

## 23

As an unperfect actor on the stage  
 Who with his fear is put besides<sup>o</sup> his part,  
 Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage  
 Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart,  
 5 So I, for fear of trust,<sup>o</sup> forget to say  
 The perfect ceremony of love's rite,<sup>9</sup>  
 And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,  
 O'er-charged<sup>o</sup> with burden of mine own love's might.  
 O let my books be then the eloquence  
 10 And dumb presagers<sup>o</sup> of my speaking breast,  
 Who plead for love, and look for recompense  
 More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.<sup>1</sup>  
 O learn to read what silent love hath writ;  
 To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.<sup>o</sup>

forgets  
 lack of confidence

overweighed

mute presenters

intelligence

## 29

When, in disgrace<sup>o</sup> with Fortune and men's eyes,  
 I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless<sup>o</sup> cries,  
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
 5 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,<sup>2</sup>  
 Desiring this man's art<sup>o</sup> and that man's scope,<sup>o</sup>  
 With what I most enjoy contented least;  
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
 10 Haply I think on thee, and then my state<sup>3</sup>  
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising  
 From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

disfavor

futile

skill / ability

## 30

When to the sessions<sup>4</sup> 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<sup>o</sup> my dear time's waste:  
 5 Then can I drown an eye (unused to flow)  
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless<sup>o</sup> night,  
 And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,  
 And moan th' expense<sup>o</sup> of many a vanished sight:  
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,<sup>o</sup>  
 10 And heavily from woe to woe tell<sup>o</sup> o'er  
 The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,  
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.

bewail anew

endless

loss

former

count

9. The first edition has "right," suggesting love's due as well as love's ritual ("rite").

1. More than that (rival) speaker who has more often said more.

2. I.e., I wish I had one man's looks, another

man's friends.

3. Condition, state of mind; but in line 14 there is a pun on *state* meaning chair of state, throne.

4. Sittings of court. "Summon up" (next line) continues the metaphor.