

Sonnet 116 – William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds, Or
bends with the remover to remove.
O no it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom. If
this be error and upon me proved, I never writ,
nor no man ever loved.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the meaning of the poem?
2. What are the main ideas and themes?
3. How is Time depicted in this sonnet?
4. Does the poem's proposed view of love function in the real world, or is it simply a utopian ideal?
5. Do you agree with the poet's view of love as eternal and unchanging?
6. There are many different kinds of love out there, such as romantic, familial, and platonic. Can the ideas posed in this poem apply to all of them?
7. The poet implies that love is the only guiding light that we have in this troublesome world. Do you agree or disagree?