

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea

But sad mortality o'ersways their power,

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out

Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,

When rocks impregnable are not so stout

Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?

O, fearful meditation! Where, alack,

Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?

Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O, none, unless this miracle have might,

That in black ink my love may still shine bright.