

Twenty Poems of Edward de Vere Echo in the Works of Shakespeare

presented by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

based upon work by past and present members of the SOF¹



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I. Introduction: Oxford's Poems and the Authorship Question

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is proud to unveil this major new presentation, the first in decades, of early poems by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604)—the Elizabethan nobleman thought by many to be the mind behind the mask of the greatest works of English literature, the plays and poems attributed to “William Shakespeare.”

This presentation reveals *hundreds* of parallels between de Vere's poems and the works of Shakespeare. Part I places these poems in context as the juvenilia of Shakespeare. Part II sets forth the twenty poems included, with annotations detailing the Shakespearean parallels. Part II also explains the sources and titles of the poems and the presentation of the parallels, with a key to abbreviations.

One objection to the Oxfordian theory of Shakespeare authorship—often voiced by defenders of the orthodox view that the author was William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon (1564–1616)—has been that de Vere was allegedly a mediocre or even “bad” poet. It has been claimed that his few surviving early lyrics fail to show the promise, originality, sophistication, or literary polish of the mature works of Shakespeare. We test that theory against the poems themselves by exploring the frequency and detailed specificity of their echoes in the later Shakespearean works. The evidence supports two related conclusions:

(1) The argument that de Vere's early poetry was “bad” stands in defiance of the views of his own contemporaries and can only reflect a lack of familiarity with his importance in the development of the early Elizabethan lyric voice.

(2) The argument that de Vere cannot have been Shakespeare *because* he was allegedly a bad poet is turned on its head by a careful study of the two bodies of work. The echoes explored here prove that Shakespeare habitually reverted to imagery, ideas, figurative language, and diction pioneered in de Vere's early lyrics. Either Shakespeare was inordinately fond of and influenced by them—or the same man wrote both in two different phases of literary development.

We do not explore the complex and hotly disputed issues of computer-assisted “stylometrics” or forensic linguistics.² Instead, more humbly, we merely collate the parallel

² Elliott & Valenza (*e.g.*, 2004 and 2010) have argued that stylometric comparisons of the text of Oxford's known poems with the text of the Shakespeare canon rule out Oxford as author of the
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phraseology, ideas, and figurative devices common to both Oxford's early lyrics and the published Shakespearean works.

We suspect many readers will want to jump right into the poems themselves (see Part II). Each poem is followed by an analysis of parallels between de Vere's text, **shown in bolded red**, and passages in Shakespeare's works. You may be stunned by the sheer weight of the evidence presented by all these echoes and parallels. They may be explored in any order and may perhaps only be fully appreciated as a whole. But just as one example, consider the remarkable thematic and verbal convergences leaping out from Poem No. 4. For a few more examples providing a preliminary taste, see No. 2 (lines 16-18), No. 9 (lines 34-36), and No. 17 (lines 1-4 & 9, and 7-10 & 15).

Oxford's Known Poetry as Juvenilia

De Vere probably wrote most of his extant acknowledged poetry when he was still in his teens and 20s, as argued by J. Thomas Looney (1920, 125) and John Shahan & Richard Whalen (2009, 236-42), among many others. Steven May, the leading orthodox (Stratfordian) scholar of de Vere's poetry, professes to some unclear extent to dispute that proposition (2004, 231-32). Yet Professor May has also opined, consistently with the Oxfordian view, that the "poems date primarily from [de Vere's] heyday at court during the 1570s" (1991, 270), when he was in his 20s.

Oxford actually established a presence at court while still a teenager during the 1560s. He became a ward of Queen Elizabeth's most powerful advisor, Sir William Cecil (later Lord Burghley), in 1562 at the age of 12 (see, *e.g.*, Anderson 16-22, 44-45). See notes to Poem No. 4 (and Part II, Appendix A), discussing reasons to think de Vere may have written it in 1563 at the age of 13. Eight de Vere poems (Nos. 2 to 9) were first published in 1576 in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (Rollins ed. 1927; see May 1980, 68-69). But since

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latter. Such arguments have met with powerful rebuttals (*e.g.*, Shahan & Whalen)—in part because the known Oxfordian text is merely a fraction of his juvenilia and thus does not seem an adequate comparison sample for stylometric purposes—but the issue is beyond the scope of this study. We do venture to suggest that the present study's apparent conflict with such stylometric claims may confirm what should not really be surprising: that a computer is still not as good as a human being at reading poetry. For a more promising, linguistic-based approach to determining authorship, see, *e.g.*, Chaski (2005) or Argamon *et al.* (2010).

Richard Edwards, who apparently compiled manuscripts on which that volume was based, died in 1566, all those poems may well date from de Vere's adolescence.

May has conceded that "[t]here is little reason" to date any of de Vere's acknowledged verse "later than the 1580s," when he was still only in his 30s (1991, 270). Indeed, May's 1991 book, while referring glancingly to de Vere throughout, discussed him most extensively in chapter 2, "Courtier Verse Before Sidney" (41-68), covering the period only up to the late 1570s and dating de Vere's composition of his most "innovati[ve]" known verses to the early 1570s (53). May has also agreed that de Vere's known poems must be only a fragment of his corpus (1980, 12; 1991, 32).

These points are in considerable tension with May's later claim that there is "a gulf between" de Vere's poetry and the Shakespeare canon that allegedly "rules out" de Vere as author of the latter (2004, 221). Allowing for these two key likelihoods—that de Vere's known poetry is only a fragment of his corpus and furthermore is merely part of his juvenilia—goes far to bridge the disjunction perceived by May and other orthodox critics.

The Oxfordian view, generally speaking, is that de Vere probably wrote or revised the works credited to "Shakespeare" about a full generation later, during his 40s and 50s. No work was published under the "Shakespeare" name until 1593 (*Venus and Adonis*), the year Oxford turned 43. The first canonical Shakespeare plays, or possible early versions of them, were not published even anonymously until the early 1590s (e.g., *The Troublesome Reign of King John* in 1591, and *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, and *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, later known as *Henry VI, Part 2*, in 1594). No canonical play is known to have been published under Shakespeare's name until 1598, when Oxford turned 48.

As discussed by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan (2017), scholars studying many great poets—Walt Whitman, Arthur Rimbaud, and Sylvia Plath, to name just a few diverse examples—have noted how dramatically they may change and develop their voices over time. Not just the extent but the pace and timing of development may vary greatly. Some poets blossom from immaturity to mastery while still precociously young (Rimbaud is a famous example), and some (like Whitman) much later, in middle age.

The first edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), a radical break with anything he (or anyone) had written before, appeared when he was 36. The expanded 1860 edition, first presenting some of his greatest work, came out when he was 41. The year Oxford turned 41, interestingly, was 1591—the very year the first version of *King John* was

published (albeit anonymously) and just two years before works published under the name “Shakespeare” started appearing. A leading expert on Whitman (Schmidgall 4) notes that the great American poet’s “[b]iographers and critics have unanimously accounted his early poetry [published into his early 30s] ... very bland stuff, indistinguishable from the countless chunks of poetasting produced to satisfy ... [newspaper] weeklies and dailies. ... These [early] poems never rise above the arch or maudlin”

In sum, the allegedly mysterious “gulf” between these early de Vere poems and the Shakespeare canon is much ado about nothing. De Vere had more than sufficient time to grow and develop as a writer—in effect, to become Shakespeare—between his mid-20s and his mid-40s (see, *e.g.*, Ogburn 390-97). Sobran, for example, noted that “whoever wrote *The Tempest* was at one time capable of writing *Titus Andronicus*, a play so inferior to Shakespeare’s mature work that its authorship was formerly in doubt” (231). The posited evolution of de Vere into Shakespeare is certainly far less mysterious than the many puzzling incongruities of the Stratfordian authorship theory. To quote a staunchly orthodox Stratfordian, if only we had evidence even remotely comparable to this massive array of poetic parallels to “bridg[e] the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of [‘Shakespeare’ the author] and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record” concerning Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon (Schoenbaum 568).

Whitman, it should be noted, was himself a Shakespeare authorship doubter. Indeed, he anticipated the Oxfordian theory as early as 1888, observing that “only one of the ‘wolfish earls’ so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendant and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works” (52, referring specifically to the English history plays).

Oxford’s Early Poetry in Elizabethan Literary History

Since most if not all of de Vere’s known poetry predates by some years the literary explosion of Spenser and Shakespeare, his proper place in the history of the English lyric must be assessed by what is otherwise known of the poetry being written in England between 1560 and 1590. From this perspective, Oxford’s role as a leading innovator and experimental poet becomes obvious, which also confirms and contextualizes the positive opinions voiced by his contemporaries about his literary talent.

Twenty Poems of Edward de Vere (2018)

Professor May has set forth, in a series of publications (1975, 1980, 1991, and 2004), a wide range of not entirely consistent commentary and bibliographical study of de Vere as a courtier poet. Oxfordians have great respect for May's diligent scholarship, even when we disagree with some of his conclusions. No other orthodox academic has devoted the extensive and respectful attention and study that he has to de Vere's literary career.

In thoughtful dissent from the tendency of many Stratfordians to indulge in biased and exaggerated disdain for de Vere, May has for example observed that he was "the earliest titled courtier poet who can be identified in Elizabeth's reign" (1980, 5), "deserves recognition not only as a poet but as a nobleman with extraordinary intellectual interests and commitments" (8), and was recognized in his time for his "lifelong devotion to learning" (8). May further noted that de Vere was remarkably generous in his patronage of writers and other artists (8-9), and stayed in close communication with fellow writers, reading their works in draft (9). Such unusual generosity must have accounted for much of the oft-criticized "squandering" of de Vere's inherited fortune, since, as May conceded, "with some part of this amount Oxford acquired a splendid reputation for nurture of the arts and sciences" (9).

May has allowed that de Vere's known verse reveals "a competent, fairly experimental poet," that his poems show great variation in style—noting that the sixteen he viewed as most likely de Vere's use "eleven different metrical and stanzaic forms," including a Shakespearean sonnet (No. 15)—and that all the poems "are unified and brought to well-defined conclusions" (1980, 13). May noted that Oxford sometimes uses "simple" methods to achieve a "sense of design" (13), and then observed:

More complex is the weaving of a double refrain into the conventional fabric of No. 6, while the surprising and unconventional endings of Nos. 7 and 9 show Oxford playing upon the received tradition in imaginative ways. De Vere's poetry ... did more than just supply his fellow courtiers with pleasingly ornamental trifles.... He is [Queen Elizabeth's] first truly prestigious courtier poet (13-14)

May has praised the "innovation" (1991, 53) of de Vere's poems (Nos. 2 to 9) published in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576) (see Rollins ed. 1927; May 1980, 68-69). Those lyrics, May agreed, were written at the latest by the early 1570s when Oxford was "still in his early twenties De Vere's eight poems in the *Paradise* create a dramatic break with everything known to have been written at the Elizabethan court up to that time," May declared (1991, 53).

Furthermore, May has amply demonstrated on his own account that de Vere's "verse does compare favorably with that of his 'drab' age contemporaries; it is, for example, varied in conception and execution in a manner well beyond the relentless plodding of Breton, Turberville, and Churchyard" (1980, 14; see also Goldstein 2016, 47-48). By "age contemporaries," May apparently meant de Vere's poetic cohort, not necessarily his age-mates. De Vere, as we have seen, wrote most of his known poems during his teens and 20s, even if May purports to dispute that point to some unclear extent (while supporting it on other occasions). Nicholas Breton (1545–1626), George Turberville (c. 1540–*ante* 1597), and Thomas Churchyard (c. 1520–1604) were by contrast five to thirty years older than de Vere, a youthful prodigy outshining them all.

May's favorable appreciation of Oxford as an original and highly competent lyric poet is matched in the critical history of his reception until after 1920. Alexander B. Grosart in 1872 perceived in de Vere's poems the same qualities that led Elizabethan and Jacobean literary critics William Webbe,³ "George Puttenham,"⁴ Francis Meres,⁵ and Henry Peacham⁶ to rank Oxford among the foremost courtier poets—a status endorsed by May

³ As Webbe stated (1586, C3v) [*sic*]: "I may not omitte the deserved commendations of many honourable and noble Lords, and Gentlemen, in her Maiesties Courte, which in the rare devises of Poetry, have been and yet are most excellent skylfull, among whom the right honourable earl of Oxford may challenge himselfe to ye title of most excellent among the rest."

⁴ One passage in the anonymously published *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) (commonly attributed to Puttenham) discussed the "very many notable gentlemen in the Court that have written commendably, And suppressed it again, or else suffered it to be published without their own names to it: as if it were a discredit for a gentleman to seem learned" (Arber ed. 37). Another passage (Arber ed. 75) specifically named Oxford as foremost among those who "in her majesty's time that now is are sprong up [*sic*] another crew of courtly makers, Noblemen and Gentlemen of her Majesty's own servants, who have written commendably well as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest." The author declared that of this "number is first that noble gentleman Edward Earle of Oxford."

⁵ As Meres stated (1598, 283v) [*sic*]: "The best among us for comedy be Edward Earle of Oxford, Maister Rowely ... Master Edwardes ... Iohn Lilly, Lodge, Gascoyne, Green, Shakespeare, Thomas Nash, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Munday our best plotter, Chapman, Porter, Wilson, Hathaway, and Henry Chettle." (Anti-Oxfordians often tout the fact that Meres listed both Oxford and "Shakespeare," but there are several plausible explanations for that consistent with "Shakespeare" being Oxford's pseudonym, including that Meres was unaware of it or was going along with, perhaps even helping to maintain, the pseudonym.)

⁶ As Peacham stated (1622, O2r) [*sic*]: "In the time of our late Queen Elizabeth, which was truly a Golden Age (for such a world of refined wits, and excellent spirits it produced, whose like are hardly to be hoped for, in any succeeding age) above others who honoured poesie with their pennes and practice (to omit her Majesty, who had singular gift therein) were Edward Earle of Oxford, the Lord Buckhurst, Henry Lord Paget, our Phoenix the noble sir Phillip Sidney, M. Edward Dier, M.

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(1980, 12 & n. 15; see also Looney 1920, 121-25; Goldstein 2016, 46-48; Waugh 82-83). In a famously mysterious comment half a century before Looney first proposed de Vere in 1920 as the true Shakespeare, Grosart noted that “[a]n unlifted shadow somehow lies across his memory,” and that de Vere’s known poems “are not without touches of the true Singer” and have “an atmosphere of graciousness and culture” (359).

In the words of Oxford University Professor William J. Courthope in the second (1897) volume of his monumental study, *A History of English Poetry* (312), de Vere “was a great patron of literature, and headed the literary party at Court which promoted the Euphuistic movement. His own verses are distinguished for their wit, and in their terse ingenuity reflect something of the coxcombry which seems to have been a leading feature of his character.”

Closely and rather curiously paraphrasing Shakespeare’s Falstaff (see *Henry IV, Part 2*, 1.2.9-10), Courthope added that de Vere “was not only witty in himself, but the cause of wit in others” (313). (Many Oxfordians believe de Vere created the louche knight Falstaff as something of a self-parody.) Even Sir Sidney Lee, the leading (and adamantly Stratfordian) Shakespeare biographer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, recognized that de Vere was “the best of the courtier poets in the early years of Elizabeth’s reign” and “wrote verse of much lyric beauty” (quoted in Goldstein 2016, 47).

Oxford’s reputation as one of the foremost lyrical poets of the Elizabethan age thus survived into the early 20th century before being challenged by partisans of the Stratfordian theory of Shakespeare authorship. During the three decades from 1560 to 1590, the only other poet whose versatility, range of expression, and literary influences might compare would be George Gascoigne. Although disputed, it has even been suggested that some of de Vere’s poetry might have appeared under Gascoigne’s name (compare, e.g., Ward’s 1926 and Miller’s 1975 editions of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, Ogburn 513-19, and Kreiler, with Prechter 2010).

May affirmed that Oxford was “the premier Elizabethan courtier poet” (1991, 52) and “the chief innovator due to the range of his subject matter and the variety of its execution.... [His] experimentation provided a much broader foundation for the

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Edmund Spencer, and M. Samuel Daniel, with sundry others whom (together with those yet living, and so well known) not out of Envie but to avoid tediousness I overpasse. Thus much of poetry.”

development of lyric poetry at court [than Edward Dyer's]" (54). The modern decline in Oxford's reputation among most other orthodox scholars appears to be an anachronistic reaction to his emergence, since 1920, as the leading non-Stratfordian authorship candidate (see, e.g., Shahan & Whalen 251-52; Goldstein 2016, 47; Waugh 82-83).

Selection of Poems

This analysis of de Vere's poetry builds upon and amplifies the pioneering studies published by J. Thomas Looney in 1920 (121-71) and 1921, and by Joseph Sobran in 1997 (231-70), which we gratefully acknowledge. We also supplement and corroborate William Plumer Fowler's remarkable 1986 book, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters*, which followed a similar methodology to reach similar conclusions based on de Vere's surviving epistolary prose.⁷ Long before Fowler, moreover, Charles Wisner Barrell gathered impressive evidence that "Shakespeare's thought and imagery dominate Oxford's own statement of creative principles" (Oct. 1946, 61), a statement set forth in de Vere's letter prefacing Thomas Bedingfield's 1573 translation of Girolamo Cardano's "*Cardanus Comforte*"—termed "Hamlet's book" by orthodox scholar Hardin Craig (1934) (see notes to Poem No. 1).

Past editors of de Vere's poetry have disagreed over the size and variety of his literary corpus. The editions compiled by Grosart (1872), Looney (1921), May (1975, 1980, and 1991), Sobran (1997), Chiljan (1998), Brazil & Flues (2002), and Kreiler (2013) (in German), have varied markedly in the number of poems they attribute to him. Grosart included 22 poems and Looney 47, but both Grosart and Looney were unaware that Nos. 12, 13, 18, and 20 (as included here) might be credited to him. Chiljan included 26 poems, Brazil & Flues 25, May only sixteen (plus four "possibly" by Oxford, for a total of twenty—rejecting or failing to consider many identified by Looney but including the four that Looney omitted), and Sobran twenty (following May's selection and order).

⁷ See also, e.g., Sobran's discussion of de Vere's letters (271-86), Gary Goldstein's 2016 and 2017 overviews of de Vere's poetic and epistolary parallels to the Shakespeare canon, Robert Prechter's 2012 analysis of the parallels to Poem No. 4, the surveys of various poetic parallels by Robert Sean Brazil & Barboura Flues in 2002 and Cheryl Eagan-Donovan in 2017, and Bonner Miller Cutting's 2017 analysis of de Vere's letters petitioning for control of a tin monopoly.

May has sometimes shown excessive zeal to question de Vere's authorship of some poems, such as the "echo" verses (No. 17) apparently written about Oxford's mistress Anne Vavasour. But May has generally been thoughtful and systematic in approaching the attribution of the poems. In the case of No. 17, he detailed several strong reasons (convincing in our view) to credit de Vere (1980, 79-81). May deserves particular notice for his fine work (1975) detailing the evidence for de Vere's authorship of Poem No. 18 ("My Mind To Me a Kingdom Is"), one of the best-loved lyrics in the English language.

One reason for the larger size of Looney's edition was that he became the first to suggest that de Vere's poems include not only those appearing over the initials "E.O." but also a number of others. The "E.O." poems were mostly published in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576) (see Rollins ed. 1927), or attributed to de Vere in manuscript. Looney included in his edition the lyrics of 13 songs from John Lyly's plays, which were omitted from the original quartos and only published in Edward Blount's 1632 edition of Lyly's *Collected Works*. For example, Lyly's play *Endymion* (Q1, 1591, G3) merely provides a stage direction that "[t]he Fayries daunce, and with a song pinch him" (see Figure 1), while the 1632 edition prints the song.

Endimion.
Enter Fayries
But what are these so fayre fiendes that caufe my
hayres to stand vpright, and spirits to fall downe? hags,
out alas, Nymphes I craue pardon. Aye me, out what
doe I heere.

The Fayries daunce, and with a song pinch
him, and hee falleth a sleepe, thy kisse *Endi-*
mion, and depart.

Figure 1: Lyly's *Endymion* (1591 quarto) omits a song first published in Lyly's posthumous 1632 *Collected Works*.

Looney also claimed for Oxford the eleven otherwise unattributed "Ignoto" poems from *England's Helicon* (1600). Kreiler would add many poems originally published in 1573 in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (reprinted as the work of Gascoigne in 1575, see Miller ed. 1975; but see Prechter 2010, disputing that Oxfordian attribution; cf. Ogburn 513-19). That would bring the total number of poems possibly attributable to Oxford to as many as a

hundred. Thus, while some poems are today canonically established as de Vere's, many others hang in some form of scholarly doubt or limbo. There is a distinct possibility that more poems and works of prose may ultimately be credited to his pen.

Without prejudicing any of those attributions, we choose to focus here (following May and Sobran) on those twenty poems that seem most strongly established as de Vere's based on direct bibliographical evidence. We believe this conservative selection more than amply illustrates the many and telling links between de Vere's known verse and Shakespeare's poetic imagination.

Evaluating the Poetic Parallels

May has criticized Oxfordians for detecting some Shakespearean echoes in a few poems mistakenly (in May's view) credited to de Vere (2004, 222, 224-25). But more interesting is that four poems of which Looney was unaware in the 1920s (Nos. 12, 13, 18, and 20) are notably rich in parallels to the Shakespeare canon. (May identified Nos. 12 and 13 as probably written by de Vere, and Nos. 18 and 20 as possibly so.) The latter two alone account for more than one fifth of all the parallels identified in this study; all four combined account for one fourth of the strongest parallels (see Part II, [Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels](#)). Looney's perception of telling similarities between de Vere's known writing and that of "Shakespeare" has thus been corroborated by poems *identified by May, which Looney did not even consider*. This is only one of several intriguing cases in which evidence coming to light since Looney's pioneering work has strengthened his Oxfordian hypothesis.

Considering all these factors, no special probative weight should be attached to any particular parallel or parallels in isolation from the larger fact pattern. Some may be part of the common idiom of Elizabethan poetics while others may have a more idiosyncratic value. Yet what ultimately matters is the large quantity of different types of parallelisms, including use of particular rhetorical figures when combined with parallel syntax or vocabulary. Nor should these parallels be considered final or definitive. Further connections certainly await discovery through more careful and refined methodologies, merging linguistics and literary study.

May's only actual analysis of any specific Oxford-Shakespeare parallels appears in a short section of his 2004 article (223-29). While May effectively accused Oxfordians of

cherry-picking similarities between the two bodies of writing (222-23), he limited his own analysis to only a handful of parallels and did not fully explore even those, missing the vastly greater number of parallels he could have addressed (including many much stronger ones), had he consulted Sobran's extensive 1997 study, which instead he either overlooked or ignored.

Departing in 1980 from the reasonable premise that "Elizabethan poets drew upon a broad, common range of motifs, rhetorical devices, allusions, and adages" (11-12), May offered the dubious contention that Oxford's poems "fail *in any way* to connect [him] with Shakespeare" (12; emphasis added), later arguing that "*nothing* in Oxford's canonical verse *in any way* hints at an affinity" with Shakespeare's writings (2004, 242; emphasis added), and in a startlingly unwarranted final leap, that there is "a gulf between the two" bodies of writing that actually "rules out" de Vere's candidacy as the true Shakespeare (2004, 221). (The latter claim seems to echo the stylometric arguments mentioned in note 2.)

There would seem to be some tension, to say the least, between May's classification of de Vere as a poet who in *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576) "create[d] a dramatic break with everything known to have been written at the Elizabethan court up to that time" (1991, 53), and his later claims that "Oxford's verse [was] ... without distinction [in] the mid-[16th]-century tradition of Tudor poetry" (2004, 223), or that "Oxford has no more claim to be the true author of Shakespeare's works than any other of the hundreds of poets" writing during that period (232).

In 2004, writing for the first time in a more explicit context about authorship (223-30), May cites the formerly "drab" Turberville (1980, 14) as one of many poets now allegedly *indistinguishable* from de Vere as a supplier of various motifs, words, and styles also appearing in the Shakespeare canon, which May now argues are "ubiquitous" (2004, 227) in Elizabethan verse. May now asserts that "Oxford's verse, in short, lacks any unique features of style, theme, or subject to connect it to Shakespeare's poetry" (225).

In 2004 May also lavished great attention on Oxford-Shakespeare parallels involving the "haggard" hawk (falconry) motif (Poems 9 and 19), as applied to willful women. To May this pattern, first explored by Looney (1920, 139-40, 163-64), is an irrelevant "commonplace in Elizabethan verse" (2004, 224).

Taken in isolation, these parallels may not be as impressive as many stronger ones, among the multitude explored here, that May could have considered had he consulted Sobran's book. In support of his claim, May cites six poems by others (223-24, 228, 244-45,

249), though one (by John Grange) does not refer to haggards at all, only the more generic term “Unmanned hawks” (244). One point of Looney’s argument, as May himself acknowledged, was the distinctiveness of the word “haggard,” a noun as used here which refers to a wild adult hawk, typically female, caught for training (*OED* 6: 1013).

Properly viewed in context, the haggard hawk parallels are actually very significant. We believe May was profoundly mistaken to dismiss them as irrelevant coincidences (see details in notes to Poems 9 and 19). In any event, May fundamentally missed the broader relevant points, already stressed by Looney in 1920: first, the sheer *quantity* of all the interlocking parallels between Oxford’s known poetry and the Shakespeare canon; second, the unusual *quality* of many specific parallels; and finally, the overall *combination* of quantity *and* quality in the observed intertextuality.

Do the “drab” George Turberville *et al.* offer anything remotely comparable? We invite readers to compare for themselves the five references to haggards by other poets as cited by May. His first example, by the prolific hack Turberville (“wild ... As though you were a haggard Hawk ... Live like a haggard ... and for no luring care,” 244), bears some comparison to language in No. 19. But it falls short of the strong parallels between Shakespeare (especially *The Taming of the Shrew*) and Nos. 9 and 19 (especially taken together), with regard to *taming* a haggard as a paternalistic metaphor for winning over a female lover.

Another example cited by May, by George Whetstone (“The haggard then that checked of late, Will stoop to fancy’s lure,” 245), connects rather weakly to the taming theme, but more like crass bribery, as Whetstone describes his swain raiding his “novice purse” to woo his lady with “trifling chain[s.] A caul of gold and other knacks.” May’s three other examples are weaker still by comparison (one might even say “drab”). They do not connect to the theme or language of taming nor the language of haggards ranging wild. Compare, for example, No. 19 (line 9) and its parallels to *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello*, with May (2004, 245, 249) (George Gascoigne, “haggard hawks mislike an empty hand”; John God, “her body[’s] ... haggard wonts”; and again Turberville, “a haggard kite”).

The haggard hawk echoes reveal that de Vere, in three separate references in two of these twenty surviving early poems—and Shakespeare, in at least six separate references in five very different plays: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Romeo and Juliet* (seven references in six plays if we count *Edward III*)—share a fascination with the aristocratic sport of falconry and its terms of art as

metaphors for human behavior. The three de Vere references use the haggard mainly to illustrate the wooing and “taming” of strong-willed women (though with some gender ambiguity in No. 9). So do the four references in *Shrew*, *Much Ado*, and *Othello*. Perhaps reflecting some degree of personal and artistic growth as compared to the time when de Vere wrote his youthful lyrics, Shakespeare also flips the genders—in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Edward III*—to use falconry in the context of describing or luring a male, with Juliet imagined as a female falconer.

If a comparable set of falconry parallels exists between Shakespeare and any other early modern English writer, we are not aware of it and May has not pointed it out. And this is merely one example of May’s generally inadequate analysis of the poetic parallels, just as the haggard hawk echoes are merely a tiny sampling of the *hundreds* of parallels explored here, many of them much stronger than these falconry parallels.

May also seized on and attempted to discredit the Shakespearean parallels to the “damask rose” references in Poems 14 and 17 (see May 2004, 224, 245-47). Those echoes, like the haggard hawk parallels, were first explored by Looney (1920, 141-45).

Unquestionably, the pervasive popularity of white (or lily) and red (or rosy) imagery in the poetry of the time (and many other times), to describe facial beauty (and not only female—see, *e.g.*, *Venus and Adonis*), limits the conclusions that can be drawn from such examples in isolation from other, more tellingly idiosyncratic comparisons. As May showed, the damask rose seems to have been a popular Elizabethan motif.

Yet these damask rose echoes are still very significant—especially, again, considering how they fit into the broader intertextuality explored here. As Looney noted, No. 14 “is the only poem in the De Vere collection in which the writer lingers tenderly and seriously on the beauty of a woman’s face; and ... his whole treatment turns upon the contrast of white and red, the lily and the damask rose” (141-42). Looney observed the “striking fact ... that the only poem of ‘Shakespeare’s’ [*Lucrece*] in which he dwells at length in the same spirit upon the same theme is dominated by the identical contrast” (142).

No similarly strong parallels are suggested in any of the examples by other poets (such as Turberville), regarding white and red facial imagery as cited by May (246-47). Looney correctly concluded that No. 14 and *Lucrece*, by contrast, “form an excellent example” (145). They do indeed resonate tellingly (see details in notes to Poems 14 and 17).

Furthermore, May misunderstood and exaggerated Looney’s reliance on the damask rose parallels. Looney did briefly discuss them, but he then immediately and very carefully

(145) “emphasize[d] a principle which is vital to the argument ... namely, that *we are not here primarily concerned with the mere piling up of parallel passages* [emphasis added]. What matters most of all is mental correspondence and the general unity of treatment which follows from it.”

It is possible, to be sure, that Looney may have been overly impressed with some structural or stylistic similarities he noticed between the de Vere poems and the Shakespeare canon. Though a diligent schoolteacher and rigorous scholar, he did not pretend to have deep expert knowledge of Elizabethan poetry and was, moreover, writing before modern bibliographical tools and practices were very developed. Conceding May’s reasonable premise that some structural or stylistic echoes were widespread in the poetry of the time (1980, 11-12; 2004, 223-30), that cannot in itself refute Looney’s conclusion. Far less can it negate the stunning array of parallels summarized and explored here. Looney barely scratched the surface. May focused briefly on a few leaves on a few trees, but failed to see the forest.

May’s recent reply to Goldstein’s 2016 article (in an email quoted in Goldstein 2017, 23-24) typifies the weak arguments deployed by Stratfordians to contest the growing evidence for Oxford’s authorship of the Shakespeare plays and poems. First, May inexplicably claims that the Oxfordian “argument assumes that Shakespeare repeated himself, expressing the same ideas over and over with similar wording. Did he? I don’t think he did.” But Oxfordians “assume” nothing of the kind. We *observe and document the undeniable empirical fact* that Shakespeare *did* echo both himself (as anyone with a standard concordance may confirm in a few minutes) *and* the young de Vere (as numerous studies, including this one and those by Sobran and Fowler, amply demonstrate).

May’s second and more interesting response is that “most of [de Vere’s early poems were] in print and available for Shakespeare to plagiarize” (quoted in Goldstein 24). But how “available” were they, really? To the extent they largely circulated in manuscript among de Vere’s aristocratic social circle, it seems puzzling that a young commoner recently arrived in London’s disreputable theatre scene could have gained access to them. May’s suggestion is also a curious example of the modern orthodox tendency to prop up the Stratfordian authorship theory by diminishing Shakespeare’s originality. Was he a mere plagiarizer? Are Stratfordians inadvertently destroying the Shakespearean village in order to save it (or their theory)? Equally important, the argument smacks of the *ad hoc* reasoning that Stratfordians regularly employ to avoid reconsidering their own

assumptions. May began by arguing there are no connections between Shakespeare and de Vere's lyric voice. He now admits that maybe such connections do exist but explains them with an improbable theory of literary influence.

May's third response is that parallels are "evidence of a single authorship ONLY if ... Oxford, Shakespeare, *and no one else* used these phrases," which May noted was not always the case (quoted in Goldstein 24; all-capitals in May's original email; italic emphasis added here). That is simply mistaken in multiple ways. Many of the stronger echoes explored here are *not*, to our knowledge, replicated fully (if at all) by any other writer of the time. In any event, the mere fact that some other writer might also echo a given verbal motif certainly does *not* negate its significance if the parallels between de Vere and Shakespeare *are more numerous and telling in context*. Quantity, quality, and context are always extremely important. It would be arbitrary to ignore a parallel just because some "two- and three-word clusters" (as Goldstein noted, 24) generate multiple "hits" in databases of contemporary writings. All evidence must be evaluated for its nature and weight, which may vary.

May further argues: "No matter how many examples you find, the repetitions have *no evidentiary value*" (quoted in Goldstein 24; emphasis added here). We respectfully disagree. Cumulative, corroborative, and contextual evidence, given sufficient quantity and quality, is the essence of a valid circumstantial argument—a very powerful argument in this case. May's all-or-nothing approach is illogical and tiresomely reminiscent of the long-held attitude of many Stratfordians—that unless and until Oxfordians produce *conclusive* airtight proof, the theory should simply be ignored and ridiculed, not seriously studied. That is not how scholars should debate issues, especially ones like this one where much evidence is unclear, disputed, or missing due to the ravages of time.

May's second suggestion, that Shakespeare plagiarized de Vere, raises some truly fascinating issues, not merely about the particular instance in dispute, but more broadly about the use of *ad hoc* arguments to salvage a declining paradigm. May's suggestion is strangely at variance with the general orthodox dismissal of de Vere as merely one of numerous *unremarkable* poets, *indistinguishable* from the rest, recycling *ubiquitous* tropes of the era. As discussed above, May himself, by 2004, seemed to fully embrace that view, at the cost of contradicting (to some extent) his own earlier praise for de Vere's artistic innovation and distinction.

But May and other orthodox critics cannot have it both ways. In one view, the echoes between de Vere and Shakespeare are allegedly *irrelevant, coincidental, and meaningless*, indicative of nothing more than a shared set of Elizabethan literary idioms common to all the writers of the day. In the other (as May now suggests), the echoes are not meaningless at all. Rather, they indicate that Shakespeare—star of poets, soul of the age!—was influenced *to a remarkable and unusual degree* by the early verse of a supposedly mediocre courtier poet, verse that was circulating up to a full generation before Shakspeare of Stratford arrived in London. In fact, May now suggests, Shakespeare might have been so impressed by young de Vere’s work that he extensively “plagiarized” it! Who knew?! We suggest it is more likely they were the same person at different stages of life and artistic development.

To be sure, it is common ground that the author Shakespeare (whoever he was) borrowed plots and ideas from many others. Doubtless he borrowed language too, as well as structural and stylistic ideas. He was certainly influenced by other writers, just as he influenced many. In some cases, as with Christopher Marlowe, the influence seems to be important and to have gone both ways. The lines between literary influence, borrowing, and outright theft (plagiarism) may often be blurred. Writers in cultures and times different from our own did not necessarily have the same attitudes about this that we do today.

In any event, May’s latest suggestion seems to be that de Vere was, at the very least, a remarkably influential and important Elizabethan poet. This suggestion, that Shakespeare plagiarized de Vere, necessarily focuses even more attention on the compelling and extensive parallels between de Vere’s early work and the Shakespeare canon. We look forward to May and other orthodox scholars pursuing this fascinating suggestion.

Conclusion

It deserves reiteration, despite all this good-natured sparring, that we truly do respect Professor May and the scholarly work he has done. He himself has written respectfully of Oxfordians—for example as having “made worthwhile contributions to our understanding of the Elizabethan age” (1980, 10), noting that other orthodox scholars “tend to belittle ... the Oxfordian movement, yet its leaders are educated men and women ... sincerely interested in Renaissance English culture. Their arguments for De Vere are entertained as at least plausible by hosts of intellectually respectable persons”

At the same time, it must be noted that May overstates the extent to which the Oxfordian theory—even as originally framed by Looney, much less in its greatly developed present form—*relies upon* the poetic parallels explored here. On the contrary, these echoes exist within a far wider and more comprehensive assemblage of evidence, perhaps best reflected in James Warren’s *Index to Oxfordian Publications*, which documents more than 350 books and 8,000 articles contributing to the Oxfordian synthesis.

One may reasonably debate whether the many Shakespearean echoes of de Vere’s poems *in themselves* pinpoint him conclusively as Shakespeare. Yet they are, at the very least, highly suggestive of common authorship—especially in combination with the vast array of biographical and other circumstantial evidence supporting the Oxfordian theory (see, *e.g.*, Ogburn’s 1984 book, Stritmatter’s 2001 dissertation, and Anderson’s 2005 book). They form an important part—but only part—of that evidence. As Looney observed (1920, 160), “first one thing and then another fits into its place with all the unity of an elaborate mosaic the moment we introduce Edward de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare writings. Is this too the merest coincidence?”

Sobran, writing seven years before May’s 2004 article, put it well in terms that neither May nor any orthodox writer has yet rebutted. (May missed an excellent opportunity in 2004.) Sobran fully grasped the argument briefly suggested by May in 1980 (11-12) and elaborated in 2004 (223-30): that the Oxford-Shakespeare parallels might allegedly “be assigned to coincidence and poetic convention” (Sobran 232).

But May’s 2004 article totally missed (failed even to cite) Sobran’s 40-page comparative analysis of de Vere’s poems (1997, 231-70)—the central issue addressed by May’s article—even though Sobran’s study was by far the most extensive of its kind (until now) and was issued by a major mainstream publisher (Simon & Schuster’s Free Press) at a time when Sobran was a nationally known political columnist. Ironically, he graciously credited May himself with unspecified assistance in the preparation of his book (301): “I have yet to ask a favor ... that [May] has failed to grant instantly”

Perhaps May was unaware of Sobran’s book, as suggested by May’s inaccurate comment that “[a]fter the publication of my edition of Oxford’s verse in 1980, reference to the Earl’s poetry all but disappeared from Oxfordian polemic” (2004, 232). In any event, May’s 2004 article followed the all-too-common orthodox tendency in failing even to respond to important skeptical scholarship. As Sobran summed up in 1997:

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[S]ome critics rank [de Vere's poems] as brilliant and accomplished ... [though] [f]ew would call them works of genius. How, then, can they be Shakespeare's? Perhaps because they are early poems....

The crucial question is whether the parallels ... are more numerous than can reasonably be assigned to coincidence and poetic convention. *These poems bear hundreds of resemblances to Shakespeare's phrasing, far too many to be dismissed as insignificant.* The kinship is evident in these poems' themes, turns of phrase, word associations, images, rhetorical figures, various other mannerisms, and, above all, general diction.

Not all of the parallels are of the same order.... But, while we may disagree over particular cases, the sheer number of examples is overwhelming. (231-32; emphasis added)

We suggest readers may best appreciate the weight of the evidence by just plunging into the poems and their parallels. We suspect most, after doing so, will have difficulty swallowing the idea that all these resonant echoes might be explained away as mere poetic "commonplaces" recycled by "hundreds" of Elizabethan writers. Do "hundreds" of other writers (or several, or even one?) exhibit the remarkable thematic and verbal convergences leaping out from many of these poems? (Poem No. 4 is just one very telling example.) Was it "common" for multiple Elizabethan poets to craft entire phrases and scenes (not just a single word or image here and there) eerily similar to those found in Shakespeare? We suspect most open-minded readers will emerge feeling strongly, as we do, that the same mind produced these two bodies of work.

As Looney always stressed, it is only through the accumulation of evidence that we approach verification of a theory. As quoted earlier, Looney embraced a principle on which we also rely to guide this entire presentation of de Vere's early poems and their echoes in the Shakespeare canon (1920, 145): "[W]e are not here primarily concerned with the mere piling up of parallel passages. What matters most of all is mental correspondence and the general unity of treatment which follows from it."

The density and quality of so many parallels of thought, diction, and poetic idiom, between these poems and the later works of "Shakespeare," suggest that the former constitute an essential part of Shakespeare's literary juvenilia. We invite you, dear readers, to venture onward and explore or rediscover these poems for yourselves, to enjoy them as we have on their own merits and for what they can tell us about the development of Shakespeare's creative genius.

II. Oxford's Poems and Their Echoes in Shakespeare

Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels

Each poem is presented below in plain text, with line numbering, followed by annotations in which **bolded red** is used for **words and phrases drawn from these de Vere poems** for comparison to parallel passages in the Shakespeare poems and plays. **Bolded black is used for our own editorial commentary** (though not in Appendices A and B to Poems 4 and 18), and plain text is used for words and phrases from the Shakespeare poems and plays (*italicized where useful to highlight especially notable textual overlaps between these de Vere poems and the Shakespearean passages*).

The parallels set forth in the annotations are divided into two broad categories: first the “strongest” parallels to each poem and then “additional” parallels to that poem. Within each category, the parallels are listed not in order of perceived strength, but simply following the line numbering of the **parallel passages identified in each de Vere poem**.

The “strongest” parallels are those which, even viewed in isolation, seem to us especially suggestive of common authorship. The “additional” parallels are those which seem to us not as strong for various reasons but still significant, especially in a cumulative sense. As Looney noted, these poems contain many “minor points of similarity, which though insignificant in themselves, help to make up that general impression of common authorship which comes only with a close familiarity with [them] as a whole” (1920, 161). But we hasten to add that we have *not* tried to identify all “minor points of similarity.” Even with regard to the “additional” parallels, we have presented only those which we feel are in some way significant, noteworthy, and interesting.

There is doubtless ample room for reasonable debate (which we welcome) about whether any given parallel properly belongs in one category or the other—or perhaps, in some cases, lacks the significance we perceived. At the same time, we have doubtless missed some parallels altogether, or some telling expansions or elaborations of ones that are presented here. We welcome constructive critical feedback on all aspects of this presentation. A great deal of subjective discretion has likewise gone into defining the scope of each of the parallels. We make no claim of numerical precision.

Thus, we are unsure what value the following numbers may have. But for readers who may be interested, we have identified in these twenty poems a total of 232 passages, each containing one or more (often many) parallels in the works of Shakespeare. Many of these passages constitute elaborate sets or clusters of parallels, echoing multiple Shakespearean passages.

We generally use the terms “parallel” and “echo” a bit loosely, to refer either to each *de Vere parallel passage* (identified by a line number or numbers) or to each separate *Shakespearean passage* echoing or paralleling that line or passage. But the numbers summarized here refer strictly and conservatively to the *de Vere parallel passages*. Thus, it is important to note, the total number of parallels could be said to be much larger. But we do not seek to hype or artificially inflate the numbers.

Under these conservative definitions, we have identified 56 parallel passages as the “strongest” and the remaining 176 as “additional.” The number of such passages identified in each poem varies widely, from three (No. 16) to thirty (No. 18, including 18b). The average is 11.6 per poem. The poems contain a total of 520 lines and they also vary greatly in length, from No. 16 (six lines) to No. 18-18b (72 lines). One would expect a longer poem to have more parallels. The strongest parallels also deserve more weight, perhaps twice that of the others. One might thus calculate a “parallel score” for each poem by multiplying the number of strongest parallels by two, then adding the number of additional parallels.

Under this concededly subjective and debatable comparison, No. 18-18b (scoring 36) appears to have the greatest absolute correspondence with the Shakespeare canon. No. 4 has the strongest “score per line” (1.2). No. 7 appears weakest in an absolute sense (scoring 4), and Nos. 8, 11, and 14 the weakest “per line” (0.3). Yet all four of the latter poems still exhibit fascinating parallels to Shakespeare—including one noted in 1910 by a leading Stratfordian scholar (see No. 11, lines 3-4).

With 232 passages containing significant Shakespearean parallels, divided by a total of 520 lines, it appears there is roughly one such passage *for every two or three lines in this early de Vere poetry*—and about one *unusually strong parallel* for every ten lines.

On the following page is a chart (Figure 2) summarizing and comparing the numbers for all twenty poems.

Twenty Poems of Edward de Vere (2018)

Figure 2: Comparison Chart of Poetic Parallels

Poem	Lines	Parallels (total)	Parallels (strongest)	Parallels (additional)	“Parallel Score”	“Parallel Score Per Line”
1.	26	9	2	7	11	0.4
2.	18	10	4	6	14	0.8
3.	26	10	2	8	12	0.5
4.	18	15	6	9	21	1.2
5.	32	14	4	10	18	0.6
6.	30	15	2	13	17	0.6
7.	10	4	0	4	4	0.4
8.	24	7	0	7	7	0.3
9.	36	20	4	16	24	0.7
10.	18	13	3	10	16	0.9
11.	28	7	2	5	9	0.3
12.	36	10	3	7	13	0.4
13.	14	5	1	4	6	0.4
14.	42	11	2	9	13	0.3
15.	14	8	3	5	11	0.8
16.	6	3	2	1	5	0.8
17.	24	14	3	11	17	0.7
18.	48	19	5	14	24	0.5
18b.	24	11	1	10	12	0.5
18 & 18b.	72	30	6	24	36	0.5
19.	18	6	3	3	9	0.5
20.	28	21	4	17	25	0.9

We generally do not try to credit specific scholars with regard to each specific parallel noted. Doing so would introduce excessive detail and clutter and would risk unintended omissions. We credit the past scholarly commentaries on the parallels to each poem generally, following the text of each poem. We have certainly relied upon those, in some cases building upon them, and are very grateful for them. We welcome information about any additional commentaries we may have missed. We do, on occasion, mention certain scholars in relation to specific parallels, where that information may be of particular interest.

Titles for all the poems are suggested in this presentation, not necessarily following those in the early manuscript and print sources, where titles may have been crafted or chosen by an editor or transcriber and may well *not* reflect de Vere's own choice. We also do not generally follow the titles provided in past modern editions like Grosart's or Looney's. May did not suggest any titles, except to note the manuscript titles of Nos. 13 and 18.

While we cannot be confident that de Vere himself chose or intended titles for any of the poems, we feel reasonably confident in assigning the text of each poem to him. Titles are a great convenience, helping readers remember and keep track of the poems. Thus, we use all or part of the first line of text of each poem for the title, or some other line of text that captures its overall theme. We adopt the apt title for No. 4 suggested by Prechter (149). The only exception to the foregoing rule is that we do accept the manuscript title of No. 13 (though not found in that poem's text), because it seems very apt.

Following each poem's number and title as given in this presentation, we provide the text, largely following Looney's 1921 edition, if available therein (Miller ed. 1975, 1: 560-96, hereinafter "Looney"; Looney in turn relied heavily on Grosart's 1872 edition, 394-429). We are also guided by the thorough scholarship evident in May's editions (1975, 391-93; 1980, 25-42; 1991, 270-86). Spelling and punctuation are silently modernized and harmonized for the convenience of readers, largely guided by Looney. After the text, we indicate the available textual sources; how the poem was listed by May (from #1 to #16) among those he viewed as very likely by Oxford (1980, 25-37, 67-79; 1991, 270-81), or that he viewed as "possibly" so (the latter abbreviated "PBO" #1 to #4) (1980, 38-42, 79-83; 1991, 282-86); each poem's basic structure (e.g., "4 x 6" indicates six stanzas of four lines each); the title (if any) provided by Looney; sources providing past commentaries on parallels; and clarifications of the text, as needed.

A significant instance where we follow May, for the purpose of our conservative approach explained in the [Introduction \(Selection of Poems\)](#), is with regard to No. 11. May did not accept the first four and last four lines of No. 11 as given by Grosart and Looney (compare Grosart 407-09, and Looney 568-69, with May 1980, 33; 1991, 277-78). Thus, the first line of No. 11 given here and by May—and the title we use—is “When wert thou born, Desire?” (not “Come hither, shepherd swain!”).

As explained in the [Introduction \(Selection of Poems\)](#), taking a conservative approach, we omit poems that May omitted entirely from his editions. We do, however, include the four stanzas of No. 18b which May included in his 1975 article, but which he was hesitant to attribute to de Vere as part of No. 18, even as he accepted the eight stanzas of No. 18 itself as “possibly” de Vere’s (our reasons are explained in Appendix B).

Grosart and Looney, on the other hand, were not aware that Oxford could be credited with Nos. 12, 13, 18-18b, or 20. As noted in the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#), it is interesting that while May has criticized Looney and other Oxfordians for detecting some Shakespearean echoes in poems mistakenly (in May’s view) credited to de Vere (2004, 222, 224-25), the four poems Looney missed include two (Nos. 18-18b and 20) that appear to be the richest in parallels of this entire corpus. Those two poems alone account for 51 parallels (22% of the total); Nos. 12, 13, 18-18b, and 20 together account for 66 parallels (28%), including 14 of the 56 strongest (25%). Thus, as we noted, Looney’s pioneering insights have been corroborated and strengthened by poems *identified by May, which Looney did not even consider*.

Following is a list of all twenty poems and key sources where they appear:

1. “The Labouring Man That Tills the Fertile Soil” (Grosart 422-23; Looney 572-73; May 1980, 25; 1991, 270-71).
2. “Even as the Wax Doth Melt” (Grosart 396-98; Looney 589-90; May 1980, 26; 1991, 271).
3. “Forsaken Man” (Grosart 403-04; Looney 585-86; May 1980, 26-27; 1991, 271-72).
4. “The Loss of My Good Name” (Grosart 401-02; Looney 580-81; May 1980, 27-28; 1991, 272-73).
5. “I Am Not as I Seem to Be” (Grosart 395-96; Looney 587-88; May 1980, 28-29; 1991, 273-74).
6. “If Care or Skill Could Conquer Vain Desire” (Grosart 399-400; Looney 592-93; May 1980, 29-30; 1991, 274-75).
7. “What Wonders Love Hath Wrought” (Grosart 410; Looney 594; May 1980, 30; 1991, 275).
8. “The Lively Lark Stretched Forth Her Wing” (Grosart 405-06; Looney 565; May 1980, 30-31; 1991, 275-76).
9. “The Trickling Tears That Fall Along My Cheeks” (Grosart 394-95; Looney 583-84; May 1980, 31-32; 1991, 276-77).

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10. "Fain Would I Sing But Fury Makes Me Fret" (Grosart 421-22; Looney 582; May 1980, 32-33; 1991, 277).
11. "When Wert Thou Born, Desire?" (Grosart 407-09; Looney 568-69; May 1980, 33; 1991, 277-78).
12. "Winged With Desire" (not in Grosart or Looney; May 1980, 34-35; 1991, 278-79).
13. "Love Compared to a Tennis-Play" (not in Grosart or Looney; May 1980, 35; 1991, 279-80).
14. "These Beauties Make Me Die" (Grosart 417-19; Looney 563-64; May 1980, 35-37; 1991, 280-81).
15. "Who Taught Thee First to Sigh?" (Grosart 413; Looney 562; May 1980, 37; 1991, 281).
16. "Were I a King" (Grosart 426-27; Looney 596; May 1980, 37; 1991, 281).
17. "Sitting Alone Upon My Thought" (The Echo Verses) (Grosart 411-12; Looney 560-61; May 1980, 38-39; 1991, 282-83).
18. "My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is" (not in Grosart or Looney; May 1975, 391-92; 1980, 39-40; 1991, 283-84) (No. 18b, also not in Grosart or Looney, appears in Rollins 1929, 1: 225-31, and May 1975, 391 n. 1, 392-93).
19. "If Women Could Be Fair and Yet Not Fond" (Grosart 420; Looney 595; May 1980, 40-41; 1991, 284).
20. "Cupid's Bow" (not in Grosart or Looney; May 1980, 41-42; 1991, 284-86).

Key to Abbreviations

A&C = *Anthony and Cleopatra*

(While often given as “*Antony*” and *Cleopatra*, the accurate and authentic title, respecting its source in the First Folio, is in fact *Anthony and Cleopatra*, as noted in Michael Delahoyde’s superb critical edition (2015, vii) from an Oxfordian perspective. See [Bibliography of Works Cited](#).)

All’s Well = *All’s Well That Ends Well*

As You = *As You Like It*

Caes. = *Julius Caesar*

Cor. = *Coriolanus*

Cym. = *Cymbeline, King of Britain*

Dream = *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

Edw. III = *Edward III*

Errors = *The Comedy of Errors*

Ham. = *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

1 Hen. IV = *King Henry IV, Part 1*

2 Hen. IV = *King Henry IV, Part 2*

Hen. V = *King Henry V*

1 Hen. VI = *King Henry VI, Part 1*

2 Hen. VI = *King Henry VI, Part 2*

3 Hen. VI = *King Henry VI, Part 3*

Hen. VIII = *King Henry VIII*

John = *King John*

Kins. = *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Lear = *King Lear*

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LLL = *Love's Labour's Lost*

Lover's Comp. = *A Lover's Complaint*

Lucrece = *The Rape of Lucrece*

Mac. = *Macbeth*

Meas. = *Measure for Measure*

Merch. = *The Merchant of Venice*

Much = *Much Ado About Nothing*

OED = *Oxford English Dictionary* (see [Bibliography of Works Cited](#))

Oth. = *Othello, the Moor of Venice*

Pass. Pilg. = *The Passionate Pilgrim*

Per. = *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*

Phoenix = *The Phoenix and the Turtle*

Rich. II = *King Richard II*

Rich. III = *King Richard III*

R&J = *Romeo and Juliet*

Shrew = *The Taming of the Shrew*

Sonnets = *Shakespeare's Sonnets*

Tem. = *The Tempest*

Timon = *Timon of Athens*

Titus = *Titus Andronicus*

Troil. = *Troilus and Cressida*

Twelfth = *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*

Two Gent. = *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Venus = *Venus and Adonis*

Win. = *The Winter's Tale*

No. 1: “The Labouring Man That Tills the Fertile Soil”

- 1 The labouring man that tills the fertile soil
2 And reaps the harvest fruit hath not indeed
3 The gain, but pain, and if for all his toil
4 He gets the straw, the Lord will have the seed.
- 5 The Manchet fine falls not unto his share,
6 On coarsest cheat his hungry stomach feeds.
7 The Landlord doth possess the finest fare;
8 He pulls the flowers, the other plucks but weeds.
- 9 The mason poor, that builds the Lordly halls,
10 Dwells not in them, they are for high degree;
11 His Cottage is compact in paper walls,
12 And not with brick or stone as others be.
- 13 The idle Drone that labours not at all
14 Sucks up the sweet of honey from the Bee.
15 Who worketh most, to their share least doth fall;
16 With due desert reward will never be.
- 17 The swiftest Hare unto the Mastiff slow
18 Oft times doth fall to him as for a prey;
19 The Greyhound thereby doth miss his game we know
20 For which he made such speedy haste away.
- 21 So he that takes the pain to pen the book
22 Reaps not the gifts of goodly golden Muse,
23 But those gain that who on the work shall look,
24 And from the sour the sweet by skill doth choose.
- 25 For he that beats the bush the bird not gets,
26 But who sits still, and holdeth fast the nets.

Textual sources: Grosart (422-23); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 572-73);
May (#1) (1980, 25; 1991, 270-71).

Poem structure: 4 x 6 with terminal couplet.

Looney’s title: “Labour and Its Reward.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (232-34); Brazil & Flues.

Clarifications of the text:

- (5-6) The words **manchet** and **cheat** refer respectively to wheat bread of premium and second-rate quality (*OED* 3: 66; 9: 297).
- (22) The nine **Muses**, in Greek mythology, are the inspirational goddesses of poets and other writers, artists, and scholars.

This poem, introduced by the notation, “The Earle of Oxenforde to the Reader,” was published in 1573, when de Vere was only 23, as part of the preface to Thomas Bedingfield’s translation of *Cardanus Comforte* (1573, rev. 1576), which was dedicated to de Vere. See Figure 3 (next page).

Cardanus is a philosophical work by the Italian mathematician Girolamo Cardano (1501–76), originally published in Venice as *De Consolatione* (1542). Its influence on the philosophical dimensions of *Hamlet* has been widely acknowledged. As discussed by Miller (1975, “Cardanus”), Ogburn (525-28), Sobran (279-86), Stritmatter (1998), and others, orthodox scholars including Hardin Craig have long documented an intimate connection between *Cardanus* and *Hamlet*. In a 1934 article (which avoided even mentioning de Vere), Craig termed it “Hamlet’s Book,” believing it to be the one from which the prince reads in act 2, scene 2.

De Vere’s separate prose letter to Bedingfield, introducing *Cardanus*, was reprinted and praised by Grosart as “extremely interesting and characteristic, graceful and gracious” (423-24).

Oxfordian scholars have documented the letter’s literary, philosophical, and linguistic connections to Shakespeare at least since Barrell’s two 1946 articles, the first of which noted that even then, *Cardanus* had “long been recognized ... as the source from which the author of *Hamlet* drew inspiration for memorable scenes and striking passages” (35). See also Fowler (118-62).

As Sobran noted, de Vere’s prefatory letter “unmistakably prefigures the Southampton poems of Shakespeare: the Sonnets, *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Rape of Lucrece*” (279). Sobran observed that “the letter anticipates those poems in spirit, theme, image, and other details ... borrow[ing], for figurative use, the languages of law, commerce, horticulture, and medicine,” and that it “speaks of publication as a duty and of literary works as tombs and monuments to their authors” (279).

Sobran also noted that the letter has echoes in the Shakespeare plays, including striking parallels to *Coriolanus* (279-82).

As detailed below, the prefatory poem also has significant parallels to the plays, but only one (that we have seen) to *Hamlet* specifically (see parallels to lines 9-10 & 13-14). This may reflect, as noted by Ogburn (525), that the poem (unlike the letter) appears to have little if any thematic connection to *Cardanus*.

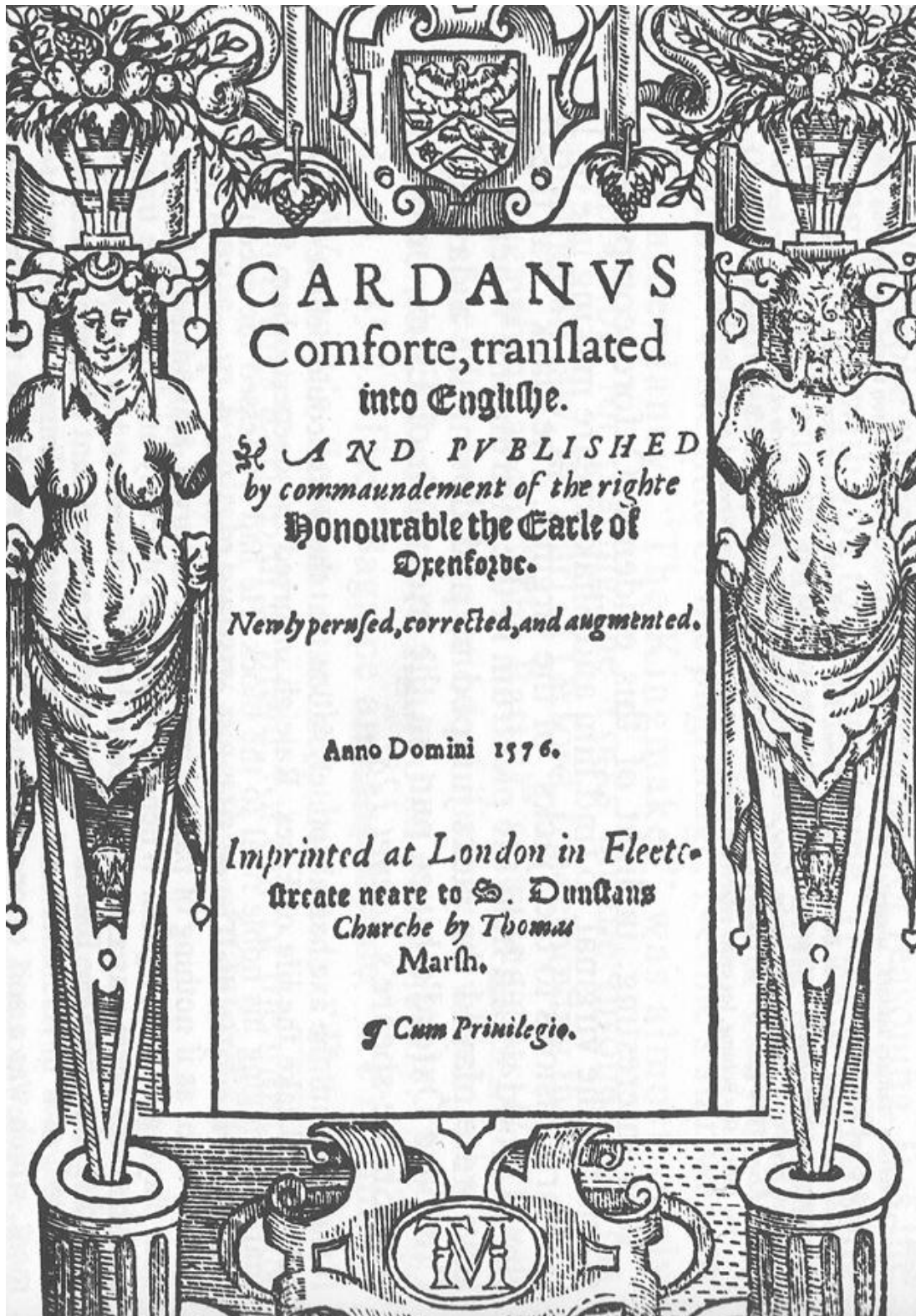


Figure 3: Cover page of *Cardanus Comforte* (1573, rev. 1576)

Strongest parallels to No. 1:

(9-10, 13-14) **The mason poor that builds the Lordly halls,
Dwells not in them ...**

...
**The idle Drone that labours not at all
Sucks up the sweet of honey from the Bee**

'For so work the honey-bees ... The singing masons building roofs of gold ... the lazy yawning drone' (*Hen.* V, 1.2.187, 198, 204); 'Not to eat honey like a drone from others' labors' (*Per.*, 2.prol.18-19); 'Where the bee sucks' (*Tem.*, 5.1.88); 'Drones suck not eagles' blood, but rob beehives' (2 *Hen.* VI, 4.1.109); 'Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath' (*R&J*, 5.3.92); 'That sucked the honey of his music vows' (*Ham.*, 3.1.156); cf. 'My honey lost, and I, a drone-like bee ... In thy weak hive a wand'ring wasp hath crept And sucked the honey which thy chaste bee kept' (*Lucrece*, 836, 839-40).

The idea of **drones** sucking **honey** from **the bees** is a characteristic idiom of both samples. See also No. 2.7-8 (**The Drone more honey sucks, that laboureth not at all, Than doth the Bee**).

(17-20) **The swiftest Hare unto the Mastiff slow**
...
**The Greyhound thereby doth miss his game we know
For which he made such speedy haste**

'like a brace of greyhounds, Having the fearful flying hare in sight' (3 *Hen.* VI, 2.5.130); 'like greyhounds in the slips ... The game's afoot!' (*Hen.* V, 3.1.31); 'thy greyhounds are as swift' (*Shrew*, ind.2.47).

The seemingly spontaneous references to the **greyhounds** (or **mastiff**) and the **hares** suggest personal experience of such aristocratic hunting sports.

Additional parallels to No. 1:

(1) **The labouring man that tills the fertile soil**

'let the magistrates be labouring men' (2 *Hen.* VI, 4.2.18); 'fertile England's soil' (2 *Hen.* VI, 1.1.238); 'soil's fertility' (*Rich.* II, 3.4.39).

(2-3) **reaps the harvest fruit ... for all his toil**

'Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil' (*LLL*, 4.3.323); cf. 'never ear so barren a land for fear it yield me so bad a harvest' (*Venus*, ded.); 'the main harvest reaps' (*As You*, 3.5.103); 'They that reap must sheaf and bind' (*As You*, 3.2.102); 'And reap the harvest which that rascal sowed' (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.1.381); 'We are to reap the harvest of his son' (3 *Hen.* VI, 2.2.116); 'To reap the harvest of perpetual peace' (3 *Hen.* VI, 5.2.15); 'My poor lips, which should that harvest reap' (*Sonnets*, 128.7).

(8) **He pulls the flowers, the other plucks but weeds**

'They bid thee *crop a weed*, thou *pluck'st a flower*' (*Venus*, 946); 'which I have sworn to *weed and pluck away*' (*Rich. II*, 2.3.167); 'He *weeds* the corn, and still *lets grow the weeding*' (*LLL*, 1.1.96).

(10) **high degree**

'Thou wast installed in that *high degree*' (1 *Hen. VI*, 4.1.17); cf. 'And thou art but of *low degree*' (*Oth.*, 2.3.94); 'Take but *degree away*, untune that string, And hark what discord follows' (*Troil.*, 1.3.109).

(20) **speedy haste**

'Good lords, make all the *speedy haste* you may' (*Rich. III*, 3.1.60).

(24) **the sour the sweet**

'The *sweets* we wish for turn to loathed *sours*' (*Lucrece*, 867); 'Things *sweet* to taste prove in digestion *sour*' (*Rich. II*, 1.3.236); 'Speak *sweetly*, man, although thy looks be *sour*' (*Rich. II*, 3.2.193); 'How *sour sweet* music is When time is broke' (*Rich. II*, 5.5.42-43); '*Sweetest* nut hath *sourest* rind' (*As You*, 3.2.109); 'Touch you the *sourest* points with *sweetest* terms' (*A&C*, 2.2.24); 'have their palates *both for sweet and sour*' (*Oth.*, 4.3.94); 'To that *sweet* thief which *sourly* robs from me' (*Sonnets*, 35.14); 'that thy *sour* leisure gave *sweet* leave' (*Sonnets*, 39.10); 'For *sweetest* things turn *sourest* by their deeds' (*Sonnets*, 94.13).

This **sweet/sour** antithesis, while undoubtedly commonplace, is the first of many such locutions found in both the de Vere poetry and Shakespeare. Both samples exhibit a marked fondness for antithesis and paradox.

(25-26) **For he that beats the bush the bird not gets, But who sits still, and holdeth fast the nets**

'Poor *bird*, thou'dst never fear the *net* nor lime' (*Mac.*, 4.2.34); 'Look how a *bird* lies tangled in a *net*' (*Venus*, 67); '*Birds* never *limed* no secret *bushes* fear' (*Lucrece*, 88).

See also No. 2.5-6 (**And he that beats the bush, the wished bird not gets, But such I see as sitteth still, and holds the fowling nets**).

No. 2: “Even as the Wax Doth Melt”

- 1 Even as the wax doth melt, or dew consume away
2 Before the Sun, so I, behold, through careful thoughts decay,
3 For my best luck leads me to such sinister state
4 That I do waste with others’ love, that hath myself in hate,
5 And he that beats the bush, the wished bird not gets,
6 But such I see as sitteth still, and holds the fowling nets.
- 7 The Drone more honey sucks, that laboureth not at all,
8 Than doth the Bee, to whose most pain least pleasure doth befall;
9 The Gardener sows the seeds whereof the flowers do grow,
10 And others yet do gather them that took less pain, I know;
11 So I the pleasant grape have pulled from the Vine,
12 And yet I languish in great thirst while others drink the wine.
- 13 Thus like a woeful wight I wove my web of woe;
14 The more I would weed out my cares, the more they seem to grow.
15 The which betokeneth hope, forsaken is of me,
16 That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree
17 To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to moan,
18 That never am less idle, lo, than when I am alone.

Textual sources: Grosart (396-98); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 589-90);
May (#2) (1980, 26; 1991, 271).

Poem structure: 6 x 3.

Looney’s title: “Care and Disappointment.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 164); Sobran (234-35);
Brazil & Flues; Goldstein (2016, 49-50; 2017, 23).

Clarifications of the text:

- (2, 16) The word **careful** is used idiomatically here to mean “**full of cares** or worries,” not “cautious” (*OED* 2: 896). See also No. 10.15. A **culver** refers to a dove or pigeon (*OED* 4: 122).
- (13) A **wight** means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).

Strongest parallels to No. 2:

- (1-2) **Even as the wax doth melt, or dew consume away Before the Sun, so I, behold, through careful thoughts decay**

The image of **wax**, **dew**, or snow, **melting**, dissolving, **decaying**, or being **consumed**, especially under the influence of **the sun**, occurs frequently in Shakespeare, often related (as here) to the **melting**, **decay**, *etc.*, of the self, body, or human attributes like virtue, willpower, or love.

‘as soon *decayed* and done As is the morning’s *silver-melting dew* Against the golden *splendor of the sun!*’ (*Lucrece*, 23-25); ‘when *sun* doth melt their snow’ (*Lucrece*, 1218); ‘As mountain snow *melts with the midday sun*’ (*Venus*, 750); ‘Scarce had the *sun* dried up the *dewy morn*’ (*Pass. Pilg.*, 6.1); ‘cold snow *melts with the sun’s hot beams*’ (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.1.223); ‘her *wax* must *melt*’ (3 *Hen.* VI, 3.2.51); ‘that *melted* at the sweet tale of the *sun’s*’ (1 *Hen.* IV, 2.4.121); ‘*melted* away with rotten *dews*’ (*Cor.*, 2.3.30); ‘solid flesh would *melt*, Thaw, and resolve itself into a *dew*’ (*Ham.*, 1.2.129); ‘let virtue be as *wax* And *melt* in her own fire’ (*Ham.*, 3.4.85); *cf.* ‘Let your love even with my life *decay*’ (*Sonnets*, 71.12).

The distinctive phrase **consume away** is similarly applied by Shakespeare to the idea of the body being **consumed** by suppressed or overpowering emotion, **care**, or **thoughts**.

‘Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire, *Consume away in sighs*, waste inwardly’ (*Much*, 3.1.78); *cf.* ‘That you *in pity may dissolve to dew*’ (*Rich. II*, 5.1.9); ‘*consume away* in rust’ (*John*, 4.1.65).

The latter quotation from *King John* refers to hot irons cooling and dissolving in young Arthur’s tears, as if in pity, rather than putting out his eyes.

- (4) **that hath myself in hate**

‘*My name*, dear saint, is *hateful to myself*’ (*R&J*, 2.2.55); ‘He scowls and *hates himself* for his offense’ (*Lucrece*, 738); ‘Whose deed *hath made herself herself detest*’ (*Lucrece*, 1566).

This theme of **self-hatred** is perhaps explored most elaborately in the following ten lines in *Richard III*:

What do I fear? myself? there’s none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?
Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
That I myself have done unto myself?

O, no! alas, I rather hate myself
For hateful deeds committed by myself!
I am a villain: yet I lie. I am not.
(5.3.198-207)

(7-8) **The Drone more honey sucks, that laboureth not at all, Than doth the Bee**

See parallels to No. 1 (lines 9-10 & 13-14) (especially the latter two lines:
The idle Drone that labours not at all Sucks up the sweet of honey from the Bee).

(16-18) **That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree
To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to moan
That never am less idle, lo, than when I am alone**

Compare the scene deftly sketched by Shakespeare between the disconsolate teenagers Romeo and Benvolio (perhaps recalling to the mature playwright this lyric written during his own moody youth?):

‘Towards him I [Benvolio] made, but he [Romeo] was ware of me And *stole into the covert of the wood*. I, measuring his affections by my own, Which then most sought where most might not be found [*i.e.*, Benvolio also wanted to be alone], *Being one too many by my weary self, Pursued my humor*, not pursuing his, And gladly shunned who gladly fled from me’ (*R&J*, 1.1.122-28).

Looney (1920, 164) noted this parallel with a quotation of these lines in *Romeo and Juliet* that seemed to blend later versions of the play with its first (so-called “bad”) quarto (1597) (the second quarto appeared in 1599, followed by later quarto versions and the 1623 First Folio). The quotation above (as with Shakespearean quotations generally in this study) is a standard modern one based on the later versions. For present purposes, however, consider the strikingly closer parallel between de Vere’s early lyric and the equivalent lines *in the first quarto* (Figure 4). (See http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/Rom_Q1/complete, lines 127-30.)

Figure 4: Comparison of No. 2 with *Romeo and Juliet* (Q1)

De Vere Poem No. 2, lines 16-18	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Q1)
That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree / To entertain my thoughts, and there my hap to moan / That never am less idle, lo, than when I am alone.	<i>Benvolio</i> : I drew towards him, but he was ware of me, / And drew into the thicket of the wood: / I noting his affections by mine own, / <i>That most are busied when th’are most alone</i>

Additional parallels to No. 2:

(2) **careful thoughts**

As noted above, the word **careful** is used idiomatically here to mean “**full** of **cares** or worries,” not “cautious.” So also in line 16 (**careful culver**), No. 10.15 (**careful corse**), and in de Vere’s letter of October 31, 1572, to his father-in-law William Cecil (Lord Burghley) (Fowler 107): “Your last letters ... after so many storms passed of your heavy grace towards me, lightened and disburdened my **careful** mind.”

Likewise in Shakespeare: ‘By Him that raised me to this *careful* height’ (*Rich. III*, 1.3.84); ‘The feast is ready, which the *careful* Titus hath ordained to an honourable end’ (*Titus*, 5.3.21-22). **Careful** means not that Titus prepared the feast “with **care**” (*i.e.*, cautiously or with attention to detail), but rather while “**full** of **cares**.”

(5-6) **And he that beats the bush, the wished bird not gets, But such I see as sitteth still, and holds the fowling nets**

See parallels to No. 1 (lines 25-26) (**For he that beats the bush the bird not gets, But who sits still, and holdeth fast the nets**).

(8) **to whose most pain least pleasure doth befall**

‘Having no other *pleasure* of his gain But torment that it cannot cure his *pain*’ (*Lucrece*, 860-61); ‘No *pains*, sir. I take *pleasure* in singing, sir’ (*Twelfth*, 2.4.67); ‘since you make your *pleasure* of your *pains*’ (*Twelfth*, 3.3.2).

See also No. 8.18 (**What thing did please, and what did pain?**) and No. 13.14 (**a pleasure mixed with pain**).

(11) **So I the pleasant grape have pulled from the vine**

‘For one *sweet grape* who will the *vine* destroy?’ (*Lucrece*, 215).

(13) **wove my web of woe**

‘Now she *unweaves the web* that she hath wrought’ (*Venus*, 991).

(14) **The more I would weed out my cares, the more they seem to grow**

‘To *weed* my vice and let his *grow*’ (*Meas.*, 3.2.70).

No. 3: “Forsaken Man”

- 1 A Crown of Bays shall that man wear
2 That triumphs over me,
3 For Black and Tawny will I wear,
4 Which mourning colours be.
- 5 The more I followed on, the more she fled away,
6 As Daphne did full long ago, Apollo's wishful prey;
7 The more my plaints resound, the less she pities me;
8 The more I sought, the less I found that mine she meant to be.
- 9 Melpomene, alas, with doleful tunes help then,
10 And sing (*bis*), woe worth on me, forsaken man.
11 Then Daphne's Bays shall that man wear that triumphs over me,
12 For Black and Tawny will I wear, which mourning colours be.
- 13 Drown me you trickling tears, you wailful wights of woe;
14 Come help these hands to rent my hairs, my rueful haps to show
15 On whom the scorching flames of love doth feed you see;
16 Ah lalantida, my dear dame hath thus tormented me.
- 17 Wherefore you Muses nine, with doleful tunes help then,
18 And sing (*bis*), woe worth on me, forsaken man.
19 Then Daphne's Bays shall that man wear that triumphs over me,
20 For Black and Tawny will I wear, which mourning colours be.
- 21 An Anchor's life to lead, with nails to scratch my grave,
22 Where earthly Worms on me shall feed, is all the joys I crave,
23 And hide myself from shame, sith that mine eyes do see,
24 Ah lalantida, my dear dame hath thus tormented me.
- 25 And all that present be, with doleful tunes help then,
26 And sing (*bis*), woe worth on me, forsaken man.

Textual sources: Grosart (403-04); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 585-86);
May (#3) (1980, 26-27; 1991, 271-72).

Poem structure: 4 x 6 with terminal couplet.

Looney's title: same as above.

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 147-48); Sobran (236-39);
Brazil & Flues.

Clarifications of the text:

- (1) **Bays** refers to laurel leaves (see also lines 11 & 19).

- (6) **Daphne** is a naiad (water-nymph) in Greek mythology (see also lines 11 & 19). The reference to **long agone** is an archaic or poetic equivalent to **long ago** (*OED* 1: 261). **Apollo** is the Greco-Roman god of the sun, also known as **Phoebus** (as in Nos. 14.31, 17.24, 19.8, and 20.4).
- (9) **Melpomene**, in Greek mythology, is the **Muse** of tragedy (see below on line 17).
- (10, 18, 26) The term **bis** indicates that the preceding passage (as in music) should be repeated (*OED* 2: 220) (thus, **And sing (bis)**, would be read **And sing, [and sing,]**). Apparently, as with several of these early de Vere poems, No. 3 was originally written as lyrics of a song. This would also explain the lamentation **Ah lalantida** (see below on lines 16 & 24).
- (13) The word **wight** (used figuratively here) generally means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).
- (14) To **rent** as used here is an archaic verb-form of **rend**, meaning to tear or rip apart (*OED* 13: 621).
- (16, 24) **Ah lalantida** is a meaningless lamentation (see above on lines 10, 18 & 26). As Looney suggested, the first and third syllables of **lalantida** should be stressed (**Ah làlantida**) to maintain the apparent intended rhythm of the line.
- (17) The **nine Muses**, in Greek mythology, are the inspirational goddesses of poets and other writers, artists, and scholars (see above on line 9).
- (23) The archaic word **sith** means “since” (*OED* 15: 563-64).

Strongest parallels to No. 3:

- (5, 7-8) *The more I followed on, the more she fled away*
...
 The more my plaints resound, the less she pities me;
 The more I sought, the less I found that mine she meant to be

‘[Hermia:] *The more I hate, the more he follows me.* [Helena:] *The more I love, the more he hateth me*’ (*Dream*, 1.1.198-99); ‘[Demetrius:] Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more!’ [Helena:] *You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant! ... And even for that do I love you the more*’ (*Dream*, 2.1.194-95, 202); ‘*I followed fast, but faster he did fly*’ (*Dream*, 3.2.416).

See additional parallels below to lines 7-8. Contrasting (e)motions produce paradoxical results, a favorite motif of Shakespeare.

- (21-22) **to scratch my grave, Where earthly Worms on me shall feed, is all the joy I crave**

Compare the dying Mercutio: ‘a *scratch*, a *scratch* ... Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a *grave man* ... They have made *worms’ meat of me*’ (*R&J*, 3.1.91, 95-96, 105).

Shakespeare further elaborates the thought in *Hamlet*: ‘Not where he *eats*, but where ‘a is eaten. A certain convocation of politic *worms* are e’en at him. Your *worm* is your only emperor for *diet*. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and *we fat ourselves for maggots*. ... A man may fish with the *worm* that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm’ (*Ham.*, 4.3.19-23, 27-28).

See also: ‘thus chides she *Death—Grim-grinning ghost, earth’s worm*’ (*Venus*, 932-33); ‘The *mortal worm* might make the *sleep eternal*’ (*2 Hen. VI*, 3.2.263); ‘Let’s talk of *graves*, of *worms*, and *epitaphs*’ (*Rich. II*, 3.2.145); ‘The *worm* of conscience still *begnaw thy soul*!’ (*Rich. III*, 1.3.221); ‘[Percy:] And *food for—* [Dies.] For *worms*, brave Percy’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 5.4.85-86); ‘Thou *worms’ meat*’ (*As You*, 3.2.62); ‘For thou dost fear the *soft and tender fork Of a poor worm*’ (*Meas.*, 3.1.16-17); ‘I wish you all *joy of the worm*’ (*A&C*, 5.2.260).

Additional parallels to No. 3:

- (1) ***Crown of Bays***

‘an olive branch and *laurel crown*’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 4.6.34); ‘*crowns*, *sceptres*, *laurels*’ (*Troil.*, 1.3.107). **As noted above, *bays* are laurel leaves.**

- (6) ***As Daphne did full long ago, Apollo’s wishful prey***

‘*Apollo* flies, and *Daphne* holds the chase’ (*Dream*, 2.1.231); ‘Tell me, *Apollo*, for thy *Daphne’s* love’ (*Troil.*, 1.1.98); cf. ‘Or *Daphne* roaming through a thorny wood, Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds, And at that sight shall sad *Apollo* weep’ (*Shrew*, ind.2.55-57).

***Apollo* is the Greco-Roman god of the sun, also known as *Phoebus* (as in Nos. 14.31, 17.24, 19.8, and 20.4). *Apollo* is referenced once (here) in these de Vere poems and 29 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 54). There are 23 references to *Phoebus* (including one spelled “Phibbus”) in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 976-77).**

***Daphne* is a naiad (water-nymph) in Greek mythology, referenced three times in these de Vere poems (see also lines 11 and 19). She is also referenced three times (as quoted above) in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 263).**

On the amours of the gods (a common interest of these de Vere poems and Shakespeare), see also No. 6 (lines 7-10, 17-18, and 23-24) and Nos. 8.6 and 14.31-32.

- (7-8) **The more my complaints resound, the less she pities me; The more I sought, the less I found that mine she meant to be**

In a variation on the **more/more** paradox (see parallels above to lines 5 & 7-8), the **more/less** antithesis is another figure common to both samples, e.g.:

'by hoping *more* they have but *less*' (*Lucrece*, 137); 'That moves in him *more* rage and *lesser* pity' (*Lucrece*, 468); 'The *lesser* thing should not the *greater* hide' (*Lucrece*, 663); 'The repetition cannot make it *less*, For *more* it is than I can well express' (*Lucrece*, 1285); 'More than I seem, and *less* than I was born to' (*3 Hen. VI*, 3.1.56); 'Not that I loved Caesar *less*, but that I loved Rome *more*' (*Caes.*, 3.2.22); 'The *more* my prayer, the *lesser* is my grace' (*Dream*, 2.2.89); 'A little *more* than kin, and *less* than kind' (*Ham.*, 1.2.65); 'An eye *more* bright than theirs, *less* false in rolling' (*Sonnets*, 20.5).

Looney noted (1920, 161) "the recurrence of what seems ... a curious appeal for **pity**" in these de Vere poems and the works of Shakespeare. The word **pity** (and its variants) appears more than 300 times in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 980-81). In addition to line 7, see No. 9.36 (**pity me**) and No. 17.8 (**some pity in the rocks**), and compare, e.g.:

'Melt at my tears, and be compassionate; Soft *pity* enters at an iron gate' (*Lucrece*, 593); 'This you should *pity* rather than despise' (*Dream*, 3.2.235); 'May move your hearts to *pity*' (*Rich. III*, 1.3.348); '*Pity*, you ancient stones, those tender babes' (*Rich. III*, 4.1.98); '*Pity me* then' (*Sonnets*, 111.8, 13); 'Thine eyes I love, and they as *pitying me* ... And suit *thy pity* like in every part' (*Sonnets*, 132.1, 12); '*my pity-wanting pain*' (*Sonnets*, 140.4).

- (9, 17, 25) **Melpomene, alas, with doleful tunes help then,**
...
Wherefore you Muses nine, with doleful tunes help then,
...
And all that present be, with doleful tunes help then

'a very *doleful tune*' (*Win.*, 4.4.262); cf. 'Be thou the tenth *muse*' (*Sonnets*, 38.9).

Melpomene, in Greek mythology, is the **Muse** of tragedy. There is no specific reference to her in canonical Shakespeare. The ancient Greek poet Sappho was historically sometimes described as "the tenth **Muse**," but Shakespeare in Sonnet 38 seems instead to refer to the mysterious beloved youth of the Sonnets as such.

(13) ***Drown me you trickling tears***

Both these de Vere poems and Shakespeare place great emphasis on **tears** and **weeping** as a manifestation of feelings. This may signify their fascination with states of human emotion, including weeping as an outward expression of various emotional states. On **trickling tears**, see also No. 9.1. On the broader theme of **tears** and **weeping**, see also Nos. 4.10, 5.12, 6.26, and 17.8-9.

‘floods of *tears* will *drown* my oratory’ (*Titus*, 5.3.90); ‘*drowned* their enmity in my true *tears*’ (*Titus*, 5.3.107); ‘Lest with my sighs or *tears* I blast or *drown* King Edward’s fruit’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 4.4.23-24); ‘Weep not, sweet queen; for *trickling tears* are vain’ (1 *Hen. IV*, 2.4.391); ‘*drown* me in thy sister’s flood of *tears*’ (*Errors*, 3.2.46); ‘*drown* our gains in *tears*’ (*All’s Well*, 4.3.68); ‘*tears* shall *drown* the wind’ (*Mac.*, 1.7.25); ‘*drown* the stage with *tears*’ (*Ham.*, 2.2.562); ‘burns Worse than *tears drown*’ (*Win.*, 2.1.112); cf. ‘My heart is *drowned* with grief, Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 3.1.198); ‘Then can I *drown* an eye unused to flow’ (*Sonnets*, 30.5).

(14) ***help these hands to rent [i.e., rend or tear] my hairs***

‘Let him have time to *tear* his curled *hair*’ (*Lucrece*, 981); ‘*These hands shall tear* her’ (*Much*, 4.1.191); ‘Is it not as this mouth should *tear* this *hand* For lifting food to ’t?’ (*Lear*, 3.4.15); cf. ‘Whose breath indeed *these hands* have newly stopped’ (*Oth.*, 5.2.202).

(15) ***On whom the scorching flames of love doth feed***

‘whom *flaming war* doth *scorch*’ (*Kins.*, 1.1.91); ‘*feed’st* thy *light’s flame*’ (*Sonnets*, 1.6); ‘to *feed* for aye her lamp and *flames of love*’ (*Troil.*, 3.2.160).

(21) ***An Anchor’s life to lead, with nails to scratch my grave***

‘An *anchor’s* cheer in prison be my scope!’ (*Ham.*, 3.2.219).

No. 4: “The Loss of My Good Name”

- 1 Framed in the front of forlorn hope, past all recovery,
2 I stayless stand t’abide the shock of shame and infamy.
3 My life, through lingering long, is lodged in lair of loathsome ways,
4 My death delayed to keep from life the harm of hapless days.
5 My sprites, my heart, my wit and force in deep distress are drowned;
6 The only loss of my good name is of these griefs the ground.
- 7 And since my mind, my wit, my head, my voice and tongue are weak
8 To utter, move, devise, conceive, sound forth, declare and speak
9 Such piercing complaints as answer might, or would, my woeful case,
10 Help crave I must, and crave I will, with tears upon my face
11 Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air, be found
12 To wail with me this loss of mine, as of these griefs the ground.
- 13 Help gods, help saints, help sprites and powers that in the heaven do dwell,
14 Help ye that are to wail, ay wont, ye howling hounds of hell,
15 Help man, help beasts, help birds and worms that on the earth doth toil,
16 Help fish, help fowl that flocks and feeds upon the salt sea soil,
17 Help echo that in air doth flee, shrill voices to resound
18 To wail this loss of my good name, as of these griefs the ground.

Textual sources: Grosart (401-02); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 580-81);
May (#4) (1980, 27-28; 1991, 272-73).

Poem structure: 6 x 3.

Looney’s title: “Loss of Good Name.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 157-60); Sobran (238-39);
Brazil & Flues; Prechter (2012).

Clarifications of the text:

- (5, 13) The word **sprites**, in the context of line 5, is an archaic usage (meaning “spirits”) that may confuse modern readers (*OED* 16: 361). The archaic meaning survives to some extent in modern usage (e.g., **sprite**ly = “spirited”). In line 13, **sprites** is used in a somewhat different though related sense (more readily comprehensible today), referring to elves or “spirit” creatures.
- (5, 7) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).

We urge readers to consult Appendix A (p. 121) for further discussion of the striking evidence provided by this very early poem (possibly the earliest work included here), which de Vere probably wrote when he was only 13.

We wish to emphasize that this presentation of the parallels to No. 4 relies especially heavily on Robert Prechter’s excellent 2012 article.

Strongest parallels to No. 4:

(3) *My life, through lingering long, is lodged in lair of loathsome ways*

Word choice, theme, and alliteration all link the following:

'life, Which false hope lingers in extremity' (*Rich. II*, 2.2.71-72); *'by the minute feed on life and, ling'ring, By inches waste you'* (*Cym.*, 5.5.51-52); *'lean-faced Envy in her loathsome cave' (i.e., lair)* (*2 Hen.*, VI, 3.2.315); *'This loathsome sequestration have I had ... detained me all my flow'ring youth Within a loathsome dungeon, there to pine'* (*1 Hen.*, VI, 2.5.25, 57); *'O, let him keep his loathsome cabin still'* (*Venus*, 637).

(6, 18) *loss of my good name*

The phrase **good name** occurs at least twelve times in the Shakespeare canon, including three repetitions of the exact phrase **my good name**. Shakespeare may fairly be described as obsessed with the theme of **good name** and **loss of** same (see Looney 1920, 157-60; Spevack 866-67).

Perhaps best known is Iago's rumination on **loss of good name**:

'Good name in man and woman ... Is the immediate jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse steals trash ... But he that filches from me my good name Robs me of that which not enriches him And makes me poor indeed' (*Oth.*, 3.3.155-61).

See also: *'Let my good name ... be kept unspotted'* (*Lucrece*, 820-21); *'an excellent good name'* (*Much*, 3.1.98); *'a good name'* (*Much*, 3.3.14); *'your great deservings and good name'* (*1 Hen. IV*, 4.3.35); *'well bred and of good name'* (*2 Hen. IV*, 1.1.26); *'in good name and fame'* (*2 Hen. IV*, 2.4.75); *'keep that good name'* (*Hen. V*, 3.7.102); *'thy good name'* (*Timon*, 5.1.160); *'[Cloten:] Sell me your good report. [Lady:] How? My good name?'* (*Cym.*, 2.3.83-84); *'Some part of a good name'* (*Kins.*, 5.3.27).

Looney noted in particular (1920, 158) the expectation or desire expressed in *Shake-speare's Sonnets* that the poet's **name**, due to some mysterious disgrace, "should be buried with his body" and would remain unknown to posterity—a point, as Looney noted, "quite inconsistent with either the Stratfordian or the Baconian theory of authorship" but strongly consistent with the Oxfordian theory.

Looney cited Sonnets 71, 72, 81, 110, 111, 112, and 121, and quoted at length from Sonnet 29:

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate
(*Sonnets*, 29.1-4)

See also, e.g.: ‘the shame, Which like a canker in the fragrant Rose, Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name?’ (*Sonnets*, 95.1-3); ‘my name receives a brand’ (*Sonnets*, 111.5).

In addition to all of the above, see, e.g.:

‘dishonor not her honorable name’ (*1 Hen. VI*, 4.5.14); ‘hath dishonored Gloucester’s honest name’ (*2 Hen. VI*, 2.1.193); ‘So shall my name with slander’s tongue be wounded’ (*2 Hen. VI*, 3.2.68); ‘Never yet did base dishonor blur our name’ (*2 Hen. VI*, 4.1.39); ‘wrong the reputation of your name’ (*LLL*, 2.1.154); ‘who can blot that name ... ?’ (*Much*, 4.1.80); ‘my maiden’s name Seared otherwise’ (*All’s Well*, 2.1.170-73); ‘She robs thee of thy name’ (*As You*, 1.3.76); ‘my unsoiled name’ (*Meas.*, 2.4.155); ‘my land[,] Legitimation, name, and all is gone’ (*John*, 1.1.247-48); ‘but my fair name, Despite of death that lives upon my grave, To dark dishonor’s use thou shalt not have’ (*Rich. II*, 1.1.167-69); ‘thou dost seek to kill my name’ (*Rich. II*, 2.1.86); ‘his great name profaned’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 3.2.64); ‘I love The name of honor more than I fear death’ (*Caes.*, 1.2.88-89); ‘To keep my name ungored’ (*Ham.*, 5.2.239); ‘O God, Horatio, what a wounded name, Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!’ (*Ham.*, 5.2.333-34).

(7-8, 10-11) ... my mind, my wit, my head, my voice and tongue are weak
To utter, move, devise, conceive, sound forth, declare and speak
...
Help crave I must ...
Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air, be found

Compare the use of two verbs above (though the samples use **move** in different senses) in a similar rapid-fire list of verbs: ‘they ... do muster true gait, eat, **speake**, and **move** under the influence of the most received star; and though the devil lead the measure [*i.e.*, the dance], such are to be followed’ (*All’s Well*, 2.1.52-56). Both samples involve the one who acts seeking **help** from, or acting under the influence of, both **heavenly** and **hellish** forces. See also the parallels noted to lines 10-11 & 13-15, and to line 11 specifically.

Later, in the same scene of *All’s Well That Ends Well*, **weak/speake** is echoed by **speake/weak**: ‘Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth *speake* His powerful sound within an organ *weak*’ (*All’s Well*, 2.1.175-76). It would be unremarkable if each sample merely used the same two common words to create a rhyme, but both also present the same image of a **weak** vessel with a powerful message **to declare and speak**.

And there’s more: The latter Shakespearean lines are spoken by the King in response to Helena wagering—yes—the **loss of** (her) **good name** (see parallels to lines 6 & 18; see also line 2, **shame and infamy**), if she proves unable to cure the King’s malady.

‘[King:] What dar’st thou venture?’ [Helena:] Tax of [*i.e.*, charge me with] impudence, A strumpet’s boldness, a divulged *shame* Traduced by odious ballads; *my maiden’s name Seared otherwise*’ (*All’s Well*, 2.1.170-73).

(10-11, 13-15) *Help crave I must ...
Of all that may in heaven or hell, in earth or air, be found
...
Help gods, help saints, help sprites and powers that in the
heaven do dwell,
Help ye that are to wail, ay wont, ye howling hounds of hell,
Help man, help beasts, help birds and worms that on the
earth doth toil*

Echoing the young de Vere, Shakespeare's Lucrece, Joan of Arc in *Henry VI, Part 1*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, and Queen Margaret in *Richard III*, all call upon various supernatural forces and entities for **help**:

'She conjures him by *high almighty Jove* ... By *heaven* and *earth*, and *all the power* of both ... To *all the host of heaven* I complain me' (*Lucrece*, 568, 572, 598).

'Now *help*, *ye* charming *spells and periapts* [i.e., amulets, objects with supernatural *powers*]; And *ye* choice *spirits* that *admonish* me' (*1 Hen. VI*, 5.3.2-3).

'*Ye elves* [i.e., *sprites* or *spirits*] of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves, And *ye that* on the sands with printless foot Do chase the ebbing Neptune ... *you demi-puppets* [i.e., *elves* or *sprites* or *spirits*] ... by *whose aid* ... I have bedimmed The noontide sun, called forth mutinous winds [etc.]' (*Tem.*, 5.1.33-36, 40-42).

'A *hellhound* that doth hunt us all to death ... *Earth* gapes, *hell* burns, *fiends* roar, *saints* pray, To have him suddenly conveyed from hence. Cancel his bond of life, *dear God*, *I pray*' (*Rich. III*, 4.4.48, 75-77).

Compare, in the last quotation above, the tersely rhythmic two-syllable clauses in de Vere's lines 13-15 with six similar clauses in the second part of that quotation—four of which (as indicated) use de Vere's exact words.

Expanding on something Prechter very astutely noticed (150), we observe that these four short Shakespearean passages quoted above—to convey the theme of desperately invoking supernatural **help**—use *15 words a total of 20 times* that are identical or interchangeable with *12 words used 22 times* by the teenage de Vere *in just the five lines quoted above, to convey the very same theme*:

1. **help** (8) / [1] *help* (1) (including parallel of **help ye** / *help ye*, but not counting parallels of crying **help** with seeking *aid* and *pray[ing]*, nor that **plaints** appears in line 9, nor that **help** appears thrice more in lines 16-17, all to express the same theme).
2. **heaven** (2) / [2] *heaven* (2) (note that the full parallels to **heaven** are strikingly close: **all that may in heaven or ... earth ... be found** / **powers that in the heaven do dwell** / *heaven and earth, and all the power of both* / *all the host of heaven*).

3. **hounds of hell** (1) / [3] *hellhound* (1), [4] *fiends* (1) / [5] *spirits* (1).
4. **hell** (1) (not counting **hounds of hell**) / [6] *hell* (1) (not counting *hellhound*).
5. **earth** (2) / [7] *earth* (2).
6. **gods** (1) / [8] *God* (1) / [9] *Jove* (1).
7. **saints** (1) / [10] *saints* (1).
8. **sprites** (1) / [11] *elves* (1) / [12] *demi-puppets* (1) / (and again) *spirits*.
9. **powers** (1) / [13] *power* (1).
10. **wail** (1) / [14] *roar* (1).
11. **howling** (1) / (and again) *roar*.
12. **ye** (2) / [15] *ye* (4) (including parallel of **ye that** / *ye that*, but not counting Shakespearean use of the common pronoun “you”).

On **wailing** and **howling**, by the way, see: ‘my father *wailing*, my sister crying, our maid *howling*’ (*Two Gent.*, 2.3.6-7).

While the modern word “you” was already becoming very common in Shakespeare’s time, used well over 14,000 times in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 1566), the archaic **ye** (*OED* 20: 707-08), already starting to go out of fashion during the time Shakespeare wrote, was used far less often—just 409 times in the canon, including all 63 instances of the contraction **y’** on the assumption **ye** was meant—i.e., less than 0.05% (less than 1 in 2,000) of all 880,000-plus words in the canon (Spevack v, 1555-56).

By way of comparison, here are the total counts in canonical Shakespeare for the other parallel words:

help (339), **heaven(s)** (855), **hell** (171), **hound(s)** (42), **hellhound(s)** (3), **fiend(s)** (82), **earth** (332), **god(s)** (1,325), **Jove(s)** (102), **saint(s)** (131), **sprite(s)** (18), **spirit(s)** (396), **elf(ves)** (10), **demi-puppet(s)** (1) (“puppet(s)” alone appears another 10 times), **power(s)** (380), **wail(ed/ing/s)** (39), **howl(ed/ing/s)** (36), **roar(ed/ing/s)** (77) (Spevack 284, 339-40, 346-47, 410, 488-92, 564-66, 570-72, 604, 614, 651-52, 998-99, 1024, 1066, 1079-80, 1194-96, 1198, 1437).

Thus, the concentrated conjunction of all these words in just five lines of de Vere’s poetry and four short Shakespearean scenes—*all five samples involving the very same motif of seeking supernatural assistance*—cannot very plausibly be dismissed as an artifact of common usage. Most of these words are not extremely rare in Shakespeare (though some are, as indicated above), but none of them are *that* commonly used—certainly not

in such striking conjunction, matching de Vere's parallel concentrated usage.

Shakespeare also refers specifically elsewhere to **hounds of hell**:

'A pair of cursed *hell-hounds* and their dam' (*Titus*, 5.2.144); 'Turn, *hellhound*, turn!' (*Mac.*, 5.8.3).

(12, 18) **To wail with me this loss of mine ... To wail this loss of my good name**

'Wailing our losses' (3 *Hen.* VI, 2.3.26); 'Wise men ne'er sit and *wail their loss*' (3 *Hen.* VI, 5.4.1); cf. 'That she hath thee is *of my wailing* chief, A *loss* in love that touches *me* more dearly' (*Sonnets*, 42.3).

Again we see in each sample, in strikingly similar words, the common interest in extreme states of emotion. Does the second parallel to *Henry VI, Part 3*, suggest perhaps some wisdom that with age had come to the poet?

(16) **fowl that flocks and feeds upon the salt sea soil**

'salt-sea shark' (*Mac.*, 4.1.24).

Sobran observed this parallel, and Prechter added the observation (154) that the compound adjective **salt sea** appears to be very rare. See Appendix A, p. 121, for further discussion of why this is a surprisingly strong parallel.

See also: 'Drown the lamenting fool [thy heart] in *sea-salt* tears' (*Titus*, 3.2.20); 'As many fresh streams meet in one *salt sea*' (*Hen.* V, 1.2.210); 'the eastern gate, all fiery red, Opening on Neptune ... Turns into yellow gold *his salt green streams*' (*Dream*, 3.2.391-93); cf. 'With tears *as salt as sea*' (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.2.96); 'For still thy eyes, which I may call the *sea*, Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is, Sailing in this *salt flood*' (*R&J*, 3.5.133-35); 'Neptune's *salt wash*' (*Ham.*, 3.2.147).

Additional parallels to No. 4:

(1) **forlorn hope, past all recovery**

'For grief that they are *past recovery*; For were there *hope* to conquer them again' (2 *Hen.* VI, 1.1.114-15).

(4) **death delayed to keep from life the harm of hapless days**

'His *days* may finish ere that *hapless time*' (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.1.200); 'In the *delaying death*' (*Meas.*, 4.2.164).

(5) **in deep distress are drowned**

Ophelia, drowning, is 'incapable of her own *distress*' (*Ham.*, 4.7.178); cf. '*deeply distressed*' (*Venus*, 814).

(6, 12, 18) **of these griefs the ground**

‘any *ground* To build a *grief* on’ (2 *Hen. IV*, 4.1.109-10).

In addition to the alliterative word parallel, note the similar usage of the less-common singular **ground**, in atypical relation to emotions as opposed to cognitive or rational matters (contrast, e.g., “**grounds** for a claim”).

See also: ‘We see the *ground* whereon these *woes* do lie, But the true *ground* of all these piteous *woes*’ (R&J, 5.3.179-80); ‘*grounds* and motives of her *woe*’ (Lover’s *Comp.*, 63).

(9) **Such piercing complaints as answer might, or would, my woeful case**

‘Hearing how our *plaints* and prayers do *pierce*’ (Rich. II 5.3.127); ‘the traitor Stands in worse *case of woe*’ (Cym., 3.4.86-87).

(10) **Help crave I must, and crave I will**

‘Hence *will I* to my ghostly father’s cell, His *help* to *crave*’ (R&J, 2.2.189-90).

(10) **with tears upon my face**

‘Cooling his hot *face* in the chastest *tears*’ (Lucrece, 682); ‘Poor soul, thy *face* is much abused *with tears*’ (R&J, 4.1.29).

On the theme of **tears** and **weeping**, see also Nos. 3.13, 5.12, 6.26, 9.1, and 17.8-9.

(11) **in heaven or hell, in earth or air**

Yet more parallels to this line in particular (see also those to lines 7-8 & 10-11, and to lines 10-11 & 13-15):

‘Whether *in sea or fire, in earth or air*, Th’extravagant and erring spirit hies To his confine’ (Ham., 1.1.153); ‘Bring with thee *airs* from *heaven* or blasts from *hell*’ (Ham., 1.4.41); ‘Am I *in earth, in heaven, or in hell?*’ (Errors, 2.2.211); ‘*T’ th’ air or th’ earth?*’ (Tem., 1.2.388).

(17) **echo that in air doth flee, shrill voices to resound**

‘*shrill echoes* from the hollow earth’ (Shrew, ind.2.46); ‘What *shrill-voiced* suppliant makes this eager cry?’ (Rich. II, 5.3.75); cf. ‘thy small pipe Is as the maiden’s organ, shrill and sound’ (Twelfth, 1.4.31-32).

No. 5: “I Am Not as I Seem to Be”

1 I am not as I seem to be,
2 Nor when I smile I am not glad,
3 A thrall although you count me free
4 I, most in mirth, most pensive-sad;
5 I smile to shade my bitter spite,
6 As Hannibal, that saw in sight
7 His country soil, with Carthage town,
8 By Roman force defaced down.

9 And Caesar, that presented was
10 With noble Pompey's princely head,
11 As 'twere some judge to rule the case,
12 A flood of tears he seemed to shed;
13 Although indeed it sprung of joy,
14 Yet others thought it was annoy;
15 Thus contraries be used, I find,
16 Of wise to cloak the covert mind.

17 I Hannibal, that smiles for grief,
18 And let you Caesar's tears suffice,
19 The one that laughs at his mischief,
20 The other all for joy that cries;
21 I smile to see me scorned so,
22 You weep for joy to see me woe,
23 And I a heart by love slain dead
24 Presents, in place of Pompey's head.

25 O cruel hap and hard estate
26 That forceth me to love my foe,
27 Accursed by so foul a fate
28 My choice for to prefix it so,
29 So long to fight with secret sore,
30 And find no secret salve therefor;
31 Some purge their pain by plaint, I find,
32 But I in vain do breathe my wind.

Textual sources: Grosart (395-96); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 587-88);
May (#5) (1980, 28-29; 1991, 273-74).

Poem structure: 8 x 4.

Looney's title: same as above.

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 165, 167-70); Sobran (240-41);
Brazil & Flues; Goldstein (2016, 55-58).

Clarifications of the text:

(10, 24) **Pompey** refers to the ancient Roman consul (106–48 BCE).

- (30) The spelling of **therefor** is modernized from **therefore**, consistently with our general approach to spelling (see [Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels](#)), and with the meaning here, which is not “**therefore**” as in modern usage (“**for** that reason” or “it follows that”), but rather, simply “**for** (something)” (i.e., the **salve** is **for** the **sore**) (*OED* 17: 909).

Strongest parallels to No. 5:

- (1) *I am not as I seem to be*

‘I am not what I am’ (*Twelfth*, 3.1.140, and *Oth.*, 1.1.65); *‘I am not I, if there be such’* (*R&J*, 3.2.50); cf. *‘Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I’* (*Rich. III*, 5.3.199).

De Vere and Shakespeare very distinctively use the Biblical phrase “**I am** that **I am**” (Exodus 3.14) (meaning “**I am** that [which] **I am**”).

See also de Vere’s defiant letter of October 30, 1584, to his father-in-law, William Cecil (Lord Burghley) (Fowler 321): “... I mean not to be your ward nor your child, I serve Her Majesty, and **I am** that **I am**”

See also, with the same meaning: *‘I am that I am’* (*Sonnets*, 121.9). Compare, indeed, the entire theme of Sonnet 121, best known by its memorable first line: ‘’Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed.’

This entire de Vere poem (see also, e.g., line 2, **when I smile I am not glad**, and line 16, **to cloak the covert mind**), and numerous Shakespearean passages (those quoted above being merely a few examples), explore the ancient philosophical dichotomy between appearance and being.

This *topos* of *dissimulatio*—the purposeful obscuring of an internal mental state, used by various characters in the history plays for the sake of Machiavellian advantage (often imitated from Seneca)—is immensely important to Shakespearean studies and strongly imprinted on both bodies of work compared here. On this leitmotif of dissimulation, see also Nos. 6.4, 9.2, 10.9-10, 12.16, and 18.40.

- (4) *I, most in mirth, most pensive-sad*

‘I show more mirth than I am mistress of’ (*As You*, 1.2.3); *‘With mirth* in funeral, and with *dirge* in marriage’ (*Ham.*, 1.2.12); *‘So mingled as if mirth* did make him *sad*’ (*Kins.*, 5.3.52); *‘But sorrow* that is couched in *seeming gladness* is like that *mirth* fate turns to *sudden sadness*’ (*Troil.*, 1.1.40); *‘sad* tales doth tell To pencilled *pensiveness*’ (*Lucrece*, 1496).

Here we start to clearly see, beyond dissimulation, a distinct theme of antithetical states of emotion, discussed further in connection with lines 17-22 and No. 12.5-6. Looney commented perceptively on the vivid duality and contrast reflected in line 4 (among others in these poems), between light humor and stark grief (1920, 168, and see generally 167-70). As he

noted, they foreshadow Shakespeare's "striking combination" and "startling contrast" between "high comedy and profound tragedy" (167).

(4, 12, 14, 17, 18) *mirth, most pensive-sad ... flood of tears ... annoy ... grief ... tears suffice*

Compare two passages from *Lucrece*:

For *mirth* doth search the bottom of *annoy*;
Sad souls are slain in *merry* company;
Grief best is pleased with *grief's* society.
True *sorrow* then in feelingly *sufficed*
When with like semblance it is sympathized.
(1109-13)

Dear lord, thy *sorrow* to my *sorrow* lendeth
Another power; no *flood* by raining slaketh.
My *woe* too sensible thy passion maketh,
More *feeling-painful*. Let it then *suffice*
To drown one *woe*, one pair of *weeping eyes*.
(1676-80)

(17-22) *I Hannibal, that smiles for grief,
And let you Caesar's tears suffice,
The one that laughs at his mischief,
The other all for joy that cries;
I smile to see me scorned so,
You weep for joy to see me woe*

'Then they for sudden *joy* did *weep*, And I for *sorrow* sung, That *such a king* should play bo-peep, And go the fools among' (*Lear*, 1.4.175); '*weeping joys*' (2 *Hen. VI*, 1.1.34); 'how much better is it to *weep at joy than to joy at weeping*!' (*Much*, 1.1.28).

The antithetical states of emotion continue the common thread seen in other parallels, and show the same tendency to treat such opposing emotions as also correlated. See also line 4 (**most in mirth, most pensive-sad**) and No. 12.5-6.

The example above from *King Lear*, in particular, when contrasted with these lines of de Vere, gives a nice snapshot of the developmental patterns of the artist. The **weeping** and **joy** motifs are handled with considerably greater naturalism in the mature work—and yet the connectedness in diction and thought of one with the other is quite evident on careful inspection.

Additional parallels to No. 5:

(2) **when I smile I am not glad**

I am not merry; but I do beguile The thing I am by seeming otherwise (*Oth.*, 2.1.125).

(6-8) **As Hannibal, that saw in sight
His country soil, with Carthage town,
By Roman force defaced down**

‘And see the cities and the towns defaced’ (1 *Hen.* VI, 3.3.45).

De Vere mentions **Hannibal** twice in this poem (see also line 17). Shakespeare mentions **Hannibal** four times and **Carthage** seven (Spevack 184, 536). The idea of **defacement**, based on the strong presence of this topic in canonical Shakespeare, has been a subject of some commentary by orthodox scholars.

See also No. 10.16 (**raze the ground**).

(10) **Pompey’s princely head**

De Vere mentions **Pompey** twice in this poem (see also line 24). Two of Shakespeare’s Roman plays (*Julius Caesar* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*), and three others (*Henry V*; *Henry VI, Part 2*; and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*—act 5 of the latter is largely devoted to a scene in which a character plays **Pompey**), make a total of 65 references to **Pompey**, the Roman consul (not counting 26 references to the unrelated clown character “Pompey” in *Measure for Measure*) (Spevack 992-93).

(12) **A flood of tears he seemed to shed**

‘Return thee therefore with a flood of tears’ (1 *Hen.* VI, 3.3.56); *‘My heart is drowned with grief, Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes’* (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.1.198-99); *‘floods of tears will drown my oratory’* (*Titus*, 5.3.90); *‘drown me in thy sister’s flood of tears!’* (*Errors*, 3.2.46); *‘till the tears that she hath shed for thee Like envious floods o’er-run her lovely face’* (*Shrew*, ind.2.62-63).

On the theme of **tears** and **weeping**, see also lines 17-22, and Nos. 3.13, 4.10, 6.26, 9.1, and 17.8-9.

(16) **to cloak the covert mind**

‘To cloak offenses with a cunning brow’ (*Lucrece*, 749).

On the leitmotif of dissimulation, see also line 1, and Nos. 6.4, 9.2, 10.9-10, 12.16, and (again using the word **cloak**) 18.40.

(23) ***a heart by love slain dead***

'in love was slain' (*Phoenix*, 28); *'Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain'* (*Sonnets*, 22.13).

(25) ***O cruel hap and hard estate***

'Our hap is loss, our hope but sad despair' (3 *Hen. VI*, 2.3.9); *'twere hard luck, being in so preposterous estate as we are'* (*Win.*, 5.2.147-48).

(26) ***That forceth me to love my foe***

'My only love, sprung from my only hate! ... Prodigious birth of love it is to me That I must love a loathed enemy!' (*R&J*, 1.5.138, 140-41).

(29-30) ***So long to fight with secret sore, And find no secret salve therefor***

'A salve for any sore that may betide' (3 *Hen. VI*, 4.6.88).

See also parallels to No. 9.22 (***She is my salve, she is my wounded sore***) and No. 18.9 (***No wily wit to salve a sore***). The **salve ... sore** motif (like some others) was echoed by some other Elizabethan poets and these parallels may not be that telling in and of themselves (see May 2004, 229), but as with many of the additional parallels noted, much of their significance is in the overall cumulative context.

(32) ***But I in vain do breathe my wind***

'You breathe in vain' (*Timon*, 3.5.59); cf. *'no wind of blame shall breathe'* (*Ham.*, 4.7.65).

We can see how the more mature thought has gained clarity and energy through compression, but the idiom is preserved. The locution **in vain**, which occurs three times in these de Vere poems (see also Nos. 9.26 and 18b.11), appears around 40 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 1421).

No. 6: “If Care or Skill Could Conquer Vain Desire”

- 1 If care or skill could conquer vain desire,
2 Or reason's reins my strong affection stay,
3 Then should my sighs to quiet breast retire,
4 And shun such signs as secret thoughts bewray;
5 Uncomely love, which now lurks in my breast,
6 Should cease my grief, through wisdom's power oppressed.
- 7 But who can leave to look on Venus' face,
8 Or yieldeth not to Juno's high estate?
9 What wit so wise as gives not Pallas place?
10 These virtues rare each God did yield a mate,
11 Save her alone who yet on earth doth reign,
12 Whose beauty's string no Gods can well distraign.
- 13 What worldly wight can hope for heavenly hire
14 When only sighs must make his secret moan?
15 A silent suit doth seld to Grace aspire;
16 My hapless hap doth roll the restless stone;
17 Yet Phoebe fair disdained the heavens above,
18 To joy on earth her poor Endymion's love.
- 19 Rare is reward where none can justly crave,
20 For chance is choice where reason makes no claim;
21 Yet luck sometimes despairing souls doth save:
22 A happy star made Gyges joy attain;
23 A slavish smith of rude and rascal race
24 Found means in time to gain a Goddess' grace.
- 25 Then lofty Love thy sacred sails advance;
26 My seething seas shall flow with streams of tears.
27 Amidst disdain drive forth my doleful chance;
28 A valiant mind no deadly danger fears.
29 Who loves aloft and sets his heart on high,
30 Deserves no pain, though he do pine and die.

Textual sources: Grosart (399-400); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 592-93);
May (#6) (1980, 29-30; 1991, 274-75).

Poem structure: 6 x 5.

Looney's title: “Reason and Affection.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Ogburn (588); Sobran (242-43); Brazil & Flues.

Clarifications of the text:

- (7) **Venus** is the Roman goddess of love (Aphrodite to the Greeks), married to Vulcan (see below on lines 23-24).

- (8) **Juno** refers to the Roman goddess, wife of Jupiter and equivalent to the Greek queen of the gods, Hera (wife of Zeus).
- (9) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34). **Pallas** is another name for the Greek goddess of wisdom and warfare, Athena (known to the Romans by the Latin name Minerva).
- (13) A **wight** means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).
- (17) **Phoebe** is a Greek goddess associated with the moon.
- (18) **Endymion**, in Greek mythology, is a handsome young shepherd or astronomer.
- (22) **Gyges**, in Greek mythology, is a shepherd who seizes the throne of Lydia and is said to possess a magic ring rendering him invisible.
- (23-24) The “slavish smith” refers to Vulcan, Roman god of metallurgy and crafts, married to **Venus** (see above on line 7).

Strongest parallels to No. 6:

- (16) **My hapless hap doth roll the restless stone**

‘giddy Fortune’s furious fickle wheel—That goddess blind, That stands upon *the rolling restless stone*’ (*Hen.* V, 3.6.26-28); cf. ‘I told ye all, When we first put this dangerous *stone a-rolling*, ’Twould fall upon ourselves’ (*Hen.* VIII, 5.3.103-05).

- (26) **My seething seas shall flow with streams of tears**

Perhaps most telling is this parallel to *Romeo & Juliet*:

‘For still thy eyes, which I may call *the sea*, Do ebb and *flow with tears*; the bark thy body is, Sailing in this *salt flood*’ (*R&J*, 3.5.133-35).

See also No. 4.16 and Appendix A (discussing **salt-sea** and **sea-salt**), and Nos. 12.19 and 18.33 (associating motions of the **sea**, or objects on the **sea**, with emotions).

On the general theme of **tears** and **weeping**, see also Nos. 3.13, 4.10, 5.12, 9.1, and 17.8-9.

Compare also the following:

‘mine eyes ... As from a mountain *stream* ... Shall *gush* pure *streams*’ (*Lucrece*, 1076-78); ‘And round about her *tear-distained* eye Blue circles *streamed*’ (*Lucrece*, 1587-88); ‘*My heart is drowned* with grief, *Whose flood begins to flow* within mine eyes’ (2

Hen. VI, 3.1.198-99); ‘Fain would I ... *drain* Upon his face *an ocean of salt tears*’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 3.2.141-43); ‘just against thy heart make thou a hole, That *all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall May run* into that sink, and soaking in, *Drown* the lamenting fool in *sea-salt tears*’ (*Titus*, 3.2.17-20); cf. ‘my eye shall be *the stream*’ (*Merch.*, 3.2.46); ‘Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds, *Weeping* as fast as they *stream* forth thy blood’ (*Caes.*, 3.1.200-01).

In Shakespeare, according to Eric Sams (313), noting several references (including those above in *Henry VI, Part 2*, and *Titus Andronicus*): “**Tears** ... resemble rivers or the **sea** in their drowning capacity Further, both elements are **salt**.”

Aside from the parallels, surely line 26 exhibits some proto-Shakespearean power and beauty. Instead of the more predictably structured metaphor one might expect (e.g., “**my tears flow** like the **seas**”—a model actually followed by two Shakespearean samples above: “mine eyes ... gush pure **streams**” and “drain upon his face an ocean”), the young de Vere deftly inverts his to *first* suggest **seas** of emotion within that are revealed through the external sign of **tears**.

Shakespeare, and originally the young de Vere, may deserve credit for influencing the signature lyric of the extraordinarily popular and durable lute song (“**Flow, My Tears**”), written after 1596 by John Dowland (1563–1626). That lyric actually seems to connect more directly and strongly to this particular line by de Vere than to any of the Shakespearean samples.

Additional parallels to No. 6:

(1) **conquer vain desire**

‘Therefore, brave *conquerors*—for so you are, That *war* against your own affections And the huge army of the world’s *desires*’ (*LLL*, 1.1.8-10).

(2) **reason’s reins my strong affection stay**

‘curb his *heat*, or *rein* his *rash desire*’ (*Lucrece*, 706); ‘for now I give *my sensual race the rein*’ (*Meas.*, 2.4.160); ‘What *rein* can hold *licentious wickedness*’ (*Hen. V*, 3.3.22); ‘he cannot Be *reined* again to *temperance*’ (*Cor.*, 3.3.28).

The image, found often in Shakespeare, is of emotion being **reined** in. The danger posed by emotion is construed in equestrian terms, as if one might relax or tighten the **reins**.

See also: ‘in all *reason*, we must *stay* the time’ (*Dream*, 5.1.248); ‘*Stay* yet; hear *reason*’ (*Lear*, 5.3.82); ‘*Stay*, my lord, And let your *reason* with your *choler* question’ (*Hen. VIII*, 1.1.129-30).

(3) *to quiet breast retire*

'Into the quiet closure of my breast' (*Venus*, 782); cf. *'Truth hath a quiet breast'* (*Rich. II*, 1.3.96).

(4) *secret thoughts*

'Nor shall he smile at thee in secret thought' (*Lucrece*, 1065); *'the history of all her secret thoughts'* (*Rich. II*, 3.5.28).

On the leitmotif of dissimulation, a suggestive common interest seen in both samples, see also No. 5 (*passim*) and Nos. 9.2, 10.9-10, 12.16, and 18.40.

(5) *Uncomely love, which now lurks in my breast*

'tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts' (*Lucrece*, 851).

(6) *my grief, through wisdom's power oppressed*

'To counterfeit oppression of such grief' (*Rich. II*, 1.4.14).

(7, 9) *Venus' face ... Pallas place?*

'The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight [erect] Minerva' (*Cym.*, 5.5.164).

There are 33 references to the Roman goddess **Venus** (Aphrodite to the Greeks) in canonical Shakespeare, along with two to Minerva (one quoted above) and four to the Greek goddess **Pallas** (Spevack 826, 956, 1425). Minerva is the Roman name of **Pallas** (also known to the Greeks as Athena).

Interestingly, there are no canonical Shakespearean references (nor by de Vere in the poems studied here) to Aphrodite or Athena. Thus, both de Vere and canonical Shakespeare seem to prefer to refer to **Venus** (instead of Aphrodite) and to **Pallas** more than Athena or Minerva (the latter name is also not mentioned in these de Vere poems).

Line 9 is the only reference to **Pallas** in these de Vere poems; line 7 and No. 20.11 refer directly to **Venus** (and line 24 indirectly).

Lines 7-10 refer glancingly to the amours of the gods (a common interest of these de Vere poems and Shakespeare), also referenced in lines 17-18 and 23-24, and in Nos. 3.6, 8.6, and 14.31-32.

(9) **What wit so wise as gives not Pallas place?**

As noted above, **wit** refers here to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor. The juxtaposition of **wise** (176 canonical references) and **wit** (268) (Spevack 1521, 1523) is typically Shakespearean (though these Shakespearean samples often use **wit** with a humorous connotation), e.g.:

‘Your *wit* makes *wise* things foolish, *Wise* things seem foolish and rich things but poor (*LLL*, 5.2.95-99); ‘This fellow is *wise* enough to play the fool; And to do that well craves a kind of *wit*’ (*Twelfth*, 3.1.57-58); ‘For though it have help madmen to their *wits*, In me it seems it will make *wise* men mad’ (*Rich. II*, 5.5.62-63).

See also No. 9.16 (**wisest wit**), No. 10.12 (**wit ... will**), and No. 18.9 (**wily wit**).

(13) **What worldly wight can hope for heavenly hire**

‘My vow was *earthly*, thou a *heavenly love*’ (*LLL*, 4.3.64); ‘a *heavenly effect* in an *earthly actor*’ (*All’s Well*, 2.3.23); ‘*heaven’s praise* with such an *earthly tongue*’ (*LLL*, 4.2.118); ‘Between this *heavenly* and this *earthly sun*’ (*Venus*, 198); ‘Such *heavenly* touches ne’er touched *earthly faces*’ (*Sonnets*, 17.8).

The antithesis between **worldly** (“earthly”) and **heavenly** is another pattern found in both samples.

(17-18) **Phoebe fair disdained the heavens above, To joy on earth her poor Endymion’s love**

‘And the moon sleeps with *Endymion*’ (*Merch.*, 5.1.109); cf. ‘A title to *Phoebe*, to *Luna*, to the moon’ (*LLL*, 4.2.37).

Phoebe, a Greek goddess associated with the moon, is referred to three times by Shakespeare (Spevack 977). **Endymion**, as noted above, is a mythological Greek shepherd or astronomer; the only Shakespearean reference to him is quoted above (Spevack 353).

On the amours of the gods (a common interest of these de Vere poems and Shakespeare), see also lines 7-10 and 23-24, and Nos. 3.6, 8.6, and 14.31-32.

(22) **A happy star made Gyges joy obtain**

‘a *happy star* Led us to Rome’ (*Titus*, 4.2.32); cf. ‘my thwarting *stars*’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 4.6.22); ‘no comfortable *star*’ (*Lucrece*, 164); ‘constant *stars*’ (*Sonnets*, 14.1).

Adjectives used to personify **stars** are common in canonical Shakespeare. The word **star** (and related variants and compounds) occurs 147 times in the canon (Spevack 1203-04). Variants from de Vere’s letters include “I know not by what unfortunate **star**” (Fowler 652). **Gyges**, as noted above, is

another mythological Greek shepherd. There is no reference to him in canonical Shakespeare.

- (23-24) *A slavish smith of rude and rascal race Found means in time to gain a Goddess' grace*

The references are to Vulcan, Roman god of metallurgy and crafts, and his wife **Venus** (see line 7). Vulcan is referred to six times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 1436), *e.g.*:

‘as like as *Vulcan and his wife*’ (*Troil.*, 1.3.168).

On the amours of the gods (a common interest of these de Vere poems and Shakespeare), see also lines 7-10 and 17-18, and Nos. 3.6, 8.6, and 14.31-32.

- (29-30) *Who loves aloft and sets his heart on high, Deserves no pain, though he do pine and die*

‘To love, to wealth, to pomp, *I pine and die*’ (*LLL*, 1.1.31).

No 7: “What Wonders Love Hath Wrought”

- 1 My meaning is to work what wonders love hath wrought,
- 2 Wherewith I muse why men of wit have love so dearly bought;
- 3 For love is worse than hate, and eke more harm hath done:
- 4 Record I take of those that rede of Paris, Priam’s son.
- 5 It seemed the God of sleep had mazed so much his wits
- 6 When he refused wit for love, which cometh but by fits;
- 7 But why accuse I him, whom earth hath covered long?
- 8 There be of his posterity alive, I do him wrong.
- 9 Whom I might well condemn to be a cruel judge
- 10 Unto myself, who hath the crime in others that I grudge.

Textual sources: Grosart (410); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 594);
May (#7) (1980, 30; 1991, 275).

Poem structure: 4 x 2 with terminal couplet.

Looney’s title: “Love and Wit.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (244-45).

Clarifications of the text:

- (2, 5-6) The terms **wit** or **wits**, as used here, refer to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).
- (3) The word **eke** as used here is an archaic synonym for “also,” “too,” or “in addition” (*OED* 5: 105).
- (4) The word **rede** is an archaic verb meaning to advise or counsel (*OED* 13: 409). **Paris**, in Greek mythology, is the son of King **Priam** of Troy.
- (5) In modern English, **mazed** has fairly mild connotations of being amazed, dazed, confused, or bewildered, but a meaning it had into the 16th century included more severe mental derangement—to be crazed or delirious (*OED* 9: 507-08). See also No. 10.3 (**My mazed mind in malice so is set**).

None of the parallels to No. 7 (second-shortest of the 20 poems) seem particularly strong, taken individually. But the following seem significant as additional echoes, especially in combination and in the overall context of all the poems.

- (1) **what wonders love hath wrought**

‘Love wrought these miracles’ (*Shrew*, 5.1.124).

The locution **hath wrought** occurs about half a dozen times in Shakespeare (Spevack 1555).

(4) *Paris, Priam's son*

This is a common mythological point of reference throughout the Shakespeare canon, e.g.:

'Had doting *Priam* checked his *son's* desire' (*Lucrece*, 1490); 'As *Priam* was for all his valiant *sons*' (3 *Hen. VI*, 2.5.120); 'sons, Half of the number *that King Priam had*' (*Titus*, 1.1.80); 'all *Priam's sons*' (*Troil.*, 2.2.126); 'You valiant offspring of great *Priamus*' (*Troil.*, 2.2.207); 'a son of *Priam*' (*Troil.*, 3.3.26); 'the youngest son of *Priam*' (*Troil.*, 4.5.96); 'great *Priam's seed*' (*Troil.*, 4.5.121); 'A bastard son of *Priam's*' (*Troil.*, 5.7.15).

(5) *It seemed the God of sleep had mazed so much his wits*

'on your eyelids crown *the god of sleep*, *Charming* your blood with pleasing heaviness' (1 *Hen. IV*, 3.1.214).

An interest in the curative powers of **sleep** (and here, the bewitching powers of this deity) is another motif in Shakespeare's variegated study of psychology. Neither Shakespeare nor this de Vere poem uses the god's proper name, *Hypnos* or *Somnus*.

(6) *love, which cometh but by fits*

'a woman's fitness *comes by fits*' (*Cym.*, 4.1.6).

No. 8: “The Lively Lark Stretched Forth Her Wing”

- 1 The lively lark stretched forth her wing,
2 The messenger of morning bright,
3 And with her cheerful voice did sing
4 The day's approach, discharging night,
5 When that Aurora, blushing red,
6 Descried the guilt of Thetis' bed.
- 7 I went abroad to take the air,
8 And in the meads I met a knight,
9 Clad in carnation colour fair;
10 I did salute this gentle wight,
11 Of him I did his name inquire.
12 He sighed, and said he was desire.
- 13 Desire I did desire to stay,
14 Awhile with him I craved to talk;
15 The courteous knight said me no nay,
16 But hand in hand with me did walk.
17 Then of desire I asked again
18 What thing did please and what did pain?
- 19 He smiled, and thus he answered then,
20 “Desire can have no greater pain
21 “Than for to see another man
22 “That he desireth to obtain;
23 “Nor greater joy can be than this,
24 “Than to enjoy that others miss.”

Textual sources: Grosart (405-06); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 565);
May (#8) (1980, 30-31; 1991, 275-76).

Poem structure: 6 x 4.

Looney's title: “Desire.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 165); Ogburn (586);
Sobran (244-45); Eagan-Donovan.

Clarifications of the text:

- (5-6) **Aurora** refers to the dawning sun. **Thetis** is a mythological Greek sea-nymph.
- (10) A **wight** means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).

- (20-24) May used quotation marks (kept here for clarity), though Looney did not. The evident meaning (lines 21-22) is **to see another man ... obtain ... [t]hat [which] he [the other man] desireth** and (line 24) **to enjoy that [which] others miss**.

None of the parallels to No. 8 seem particularly strong, taken individually. But the following seem significant as additional echoes, especially in combination and in the overall context of all the poems.

- (1-2) ***The lively lark stretched forth her wing, The messenger of morning bright***

'Lo here *the gentle lark*, weary of rest, From his moist cabinet mounts up on high, And *wakes the morning*' (*Venus*, 853); '*the morning lark*' (*Dream*, 4.1.94, and *Shrew*, ind.2.44); '*the lark, the herald of the morn*' (*R&J*, 3.5.6); 'Hark! Hark! *The lark at heaven's gate sings, And Phoebus 'gins arise*' (*Cym.*, 2.3.19-20); '*Like to the Lark at break of day arising, From sullen earth sings hymns at Heaven's gate*' (*Sonnets*, 29.11-12).

Phoebus (referenced in Nos. 14.31, 17.24, 19.8, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo**, Greco-Roman god of the sun. The quotation above from *Cymbeline* is one of 23 references to **Phoebus** (including one spelled "Phibbus") in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 976-77). **Apollo** is referenced once in these de Vere poems (No. 3.6) and 29 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 54).

- (3) ***cheerful voice***

'with one *cheerful voice* welcome my love' (2 *Hen.* VI, 1.1.36); cf. 'This general applause and *cheerful shout*' (*Rich.* III, 3.7.39).

- (4) ***The day's approach***

'*the approach of day*' (*Hen.* V, 4.1.86); cf. '[French Lord 2:] We shall not then have his company tonight? [Lord 1:] Not till after midnight, for he is dieted to *his hour*. [Lord 2:] *That approaches* apace' (*All's Well*, 4.3.26-29); '*The vaporous night approaches*' (*Meas.*, 4.1.57); '*The time approaches*' (*Mac.*, 5.4.16); '*Approach, thou beacon* [the sun] to this under globe' (*Lear*, 2.2.159).

(5-6) **When that Aurora, blushing red, Descried the guilt of Thetis' bed**

'Many a morning hath he there been seen ... as the all-cheering sun Should in the farthest East begin to draw The shady curtains from Aurora's bed' (*R&J*, 1.1.129, 132-34); 'And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger, At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there, Troop home to churchyards' (*Dream*, 3.2.380-82); cf. 'When lo the blushing morrow Lends light to all' (*Lucrece*, 1082); 'King Richard doth himself appear, As doth the blushing discontented sun From out the fiery portal of the east' (*Rich. II*, 3.3.63); 'a blush Modest as morning' (*Troil.*, 1.3.229).

Aurora refers to the dawning sun (referred to twice as such by Shakespeare, as quoted above, Spevack 78). Shakespeare refers six times to the Greek sea-nymph **Thetis** (Spevack 1310). See also No. 14.31-33 (**When Phoebus from the bed Of Thetis doth arise, The morning, blushing red**). **Phoebus** is an epithet for **Apollo**, Greco-Roman god of the sun (see parallels to lines 1-2). See also parallels to line 6 below.

(6) **Thetis' bed**

'Juno's crown, O blessed bond of board and bed!' (*As You*, 5.4.142); 'Hymen's purest bed' (*Timon*, 4.3.383); 'Cytherea, how bravely thou becom'st thy bed!' (*Cym.*, 2.2.15); 'Whom Jove hath marked The honour of your bed' (*Kins.*, 1.1.30); cf. 'And Phoebus gins arise' (*Cym.*, 2.3.20).

See also parallels to lines 5-6 above. The Ovidian conjunction of mythological figures and **bed**-play is a motif these de Vere poems and the works of Shakespeare have in common. The amours of the gods are a conspicuous point of curiosity in both. See also No. 3.6, No. 6 (lines 7-10, 17-18, and 23-24), and No. 14.31-32.

(15) **The courteous knight**

'You are right courteous knights' (*Per.*, 2.3.27).

(18) **What thing did please and what did pain?**

'Having no other pleasure of his gain But torment that it cannot cure his pain' (*Lucrece*, 860-61); 'No pains, sir. I take pleasure in singing, sir' (*Twelfth*, 2.4.67); 'since you make your pleasure of your pains' (*Twelfth*, 3.3.2).

See also No. 2.8 (**to whose most pain least pleasure doth befall**) and No. 13.14 (**a pleasure mixed with pain**).

No. 9: “The Trickling Tears That Fall Along My Cheeks”

- 1 The trickling tears that fall along my cheeks,
2 The secret sighs that show my inward grief,
3 The present pains perforce that love ay seeks,
4 Bid me renew my cares without relief
5 In woeful song, in dole display,
6 My pensive heart for to bewray.
- 7 Bewray thy grief, thou woeful heart, with speed,
8 Resign thy voice to her that caused thy woe;
9 With irksome cries bewail thy late-done deed,
10 For she thou lovest is sure thy mortal foe,
11 And help for thee there is none sure,
12 But still in pain thou must endure.
- 13 The stricken Deer hath help to heal his wound,
14 The haggard hawk with toil is made full tame,
15 The strongest tower the Cannon lays on ground,
16 The wisest wit that ever had the fame
17 Was thrall to Love by Cupid's sleights;
18 Then weigh my case with equal weights.
- 19 She is my joy, she is my care and woe,
20 She is my pain, she is my ease therefor,
21 She is my death, she is my life also,
22 She is my salve, she is my wounded sore;
23 In fine, she hath the hand and knife
24 That may both save and end my life.
- 25 And shall I live on earth to be her thrall?
26 And shall I sue and serve her all in vain?
27 And shall I kiss the steps that she lets fall?
28 And shall I pray the gods to keep the pain
29 From her, that is so cruel still?
30 No, no, on her work all your will.
- 31 And let her feel the power of all your might,
32 And let her have her most desire with speed,
33 And let her pine away both day and night,
34 And let her moan, and none lament her need,
35 And let all those that shall her see
36 Despise her state, and pity me.

**Textual sources: Grosart (394-95); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 583-84);
May (#9) (1980, 31-32; 1991, 276-77).**

Poem structure: 6 x 6.

Looney's title: “Love and Antagonism.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 139-40, 153-56, 161, 163-64); Sobran (244-47); Brazil & Flues; May (2004, 223-24, 228); Eagan-Donovan.

Clarifications of the text:

- (1-2, 4) The spellings of **fall**, **show**, and **Bid** are corrected from the original **tears that falls**, **sighs that shows**, and **Bids me renew**, consistently with our general approach to modernizing spelling (see Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels); the grammatical mismatches (according to modern usage) would likely trip up most readers.
- (14) A **haggard** (a term of art in falconry) refers to a wild adult **hawk** (typically female) caught for training; it is thus mainly a noun in this context (not to be confused with the adjective indicating an exhausted appearance) (*OED* 6: 1013).
- (16) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).
- (17) **Cupid**, in classical mythology, is the god of love and desire. His **sleights** refers to his use of cunning or deception.
- (20) The spelling of **therefor** is modernized from **therefore**, again consistently with our general approach to spelling, and also with the meaning here, which is not “**therefore**” as in modern usage (“**for** that reason” or “it follows that”), but rather, simply “**for** (something)” (*i.e.*, **she** is the poet’s **ease ... for his pain**; the very point seems to be to highlight this as a paradox, *not* what one would expect “**therefore**” to follow) (*OED* 17: 909).

Strongest parallels to No. 9:

- (14) **The haggard hawk with toil is made full tame**

‘My falcon now is sharp and passing empty, And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged, For then she never looks upon her lure. Another way I have to man my haggard, To make her come and know her keeper’s call’ (Shrew, 4.1.177-81); cf. ‘If I do prove her haggard, Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings, I’d whistle her off and let her down the wind To prey at fortune’ (Oth., 3.3.260-63); ‘I know her spirits are as coy and wild As haggards of the rock’ (Much, 3.1.35-36).

Note that line 14 is explicitly echoed by the very title of *The Taming of the Shrew*. See also No. 19, lines 9 (**like haggards wild they [women] range**) and 15 (**train them [women] to our lure**). See the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#) for more discussion.

Falconry was a distinctly aristocratic sport and status symbol in medieval and early modern Europe (and other parts of the world). In early English falconry literature, **hawk**, **haggard**, and “falcon” usually refer to females (a

male **hawk** is known to falconers as a “tiercel”). A **haggard**, as noted above, refers to a wild adult **hawk** caught for training.

The **haggard hawk** in line 14 thus suggestively represents **her that caused thy** (the poet’s **woeful heart’s** **woe** (lines 7-8) and **she thou lovest** (line 10), whom lines 30-36 urge the **lovelorn** male to **tame**. But in an interesting duality, other lines, *e.g.*, 8 (**Resign thy voice to her**) and 12 (**still in pain thou must endure**), suggest that **haggard hawk** may also refer to the **lovelorn** poet himself (**made full tame** by his female **love**).

Such gender-bending is very typically Shakespearean. Indeed, a fourth canonical Shakespeare reference to **haggard** explicitly uses it as a metaphor for male behavior:

‘This fellow is wise enough to play the fool ... And like the *haggard*, check at every feather That comes before his eye’ (*Twelfth*, 3.1.58, 62-63).

There are at least five canonical Shakespearean references altogether to **haggards** (Spevack 528)—the four quoted above, plus another in *Shrew*. There is also a sixth passage which, though not referring to a **haggard**, flips the expected gender roles (as in *Twelfth Night*) to depict *Juliet* as a falconer trying to **lure** a flighty Romeo (see Looney 1920, 163-64):

‘this proud disdainful *haggard*’ (*Shrew*, 4.2.39); ‘[Juliet:] Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a *falc’ner’s* voice To lure this tassel-gentle back again!’ (*R&J*, 2.2.159-60).

Beyond all those is a *seventh* reference in *Edward III*, which many scholars now view as a canonical Shakespeare play. It explicitly refers to a female **haggard**, but again (as in *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*) deploys the term as a metaphor for *male* behavior:

‘[King Edward:] dare a *falcon* when she’s in her flight And ever after *she’ll be haggard-like*. Let [Prince] Edward be delivered by our hands And still in danger he’ll expect the like’ (*Edw. III*, 8.46-49, Proudfoot & Bennett 275).

(15) **The strongest tower the Cannon lays on ground**

‘Who in a moment *even with the earth* Shall lay your stately and air-braving towers’ (*1 Hen. VI*, 4.2.12); ‘When sometime *lofty towers* I see down rased’ (*Sonnets*, 64.3); *cf.* ‘the teeming [*i.e.*, quaking] earth ... *topples down Steeples and mossgrown towers*’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 3.1.28, 32-33); ‘the king’s name is a *tower of strength*’ (*Rich. III*, 5.3.12).

See also, in “When as Thine Eye” (additional parallels to line 13 below): “**The strongest** castle, **tower**, and towne *The golden bullet beats it down.*”

(18) *weigh my case with equal weights*

'I have in equal balance justly weighed' (2 *Hen. IV*, 4.1.67); cf. 'Commit my cause in balance to be weighed' (*Titus*, 1.1.55); 'Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh. Your vows to her and me, put in two scales, Will even weigh' (*Dream*, 3.2.131-33); 'equalities are so weighed' (*Lear*, 1.1.6); 'In equal scale weighing delight and dole' (*Ham.*, 1.2.13).

This strikingly Shakespearean sentiment of equipoised justice becomes, of course, the title and theme of an entire canonical play, *Measure for Measure*. See, e.g.:

'you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale' (*Meas.*, 4.2.26-27).

(34-36) *And let her moan, and none lament her need,
And let all those that shall her see
Despise her state, and pity me*

Compare *Lucrece*:

*Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
And time to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.*
(981-87)

The parallel above was first explored by Looney (1920, 155-56; 1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 584), and further discussed by Sobran in 1997 (246-47) and Eagan-Donovan in 2017.

Compare especially these eight words in line 34—*let her moan, and none lament her need*—with the following eight words in *Lucrece*:

'make him moan, but pity not his moans' (*Lucrece*, 977).

Note the identical comma placement after the first three words, *let/her/him moan*, which we double-checked to make sure the original versions were not affected by modern emendation or harmonization of punctuation—as to No. 9, May 1980, 32, 68-69; 1991, 277; as to *Lucrece*, a facsimile of the original 1594 edition.

Additional parallels to No. 9:

(1) **The trickling tears that fall along my cheeks**

‘tears fret channels in her cheeks’ (*Lear*, 1.4.285); ‘Weep not, sweet queen; for trickling tears are vain’ (1 *Hen. IV*, 2.4.391).

Tears and **cheeks** often occur together in Shakespeare. On **trickling tears**, see also No. 3.13. On the broader theme of **tears** and **weeping**, see also Nos. 4.10, 5.12, 6.26, and 17.8-9.

(2) **The secret sighs that show my inward grief**

‘my grief lies all within’ (*Rich. II*, 4.1.295); ‘A plague of sighing and grief!’ (1 *Hen. IV*, 2.4.332); ‘Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly’ (*Much*, 3.1.78).

On the broader theme of **tears** and **sighs** (linked by lines 1-2), see also No. 17.8-9. Line 2 is a strong example of the *topos* of emotional dissimulation.

On the leitmotif of dissimulation, a suggestive common interest seen in both samples, see also No. 5 (*passim*) and Nos. 6.4, 10.9-10, 12.16, and 18.40.

(3) **present pains**

‘put me to present pain’ (*Per.*, 5.1.222); ‘Tis good for men to love their present pains’ (*Hen.* V, 4.1.18).

(4) **Bid me renew my cares without relief**

‘And by her presence still renew his sorrows’ (*Titus*, 5.3.82).

(10) **thy mortal foe**

‘I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 5.1.94); cf. ‘But I return his sworn and mortal foe’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 3.3.257).

(13) **The stricken Deer hath help to heal his wound**

‘Why, let the stricken deer go weep’ (*Ham.*, 3.2.287); ‘My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 14.8.41).

Language very similar to this line is found in the “apocryphal” Shakespeare poem, “When as Thine Eye Had Chose the Dame” (Rollins 1938, 308-09) (e.g., “and stalde **the deare** that thou shouldst **strike**”). The earliest text of “When as Thine Eye” is the Cornwallis manuscript (Folger 1.112, c. 1585–90), with a spine labeled “Poems by the Earl of Oxford and Others.” Among the 33 poems contained in the manuscript are de Vere’s “echo” verses (No. 17) and a number of anonymous poems, some in the

handwriting of King's men actor John Bentley, who died in 1585 (see Miller, "Cornwallis").

- (16-17, 25) **The wisest wit ...**
 Was *thrall* to Love by Cupid's sleights;
 ...
 And shall I live on earth to be her *thrall*?

'How *love* makes young men *thrall*, and old men dote' (*Venus*, 837); cf. 'my mistress' *thrall*' (*Sonnets*, 154.12). See also No. 6.9 (**wit so wise**), No. 10.12 (**wit ... will**), and No. 18.9 (**wily wit**).

- (19) **She is my joy, she is my care and woe**

'Your tributary drops belong to *woe*, Which you, mistaking, offer up to *joy*' (*R&J*, 3.2.103).

- (20) **She is my pain, she is my ease therefor**

'Give physic to the sick, *ease* to the pained' (*Lucrece*, 901).

- (21) **She is my death, she is my life also**

'Showing *life*'s triumph in the map of *death* ... *life* lived in *death*, and *death* in *life*' (*Lucrece*, 402, 406); '*life* imprisoned in a *body dead*' (*Lucrece*, 1456); 'Yet in this *life* Lie hid more thousand *deaths*' (*Meas.*, 3.1.39); '*seeking death, find life*' (*Meas.*, 3.1.44); 'That *life* is better *life*, past fearing *death*' (*Meas.*, 5.1.397).

- (22) **She is my salve, she is my wounded sore**

'To see the *salve* doth make the *wound* ache more' (*Lucrece*, 1116); 'A *salve* for any *sore* that may betide' (*3 Hen. VI*, 4.6.88); '*salve* The long-grown *wounds* of my intemperance' (*1 Hen. IV*, 3.2.155-56); 'For no man well of such a *salve* can speak That heals the *wound*, and cures not the disgrace' (*Sonnets*, 34.7-8); 'The humble *salve* which *wounded bosoms* fits!' (*Sonnets*, 120.12).

See also No. 5.29-30 (**So long to fight with secret sore, And find no secret salve therefor**) and No. 18.9 (**No wily wit to salve a sore**).

The **salve ... sore** motif (like some others) was echoed by some other Elizabethan poets and these parallels may not be that telling in and of themselves (see May 2004, 229), but as with many of the additional parallels noted, much of their significance is in the overall cumulative context.

- (25-30) *And shall I live on earth to be her thrall?
And shall I sue and serve her all in vain?
And shall I kiss the steps that she lets fall?
And shall I pray the gods to keep the pain
From her, that is so cruel still?
No, no, on her work all your will*

Looney (1920, 153-54) pointed out structural similarities between these lines and passages in *Henry VI, Part 3*, and *Lucrece*. May (2004, 228) dismissed this point without fully engaging Looney's argument or quoting the Shakespearean parallels:

*Did I forget that by the House of York
My father came untimely to his death?
Did I let pass th' abuse done to my niece?
Did I impale him with the regal crown?
Did I put Henry from his native right?
And am I guerdoned [i.e., rewarded] at the last with shame?
(3 Hen. VI, 3.3.186-91)*

*What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?
No, no, my heart will burst an if I speak.
(3 Hen. VI, 5.5.58-59)*

*Why should the worm intrude the maiden bud?
Or hateful cuckoos hatch in sparrow's nests?
Or toads infect fair founts with venom mud?
Or tyrant folly lurk in gentle breasts?
Or kings be breakers of their own behests?
But no perfection is so absolute
That some impurity doth not pollute.
(Lucrece, 848-54)*

- (31) *let her feel the power of all your might*

'O, from what *power* hast thou *this powerful might*' (*Sonnets*, 150.1).

- (32) *let her have her most desire*

'There is a vice that *most* I do abhor, And *most desire* should meet the blow of justice'
(*Meas.*, 2.2.29-30); cf. 'our *most* just and right *desires*' (2 *Hen. IV*, 4.2.40).

- (33) *let her pine away*

'There I'll *pine away*' (*Rich. II*, 3.2.209); 'the fool hath much *pined away*' (*Lear*, 1.4.71).

(36) *pity me*

Looney noted “the recurrence of what seems ... a curious appeal for **pity**” (1920, 161) in these de Vere poems and the works of Shakespeare. The word **pity** (including variants) appears more than 300 times in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 980-81). In addition to line 36, see No. 3.7 (**the less she pities me**) and No. 17.8 (**some pity in the rocks**), and compare, *e.g.*:

‘Melt at my tears, and be compassionate; Soft *pity* enters at an iron gate’ (*Lucrece*, 593); ‘This you should *pity* rather than despise’ (*Dream*, 3.2.235); ‘May move your hearts to *pity*’ (*Rich. III*, 1.3.348); ‘*Pity*, you ancient stones, those tender babes’ (*Rich. III*, 4.1.98); ‘*Pity me* then’ (*Sonnets*, 111.8, 13); ‘Thine eyes I love, and they as *pitying me* ... And suit *thy pity* like in every part’ (*Sonnets*, 132.1, 12); ‘*my pity-wanting pain*’ (*Sonnets*, 140.4).

No. 10: “Fain Would I Sing But Fury Makes Me Fret”

- 1 Fain would I sing but fury makes me fret,
2 And rage hath sworn to seek revenge of wrong;
3 My mazed mind in malice so is set
4 As death shall daunt my deadly dolours long.
5 Patience perforce is such a pinching pain,
6 As die I will or suffer wrong again.
- 7 I am no sot to suffer such abuse
8 As doth bereave my heart of his delight,
9 Nor will I frame myself to such as use
10 With calm consent to suffer such despite.
11 No quiet sleep shall once possess mine eye,
12 Till wit have wrought his will on injury.
- 13 My heart shall fail and hand shall lose his force,
14 But some device shall pay despite his due;
15 And fury shall consume my careful corse,
16 Or raze the ground whereon my sorrow grew.
17 Lo, thus in rage of ruthless mind refused,
18 I rest revenged of whom I am abused.

Textual sources: Grosart (421-22); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 582);
May (#10) (1980, 32-33; 1991, 277).

Poem structure: 6 x 3.

Looney’s title: “Revenge of Wrong.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 151-52, 164); Sobran (248-49);
Brazil & Flues; Goldstein (2016, 58-60); Eagan-Donovan.

Clarifications of the text:

- (1) The archaic word **fain** means “gladly” (*OED* 5: 667-68). See also No. 18b.14.
- (3) In modern English, **mazed** has fairly mild connotations of being **amazed**, **dazed**, **confused**, or **bewildered**, but a meaning it bore into the 16th century included more severe mental derangement—to be **crazed** or **delirious** (*OED* 9: 507-08). See also No. 7.5 (**mazed so much his wits**).
- (4) The word **dolours** refers to pain (*OED* 4: 941).
- (12) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).
- (15) The word **corse** means a living body (*OED* 3: 975). The word **careful** is used idiomatically here to mean “**full of cares** or worries,” not “cautious” (*OED* 2: 896). See also No. 2, lines 2 and 16-18.

Strongest parallels to No. 10:

(6-7) **As die I will or suffer wrong again. I am no sot to suffer such abuse**

‘what wrongs we suffer’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 4.1.68); ‘the wrongs I suffer’ (*Errors*, 3.1.16); ‘Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?’ (*Rich. II*, 2.1.164); ‘such suffering souls That welcome wrongs’ (*Caes.*, 2.1.140); ‘he shall not suffer indignity’ (*Tem.*, 3.2.37); ‘[Malvolio:] Why have you suffered me to be imprisoned ... And made the most notorious geck and gull ...? ... [Olivia:] He hath been most notoriously abused’ (*Twelfth*, 5.1.331, 333, 368).

See also line 10 (**suffer such despite**).

(9-10) **Nor will I frame myself ... to suffer such despite**

‘she framed thee in high heaven’s despite’ (*Venus*, 731); ‘And frame my face to all occasions’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 3.2.185); ‘That she preparedly may frame herself To the way she’s forced to’ (*A&C*, 5.1.55); ‘Frame yourself to orderly soliciting’ (*Cym.*, 2.3.46); cf. ‘thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her’ (*Oth.*, 4.2.116).

See also lines 6-7 (**suffer wrong ... abuse**).

The idea of **framing oneself** for a particular social expectation belongs to the dissimulation *topos*. Again, we see the same idea expressed in what appears to be idiomatic language.

On the leitmotif of dissimulation, a suggestive common interest seen in both samples, see also No. 5 (*passim*) and Nos. 6.4, 9.2, 12.16, and 18.40.

(12) **Till wit have wrought his will**

‘What wit sets down is blotted straight with will’ (*Lucrece*, 1299); ‘he wants wit that wants resolved will To learn his wit’ (*Two Gent.*, 2.6.12-13); ‘a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will, Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills’ (*LLL*, 2.1.49-50); ‘Wit, an’t be thy will, put me into good fooling. Those wits that think they have thee do very oft prove fools, and I that am sure I lack thee may pass for a wise man. For what says Quinapalus? Better a witty fool than a foolish wit’ (*Twelfth*, 1.5.29); ‘your wit will not so soon out as another man’s will’ (*Cor.*, 2.3.25); ‘With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts—O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen’ (*Ham.*, 1.5.43-46).

See also No. 6.9 (**wit so wise**), No. 9.16 (**wisest wit**), and No. 18.9 (**wily wit**). As noted above, the term **wit** as used here generally refers to intelligence or mental sharpness rather than humor, but there are overtones of the humorous meaning in the quotations from *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and especially from *Twelfth Night*.

Additional parallels to No. 10:

(1) *Fain would I sing but fury makes me fret*

‘with the wind in greater *fury fret*’ (*Lucrece*, 648); cf. ‘*Fain would I woo her, yet I dare not speak*’ (1 *Hen. VI*, 5.3.65).

The phrase **fury ... fret** seems curiously idiomatic. This is another instance of the wide range of emotional expression in both samples.

(2) *rage hath sworn to seek revenge of wrong*

‘you both *have vowed revenge* On him’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 1.1.55); ‘I will *revenge his wrong*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 3.3.197); ‘seek not t’allay My *rages and revenges*’ (*Cor.*, 5.3.85).

(3) *My mazed mind in malice so is set*

‘The venomous *malice of my swelling heart!*’ (*Titus*, 5.3.13); cf. ‘Nor *set down aught in malice*’ (*Oth.*, 5.2.343); ‘Who can be wise, *amazed*, temp’rate and *furious*’ (*Mac.*, 2.3.104).

See also parallels to line 1 (**fury**). Looney (1920, 151-52) and Eagan-Donovan suggested a broad thematic linkage between No. 10 and Sonnets 140 and 147 (see also parallels to line 5), e.g.:

‘Past care I am, *now reason is past cure*, And *frantic-mad with evermore unrest*; My *thoughts and my discourse as madmen’s are*’ (*Sonnets*, 147.9-11).

(4) *As death shall daunt my deadly dolours long*

‘Think you a little din can *daunt mine ears?*’ (*Shrew*, 1.2.196); ‘let not discontent *Daunt all your hopes*’ (*Titus*, 1.1.270-71); ‘To think *their dolour* others have *endured*’ (*Lucrece*, 1582); ‘As *ending* anthem of my *endless dolour*’ (*Two Gent.*, 3.1.242).

(5) *Patience perforce is such a pinching pain*

‘*Patience perforce* with willful choler meeting *Makes my flesh tremble*’ (*R&J*, 1.5.89); cf. ‘do not press my tongue-tied *patience* with too much disdain’ (*Sonnets*, 140.1-2).

As noted above (see parallels to line 3), Looney and Eagan-Donovan suggested a broad thematic linkage to Sonnets 140 and 147.

May has argued that phrases like **patience perforce** and **pinching pain** were “ubiquitous in contemporary verse” (2004, 229; see also Goldstein 2017, 24, quoting May). While this particular parallel may not be very strong in itself, the point is to consider the overall cumulative weight and context of all the parallels. It is a given, as discussed in the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#), that some are weaker (or stronger) than others. As Looney noted (1920, 161), these poems contain many “minor

points of similarity, which though insignificant in themselves, help to make up that general impression of common authorship which comes only with a close familiarity with [them] as a whole.”

(11) **No quiet sleep shall once possess mine eye**

‘What a strange drowsiness possesses them!’ (*Tem.*, 2.1.199); ‘Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye’ (*Sonnets*, 62.1).

There are two distinct ideas in de Vere’s lyric, that of something **possessing** the **eye** and that **sleep possesses** a person. Both are developed by Shakespeare.

(14) **some device**

‘plot some device of further misery’ (*Titus*, 3.1.134); ‘I think by some odd gimmors or device’ (*1 Hen. VI*, 1.2.41); ‘by some device or other’ (*Errors*, 1.2.95); ‘entrap thee by some treacherous device’ (*As You*, 1.1.151); ‘Every day thou daffst me with some device’ (*Oth.*, 4.2.175).

(14) **pay despite his due**

‘Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet’ (*LLL*, 5.2.334); ‘More is thy due than more than all can pay’ (*Mac.*, 1.4.21); cf. ‘be spent, And as his due writ in my testament’ (*Lucrece*, 1183).

(16) **raze the ground**

‘raze the sanctuary’ (*Meas.*, 2.2.170); ‘Raze out the written troubles of the brain’ (*Mac.*, 5.3.49); ‘To raze one title of your honour out’ (*Rich. II*, 2.3.76); ‘razed oblivion’ (*Sonnets*, 122.7).

Once again the Shakespearean equivalents are figurative elaborations of their lyric antecedent in de Vere, illustrating the Bloomian principle that Shakespeare grew by “overhearing himself.” See also No. 5.6-8 (**As Hannibal, that saw ... defaced down**).

(17) **in rage of ruthful mind refused**

‘in rage With their refusal’ (*Cor.*, 2.3.259); cf. ‘Complots of mischief, treason, villainies Ruthful to hear’ (*Titus*, 5.1.65-66); ‘ruthful deeds’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 2.5.95); ‘ruthful work’ (*Troil.*, 5.3.48).

No. 11: “When Wert Thou Born, Desire?”

- 1 When wert thou born, desire?
- 2 In pomp and prime of May.
- 3 By whom, sweet boy, wert thou begot?
- 4 By good conceit, men say.
- 5 Tell me, who was thy nurse?
- 6 Fresh youth in sugared joy.
- 7 What was thy meat and daily food?
- 8 Sad sighs with great annoy.
- 9 What hadst thou then to drink?
- 10 Unfeigned lovers’ tears.
- 11 What cradle wert thou rocked in?
- 12 In hope devoid of fears.
- 13 What brought thee then asleep?
- 14 Sweet speech, that liked me best.
- 15 And where is now thy dwelling-place?
- 16 In gentle hearts I rest.
- 17 Doth company displease?
- 18 It doth in many a one.
- 19 Where would desire then choose to be?
- 20 He likes to muse alone.
- 21 What feedeth most your sight?
- 22 To gaze on favour still.
- 23 What findest thou most to be thy foe?
- 24 Disdain of my goodwill.
- 25 Will ever age or death
- 26 Bring thee unto decay?
- 27 No, no, desire both lives and dies
- 28 Ten thousand times a day.

Textual sources: Grosart (407-09); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 568-69);
May (#11) (1980, 33; 1991, 277-78).

Poem structure: even-numbered lines rhyming in pairs.

Looney’s title: “Fond Desire.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Lee (1910, 227); Ogburn (587-88); Sobran (250-51);
Goldstein (2016, 50-51; 2017, 23).

The first four and last four lines in the Grosart and Looney editions were omitted by May, and are thus omitted here as well, consistently with our conservative approach explained in the [Introduction \(Selection of Poems\)](#) and [Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels](#).

We are very pleased, as noted above (see also parallels below to lines 3-4), to credit Sir Sidney Lee, the leading Stratfordian Shakespeare biographer and scholar, with the earliest known commentary on any of the parallels between these early de Vere poems and the works of Shakespeare.

Strongest parallels to No. 11:

(9-10) **What had'st thou then to drink? Unfeigned lovers' tears**

'drink my tears' (*John*, 4.1.62); 'Ye see I drink the water of my eye' (3 *Hen.* VI, 5.4.75); 'Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine' (*Titus*, 3.1.140); cf. 'I come in kindness and unfeigned love' (*Shrew*, 4.2.32); 'as lovers they do feign' (*As You*, 3.3.22); 'Dismiss your vows, your feigned tears' (*Venus*, 425).

(21-22) **What feedeth most your sight? To gaze on favour still**

'with gazing fed' (*Merch.*, 3.2.68); 'I have fed mine eyes on thee' (*Troil.*, 4.5.231); 'Her eye must be fed' (*Oth.*, 2.1.225); 'That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?' (*All's Well*, 1.1.221); 'I feed Most hungerly on your sight' (*Timon*, 1.1.252); cf. 'all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes' (*LLL*, 2.1.245); 'youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way' (*Cor.*, 1.3.6-7).

See also No. 18.10 (to feed each gazing eye), and compare these lines in *Venus and Adonis*:

But, when his glutton eye so full hath fed
(399)

Alas, he naught esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes
(631-32)

Fold in the object that did feed her sight
(822)

He fed them with his sight [*i.e.*, his beauty], they him with berries
(1104)

Additional parallels to No. 11:

(3-4) **By whom, sweet boy [*i.e.*, desire], wert thou begot? By good conceit, men say**

'Tell me where is fancy [*i.e.*, love, infatuation, or desire] bred, Or in the heart, or in the head?' (*Merch.*, 3.2.63-64); cf. 'sweet boy' (*Venus*, 155, 583, 613); 'sweet boy' (*Sonnets*, 108.5).

As Goldstein noted (2016, 50-51; 2017, 23), no less an orthodox Shakespeare scholar than Sir Sidney Lee pointed out this parallel with *The Merchant of Venice*—before de Vere was proposed as the true Shakespeare (by Looney, 1920) and thus before he became a threat to be disparaged by devout Stratfordians.

Lee observed in 1910 that this passage in No. 11, as compared to the lines in *Merchant*, "is in a kindred key" (227). ("A little more than kin," Oxfordians might say. *Hamlet*, 1.2.65.) See also Lee's praise for de Vere around the turn of the 20th century (quoted in Goldstein 2016, 47), as mentioned in the [Introduction \(Oxford's Early Poetry in Elizabethan Literary History\)](#).

Lee added, seemingly by way of excusing this parallel (227): “There are indeed few lyrical topics to which the French and English writers failed to apply on some occasion or other much the same language.” No doubt, but de Vere and Shakespeare use the same words and concepts far more often than “on some occasion or other,” and frequently do so in strikingly similar linguistic or narrative contexts.

That this parallel caught Lee’s attention, and prompted his inclusion of it as a telling example, is very significant as yet one more piece of the dense and cumulative network of intertextuality explored here—of which Lee was of course as innocent as a cherub.

(6) *Fresh youth*

‘whose *youth* and *freshness* wrinkles Apollo’s’ (*Troil.*, 2.2.78).

(8) *Sad sighs*

‘*Sad sighs*, deep groans’ (*Two Gent.*, 3.1.232).

(11) *What cradle wert thou rocked in?*

‘And *rock* his brains In *cradle* of the rude’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 3.1.19); ‘If drink *rock* not his *cradle*’ (*Oth.*, 4.4.28).

(25-26) *Will ever age or death Bring thee unto decay?*

‘*Death*, desolation, ruin, and *decay*’ (*Rich. III*, 4.4.409); ‘folly, *age*, and cold *decay*’ (*Sonnets*, 11.6).

No. 12: “Winged With Desire”

- 1 Winged with desire, I seek to mount on high,
2 Clogged with mishap yet am I kept full low;
3 Who seeks to live and finds the way to die,
4 Sith comfort ebbs, and cares do daily flow,
5 But sad despair would have me to retire,
6 When smiling hope sets forward my desire.
- 7 I still do toil and never am at rest,
8 Enjoying least when I do covet most;
9 With weary thoughts are my green years oppressed,
10 To danger drawn from my desired coast;
11 Now crazed with Care, then haled up with Hope,
12 With world at will yet wanting wished scope.
- 13 I like in heart, yet dare not say I love,
14 And looks alone do lend me chief relief.
15 I dwelt sometimes at rest yet must remove,
16 With feigned joy I hide my secret grief.
17 I would possess yet needs must flee the place
18 Where I do seek to win my chiefest grace.
- 19 Lo, thus I live twixt fear and comfort tossed,
20 With least abode where best I feel content;
21 I seld resort where I should settle most,
22 My sliding times too soon with her are spent;
23 I hover high and soar where Hope doth tower,
24 Yet froward Fate defers my happy hour.
- 25 I live abroad but still in secret grief,
26 Then least alone when most I seem to lurk;
27 I speak of peace, and live in endless strife,
28 And when I play then are my thoughts at work;
29 In person far that am in mind full near,
30 Making light show where I esteem most dear.
- 31 A malcontent yet seem I pleased still,
32 Bragging of heaven yet feeling pains of hell.
33 But Time shall frame a time unto my will,
34 Whenas in sport this earnest will I tell;
35 Till then, sweet friend, abide these storms with me,
36 Which shall in joys of either fortunes be.

Textual sources: May (#12) (1980, 34-35; 1991, 278-79) (not in Grosart or Looney).

Poem structure: 6 x 6.

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (250-53); Goldstein (2016, 60-62).

Clarifications of the text:

- (4) **Sith** is an archaic word meaning “since” (*OED* 15: 563-64).
- (24) The term **froward**, no longer in common use, means perverse, obstinate, or contrary (*OED* 6: 225), the etymological opposite of “toward” (as in “to and fro”).
- (34) **Whenas**, also out of common use, is equivalent to “**when**,” “**whereas**,” or “**inasmuch as**” (*OED* 20: 210).

Strongest parallels to No. 12:

- (1) *I seek to mount on high*

‘the gentle lark, weary of rest, From his moist cabinet *mounts up on high*’ (*Venus*, 854); ‘*To mount aloft* with thy imperial mistress, And *mount* her pitch, whom thou in triumph long Hast prisoner held’ (*Titus*, 2.1.13-15); ‘*Mount, mount, my soul!* thy seat is *up on high*’ (*Rich. II*, 5.5.112); ‘*mounts no higher* than a bird can soar’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 2.1.14).

- (8) *Enjoying least when I do covet most*

‘With *what I most enjoy contented least*’ (*Sonnets*, 29.8).

The slight variations in syntax and word choice cannot obscure this parallel expression of an almost identical complex and subtle point, a profound insight into a paradox of human nature: Sometimes the more we **covet** or **enjoy** something, the less satisfied we are in hindsight. The thought is expressed in each case as a self-aware first-person insight, in remarkably similar turns of phrase.

See also lines 20 & 26.

- (20, 26) *With least abode where best I feel content ... Then least alone when most I seem to lurk*

‘*Seeming to be most* which we indeed *least* are’ (*Shrew*, 5.2.175); ‘In *least* speak *most*’ (*Dream* 5.1.105); ‘The true soul, when *most* impeached stands *least* in thy control’ (*Sonnets*, 125.14).

See also line 8.

Additional parallels to No. 12:

- (1) *Winged with desire*

‘Whose haughty spirit, *winged with desire*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 1.1.267); ‘Borne by the trustless *wings* of false *desire*’ (*Lucrece*, 2).

(4) **comfort ebbs and cares do daily flow**

The linguistic parallelism of **ebbing** and **flowing** is by itself fairly commonplace, e.g.: ‘The sea will *ebb and flow*’ (*LLL*, 4.3.212); ‘*ebb and flow* like the sea’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 1.2.31); ‘great ones, That *ebb and flow* by th’moon’ (*Lear*, 5.3.19).

More telling are parallels associating **ebbing** and **flowing** with fluctuating emotions: ‘And sorrow *ebbs*, being *blown* with *wind of words*’ (*Lucrece*, 1330); ‘Thus *ebbs and flows* the current of her sorrow’ (*Lucrece*, 1569); ‘For still thy eyes ... Do *ebb and flow with tears*’ (*R&J*, 3.5.133-34).

The broader linkages are between fluctuating or **flowing** emotions (**comfort** and **cares**) and (see No. 6.26) with **tears** and with motions of the **sea** (another **salty** medium). See also line 19 and No. 18.33.

(5-6) **But sad despair would have me to retire, When smiling hope sets forward my desire**

‘our *hope* but sad *despair*’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 2.3.9); ‘Where *hope* is coldest and *despair* most fits’ (*All’s Well*, 2.1.144); ‘past *hope*, and in *despair*’ (*Cym.*, 1.1.137); ‘*Despair* and *hope* makes thee ridiculous’ (*Venus*, 988).

Again, antithetical yet juxtaposed emotions appear in both samples. See also No. 5.17-22.

(11) **Now crazed with Care**

‘The grief hath *crazed my wits*’ (*Lear*, 3.4.170).

(16) **With feigned joy I hide my secret grief**

‘And all that poets *feign* of bliss and joy’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 1.2.31).

On the leitmotif of dissimulation, a suggestive common interest seen in both samples, see also No. 5 (*passim*) and Nos. 6.4, 9.2, 10.9-10, and 18.40.

(19) **twixt fear and comfort tossed**

‘Is madly *tossed between* desire and *dread*’ (*Lucrece*, 171).

The word **tossed**, recalling an association between emotion and the motions of the **sea** or objects on the **sea**, sums up the divided condition of **fear** juxtaposed to some positive emotion (**comfort** or “desire”). See also line 4 and Nos. 6.26 and 18.33.

(27) **I speak of peace, and live in endless strife**

‘as thou liv’st in *peace*, die free from *strife*’ (*Rich. II*, 5.6.27); ‘And for the *peace* of you I hold such *strife*’ (*Sonnets*, 75.3).

No. 13: “Love Compared to a Tennis-Play”

- 1 Whereas the heart at tennis plays, and men to gaming fall,
- 2 Love is the court, hope is the house, and favour serves the ball.
- 3 The ball itself is true desert; the line, which measure shows,
- 4 Is reason, whereon judgment looks how players win or lose.
- 5 The jetty is deceitful guile, the stopper, jealousy,
- 6 Which hath Sir Argus’ hundred eyes wherewith to watch and pry.
- 7 The fault, wherewith fifteen is lost, is want of wit and sense,
- 8 And he that brings the racket in is double diligence.
- 9 And lo, the racket is freewill, which makes the ball rebound;
- 10 And noble beauty is the chase, of every game the ground.
- 11 But rashness strikes the ball awry, and where is oversight?
- 12 “A bandy ho,” the people cry, and so the ball takes flight.
- 13 Now in the end, good-liking proves content the game and gain.
- 14 Thus in a tennis knit I love, a pleasure mixed with pain.

Textual sources: May (#13) (1980, 35; 1991, 279-80) (not in Grosart or Looney).

Poem structure: sonnet (though not in classically Shakespearean form).

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (254-55).

The title reflects the manuscript sources, but may not have been chosen by de Vere (see [Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels](#)).

Clarifications of the text:

- (6) **Argus** Panoptes is a multi-**eyed** giant in Greek mythology, according to which some of his **eyes** always remain **watch**fully awake while others sleep.
- (7) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).

Shakespeare refers often and with seemingly spontaneous naturalism to the then-aristocratic sport of **tennis** and its terms of art. De Vere devoted all of No. 13 to an extended metaphor on the subject.

Shakespeare’s reference in *Hamlet* (2.1.59) to “falling out at tennis” has been seen by many scholars, including Chambers (1895, 142), as a possible topical reference to the famous 1579 London “tennis court quarrel” between de Vere and Sir Philip Sidney—which, of course, occurred many years before the orthodox view would allow *Hamlet* to have been written.

Shakespeare of Stratford was a 15-year-old boy in 1579, still growing up in that provincial town. The incident was about a decade past by the time conventional wisdom holds he arrived in London, and still further in the past when he is conventionally said to have written *Hamlet*. Of course, any playwright might write about an incident in which he himself was not involved—but decades later, when it was old and stale news? Sidney died of battle wounds in 1586 at age 31

and was revered as an English national hero. Would a commoner, writing after that, dredge up an unsavory incident from many years before?

Strongest parallels to No. 13:

(1) **Whereas the heart at tennis plays, and men to gaming fall**

‘There [*he*] was ‘a gaming ... There falling out at tennis’ (*Ham.*, 2.1.58-59).

As noted above, the *Hamlet* connection undermines the Stratfordian authorship theory and suggests a significant linkage to de Vere.

See also: ‘to play at tennis’ (*Kins.*, 5.2.56); cf. ‘The faith they have in *tennis* and tall stockings’ (*Hen. VIII*, 1.3.30).

Additional parallels to No. 13:

(2, 10) **court ... chase**

‘That all the *courts* of France will be disturbed With *chases*’ (*Hen. V*, 1.2.266).

(6) **Sir Argus’ hundred eyes wherewith to watch and pry**

‘Watch thou and wake when others be asleep, To pry into the secrets of the state’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 1.1.247-48); ‘Watch me like Argus’ (*Merch.*, 5.1.230); cf. ‘one that will do the deed, Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard’ (*LLL*, 3.1.187-88); ‘purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight’ (*Troil.*, 1.2.29).

Argus Panoptes, as noted above, is a multi-eyed giant in Greek mythology, according to which some of his eyes always remain watchfully awake while others sleep. The three Shakespearean references to him are quoted above (Spevack 58).

(9) **the racket is freewill, which makes the ball rebound**

‘When we have matched our *rackets* to these *balls*’ (*Hen. V*, 1.2.261); cf. ‘tennis-balls, my liege’ (*Hen. V*, 1.2.258); ‘stuffed tennis-balls’ (*Much*, 3.2.46); ‘the tennis-court-keeper knows better than I, for it is a low ebb of linen with thee when thou keepest not racket there’ (2 *Hen. IV*, 2.2.18).

(14) **a pleasure mixed with pain**

‘Having no other *pleasure* of his gain But torment that it cannot cure his *pain*’ (*Lucrece*, 860-61); ‘since you make your *pleasure* of your *pains*’ (*Twelfth*, 3.3.2); cf. ‘No *pains*, sir. I take *pleasure* in singing, sir’ (*Twelfth*, 2.4.67).

See also No. 2.8 (to whose most pain least pleasure doth befall) and No. 8.18 (What thing did please, and what did pain?).

No. 14: “These Beauties Make Me Die”

1 What cunning can express
2 The favour of her face,
3 To whom in this distress
4 I do appeal for grace?
5 A thousand Cupids fly
6 About her gentle eye.

7 From whence each throws a dart,
8 That kindleth soft sweet fire,
9 Within my sighing heart,
10 Possessed by desire;
11 No sweeter life I try,
12 Than in her love to die.

13 The Lily in the field,
14 That glories in his white,
15 For pureness now must yield
16 And render up his right;
17 Heaven pictured in her face
18 Doth promise joy and grace.

19 Fair Cynthia's silver light,
20 That beats on running streams,
21 Compares not with her white,
22 Whose hairs are all sunbeams;
23 Her virtues so do shine,
24 As day unto mine eyne.

25 With this there is a Red
26 Exceeds the Damask Rose,
27 Which in her cheeks is spread,
28 Whence every favour grows;
29 In sky there is no star
30 That she surmounts not far.

31 When Phoebus from the bed
32 Of Thetis doth arise,
33 The morning, blushing red,
34 In fair carnation wise,
35 He shows it in her face
36 As Queen of every grace.

37 This pleasant Lily white,
38 This taint of roseate red,
39 This Cynthia's silver light,
40 This sweet fair Dea spread,
41 These sunbeams in mine eye,
42 These beauties make me die.

Textual sources: Grosart (417-19); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 563-64);
May (#14) (1980, 35-37; 1991, 280-81).

Poem structure: 6 x 7.

Looney's title: "What Cunning Can Express."

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 141-45); Sobran (254-57, 586-87);
May (2004, 224).

Clarifications of the text:

- (5) **Cupid**, in classical mythology, is the god of love and desire.
- (19, 39) **Cynthia** refers to the moon. The name is sometimes used as an epithet for Selene, the Greek goddess of the moon (or her Roman counterpart, Diana).
- (24) The phrase **mine eyne** means **my eyes**, **eyne** being an archaic plural form (*OED* 5: 625).
- (31-32) **Phoebus** (see also Nos. 17.24, 19.8, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo** (see No. 3.6), Greco-Roman god of the sun. **Thetis** is a mythological Greek sea-nymph.
- (40) **Dea** is a general Latin term for "goddess."

Strongest parallels to No. 14:

- (21, 23, 25-27) **Compares not with her white,**
...
Her virtues so do shine
...
With this there is a Red
Exceeds the Damask Rose,
Which in her cheeks is spread

This play of **red** and **white** imagery, comparing the **blush** to a **rose** (specifically **the damask rose**), becomes a leitmotif in Shakespeare. See also parallels below to lines 13-14 and to line 33.

See the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#) for more discussion of the **damask rose** references (see also No. 17.5-6).

Compare, *e.g.*, the following lines in *Lucrece*:

To praise the clear unmatched *red and white*
Which triumphed in that sky of his delight
(11-12)

When Beauty boasted *blushes*, in despite
Virtue would stain that o'er with *silver white*
(55-56)

This heraldry in Lucrece' face was seen,
Argued by *Beauty's red and Virtue's white*.
Of either's colour was the other queen
(64-66)

This silent war of *lilies and roses*
Which Tarquin viewed in her fair face's field
(71-72)

Her lily hand her rosy cheek lies under
(386)

See also, e.g.: 'Upon the *blushing rose* usurps *her cheek*' (*Venus*, 591); 'The air hath starved the *roses in her cheeks*' (*Two Gent.*, 4.4.154); 'Meantime your *cheeks* do counterfeit our *roses*' (*1 Hen. VI*, 2.4.62); '[Armado:] My love is most immaculate *white and red* ... [Moth:] If she be made of *white and red*, Her faults will ne'er be known, For *blushing cheeks* by faults are bred, And fears by *pale white* shown' (*LLL*, 1.2.86, 93-96); 'The *roses in thy lips and cheeks* shall fade' (*R&J*, 4.1.99); 'as those *cheek-roses* Proclaim you are no less!' (*Meas.*, 1.4.16); 'Our veiled dames Commit the war of *white and damask* in *Their nicely gawded cheeks*' (*Cor.*, 2.1.204-06); '*rosy lips and cheeks*' (*Sonnets*, 116.9).

On the damask rose, see: 'as sweet as *damask roses*' (*Win.*, 4.4.220); 'I have seen *roses damasked, red and white*, But no such roses see I in her *cheeks*' (*Sonnets*, 130.5-6); 'With *cherry lips and cheeks of damask roses*' (*Kins.*, 4.1.74); cf. 'feed on her *damask cheek*' (*Twelfth*, 2.4.112).

(37-42) **This pleasant *Lily white*,
This taint of *roseate red*,
This *Cynthia's silver light*,
This *sweet fair Dea* spread,
These *sunbeams in mine eye*,
These *beauties make me die***

As noted above, **Cynthia** refers to the moon and **Dea** is a general Latin term for "goddess." Recalling that **Thetis** (line 32) is a nymph—and noting that the writer of each passage clearly felt that great human beauty is (in modern parlance) "to die for"—compare these lines in *Venus and Adonis*:

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;
Nature that made thee with herself at strife
Saith that *the world hath ending with thy life*.
(8-12)

Additional parallels to No. 14:

(1) **What cunning can express**

‘My tongue *cannot express* my grief’ (*Venus*, 1069); ‘more it is than I *can well express*’ (*Lucrece*, 1286).

(5) **A thousand Cupids**

‘armed with *thousand Cupids*’ (*Kins.*, 2.2.31).

(8) **That kindleth soft sweet fire**

‘his love-*kindling fire*’ (*Sonnets*, 153.3); ‘the raging *fire* of fever *bred*’ (*Errors*, 5.1.75); ‘Therefore let Benedick, like covered *fire*, *Consume away* in sighs, waste inwardly’ (*Much*, 3.1.78); cf. ‘let virtue be as wax And melt in her own *fire*’ (*Ham.*, 3.4.85).

According to Eric Sams (297): “Among Tudor dramatists, it is [Shakespeare] who notices how **fire** behaves and converts that knowledge into proverbs and sayings of his own ...” This parallel suggests that de Vere was in fact the innovator.

(13-14) **The Lily in the field, That glories in his white**

The **lily** is one of Shakespeare’s favorite flowers, with around 25 allusions in the canonical plays and poems (Spevack 723), *e.g.*:

‘most *lily-white* of hue’ (*Dream*, 3.1.84); ‘Nor did I wonder at *the lily’s white*, Nor praise the deep vermilion in *the rose*’ (*Sonnets*, 98.9-10); ‘*The lily* I condemned for thy hand ... *The roses* fearfully on thorns did stand, One *blushing* shame, another *white* despair’ (*Sonnets*, 99.6, 8-9).

See also parallels above to lines 21, 23 & 25-27.

(19) **Cynthia’s silver light**

‘*Cynthia* for shame obscures her *silver shine*’ (*Venus*, 728); ‘Tis but the *pale reflex* of *Cynthia’s* brow’ (*R&J*, 3.5.20); ‘*Cynthia* with her *borrowed light*’ (*Kins.*, 4.1.153).
Cynthia, as noted above, refers to the moon.

(29-30) **there is no star That she surmounts not far**

‘The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars’ (*R&J*, 2.2.19).

(31-32) **When *Phoebus* from the bed Of *Thetis* doth arise**

‘And *Phoebus* ’gins arise’ (*Cym.*, 2.3.20).

Shakespeare refers six times to **Thetis**, the Greek sea-nymph (Spevack 1310). See also No. 8.5-6 (**When that *Aurora*, blushing red, Descried the guilt of *Thetis*’ bed**). **Aurora** refers to the dawning sun.

Phoebus (also referenced in Nos. 17.24, 19.8, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo**, Greco-Roman god of the sun. The quotation above from *Cymbeline* is one of 23 references to **Phoebus** (including one spelled “Phibbus”) in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 976-77). **Apollo** is referenced once in these de Vere poems (No. 3.6) and 29 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 54).

On **Thetis** and **Phoebus**, see also the parallels to No. 8 (lines 1-2 and 5-6). On the amours of the gods generally (a common interest of these de Vere poems and Shakespeare), see also No. 3.6 and No. 6 (lines 7-10, 17-18, and 23-24).

(33) **The morning, blushing red**

‘When lo the *blushing* morrow Lends light to all’ (*Lucrece*, 1082); ‘King Richard doth himself appear, As doth the *blushing* discontented sun From out the fiery portal of the east’ (*Rich. II*, 3.3.63); ‘a *blush* Modest as *morning*’ (*Troil.*, 1.3.229); cf. ‘To *blush* and beautify the cheek’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 3.2.167); ‘His treasons will sit *blushing* in his face’ (*Rich. II*, 3.2.51).

See also No. 8.5 (**that *Aurora* [i.e., dawning sun] *blushing red***).

(34) **In fair carnation wise**

‘the fairest flowers o’ th’ season Are our *carnations* and streaked gillyvors’ (*Win.*, 4.4.81-82); cf. ‘how much *carnation* ribbon may a man buy ... ?’ (*LLL*, 3.1.135-36); ‘[Hostess Quickly:] A could never abide *carnation*; ’twas a color he [Falstaff] never liked’ (*Hen. V*, 2.3.30).

De Vere employs here another flower (in addition to **lilies** and **roses**) referenced by Shakespeare (on the three occasions quoted above, Spevack 183).

No. 15: “Who Taught Thee First to Sigh?”

- 1 Who taught thee first to sigh, alas, my heart?
- 2 Who taught thy tongue the woeful words of plaint?
- 3 Who filled thine eyes with tears of bitter smart?
- 4 Who gave thee grief and made thy joys so faint?
Love
- 5 Who first did print with colours pale thy face?
- 6 Who first did break thy sleeps of quiet rest?
- 7 Above the rest in Court, who gave thee Grace?
- 8 Who made thee strive in virtue to be best?
Love
- 9 In constant troth to bide so firm and sure,
- 10 To scorn the world, regarding but thy friend,
- 11 With patient mind each passion to endure,
- 12 In one desire to settle to thy end?
Love
- 13 Love then thy choice, wherein such faith doth bind,
- 14 As nought but death may ever change thy mind.

Textual sources: Grosart (413); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 562);
May (#15) (1980, 37; 1991, 281).

Poem structure: sonnet (in classical Shakespearean form, plus three echoes).

Looney’s title: “Love Thy Choice.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Ogburn (512-13); Sobran (258-59); Brazil & Flues.

Clarification of the text:

- (9) The word **troth** is an archaic term for “truth,” also signifying solemnly pledged faith, loyalty, or **constancy** (*OED* 17: 587-88).

Strongest parallels to No. 15:

- (1) ***Who taught thee first to sigh, alas, my heart?***

‘Who taught thee how to make me love thee more ... ?’ (*Sonnets*, 150.9).

Both samples employ the identical phrase (**Who taught thee?**) in exactly the same context—a rhetorical question asking about the origins of the speaker’s love for another. In both there is a kind of sweet chiding over the beloved’s responsibility for inspiring the lover’s desire.

- (2) ***Who taught thy tongue the woeful words of plaint?***

‘And if I were thy nurse, *thy tongue to teach*’ (*Rich. II*, 5.3.113); ‘To teach my tongue to be so long’ (*Pass. Pilg.*, 18.52); cf. ‘Those eyes that *taught all other eyes to see*’ (*Venus*, 952); ‘How angerly I *taught my brow to frown*’ (*Two Gent.*, 1.2.62); ‘And teach your ears to list me with more heed’ (*Errors*, 4.1.101); ‘Teach not thy lip such scorn’

(*Rich. III*, 1.2.171); 'my *woe-wearied tongue* is still and mute' (*Rich. III*, 4.4.18); 'O, she doth *teach the torches* to burn bright!' (*R&J*, 1.5.44).

The parallel here is not merely the verb **teach/taught** but its specific, playful, metaphorical use as applied to the **tongue** or other body parts or inanimate objects.

(8-9) **Who made thee strive in virtue to be best? ... In constant troth to bide so firm and sure**

'I did *strive to prove The constancy and virtue* of your love' (*Sonnets*, 117.13-14); 'Oaths of thy love, *thy truth, thy constancy*' (*Sonnets*, 152.10); cf. 'though *thou stand'st more sure* than I could do, Thou art not *firm* enough' (*2 Hen. IV*, 4.5.202-03); 'That 'gainst the stream of *virtue* they may *strive*' (*Timon*, 4.1.27); 'so *firm, so constant*' (*Tem.*, 1.2.207).

One signification of the word **troth**, as noted above, is solemnly pledged faith, loyalty, or **constancy**.

Additional parallels to No. 15:

(2) **woeful words**

'As if they heard the *woeful words* they told' (*Venus*, 1126).

(3) **tears of bitter smart**

'*bitter tears*' (*Titus*, 3.1.6, 129).

(4-5) **Who gave thee grief and made thy joys to faint? ... Who first did print with colours pale thy face?**

'Affection *faints* not like a *pale-faced* coward' (*Venus*, 569); cf. 'As burning fevers, *ague, pale and faint*' (*Venus*, 739).

(6) **break thy sleeps of quiet rest**

'*break not your sleeps* for that' (*Ham.*, 4.7.30); cf. '*broke their sleep*' (*2 Hen. IV*, 4.5.68; *Cor.*, 4.4.19); 'one *quiet* breath of *rest*' (*John*, 3.4.134); 'God give you *quiet rest* tonight' (*Rich. III*, 5.3.43); 'Romeo should ... Soon *sleep in quiet*' (*R&J*, 3.5.99-100).

See also No. 18b.15 (**I break no sleep**).

(11) **With patient mind each passion to endure**

'God of his mercy give You *patience to endure*' (*Hen. V*, 2.2.180); 'have *patience* and *endure*' (*Much*, 4.1.254); '*endure* the toothache *patiently*' (*Much*, 5.1.36); 'I must have *patience to endure* the load' (*Rich. III*, 3.7.230); 'I must have *patience to endure* all this' (*Titus*, 2.3.88); 'I have the *patience to endure* it now' (*Caes.*, 4.3.192).

No. 16: “Were I a King”

- 1 Were I a king I could command content;
- 2 Were I obscure unknown should be my cares,
- 3 And were I dead no thought should me torment,
- 4 Nor words, nor wrongs, nor loves, nor hopes, nor fears;
- 5 A doubtful choice of these things one to crave,
- 6 A kingdom or a cottage or a grave.

Textual sources: Grosart (426-27); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 596);
May (#16) (1980, 37; 1991, 281).

Poem structure: epigram.

Looney’s title: same as above.

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (258-59); Goldstein (2016, 51-52; 2017, 23).

Nos. 16 and 18 express several related thoughts. Compare No. 18, line 1 (**My mind to me a kingdom is**) and lines 23-24 (**thus I triumph like a king, Content**).

Strongest parallels to No. 16:

(1) ***Were I a king I could command content***

‘*Was ever king that joyed an earthly throne, And could command no more content than I?*’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 4.9.2); cf. ‘*a king crowned with content*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 3.1.66); cf. ‘*Were the world mine*’ (*Dream*, 1.1.190).

(1-2, 6) ***content ... obscure ... A kingdom or a cottage or a grave***

‘*The king shall be contented ... I’ll give ... My gorgeous palace for a hermitage ... And my large kingdom for a little grave, A little little grave, an obscure grave*’ (*Rich. II*, 3.3.145).

Additional parallels to No. 16:

(3) ***no thought should me torment***

‘*the torture of the mind*’ (*Mac.*, 3.2.21); ‘*the thought* whereof Doth like a poisonous mineral *gnaw my inwards*’ (*Oth.*, 2.1.296); ‘*But ah, thought kills me*’ (*Sonnets*, 44.9).

Here is another characteristic topic in Shakespeare’s theory of the mind, found first in de Vere’s lyric: the idea that the mind can make itself sick with too much worry. Shakespeare’s Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI all lament the woes of **kings**.

No. 17: “Sitting Alone Upon My Thought” (The Echo Verses)

- 1 Sitting alone upon my thought, in melancholy mood,
2 In sight of sea, and at my back an ancient hoary wood,
3 I saw a fair young lady come, her secret fears to wail,
4 Clad all in colour of a nun, and covered with a veil.
5 Yet, for the day was clear and calm, I might discern her face,
6 As one might see a damask rose hid under crystal glass.
7 Three times with her soft hand full hard on her left side she knocks,
8 And sighed so sore as might have moved some pity in the rocks.
9 From sighs, and shedding amber tears, into sweet song she brake,
10 When thus the echo answered her to every word she spake.
- 11 “O heavens! Who was the first that bred in me this fever?”
 Vere.
12 “Who was the first that gave the wound, whose scar I wear for ever?”
 Vere.
13 “What tyrant Cupid to my harms usurps the golden quiver?”
 Vere.
14 “What wight first caught this heart, and can from bondage it deliver?”
 Vere.
15 “Yet who doth most adore this wight, O hollow caves, tell true?”
 You.
16 “What nymph deserves his liking best, yet doth in sorrow rue?”
 You.
17 “What makes him not regard good will with some remorse or ruth?”
 Youth.
18 “What makes him show, besides his birth, such pride and such untruth?”
 Youth.
19 “May I his beauty match with love, if he my love will try?”
 Aye.
20 “May I requite his birth with faith? Then faithful will I die?”
 Aye.
- 21 And I, that knew this lady well,
22 Said Lord, how great a miracle,
23 To her how echo told the truth,
24 As true as Phoebus’ oracle.

Textual sources: Grosart (411-12); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 560-61);
 May (PBO #1) (1980, 38-39; 1991, 282-83).

Poem structure: 10 x 2, with 10 echoes and 4-line coda.

Looney’s title: “Echo Verses.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 141-45, 162-64); Ogburn (393);
 Sobran (260-62); May (2004, 224); Goldstein (2016, 48-49; 2017, 22-23).

Clarifications of the text:

- (11-14) As Looney noted (1920, 162-63), **Vere** in the **echoes** to lines 11-14 would be pronounced “Vair.”
- (11-20) There are no quotation marks around the **fair young lady**’s words in the manuscript sources. May added quotation marks but Looney did not. They are used here for clarity. See also comment on line 11 in Figure 5 (next page).
- (13) **Cupid**, in classical mythology, is the god of **love** (see line 19) and desire (see line 11, “fever”).
- (14-15) A **wight** means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).
- (24) **Phoebus** (see also Nos. 14.31, 19.8, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo** (see No. 3.6), Greco-Roman god of the sun.

This poem may have been inspired by de Vere’s relationship with his mistress Anne Vavasour (c. 1560–c. 1650). The affair began around 1579, produced a son (Sir Edward Vere) born in March 1581, and apparently ended later that year (see, e.g., Anderson 161-65, 172-73, 178-81).

Professor May acknowledged strong reasons (convincing in our view) to accept de Vere’s authorship of No. 17, though he also questioned that attribution (1980, 79-81).

May’s text of No. 17 relies on the Folger Library’s manuscript 1.1112, which has the name “Vavaser” attached to it. Looney’s text relies on the Rawlinson manuscript in Oxford University’s Bodleian Library, which identifies “the Earl of Oxford” as the author and seems, overall, the preferable version (thus primarily relied upon here).

Several passages in the two manuscript versions are compared in Figure 5 (next page, with modernized spelling).

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Rawlinson MS:	Folger MS:	Commentary:
(3) her secret fears to wail	her secret tears to wail	How can <i>tears</i> be <i>secret</i> , much less <i>wailed</i> ?
(4) in colour of a nun	in colour of a vow	<i>Color of a vow</i> ? What does that mean? It is not comprehensible.
(6) hid under crystal glass	though hid with crystal glass	<i>Under</i> seems a superior poetic choice in diction and concision as well as sense. Both versions scan, but the Folger uses the superfluous <i>though</i> and less precise <i>with</i> , slowing down the vigor of the Rawlinson version.
(7) on her left side she knocks	upon her heart she knocks	<i>Heart</i> may be a stronger choice than <i>left side</i> . But metrically the one syllable <i>on</i> is more apt than <i>upon</i> , which fails to scan and needlessly takes two syllables. In these early poems, Oxford already understands the force of the one-syllable word and generally prefers it.
(8) moved some pity in the rocks	moved some mercy in the rocks	To <i>move mercy</i> is a cognitive and jurisprudential act. To <i>move pity</i> is an emotive act and seems more apt here.
(10) When thus the echo answered her	And thus the echo answered her	<i>When</i> retains the narrative dimension of the poem, lost in the use of <i>And</i> , a dead filler conjunction.
(11) O heavens! Who was the first ... ?	"O heavens," quoth she, "who was the first ... ?"	As noted on the previous page, there are no quotation marks in either manuscript, but May added them to the Folger text, perhaps to accommodate the superfluous <i>quoth she</i> in that version. The previous line in both versions says <i>the echo answered her to every word she spake</i> , rendering <i>quoth she</i> most likely a copyist's interpolation.
(24) As true as Phoebus' oracle	as 'twere Apollo's oracle	<i>As true as</i> reiterates the de Vere motto (" <i>Nothing Is Truer Than Truth</i> "), which is central to the meaning of the coda.

Figure 5: Comparison of Manuscripts of No. 17

Strongest parallels to No. 17:

- (1-4, 9) *Sitting alone upon my thought, in melancholy mood,
In sight of sea, and at my back an ancient hoary wood,
I saw a fair young lady come, her secret fears to wail,
Clad all in colour of a nun, and covered with a veil*
...
*From sighs, and shedding amber tears, into sweet song she
brake*

Compare the opening lines above to those opening *A Lover's Complaint*:

*From off a hill whose concave womb re-worded
A plaintful story from a sist'ring vale,*
(1-2)
*Ere long [I] espied a fickle maid full pale,
Tearing of papers, breaking rings a-twain,
Storming her world with sorrow's wind and rain.*
(5-7)
*Upon her head a platted hive of straw,
Which fortified her visage from the sun*
(8-9)
Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne [eyes],
(15)
That seasoned woe had pelleted in tears,
(18)
As often shrieking undistinguished woe
(20)

See also: 'Sitting on a bank, Weeping again the King my father's wrack, *This music crept by me upon the waters*' (*Tem.*, 1.2.390-92); cf. 'Sweet Cytherea, *sitting by a brook* With young Adonis ... told him stories to delight his ear' (*Pass. Pilg.*, 4.1-2, 5); 'Venus, with young Adonis *sitting by her Under a myrtle shade*, began to woo him' (*Pass. Pilg.*, 11.1-2).

The parallels here all involve **sitting** in evocative wilderness settings where some music or story (or both, *i.e.*, a **song**) are then heard.

Most strikingly, especially for that male-centric era, in both No. 17 and *Complaint*—and in *Venus and Adonis* (see parallels below to lines 7-10 & 15)—we overhear a *female* soliloquy of romantic woe (observed passively by a hidden man in both No. 17 and *Complaint*). Note that the lamenting **lady** in *Complaint* (like Shakespeare's *Venus*) seems to be significantly older ("carcass of a beauty spent and done [line 11] ... Some beauty peeped through lattice of seared age [line 14]") than the **fair young lady** of No. 17.

De Vere, likewise, when writing *Complaint* as "Shakespeare"—a pseudonym first used in print with the publication of *Venus* when he was

43—was probably significantly older than when he wrote No. 17, perhaps around the time his affair with Vavasour ended when he was 31.

More broadly, No. 17, *Complaint*, *Venus*, and the above-quoted scene in *The Tempest* all unite in presenting a natural setting for solitary anguish and tears.

See below three related and additional sets of parallels, to lines 7-10 & 15, to line 8 (**moved some pity in the rocks**) (including another echo in *Complaint*), and to lines 8-9.

(7-10, 15) ... full hard on her left side she knocks,
And sighed so sore ...
From sighs, and ... tears, into sweet song she brake
When thus the echo answered her to every word she spake
...
"O hollow caves, tell true"

Note that the Folger manuscript version of line 7 reads **upon her heart she knocks**. The **heart** is on the **left side** of the chest. Note also that line 19 twice refers explicitly to **love**, the overall theme.

Now compare, as Looney did (1920, 162-63; see also Goldstein 2016, 48-49; 2017, 22-23), the following 13 lines (including two full stanzas) from the first work published as by "Shakespeare" in 1593. That work, *Venus and Adonis* (like No. 17), depicts a **love**lorn female alone in a wilderness setting (Venus after Adonis eludes her), who proceeds to lament her woes, **sighing** and groaning **sorely** and **knocking upon her heart**—also **breaking into song**, while most distinctively of all, **caves echo every word she speaks**:

And now she beats her heart, whereat it groans,
That all the neighbor caves, as seeming troubled,
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
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 choir of echoes answer so.

Her song was tedious and outwore the night[.]
(*Venus*, 829-41)

See also: ‘echo replies’ (*Venus*, 695); ‘fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth’ (*Shrew*, ind.2.44); ‘with heart-sore sighs’ (*Two Gent.*, 1.1.30); ‘With nightly tears and daily heart-sore sighs’ (*Two Gent.*, 2.4.129); cf. ‘every word doth almost tell my name’ (*Sonnets*, 76.7).

Pursuing the parallels (dare we say **echoes**?) to lines 10 and 15 in particular, and noting the **fair young lady’s** repeated questions in lines 11-20 (**the echo answering “Vere”** in lines 11-14), consider also the following line uttered by yet another Shakespearean female enraptured by the pangs of **love**, calling out to her beloved (see Looney 1920, 163-64):

‘[Juliet:] Bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud, Else would I tear *the cave where Echo lies* And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine *With repetition of “My Romeo”!*’ (*R&J*, 2.2.161-64).

These parallels reveal both de Vere and Shakespeare deploying the same observant (Ovidian?) association between **cave** and **echo**.

(8) ***moved some pity in the rocks***

‘O if no harder than a *stone* thou art, *Melt at my tears, and be compassionate*; Soft *pity* enters at an iron gate’ (*Lucrece*, 593); ‘*Pity*, you ancient *stones*, those tender babes’ (*Rich. III*, 4.1.98); ‘What *rocky heart* to water *will not wear*?’ (*Lover’s Comp.*, 291); cf. ‘Beat at thy *rocky and wrack-threat’ning heart*’ (*Lucrece*, 590); ‘hard’ned *hearts*, harder than *stones*’ (*Lucrece*, 978).

See also: ‘He is a *stone*, a very *pebble stone*, and has no more *pity* in him than a dog’ (*Two Gent.*, 2.3.11); ‘I am not made of *stones*, But *penetrable to your kind entreats*’ (*Rich. III*, 3.7.224); ‘Your sorrow beats so ardently upon me That it shall make a counter-reflect ’gainst My brother’s *heart* and *warm it to some pity*, Though it were *made of stone*’ (*Kins.*, 1.1.126-29); cf. ‘I would to God my *heart* were *flint*, like Edward’s, Or Edward’s soft and *pitiful* like mine’ (*Rich. III*, 1.3.140); ‘*May move your hearts to pity*’ (*Rich. III*, 1.3.348).

Looney noted “the recurrence of what seems ... a curious appeal for **pity**” (1920, 161) in these de Vere poems and the works of Shakespeare. The word **pity** (including variants) appears more than 300 times in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 980-81). In addition to line 8, see also No. 3.7 (**the less she pities me**), No. 9.36 (**pity me**), and, e.g.:

‘This you should *pity* rather than despise’ (*Dream*, 3.2.235); ‘*Pity me* then’ (*Sonnets*, 111.8, 13); ‘Thine eyes I love, and they as *pitying me* ... And suit *thy pity* like in every part’ (*Sonnets*, 132.1, 12); ‘*my pity-wanting pain*’ (*Sonnets*, 140.4).

Compare also de Vere’s 1572 letter: “on whose tragedies we have an [*sic*] number of French Aeneases in this city, that tell of their own overthrows with tears falling from their eyes, a **piteous** thing to hear but a cruel and far more grievous thing we must deem it them to see” (Fowler 55). The same idea is expressed in different words by Shakespeare: ‘To see sad sights

moves more than hear them told, For then the eye interprets to the ear The heavy motion that it doth behold (Lucrece, 1324-26).

Additional parallels to No. 17:

(1) *melancholy mood*

'moody and dull melancholy (Errors, 5.1.79).

(4) *Clad all in colour of a nun, and covered with a veil*

'But like a cloistress she will veiled walk (Twelfth, 1.1.27); cf. *'Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot* (Sonnets, 95.11).

(5-6) *I might discern her face, As one might see a damask rose*

'I have seen roses damasked, red and white, But no such roses see I in her cheeks (Sonnets, 130.5-6); cf. *'[he] calls me e'en now ... through a red lattice, and I could discern no part of his face from the window* (2 Hen. IV, 2.2.74-75); *'feed on her damask cheek* (Twelfth, 2.4.112); *'as sweet as damask roses* (Win., 4.4.220); *'With cherry lips and cheeks of damask roses* (Kins., 4.1.74).

See also No. 14 (lines 21, 23 & 25-27) (**damask rose** and related parallels) and the discussion in the [Introduction](#) ([Evaluating the Poetic Parallels](#)).

(7) *her soft hand*

'her soft hand's print (Venus, 353); cf. *'thy soft hands* (Venus, 633).

(8-9) *sighed so sore ... sighs, and shedding amber tears*

As discussed above, *A Lover's Complaint* and *The Tempest* (especially the former) contain significant parallels to line 9 (**sighs ... tears**), as well as to lines 1-4. More broadly, there are around two dozen Shakespearean references to **shedding tears** (Spevack 1129-30). See, e.g.:

'Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make them wet again (Venus, 966); *'My sighs are blown away, my salt tears gone* (Venus, 1071); *'Be moved with my tears, my sighs, my groans* (Lucrece, 588); *'sighs and groans and tears* (Lucrece, 1319); *'With nightly tears and daily heart-sore sighs* (Two Gent., 2.4.129); *'upon the altar of her beauty You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart* (Two Gent., 3.2.72-73); *'Can you ... behold My sighs and tears and will not once relent?* (1 Hen. VI, 3.1.107-08); *'Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown King Edward's fruit* (3 Hen. VI, 4.4.23-24); *'what 'tis to love. It is to be all made of sighs and tears* (As You, 5.2.78-79); *'sighs and tears and groans Show minutes, times, and hours* (Rich. II, 5.5.57-58).

The foregoing is only a sampling of the many Shakespearean references to **sigh(sing)**, etc., in connection with **tears**, **weeping**, **groaning**, etc. (Spevack

1144-45). On **tears** and **sighs**, see also No. 9.1-2, and on the broader theme of **tears** and **weeping**, Nos. 3.13, 4.10, 5.12, and 6.26.

- (11) **“bred in me this fever”**

‘the raging fire of *fever bred*’ (*Errors*, 5.1.75).

- (12) **“Who was the first that gave the wound, whose scar I wear for ever?”**

‘When griping grief the heart doth *wound*, And doleful dumps the mind oppress’ (*R&J*, 4.5.126). Both samples use and parody **wound** as a metaphorical extravagance.

- (13) **“What tyrant *Cupid* to my harms usurps the golden quiver?”**

‘if *Cupid* have not spent all his *quiver* in Venice’ (*Much*, 1.1.241-42). Shakespeare often uses **usurp** and its variants figuratively (Spevack 1420), as it is used here in de Vere’s lyric.

- (14) **“can from bondage it deliver”**

‘Cassius *from bondage will deliver* Cassius’ (*Caes.*, 1.3.90).

- (19-20) **“May I his beauty match with love ... May I requite his birth with faith?”**

‘I will *requite* you *with as good a thing*’ (*Tem.*, 5.1.169); cf. ‘love on, I will *requite* thee’ (*Much*, 3.1.111); ‘I do with an eye of *love requite* her’ (*Much*, 5.4.24); ‘if he *love* me to madness, I shall never *requite* him’ (*Merch.*, 1.2.59-60); ‘I thank thee for thy *love* to me, which ... I will most kindly *requite*’ (*As You*, 1.1.127-28); ‘To make a more *requital* to your *love*’ (*John*, 2.1.34); ‘I will *requite* your *loves*’ (*Ham.*, 1.2.251).

- (24) ***As true as Phoebus’ oracle***

‘And in *Apollo’s* name, his *oracle*’ (*Win.*, 3.2.118); ‘There is *no truth at all i’ th’ oracle!*’ (*Win.*, 3.2.138); ‘*Apollo* said, Is’t not the tenor of *his oracle*’ (*Win.*, 5.1.38).

Phoebus (also referenced in Nos. 14.31, 19.8, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo**, Greco-Roman god of the sun. There are 23 references to **Phoebus** (including one spelled “Phibbus”) in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 976-77). **Apollo** is referenced once in these de Vere poems (No. 3.6) and 29 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 54).

No. 18: “My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is”

(see also four additional stanzas in No. 18b, p. 109)

- 1 My mind to me a kingdom is;
- 2 Such perfect joy therein I find
- 3 That it excels all other bliss
- 4 That world affords or grows by kind.
- 5 Though much I want which most men have,
- 6 Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

- 7 No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
- 8 No force to win the victory,
- 9 No wily wit to salve a sore,
- 10 No shape to feed each gazing eye,
- 11 To none of these I yield as thrall.
- 12 For why? My mind doth serve for all.

- 13 I see how plenty suffers oft,
- 14 How hasty climbers soon do fall;
- 15 I see that those that are aloft
- 16 Mishap doth threaten most of all;
- 17 They get with toil, they keep with fear.
- 18 Such cares my mind could never bear.

- 19 Content I live, this is my stay;
- 20 I seek no more than may suffice;
- 21 I press to bear no haughty sway;
- 22 Look what I lack my mind supplies.
- 23 Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
- 24 Content with that my mind doth bring.

- 25 Some have too much yet still do crave;
- 26 I little have and seek no more.
- 27 They are but poor though much they have
- 28 And I am rich with little store.
- 29 They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
- 30 They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

- 31 I laugh not at another's loss,
- 32 I grudge not at another's gain.
- 33 No worldly waves my mind can toss;
- 34 My state at one doth still remain.
- 35 I fear no foe nor fawning friend,
- 36 I loathe not life nor dread my end.

37 Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
38 Their wisdom by their rage of will;
39 Their treasure is their only trust,
40 And cloaked craft their store of skill.
41 But all the pleasure that I find,
42 Is to maintain a quiet mind.

43 My wealth is health and perfect ease,
44 My conscience clear my chief defense;
45 I neither seek by bribes to please
46 Nor by deceit to breed offense.
47 Thus do I live, thus will I die.
48 Would all did so as well as I.

Textual sources: May (PBO #2) (1975, 391-92; 1980, 39-40; 1991, 283-84)
(not in Grosart or Looney).

Poem structure: 6 x 8.

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (262-65); Brazil & Flues;
Goldstein (2016, 63-66).

A title used for No. 18 in the original sources, possibly not chosen by de Vere, is **In Praise of a Contented Mind** (see [Note on Sources, Titles, and Presentation of Parallels](#)).

Clarification of the text:

- (9) The term **wit** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).

Orthodox scholars have generally tried to minimize the size of de Vere's canon, though some, like May (1975), have occasionally sought to enlarge it with poems misattributed to other Elizabethan poets, such as No. 18.

The correct attribution of No. 18 is important. It has long been regarded as one of "the most popular verses in the English language" (May 1975, 385). As May noted, it "has been continuously reprinted since 1588 Of the thousands of lines of moral and philosophical verse turned out during the first half of the Elizabethan age, only this poem seems to have captured the attention of later generations ..." (1991, 64; see also 1975, 393, noting its "extraordinary and enduring popularity").

One can readily detect the intimate influence of both Seneca and Ovid in No. 18, which constitutes a remarkable testament to the author's striking philosophical originality and poetic fluency. It is included here on the strength of May's 1975 attribution. See also Appendix B, p. 124 (explaining why it is reasonable to also attribute to de Vere the four stanzas in No. 18b, p. 109).

Strongest parallels to No. 18:

(1) **My mind to me a kingdom is**

‘My library Was *dukedom* large enough’ (*Tem.*, 1.2.108-09); ‘O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count *myself a king of infinite space*, were it not that I have bad dreams’ (*Ham.*, 2.2.254); cf. ‘For *’tis the mind* that makes the body rich’ (*Shrew*, 4.3.169); ‘our Caesar tells, I am conqueror of myself’ (*A&C*, 4.14.62).

The following lines in *Henry VI, Part 2*, are perhaps closest to the overall thought and diction of No. 18:

This small inheritance my father left me
Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.
I seek not to wax great by others’ waning,
Or gather wealth, I care not with what envy.
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state
And send the poor well pleased from my gate.
(4.10.17-22)

See also No. 18b.16-18 (**I wait not at the mighty’s gate. I scorn no poor, nor fear no rich, I feel no want nor have too much**).

No. 16 and No. 18 express several related thoughts. Compare the manuscript title of No. 18 (**In Praise of a Contented Mind**) (though possibly not chosen by de Vere, as noted above), with No. 18, lines 19 and 24 (**Content**) and No. 16, line 1 (**Were I a king I could command content**).

The Shakespearean words **mind** (393 references), and **kingdom** (136) (Spevack 665-66, 821-22), express core concepts in the canon. **Mind** relates to the playwright’s exploration of human psychology, and **kingdom** to his study of political organization, especially the contrast between tyranny and legitimate monarchy and problems of governance and law more generally. Fused as they are in de Vere’s lyric, these terms attest to the fluid nature of the boundary between the psychological and the political—a relationship that is characteristically Shakespearean.

(10-11) **No shape to feed each gazing eye, To none of these I yield as thrall**

‘Whose sudden *sight hath thrall’d my wounded eye*’ (*Shrew*, 1.1.220); ‘all eyes saw *his eyes enchanted with gazes*’ (*LLL*, 2.1.245); ‘*So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape*’ (*Dream*, 3.1.139); cf. ‘youth with comeliness *plucked all gaze his way*’ (*Cor.*, 1.3.6-7).

The above-quoted line in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is part of an extended passage on the theme of **enthralled gaze** (2.1.226-51). Compare also these lines in *Venus and Adonis*:

But, when *his glutton eye so full hath fed*
(399)

Alas, he naught esteems that face of thine,
To which Love's eyes pay tributary gazes
(631-32)

Fold in the object that did feed her sight
(822)

He fed them with his sight [i.e., his beauty], they him with berries
(1104)

See also: 'gaze on and grovel on thy face' (2 *Hen. VI*, 1.2.9); 'The abject people gazing on thy face' (2 *Hen. VI*, 2.4.11); 'No shape but his can please your dainty eye' (3 *Hen. VI*, 5.3.38); 'with gazing fed' (*Merch.*, 3.2.68); 'I have fed mine eyes on thee' (*Troil.*, 4.5.231); 'Her eye must be fed' (*Oth.*, 2.1.225); 'That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?' (*All's Well*, 1.1.221); 'I feed Most hungrily on your sight' (*Timon*, 1.1.252); 'mine eyes have drawn thy shape' (*Sonnets*, 24.10).

The words **gaze** (and its variants) and **eye(s)** appear together more than a dozen times in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 468). See also No. 11.21 (**What feedeth most your sight?**).

(14-16) **How hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those that are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all**

'The art o' the court, As hard to leave as keep, whose top to climb Is certain falling'
(*Cym.*, 3.3.46-48).

(23-24) **I triumph like a king, Content with that my mind doth bring**

'For 'tis the *mind* that makes the body *rich*' (*Shrew*, 4.3.169); 'Poor and *content* is *rich* and *rich* enough' (*Oth.*, 3.3.172).

See also line 19 (**Content I live**), the discussion of the parallels to line 1, and No. 16.1 (**Were I a king I could command content**).

(27-28) **They are but poor though much they have And I am rich with little store**

The antithesis becomes, again, one of Shakespeare's favorites: 'poorly rich' (*Lucrece*, 97); 'My *riches* are these *poor* habiliments' (*Two Gent.*, 4.1.13); 'Wise things seem foolish and *rich* things *but poor*' (*LLL*, 5.2.378); 'If thou art *rich*, thou'rt *poor*' (*Meas.*, 3.1.25); 'Fairest Cordelia, that art *most rich* being *poor*' (*Lear*, 1.1.250); 'Rich gifts wax *poor*' (*Ham.*, 3.1.100).

Indeed, consider carefully not just lines 27-28 but the entire stanza where they appear (lines 25-30):

**Some have too much yet still do crave;
I little have and seek no more.
They are but poor though much they have
And I am rich with little store.**

*They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.*

Then compare the following stanza in *Lucrece*:

Those that *much* covet are with gain so fond
That what *they* have not, *that which they* possess,
They scatter and unloose it from their bond,
And so, *by hoping more, they have but less*;
Or, gaining *more*, the profit of *excess*
Is but to *surfeit*, and such griefs sustain
That *they* prove bankrupt in this *poor rich* gain.
(134-40)

Additional parallels to No. 18:

(2) *Such perfect joy therein I find*

‘the *perfectest* herald of *joy*’ (*Much*, 2.1.306).

(3-4) *all other bliss That world affords*

‘What other *pleasure* can *the world* afford?’ (3 *Hen.* VI, 3.2.147); ‘the *sweet degrees* that *this brief world* affords’ (*Timon*, 4.3.253); ‘The *world* affords no law to make thee *rich*’ (*R&J*, 5.1.73); cf. ‘The spacious *world* cannot again afford’ (*Rich.* III, 1.2.245).

(4) *grows by kind*

‘Your cuckoo sings *by kind*’ (*All’s Well*, 1.3.63); ‘Fitted *by kind* for rape and villainy’ (*Titus*, 2.1.116).

(6) *Yet still my mind forbids to crave*

‘The affliction of my *mind* amends, with which, I fear, a madness held me: this must *crave*’ (*Tem.*, 5.1.122).

(7) *No princely pomp, no wealthy store*

‘To love, to *wealth and pomp*, I pine and die’ (*LLL*, 1.1.31); cf. ‘O, him she *stores*, to show what *wealth* she had’ (*Sonnets*, 67.13).

(8) *No force to win the victory*

‘you have *won a happy victory*’ (*Cor.*, 5.3.186).

(9) **No wily wit**

‘upon my *wit*, to defend my *wiles*’ (*Troil.*, 1.2.247-48). See also No. 6.9 (**wit so wise**), No. 9.16 (**wisest wit**), and No. 10.12 (**wit ... will**).

(9) **to salve a sore**

‘A *salve* for any *sore* that may betide’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 4.6.88).

See also parallels to No. 9.22 (**She is my salve, she is my wounded sore**) and No. 5.29-30 (**So long to fight with secret sore, And find no secret salve therefor**). The **salve ... sore** motif (like some others) was echoed by some other Elizabethan poets and these parallels may not be that telling in and of themselves (see May 2004, 229), but as with many of the additional parallels noted, much of their significance is in the overall cumulative context.

(20) **I seek no more than may suffice**

‘and have *no more* of life *than may suffice*’ (*Per.*, 2.1.74).

(31-32) **I laugh not at another’s loss, I grudge not at another’s gain**

‘laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains’ (*Merch.*, 3.1.55); ‘I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man’s happiness, glad of other men’s good, content with my harm’ (*As You*, 3.2.74). See also lines 19 and 24 (**Content**).

(33, 36) **No worldly waves my mind can toss ... I loathe not life nor dread my end**

‘Your *mind* is tossing on the ocean’ (*Merch.*, 1.1.8); ‘By waves from coast to coast is tossed’ (*Per.*, 2.ch.34); cf. ‘madly tossed between desire and dread’ (*Lucrece*, 171); ‘My life’s foul deed, my life’s fair end shall free it’ (*Lucrece*, 1208).

Once again, using language similar to Shakespeare’s, de Vere associates the inner life of the human subject with the motions of the **sea**. See also Nos. 6.26 and 12.19.

Also: ‘the weariest and most *loathed worldly life*’ (*Meas.*, 3.1.128); cf. ‘Why then, though *loath*, yet must I be *content*’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 4.6.48). See also lines 19 and 24 (**Content**).

(40) **cloaked craft**

‘To *cloak* offenses with a *cunning* brow’ (*Lucrece*, 749).

Here again we have the leitmotif of dissimulation, using the word **cloak** in common. See also No. 5.16 (**to cloak the covert mind**). On this important *topos*, a suggestive common interest, see also No. 5 (line 1 and *passim*) and Nos. 6.4, 9.2, 10.9-10, and 12.16.

(43) **My *wealth* is health and perfect *ease***

‘With honor, *wealth*, and *ease* in waning age’ (*Lucrece*, 142); ‘Leaving his *wealth* and *ease*’ (*As You*, 2.5.52).

(46) ***breed offense***

‘love *breeds* such *offense*’ (*Oth.*, 3.3.380).

No. 18b: “My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is” (additional stanzas)

- 1 I joy not in no earthly bliss,
- 2 I force not Croesus' wealth a straw.
- 3 For care I know not what it is,
- 4 I fear not Fortune's fatal law.
- 5 My mind is such as may not move
- 6 For beauty bright nor force of love.

- 7 I wish but what I have at will,
- 8 I wander not to seek for more.
- 9 I like the plain, I climb no hill,
- 10 In greatest storms I sit on shore
- 11 And laugh at those that toil in vain,
- 12 To get what must be lost again.

- 13 I kiss not where I wish to kill,
- 14 I feign not love where most I hate.
- 15 I break no sleep to win my will,
- 16 I wait not at the mighty's gate.
- 17 I scorn no poor, nor fear no rich,
- 18 I feel no want nor have too much.

- 19 The Court ne cart I like ne loathe,
- 20 Extremes are counted worst of all.
- 21 The golden mean betwixt them both
- 22 Doth surest sit and fear no fall.
- 23 This is my choice, for why I find
- 24 No wealth is like the quiet mind.

Textual sources: Rollins (1929, 1: 225-31); May (1975, 391 n. 1, 392-93)
(not in Grosart or Looney).

Poem structure: 6 x 4.

Past commentaries on parallels: None to our knowledge.

These four additional stanzas are found in some sources for No. 18. Rollins attributed both Nos. 18 and 18b to Edward Dyer, but May (1975, 386-90) leaned in favor de Vere as the author of No. 18, while suggesting that no clear attribution was possible for No. 18b. See Appendix B, p. 124, for an explanation of why it is reasonable to attribute No. 18b to de Vere.

Clarifications of the text:

- (19) The word **ne** is an archaic conjunction (already becoming so by the early Elizabethan period), that was sometimes used in place of “nor” in late-15th to mid-16th century English (so **ne ... ne** essentially means “neither ... nor”) (*OED*, 10: 264-65). **Court** and **cart** refer to the royal **court** in contrast to a menial **cart**, thus reinforcing the poet's asserted indifference to **wealth** or

status. The original text uses **loath**, but since it is used as a verb, the modern spelling of **loathe** is given here. However, in early modern English **loathe** did not have so intense a connotation of aversion as it does today (*OED* 8: 1071).

Line 19 could thus be translated: **I [neither] like [nor dislike] the [royal] Court [nor menial] cart**. That is, the poet disdains **extremes of feeling** (especially as between **wealth** and status or their absence, as also suggested by lines 2, 18, and 20-22). See parallels to lines 16-19.

Strongest parallels to No. 18b:

(16-19) *I wait not at the mighty's gate.
I scorn no poor, nor fear no rich,
I feel no want nor have too much.
The Court ne cart I like ne loath*

Compare, again, lines quoted in relation to No. 18.1:

*I seek not to wax great by others' waning,
Or gather wealth, I care not with what envy.
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state
And send the poor well pleased from my gate.*
(2 *Hen. VI*, 4.10.19-22)

Cf. 'The poor mechanic porters crowding in Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate' (*Hen. V*, 1.2.203-04); 'I live with bread like you, *feel want*' (*Rich. II*, 3.2.175); 'You have too much respect upon [*i.e.*, concern for] the world' (*Merch.*, 1.1.74); 'Why, Paris hath color enough ... Then Troilus should *have too much*' (*Troil.*, 1.2.95, 97); 'yet you *Have too much* blood in him' (*Win.*, 2.1.56-57); 'I *have too much* believed mine own suspicion' (*Win.*, 3.2.149).

As discussed above, **ne ... ne** (line 19) means "neither ... nor." There appears to be one analogous usage in canonical Shakespeare (below):

'he, good prince [Pericles], having all lost, By waves from coast to coast is tost. All perishen of man, of pelf [*i.e.*, all other people and goods being lost], *Ne* aught escapend but himself [*i.e.*, *Nor* anyone escaping but Pericles himself]' (*Per.*, 2.ch.33-36).

Seven other appearances of **ne** in canonical Shakespeare appear to involve common usages in Latin and French where it has a somewhat different meaning, or as an abbreviation or equivalent of the English words "neigh" or "nay" (Spevack 872).

Additional parallels to No. 18b:

(1) ***I joy not in no earthly bliss***

‘I know you *joy not in* a love discourse’ (*Two Gent.*, 2.4.124); ‘by the hope I have of heavenly bliss’ (3 *Hen.* VI, 3.3.182).

(3) ***Care, I know not what it is***

‘Madam, *I know not*, nor I greatly *care not*’ (*Rich. II*, 5.2.48); ‘My aunt Lavinia Follows me everywhere, *I know not* why ... My Lord, *I know not*, I, nor can I guess’ (*Titus*, 4.1.2, 16); ‘Nay, by my troth, *I know not*, but *I know* to be up late is to be up late’ (*Twelfth*, 2.3.4-5); ‘Why I should fear *I know not*, Since guiltiness *I know not*’ (*Oth.*, 5.2.38-39).

(5-6) ***My mind is such as may not move For beauty bright nor force of love***

‘She *moves me not*, or not removes, at least, *Affection’s edge in me*’ (*Shrew*, 1.2.70-71); cf. ‘If this letter *move him not*, his legs cannot’ (*Twelfth*, 3.4.159).

(6) ***nor force of love***

‘And love you ’gainst the nature of love—*force ye*’ (*Two Gent.*, 5.4.58); ‘If this inducement *force her not to love*’ (*Rich. III*, 4.4.386); ‘This flower’s *force* in stirring love’ (*Dream*, 2.2.69).

(7) ***I wish but what I have at will***

‘Why, now *thou hast thy wish*. Wouldst have me weep? Why, now *thou hast thy will*’ (3 *Hen.* VI, 1.4.143-44); ‘Whoever *hath her wish, thou hast thy will*’ (*Sonnets*, 135.1); cf. ‘To let him slip *at will*’ (*Cor.*, 1.6.39); ‘For them to play *at will*’ (*Win.*, 2.1.52).

(10) ***In greatest storms I sit on shore***

‘When from thy *shore the tempest* beat us back, I stood upon the hatches *in the storm*’ (2 *Hen.* VI, 3.2.102-03).

(11) ***And laugh at those that toil in vain***

‘And all the rest *forgot for which he toiled*’ (*Sonnets*, 25.12); ‘*bootless toil* must recompense itself With its own sweat’ (*Kins.*, 1.1.153-54).

The locution **in vain**, which occurs three times in these de Vere poems (see also Nos. 5.32 and 9.26), appears around 40 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 1421).

(13) ***I kiss not where I wish to kill***

‘He thought to *kiss* him, and hath *killed* him so’ (*Venus*, 1110); cf. ‘What follows more she *murders with a kiss*’ (*Venus*, 54).

(15) ***I break no sleep to win my will***

‘*Break not your sleeps* for that’ (*Ham.*, 4.7.30); cf. ‘*broke their sleep*’ (*2 Hen. IV*, 4.5.68, and *Cor.*, 4.4.19); ‘Shall I go *win my daughter* to thy *will*?’ (*Rich. III*, 4.4.426).

See also No. 15.6 (***break thy sleeps***).

(22) ***Doth surest sit and fear no fall***

‘Ours is the *fall*, I *fear*’ (*Timon*, 5.2.17); ‘Does *fall* in travail with her *fear*’ (*Per.*, 3.ch.52); cf. ‘They well deserve to have That know the strong’st and *surest* way to get’ (*Rich. II*, 3.3.200-01); ‘open perils *surest* answered’ (*Caes.*, 4.1.47); ‘My love and *fear* glued many friends to thee, And now I *fall*’ (*3 Hen. VI*, 2.6.5-6).

The word **surest** appears once (here) in these de Vere poems and twice (as quoted above) in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 1235).

No. 19: “If Women Could Be Fair and Yet Not Fond”

- 1 If women could be fair and yet not fond,
2 Or that their love were firm, not fickle still,
3 I would not marvel that they make men bond
4 By service long to purchase their good will.
5 But when I see how frail those creatures are,
6 I muse that men forget themselves so far.
- 7 To mark the choice they make and how they change,
8 How oft from Phoebus they do flee to Pan;
9 Unsettled still, like haggards wild they range,
10 These gentle birds that fly from man to man.
11 Who would not scorn and shake them from the fist,
12 And let them fly, fair fools, which way they list?
- 13 Yet for disport we fawn and flatter both,
14 To pass the time when nothing else can please,
15 And train them to our lure with subtle oath,
16 Till weary of their wiles ourselves we ease.
17 And then we say when we their fancy try,
18 To play with fools, oh what a fool was I.

Textual sources: Grosart (420); Looney (1921, Miller ed. 1975, 1: 595);
May (PBO #3) (1980, 40-41; 1991, 284).

Poem structure: 6 x 3.

Looney’s title: “Woman’s Changeableness.”

Past commentaries on parallels: Looney (1920, 139-40, 163-64);
Ogburn (380-81, 518); Sobran (266-67); Brazil & Flues;
May (2004, 223-24, 228); Goldstein (2016, 53-54).

Clarifications of the text:

- (1) The word **fond** bears here the archaic meaning of “foolish” or “foolishly affectionate” (not the bland modern sense of merely “affectionate”); the archaic meaning of **fond** could also, more intensely, connote madness or imbecility (*OED* 6: 5-6).
- (8) **Phoebus** (see also Nos. 14.31, 17.24, and 20.4) is an epithet for **Apollo** (see No. 3.6), Greco-Roman god of the sun. **Pan**, in Greek mythology, is the god of wild woodlands, fields, and shepherds, strongly associated with fertility and sexuality.
- (9) A **haggard** (a term of art in falconry) refers to a wild adult **hawk** (typically female) caught for training (see also No. 9.14); it is thus mainly a noun in this context (not to be confused with the adjective indicating an exhausted appearance) (*OED* 6: 1013).

Strongest parallels to No. 19:

- (7-8) **To mark the choice they make and how they change, How oft from Phoebus they do flee to Pan**

‘She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice. She must have change, she must’ (*Oth.*, 1.3.355); ‘So excellent a king [Hamlet’s late father], that was to this *Hyperion to a satyr* [referring to his uncle, the new King Claudius, hastily married to his widowed mother] ... *Within a month ... She married. O, most wicked speed*, to post With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!’ (*Ham.*, 1.2.139-40, 153, 156-57).

As noted above, **Phoebus** is an epithet for **Apollo**, while **Pan** is a god associated with fertility and sexuality. **Apollo** (or **Phoebus**) is often associated with the Greek sun god Helios, who in turn is the son of *Hyperion* (one of the Titans). *Satyrs*, in Greek mythology, are the priapic male companions of Dionysus (Bacchus to the Romans). Like **Pan**, with whom they have long been associated, satyrs are typically depicted with goatish hindquarters, prominent genitals, and insatiable sexual appetites.

Hamlet’s famous diatribe (“*Hyperion to a satyr*”) thus essentially accuses his mother (in only slightly different terms) of **flee[ing] ... from Phoebus ... to Pan**. Oxfordians have long noted that de Vere, at the impressionable age of 12, experienced the death of his father and, apparently within a year or so, his mother’s remarriage—perhaps unduly prompt or unseemly as it may have appeared to a grieving pubescent son (see, e.g., Anderson 16-18, 37).

See also the parallel to line 5.

- (9) **like haggards wild they range**

‘I know her spirits are as coy and wild As haggards of the rock’ (*Much*, 3.1.35-36); ‘If I do prove her haggard, Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings, I’d whistle her off and let her down the wind To prey at fortune’ (*Oth.*, 3.3.260-63).

See also the parallels to line 15 (**train them to our lure**) and to No. 9.14 (**The haggard hawk with toil is made full tame**). Falconry was an aristocratic sport and status symbol during Shakespeare’s time. See the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#) for more discussion. In early English falconry literature, **hawk**, **haggard**, and “falcon” usually refer to females (a male **hawk** is known to falconers as a “tiercel”).

The parallels to line 9 (which refers generically to **women** as **wild haggards**) are not quite as strong as those to No. 9.14, though line 9 and *Much Ado About Nothing* do present a triple word parallel (**like/as wild haggards**). Line 9 and *Othello* also present a specifically similar image of **women ranging** or roaming freely like **wild** birds. The notable passage in *The Taming of the Shrew* (“to man my **haggard**,” etc.) echoes line 9, as it

does (even more strongly) No. 9.14. Since that passage also connects tellingly to line 15, the quotation is provided below.

(15) *train them to our lure*

The reference to a **lure** makes clear that de Vere in line 15 is continuing the falconry simile of line 9 (and No. 9.14). Line 15, like No. 9.14, thus parallels the same passage quoted there in *The Taming of the Shrew*—and, given the parallel between **training** and **taming** (as well as “manning”) the **haggard** (or shrewish **woman**), the very title of that play:

‘My falcon now is sharp and passing empty, And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged, For then she never looks upon her lure. Another way I have to man my haggard, To make her come and know her keeper’s call’ (*Shrew*, 4.1.177-81).

Line 15 also recalls the passages in *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello* quoted in connection with line 9 and No. 9.14. Again, see the additional discussion of the **haggard hawk** parallels in the [Introduction \(Evaluating the Poetic Parallels\)](#).

In a gender-flipping contrast (see also No. 9.14), Juliet imagines herself as a falconer **luring** Romeo:

‘[Juliet:] Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falc’ner’s voice To lure this tassel-gentle back again!’ (*R&J*, 2.2.159-60).

Additional parallels to No. 19:

(4) *By service long to purchase their good will*

‘I entreat true peace of you, Which I will purchase with my duteous service’ (*Rich. III*, 2.1.63-64); cf. *‘purchase us a good opinion’* (*Caes.*, 2.1.145).

(5) *how frail those creatures are*

‘frailty, thy name is woman’ (*Ham.*, 1.2.146).

See also the parallels to lines 7-8 above.

(15) *with subtle oath*

Compare Sonnet 138:

When my love *swears* that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutored youth,
Unlearned in the world’s false *subtleties*.

(1-4)

No. 20: “Cupid’s Bow”

1 In peascod time when hound to horn gives ear while buck is killed,
2 And little boys with pipes of corn sit keeping beasts in field,
3 I went to gather strawberries tho’ when woods and groves were fair,
4 And parched my face with Phoebus, lo, by walking in the air.
5 I lay me down all by a stream and banks all overhead,
6 And there I found the strangest dream, that ever young man had.
7 Methought I saw each Christmas game, both revels all and some,
8 And each thing else that man could name or might by fancy come,
9 The substance of the thing I saw, in silence pass it shall,
10 Because I lack the skill to draw, the order of them all.
11 But Venus shall not ’scape my pen, whose maidens in disdain
12 Sit feeding on the hearts of men, whom Cupid’s bow hath slain.
13 And that blind Boy sat all in blood, be bathed to the ears,
14 And like a conqueror he stood, and scorned lovers’ tears.
15 “I have more hearts,” quoth he, “at call, than Caesar could command.
16 “And like the deer I make them fall, that overcross the land.
17 “I do increase their wand’ring wits, till that I dim their sight.
18 “’Tis I that do bereave them of their joy and chief delight.”
19 Thus did I see this bragging Boy advance himself even then,
20 Deriding at the wanton toys, of foolish loving men,
21 Which when I saw for anger then my panting breast did beat,
22 To see how he sat taunting them, upon his royal seat.
23 O then I wished I had been free, and cured were my wound;
24 Methought I could display his arms, and coward deeds expound.
25 But I perforce must stay my muse, full sore against my heart,
26 For that I am a subject wight, and lanced with his dart.
27 But if that I achieve the fort, which I have took in charge,
28 My hand and head with quivering quill, shall blaze his name at large.

Textual sources: May (PBO #4) (1980, 41-42; 1991, 284-86)
(not in Grosart or Looney).

Poem structure: rhyming couplets.

Past commentaries on parallels: Sobran (266-70).

Clarifications of the text:

- (1) A **peascod** is the pod of a **pea** plant (*OED* 11: 404-05), so **peascod time** would mean the harvest season for that crop.
- (12) **Cupid**, in classical mythology, is the god of **love** (see lines 14 and 20) and desire.
- (17) The term **wits** as used here refers to intelligence or mental sharpness, not humor (*OED* 20: 432-34).

- (25) The nine **Muses**, in Greek mythology, are the inspirational goddesses of poets and other writers, artists, and scholars.
- (26) A **wight** means a person (who can be male or female), with some connotation of commiseration or contempt (*OED* 20: 328).

Strongest parallels to No. 20:

- (4) *parched my face with Phoebus, lo, by walking in the air*

‘Think on me, That am *with Phoebus’ amorous pinches black And wrinkled deep in time?*’ (*A&C*, 1.5.27-29); cf. ‘parch in Afric sun’ (*Troil.*, 1.3.369); ‘Lo! whilst I waited on my tender lambs, And to sun’s parching heat displayed my cheeks’ (*1 Hen. VI*, 1.2.77).

Phoebus (see also Nos. 14.31, 17.24, and 19.8) is an epithet for **Apollo**, Greco-Roman god of the sun. There are 23 references to **Phoebus** (including one spelled “Phibbus”) in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 976-77). **Apollo** is referenced once in these de Vere poems (No. 3.6) and 29 times in canonical Shakespeare (Spevack 54).

- (6) *And there I found the strangest dream, that ever young man had*

I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was’ (*Dream*, 4.1.205); ‘the rarest dream that e’er dulled sleep’ (*Per.*, 5.1.161); cf. ‘Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to think’ (*R&J*, 5.1.7).

- (12-13) *feeding on the hearts of men, whom Cupid’s bow hath slain. And that blind Boy sat all in blood, bebathed to the ears*

‘bathed in maiden blood’ (*Titus*, 2.3.232); ‘let us bathe our hands in Caesar’s blood’ (*Caes.*, 3.1.106); ‘bathe my dying honour in the blood’ (*A&C*, 4.2.6); ‘The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit Up to the ears in blood’ (*1 Hen. IV*, 4.1.117); cf. ‘Out, damned spot! Out, I say! ... Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? ... What, will these hands ne’er be clean?’ (*Mac.*, 5.1.32, 35-37, 40).

While the last of the foregoing echoes lacks the explicit double parallels to **blood** and **bathe** (or **ears**), Lady Macbeth is desperately seeking to wash (**bathe**) off her victim’s **blood**. The vividly horrific impression left by all the samples is of inundation **in blood**.

See also: ‘slain in Cupid’s wars’ (*Per.*, 1.1.38); cf. ‘Cupid’s bow’ (*Venus*, 581); ‘Cupid’s strongest bow’ (*Dream*, 1.1.169); ‘Cupid’s bow-string’ (*Much*, 3.2.10).

- (27-28) *But if that I achieve the fort [i.e., his beloved], which I have took in charge, My hand and head with quivering quill, shall blaze his name at large*

‘He hath achieved a maid ... that excels the quirks of blazoning pens’ (*Oth.*, 2.1.61, 63); cf. ‘the half-achieved Harfleur [a French port]’ (*Hen. V*, 3.3.8).

Additional parallels to No. 20:

(1) **In peascod time**

‘these nine and twenty years, come *peascod-time*’ (2 *Hen. IV*, 2.4.383).

(1) **when hound to horn gives ear**

‘She *hearkens for his hounds and for his horn*’ (*Venus*, 868); cf. ‘Adonis comes with *horn and hounds*’ (*Pass. Pilg.*, 9.6); ‘with *horn and hound*’ (*Titus*, 1.1.494); ‘*hounds and horns*’ (*Titus*, 2.3.27).

(2) **boys with pipes of corn sit keeping beasts in field**

‘And in the shape of *Corin* sat all day, Playing on *pipes of corn*’ (*Dream*, 2.1.66-67); ‘When *shepherds pipe* on *oaten straws*’ (*LLL*, 5.2.903). **Corin was a name commonly used by poets for a shepherd boy.**

(7) **each Christmas game**

‘a *Christmas gambold*’ (*Shrew*, ind.2.134-35).

(10) **Because I lack the skill to draw**

‘*I have no skill* in sense to make distinction’ (*All’s Well*, 3.4.39); ‘Sir, *I have not much skill* in grass’ (*All’s Well*, 4.5.21); ‘*I have not the skill*’ (*Ham.*, 3.2.362); cf. ‘Which far exceeds *his barren skill* to show’ (*Lucrece*, 81); ‘with *the little skill I have*’ (*Titus*, 2.1.43); ‘*Had I sufficient skill* to utter them’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 5.5.13); ‘if *I have any skill*’ (*Kins.*, 5.2.53).

(11) **But Venus shall not ’scape my pen**

‘and who shall *scape* whipping?’ (*Ham.*, 2.2.530); ‘thou shalt not *escape* calumny’ (*Ham.*, 3.1.136); ‘in sooth you *scape not so*’ (*Shrew*, 2.1.240); ‘we shall not *scape* a brawl’ (*R&J*, 3.1.3); ‘the villain shall not *scape*’ (*Lear*, 2.1.80).

(14) **like a conqueror he stood**

‘Did forfeit ... all those lands Which *he stood* seized of to the *conqueror*’ (*Ham.*, 1.1.88-89).

(14) **he ... scorned lovers’ tears**

‘My manly eyes did *scorn* an humble *tear*’ (*Rich. III*, 1.2.164); cf. ‘Hunting he *loved*, but *love he laughed to scorn*’ (*Venus*, 4); ‘So mild that patience seemed to *scorn his woes*’ (*Lucrece*, 1505); ‘Why should you think that I should *woo in scorn*? *Scorn* and derision never come in *tears*’ (*Dream*, 3.2.123).

- (15) **“I have more hearts,” quoth he [the blind Boy Cupid], “at call, than Caesar could command”**

‘Sextus Pompeius *Hath given the dare to Caesar and commands* The empire of the sea’ (A&C, 1.2.179-81); ‘His ... ministers would prevail *Under the service of a child* as soon As i’ th’ *command of Caesar*’ (A&C, 3.13.22-25).

Considering the references in lines 14-15 to **conqueror** and **Caesar**, compare, e.g.:

‘Shall *Caesar* send a lie? Have I in *conquest* stretched mine arm so far To be afeared to tell greybeards the truth!’ (Caes., 2.2.66-67); ‘O mighty *Caesar*! Dost thou lie so low? Are all thy *conquests*, glories, triumphs, spoils, Shrunk to this little measure?’ (Caes., 3.1.148-50); ‘she which by her death our *Caesar* tells I am *conqueror* of myself’ (A&C, 4.14.61-62); ‘A kind of *conquest Caesar* made here’ (Cym., 3.1.22-23).

One would expect to see references to **Caesar**’s conquests in a play like *Julius Caesar*. But it is noteworthy that de Vere refers three times to **Caesar** in these twenty poems (in a rather unexpected context here; see also No. 5, lines 9 and 18), while Shakespeare devotes an entire play to the Roman leader and refers to him dozens of times in almost half the plays in the canon (not even counting *Julius Caesar* itself, nor *Anthony and Cleopatra*, both of which refer to him *passim*) (Spevack 166-67).

- (16) **“like the deer I make them fall”**

‘Here wast thou bayed, brave *hart*; Here didst thou *fall* ... How *like a deer* stricken by many princes *Doth thou here lie*!’ (Caes., 3.1.205).

- (17) **“dim their sight”**

‘Gazing on that which seems to *dim* thy *sight*’ (2 Hen. VI, 1.2.6).

- (18) **“bereave them of their joy and chief delight”**

‘bereave him of his wits with wonder’ (1 Hen. VI, 5.3.195); cf. ‘joy *delights in joy*’ (Sonnets, 8.2).

- (19-20) **this bragging Boy [Cupid] ... Deriding at the wanton toys, of foolish loving men**

‘To toy, to *wanton*, dally, smile, and jest’ (Venus, 106); ‘toys Of feathered *Cupid*’ (Oth., 1.3.268).

Shakespeare associates **wanton** with **Cupid** and **boys** on several occasions (Spevack 1440), e.g.:

‘the weak *wanton Cupid*’ (Troil., 3.3.222); ‘As flies to *wanton boys* are we to th’ gods; They kill us for their sport’ (Lear, 4.1.36-37).

(22) **upon his royal seat**

‘The rightful heir of England’s *royal seat*’ (2 *Hen. VI*, 5.1.178); ‘in the *seat royal* of this famous isle’ (*Rich. III*, 3.1.164); cf. ‘this the *regal seat*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 1.1.26); ‘Have shaken Edward from the *regal seat*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 4.6.2); ‘the *supreme seat*’ (*Rich. III*, 3.7.118); ‘the *seat of majesty*’ (*Rich. III*, 3.7.169).

(23) **cured were my wound**

‘*cureless are my wounds*’ (3 *Hen. VI*, 2.6.23); ‘with a *wound* I must be *cured*’ (*A&C*, 4.14.78); cf. ‘A smile *recures* [*i.e.*, *cures*] the *wounding* of a frown’ (*Venus*, 465); ‘the deer That hath received some *unrecuring* [*i.e.*, *incurable*] *wound*’ (*Titus*, 3.1.90).

(24) **coward deeds expound**

‘to *expound* His *beastly* mind’ (*Cym.*, 1.6.152-53).

(25) **But I perforce must stay my muse**

‘*But my Muse labours*’ (*Oth.*, 2.1.127); ‘*my sick Muse doth give another place*’ (*Sonnets*, 79.3-4); ‘*My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still* [*i.e.*, *politely stays quiet*]’ (*Sonnets*, 85.1); ‘*Alack what poverty my Muse brings forth ... O blame me not if I no more can write!*’ (*Sonnets*, 103.1, 5).

And with that suitable line, we **must stay** this study.

Appendix A: Further Notes to No. 4

The pioneering 1920 book by J. Thomas Looney (157-60), Joseph Sobran's 1997 book (238-39), and Robert Prechter's 2012 article have explored the numerous and startlingly powerful Shakespearean parallels to No. 4—notwithstanding that some may view this as the weakest known de Vere poem. Indeed, as Prechter noted (148), it has been singled out by some critics for especially vituperative ridicule, as supposedly making a mockery of the very idea that Oxford could have written the works credited to Shakespeare (*e.g.*, Elliott & Valenza 2010, 138, 142-43, 151).

No. 4 was likely inspired by de Vere's traumatic experience at age 13—having lost his father just the year before in 1562—of being unjustly accused of illegitimacy by his elder half-sister in an apparent effort to divest him of his inheritance. It may well have been written that same year, 1563 (Ogburn 190, 431; Anderson 24-25). It certainly has an angry, self-pitying, and freshly wounded ring—expressed, as Anderson aptly noted, “in an adolescent voice given to tub-thumping meter and alliterative excess” (25). As discussed in the [Introduction](#) ([Oxford's Known Poetry as Juvenilia](#)), it seems likely that de Vere wrote most of these poems when he was still only in his teens or 20s.

False and unjust defamation of character, often leveled against women, is of course a pervasive theme in Shakespeare. Oxfordians have often, very properly, linked that theme to de Vere's apparent remorse over accusing his first wife of infidelity (see, *e.g.*, Anderson 220-21). No. 4 reminds us that his own much earlier experience, as victim of a false accusation himself, may already have seared an obsession with that theme deeply into his psyche. Do not many of us recall with unusually persistent clarity the hurts and embarrassments of adolescence? Shakespeare dwells repeatedly on the theme of loss of good name. *E.g.*, parallels to line 6 (“loss of my good name”) and lines 7-8 & 10-11 (“my mind, my wit,” *etc.*).

In this much-mocked poem, lines 10-11 & 13-15 (especially those hyperventilating “howling hounds of hell”) have aroused particular ridicule. Could Shakespeare have written such stuff? Well, as an emotionally distraught 13-year-old, why not? Perhaps he was practicing a recently learned lesson in alliteration. Even great artists find their way by early experimentation. In seemingly insisting that Shakespeare, no matter how young, could never have written anything of less than high quality, critics have been distracted

from noticing the striking thematic, structural, and word-choice parallels between those very lines and several Shakespeare plays.

Prechter astutely noted the risk—which we acknowledge and take very seriously—that apparent textual linkages may sometimes reflect “commonplace[s] or data-min[ing]” (154), or as Sobran put it, “coincidence and poetic convention” (232). It is important to avoid confirmation bias or cherry-picking of weak or strained parallels, as best we can.

Prechter’s preliminary diagnostic comparison of No. 4 to Christopher Marlowe’s corpus, however, yielded notably “barren result[s]” (155), suggesting that No. 4’s rich vein of parallels to Shakespeare cannot easily be brushed aside—even, strikingly, in what may be de Vere’s weakest and earliest poem, the raw *cri de coeur* of a traumatized pubescent boy. Sometimes a distinctive and telling crop of fruit really is there to be picked, and should not be left to rot.

The intriguing reference to “salt sea soil” in line 16 merits particular attention. Prechter argued that “salt-sea,” used here as a compound adjective, “is a very rare construction” (154). Eric Sams, a Stratfordian scholar apparently unaware of this de Vere poem, argued that the similar compound adjective “sea-salt” is a “rare and imaginative” construction and “is surely a highly individual idea embodying a new epithet specially invented by Shakespeare for his own personal intellectual and expressive purposes” (313).

The compound adjectives “salt-sea” and “sea-salt” appear only once each in the Shakespeare canon (Spevack 1081, 1097). See *Macbeth* (4.1.24) (“salt-sea shark”) (Sobran 238; also noted by Prechter 154) and *Titus Andronicus* (3.2.20) (“Drown the lamenting fool [thy heart] in sea-salt tears”) (Sams 313). See also, however, *Henry V* (1.2.210) (“As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea”) (Sobran 238), *Henry VI, Part 2* (3.2.96) (“With tears as salt as sea”), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (3.2.391-93) (“the eastern gate, all fiery red, Opening on Neptune ... Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams”), *Romeo and Juliet* (3.5.133-35) (“For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea, Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is, Sailing in this salt flood”) (Sobran 238; expanded here), and *Hamlet* (3.2.147) (“Neptune’s salt wash”) (Sobran 238).

As Sams noted (313), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) (14: 808) identifies the adjective “sea-salt” as both “rare” and originating in Shakespeare, citing the above-quoted line in *Titus Andronicus*. *OED* also cites Richard Linche (*Diella*, 1596) (“sea-salt tears”) and Theodore Watts-Dunton (*Aylwin*, 1897) (“sea-salt lips”).

OED does not explicitly identify the adjective “salt-sea” as “rare,” but it implies as much, citing only the above-quoted line in *Macbeth* for its appearance *as a compound adjective* before 1798 (14: 407). *OED* also cites William Wordsworth (*Peter Bell*, 1798) (“salt-sea foam”). *OED* states that “salt sea,” along with similar compounds like “salt flood,” “salt foam,” and “salt stream,” were “frequent phrases for the sea” in Middle English poetry. But two points bear noting: First, frequency in Middle English literature would not necessarily equate to frequency in the Early Modern English literature of Shakespeare’s time. Second, *OED* does not seem to distinguish in this regard between compound *nouns* (with only “salt” or “salty” as the adjective) and compound *adjectives* in the form “salt-[blank]” modifying some *other* noun.

The only other example in *OED* of “salt sea” before 1798 is from Geoffrey Chaucer, a Middle English writer. In that reference it is a compound noun with only “salt” or “salty” functioning as the adjective (as, of course, it commonly does)—*not* a compound adjective like “salt-sea” as used in No. 4 (*OED* 14: 407, citing Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, c. 1385, “So longe he seylith in the salte se”).

In sum, the proposition that “salt-sea”—as used so identically and distinctively as a compound adjective in both No. 4 and *Macbeth*—was “very rare” (Prechter 154), at least at the time, seems eminently sound. The unabridged *OED* (twenty volumes and 20,000-odd pages) does not provide even a single additional example before 1798 (and none at all aside from those two). *OED* missed its usage in No. 4, first published in 1576 in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (see Rollins ed. 1927), and probably written (as noted) around 1563, so it is certainly possible that *OED* (and we) have missed other usages. But our impression is that this compound has remained “very rare,” *as an adjective*, up to the present day.

It appears in fact that young Edward, perhaps barely a teenager—in one of his weakest and most-mocked poems—must be credited with originating this “rare,” “imaginative,” and “highly individual” turn of phrase (Sams 313), one echoed later by renowned poets like “Shakespeare” and (two centuries later) Wordsworth. Sams, of course, was referring to “sea-salt,” the *less distinctive variant* which he felt sure was “specially invented by Shakespeare for his own personal intellectual and expressive purposes” (313).

We might add that line 16 (“fowl that flocks and feeds upon the salt sea soil”) seems overall the most creative and satisfying instance of alliteration in No. 4. The bracing natural image it conveys makes for perhaps the most pleasing line in the poem, one hinting (as all these echoes to all these de Vere poems do) at the future Shakespeare.

If a teenager had written No. 4 *after* the works of Shakespeare were published—instead of, in all probability, thirty years *before* the first work to appear under the “Shakespeare” *nom de plume*—we might have supposed he was clumsily imitating the master. Which is more likely? That Shakespeare was influenced by a weak and obscure poem written in 1563 and published in 1576, a full generation before his career supposedly hit full stride? Or that, as corroborated by much additional circumstantial evidence, *he was that poet as a boy*, and consciously or unconsciously recycled words, images, and phrasing from his youth, spinning dross into gold?

Appendix B: Further Notes to No. 18

Professor May, while including the text of No. 18b in his 1975 article (391 n. 1, 392-93), did not include those four stanzas in his later editions of de Vere’s poetry (1980, 39-40; 1991, 283-84). He seemed to conclude that the evidence, which he found to “possibly” support de Vere’s authorship of the eight stanzas in No. 18 (1975, 386-89; 1980, 39-40), does not sufficiently support de Vere or any specific poet as the author of No. 18b (which May called “Part 2” of No. 18) (1975, 389-90).

On the other hand, the evidence cited by May is in no way inconsistent with de Vere’s authorship and does in fact provide support for it. As May noted (1975, 390), No. 18b became merged with No. 18 in some manuscript and print sources by no later than 1616. While there is apparently no surviving evidence documenting a merger of the poems before that date, there also seems to be no evidence *against* a much earlier merger (see 389-90).

Nor did May cite any evidence against the two poems having common authorship—which seems entirely likely given their obvious similarities and continuities in style and subject. May noted Rollins’s view that “*all twelve stanzas were originally a single poem*” by a single author (Rollins 1929, 1: 226, quoted in May 1975, 389; emphasis added here)—though May (as we agree) found de Vere’s authorship more likely overall than Rollins’s attribution to Edward Dyer (May 1975, 386-89).

As May noted, No. 18b was first printed in 1588, and a manuscript reference “suggests that additions to the original text were circulating even as early as 1581” (389)—when, it should be noted, de Vere was only 31. Most significantly, May noted (389) that an anonymous manuscript poem responding to No. 16—which has been more confidently ascribed to de Vere—paraphrases No. 18b (line 19, “Court ... cart”) and thus implies he

wrote No. 18b as well. May also noted (388-89) a separate manuscript response to No. 16 that paraphrases No. 18 (part of the evidence supporting de Vere's authorship of No. 18). May concluded that "the evidence is inconclusive, yet ... these two possible allusions ten[d] to link 'My mind to me' more closely with Oxford ..." (389).

We agree the evidence is not *conclusive*, but what we have clearly weighs in favor of de Vere's authorship of both Nos. 18 and 18b. The allusions linking No. 16 to both seem telling, and there seems no strong reason to think No. 18b was merely grafted onto No. 18 by some other poet, editor, publisher, or copyist. More likely, some sources simply preserved a single overall poem in various incomplete or fragmentary states, which would hardly be surprising or unusual. For example, May noted that the manuscript of No. 18, which he cited as the primary basis for his attribution of all eight stanzas of that poem to de Vere, actually "transcribes only five of [its] eight stanzas, plus four lines of a sixth" (387). Alternatively, the same author who wrote No. 18 (most likely de Vere) may simply have added the four stanzas of No. 18b at some later time.

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