

'Among the many that mine eyes have seen,  
Not one whose flame my heart so much as warm'd,  
Or my affection put to the smallest teen,  
Or any of my leisures ever charm'd:  
195 Harm have I done to them, but ne'er was harm'd;  
Kept hearts in liveries, but mine own was free,  
And reign'd, commanding in his monarchy.

'Look here, what tributes wounded fancies sent me,  
Of paled pearls and rubies red as blood;  
200 Figuring that they their passions likewise lent me  
Of grief and blushes, aptly understood  
In bloodless white and the encrimson'd mood;  
Effects of terror and dear modesty,  
Encamp'd in hearts, but fighting outwardly.

'And, lo, behold these talents of their hair,  
With twisted metal amorously impleach'd,  
I have received from many a several fair,  
Their kind acceptance weepingly beseech'd,  
With the annexions of fair gems enrich'd,  
210 And deep-brain'd sonnets that did amplify  
Each stone's dear nature, worth, and quality.

'The diamond,--why, 'twas beautiful and hard,  
Whereto his invised properties did tend;  
215 The deep-green emerald, in whose fresh regard  
Weak sights their sickly radiance do amend;  
The heaven-hued sapphire and the opal blend  
With objects manifold: each several stone,  
With wit well blazon'd, smiled or made some moan.

'Lo, all these trophies of affections hot,  
220 Of pensived and subdued desires the tender,  
Nature hath charged me that I hoard them not,  
But yield them up where I myself must render,  
That is, to you, my origin and ender;  
For these, of force, must your oblations be,  
225 Since I their altar, you enpatron me.

'O, then, advance of yours that phraseless hand,  
Whose white weighs down the airy scale of praise;  
Take all these similes to your own command,  
230 Hallow'd with sighs that burning lungs did raise;  
What me your minister, for you obeys,  
Works under you; and to your audit comes  
Their distract parcels in combined sums.

'Lo, this device was sent me from a nun,  
Or sister sanctified, of holiest note;  
235 Which late her noble suit in court did shun,  
Whose rarest havings made the blossoms dote;  
For she was sought by spirits of richest coat,  
But kept cold distance, and did thence remove,  
To spend her living in eternal love.

'But, O my sweet, what labour is't to leave  
240 The thing we have not, mastering what not strives,  
Playing the place which did no form receive,  
Playing patient sports in unconstrained gyves?  
She that her fame so to herself contrives,  
245 The scars of battle 'scapeth by the flight,  
And makes her absence valiant, not her might.

'O, pardon me, in that my boast is true:  
The accident which brought me to her eye  
250 Upon the moment did her force subdue,  
And now she would the caged cloister fly:  
Religious love put out Religion's eye:  
Not to be tempted, would she be immured,  
And now, to tempt, all liberty procured.

'How mighty then you are, O, hear me tell!  
255 The broken bosoms that to me belong  
Have emptied all their fountains in my well,  
And mine I pour your ocean all among: