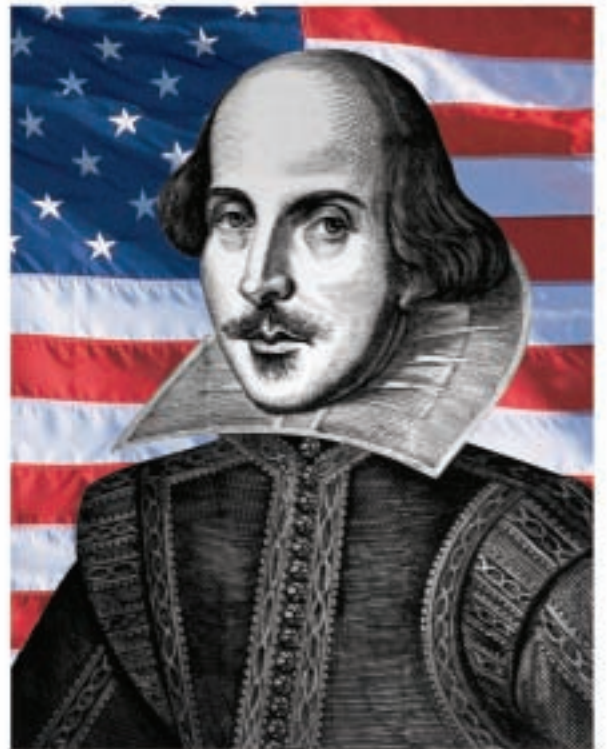


“Speak the speech,
I pray you, as I
pronounced it
to you, trippingly
on the tongue:
but if you mouth it, as
many of your players
do, I had as lief the
town-crier spoke my
lines. Nor do not
saw the air too much
with your hand, thus,
but use all gently; for
in the very torrent,
tempest, and, as I may
say, the whirlwind of
passion, you must
acquire and beget a
temperance that may
give it smoothness.”

HAMLET

RECITATION CONTEST

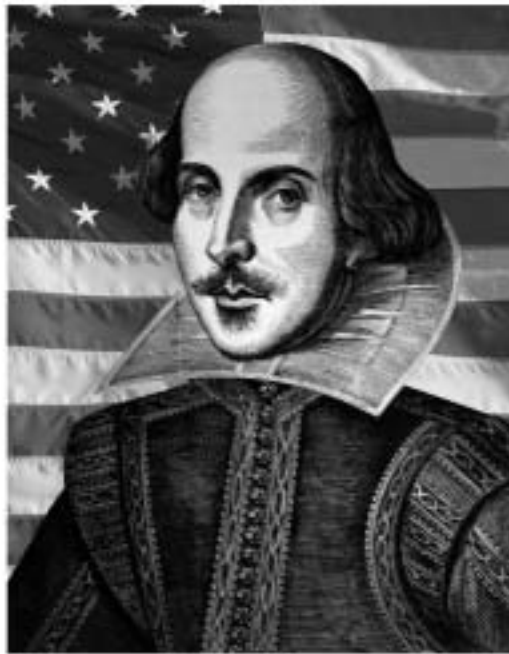
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

RECITATION CONTEST

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
PRESENTS



SHAKESPEARE
IN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES



Shakespeare in American Communities is a national theater touring initiative made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Sallie Mae Fund in cooperation with Arts Midwest. The tour will visit 100 communities in all 50 states, bringing professional theater productions of Shakespeare and related educational activities to Americans throughout the country.



The National Endowment for the Arts exists to foster, preserve, and promote excellence in the arts, to bring art to all Americans, and to provide leadership in arts education. Serving a nation in which artistic excellence is celebrated, supported, and available to all, the Arts Endowment is the largest annual funder of the arts in the United States.



The Sallie Mae Fund, a charitable organization sponsored by Sallie Mae, achieves its mission—to increase access to a post-secondary education for America's children—by supporting programs and initiatives that help open doors to higher education.



Arts Midwest, a nonprofit regional arts organization headquartered in Minneapolis, connects the arts to audiences throughout Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

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Actor Steven Berkoff as Hamlet.

RECITATION AND LEARNING

Memorization and recitation have been central elements of language arts education since ancient times. Through the act of performing literature, students begin to master important public-speaking skills. This practice also helps to build confidence and expand students' knowledge of great literature.

Along with wrestling and the javelin toss, the Ancient Olympics included contests in music, drama, and poetry. Performers would travel to the games from far away. (During times of war a temporary truce would be called and weapons laid down, allowing competitors to pass through enemy territory unharmed.) Now, more than two thousand years since the games began—and after a few silent decades—the recitation contest returns.

Your students will study, memorize, and perform sonnets and monologues from the works of William Shakespeare, the greatest playwright in the history of the English language.

Although many students may initially be nervous about reciting in front of their teenage peers, the experience will prove valuable—not only in school but also in life. Much of the future success of students will depend on how well they present themselves in public. Whether talking to one person or many, public speaking is a skill people use everyday in both the workplace and the community.

Two winners from your school will be sent an official award certificate from the National Endowment for the Arts, signed by Chairman Dana Gioia.

PREPARATION

- 1. Discuss the sonnets and monologues.** The most important preparation for reading Shakespeare aloud is in understanding the text. When the reader or actor doesn't understand the text, neither will the listener. Begin preparation with a class session of discussions concerning the sonnets and monologues. (Dictionaries will be necessary for this activity. In larger classes, you might split students into smaller groups for the discussions and text analysis.)
- 2. Ask students to choose an excerpt to memorize.** Each student must choose one of the sonnets or monologues to memorize and prepare for recitation.
- 3. Share these memorization tips with your students:** 1. Rewrite your sonnet or monologue by hand as often as you can. Each time, try to write more and more of it from memory. 2. Read your piece aloud before going to sleep at night, and repeat it when you wake up. 3. Carry around a copy of your sonnet or monologue in your pocket or bag. You'll find many moments throughout the day to reread or recite it.
- 4. Model recitation skills.** The teacher should model both effective and ineffective recitation practices, asking students to point out which elements of the performance are successful and which are not. On the board, develop a list of bad habits that distract the audience or take away from the performance, such as fidgeting, monotone voice, inaudible volume, mispronunciations, and (the most common problem) speaking too quickly. Now develop a list of elements that a successful recitation performance should contain: eye contact with audience, voice inflection, sufficient volume, evidence of understanding, pronunciation, and an appropriate speed with the proper pauses.
- 5. Practice the monologues.** Allow class-time for students to practice their monologues. Break the class into pairs of students (rotating at each session). Have each student practice with his or her partner. Partners should offer constructive criticism, using the included checklist for their critique.

SUGGESTED CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

- Read and discuss the sonnets and monologues in class.
(2–3 full classes)
- Have students choose sonnets or monologues to memorize. They should look up all unfamiliar words, making sure they understand and can pronounce every word and phrase. Encourage them to make helpful notes onto the copies of their selections.
(1 full class)
- Have students practice their sonnets or monologues with partners.
(15 minutes per day)
- The teacher should model effective and ineffective recitation practices.
(1 full class)

Week 2

- Have students practice their sonnets or monologues with partners each day. They should also work on their memorization and performance outside of school. Students should have their selections completely memorized and be able to recite without using a page by the end of the week.
(15 minutes per day)

Week 3

- Hold the class-wide recitation contest.
(1–2 full classes)
- Winners compete in the school-wide competition towards the end of the week.
(1 hour)

PRACTICE CHECKLIST

Volume

A performer should be loud enough to be heard by the entire audience.

Speed

Most of us speak too quickly when we are nervous, which can make a performance difficult to understand. Speak slowly, but not so slowly that the language sounds unnatural or awkward. Speak at a natural pace.

Voice Inflection

Avoid monotone recitation. If a performer sounds bored, he or she will project that boredom onto the audience. One should also avoid using too much inflection, which can make the recitation sound insincere.

Posture and Presence

Stand up straight and attentively. Appropriate gestures and movement on the stage are encouraged, as long as they are not overdone.

Evidence of Understanding and Pronunciation

Be sure you know the meaning and correct pronunciation of every word and line in your excerpt. If you are unsure about something, it will be apparent to the audience. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher for help.

Eye Contact

Engage your audience. Look them in the eye. If you have trouble with that, look past them to the far wall, but try not to look down unless appropriate to the text.

Name: _____

	poor	>	average	>	excellent
Volume	1	2	3	4	5
Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Voice Inflection	1	2	3	4	5
Posture and Presence	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence of Understanding	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5

CONTEST GUIDELINES

Schedule

First the teacher will hold a class-wide recitation contest. The two highest scorers from each class will take part in the school-wide competition, held at an assembly with all students present. Schedule a date and time for the school-wide assembly as soon as possible. For larger schools, allow only one finalist from each class to take part in the school-wide competition. (Eight to twelve competitors would be ideal.)

Performance Introductions

At the competition, students should stand before the class (or the school), introduce themselves, identify what they will perform (for example, “This is ‘Sonnet 18’ by William Shakespeare,” or “This is an excerpt from act two, scene two, of *Romeo and Juliet*. I will read the part of Juliet”), and begin.

Evaluation

The teacher will act as the judge using the following evaluation sheet. Select three teachers to judge the school-wide competition. All students who participate will be sent a certificate from the National Endowment for the Arts. Two winners from each school will be sent an official award document from the National Endowment for the Arts, signed by Chairman Dana Gioia.

CONTEST EVALUATION SHEET

Name of Performer: _____

Monologue or Sonnet: _____

Ratings

1: Poor

2: Below Average

3: Average

4: Very Good

5: Excellent

	poor	>	average	>	excellent
Volume	1	2	3	4	5
Speed	1	2	3	4	5
Voice Inflection	1	2	3	4	5
Posture and Presence	1	2	3	4	5
Evidence of Understanding	1	2	3	4	5
Gestures	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
Eye Contact	1	2	3	4	5

FINAL SCORE: _____

LIST OF WINNERS

Names of Winners
(type or print legibly)

1. _____
2. _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Number of Participating Students: _____

Name of Teacher: _____

Signature of Teacher: _____

Please return this form to:

Recitation Awards
National Endowment for the Arts
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Room 621
Washington, DC 20506

Romeo

ROMEO AND JULIET

Act II, Scene 2

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
 It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!
 Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
 Who is already sick and pale with grief
 That thou her maid art far more fair than she.
 Be not her maid, since she is envious;
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
 And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
 It is my lady; O it is my love!
 O that she knew she were!
 She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that?
 Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
 I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
 As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright
 That birds would sing and think it were not night.
 See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
 O that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek!

Theseus

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Act V, Scene 1

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

Macbeth

MACBETH

Act V, Scene 5

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

THE MONOLOGUES

Orsino

TWELFTH NIGHT

Act I, Scene 1

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall;
O it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour. Enough! No more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! How quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical.

Othello

OTHELLO

Act V, Scene 2

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light.
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again;
It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree. [*Kisses her.*]
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last;
So sweet was ne'er so fatal.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester

RICHARD III

Act I, Scene 1

Now is the winter of our discontent
 Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
 And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
 In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
 Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths,
 Our bruised arms hung up for monuments,
 Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.
 Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
 And now, instead of mounting barbed steeds
 To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
 He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
 To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
 But I, that am not shap'd for sportive tricks
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
 I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
 To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
 I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
 Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
 Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
 And that so lamely and unfashionable
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
 Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
 Have no delight to pass away the time,
 Unless to see my shadow in the sun
 And descant on mine own deformity.
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
 To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
 I am determin'd to prove a villain,
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Antony

JULIUS CAESAR

Act III, Scene 2

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.
 I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
 The evil that men do lives after them,
 The good is oft interred with their bones;
 So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
 Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
 If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
 And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
 Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
 For Brutus is an honourable man;
 So are they all, all honourable men—
 Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me.
 But Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
 Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
 When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept;
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And Brutus is an honourable man.
 You all did see that on the Lupercal
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
 And, sure, he is an honourable man.
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
 But here I am to speak what I do know.
 You all did love him once, not without cause.
 What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
 And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;
 My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
 And I must pause till it come back to me.

Hamlet

HAMLET

Act III, Scene 1

To be, or not to be: that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep; perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

Chorus

HENRY V

Prologue

O for a Muse of fire that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
Then should the war-like Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that hath dar'd
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

Juliet

ROMEO AND JULIET

Act II, Scene 2

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself though, not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Helena

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Act I, Scene 1

How happy some o'er other some can be!
 Through Athens I am thought as fair as she;
 But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so.
 He will not know what all but he do know;
 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
 So I, admiring of his qualities.
 Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
 Love can transpose to form and dignity.
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
 Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste;
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
 So the boy Love is perjur'd everywhere;
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;
 Then to the wood will he tomorrow night
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense.
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither and back again.

Portia

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Act IV, Scene 1

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway.
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings;
It is an attribute to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

THE MONOLOGUES

Ophelia

HAMLET

Act III, Scene 1

O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O woe is me
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Cleopatra

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Act I, Scene 5

O Charmian!

Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse, for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,
Or murmuring 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'
For so he calls me. Now I feed myself
With most delicious poison. Think on me,
That am with Phœbus' amorous pinches black
And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Cæsar,
When thou wast here above the ground, I was
A morsel for a monarch, and great Pompey
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;
There would he anchor his aspect, and die
With looking on his life.

Miranda

THE TEMPEST

Act I, Scene 2

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch
But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perish'd.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
The fraughting souls within her.

Juliet

ROMEO AND JULIET

Act II, Scene 5

The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;
In half an hour she promis'd to return.
Perchance she cannot meet him. That's not so.
O she is lame! Love's heralds should be thoughts,
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,
Driving back shadows over lowering hills.
Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw Love,
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill
Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve
Is three long hours, yet she is not come.
Had she affections and warm youthful blood,
She'd be as swift in motion as a ball;
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
And his to me.
But old folks, many feign as they were dead;
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.
O God, she comes! O honey nurse! What news?
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.
Now, good sweet nurse; O Lord! Why look'st thou sad?
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;
If good, thou sham'st the music of sweet news
By playing it to me with so sour a face.
I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; good, good nurse, speak!

Kate

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Act IV, Scene 3

The more my wrong, the more his spite appears.
What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars that come unto my father's door
Upon entreaty have a present alms;
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity.
But I, who never knew how to entreat
Nor never needed that I should entreat,
Am starv'd for meat, giddy for lack of sleep;
With oaths kept waking and with brawling fed.
And that which spites me more than all these wants,
He does it under name of perfect love;
As who should say, if I should sleep or eat
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.
I prithee go and get me some repast;
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

Sonnet XVIII

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

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

Sonnet XXVII

“Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed”

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind when body’s work’s expir’d:
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see;
Save that my soul’s imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beautiful and her old face new.
 Lo! Thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
 For thee and for myself no quiet find.

Sonnet XXIX

“When, in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes”

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

Sonnet XXX

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought”

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear times’ waste;
Then can I drown an eye, unus’d to flow,
For precious friends hid in death’s dateless night,
And weep afresh love’s long since cancell’d woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish’d sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o’er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restor’d and sorrows end.

Sonnet LV

“Not marble, nor the gilded monuments”

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
 But you shall shine more bright in these contents
 Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
 When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
 And broils root out the work of masonry,
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
 The living record of your memory.
 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
 Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
 Even in the eyes of all posterity
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Sonnet CXVI

“Let me not to the marriage of true minds”

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

Sonnet CXXX

“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”

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

Sonnet CXXXVIII

“When my love swears that she is made of truth”

When my love swears that she is made of truth
 I do believe her, though I know she lies,
 That she might think me some untutor’d youth,
 Unlearned in the world’s false subtleties.
 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
 Although she knows my days are past the best,
 Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue;
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
 O love’s best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told.
 Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flatter’d be.



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