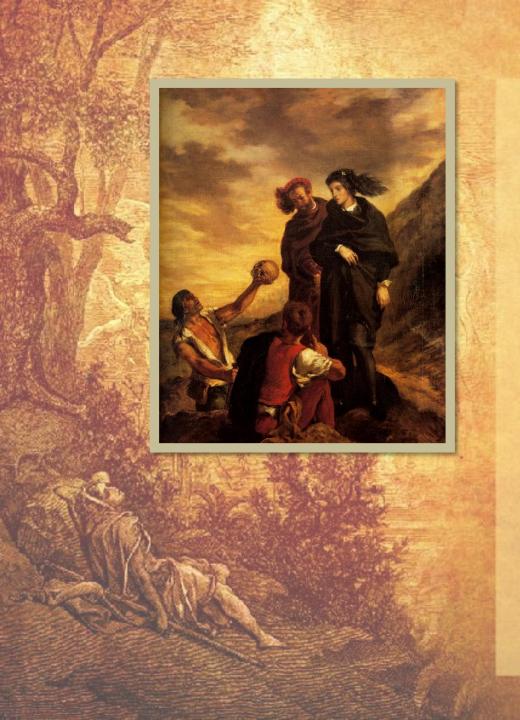


'All the world 's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts.'

Published in 1609, the Sonnets were the last of mine non-dramatic works to be printed. Scholars are not certain when each of the 154 sonnets was composed, but evidence suggests that I wrote sonnets throughout my career for a private readership. Even before the two unauthorised sonnets appeared in The Passionate Pilgrim in 1599, Francis Meres had referred in 1598 to Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends".

Few analysts believe that the published collection follows mine intended sequence. I seem to have planned two contrasting series: one about uncontrollable lust for a married woman of dark complexion (the "dark lady"), and one about conflicted love for a fair young man (the "fair youth"). It still remains unclear if these figures represent real individuals, or if the authorial "I" who addresses them represents me myself, though friend of mine believed that with the sonnets





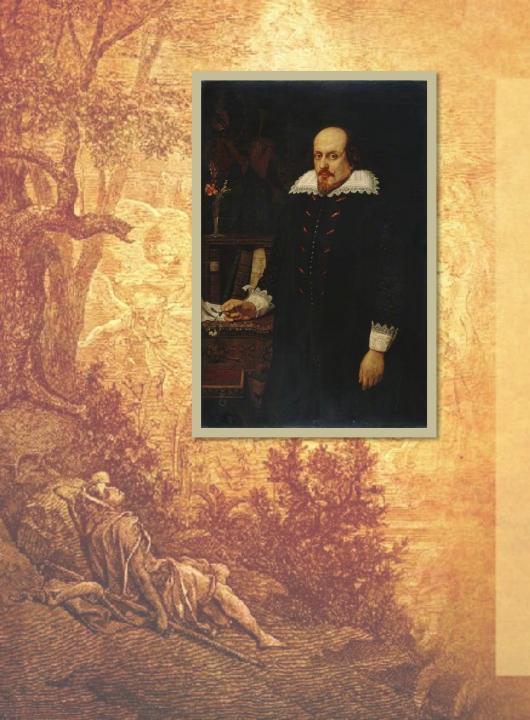
#### Sonnet XXIII

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put beside his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own
heart;

So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharged with burthen of mine own love's
might.

O! let my looks be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more
express'd.

O! learn to read what silent love hath writ: To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.



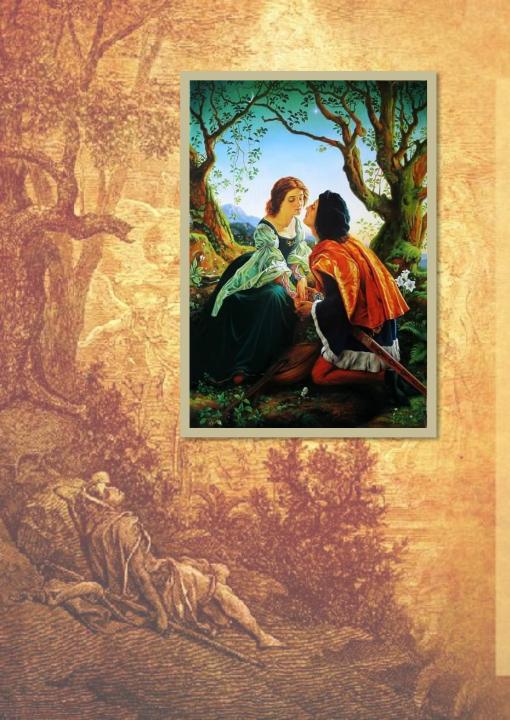
# Sonnet XXXV

No more be grieved atthat which thou hast done: Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud: Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun, And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud. All men make faults, and even I in this, Authorizing thy trespass with compare, Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss, Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are; For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense, Thy adverse party is thy advocate, And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence: Such civil war is in my love and hate, That I an accessary needs must be, To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.



# Sonnet XXXVI

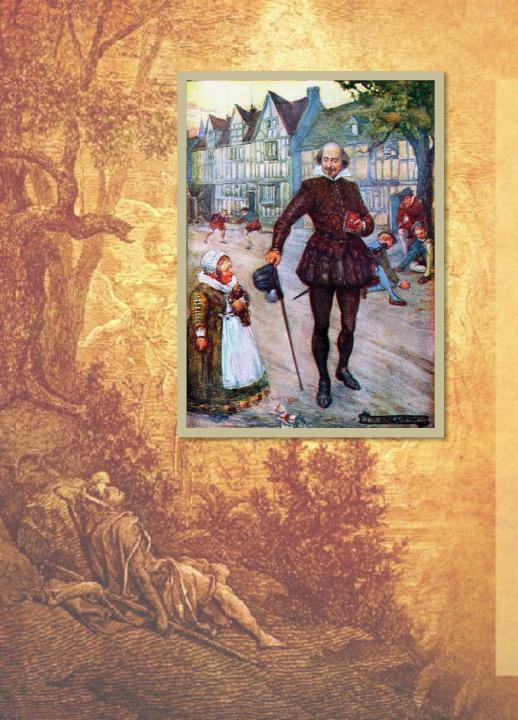
Let me confess that we two must be twain, Although our undivided loves are one: So shall those blots that do with me remain. Without thy help, by me be borne alone. In our two loves there is but one respect, Though in our lives a separable spite, Which though it alter not love's sole effect, Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight. I may not evermore acknowledge thee, Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame, Nor thou with public kindness honour me, Unless thou take that honour from thy name: But do not so, I love thee in such sort, As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.



# Sonnet XLIII

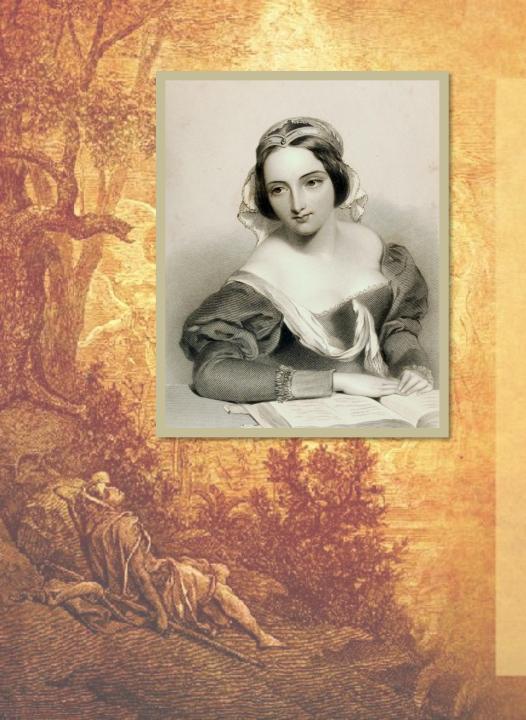
When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see, For all the day they view things unrespected; But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee, And darkly bright, are bright in dark directed. Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright,

How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so!
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day,
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay!
All days are nights to see till I see thee,
And nights bright days when dreams do show
thee me.



# Sonnet CIX

O! never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify,
As easy might I from my self depart
As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,
Like him that travels, I return again;
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe though in my nature reigned,
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose, in it thou art my all.



#### Sonnet CXXX

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare, As any she belied with false compare..

