Michael Drayton’s *Sonnet 40* inspires protracted empathy and insight into the trails and tribulations of fruitless love. Through Drayton’s masterful manipulation of prosody, tropes, and rhetorical schemes he is able to delve into the realm of romantic sorrow and convey it’s overwhelming, and consuming nature, otherwise difficult to express through language.

The overall theme of *Sonnet 40* is the Drayton’s eternal pain and suffering that is caused through unreciprocated romantic love. Drayton dense and varied, among these is his manipulation of metrical stresses, which in turn creates a specific way for the sonnet to be read and understood. For example, Drayton keeps the rhythm regular until the last line in the quatrain he adds a trochaic substitution with “Love is”, in order to signify a change in meaning. Formerly he had been attributing his “heart”, “words”, and “breast” to himself, however in congruency with the metrical shift he also shifts when talking about love, because he is explaining his lack of control over his emotions. This is also supported through his omission of the possessive pronoun “My”, which began lines one to three, and now on the fourth his omission signifies it is not only the lack of possession of love, but rather the opposite, more that it has control over him. He continues trochaic substitutions only twice more in the sonnet, at the beginning of lines six and seven, in order to connect the ideas of suffering and pain in those lines back to line four, when he presents love having control over him.

The content of this sonnet is heavily based on suffering, and in particular, the drawn out nature of that suffering. Through multiple elements of prosody Drayton is able to elongate specific moments and emphasize the protracted material. This is most blatant in the repeated extra-syllabic endings of the second and third quatrains. By extending each line by one syllable Drayton is disrupting the confortable and stable rhythm he has been building and physically draws out time by inserting an extra, unnecessary syllable. These additions are coupled with the beginning of his description of pain and suffering caused by his unreturned love, and in doing so pairs the two together. Then in the same fashion, in line eight Drayton substitutes a spondee on “woes still”, prolonging the time spent stressing each word; “woes” being the subject of his emotions, and “still” modifying the subject to have a lasting nature.

*Sonnet 40* is also richly saturated with tropes. Each line in the first quatrain is a metaphor comparing an aspect of Drayton to a blacksmith’s tool: “MY heart the Anvil where my thoughts doe beat.” Through each metaphor he compares a part of himself, ‘My heart”, “My words”, or “My breast”, to a blacksmiths tool, and by doing this he is associating himself with hard, concrete tools, with objects that are related to strength. However, in the forth line he compares “Love is the Fuel which maintains the fire.” Here, along with a shift in prosody and metrical schemes, there is a shift in associating a part of himself with something fluid instead of something solid. Also using fire in the metaphor to symbolize the consumption that is required in sorrow, that in order for him to be in this state he must contribute his negative feelings, as he supports in line eleven: “But with those drops, the flame again reviving.” Through this association of fluidity and flame come the connotations of both, which are unpredictable, and less controllable than solids, foreshadowing his description of love being uncontrollable and engulfing. He then uses the second and third quatrains to explore the fluidity of his love.

Among other literary devices he uses a variety of rhetorical schemes to emphasize his anguish and draw deeper emotion and understanding. In the first quatrain of the sonnet Drayton uses parallelism, ellipsis, and anaphora to link together the metaphors that his body and emotions are like the blacksmithing tools. However he does this in an interesting way by only using anaphora and ellipsis for the first three lines, and on the fourth line excluding the word ‘My’ in relation to ‘Love’ and in it’s place add ‘is’, there ending the rhythm created by the ellipsis, to signify that he has not control over love, but rather he is controlled by it, and this is with conjunction with the prosody discussed before. Then by using parallelism in the first four lines he is able to associate the fourth line to the first three despite the absence of anaphora and ellipsis. With this use of parallelism he stresses the importance of the possessive pronoun “My” omission, and that of the metaphors presented “love” is the most important subject, which will then be delved further into in the second and third quatrains.

Drayton uses chiasmus and metaphor, examples of *Sonnet 40’s* depth of form, to leave a lasting impression of timeless enduring and suffering. In the couplet each line is dedicated to a different Greek myth of torment, by comparing himself and his torment to Greek mythology he is putting himself in the same eternal nature of myths and stories, immortalizing himself through metaphor and sonnet alike. Also, the subjects of both myths have to do with circular motions, either ‘roll[ing] the stone’ or ‘turn[ing] the wheel’. Beginning with a mythical reference, describing their cyclical efforts, and then ending with a final mythical reference so as to complete the metaphorical circle. By the speakers use of chiasmus in this couplet Drayton reinforces the cyclical nature of his torment, and to emphasize its endlessness as a circle has no end point.

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| , / , / , / , / , /  MY heart the Anvil where my thoughts doe beat;  , / , / , / (, ) , / , / |
| My words the Hammers fashioning my Desire;  , / , / , / , / , / |
| My breast the Forge including all the heat,  / , , / , / , / , / |
| Love is the Fuel which maintains the fire.  , / , / , / , / , / (,) |
| My sighs the Bellows which the flame increaseth,  / , , / , / , / , / (,) |
| Filling mine ears with noise and nightly groaning.  / , , / , / , / , / (,) |
| Toiling with pain, my labour never ceaseth;  , / , / , , / / , / (,) |
| In grievous Passions, my woes still bemoaning.  , / , / , / , / , / (,) |
| My eyes with tears against the fire striving,  , / , / , / , / , / (,) |
| Whose scorching glede, my heart to cinders turneth: |
| , / , / , / , / , / (,) |
| But with those drops, the flame again reviving  , / , / , / , / , / (,) |
| Still more and more it, to my torment burneth.  , / , / , / , / , / |
| With SISYPHUS thus doe I roll the stone,  , / , / , / , / , / |
| And turn the wheel with damned IXION. |

Works Cited:

“Sonnet 40” Michael Drayton 1563-1631