

## A Selection Of Shakespeare's Sonnets

### Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
    So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
    So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

### Sonnet 20

A woman's face with nature's own hand painted  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;  
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted  
With shifting change as is false woman's fashion;  
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,  
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;  
A man in hue all hues in his controlling,  
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth:  
And for a woman wert thou first created,-  
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,  
And by addition me of thee defeated,  
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.  
    But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,  
    Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

### Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising  
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate:  
    For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
    That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

"The Guilt Quartet"

Sonnet 33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,  
Anon permit the basest clouds to rise  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the fo'rlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:  
Even so my sun one early morn did shine  
With all triumphant splendour on my brow;  
But out alack, he was but one hour mine:  
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.  
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth:  
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

Sonnet 34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day  
And make me travel forth without my cloak,  
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,  
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke?  
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,  
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,  
For no man well of such a salve can speak  
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace:  
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;  
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss:  
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief  
To him that bears the strong offense's cross.  
Ah! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,  
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

Sonnet 35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done:  
Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;  
Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,  
And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.  
All men make faults, and even I in this,  
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,  
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,  
Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are;  
For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense -  
Thy adverse party is thy advocate -  
And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence:  
Such civil war is in my love and hate  
That I an accessory needs must be  
To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

### Sonnet 36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,  
Although our undivided loves are one:  
So shall those blots that do with me remain  
Without thy help by me be born alone.  
In our two loves there is but one respect,  
Though in our loves a separable spite,  
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,  
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.  
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,  
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,  
Nor thou with public kindness honor me,  
Unless thou take that honor from thy name:  
    But do not so; I love thee in such sort  
    As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

### Sonnet 40

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all.  
What hast thou then more than thou hadst before?  
No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call;  
All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.  
Then, if for my love thou my love receivest,  
I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest;  
But yet be blamed if thou thyself deceivest  
By willful taste of what thyself refuseth.  
I do forgive thy robb'ry, gentle thief,  
Although thou steal thee all my poverty;  
And yet love knows it is a greater grief  
To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.  
Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,  
Kill me with spites, yet we must not be foes.

### Sonnet 41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits  
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,  
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,  
For still temptation follows where thou art.  
Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;  
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;  
And when a woman woos, what woman's son  
Will sourly leave her till he have prevailed?  
Ay me, but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,  
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth,  
Who lead thee in their riot even there  
Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth:  
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,  
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

## Sonnet 42

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,  
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;  
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief,  
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.  
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye:  
Thou dost love her because thou know'st I love her,  
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,  
Suff'ring my friend for my sake to approve her.  
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,  
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;  
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,  
And both for my sake lay on me this cross.  
But here's the joy: my friend and I are one;  
Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone.

Compare 40-42 with 144, which seem to be about the same incident  
Sonnet 87

Farewell - thou art too dear for my possessing,  
And like enough thou knowest thy estimate:  
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing,  
My bonds in thee are all determinate.  
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?  
And for that riches where is my deserving?  
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,  
And so my patent back again is swerving,  
Thy self thou gavest, thy own worth then not knowing;  
Or me, to whom thou gavest it, else mistaking:  
So thy great gift, upon misprison growing,  
Comes home again on better judgment making,  
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:  
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

## Sonnet 107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come  
Can yet the lease of my true love control,  
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.  
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augers mock their own presage;  
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,  
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.  
Now with the drops of this most balmy time  
My love looks fresh; and Death to me subscribes,  
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme  
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:  
And thou in this shalt find thy monument  
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

### Sonnet 110

Alas, 'tis true, I have gone here and there  
And made myself a motley to the view,  
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,  
Made old offenses of affections new.  
Most true it is that I have looked on truth  
Askance and strangely; but by all above,  
These blanches gave my heart another youth,  
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.  
Now all is done, have what shall have no end.  
Mine appetite I never more will grind  
On newer proof, to try an older friend,  
A god in love, to whom I am confined.  
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,  
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

### Sonnet 111

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,  
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,  
That did not better for my life provide  
Than public means which public manners breeds.  
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand;  
And almost thence my nature is subdued  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.  
Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed,  
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink  
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection;  
No bitterness that I will bitter think,  
Nor double penance, to correct correction.  
Pity me, then, dear friend, and I assure ye  
Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

### Sonnet 112

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill  
Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow;  
For what care I who calls me well or ill,  
So you o'ergreen my bad, my good allow?  
You are my all the world, and I must strive  
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;  
None else to me, nor I to none alive,  
That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.  
In so profound abysm I throw all care  
Of others' voices that my adder's sense  
To critic and to flatterer stoppèd are.  
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:  
You are so strongly in my purpose bred  
That all the world besides methinks are dead.

### Sonnet 116

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-fixèd 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.

### Sonnet 121

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,  
When not to be receives reproach of being,  
And the just pleasure lost which is so deemed  
Not by our feeling but by others' seeing.  
For why should others' false adulterate eyes  
Give salutation to my sportive blood?  
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,  
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?  
No: I am that I am, and they that level  
At my abuses reckon up their own;  
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel;  
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown,-  
Unless this general evil they maintain:  
All men are bad and in their badness reign.

### Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head;  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
and in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks;  
I love to hear her speak, but well I know  
That music has a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go  
(My mistress when she walks treads on the ground).  
And yet by heaven I think my love as rare  
As any she belied with false compare.

## Sonnet 144

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,  
Which like two spirits do suggest me still:  
The better anis a man right fair,  
The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.  
To win me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angegel is a man right fair,  
The worser spirit a woman coloured ill.  
To win me soon to hell, my female evil  
Tempteth my better angel from my side,  
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,  
Wooing his purity with her foul pride.  
And whether that my angel be turned fiend  
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell;  
But being both from me, both to each friend,  
I guess one angel in another's hell:  
    Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt  
    Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

Sonnets:

Petrarch:

Iambic Pentameter:

Quatrain:

Octet:

Sestet:

Couplet:

Shakespeare on love from A Midsummer Night's Dream

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;  
That is the madman; the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.  
Such tricks hath strong imagination,  
That if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy:  
Or, in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!