

FROM fairest creatures we desire increase,  
 That thereby beauty's rose might never die,  
 But as the ripper should by time decease,  
 His tender heir might bear his memory:  
 But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,  
 Feed'st thy light'st flame with self-substantial fuel,  
 Making a famine where abundance lies,  
 Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.  
 Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament  
 And only herald to the gaudy spring,  
 Within thine own bud buriest thy content  
 And, tender churl, makest waste in niggarding.  
 Pity the world, or else this glutton be,  
 To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.  
 When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,  
 And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,  
 Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,  
 Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:  
 Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,  
 Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,  
 To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,  
 Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.  
 How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,  
 If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine  
 Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,'  
 Proving his beauty by succession thine!  
 This were to be new made when thou art old,  
 And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.  
 Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest  
 Now is the time that face should form another;  
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,  
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.  
 For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb

Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?  
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb  
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?  
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee  
Calls back the lovely April of her prime:  
So thou through windows of thine age shall see  
Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.  
But if thou live, remember'd not to be,  
Die single, and thine image dies with thee.  
Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend  
Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?  
Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend,  
And being frank she lends to those are free.  
Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse  
The bounteous largess given thee to give?  
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use  
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?  
For having traffic with thyself alone,  
Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.  
Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,  
What acceptable audit canst thou leave?  
Thy unused beauty must be tomb'd with thee,  
Which, used, lives th' executor to be.  
Those hours, that with gentle work did frame  
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,  
Will play the tyrants to the very same  
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:  
For never-resting time leads summer on  
To hideous winter and confounds him there;  
Sap cheque'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,  
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where:  
Then, were not summer's distillation left,  
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,

Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,  
 Nor it nor no remembrance what it was:  
 But flowers distill'd though they with winter meet,  
 Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.  
 Then let not winter's ragged hand deface  
 In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:  
 Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place  
 With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.  
 That use is not forbidden usury,  
 Which happies those that pay the willing loan;  
 That's for thyself to breed another thee,  
 Or ten times happier, be it ten for one;  
 Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,  
 If ten of thine ten times refigured thee:  
 Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart,  
 Leaving thee living in posterity?  
 Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair  
 To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.  
 Lo! in the orient when the gracious light  
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,  
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty;  
 And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,  
 Resembling strong youth in his middle age,  
 yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,  
 Attending on his golden pilgrimage;  
 But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,  
 Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,  
 The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are  
 From his low tract and look another way:  
 So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,  
 Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.  
 Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?

Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.  
 Why lovest thou that which thou receivest not gladly,  
 Or else receivest with pleasure thine annoy?  
 If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,  
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.  
 Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,  
 Resembling sire and child and happy mother  
 Who all in one, one pleasing note do sing:  
 Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,  
 Sings this to thee: 'thou single wilt prove none.  
 Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye  
 That thou consumest thyself in single life?  
 Ah! if thou issueless shalt hap to die.  
 The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife;  
 The world will be thy widow and still weep  
 That thou no form of thee hast left behind,  
 When every private widow well may keep  
 By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.  
 Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend  
 Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;  
 But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,  
 And kept unused, the user so destroys it.  
 No love toward others in that bosom sits  
 That on himself such murderous shame commits.  
 For shame! deny that thou bear'st love to any,  
 Who for thyself art so unprovident.  
 Grant, if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,  
 But that thou none lovest is most evident;  
 For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate  
 That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire.  
 Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate

Which to repair should be thy chief desire.  
 O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind!  
 Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?  
 Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,  
 Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove:  
 Make thee another self, for love of me,  
 That beauty still may live in thine or thee.  
 As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou growest  
 In one of thine, from that which thou departest;  
 And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestowest  
 Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest.  
 Herein lives wisdom, beauty and increase:  
 Without this, folly, age and cold decay:  
 If all were minded so, the times should cease  
 And threescore year would make the world away.  
 Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,  
 Harsh featureless and rude, barrenly perish:  
 Look, whom she best endow'd she gave the more;  
 Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish:  
 She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby  
 Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.  
 When I do count the clock that tells the time,  
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;  
 When I behold the violet past prime,  
 And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;  
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves  
 Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
 And summer's green all girded up in sheaves  
 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,  
 Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
 That thou among the wastes of time must go,  
 Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake  
 And die as fast as they see others grow;

And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence  
 Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.  
 O, that you were yourself! but, love, you are  
 No longer yours than you yourself here live:  
 Against this coming end you should prepare,  
 And your sweet semblance to some other give.  
 So should that beauty which you hold in lease  
 Find no determination: then you were  
 Yourself again after yourself's decease,  
 When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.  
 Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,  
 Which husbandry in honour might uphold  
 Against the stormy gusts of winter's day  
 And barren rage of death's eternal cold?  
 O, none but unthriffs! Dear my love, you know  
 You had a father: let your son say so.  
 Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck;  
 And yet methinks I have astronomy,  
 But not to tell of good or evil luck,  
 Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality;  
 Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell,  
 Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,  
 Or say with princes if it shall go well,  
 By oft predict that I in heaven find:  
 But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,  
 And, constant stars, in them I read such art  
 As truth and beauty shall together thrive,  
 If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert;  
 Or else of thee this I prognosticate:  
 Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.  
 When I consider every thing that grows  
 Holds in perfection but a little moment,  
 That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows  
 Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

When I perceive that men as plants increase,  
Cheered and cheque'd even by the self-same sky,  
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,  
And wear their brave state out of memory;  
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay  
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,  
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,  
To change your day of youth to sullied night;  
And all in war with Time for love of you,  
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.  
But wherefore do not you a mightier way  
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time?  
And fortify yourself in your decay  
With means more blessed than my barren rhyme?  
Now stand you on the top of happy hours,  
And many maiden gardens yet unset  
With virtuous wish would bear your living flowers,  
Much liker than your painted counterfeit:  
So should the lines of life that life repair,  
Which this, Time's pencil, or my pupil pen,  
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,  
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.  
To give away yourself keeps yourself still,  
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.