**EDMUND SPENSER**

AMORETTI

Notes: This text is based on an electronic edition, a compilation of those that are to be found at various web sites, for example <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks/>

Spelling has been mostly modernized and corrections have been made on the basis of the Sidney Lee edition of 1904. However, some spellings have been left as the original, for example Bellamoures, Cullambynes and Jessemynes in Sonnet 64.

It is not possible to 'modernise' entirely a Renaissance edition of a work, since some words are peculiar to the time, or of limited use, or only known to have been used by that one author, or spelt differently in different parts of the text. This is especially true of Spenser, who used many words and spellings which were archaic in his own day. However, to insist that one retains spelling from the original edition, which is often what is done with Spenser, is somewhat unrealistic, for we do not demand the same for other Elizabethan authors. We are happy for the most part to use modern spelling editions of Shakespeare and Marlowe, so why not of Spenser?

To those anxious to see how erratic was the spelling of works printed in Shakespeare's time I suggest looking at the edition of Lodge's Sonnets to Phillis, 1593 available on this site, ( Phillis ) or at the Q version of Shakespeare's sonnets, given with the commentary to each individual sonnet. This modern spelling version is offered for those who would like to read Spenser' *Amoretti* without having first to overcome the difficulties of idiosyncratic and archaic spellings which are a great hindrance to understanding.

AMORETTI

To the Right Worshipful  
  
S I R R O B A R T N E E D H A M, KNIGHT.  
  
  
SIr, to gratulate your safe return from Ireland, I had nothing so ready, nor thought any thing so meet, as these sweet conceited Sonnets, the deed of that well deserving gentleman, master Edmond Spenser: whose name sufficiently warranting the worthiness of the work: I do more confidently presume to publish it in his absence, under your name to whom (in my poor opinion) the patronage thereof, doth in some respects properly appertain. For, besides your judgement and delight in learned poesie: This gentle Muse for her former perfection long wished for in England, now at the length crossing the Seas in your happy company, (though to yourself unknown) seemeth to make choice of you, as meetest to give her deserved countenance, after her return: entertain her, then, (Right worshipful) in sort best beseeming your gentle mind, and her merit, and take in worth my good will herein, who seek no more, but to shew myself yours in all dutiful affection.  
  
W. P.

G. W senior, to the Author.

DARK is the day, when Phoebus face is shrouded,  
  and weaker sights may wander soon astray;  
  but when they see his glorious rays unclouded,  
  with steady steps they keep the perfect way,  
So while this Muse in foreign lands doth stay,  
  invention weeps, and pens are cast aside,  
  the time like night, deprived of cheerful day,  
  and few do write, but (ah) too soon may slide.  
Then, hie thee home, that art our perfect guide,  
  and with thy wit illustrate England's fame,  
  daunting thereby our neighbours ancient pride,  
  that do for poesie, challenge chiefest name.  
So we that live, and ages that succeed,  
  with great applause thy learned works shall read.

To the Author.

AH Colin, whether on the lowly plain.  
  piping to shepherds thy sweet roundelays:  
  or whether singing in some lofty vein,  
  heroic deeds, of past, or present days.  
Or whether in thy lovely Mistress' praise,  
  thou list to exercise thy learned quill:  
  thy muse hath got such grace, and power to please,  
  with rare intention beautified by skill.  
As who therein can ever joy their fill.  
  O therefore let that happy muse proceed  
  to climb the height of virtue's sacred hill,  
  where endless honour shall be made thy meed.  
Because no malice of succeeding days,  
  can ‘rase those records of thy lasting praise.

G. W. I.

**SONNET I.**

HAPPY ye leaves when as those lily hands,  
  which hold my life in their dead doing might  
  shall handle you and hold in loves soft bands,  
  like captives trembling at the victor's sight.  
And happy lines, on which with starry light,  
  those lamping eyes will deign sometimes to look  
  and read the sorrows of my dying spright,  
  written with tears in hearts close bleeding book.  
And happy rhymes bath'd in the sacred brook,  
  of Helicon whence she derived is,  
  when ye behold that Angels blessed look,  
  my soul's long lacked food, my heaven's bliss.  
Leaves, lines, and rhymes, seek her to please alone,  
  whom if ye please, I care for other none.

**SONNET II.**

UNQUIET thought, whom at the first I bred,  
  Of th' inward bale of my love pined heart:  
  and sithence have with sighs and sorrows fed,  
  till greater than my womb thou woxen art.  
Break forth at length out of the inner part,  
  in which thou lurkest like to viper's brood:  
  and seek some succor both to ease my smart  
  and also to sustain thy self with food.  
But if in presence of that fairest proud  
  thou chance to come, fall lowly at her feet:  
  and with meek humbless and afflicted mood,  
  pardon for thee, and grace for me intreat.  
Which if she grant, then live and my love cherish,  
  if not, die soon, and I with thee will perish.

**SONNET III.**

THE sovereign beauty which I do admire,  
  witness the world how worthy to be praised:  
  the light whereof hath kindled heavenly fire,  
  in my frail spirit by her from baseness raised.  
That being now with her huge brightness dazed,  
  base thing I can no more endure to view:  
  but looking still on her I stand amazed,  
  at wondrous sight of so celestial hue.  
So when my tongue would speak her praises due,  
  it stopped is with thought's astonishment:  
  and when my pen would write her titles true,  
  it ravished is with fancy's wonderment:  
Yet in my heart I then both speak and write,  
  the wonder that my wit cannot endite.

**SONNET IV.**

NEW year forth looking out of Janus’ gate,  
  Doth seem to promise hope of new delight:  
  and bidding th' old Adieu, his passed date  
  bids all old thoughts to die in dumpish spright.  
And calling forth out of sad Winter's night,  
  fresh love, that long hath slept in cheerless bower:  
  wills him awake, and soon about him dight  
  his wanton wings and darts of deadly power.  
For lusty spring now in his timely hour,  
  is ready to come forth him to receive:  
  and warns the Earth with divers coloured flower,  
  to deck herself, and her fair mantle weave.  
Then you fair flower, in whom fresh youth doth reign,  
  prepare yourself new love to entertain.

**SONNET V.**

RUDELY thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,  
  In finding fault with her too portly pride:  
  the thing which I do most in her admire,  
  is of the world unworthy most envied.  
For in those lofty looks is close implied,  
  scorn of base things, and sdaine of foul dishonor:  
  threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide,  
  that loosely they ne dare to look upon her.  
Such pride is praise, such portliness is honour,  
  that boldened innocence bears in her eyes:  
  and her fair countenance like a goodly banner,  
  spreads in defiance of all enemies.  
Was never in this world ought worthy tried,  
  without some spark of such self-pleasing pride.

**SONNET VI.**

BE nought dismayed that her unmoved mind,  
  doth still persist in her rebellious pride:  
  such love not like to lusts of baser kind,  
  The harder won, the firmer will abide.  
The durefull Oake, whose sap is not yet dried,  
  is long ere it conceive the kindling fire:  
  but when it once doth burn, it doth divide  
  great heat, and makes his flames to heaven aspire.  
So hard it is to kindle new desire,  
  in gentle breast that shall endure for ever:  
  deep is the wound, that dints the parts entire  
  with chaste affects, that naught but death can sever.  
Then think not long in taking little pain  
  to knit the knot, that ever shall remain.

**SONNET VII.**

FAIR eyes, the mirror of my mazed heart,  
  what wondrous virtue is contained in you  
  the which both life and death forth from you dart  
  into the object of your mighty view?  
For, when ye mildly look with lovely hue,  
  then is my soul with life and love inspired:  
  but when ye lour, or look on me askew  
  then do I die, as one with lightning fired.  
But since that life is more then death desired,  
  look ever lovely, as becomes you best,  
  that your bright beams of my weak eyes admired,  
  may kindle living fire within my breast.  
Such life should be the honour of your light,  
  such death the sad ensample of your might

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**SONNET VIII.**

MORE then most fair, full of the living fire  
  Kindled above unto the maker near:  
  no eyes buy joys, in which all powers conspire,  
  that to the world naught else be counted dear.  
Through your bright beams doth not the blinded guest,  
  shoot out his darts to base affection's wound;  
  but Angels come to lead frail minds to rest  
  in chaste desires on heavenly beauty bound.  
You frame my thoughts and fashion me within,  
  you stop my tongue, and teach my heart to speak,  
  you calm the storm that passion did begin,  
  strong through your cause, but by your virtue weak.  
Dark is the world, where your light shined never;  
  well is he borne that may behold you ever.

**SONNET IX.**

LONG-WHILE I sought to what I might compare  
  those powerful eyes, which lighten my dark spright,  
  yet find I nought on earth to which I dare  
  resemble th' image of their goodly light.  
Not to the Sun: for they do shine by night;  
  nor to the Moone: for they are changed never;  
  nor to the Stars: for they have purer sight;  
  nor to the fire: for they consume not ever;  
Nor to the lightning: for they still persever;  
  nor to the Diamond: for they are more tender;  
  nor unto Crystal: for nought may them sever;  
  nor unto glass: such baseness mought offend her;  
Then to the Maker self they likest be,  
  whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

**SONNET X.**

UNRIGHTEOUS Lord of love what law is this,  
  That me thou makest thus tormented be:  
  the whiles she lordeth in licentious bliss  
  of her freewill, scorning both thee and me.  
See how the Tyranness doth joy to see  
  the huge massacres which her eyes do make:  
  and humbled hearts brings captives unto thee,  
  that thou of them mayst mighty vengeance take.  
But her proud heart do thou a little shake,  
  and that high look, with which she doth comptroll  
  all this worlds pride bow to a baser make,  
  and all her faults in thy black book enroll.  
That I may laugh at her in equal sort,  
  as she doth laugh at me and makes my pain her sport.

**SONNET XI.**

DAILY when I do seek and sue for peace,  
  And hostages do offer for my truth:  
  she cruel warrior doth herself address,  
  to battle, and the weary war renew'th.  
Ne will be moved with reason or with ruth,  
  to grant small respite to my restless toil:  
  but greedily her fell intent pursueth,  
  Of my poor life to make unpitied spoil.  
Yet my poor life, all sorrows to assoil,  
  I would her yield, her wrath to pacify:  
  but then she seeks with torment and turmoil,  
  to force me live and will not let me die.  
All pain hath end and every war hath peace,  
  but mine no price nor prayer may surcease.

**SONNET XII.**

ONE day I sought with her heart-thrilling eyes,  
  to make a truce and terms to entertain:  
  all fearless then of so false enemies,  
  which sought me to entrap in treason's train.  
So as I then disarmed did remain,  
  a wicked ambush which lay hidden long  
  in the close covert of her guileful eyen,  
  thence breaking forth did thick about me throng,  
Too feeble I t'abide the brunt so strong,  
  was forced to yield myself into their hands:  
  who me captiving straight with rigorous wrong,  
  have ever since me kept in cruel bands.  
So Lady now to you I do complain,  
  against your eyes that justice I may gain.

**SONNET XIII.**

IN that proud port, which her so goodly graceth,  
  whiles her fair face she rears up to the sky:  
  and to the ground her eye lids low embaseth,  
  most goodly temperature ye may descry,  
Mild humbless mixt with awful majesty,  
  for looking on the earth whence she was borne:  
  her mind remembreth her mortality,  
  what so is fairest shall to earth return.  
But that same lofty countenance seems to scorn  
  base thing, and think how she to heaven may climb:  
  treading down earth as loathsome and forlorn,  
  that hinders heavenly thoughts with drossy slime.  
Yet lowly still vouchsafe to look on me,  
  such lowliness shall make you lofty be.

**SONNET XIV.**

RETURN again my forces late dismayed,  
  Unto the siege by you abandon'd quite,  
  great shame it is to leave like one afraid,  
  so fair a piece for one repulse so light.  
Gainst such strong castles needeth greater might,  
  then those small forts which ye were wont belay,  
  such haughty minds enur'd to hardy fight,  
  disdain to yield unto the first assay.  
Bring therefore all the forces that ye may,  
  and lay incessant battery to her heart,  
  plaints, prayers, vows, ruth, sorrow, and dismay,  
  those engines can the proudest love convert.  
And if those fail fall down and die before her,  
  so dying live, and living do adore her.

**SONNET XV.**

YE tradefull Merchants that with weary toil,  
  do seek most precious things to make your gain:  
  and both the Indias of their treasures spoil,  
  what needeth you to seek so far in vain?  
For lo my love doth in herself contain  
  all this world's riches that may far be found;  
  if Sapphires, lo her eyes be Sapphires plain,  
  if Rubies, lo her lips be Rubies found;  
If Pearls, her teeth be pearls both pure and round;  
  if Ivory, her forehead ivory ween;  
  if Gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;  
  if silver, her fair hands are silver sheen,  
But that which fairest is, but few behold,  
  her mind adorned with virtues manifold.

**SONNET XVI.**

ONE day as I unwarily did gaze  
  on those fair eyes my love's immortal light:  
  the whiles my 'stonish'd heart stood in amaze,  
  through sweet illusion of her looks delight.  
I mote perceive how in her glancing sight,  
  legions of loves with little wings did fly:  
  darting their deadly arrowes fiery bright,  
  at every rash beholder passing by.  
One of those archers closely I did spy,  
  aiming his arrow at my very heart:  
  when suddenly with twinkle of her eye,  
  the Damsel broke his misintended dart.  
Had she not so done, sure I had been slain,  
  yet as it was, I hardly scap'd with pain.

**SONNET XVII.**

THE glorious portrait of that Angel's face,  
  Made to amaze weak men’s confused skill:  
  and this world's worthless glory to embase,  
  what pen, what pencil can express her fill?  
For though he colours could devise at will,  
  and eke his learned hand at pleasure guide:  
  least trembling it his workmanship should spill,  
  yet many wondrous things there are beside.  
The sweet eye-glances, that like arrows glide,  
  the charming smiles, that rob sense from the heart:  
  the lovely pleasance and the lofty pride  
  cannot expressed be by any art.  
A greater craftsman's hand thereto doth need,  
  that can express the life of things indeed.

**SONNET XVIII.**

THE rolling wheel that runneth often round.  
  The hardest steel in tract of time doth tear:  
  and drizzling drops that often do redound,  
  the firmest flint doth in continuance wear.  
Yet cannot I with many a dropping tear,  
  and long intreaty soften her hard heart:  
  that she will once vouchsafe my plaint to hear,  
  or look with pity on my painful smart.  
But when I plead, she bids me play my part,  
  and when I weep, she says tears are but water:  
  and when I sigh, she says I know the art,  
  and when I wail she turns herself to laughter.  
So do I weep, and wail, and plead in vain,  
  whiles she as steel and flint doth still remain.

**SONNET XIX.**

THE merry Cuckoo, messenger of Spring,  
  His trumpet shrill hath thrice already sounded:  
  that warns all lovers wait upon their king,  
  who now is coming forth with garland crowned.  
With noise whereof the quire of Birds resounded  
  their anthems sweet devised of loves praise,  
  that all the woods their echoes back rebounded,  
  as if they knew the meaning of their lays.  
But ‘mongst them all, which did loves honour raise  
  no word was heard of her that most it ought,  
  but she his precept proudly disobeys,  
  and doth his idle message set at nought.  
Therefore O love, unless she turn to thee  
  ere Cuckoo end, let her a rebel be.

**SONNET XX.**

IN vain I seek and sue to her for grace,  
  and do mine humbled heart before her pour  
  the whiles her foot she in my neck doth place,  
  and tread my life down in the lowly floor.  
And yet the Lion that is Lord of power,  
  and reigneth over every beast in field:  
  in his most pride disdaineth to devour  
  the silly lamb that to his might doth yield.  
But she more cruel and more salvage wild,  
  then either Lion or the Lioness:  
  shames not to be with guiltless blood defiled,  
  but taketh glory in her cruelness.  
Fairer then fairest let none ever say,  
  that ye were blooded in a yielded prey.

**SONNET XXI.**

WAS it the work of nature or of Art?  
  which tempered so the feature of her face:  
  that pride and meekness mixt by equal part,  
  do both appear t'adorn her beauty's grace.  
For with mild pleasance, which doth pride displace,  
  she to her love doth lookers eyes allure:  
  and with stern countenance back again doth chase  
  their looser looks that stir up lusts impure,  
With such strange terms her eyes she doth inure,  
  that with one look she doth my life dismay:  
  and with another doth it straight recure,  
  her smile me draws, her frown me drives away.  
Thus doth she train and teach me with her looks,  
  such art of eyes I never read in books.

**SONNET XXII.**

THIS holy season fit to fast and pray,  
  Men to devotion ought to be inclined:  
  therefore, I likewise on so holy day,  
  for my sweet Saint some service fit will find,  
Her temple fair is built within my mind,  
  in which her glorious image placed is,  
  on which my thoughts do day and night attend  
  like sacred priests that never think amiss.  
There I to her as th' author of my bliss,  
  will build an altar to appease her ire:  
  and on the same my heart will sacrifice,  
  burning in flames of pure and chaste desire:  
The which vouchsafe O goddess to accept,  
  amongst thy dearest relics to be kept.

**SONNET XXIII.**

PENELOPE for her Ulysses' sake,  
  Devis'd a Web her wooers to deceive:  
  in which the work that she all day did make  
  the same at night she did again unreave.  
Such subtle craft my Damsel doth conceive,  
  th' importune suit of my desire to shun:  
  for all that I in many days do weave,  
  in one short hour I find by her undone.  
So when I think to end that I begun,  
  I must begin and never bring to end:  
  for with one look she spoils that long I spun,  
  and with one word my whole years work doth rend.  
Such labour like the Spider's web I find,  
  whose fruitless work is broken with least wind.

**SONNET XXIV.**

WHEN I behold that beauty's wonderment,  
  And rare perfection of each goodly part:  
  of nature's skill the only complement,  
  I honour and admire the maker's art.  
But when I feel the bitter baleful smart,  
  which her fair eyes unwares do work in me:  
  that death out of their shiny beams do dart,  
  I think that I a new Pandora see.  
Whom all the Gods in council did agree,  
  into this sinful world from heaven to send:  
  that she to wicked men a scourge should be,  
  for all their faults with which they did offend.  
But since ye are my scourge I will intreat,  
  that for my faults ye will me gently beat.

**SONNET XXV.**

HOW long shall this like dying life endure,  
  And know no end of her own misery:  
  but waste and wear away in terms unsure,  
  twixt fear and hope depending doubtfully.  
Yet better were at once to let me die,  
  and show the last ensample of your pride:  
  then to torment me thus with cruelty,  
  to prove your power, which I too well have tried.  
yet if in your hardened breast ye hide,  
  a close intent at last to show me grace:  
  then all the woes and wrecks which I abide,  
  as means of bliss I gladly will embrace.  
And wish that more and greater they might be,  
  that greater meed at last may turn to me.

**SONNET XXVI.**

SWEET is the Rose, but grows upon a brier;  
  Sweet is the Juniper, but sharp his bough;  
  sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near;  
  sweet is the firbloom, but his branches rough  
Sweet is the Cypress, but his rind is tough,  
  sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill;  
  sweet is the broom-flower, but yet sour enough;  
  and sweet is Moly, but his root is ill.  
So every sweet with sour is tempered still,  
  that maketh it be coveted the more:  
  for easy things that may be got at will,  
  most sorts of men do set but little store.  
Why then should I accompt of little pain,  
  that endless pleasure shall unto me gain.

**SONNET XXVII.**

FAIR proud now tell me, why should fair be proud,  
  Sith all world's glory is but dross unclean:  
  and in the shade of death itself shall shroud,  
  however now thereof ye little ween.  
That goodly Idol, now so gay beseen,  
  shall doff her flesh's borrowed fair attire:  
  and be forgot as it had never been,  
  that many now much worship and admire.  
Ne any then shall after it inquire,  
  ne any mention shall thereof remain:  
  but what this verse, that never shall expire,  
  shall to you purchase with her thankless pain.  
Fair be no longer proud of that shall perish,  
  but that which shall you make immortal, cherish.

**SONNET XXVIII.**

THE laurel leaf, which you this day do wear,  
  gives me great hope of your relenting mind:  
  for since it is the badge which I do bear,  
  ye bearing it do seem to me inclined:  
The power thereof, which oft in me I find,  
  let it likewise your gentle breast inspire  
  with sweet infusion, and put you in mind  
  of that proud maid, whom now those leaves attire.  
Proud Daphne scorning Phoebus lovely fire,  
  on the Thessalian shore from him did fly:  
  for which the gods in their revengeful ire  
  did her transform into a laurel tree.  
Then fly no more fair love from Phoebus chase,  
  but in your breast his leaf and love embrace.

**SONNET XXIX.**

SEE! how the stubborn damsel doth deprave  
  my simple meaning with disdainful scorn:  
  and by the bay which I unto her gave,  
  accompts myself her captive quite forlorn.  
The bay (quoth she) is of the victors borne,  
  yielded them by the vanquished as their meeds,  
  and they therewith do poets' heads adorn,  
  to sing the glory of their famous deeds.  
But sith she will the conquest challenge needs  
  let her accept me as her faithful thrall,  
  that her great triumph which my skill exceeds,  
  I may in trump of fame blaze over all.  
Then would I deck her head with glorious bays,  
  and fill the world with her victorious praise.

**SONNET XXX.**

MY love is like to ice, and I to fire;  
  how comes it then that this her cold so great  
  is not dissolv'd through my so hot desire,  
  but harder grows the more I her intreat?  
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat  
  is not delayed by her heart frozen cold:  
  but that I burn much more in boiling sweat,  
  and feel my flames augmented manifold?  
What more miraculous thing may be told  
  that fire which all things melts, should harden ice:  
  and ice which is congeal'd with senseless cold,  
  should kindle fire by wonderful device.  
Such is the power of love in gentle mind,  
  that it can alter all the course of kind.

**SONNET XXXI.**

AH why hath nature to so hard a heart,  
  given so goodly gifts of beauty's grace?  
  whose pride depraves each other better part,  
  and all those precious ornaments deface.  
Sith to all other beasts of bloody race,  
  a dreadfull countenance she given hath:  
  that with their terror all the rest may chase,  
  and warn to shun the danger of their wrath.  
But my proud one doth work the greater scathe,  
  through sweet allurement of her lovely hue:  
  that she the better may in bloody bath,  
  of such poor thralls her cruel hands embrue.  
But did she know how ill these two accord,  
  such cruelty she would have soon abhorred.

**SONNET XXXII.**

THE painful smith with force of fervent heat,  
  the hardest iron soon doth mollify:  
  that with his heavy sledge he can it beat,  
  and fashion to what he it list apply.  
Yet cannot all these flames in which I fry,  
  her heart more hard then iron soft awhit;  
  ne all the plaints and prayers with which I  
  do beat on th' anvil of her stubborn wit:  
But still the more she fervent sees my fit:  
  the more she freezeth in her willful pride:  
  and harder grows the harder she is smit,  
  with all the plaints which to her be applied.  
What then remains but I to ashes burn,  
  and she to stones at length all frozen turn?

**SONNET XXXIII.**

GREAT wrong I do, I can it not deny,  
  to that most sacred Empress my dear dread,  
  not finishing her Queen of fa�ry,  
  that mote enlarge her living praises dead:  
But Lodwick, this of grace to me aread:  
  do ye not think th' accomplishment of it,  
  sufficient work for one man's simple head,  
  all were it as the rest, but rudely writ.  
How then should I without another wit,  
  think ever to endure so tedious toil,  
  since that this one is tossed with troublous fit,  
  of a proud love, that doth my spirit spoil.  
Cease then, till she vouchsafe to grant me rest,  
  or lend you me another living breast.

**SONNET XXXIV.**

Like as a ship, that through the Ocean wide,  
  by conduct of some star doth make her way,  
  whenas a storm hath dimmed her trusty guide,  
  out of her course doth wander far astray.  
So I whose star, that wont with her bright ray,  
  me to direct, with clouds is over-cast,  
  do wander now, in darkness and dismay,  
  through hidden perils round about me placed.  
Yet hope I well, that when this storm is past,  
  My Helice the lodestar of my life  
  will shine again, and look on me at last,  
  with lovely light to clear my cloudy grief.  
Till then I wander carefull comfortless,  
  in secret sorrow and sad pensiveness.

**SONNET XXXV.**

MY hungry eyes through greedy covetise,  
  still to behold the object of their pain:  
  with no contentment can themselves suffice,  
  but having, pine, and having not, complain.  
For lacking it they cannot life sustain,  
  and having it they gaze on it the more:  
  in their amazement like Narcissus vain  
  whose eyes him starved: so plenty makes me poor.  
Yet are mine eyes so filled with the store  
  of that fair sight, that nothing else they brook,  
  but loathe the things which they did like before,  
  and can no more endure on them to look.  
All this world's glory seemeth vain to me,  
  and all their shows but shadows saving she.

**SONNET XXXVI.**

TELL me when shall these weary woes have end,  
  Or shall their ruthless torment never cease:  
  but all my days in pining languor spend,  
  without hope of assuagement or release.  
Is there no means for me to purchase peace,  
  or make agreement with her thrilling eyes:  
  that their cruelty doth still increase,  
  daily more augment my miseries.  
But when ye have showed all extremities,  
  then think how little glory ye have gained:  
  by slaying him, whose life though ye despise,  
  mote have your life in honour long maintained.  
But by his death which some perhaps will moan,  
  ye shall condemned be of many a one.

**SONNET XXXVII.**

WHAT guile is this, that those her golden tresses,  
  She doth attire under a net of gold:  
  and with sly skill so cunningly them dresses,  
  that which is gold or hair, may scarce be told?  
Is it that mens frail eyes, which gaze too bold,  
  she may entangle in that golden snare:  
  and being caught may craftily enfold,  
  their weaker hearts, which are not well aware?  
Take heed therefore, mine eyes, how ye do stare  
  henceforth too rashly on that guilefull net,  
  in which if ever ye entrapped are,  
  out of her bands ye by no means shall get.  
Fondness it were for any being free,  
  to covet fetters, though they golden be.

**SONNET XXXVIII.**

ARION, when through tempests cruel wrack,  
  He forth was thrown into the greedy seas:  
  through the sweet music which his harp did make  
  allured a Dolphin him from death to ease.  
But my rude music, which was wont to please  
  some dainty ears, cannot, with any skill,  
  the dreadfull tempest of her wrath appease,  
  nor move the Dolphin from her stubborn will,  
But in her pride she doth persever still,  
  all careless how my life for her decays:  
  yet with one word she can it save or spill.  
  to spill were pity, but to save were praise.  
Choose rather to be praised for doing good,  
  than to be blam'd for spilling guiltless blood.

**SONNET XXXIX.**

SWEET smile, the daughter of the Queen of love,  
  Expressing all thy mother's powerful art:  
  with which she wonts to temper angry Jove,  
  when all the gods he threats with thundering dart.  
Sweet is thy virtue as thy self-sweet art,  
  for when on me thou shinedst late in sadness:  
  a melting pleasance ran through every part  
  and me revived with heart robbing gladness.  
Whilst rapt with joy resembling heavenly madness,  
  my soul was ravished quite as in a trance:  
  and feeling thence no more her sorrows sadness,  
  fed on the fullness of that cheerful glance,  
More sweet than Nectar or Ambrosial meat,  
  seemed every bit, which thenceforth I did eat.

**SONNET XL.**

MARK when she smiles with amiable cheer,  
  And tell me whereto can ye liken it:  
  when on each eyelid sweetly do appear,  
  an hundred Graces as in shade to sit.  
Likest it seemeth in my simple wit  
  unto the fair sunshine in summer's day:  
  that when a dreadful storm away is flit,  
  through the broad world doth spread his goodly ray  
At sight whereof each bird that sits on spray,  
  and every beast that to his den was fled:  
  comes forth afresh out of their late dismay,  
  and to the light lift up their drooping head.  
So my storm beaten heart likewise is cheered,  
  with that sunshine when cloudy looks are cleared.

**SONNET XLI.**

IS it her nature or is it her will,  
  to be so cruel to an humbled foe:  
  if nature, then she may it mend with skill,  
  if will, then she at will may will forego.  
But if her nature and her will be so,  
  that she will plague the man that loves her most:  
  and take delight t'increase a wretch's woe,  
  then all her natures goodly gifts are lost  
And that same glorious beauty's idle boast,  
  is but a bait such wretches to beguile:  
  as being long in her love's tempest tossed,  
  she means at last to make her piteous spoil.  
O fairest fair let never it be named,  
  that so fair beauty was so foully shamed.

**SONNET XLII.**

THE love which me so cruelly tormenteth,  
  So pleasing is in my extremest pain:  
  that all the more my sorrow it augmenteth,  
  the more I love and do embrace my bane.  
Ne do I wish (for wishing were but vain)  
  to be acquit fro my continual smart:  
  but joy her thrall for ever to remain,  
  and yield for pledge my poor captivéd heart   
The which that it from her may never start,  
  let her, if please her, bind with adamant chain:  
  and from all wand’ring loves which mote pervert,  
  his safe assurance strongly it restrain.  
Only let her abstain from cruelty,  
  and do me not before my time to die.

**SONNET XLIII.**

SHALL I then silent be or shall I speak?  
  And if I speak, her wrath renew I shall:  
  and if I silent be, my heart will break,  
  or chokéd be with overflowing gall.  
What tyranny is this both my heart to thrall,  
  and eke my tongue with proud restraint to tie?  
  that neither I may speak nor think at all,  
  but like a stupid stock in silence die.  
Yet I my heart with silence secretly  
  will teach to speak, and my just cause to plead:  
  and eke mine eyes with meek humility,  
  love learned letters to her eyes to read.  
Which her deep wit, that true heart's thought can spell,  
  will soon conceive, and learn to construe well.

**SONNET XLIV.**

WHEN those renownéd noble Peers of Greece,  
  through stubborn pride amongst themselues did jar  
  forgetful of the famous golden fleece,  
  then Orpheus with his harp their strife did bar.  
But this continual cruel civil war,  
  the which myself against myself do make:  
  whilst my weak powers of passions warréd are,  
  no skill can stint nor reason can aslake.  
But when in hand my tuneless harp I take,  
  then do I more augment my foe's despite:  
  and grief renew, and passions do awake,  
  to battle fresh against myself to fight.  
‘Mongst whom the more I seek to settle peace,  
  the more I find their malice to increase.

**SONNET XLV.**

LEAVE lady in your glass of crystal clean,  
  Your goodly self for evermore to view:  
  and in myself, my inward self I mean,  
  most lively like behold your semblant true.  
Within my heart, though hardly it can show,  
  thing so divine to view of earthly eye:  
  the fair Idea of your celestial hue,  
  and every part remains immortally:  
And were it not that, through your cruelty,  
  with sorrow dimmed and deform'd it were:  
  the goodly image of your visnomy,  
  clearer then crystal would therein appear.  
But if yourself in me ye plain will see,  
  remove the cause by which your fair beams darkened be.

**SONNET XLVI.**

WHEN my abode's prefixed time is spent,  
  My cruel fair straight bids me wend my way:  
  but then from heaven most hideous storms are sent  
  as willing me against her will to stay.  
Whom then shall I or heaven or her obey,  
  the heavens know best what is the best for me:  
  but as she will, whose will my life doth sway,  
  my lower heaven, so it perforce must be.  
ye high heavens, that all this sorrow see,  
  sith all your tempests cannot hold me back:  
  assuage your storms, or else both you and she,  
  will both together me too sorely wrack.  
Enough it is for one man to sustain,  
  the storms, which she alone on me doth rain.

**SONNET XLVII.**

TRUST not the treason of those smiling looks,  
  until ye have their guileful trains well tried:  
  for they are like but unto golden hooks,  
  that from the foolish fish their baits do hide:  
So she with flattering smiles weak hearts doth guide,  
  unto her love, and tempt to their decay,  
  whom being caught she kills with cruel pride,  
  and feeds at pleasure on the wretched prey:  
Yet even whilst her bloody hands them slay,  
  her eyes look lovely and upon them smile:  
  that they take pleasure in her cruel play,  
  and dying do them selves of pain beguile.  
O mighty charm which makes men love their bane,  
  and think they die with pleasure, live with pain.

**SONNET XLVIII.**

INNOCENT paper whom too cruel hand,  
  Did make the matter to avenge her ire:  
  and ere she could thy cause well understand,  
  did sacrifice unto the greedy fire.  
Well worthy thou to have found better hire,  
  then so bad end for heretics ordained:  
  yet heresy nor treason didst conspire,  
  but plead thy masters cause unjustly pained.  
Whom all the careless of his grief constrained  
  to utter forth th' anguish of his heart:  
  and would not hear, when he to her complained,  
  the piteous passion of his dying smart.  
Yet live forever, though against her will,  
  and speak her good, though she requite it ill.

**SONNET XLIX.**

FAIR cruel, why are ye so fierce and cruel,  
  Is it because your eyes have power to kill?  
  then know, that mercy is the mighty's jewel,  
  and greater glory think to save than spill.  
But if it be your pleasure and proud will,  
  To show the power of your imperious eyes:  
  then not on him that never thought you ill,  
  but bend your force against your enemies.  
Let them feel th' utmost of your cruelties,  
  and kill, with looks as Cockatrices do:  
  but him that at your footstool humbled lies,  
  with merciful regard, give mercy too.  
Such mercy shall you make admired to be,  
  so shall you live by giving life to me.

**SONNET L.**

LONG languishing in double malady,  
  of my hearts wound and of my body's grief:  
  there came to me a leech that would apply  
  fit medicines for my body's best relief  
Vain man (quoth I) that hast but little prief:  
  in deep discovery of the mind's disease,  
  is not the heart of all the body chief?  
  and rules the members as it self doth please.  
Then with some cordials seek first to appease,  
  the inward languor of my wounded heart,  
  and then my body shall have shortly ease:  
  but such sweet cordials pass Physicians art.  
Then my life's Leech do you your skill reveal,  
  and with one salve both heart and body heal.

**SONNET LI.**

DO I not see that fairest images  
  Of hardest Marble are of purpose made?  
  for that they should endure through many ages,  
  ne let their famous monuments to fade.  
Why then do I, untrained in lover's trade,  
  her hardness blame which I should more commend?  
  sith never ought was excellent assayed,  
  which was not hard t' achieve and bring to end.  
Ne ought so hard, but he that would attend,  
  mote soften it and to his will allure:  
  so do I hope her stubborn heart to bend,  
  and that it then more steadfast will endure.  
Only my pains will be the more to get her,  
  but having her, my joy will be the greater.

**SONNET LII.**

SO oft as homeward I from her depart,  
  I go like one that having lost the field:  
  is prisoner led away with heavy heart,  
  despoiled of warlike arms and knowen shield.  
So do I now myself a prisoner yield,  
  to sorrow and to solitary pain:  
  from presence of my dearest dear exiled  
  longwhile alone in languor to remain.  
There let no thought of joy or pleasure vain,  
  dare to approach, that may my solace breed:  
  but sudden dumps and dreary sad disdain,  
  of all worlds gladness more my torment feed.  
So I her absence will my penance make,  
  that of her presence I my meed may take.

**SONNET LIII.**

THE Panther knowing that his spotted hide,  
  Doth please all beasts but that his looks them fray:  
  within a bush his dreadful head doth hide,  
  to let them gaze whilst he on them may prey.  
Right so my cruel fair with me doth play,  
  for with the goodly semblant of her hue:  
  she doth allure me to mine own decay,  
  and then no mercy will unto me show.  
Great shame it is, thing so divine in view,  
  made for to be the world's most ornament:  
  to make the bait her gazers to embrue,  
  good shames to be so ill an instrument.  
But mercy doth with beauty best agree,  
  as in their maker ye them best may see.

**SONNET LIV.**

OF this world's Theatre in which we stay,  
  My love like the Spectator idly sits  
  beholding me that all the pageants play,  
  disguising diversely my troubled wits.  
Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,  
  and mask in mirth like to a Comedy:  
  soon after when my joy to sorrow flits,  
  I wail and make my woes a Tragedy.  
Yet she beholding me with constant eye,  
  delights not in my mirth nor rues my smart:  
  but when I laugh she mocks, and when I cry  
  she laughs, and hardens evermore her heart.  
What then can move her? if nor mirth, nor moan ,  
  she is no woman, but a senseless stone.

**SONNET LV.**

SO oft as I her beauty do behold,  
  And therewith do her cruelty compare:  
  I marvel of what substance was the mould  
  the which her made at once so cruel fair.  
Not earth; for her high thoughts more heavenly are,  
  not water; for her love doth burn like fire:  
  not air ; for she is not so light or rare:  
  not fire; for she doth freeze with faint desire.  
Then needs another Element inquire  
  whereof she mote be made; that is the sky .  
  for to the heaven her haughty looks aspire:  
  and eke her mind is pure immortal high .  
Then sith to heaven ye likened are the best,  
  be like in mercy as in all the rest.

**SONNET LVI.**

FAIR ye be sure, but cruel and unkind,  
  As is a Tiger that with greediness  
  hunts after blood, when he by chance doth find  
  a feeble beast, doth felly him oppress.  
Fair be ye sure but proud and pitiless,  
  as is a storm, that all things doth prostrate:  
  finding a tree alone all comfortless,  
  beats on it strongly it to ruinate.  
Fair be ye sure, but hard and obstinate,  
  as is a rock amidst the raging floods:  
  ‘gainst which a ship of succor desolate,  
  doth suffer wreck both of herself and goods.  
That ship, that tree, and that same beast am I,  
  whom ye do wreck, do ruin, and destroy.

**SONNET LVII.**

SWEET warrior when shall I have peace with you?  
  High time it is, this war now ended were:  
  which I no longer can endure to sue,  
  ne your incessant battery more to bear:  
So weak my powers, so sore my wounds appear,  
  that wonder is how I should live a jot,  
  seeing my heart through-lanced everywhere  
  with thousand arrows, which your eyes have shot:  
Yet shoot ye sharply still, and spare me not,  
  but glory think to make these cruel stours.  
  ye cruel one! What glory can be got,  
  in slaying him that would live gladly yours?  
Make peace therefore, and grant me timely grace:  
  that all my wounds will heal in little space.

**SONNET LVIII.**

By her that is most assured to herself.  
WEAK is th' assurance that weak flesh reposeth,  
  In her own power and scorneth others aid:  
  that soonest falls when as she most supposeth,  
  her self-assured, and is of nought afraid.  
All flesh is frail, and all her strength unstayed  
  like a vain bubble blowen up with air :  
  devouring time and changeful chance have preyed,  
  her glory's pride that none may it repair.  
Ne none so rich or wise, so strong or fair,  
  but faileth trusting on his own assurance:  
  and he that standeth on the highest stair  
  falls lowest: for on earth nought hath endurance.  
Why then do ye proud fair, misdeem so far,  
  that to yourself ye most assured are.

**SONNET LIX.**

THRICE happy she, that is so well assured  
  Unto herself and settled so in heart:  
  that neither will for better be allured,  
  ne feared with worse to any chance to start,  
But like a steady ship doth strongly part  
  the raging waves, and keeps her course aright:  
  ne ought for tempest doth from it depart,  
  ne ought for fairer weather's false delight.  
Such self-assurance need not fear the spite,  
  of grudging foes, ne favour seek of friends:  
  but in the stay of her own steadfast might,  
  neither to one herself nor other bends.  
Most happy she that most assured doth rest,  
  but he most happy who such one loves best.

**SONNET LX.**

THEY, that in course of heavenly spheres are skilled,  
  To every planet point his sundry year:  
  in which her circles voyage is fulfilled,  
  as Mars in three score years doth run his sphere  
So since the winged God his planet clear,  
  began in me to move, one year is spent:  
  the which doth longer unto me appear,  
  then all those forty which my life outwent.  
Then by that count, which lovers' books invent,  
  the sphere of Cupid forty years contains:  
  which I have wasted in long languishment,  
  that seemed the longer for my greater pains.  
But let me love's fair Planet short her ways  
  this year ensuing, or else short my days.

**SONNET LXI.**

THE glorious image of the maker's beauty ,  
  My sovereign saint, the Idol of my thought,  
  dare not henceforth above the bounds of duty,  
  t' accuse of pride, or rashly blame for aught.  
For being as she is divinely wrought,  
  and of the brood of Angels heavenly born:  
  and with the crew of blessed Saints upbrought,  
  each of which did her with their gifts adorn;  
The bud of joy, the blossom of the morn,  
  the beam of light, whom mortal eyes admire:  
  what reason is it then but she should scorn,  
  base things that to her love too bold aspire?  
Such heavenly forms ought rather worshipt be,  
  than dare be loved by men of mean degree.

**SONNET LXII.**

THE weary year his race now having run,  
  The new begins his compassed course anew:  
  with show of morning mild he hath begun,  
  betokening peace and plenty to ensue,  
So let us, which this change of weather view,  
  change eke our minds and former lives amend  
  the old year's sins forepast let us eschew  
  and fly the faults with which we did offend.  
Then shall the new year's joy forth freshly send,  
  into the glooming world his gladsome ray:  
  and all these storms which now his beauty blend,  
  shall turn to calms and timely clear away.  
So likewise love cheer you your heavy spright,  
  and change old year's annoy to new delight.

**SONNET LXIII.**

AFTER long storms and tempest's sad assay,  
  Which hardly I enduréd heretofore:  
  in dread of death and dangerous dismay,  
  with which my silly bark was tosséd sore.  
I do at length descry the happy shore,  
  in which I hope ere long for to arrive,  
  fair soil it seems from far and fraught with store  
  of all that dear and dainty is alive.  
Most happy he that can at last achieve  
  the joyous safety of so sweet a rest:  
  whose least delight sufficeth to deprive  
  remembrance of all pains which him opprest.  
All pains are nothing in respect of this,  
  all sorrows short that gain eternal bliss.

**SONNET LXIV.**

COMING to kiss her lips, (such grace I found)  
  Me seemed I smelt a garden of sweet flowers:  
  that dainty odours from them threw around  
  for damsels fit to deck their lovers' bowers.  
Her lips did smell like unto Gillyflowers,  
  her ruddy cheeks, like unto Roses red:  
  her snowy brows like budded Bellamoures  
  her lovely eyes like Pinks but newly spread,  
Her goodly bosom like a Strawberry bed,  
  her neck like to a bunch of Cullambynes:  
  her breast like lillies, ere their leaves be shed,  
  her nipples like young blossomed Jessemynes,  
Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell,  
  but her sweet odour did them all excel.

**SONNET LXV.**

THE doubt which ye misdeem, fair love, is vain  
  That fondly fear to loose your liberty,  
  when loosing one, two liberties ye gain,  
  and make him bond that bondage erst did fly.  
Sweet be the bands, the which true love doth tie,  
  without constraint or dread of any ill:  
  the gentle bird feels no captivity  
  within her cage, but sings and feeds her fill.  
There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill  
  the league twixt them, that loyal love hath bound:  
  but simple truth and mutual good will,  
  seeks with sweet peace to salve each other's wound  
There faith doth fearless dwell in brazen tower,  
  and spotless pleasure builds her sacred bower.

**SONNET LXVI.**

TO all those happy blessings which ye have,  
  with plenteous hand by heaven upon you thrown:  
  this one disparagement they to you gave,  
  that ye your love lent to so mean a one.  
Ye whose high worths surpassing paragon,  
  could not on earth have found one fit for mate,  
  ne but in heaven matchable to none,  
  why did ye stoop unto so lowly state?  
But ye thereby much greater glory gate,  
  then had ye sorted with a prince's peer:  
  for now your light doth more it self dilate,  
  and in my darkness greater doth appear.  
Yet since your light hath once enlumined me,  
  with my reflex yours shall encreaséd be.

**SONNET LXVII.**

Like as a huntsman after weary chase,  
  Seeing the game from him escaped away:  
  sits down to rest him in some shady place,  
  with panting hounds beguiléd of their prey.  
So after long pursuit and vain assay,  
  when I all weary had the chase forsook,  
  the gentle deer returned the self-same way,  
  thinking to quench her thirst at the next brook.  
There she beholding me with milder look,  
  sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide:  
  till I in hand her yet half trembling took,  
  and with her own goodwill her firmly tied.  
Strange thing me seemed to see a beast so wild,  
  so goodly won with her own will beguiled.

**SONNET LXVIII.**

MOST glorious Lord of life that on this day,  
  Didst make thy triumph over death and sin:  
  and having harrowed hell didst bring away,  
  captivity thence captive us to win.  
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,  
  and grant that we for whom thou didest die  
  being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,  
  may live forever in felicity.  
And that thy love we weighing worthily,  
  may likewise love thee for the same again:  
  and for thy sake that all like dear didst buy,  
  with love may one another entertain.  
So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,  
  love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

**SONNET LXIX.**

THE famous warriors of the antique world,  
  Used Trophies to erect in stately wise:  
  in which they would the records have enrolled,  
  of their great deeds and valorous emprize.  
What trophy then shall I most fit devise,  
  in which I may record the memory  
  of my love's conquest, peerless beauty's prize,  
  adorned with honour, love, and chastity.  
Even this verse vowed to eternity,  
  shall be thereof immortal monument:  
  and tell her praise to all posterity,  
  that may admire such world's rare wonderment.  
The happy purchase of my glorious spoil,  
  gotten at last with labour and long toil.

**SONNET LXX.**

FRESH spring the herald of love's mighty king,  
  In whose coat-armour richly are displayed,  
  all sorts of flowers the which on earth do spring  
  in goodly colours gloriously arrayed.  
Go to my love, where she is careless laid,  
  yet in her winter's bower not well awake:  
  tell her the joyous time will not be stayed  
  unless she do him by the forelock take.  
Bid her therefore her self soon ready make,  
  to wait on love amongst his lovely crew:  
  where every one, that misseth then her make,  
  shall be by him amerced with penance due.  
Make hast therefore sweet love, whilst it is prime,  
  for none can call again the passéd time.

**SONNET LXXI.**

I joy to see how in your drawen work,  
  Your self unto the Bee ye do compare;  
  and me unto the Spider that doth lurk,  
  in close await to catch her unaware.  
Right so your self were caught in cunning snare  
  of a dear foe, and thralléd to his love:  
  in whose straight bands ye now captivéd are  
  so firmly, that ye never may remove.  
But as your work is woven all above,  
  with woodbind flowers and fragrant Eglantine:  
  so sweet your prison you in time shall prove,  
  with many dear delights bedeckéd fine.  
And all thenceforth eternal peace shall see  
  between the Spider and the gentle Bee.

**SONNET LXXII.**

OFT when my spirit doth spread her bolder wings,  
  In mind to mount up to the purest sky:  
  it down is weighed with thought of earthly things  
  and clogged with burden of mortality,  
Where when that sovereign beauty it doth spy,  
  resembling heaven's glory in her light:  
  drawn with sweet pleasure's bait, it back doth fly,  
  and unto heaven forgets her former flight.  
There my frail fancy fed with full delight,  
  doth bathe in bliss and mantleth most at ease:  
  ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might  
  her heart's desire with most contentment please.  
Heart need not with none other happiness,  
  but here on earth to have such heaven's bliss.

**SONNET LXXIII.**

BEING myself captived here in care,  
  My heart, whom none with servile bands can tie:  
  but the fair tresses of your golden hair,  
  breaking his prison forth to you doth fly.  
like as a bird that in one's hand doth spy  
  desired food, to it doth make his flight:  
  even so my heart, that wont on your fair eye  
  to feed his fill, flies back unto your sight.  
Do you him take, and in your bosom bright,  
  gently encage, that he may be your thrall:  
  perhaps he there may learn with rare delight,  
  to sing your name and praises over all.  
That it hereafter may you not repent,  
  him lodging in your bosom to have lent.

**SONNET LXXIV.**

MOST happy letters framed by skillful trade,  
  with which that happy name was first defined:  
  the which three times thrice happy hath me made,  
  with gifts of body, fortune and of mind.  
The first my being to me gave by kind,  
  from mother's womb derived by due descent,  
  the second is my sovereign Queen most kind,  
  that honour and large riches to me lent.  
The third my love, my life's last ornament,  
  by whom my spirit out of dust was raised:  
  to speak her praise and glory excellent,  
  of all alive most worthy to be praised.  
Ye three Elizabeths for ever live,  
  that three such graces did unto me give.

**SONNET LXXV.**

ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
  but came the waves and washéd it away:  
  again I wrote it with a second hand,  
  but came the tide, and made my pains his prey.  
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay,  
  a mortal thing so to immortalize,  
  for I my self shall like to this decay,  
  and eek my name be wipéd out likewise.  
Not so, (quoth I) let baser things devise,  
  to die in dust, but you shall live by fame:  
  my verse your virtues rare shall eternise,  
  and in the heavens write your glorious name.  
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,  
  our love shall live, and later life renew.

**SONNET LXXVI.**

FAIR bosom fraught with virtue's richest treasure,  
  The nest of love, the lodging of delight:  
  the bower of bliss, the paradise of pleasure,  
  the sacred harbour of that heavenly spright.  
How was I ravished with your lovely sight,  
  and my frail thoughts too rashly led astray?  
  whiles diving deep through amorous insight,  
  on the sweet spoil of beauty they did prey.  
And twixt her paps like early fruit in May,  
  whose harvest seemd to hasten now apace:  
  they loosely did their wanton wings display,  
  and there to rest themselues did boldly place.  
Sweet thoughts I envy your so happy rest,  
  which oft I wished, yet never was so blest.

**SONNET LXXVII.**

WAS it a dream, or did I see it plain,  
  a goodly table of pure ivory:  
  all spread with junkets, fit to entertain,  
  the greatest Prince with pompous royalty.  
Mongst which there in a silver dish did lie,  
  two golden apples of unvalued price:  
  far passing those which Hercules came by,  
  or those which Atalanta did entice.  
Exceeding sweet, yet void of sinful vice,  
  That many sought yet none could ever taste,  
  sweet fruit of pleasure brought from paradise:  
  By love himselfe and in his garden placed.  
Her breast that table was so richly spread,  
  my thoughts the guests, which would thereon have fed.

**SONNET LXXVIII.**

LACKING my love I go from place to place,  
  like a young fawn that late hath lost the hind:  
  and seek each where, where last I saw her face,  
  whose image yet I carry fresh in mind.  
I seek the fields with her late footing signed,  
  I seek her bower with her late presence decked,  
  yet nor in field nor bower I her can find:  
  yet field and bower are full of her aspect,  
But when mine eyes I thereunto direct,  
  they idly back return to me again,  
  and when I hope to see their true object,  
  I find myself but fed with fancies vain.  
Cease then mine eyes, to seek herself to see,  
  and let my thoughts behold herself in me.

**SONNET LXXIX.**

MEN call you fair, and you do credit it,  
  For that yourself ye daily such do see:  
  but the true fair, that is the gentle wit,  
  and virtuous mind is much more praised of me.  
For all the rest, however fair it be,  
  shall turn to nought and loose that glorious hue:  
  but only that is permanent and free  
  from frail corruption, that doth flesh ensue.  
That is true beauty : that doth argue you  
  to be divine and born of heavenly seed:  
  derived from that fair Spirit, from whom all true  
  and perfect beauty did at first proceed.  
He only fair, and what he fair hath made,  
  all other fair like flowers untimely fade.

**SONNET LXXX.**

AFTER so long a race as I have run  
  Through Faery land, which those six books compile  
  give leave to rest me, being half foredone,  
  and gather to my self new breath awhile.  
When as a steed refreshéd after toil,  
  out of my prison I will break anew:  
  and stoutly will that second work assoil,  
  with strong endeavour and attention due.  
Till then give leave to me in pleasant mew,  
  to sport my muse and sing my love's sweet praise:  
  the contemplation of whose heavenly hue,  
  my spirit to an higher pitch will raise.  
But let her praises yet be low and mean,  
  fit for the handmaid of the Faery Queen.

**SONNET LXXXI.**

FAIR is my love, when her fair golden hairs,  
  with the loose wind ye waving chance to mark:  
  fair when the rose in her red cheeks appears,  
  or in her eyes the fire of love does spark.  
Fair when her breast like a rich laden bark,  
with precious merchandize she forth doth lay:  
  fair when that cloud of pride, which oft doth dark  
  her goodly light with smiles she drives away.  
  But fairest she, when so she doth display,  
the gate with pearls and rubies richly dight:  
  through which her words so wise do make their way  
  to bear the message of her gentle spright,  
  The rest be works of nature's wonderment,  
but this the work of heart's astonishment.

**SONNET LXXXII.**

JOY of my life! full oft for loving you  
  I bless my lot, that was so lucky placed:  
  but then the more your own mishap I rue,  
  that are so much by so mean love embased.  
For had the equal heavens so much you graced  
  in this as in the rest, ye mote invent  
  some heavenly wit, whose verse could have enchased  
  your glorious name in golden monument.  
But since ye deigned so goodly to relent  
  to me your thrall, in whom is little worth,  
  that little that I am, shall all be spent,  
  in setting your immortal praises forth.  
Whose lofty argument uplifting me,  
  shall lift you up unto an high degree.  
SONNET LXXXIII. (A repeat of sonnet 35)  
MY hungry eyes, through greedy covetize,  
  still to behold the object of their pain:  
  with no contentment can themselves suffice,  
  but having, pine, and having not, complain,  
For lacking it, they cannot life sustain,  
  and seeing it, they gaze on it the more:  
  in their amazement like Narcissus vain  
  whose eyes him starv'd: so plenty makes me poor.  
Yet are mine eyes so filled with the store  
  of that fair sight, that nothing else they brook:  
  but loath the things which they did like before,  
  and can no more endure on them to look.  
All this world's glory seemeth vain to me,  
  and all their shows but shadows saving she.

**SONNET LXXXIV.**

LET not one spark of filthy lustful fire  
  break out, that may her sacred peace molest:  
  ne one light glance of sensual desire:  
  Attempt to work her gentle minds unrest.  
But pure affections bred in spotless breast,  
  and modest thoughts breathed from well-tempered sprites  
  go visit her in her bower of rest,  
  accompanied with angelic delights.  
There fill yourself with those most joyous sights,  
  the which myself could never yet attain:  
  but speak no word to her of these sad plights,  
  which her too constant stiffness doth constrain.  
Only behold her rare perfection,  
  and bless your fortunes fair election.

**SONNET LXXXV.**

THE world that cannot deem of worthy things,  
  when I do praise her, say I do but flatter:  
  so does the Cuckoo, when the Mavis sings,  
  begin his witless note apace to clatter.  
But they that skill not of so heavenly matter,  
  all that they know not, envy or admire,  
  rather than envy let them wonder at her,  
  but not to deem of her desert aspire.  
Deep in the closet of my parts entire,  
  her worth is written with a golden quill:  
  that me with heavenly fury doth inspire,  
  and my glad mouth with her sweet praises fill.  
Which when as fame in her shrill trump shall thunder  
  let the world chose to envy or to wonder.

**SONNET LXXXVI.**

VENEMOUS tongue tipped with vile adder's sting,  
  Of that self kind with which the Furies fell  
  their snaky heads do comb, from which a spring  
  of poisoned words and spitefull speeches well.  
Let all the plagues and horrid pains of hell,  
  upon thee fall for thine accurséd hire:   
  that with false forgéd lies, which thou didst tell,  
  in my true love did stir up coals of ire,  
The sparks whereof let kindle thine own fire,  
  and, catching hold on thine own wicked head  
  consume thee quite, that didst with guile conspire  
  in my sweet peace such breaches to have bred.  
Shame be thy meed, and mischief thy reward.  
  due to thy self that it for me prepared.

**SONNET LXXXVII.**

SINCE I did leave the presence of my love,  
  Many long weary days I have outworn:  
  and many nights, that slowly seemed to move,  
  their sad protract from evening until morn.  
For when as day the heaven doth adorn,  
  I wish that night the noyous day would end:  
  and when as night hath us of light forlorn,  
  I wish that day would shortly reascend.  
Thus I the time with expectation spend,  
  and fain my grief with changes to beguile,  
  That further seems his term still to extend,  
  and maketh every minute seem a mile.  
So sorrow still doth seem too long to last,  
  but joyous hours do fly away too fast.

**SONNET LXXXVIII.**

SINCE I have lacked the comfort of that light,  
  The which was wont to lead my thoughts astray:  
  I wander as in darkness of the night,  
  afraid of every danger's least dismay.  
Ne aught I see, though in the clearest day,  
  when others gaze upon their shadows vain:  
  but th' only image of that heavenly ray,  
  whereof some glance doth in mine eye remain.  
Of which beholding th’ Idéa plain,  
  through contemplation of my purest part:  
  with light thereof I do myself sustain,  
  and thereon feed my love-affamished heart.  
But with such brightness whilst I fill my mind,  
  I starve my body and mine eyes do blind.

**SONNET LXXXIX.**

Like as the Culver on the bared bough,  
  Sits mourning for the absence of her mate;  
  and in her songs sends many a wishful vow,  
  for his return that seems to linger late.  
So I alone now left disconsolate,  
  mourn to myself the absence of my love:  
  and wand’ring here and there all desolate,  
  seek with my plaints to match that mournful dove.  
Ne joy of aught that under heaven doth hove,  
  can comfort me, but her own joyous sight:  
  whose sweet aspect both God and man can move,  
  in her unspotted pleasance to delight.  
Dark is my day, whiles her fair light I miss,  
  and dead my life that wants such lively bliss.