



Created by Michael Hunsaker

A Faustian fable based on Shakespeare's Sonnets

Characters:

The Devil
The Muse
The Parent
The Youth
The Poet

Setting:

THE "THEATRE" - AN IMMERSIVE SPACE

Author's note:

The casting for this piece is at the discretion of the production. It has been intentionally written without being gender specific. Any indication of gender in the text is taken directly from the sonnet and may be swapped to accommodate casting if necessary. (ie: "Catch Her" can become "Catch Him" or "Catch Them".)

*For my dear friend Peter Saide,
Whose beautiful spirit inspired me even if he didn't realize it.*

ACT I

The actors come out of the dark and interact with the audience. The DEVIL hands out quill pens and asks people to sign the “contract”. The MUSE hands out feathers from their “wings”. The PARENT hands out baby shower invitations. The YOUTH hands out flowers (preferably dandelions to blow wishes on, or daisies). The POET rips out poetry from a book (either copies of Shakespeare’s Sonnets or lines from Sonnets that they scribble). All the while they sing the opening Madrigal.

MADRIGAL (medley of melodies)

ALL

LA, LA, LA, LA... etc.

The players end in a tableau at the end of the Madrigal. The DEVIL steps out to introduce their character.

DESIRE (sonnets 1,2, 14)

DEVIL

FROM FAIREST CREATURES WE DESIRE INCREASE
 THAT THEREBY BEAUTY’S ROSE MIGHT NEVER DIE
 BUT AS THE RIPER SHOULD BY TIME DECEASE
 HIS TENDER HEIR MIGHT BEAR HIS MEMORY (sic)

BUT THOU CONTRACTED TO THINE OWN BRIGHT EYES
 FEED’ST THY FLAME WITH SELF-SUBSTANTIAL FUEL
 MAKING A FAMINE WHERE ABUNDANCE LIES
 THY SELF THY FOE, TO THY SWEET SELF TOO CRUEL

DESIRE
 WOAHH DESIRE
 DESIRE
 WOAHH DESIRE

The other players join the DEVIL.

DEVIL

WHEN FORTY WINTERS SHALL BESIEGE THY BROW
 AND DIG DEEP TRENCHES IN THY BEAUTY'S FIELD
 THY YOUTH'S PROUD LIVERY, SO GAZED ON NOW
 WILL BE A TATTERED WEED, OF SMALL WORTH YIELD

OTHERS

OOOOH
 OOOOH
 OOOOH
 OOOOH

As the PLAYERS sing the DEVIL goes to each one and collects the objects they were handing out at the beginning.

PARENT

THEN BEING ASKED WHERE ALL THY BEAUTY LIES

MUSE

WHERE ALL THE TREASURE OF THY LUSTY GAME

POET

TO SAY WITHIN THINE OWN DEEP-SUNKEN EYES

YOUTH

BELIES A THRIFTLESS AND ALL-EATING SHAME

DEVIL, MUSE, MOTHER

DESIRE
 WOAH DESIRE

DESIRE
 WOAH DESIRE

YOUTH & POET

GIVE IN TO DESIRE, GIVE IN TO DESIRE
 TO MAKE YOU FEEL HIGHER,
 TO MAKE YOU FEEL HIGHER
 GIVE IN TO DESIRE, GIVE IN TO DESIRE
 DESIRE

The DEVIL takes the objects collected and uses them to cast a spell.

DEVIL

NO IT'S NOT FROM THE STARS DO I MY JUDGEMENT PLUCK
 METHINKS I'VE ASTRONOMY
 NOR IS IT TO TELL OF PLAGUES OR OF DEARTHES, OF GOOD OR EVIL LUCK
 OR SEASONS' QUALITY
 NOR CAN I FORTUNE TO BRIEF MINUTES TELL
 SAY, "PRINCES, IT SHALL GO WELL"
 POINTING TO THUNDER AND RAIN
 THY END IS TRUTH'S DOOM AND BEAUTY'S FINAL DATE
 I REMAIN
 THIS I PROGNOSTICATE

The DEVIL has arranged the PLAYERS around the stage.

Sell it to the people!

The DEVIL scats and descants over the PLAYERS in this last chorus.

MUSE, MOTHER

DESIRE
WOAH DESIRE

DESIRE

YOUTH & POET

GIVE IN TO DESIRE, GIVE IN TO DESIRE
TO MAKE YOU FEEL HIGHER,
TO MAKE YOU FEEL HIGHER
GIVE IN TO DESIRE, GIVE IN TO DESIRE

The DEVIL "freezes" the PLAYERS and addresses the audience.

DEVIL

LET ME FULFILL ALL YOUR
TWISTED, TEMPESTUOUS...
SWEETLY SUCCOMB TO YOUR
SINFULLY SUMPTUOUS
DEEPEST, DARKEST
DESIRE!

APRIL (sonnets 3, 2, 4, 6)

The actor playing the PARENT steps into the vanity and sits down to apply makeup. The DEVIL watches the PARENT intently. The "reflection" seen is of the YOUTH on the other side of the "glass".

PARENT

UNTHRIFTY LOVELINESS
WHY SPEND UPON THYSELF THY BEAUTY'S LEGACY
NATURE'S BEQUEST GIVES NOTHING,
BUT DOTHS LEND TO THOSE ARE FREE

FOR HAVING TRAFFIC WITH THYSELF ALONE,
THOU OF THYSELF THY SWEET SELF DOST DECEIVE
THEN HOW WHEN NATURE CALLS THEE TO BE GONE
WHAT ACCEPTABLE AUDIT CANST THOU LEAVE?

The DEVIL rifles through papers, pulls out a particular contract, and leans in to read to the PARENT.

DEVIL

THY UNUSED BEAUTY MUST BE TOMBED WITH THEE
WHICH USED LIVES TH' EXECUTOR TO BE

The PARENT takes the contract and looks at it.

PARENT

LOOK IN THY GLASS, AND TELL THE FACE THOU VIEWEST
 NOW IS THE TIME THAT FACE SHOULD FORM ANOTHER
 WHOSE FRESH REPAIR IF NOW THOU NOT RENEWEST
 THOU DOST BEGUILE THE WORLD, UNBLESS SOME MOTHER

The DEVIL sweeps the PARENT up into a dance.

DEVIL

MAKE ANOTHER SELF FOR LOVE OF ME
 THAT BEAUTY MAY LIVE IN THINE OR THEE

The Devil hands the PARENT a contract.

PARENT

THOU ART THY MOTHER'S GLASS, AND SHE IN THEE
 CALLS BACK THE APRIL OF HER PRIME
 SO THOU THROUGH WINDOWS OF THINE AGE SHALT SEE
 DESPITE OF WRINKLES, THY GOLDEN TIME
 CALL UPON APRIL
 I WANT TO SEE APRIL

*The PARENT signs the contract and the DEVIL's dance becomes more intimate
 as the PARENTs wish for a child is granted.*

PARENT, MUSE & DEVIL

LOOK IN THY GLASS, THAT USE IS NOT FORBIDDEN
 AS LONG AS YOU PAY THE LOAN NOT SO WELL HIDDEN

The PARENT feels a child growing inside.

DEVIL

BE NOT SELF-WILLED, THOU ART MUCH TOO FAIR
 TO BE DEATH'S CONQUEST AND MAKE WORMS THINE HEIR

The DEVIL hands the PARENT the swaddled baby.

PARENT, MUSE & DEVIL

THOU ART THY MOTHER'S GLASS, AND SHE IN THEE
 CALLS BACK THE APRIL OF HER PRIME
 SO THOU THROUGH WINDOWS OF THINE AGE SHALT SEE
 DESPITE OF WRINKLES, THY GOLDEN TIME
 CALL UPON APRIL
 YOU MAKE ME FEEL APRIL

The DEVIL files the contract, then sweeps up the baby in a weird dance that resembles a ritual.

DEVIL

TEN TIMES HAPPIER, BE IT TEN FOR ME
 TEN TIMES THYSELF WERE HAPPIER THAN THOU ART
 IF TEN OF THINE TEN TIMES REFIGURED THEE
 THEN WHAT COULD DEATH DO IF THOU SHOULDST DEPART?

The DEVIL has unraveled the swaddled blanket and holds up the unfolded blanket. The blanket snaps back, like a magic trick to reveal the YOUTH fully grown.

PARENT & YOUTH

THOU ART THY MOTHER'S GLASS, AND SHE IN THEE
 CALLS BACK THE APRIL OF HER PRIME
 SO THOU THROUGH WINDOWS OF THINE AGE SHALT SEE
 DESPITE OF WRINKLES, THY GOLDEN TIME
 NOW IT IS APRIL
 HAVE WE MADE IT TO APRIL
 BLESS US THIS APRIL
 HAPPY AS APRIL!

CATCH HER (sonnets 143, 27, 28)

The YOUTH breaks free from the PARENT's embrace and starts to cavort and play around the stage.

PARENT

ATTENTIVE PARENT IS RUNNING TO CATCH
 ONE OF HER FLOCK'S FEATHERED CREATURES WHO HAS BROKE AWAY
 PUTS DOWN HER BABY, MAKES SWIFT DISPATCH
 IN PURSUIT OF THE THING THAT SHE'S WANTING TO STAY

NEGLECTED CHILD HOLDS HER IN CHASE
 CRYING OUT TO CATCH THE ONE WHOSE BUSY CARE IS BENT
 TO FOLLOW FLYING FOWL, IGNORING BABE'S DISCONTENT

SO I RUN AFTER THAT WHICH FLIES
 WHILST I CHASE THEE FROM FAR BEHIND
 AND YOU LEAVE ME TO PLAY THE MOTHER'S PART, PLEASE BE KIND

ALL BUT YOUTH

SO CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER

CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (RUNNING WITH THE DAWN)
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (OR SHE'LL BE GONE)

The YOUTH's "curiosity" has exhausted the PARENT. The PARENT tries to sleep but constantly keeps an eye on the YOUTH.

PARENT

WEARY WITH TOIL, I HASTE TO MY BED
 THE DEAR REPOSE FOR MY LIMBS, WHICH FROM TRAVAIL I TIRE
 BEGINS A JOURNEY INSIDE MY HEAD
 STARTS TO WORK MY MIND, WHEN THE BODY DOES EXPIRE

THEN MY THOUGHTS, FAR FROM WHERE I ABIDE
 INTEND A LONG AND RELENTLESS PILGRIMAGE TO THEE
 KEEPING MY DROOPING EYELIDS OPEN WIDE, BUT CAN'T SEE!

SAVE THAT MY SOUL'S IMAGINED VIEW
 PRESENTS A JEWEL HUNG IN GHASTLY NIGHT
 MAKES THE NIGHT BEAUTEOUS, AND HER OLD FACE BECOMES NEW

The YOUTH has fallen asleep but the PARENT keeps a watchful eye over.

HOW CAN I RETURN THEN IN HAPPIEST PLIGHT
 IF I'M DEBARRED BENEFIT OF REST
 WHEN DAY'S OPPRESSION IS NOT EASED BY PEACE FOUND AT NIGHT
 DAY BY NIGHT, NIGHT BY DAY OPPRESSED
 AND EACH, THOUGH ENEMIES TO EITHER'S REIGN
 THEY DO SHAKE HANDS TO TORTURE ME
 THE ONE BY TOIL, THE OTHER TO COMPLAIN
 HOW FAR I TOIL, STILL FARTHER FROM THEE!

The YOUTH has awoken and again starts to cavort and explore the surroundings.

ALL BUT YOUTH

SO CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (RUNNING WITH THE DAWN)
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (OR SHE'LL BE GONE)
 OH CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (RUNNING WITH THE DAWN)
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER GOTTA CATCH... GOTTA CATCH HER, CATCH HER
 CATCH HER, CATCH HER WHEN SHE RUNS (OR SHE'LL BE GONE)

Exhaustion has overtaken the PARENT. The PARENT slumps into a slumber.

MY FALSE EYES (sonnets 148, 46, & 137)

The YOUTH spots the POET across the room and time stops.

YOUTH

O ME! WHAT EYES HATH LOVE PUT IN MY HEAD
 THEY LIE! O MY WHERE HAS MY JUDGEMENT FLED
 IF THAT BE FAIR WHERE DO THEY DOTE
 WHAT MEANS THE WORLD TO SAY IT IS NOT SO?
 O TELL ME, MY FALSE EYES
 IF IT BE NOT, LOVE LET ME GO

LOVE'S EYE IS NOT SO TRUE AS ALL MEN'S VIEW
 EXPLAIN, JUST HOW LOVE'S EYE CAN E'ER BE TRUE
 THAT IS SO VEXED, WATCHING WITH TEARS
 THE SUN ITSELF SEES NOT TIL HEAVEN CLEARS
 SO TELL ME, MY FALSE EYES
 O CUNNING LOVE! YOU'RE STOKING MY FEARS

THOU BLIND FOOL LOVE, WHATCHA DONE TO MINE EYES
 THAT THEY BEHOLD, AND SEE NOT WHAT THEY SEE?
 THEY KNOW BEAUTY, THEY SEE WHERE IT LIES
 YET THE BEST TAKES THE WORST TO BE
 YOU SEE MINE EYE AND HEART ARE AT A MORTAL WAR
 HOW TO DIVIDE THE CONQUEST OF THY SIGHT
 A QUEST OF THOUGHTS, AND THE VERDICT IS TORN
 MINE EYE'S DUE, MY HEART'S RIGHT IS LOVE OF THY HEART!

SO WHY IF EYES CORRUPTED BY YOUR LOOKS
 HAVE I BEEN ANCHORED BY YOUR FORGÈD HOOKS
 IF THAT BE FAIR WHERE DO THEY DOTE
 WHAT MEANS THE WORLD TO SAY IT IS NOT SO?
 O TELL ME, MY FALSE EYES
 IF IT BE NOT, LOVE LET ME GO
 O TELL ME, MY FALSE EYES
 IF IT BE NOT, LOVE LET ME GO
 O TELL ME, MY FALSE EYES
 IF IT BE NOT, LOVE LET ME GO

The POET none the wiser to the YOUTH's affections keeps walking off. The YOUTH is left pining.

MUSIC TO HEAR (sonnets 8, 10, 26)

The DEVIL notices the YOUTH's turmoil for the POET. The DEVIL immediately goes over to "pitch" a deal.

DEVIL

MUSIC TO HEAR!

THERE'S MUSIC TO HEAR MY DARLING
SO WHY HEAR MUSIC SO SAD
SWEETS WAR NOT WITH SWEET, JOY DELIGHTING IN JOY
WHY LOV'ST THAT WHICH MAKES YOU NOT GLAD?

WHAT MUSIC TO HEAR SWEET CHILD
IF THE TRUE CONCORD OF WELL-TUNED SOUNDS
BY UNIONS MARRIED, DO OFFEND THINE EAR
THEY DO BUT SWEETLY CHIDE THEE, WHO CONFOUNDS

The YOUTH turns to the DEVIL and begins to beg for the thing of desire.

YOUTH

I BEG YOU LORD OF MY LOVE, TO WHOM IN VASSALAGE
THOU HATH MY DUTY STRONGLY KNIT
I SEND THEE THIS EMBASSAGE, WITNESS MY WRITTEN HOMAGE,
NOT SHOW MY WIT
I OFFER DUTY SO GREAT, IN WHICH WIT SO POOR AS MINE
SEEMS BARE IN WANTING WORDS TO SHOW
BUT I HOPE THY SOUL'S THOUGHT,
ALL NAKED, WILL BESTOW

The DEVIL feigns uninterest.

DEVIL

O CHANGE THY THOUGHT, THAT I MAY CHANGE MY MIND
SHALL HATE BE FAIRER LODGED THAN THY PRESENCE GRACIOUS AND KIND

The YOUTH, exasperated, delivers the final pitch.

YOUTH

THEN MAY I DARE TO BOAST HOW I LOVE THEE
TILL THEN, NOT SHOW MY HEAD WHERE THOU MAYST PROVE ME!

The DEVIL immediately acquiesces... which was always going to happen.

DEVIL and YOUTH

THERE'S MUSIC TO HEAR

DEVIL

ALL OVER

YOUTH

YES I CAN HEAR THE MUSIC

The DEVIL grabs the PARENT who has been in a sort of trance or sleep. The PARENT begins to sing a wild cadenza over the top.

DEVIL

THE NOTES OF THE CHORDS STRIKING EACH STRING
OH THEY RESEMBLE SIRE, MOTHER AND CHILD
WHO ALL IN ONE, ONE PLEASING NOTE DO SING

The DEVIL weighs the YOUTH's plea, peruses the contracts and pulls out the perfect one that will win the YOUTH's soul.

ALL

MUSIC
LISTEN TO THE MUSIC
BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TO HEAR!

The YOUTH signs the contract and the DEVIL greedily snatches it back in victory.

SUMMER'S DAY (sonnets 18, 17)

The DEVIL gestures at the POET. The POET spins around and sees the YOUTH. The POET stops in their tracks and devotes complete attention to the YOUTH.

POET

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY!

The POET starts to perform a routine straight out of a "Boy Band" video.

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
IF I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY

SOMETIME TOO HOT THE EYE OF HEAVEN SHINES

AND OFT HIS GOLD COMPLEXION SEEMS TO DIM
AND EVERY FAIR FROM FAIR SOMETIME DECLINES
CUZ NATURE'S COURSE CAN CHANGE ON A WHIM

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY!

BUT THY ETERNAL SUMMER SHALL NOT FADE
NOR LOSE POSSESSION OF THAT FAIR THOU OWN
NO DEATH WON'T BRAG THOU WANDER IN HIS SHADE
WHEN IN ETERNAL LINES TO TIME YOU'VE GROWN

IF I COULD WRITE THE BEAUTY OF YOUR EYES
AND NUMBER ALL THE NUMBERS OF YOUR WORTH
THE AGE TO COME WOULD SAY, "THIS POET LIES
SUCH HEAVEN ISN'T FOUND ON EARTH!"

SO I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY!

SO LONG AS MEN CAN BREATHE OR EYES CAN SEE
SO LONG LIVES THIS, AND GIVES NEW LIFE TO THEE

I SHALL COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE
SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A SUMMER'S DAY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY
THOU ART MORE LOVELY!

SUMMER, SUMMER
FEELS LIKE A SUMMER'S DAY!

CROOKED ECLIPSE (sonnets 60 & 64)

The scene morphs into a ballroom dance floor complete with spinning mirror ball, creating a romantic old-timey feel. The actor playing the MUSE grabs a standing mic and sets the scene for an intimate dance for the YOUTH and the POET.

MUSE

LIKE AS THE WAVES MAKE TOWARDS THE PEBBLED SHORE
SO DO OUR MINUTES HASTEN TO THEIR END
A CROOKED ECLIPSE, WHICH GOES BEFORE
IN TOIL... CONTEND

NATIVITY, ONCE IN THE MAIN OF LIGHT
CRAWLS TO MATURITY, WHEREWITH BEING CROWNED
OH CROOKED ECLIPSE AGAINST HIS GLORY FIGHT
AND TIME THAT GAVE HIS GIFT, NOW CONFOUND

TIME DOTTH TRANSFIX THE FLOURISH SET ON YOUTH
AND DELVES THE PARALLELS IN BEAUTY'S BROW
FEEDS ON THE RARITIES OF NATURE'S TRUTH
AND NOTHING STANDS BUT FOR HIS SCYTHER TO MOW
NOW WHERE'D THAT MOON GO...

WHEN I HAVE SEEN SUCH INTERCHANGE OF STATE
OR STATE ITSELF CONFOUND TO DECAY
RUIN HATH TAUGHT ME THUS TO RUMINATE
THIS CROOKED ECLIPSE WILL COME AND TAKE MY LOVE AWAY

All exit the stage leaving the DEVIL to ponder all the happiness around.

BETTER TO BE VILE (sonnet 121)

The DEVIL decides enough is enough. The plot to wreck all the good feelings must be implemented.

DEVIL

BETTER TO BE VILE THAN VILE ESTEEMED
WHEN NOT TO BE RECEIVES THE REPROACH OF WHO YOU BE
THE JUST PLEASURE IT IS LOST WHEN THE DIRTY IS SO DEEMED
NOT BY WHAT YOU FEEL, BUT BY WHAT OTHERS SEE

FOR WHY SHOULD OTHERS FALSE ADULTERATE EYES
 GIVE SALUTATION TO MY SPORTIVE BLOOD?
 OR ON MY FRAILTIES I SEE FRAILER SPIES,
 WHICH IN THEIR WILLS COUNT BAD WHAT I THINK GOOD?
 NO, NO! I AM WHAT I AM
 SO IF YOU CALL OUT MY ABUSES, BETTER CALL YOUR OWN
 I MAY BE STRAIGHT,
 HATERS CAN HATE...
 BUT BY THEIR RANK THOUGHTS MY DEEDS MUST NOT BE SHOWN

The DEVIL summons the YOUTH and POET. Then positions the PARENT to watch over what they do next in secret.

LOVING OFFENDERS, I WILL EXCUSE YE
 WE CAN PART OUR WAYS AS FRIEND
 NEVER FORSAKE ME, THOUGH YOU ABUSE ME
 LOVE EACH OTHER TIL THE END

The PARENT is stunned at feeling like the YOUTH is leaving them. The DEVIL speaks to the audience once more.

BETTER TO BE VILE THAN VILE ESTEEMED
 WHEN NOT TO BE RECEIVES THE REPROACH OF WHO YOU BE
 THE JUST PLEASURE IT IS LOST WHEN THE DIRTY IS SO DEEMED
 NOT BY WHAT YOU FEEL, BUT BY WHAT OTHERS SEE

The DEVIL surveys the situation.

BETTER TO BE VILE...
 YES, BETTER TO BE VILE...

The DEVIL lets out a boisterous laugh as they exit the stage.

HATE NOT YOU (sonnets 145, 147, 91)

The POET and the YOUTH sit and have an intimate moment.

POET

THOSE LIPS THAT LOVE'S OWN HAND DID MAKE
 BREATHED FORTH THE SOUND THAT SAID "I HATE"
 TO ME THAT LANGUISHED FOR HER SAKE
 BUT WHEN SHE SAW MY WOEFUL STATE.
 SHE TURNED AND SAID,

“I HATE NOT YOU,
I HATE NOT YOU”
STRAIGHT FROM HER HEART DID MERCY COME
EVER SWEET THAT CHIDING TONGUE SAID,
“I HATE NOT YOU”

LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, LA DA DEH DUM
LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, DUM DUM

YOUTH

MY LOVE’S A FEVER LONGING STILL
FOR THAT WHICH LONGER NURSE THIS DISEASE
FEEDING ON WHAT DOTHS PRESERVE THE ILL
THIS SICKLY APPETITE TO PLEASE
BUT THEN YOU SAY,

POET & YOUTH

“I HATE NOT YOU,
I HATE NOT YOU”
PAST CURE AM I, MY REASON FIND
MY THOUGHTS ARE OF A MADMAN’S MIND
BUT I... I HATE NOT YOU,
NO I... I HATE NOT YOU

SOME GLORY IN THEIR BIRTH, SOME IN THEIR SKILL
SOME IN THEIR GARMENTS, THOUGH NEW-FANGLED ILL
SOME IN THEIR WEALTH, SOME IN THEIR BODY’S FORCE
SOME IN THEIR HAWKS AND HOUNDS, SOME IN THEIR HORSE
BUT YOU ARE BETTER THAN HIGH BIRTH TO ME
OF MORE DELIGHT THAN HAWKS OR HORSES BE
RICHER THAN WEALTH, OR THE MOON UP ABOVE
AND HAVING THEE, MAYBE WE CALL THIS...

POET

Mutual admiration?

YOUTH pushes POET away, laughing. POET pulls in YOUTH.

POET

I HATE NOT YOU

YOUTH

I HATE... NOT YOU

POET & YOUTH

“I HATE” AWAY FROM HATE YOU THREW

AND SAVED MY LIFE, SAYING "NOT YOU"
OH I... I HATE NOT YOU,
NO I... I HATE NOT...

They kiss.

POET & YOUTH

LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, LA DA DEH DUM
LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, DUM DUM

They embrace as the lights fade on them.

SOME SAY (sonnets 96, 119, 118)

The PARENT watches as the YOUTH slips through their fingers. Time seems cruel for taking the YOUTH away.

PARENT

SOME SAY THY FAULT IS YOUTH, SOME WANTONNESS
SOME SAY THY GRACE IS YOUTH AND GENTLE SPORT
SOME SAY BOTH GRACE AND FAULTS ARE LOVED OF MORE AND LESS
SOME SAY THOU MAKEST FAULTS THAT TO THEE RESORT

AS ON THE FINGER OF A THRONED QUEEN
THE BASEST JEWEL WILL BE WELL ESTEEMED
SO ARE THOSE ERRORS THAT IN THEE ARE SEEN
TO TRUTHS TRANSLATED AND FOR TRUE THINGS DEEMED

SOME SAY, SOME SAY, SOME SAY...

The DEVIL comes out and begins to lurk around the PARENT.

PARENT

SOME SAY HOW MANY LAMBS MIGHT THE WOLF BETRAY
SOME SAY IF LIKE A LAMB HE COULD HIS LOOKS TRANSLATE
SOME SAY HOW MANY HEARTS MIGHTST THOU LEAD AWAY
SOME SAY IF THOU WOULDST USE THE STRENGTH OF ALL THY STATE!

WHAT POTIONS HAVE I DRUNK OF SIREN'S TEARS
DISTILLED FROM LIMBECKS FOUL AS HELL WITHIN
APPLYING FEARS TO HOPES, AND HOPES TO FEARS,
STILL LOSING WHEN I SAW MYSELF TO WIN!

SOME SAY, SOME SAY...

The PARENT goes to the DEVIL and flirtatiously pleads their case.

PARENT

YOU SAID....
O BENEFIT OF ILL, NOW I FIND TRUE
THAT BETTER MADE BY EVIL IS STILL MADE BETTER
AND RUINED LOVE WHEN IT IS BUILT ANEW
GROWS FAIRER THAN AT FIRST, MORE STRONG, FAR GREATER

The DEVIL takes out the PARENT's contract and threatens to rip it up. The PARENT begs the DEVIL not to.

PARENT

SO I RETURN REBUKED TO MY CONTENT
AND GAIN BY ILLS THRICE MORE THAN I HAVE SPENT
BUT THENCE I LEARN, AND FIND THE LESSON TRUE
DRUGS POISON ME THAT SO FELL SICK OF YOU

SOME SAY, SOME SAY, SOME SAY...

The PARENT picks up the piece of clothing that the YOUTH has left behind, holds it close and walks off in a daze.

INVOKING THE MUSE (sonnets 144, 78)

The DEVIL calls upon the MUSE for advice.

DEVIL

I MUST HEAR THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL!

The MUSE reappears from above and makes way to the DEVIL while singing a descant over the music.

DEVIL

THINE EYES, THAT TAUGHT THE DUMB ON HIGH TO SING
AND HEAVY IGNORANCE ALOFT TO FLY,
HAVE ADDED FEATHERS TO THE LEARNED'S WING
AND GIVEN GRACE A DOUBLE MAJESTY

YET BE MOST PROUD OF THAT WHICH I COMPILE
WHOSE INFLUENCE IS THINE AND BORN OF THEE
IN OTHERS' WORKS THOU DOST BUT MEND THE STYLE
AND ARTS WITH THY SWEET GRACES GRACED BE

SO OFT HAVE I INVOKED THEE FOR MY MUSE
 FOUND FAIR ASSISTANCE IN MY VERSE
 AS EVERY ALIEN PEN HATH STOLE MY USE
 YOU MAKE THEIR POETRY DISPERSE
 SO ONCE AGAIN
 I'M INVOKING THE MUSE
 I'M INVOKING THE MUSE TONIGHT

MUSE

TWO LOVES I HAVE, OF COMFORT AND DESPAIR
 WHICH, LIKE TWO SPIRITS, DO SUGGEST ME STILL
 THE BETTER ANGEL IS A MAN RIGHT FAIR
 THE SPIRIT WORSE A WOMAN COLORED ILL

AND WHETHER THAT MY ANGEL BE TURNED FIEND
 SUSPECT I MAY, BUT NOT DIRECTLY TELL
 BUT BEING BOTH FROM ME BOTH TO EACH FRIEND
 I GUESS ONE ANGEL IN ANOTHER'S HELL

SO OFT HAVE YOU INVOKED ME FOR THY MUSE
 FOUND FAIR ASSISTANCE IN MY VERSE
 AS EVERY ALIEN PEN HATH STOLE MY USE
 YOU MAKE THEIR POETRY DISPERSE

BOTH

SO ONCE AGAIN
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE TONIGHT

The DEVIL lays out his plan to the MUSE to drive a wedge between the young lovers.

DEVIL

TO WIN ME SOON TO HELL, MY FEMALE EVIL
 TEMPETH MY BETTER ANGEL FROM MY SIDE
 AND WOULD CORRUPT MY SAINT TO BE A DEVIL
 WOOING HIS PURITY WITH HER FOUL PRIDE

The DEVIL makes the MUSE sign a contract. The MUSE does so begrudgingly.

BOTH

SO ONCE AGAIN
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE
 YOU'RE INVOKING THE MUSE TONIGHT

BLACK INK (sonnets 65, 83)

The POET walks on writing in his book. The DEVIL points the MUSE towards the POET. The MUSE nods knowingly and the DEVIL exits. The MUSE advances on the POET. The POET is startled by the MUSE's presence. The MUSE starts to extemporize. The POET is intrigued by the poetry spouting from the MUSE.

MUSE

SINCE BRASS, NOR STONE, NOR EARTH, NOR BOUNDLESS SEA
BUT SAD MORTALITY O'ERSWAYS THEIR POWER
HOW WITH THIS RAGE SHALL BEAUTY HOLD A PLEA
WHOSE ACTION IS NO STRONGER THAN A FLOWER?

The MUSE grabs the POET's book.

DON'T WRITE THIS DOWN IN YOUR BLACK INK
IT'S NOT THE MIRACLE YOU THINK
SHALL TIME'S BEST JEWEL FROM TIME'S CHEST LIE HID?
OR WHO HIS SPOIL OR BEAUTY CAN FORBID?
BLACK INK WHILST PLAY THOU FOR A FOOL
BLACK INK'S EXCEPTIONALLY CRUEL

The MUSE advances on the POET, but the POET is cautious.

POET

I NEVER SAW THAT YOU DID PAINTING NEED
AND THEREFORE TO YOUR FAIR NO PAINTING SET
I FOUND, OR THOUGHT I FOUND, YOU DID EXCEED
THE BARREN TENDER OF A POET'S DEBT

AND THEREFORE HAVE I SLEPT IN YOUR REPORT
THAT YOU YOURSELF, BEING EXTANT, WELL MIGHT SHOW

MUSE

HOW FAR A MODERN QUILL DOTH COME TOO SHORT,
SPEAKING OF WORTH, WHAT WORTH IN YOU DOTH GROW?

The MUSE pulls the POET close... the POET suddenly realizes that they are staring into a god's eyes.

POET

THERE LIVES MORE LIFE IN ONE OF YOUR FAIR EYES
THAN ALL THE POETS CAN IN PRAISE DEVISE

The MUSE is taken by the POET's words and kisses the POET. The YOUTH happens upon them and sees the kiss. The POET pulls away. The YOUTH runs off and the POET runs after.

MUSE

DON'T WRITE THIS DOWN IN YOUR BLACK INK
IT'S NOT THE MIRACLE YOU THINK
SHALL TIME'S BEST JEWEL FROM TIME'S CHEST LIE HID?
OR WHO HIS SPOIL OR BEAUTY CAN FORBID?
BLACK INK WON'T PLAY YOU FOR A FOOL
BLACK INK'S EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

The MUSE is a bit thrown by what just happened.

THE DEBTOR (sonnets 134 & 135)

The YOUTH has found the DEVIL and runs up to deliver a scolding.

YOUTH

SO NOW I HAVE CONFESSED THAT HE IS THINE
AND I MYSELF AM MORTGAGED TO THY WILL
MYSELF I'LL FORFEIT, SO THAT OTHER MINE
THOU WILT RESTORE... TO BE MY COMFORT STILL

The YOUTH steps back to observe the DEVIL's cold stare.

BUT THOU WILT NOT, NOR HE WILL NOT BE FREE
FOR THOU ART COVETOUS, AND HE IS KIND
HE LEARNED BUT SURETY-LIKE TO WRITE FOR ME
UNDER THAT BOND THAT HIM AS FAST DOTTH BIND

The DEVIL has grown angry and pulls out a contract.

DEVIL

WHOEVER HATH HER WISH, THOU HAST THY WILL
AND WILL TO BOOT, AND WILL IN OVERPLUS
MORE THAN ENOUGH AM I, THAT VEX THEE STILL
TO THY SWEET WILL MAKE ADDITION THUS

The DEVIL shows the YOUTH two contracts: One that says, "WISH" and one that says, "SOUL".

YOUTH

No!!
 THE STATUTE OF THY BEAUTY THOU WILT TAKE
 THOU USERER, THAT PUT'ST FORTH ALL TO USE
 AND SUE A FRIEND CAME DEBTOR FOR MY SAKE
 SO HIM I LOSE THROUGH MY UNKIND ABUSE

DEVIL

LET NO UNKIND, NO FAIR BESEECHERS KILL
 THINK ALL BUT ONE, AND ME IN THAT ONE WILL

The DEVIL crumples the contract that says, "WISH" in their fist and drops it at the YOUTH's feet.

YOUTH

HIM HAVE I LOST THOU HAST BOTH HIM AND ME
 HE PAYS THE WHOLE, AND YET AM I NOT FREE

The YOUTH slumps down and picks up the crumpled "wish" and begins to write a new note onto it.

RELEASING (sonnets 87, 90, 43)

The POET runs on desperate to find the YOUTH, falling on their knees.

POET

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
 Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross;
 Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
 And do not drop in for an after-loss:
 Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
 Come in the rearward of a conquered woe,
 Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
 To linger out a purposed overthrow.
 If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last....

The YOUTH puts a finger over the POET's lips to stop the speaking.

YOUTH

TELL ME HOW DO I HOLD THEE
 UNLESS YOU WISH IT SO?
 AND THE RICHES THAT I'M DESERVING...
 I WOULD JUST LIKE TO KNOW

THYSELF GAVE THY OWN
EVEN THOUGH UNKNOWN
AND THAT GIFT, MISPRISION GROWN

THOU ART TOO DEAR FOR ME, FAREWELL!
AND LIKE ENOUGH THOU KNOW'ST THY ESTIMATE
WORTHY OF FLYING FREE, FAREWELL!
MY BONDS IN THEE ARE ALL DETERMINATE
SO THIS DREAM I'VE HAD WON'T COME TRUE
I'M RELEASING YOU

The YOUTH starts to go but the POET stops them.

POET

Other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

The YOUTH hands the POET the note and leaves.

The YOUTH runs into the PARENT. Seeing the YOUTH in tears, the PARENT goes to comfort the YOUTH, but the YOUTH quickly breaks the embrace and goes to wallow in their own sorrow.

The POET reads the note as the PARENT looks at the distressed YOUTH.

PARENT & POET

TELL ME HOW DO I HOLD THEE
UNLESS YOU WISH IT SO?
AND THE RICHES THAT I'M DESERVING...
I WOULD JUST LIKE TO KNOW

THYSELF GAVE THY OWN
EVEN THOUGH UNKNOWN
AND THAT GIFT, MISPRISION GROWN

THOU ART TOO DEAR FOR ME, FAREWELL!
AND LIKE ENOUGH THOU KNOW'ST THY ESTIMATE
WORTHY OF FLYING FREE, FAREWELL!
MY BONDS IN THEE ARE ALL DETERMINATE
SO THIS DREAM I'VE HAD WON'T COME TRUE
I'M RELEASING YOU

YOUTH, POET & PARENT

I SEE BEST WHEN I DREAM
IN DREAMS I LOOK ON THEE

SO PLEASE LEAVE ME TO SLEEP FOR WHEN I'M AWAKE MY EYES DECEIVE ME

EVEN THY SHADOW SHINES!

SO WHAT NEED DO I HAVE TO LAY EYES ON YOU HERE IN THE DAYLIGHT
WHEN I SEE YOU CLEAR IN MY DREAMS AT NIGHT?

The PARENT realizes they can do nothing for the YOUTH but give space. The PARENT runs off to find the DEVIL.

YOUTH & POET (PARENT in counterpoint)

THOU ART TOO DEAR FOR ME, FAREWELL!
AND LIKE ENOUGH THOU KNOW'ST THY ESTIMATE
WORTHY OF FLYING FREE, FAREWELL!
MY BONDS IN THEE ARE ALL DETERMINATE
SO THIS DREAM I'VE HAD WON'T COME TRUE
I'M RELEASING YOU
I'M RELEASING YOU
I'M RELEASING YOU
I'M RELEASING YOU
I'M RELEASING YOU

The POET rips the "wish" letter in two. The YOUTH crumbles as if struck in the chest. The POET comes out of a trance and appears to be lost, and wanders off.

MUSIC TO HEAR (reprise)

The MUSE sees the YOUTH and goes to see what's wrong. The YOUTH brushes them away. The MUSE falls back into old tactics.

MUSE

MUSIC TO HEAR!

THERE'S MUSIC TO HEAR MY DARLING
SO WHY HEAR MUSIC SO SAD
SWEETS WAR NOT WITH SWEET, JOY DELIGHTING IN JOY...

YOUTH

Stop!!

The MUSE is taken aback, but genuinely wants to help.

KINGDOMS OF HEARTS (sonnets 70, 56, 31, 21, 5)

MUSE

SWEET LOVE, RENEW THY FORCE AND THY MIGHT
 DO NOT LET IT BE SAID THY EDGE SHOULD BLUNTER BE THAN APPETITE
 SO LOVE, ALTHOUGH THY HUNGRY EYES THOU FILL
 TOMORROW SEE AGAIN WITH CLARITY AND DO NOT KILL
 THE SPIRIT OF LOVE
 LET THIS SAD WAVE LIKE THE OCEAN BE
 THEY PUSH AND THEY SHOVE
 AND RUSH BACK TO THE SEA

HOW MANY HOLY AND OBSEQUIOUS TEARS I CRY
 HATH DEAR RELIGIOUS LOVE STOLEN FROM MINE EYE
 BUT THINGS REMOVED HIDE, HIDE DEEP WITHIN THEE LIE
 THERE REIGNS LOVE'S LOVING PARTS
 THOU ART THE HALLOWED GRAVE WHERE BURIED LOVE DOTH LIVE
 HUNG WITH THE TROPHIES OF PAST LOVERS TO THEE DID GIVE
 I SEE THEM ALL IN THEE, AND BEG THEE TO FORGIVE
 WHEN YOU'RE CROWNED
 IN THE KINGDOM OF HEARTS

The YOUTH dries the tears and embraces the MUSE. The MUSE puts a hand towards the YOUTH... it's time to reconcile with the PARENT. The MUSE takes the YOUTH to the PARENT and acts as mediator.

MUSE

WITH APRIL'S FIRST-BORN FLOWERS, AND ALL THINGS RARE
 O LET ME, TRULY WRITE, BELIEVE ME THY LOVE IS AS FAIR
 AS ANY MOTHER'S CHILD, BUT IF YOU DOUBT THEN THOU SHOULD COMPARE
 TO THOSE BRIGHT GOLD CANDLES FIXED IN HEAVEN'S AIR, THEY SHARE
 THE SPIRIT OF LOVE
 LET THIS SAD WAVE LIKE THE OCEAN BE
 THEY PUSH AND THEY SHOVE
 AND RUSH BACK TO THE SEA

The MUSE pleads the YOUTH's case to the PARENT.

YOU'VE PASSED THE AMBUSH OF THOSE HORRIBLE YOUNGER DAYS
 AND YOU WERE NOT ASSAILED, NOR VICTOR IS THY CHARGE
 AND YET THY PRAISE, CANNOT BE SO THY PRAISE
 DON'T TIE DOWN THIS ENVY LARGE
 AND THOU BE GOOD THE GREATER WORTH BEING WOODED OF TIME

FOR CANKER VICE THE SWEETEST BUDS ARE LOVE, IF YOU'RE SMART
 SO THOU PRESENT A PURE, A PURE UNSTAINED PRIME
 AS YOU'RE CROWNED
 IN THE KINGDOM OF HEARTS

The PARENT and the YOUTH reconcile. The MUSE revels in the reunion.

ALL THREE (MAYBE JUST MUSE)

FLOWERS DISTILLED, THOUGH THEY WITH WINTER MEET
 LEESE BUT THEIR SHOW, THEIR SUBSTANCE STILL LIVES SWEET
 THEN WERE NOT SUMMER'S DISTILLATION PASS
 A LIQUID PRISONER PENT IN WALLS OF GLASS

ALL THREE

HOW MANY HOLY AND OBSEQUIOUS TEARS I CRY
 HATH DEAR RELIGIOUS LOVE STOLEN FROM MINE EYE
 BUT THINGS REMOVED HIDE, HIDE DEEP WITHIN THEE LIE
 THERE REIGNS LOVE'S LOVING PARTS
 THOU ART THE HALLOWED GRAVE WHERE BURIED LOVE DOTH LIVE
 HUNG WITH THE TROPHIES OF PAST LOVERS TO THEE DID GIVE
 I SEE THEM ALL IN THEE, AND BEG THEE TO FORGIVE
 WHEN YOU'RE CROWNED
 IN THE KINGDOM OF HEARTS!

The MUSE takes the hands of the PARENT and the YOUTH and engages in a silent prayer.

AND... (sonnet 66)

The DEVIL appears and observes them from afar, clearly unnerved.

DEVIL

TIRED WITH ALL THESE... FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY

AS TO BEHOLD THEM, DESERT A BEGGAR BORN
 AND PUREST FAITH IS UNHAPPILY FORESWORN
 AND RIGHT PERFECTION BE WRONGFULLY DISGRACED
 AND GILDED HONOR IS SHAMEFULLY MISPLACED

AND MAIDEN VIRTUE RUDELY STRUMPETED
 AND STRENGTH BY LIMPING SWAY DISABLED
 AND NEEDY NOTHING TRIMMED IN JOLLITY
 TIRED WITH ALL THESE, FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY!

AND ART THAT IS MADE TONGUE-TIED BY SOME AUTHORITY
 AND SIMPLE TRUTH IS MISCALLED SIMPLICITY
 AND FOLLY, DOCTOR-LIKE, ARE THE ONES CONTROLLING SKILL
 AND CAPTIVE GOOD WHEN ATTENDING CAPTAIN ILL

TIRED WITH ALL THESE, FROM THESE WOULD I BE GONE
 SAVE THAT TO DIE, I LEAVE MY LOVE ALONE

TAKE ALL MY LOVES (sonnet 40)

The MUSE, the PARENT, and the YOUTH surround the DEVIL and attempt to lay a trap.

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH

TAKE ALL MY LOVES, MY LOVE, 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 RECEIVE
 I CANNOT BLAME THEE FOR MY LOVE THAT YOU USE
 BUT THOU BE BLAMED IF THOU THYSELF DECEIVE
 BY WILFUL TASTE OF WHAT THYSELF DOTHT REFUSE

The DEVIL becomes agitated as the three advance in the ritual.

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH

I DO FORGIVE THY ROBB'RY, GENTLE THIEF

DEVIL

AND MAIDEN VIRTUE RUDELY STRUMPETED

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH

ALTHOUGH THOU STEAL THEE ALL MY POVERTY

DEVIL

AND STRENGTH BY LIMPING SWAY DISABLED

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH

AND YET LOVE KNOWS IT'S A GREATER GRIEF

DEVIL

AND NEEDY NOTHING TRIMMED IN JOLLITY

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH
TO BEAR LOVE'S WRONG THAN HATE'S KNOWN INJURY

DEVIL
TIRED WITH ALL THESE, FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY!

DEVIL
AS TO BEHOLD THEM, DESERT A BEGGAR BORN
AND PUREST FAITH IS UNHAPPILY FORESWORN

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH
TAKE ALL MY LOVES, MY LOVE, TAKE THEM ALL
WHAT HAST THOU THEN MORE THAN THOU HADST BEFORE?

DEVIL
LASCIVIOUS GRACE...

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH
NO LOVE, MY LOVE, THAT THOU MAYST TRUE LOVE CALL

DEVIL
IN WHOM ALL ILL WELL SHOWS

PARENT, MUSE, & YOUTH
ALL MINE WAS THINE BEFORE THOU HADST THIS MORE

DEVIL
KILL ME WITH SPITES!

The DEVIL takes the YOUTH into his custody.

PARENT
NO!

DEVIL
YET WE MUST NOT BE FOES...

The DEVIL grabs the YOUTH and begins to slink off to the underworld. The MUSE holds back the PARENT... they exchange a knowing look before they part as they exit... There is more to be done. The DEVIL lets the YOUTH have one last moment with the POET before he takes her away.

YOUTH
ALL DAYS ARE NIGHTS TO SEE TIL I SEE THEE
AND NIGHTS BRIGHT DAYS WHEN DREAMS DO SHOW THEE ME

YOUTH & POET

ALL DAYS ARE NIGHTS TO SEE TIL I SEE THEE
AND NIGHTS BRIGHT DAYS WHEN DREAMS DO SHOW THEE ME

The DEVIL grows impatient and grabs the YOUTH to take with him to hell. The POET is left utterly confused on-stage alone.

POET

Else call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome, thrice more wished, more rare.

But the POET is unmoved, unresponsive, and unaware of the YOUTH. The DEVIL drags the devastated YOUTH off-stage. The POET wanders off bewildered. The DEVIL smiles and exits quite satisfied.

BLACKOUT

ACT II

LOVE IS MY SIN (sonnets 142, 147)

The PLAYERS reassemble on stage shouting their confessions as they make their way through the audience. They set up like they are in a recovery group or a confessional. This should resemble some form of fever dream... We will see later that it is the POET's nightmare.

POET

Else call it winter, which being full of care,
Makes summer's welcome, thrice more wished, more rare.

DEVIL

Love is my sin...

YOUTH

Love is my sin...

PARENT

Love is my sin...

MUSE

Love is my sin

POET

LOVE IS MY SIN

DEVIL

BE IT LAWFUL I LOVE YOU
AS YOU LOVE THOSE OTHER MEN
THOSE WHOSE EYES LIKE TO UNDRESS YOU
AS MINE DO IMPORTUNE YOU
CUZ LOVE IS MY SIN

PARENT

MY LOVE IS LIKE A FEVER
THIS DISEASE I HAVE WITHIN
FEEDING ON WHICH DOTHS PRESERVE
A SICK APPETITE DESERVE
OH, LOVE IS MY SIN

YOUTH & POET

PAST CURE AM I, NOW REASON IS PAST CARE
A FRANTIC MADMAN EVERMORE AWARE!

MUSE

O BUT WITH MINE COMPARE, YEAH
THY DEAR VIRTUE WEARING THIN
IF YOU HATE MY SINFUL LOVING
FIND MERITS NOT REPROVING
CUZ LOVE IS MY SIN

ALL

SCARLET ORNAMENTS PROFANE
WON'T ESCAPE YOUR LIPS AGAIN
FALSE BONDS YOU HAVE SAID
WHEN YOU ROB ANOTHER'S BED
OH LOVE IS MY SIN

I DON'T DENY MY CRIME
I'LL GLADLY DO MY TIME
FOR LOVE IS MY SIN

IF LOVING YOU IS WRONG
DON'T LISTEN TO THIS SONG
CUZ LOVE IS MY SIN

All PLAYERS exit except for the POET who has fallen asleep center stage.

SINCE I LEFT YOU (sonnet 113)

The POET awakes, disoriented, as if from a nightmare. The POET sits and draws a picture of a person who may be someone familiar?

POET

SINCE I LEFT YOU MINE EYE'S IN MY MIND
AND WHAT GOVERNS ME TO GO ABOUT
DOTH PART HIS FUNCTION, AND IS PARTIALLY BLIND
SEEMS SEEING, BUT EFFECTUALLY'S OUT

SINCE I LEFT YOU NO FORM DELIVERS TO MY HEART
OF BIRD, OF FLOW'R, NOR SHAPE DOTH IT LATCH
OF QUICK OBJECTS THE MIND WANTS NO PART
NOR HIS OWN VISION DOTH HOLD WHAT IT CATCH

FOR IF IT SEES THE RUDEST OR GENTLEST SIGHT
 THE MOST SWEET FAVOR OR DEFORMEDEST CREATURE
 THE MOUNTAIN, OR THE SEA, THE DAY, OR NIGHT
 THE CROW, OR DOVE, IT SHAPES THEM TO YOUR FEATURE

The POET assesses his drawing.

SINCE I LEFT YOU MINE EYE'S IN MY MIND
 AND WHAT GOVERNS ME TO GO ABOUT
 DOTH PART HIS FUNCTION, AND IS PARTIALLY BLIND
 SEEMS SEEING, BUT EFFECTUALLY'S OUT

The POET almost remembers what he is talking about but then... it's gone.

SINCE I LEFT YOU... I FORGOT WHO YOU WERE
 AND TIME'S FICKLE GLASS IS ONLY A BLUR
 INCAPABLE OF MORE, REplete WITH YOU
 MY MOST TRUE MIND, MAKES MINE UNTRUE
 SINCE I LEFT YOU

The POET drops the drawing, picks up his notebook and starts scribbling some new poetry.

DESCRIBE ADONIS (sonnets 53, 55, 100, 104)

The DEVIL stumbles upon the aimless POET. The DEVIL peers over the POET's shoulder to read what is being written. The POET is taken aback by the DEVIL's presence.

DEVIL

May I?

The POET hands the DEVIL the notebook.

DEVIL (sonnet 23)

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
 Who with his fear is put besides his part,
 Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
 Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart
 So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
 The perfect ceremony of love's rite...

(to POET) And who is thine Muse?

The POET shrugs and pulls out a flask to drink. The POET offers it to the DEVIL.

DEVIL

WHAT IS YOUR SUBSTANCE, WHERE OF ARE YOU MADE,
THAT MILLIONS OF STRANGE SHADOWS ON YOU TEND?
SINCE EVERYONE HATH EVERY ONE, ONE SHADE
AND YOU, BUT ONE, CAN EVERY SHADOW LEND

*The DEVIL takes a deep drink of the POET's flask and begins to impart their
sarcastic view of a Muse's influence. The DEVIL shouts out looking for the "lost
Muse".*

WHERE ART THOU, MUSE, THAT THOU FORGET'ST SO LONG
TO SPEAK OF THAT WHICH GIVES THEE ALL THY MIGHT?
SPEND'ST THY FURY ON SOME WORTHLESS SONG
DARK'NING THY POW'R TO LEND THE BASEST SUBJECTS LIGHT?

POET

NOT MARBLE NOR THE GILDED MONUMENTS
OF PRINCES SHALL OUTLIVE THIS POW'RFUL RHYME

The DEVIL picks up the POET's notebook.

DEVIL

BUT YOU SHALL SHINE MORE BRIGHT IN THESE CONTENTS
THAN UNSWEPT STONE, BESMEARED WITH SLUTTISH TIME

DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE ADONIS
AND THE COUNTERFEIT WILL FAIL AFTER YOU
ON HELEN'S CHEEK ALL ART OF BEAUTY SET AND YOU
IN GRECIAN TIRES ARE PAINTED NEW

POET

RETURN, FORGETFUL MUSE, AND STRAIGHT REDEEM
IN GENTLE NUMBERS TIME SO IDLY SPENT
SING TO THE EAR THAT DOTTH THY LAYS ESTEEM
AND GIVES THY PEN BOTH SKILL AND ARGUMENT

BOTH

DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE ADONIS
AND THE COUNTERFEIT WILL FAIL AFTER YOU
WHEN WASTEFUL WAR SHALL STATUES OVERTURN
NOR MARS HIS SWORD, NOR WARS QUICK FIRE SHALL BURN

The DEVIL pulls the POET in close to impart knowledge. The intensity between them increases with each line uttered. The POET writes down the DEVIL's every word.

DEVIL

TO ME, FAIR FRIEND, YOU CAN NEVER BE OLD
 WHEN FIRST YOUR EYE I EYED
 YOUR BEAUTY STILL. THREE WINTERS COLD
 THAT SHOOK THREE SUMMER'S PRIDE
 THREE SPRINGS TO YELLOW AUTUMN TURNED
 OH THE SEASONS I HAVE SEEN
 THREE APRIL'S RAIN, THREE HOT JUNES BURNED
 SAW YOU FRESH, YET STILL ARE GREEN

BOTH

FOR FEAR OF WHICH, HEAR THIS, THOU AGE UNBRED
 ERE YOU WERE BORN WAS BEAUTY'S SUMMER DEAD!

POET

DESCRIBE, DESCRIBE ADONIS

DEVIL

YOU'RE MY.... YOU'RE MY...
 YOU'RE MY ADONIS

BOTH

AND THE COUNTERFEIT WILL FAIL AFTER YOU
 RISE, RESTY MUSE; IF TIME HAVE ANY WRINKLE THERE
 THEN MAKE TIME'S SPOILS DESPISED EVERYWHERE
 MAKE TIME'S SPOILS DESPISED EVERYWHERE
 MAKE TIME'S SPOILS DESPISED EVERYWHERE!

The DEVIL and the POET collapse in drunken revelry. The MUSE appears.

DEVIL

Ah! Speak of the Devil...

The POET and the DEVIL burst into a fit of laughter.

MUSE

My ears were burning.

BLACK INK (REPRISE) (sonnet 79)

The DEVIL moves towards the MUSE.

DEVIL

WHILST I ALONE DID CALL UPON THY AID
 MY VERSE ALONE HAD ALL THY GENTLE GRACE
 BUT NOW MY GRACIOUS NUMBERS ARE DECAYED
 AND MY SICK MUSE DOTH GIVE ANOTHER PLACE

The DEVIL slings their arm around the POET, claiming ownership.

MUSE

I GRANT, SWEET LOVE, THY LOVELY ARGUMENT
 DESERVES THE TRAVAIL OF A WORTHER PEN
 YET WHAT OF THEE THY POET DOTH INVENT
 HE ROBS THEE OF AND PAYS IT THEE AGAIN

The MUSE pulls the POET away from the DEVIL. The MUSE takes the contract that the DEVIL has given to the POET. The MUSE now has a plan of action...

DON'T WRITE THIS DOWN IN YOUR BLACK INK
 IT'S NOT THE MIRACLE YOU THINK
 (to DEVIL) THEN THANK HIM NOT FOR THAT WHICH HE DOTH SAY
 SINCE WHAT HE OWES THEE THOU THYSELF DOST PAY
 BLACK INK WHILST PLAY THOU FOR A FOOL
 (to POET) BLACK INK'S EXCEPTIONALLY CRUEL

The DEVIL dismisses the POET with a pat on the cheek. The MUSE pulls the POET close.

MUSE

(to POET) Go!

The confused POET stumbles off.

AGAINST THAT TIME (sonnets 49, 110, 106)

The MUSE advances on the DEVIL.

MUSE

AGAINST THAT TIME, IF THAT TIME EVER COME
 WHEN I SHALL SEE THEE FROWN ON ALL MY FAULTS
 WHENAS THY LOVE HATH CAST HIS UTMOST SUM
 DUE TO REFLECTION, THESE RESULTS
 I'M RACING AGAINST THAT TIME

The MUSE takes the DEVIL's hands and sits with them.

AGAINST THAT TIME WHEN THOU SHALT STRANGELY PASS,
 AND SCARCELY GREET ME WITH THAT SUN, THINE EYE;
 WHEN LOVE HAS CHANGED, O BLAME TIME'S FICKLE GLASS,
 AND THERE'S NO LONGER YOU AND I;
 I'M FIGHTING AGAINST THAT TIME

MUSE

WHEN IN THE CHRONICLE OF WASTED TIME
 I SEE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FAIREST WIGHTS
 AND BEAUTY MAKING BEAUTIFUL OLD RHYME
 IN PRAISE OF LADIES DEAD AND LOVELY KNIGHTS
 THEN IN THE BLAZON OF SWEET BEAUTY'S BEST
 OF HAND, OF FOOT, OF LIP, OF BROW
 I SEE THEIR ANTIQUE PEN WOULD HAVE EXPRESSED
 EVEN SUCH BEAUTY AS YOU MASTER NOW.

DEVIL

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 blenches gave my heart another youth,
 And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
 Now all is done, save what shall have no end;
 Mine appetite I never more will grind
 On newer proof, to try and older friend,
 A god in love, to whom I am confined.

Then give me welcome, next my heav'n the best,
 Ev'n to thy pure and most most loving breast.

The DEVIL rests their head into the MUSE's lap.

MUSE

AGAINST THAT TIME DO I NOW TAKE THIS STAND
 WITHIN THE KNOWLEDGE OF MINE OWN ACCORD,
 AGAINST MYSELF, I DO SO RAISE MY HAND
 TO SO DEFEND YOU,
 AND IF YOU WANT TO
 I'M HERE TIL HEAVEN'S FINAL CHORD
 BUT I'M LOSING AGAINST THAT TIME

The DEVIL has fallen asleep in the MUSE's lap. The MUSE finds the "soul contracts" in the DEVIL's pocket and takes them as they run off.

CLAY (sonnets 71, 109)

The YOUTH is in hell. Bored, despondent, and ready to give up...

YOUTH

NO LONGER MOURN FOR ME WHEN I AM DEAD
 IF YOU SHOULD HEAR THAT SULLEN BELL
 GIVING WARNING TO THE WORLD THAT I'M FINALLY FLED
 FROM THIS VILE WORLD WITH VILDEST WORMS TO DWELL

NAY IF YOU READ THIS LINE, REMEMBER NOT
 WHO WRITES, FOR I DO LOVE YOU SO
 THAT I IN YOUR SWEET THOUGHTS WOULD BE FORGOT,
 IF THINKING ON ME MADE YOU WOE

RETURN ME TO CLAY
 DO NOT EVEN MY POOR NAME REHEARSE
 LET YOUR LOVE TOO DECAY
 IF YOU HAPPEN TO LOOK ON THIS VERSE
 LEST THE WISE WORLD LOOK INTO YOUR MOAN
 AND MOCK YOU WITH ME WHEN I'M GONE
 REFUSE TO OBEY
 RETURN ME TO CLAY

O NEVER SAY THAT I WAS FALSE OF HEART,
 THOUGH MY ABSENCE WOULD SURE JUSTIFY
 AS EASY AS I MIGHT FROM MYSELF DEPART
 FROM MY SOUL, WHICH IN THY BREAST DOTHTH LIE

THAT IS MY HOME OF LOVE; IF I HAVE RANGED
 LIKE A TRAV'LLER I RETURN AGAIN
 JUST TO THE TIME, NOT WITH TIME-EXCHANGED
 SO THE WATER I BRING FOR MY STAIN

REMOLD ME FROM CLAY
 DO NOT EVEN MY POOR NAME REHEARSE
 LET YOUR LOVE TOO DECAY
 IF YOU HAPPEN TO LOOK ON THIS VERSE
 LEST THE WISE WORLD LOOK INTO YOUR MOAN

AND MOCK YOU WITH ME WHEN I'M GONE
 DON'T BOTHER TO PRAY
 REMOLD ME FROM CLAY

YOUTH

DON'T EVER BELIEVE THOUGH THAT,
 IN MY NATURED REIGNED THAT ALL
 FRAILITIES BESEIGE ALL KINDS OF BLOOD, NO!
 WHO COULD THINK IT'D BE SO PREPOST'ROUSLY STAINED
 TO LEAVE NOTHING FOR THY SUM OF GOOD
 FOR NOTHING THIS WIDE UNIVERSE I CALL,
 SAVE THOU, MY ROSE; IN IT THOU ART MY ALL

PLEASE BURN ME IN THE CLAY
 DO NOT EVEN MY POOR NAME REHEARSE
 LET YOUR LOVE TOO DECAY
 IF YOU HAPPEN TO LOOK ON THIS VERSE
 LEST THE WISE WORLD LOOK INTO YOUR MOAN
 AND MOCK YOU WITH ME WHEN I'M GONE
 I WISH I COULD STAY
 BURN ME IN THE...

The POET has wandered into the YOUTH's corner of hell during the YOUTH's breakdown.

POET

Are you alright?

The YOUTH is startled, but then is happy to see the POET. Happy, but embarrassed.

YOUTH

Yes. Yes, quite.

POET

You look familiar.

YOUTH

You too.

The YOUTH reiterates the last sonnet the POET spoke to her.

“Other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
 Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.”

The POET stops the YOUTH... It's clear now.

HATE NOT YOU (reprise) (sonnet 35)

The POET takes the YOUTH's hands.

POET

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 LOATHESOME CANCKER LIVES IN SWEETEST BUD

ALL MEN MAKE FAULTS, AND EVEN I IN THIS,
LET SLIDE THY TRESPASS FROM AFAR
MYSELF CORRUPTING, SALVING THY AMISS,
EXCUSING THESE SINS MORE THAN THESE SINS ARE.

YOUTH

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
Now while the world is bent my deeds to cross...

The POET lifts the YOUTH's chin.

POET

I HATE NOT YOU
I HATE NOT YOU

POET & YOUTH

"I HATE" AWAY FROM HATE YOU THREW
AND SAVED MY LIFE, SAYING "NOT YOU"
OH I... I HATE NOT YOU,
NO I... I HATE NOT YOU

They embrace.

POET & YOUTH

LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, LA DA DEH DUM
LA DA DEH DUM, LA DA DA, DUM DUM

They walk off as they get to know each other all over again. This time not under the DEVIL's eye.

LEVEL OF YOUR FROWN (sonnets 117, 120, 130)

The PARENT, after an endless search, has found the DEVIL asleep.

PARENT

ACCUSE ME THUS: THAT I HAVE SCANTED ALL
 WHEREIN I SHOULD YOUR GREAT DESERTS REPAY,
 FORGOT UPON YOUR DEAREST LOVE TO CALL,
 WHERE TO ALL BONDS DO TIE ME DAY BY DAY;
 THAT I HAVE FREQUENT BEEN WITH UNKNOWN MINDS,
 AND TAKEN YOUR DEAR PURCHASED RIGHT;
 THAT I HAVE HOISTED SAIL TO ALL THE WINDS
 WHICH SHOULD TRANSPORT ME FARTHEST FROM YOUR SIGHT.
 BOOK BOTH MY WILLFULNESS AND ERRORS DOWN,
 JUST PROOF SURMISE ACCUMULATE
 BRING ME WITHIN THE LEVEL OF YOUR FROWN,
 BUT SHOOT NOT AT ME IN YOUR WAKENED HATE,

The PARENT pulls out a knife and advances on the sleeping DEVIL.

SINCE MY APPEAL SAYS I DID STRIVE TO PROVE
 THE CONSTANCY AND VIRTUE OF YOUR LOVE

The DEVIL stirs and sees a figure hovering over. The DEVIL thinks it's the MUSE at first.

PARENT

SHOW ME THE LEVEL OF YOUR FROWN!

DEVIL

MY MISTRESSES' EYES ARE NOTHING LIKE THE SUN;
 CORAL'S FAR MORE RED THAN HER LIPS' RED

PARENT

SHOW ME THE LEVEL OF YOUR FROWN!

DEVIL

IF SNOW BE WHITE, WHY THEN HER BREASTS ARE DUN;
 IF HAIRS BE WIRES, BLACK WIRES GROW ON HER HEAD;

The PARENT lunges at the DEVIL with the knife. The DEVIL is unphased... the PARENT stops short of thrusting in the knife.

DEVIL

Do it!

But the PARENT cannot. The DEVIL swiftly disarms the PARENT and pulls them in close.

DEVIL

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

PARENT

THAT YOU WERE ONCE UNKIND BEFRIENDS ME NOW,
AND FOR THAT SORROW WHICH I THEN DID FEEL
NEEDS MUST I UNDER MY TRANSGRESSION BOW,
UNLESS MY NERVES WERE BRASS OR HAMMERED STEEL.

BUT THAT YOUR TRESPASS NOW BECOMES A FEE;
MINE RANSOMS YOURS, AND YOURS MUST RANSOM ME.

DEVIL

SHOW ME THE LEVEL OF YOUR FROWN

The DEVIL grabs the PARENT's face.

DEVIL

You have made a grave error.

The DEVIL reaches for the PARENT's contract... but it is gone! The MUSE appears holding the contracts.

MUSE

May I borrow a worthier pen?

The DEVIL releases the PARENT. The PARENT runs to the MUSE.

HAPPY TO DIE (sonnets 92, 93)

The DEVIL collects himself from his rage.

DEVIL

BUT DO THY WORST TO STEAL THYSELF AWAY,
FOR TERM OF LIFE THOU ART ASSURED MINE,

AND LIFE NO LONGER THAN THY LOVE WILL STAY,
FOR IT DEPENDS UPON THAT LOVE OF THINE.

The POET and the YOUTH run on to see what the commotion is. The DEVIL nods as everyone joins in the standoff, as if it is told that this prophecy would be fulfilled.

DEVIL

THEN NEED I NOT TO FEAR THE WORST OF WRONGS,
WHEN IN THE LEAST OF THEM MY LIFE HATH END.
I SEE A BETTER STATE TO ME BELONGS
THAN THAT WHICH ON THY HUMOR DOTH DEPEND.

SO SHALL I LIVE, SUPPOSING THOU ART TRUE,
LIKE A DECEIVED HUSBAND SO DOES FACE
MAY STILL SEEM LOVE TO ME, THOUGH ALTERED NEW
THY LOOKS WITH ME THY HEART IN OTHER PLACE

The MUSE passes out the contracts to their respective owner. They try to rip them up but they cannot. The DEVIL laughs heartily.

THOU CANST NOT VEX ME WITH INCONSTANT MIND,
SINCE THAT MY LIFE ON THY REVOLT DOTH LIE.
O WHAT A HAPPY TITLE DO I FIND,
HAPPY TO HAVE THY LOVE, HAPPY TO DIE!

The DEVIL starts to lose it as the others begin to form a circle. The DEVIL is beginning to feel trapped.

BUT DO THY WORST TO STEAL THYSELF AWAY,
FOR TERM OF LIFE THOU ART ASSURED MINE,
AND LIFE NO LONGER THAN THY LOVE WILL STAY,
FOR IT DEPENDS UPON THAT LOVE OF THINE.

THEN NEED I NOT TO FEAR THE WORST OF WRONGS,
WHEN IN THE LEAST OF THEM MY LIFE HATH END.
I SEE A BETTER STATE TO ME BELONGS
THAN THAT WHICH ON THY HUMOR DOTH DEPEND.

The players begin to recite sonnet 94 under the DEVIL's rantings.

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH, POET

(underneath, softly at first) They have pow'r to hurt, and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who moving others are themselves as stone,
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow

DEVIL

THOU CANST NOT VEX ME WITH INCONSTANT MIND,
 SINCE THAT MY LIFE ON THY REVOLT DOTH LIE.
 O WHAT A HAPPY TITLE DO I FIND,
 HAPPY TO HAVE THY LOVE, HAPPY TO DIE!

*The players have surrounded the DEVIL and begin to glow. The DEVIL knows
 it's near the end.*

BUT WHAT'S SO BLESSED-FAIR THAT FEARS NO BLOT?
 THOU MAYST BE FALSE, AND YET I KNOW IT NOT.

THE POWER TO HURT (sonnets 116, 94, 95)

The MUSE has everyone link hands around the DEVIL they begin to glow.

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

LOVE'S NOT TIME'S FOOL, THOUGH ROSY LIPS AND CHEEKS
 WITHIN HIS BENDING SICKLE'S COMPASS LOOM:
 LOVE ALTERS NOT WITH BRIEF HOURS AND WEEKS,
 BUT BEARS IT OUT UNTO THE EDGE OF DOOM.

The DEVIL takes a blow with this incantation.

PARENT

THEY THAT HAVE THE POW'R TO HURT, AND WILL DO NONE,
 THAT DO NOT DO THE THING THEY MOST DO SHOW,
 WHO MOVING OTHERS ARE THEMSELVES AS STONE,
 UNMOVED, COLD, SLOW,

MUSE

THEY RIGHTLY DO INHERIT HEAVEN'S GRACE,
 AND HUSBAND NATURE'S RICHES FROM EXPENSE,
 THEY ARE THE LORDS AND OWNERS OF THEIR FACE;
 OTHERS BUT STEWARDS OF EXCELLENCE....

TAKE HEED, DEAR HEART, OF THIS LARGE PRIVILEGE;
 THE HARDEST KNIFE ILL USED DOTH LOSE HIS EDGE.

THE POWER TO HURT
 THE POWER TO FEEL

MUSE, PARENT

THE POWER TO GRIEVE
THE POWER TO RISE ABOVE

MUSE, PARENT, & POET

THE POWER TO LIVE
THE POWER TO DREAM

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO LAUGH
THE POWER TO CRY
THE POWER TO LOVE

The four players now face off with the DEVIL. The MUSE holds up the contract.

MUSE

HOW SWEET AND LOVELY DOST THOU MAKE THE SHAME

The MUSE rips the contract. The DEVIL is hit. The PARENT holds up the contract.

PARENT

WHICH, LIKE A CANKER IN THE FRAGRANT ROSE,

The PARENT rips the contract. Again the DEVIL is hit. The POET holds up the contract.

POET

DOTH SPOT THE BEAUTY OF THY BUDDING NAME

The POET rips the contract. The DEVIL goes to their knees. The YOUTH holds up the contract.

YOUTH

IN WHAT SWEETS DOST THOU SINS ENCLOSE

The YOUTH rips the contract. The DEVIL slumps back.

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

FOR SWEETEST THINGS TURN SOUREST BY THEIR DEEDS;
LILLIES THAT FESTER SMELL FAR WORSE THAN WEEDS.

THE POWER TO HURT
THE POWER TO FEEL
THE POWER TO GRIEVE
THE POWER TO RISE ABOVE

THE POWER TO LIVE
 THE POWER TO DREAM
 THE POWER TO LAUGH
 THE POWER TO CRY
 THE POWER TO LOVE

The DEVIL concedes.

LOVING OFFENDERS (sonnets 42, 37)

The DEVIL stands to admit defeat.

DEVIL

THAT THOU HAST WON IS NOT WHAT AILS ME
 NO, IT IS NOT ALL MY GRIEF
 YET I ADMIT IT MAY BE SAID THAT
 THAT I LOVED YOU ALL DEARLY
 AND YOU NOW ALL HAVE EACH OTHER
 THIS JEALOUSY'S MY WAILING CHIEF
 A LOSS IN LOVE THAT SEEMS TO TOUCH ME
 TOUCHES ME MORE NEARLY

LOOK WHAT IS BEST, THE BEST I WISH THEE
 THIS WISH I HAVE; THEN TEN TIMES HAPPY ME

LOVING OFFENDERS, I WILL EXCUSE YE
 WE CAN PART OUR WAYS AS FRIEND
 NEVER FORSAKE ME, THOUGH YOU ABUSE ME
 LOVE EACH OTHER TIL THE END

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO HURT
 THE POWER TO FEEL

DEVIL

LOVING OFFENDERS, I WILL EXCUSE YE
 WE CAN PART OUR WAYS AS FRIEND

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO GRIEVE

DEVIL

NEVER FORSAKE ME, THOUGH YOU ABUSE ME

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO RISE ABOVE
THE POWER TO LIVE

DEVIL

LOVING OFFENDERS, I WILL EXCUSE YE

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO DREAM
THE POWER TO LAUGH

DEVIL

LOVE EACH OTHER TIL THE END

MUSE, PARENT, YOUTH & POET

THE POWER TO CRY

DEVIL

LOVING OFFENDERS
TIL THE DAY THAT YOU DIE!

ALL

THE POWER TO LOVE

*The DEVIL fades off in the distance. The MUSE ascends back to the heavens.
The POET and YOUTH hold hands. The PARENT looks on, as all is well.*

They BOW....

THE BALLAD OF CUPID (Love's Fire) (sonnets 153, 154)

*BUT... there's a moral to this story... the PLAYERS drop character to address
the audience. A salute to the little love god who always starts the mess.*

POET

CUPID LAID BY HIS BRAND AND FELL ASLEEP

YOUTH

A MAID OF DIAN'S THIS ADVANTAGE FOUND

MUSE

AND HIS LOVE-KINDLING FIRE DID QUICKLY STEEP

PARENT

IN A COLD VALLEY-FOUNTAIN OF THAT GROUND,

POET & YOUTH

WHICH BORROWED FROM THIS HOLY FIRE OF LOVE

MUSE & PARENT

A DATELESS LIVELY HEAT, STILL TO ENDURE

POET, YOUTH, MUSE & PARENT

AND GREW A SEETHING BATH, WHICH YET MEN PROVE
AGAINST STRANGE MALADIES A SOVREIGN CURE.

DEVIL

BUT THEN CUPID GRABBED HIS TRUSTY LOVE ARROW
SAW MY HEART EXPOSED AND DREW HIS BOW
THEN HE LET THAT THING FLY TO THE SKY!
AND IT HIT ME RIGHT BETWEEN RIB 3 AND 4
HURT AT FIRST BUT THEN I FELT A GLOW
THROUGH AND THROUGH THIS LOVE CALLED YOU AND I

DEVIL & POET

THE LITTLE LOVE-GOD LYING ONCE ASLEEP
LAID BY HIS SIDE HIS HEART-INFLAMING BRAND

MUSE, PARENT, & YOUTH

WHILST MANY NYMPHS THAT VOWED CHASTE LIFE TO KEEP
CAME TRIPPING BY; BUT IN HER MAIDEN HAND

DEVIL & POET

THE FAIREST VOTARY TOOK UP THAT FIRE,
WHICH MANY LEGIONS OF TRUE HEARTS HAD WARMED;

MUSE, PARENT, & YOUTH

AND SO THE GENERAL OF HOT DESIRE
WAS, SLEEPING, BY A VIRGIN HAND DISARMED.

ALL

BUT THEN CUPID GRABBED HIS TRUSTY LOVE ARROW
SAW MY HEART EXPOSED AND DREW HIS BOW
THEN HE LET THAT THING FLY TO THE SKY!
AND IT HIT ME RIGHT BETWEEN RIB 3 AND 4
HURT AT FIRST BUT THEN I FELT A GLOW
THROUGH AND THROUGH THIS LOVE CALLED YOU AND I

THIS BRAND WAS QUENCHED IN A COOL WELL NEARBY
GROWING A BATH AND A HEATHFUL REMEDY

ALL

BUT LOVE'S FIRE HEATS WATER,
WATER COOLS NOT THE LOVE
I SAID, LOVE'S FIRE HEATS WATER,
BUT WATER COOLS NOT THE LOVE, NO, NO, NO

(Repeats over the chorus with everyone taking turns to ad lib)

BUT THEN CUPID GRABBED HIS TRUSTY LOVE ARROW
SAW MY HEART EXPOSED AND DREW HIS BOW
THEN HE LET THAT THING FLY TO THE SKY!
AND IT HIT ME RIGHT BETWEEN RIB 3 AND 4
HURT AT FIRST BUT THEN I FELT A GLOW
THROUGH AND THROUGH THIS LOVE CALLED YOU AND I

LOVE'S FIRE FOREVER BURNS!

FINAL BOW

FINIS.