

= ictus , a metrically strong syllabic position . x =  
nonictus . ( x ) = extrametrical syllable .

= = Context = =

Sonnet 102 is a part of the Fair Youth sequence , and it is also connected with the surrounding sonnets ( 100 , 101 , and 103 ) in detailing a silence that has arisen between the poet and his muse . David West contends that this sequence may be in response to the Rival Poet sequence . The Rival Poet sequence of sonnets mention a rival for either the affections of the Fair Youth , or that they are addressing other writers that may be a " worthier pen " ( Sonnet 79 ) . There is a rather long list of people that scholars believe are likely candidates for the title of the fair youth addressed in the Sonnets : William Herbert , Earl of Pembroke ; Philip Herbert , Earl of Montgomery ; and Henry Wriothesley , Third Earl of Southampton are the most common candidates .

There has also been speculation of the identity of the Rival Poet . George Chapman and Christopher Marlowe , are typically considered to be the two most likely rivals , due to their publicity , profession , relations , and standing with Shakespeare during the presumed time of writing .

= = Exegesis = =

= = = Overview = = =

While there is no consensus as to what specifically has caused the silence that has grown between the speaker and his muse , sonnet 102 seems to be an attempt to mend the relationship by claiming that he still loves as strongly as he ever has . Katherine Duncan @-@ Jones has given the following overview : " Still claiming to have fallen silent , the poet claims that he loves just as much , though he shows it less , for fear of wearisome repetition . "

= = = Quatrain 1 = = =

In the first quatrain the poet describes that he has become quiet about the love he has for his muse , but this doesn 't mean that his love is less . Rather , he claims that it is for the exact opposite reason . Carl Aitkins feels that the tone established here is like an tangential thought from Sonnet 100 and Sonnet 101 . Publishing sonnets about his love have become a kind of currency . This is a use of a common proverb of the time : " He praises who wishes to sell . " David West suggests that this may also be viewed as an attack at the Rival Poet , in an attempt to cheapen the The Rival Poet 's love .

= = = Quatrain 2 = = =

In the second quatrain , the poet elaborates upon his sentiments made in the first quatrain , comparing the present silence to the relationship when it was new . He uses seasonal imagery to set up his atmosphere , which he continues to use in line three , where we also encounter an allusion to the myth of Philomela , which can be a poetic name for the nightingale . In Ovid 's Metamorphoses , the myth of Philomela involves Tereus , the King of Thrace , who kidnaps his wife 's sister , Philomela , and then he rapes her and cuts out her tongue to silence her . There is contention among scholars as to whether Shakespeare actively utilizes the Philomela allusion , Stephen Booth contends that there is " no active reference to Philomela . " This is to say that Stephen Booth feels that Shakespeare is not invoking Philomela for any reason beyond the poetic name for the nightingale . In A Moving Rhetoricke , however , Christina Luckyj contends that the Shakespeare views the Fair Youth 's silence as a violation of the same magnitude as Tereus 's rape of Philomela , and the cause of the poet 's silence . Since his lover has betrayed him in favor of the Rival Poet , he chooses to silence himself .

On line 8 , " His " is the word which appears in the original 1609 Quarto . Katherine Duncan @-@ Jones has edited this to become " her , " as many scholars think that " his " may be a misreading of the manuscript , which may have read " hir " . This change is frequently made by editors , as Philomel is referred to as feminine throughout the rest of the sonnet . However , there are scholars who defend the use of " his " . Stephen Booth simply contends that this is done to move away from the mythological allusion and focuses on the nightingale : It is the male nightingale that sings . While David West also offers a defense of the use of " his , " his reasoning differs greatly from Booth . West contends that Shakespeare used his for a variety of reasons , among his reasons being to avoid " the embarrassment of comparing [ his lover ] to a female . " Another reason defense put forth by West is a difference in language . In Elizabethan times , his was used as a neutral pronoun , often used where a modern writer would use " its " .

= = = Quatrain 3 = = =

The third quatrain continues the metaphor of the nightingale and seasonal imagery to further stress that the poet 's silence is not because their love is less pleasant . The nightingale is used as a metaphor to explain that just because he doesn 't flatter the Fair Youth , doesn 't mean that he loves less . As one scholar put it , " too much praise ceases to please " . The poet explains his silence further in line 11 , that the wild birds physically burden the tree branches as well as crowd the air with their songs . This may represent the myriad of love sonnets being published in attempt to flatter and please their muses . A similar interpretation of line 12 by Katherine Duncan @-@ Jones is given , in which she claims that the poet is addressing the many circulating love sonnets as somewhat redundant , describes them as " pleasures which have become familiar are no longer intensely enjoyable " . This is a usage of another common proverb ; " Too much familiarity breeds contempt . "

= = = Couplet = = =

The couplet summarizes the sonnet in two lines , " Therefore , like her , I sometime hold my tongue , because I would not dull you with my song " . This is a clear statement from the poet vocalizing for the final time that he will not dull , bore , or represent his muse in a tedious way by creating a sonnet as exhausted and cliched as his contemporaries . In his analysis of the couplet , Stephen Booth compares the couplet to a proverb : " My desire is not to dull you , if I cannot delight you . " Booth suggests that the poet does not wish to make his lover seem common with overabundant praise . Aitkins similarly suggests that the poet does not wish his praises to become annoying . Helen Vendler suggests that the poet uses proverbial language here to address the Fair Youth 's seeming obsession with receiving praise ; a personal plea would fall on deaf ears , so he makes his case rather impersonal .