

## Sonnet 8: Music To Hear, Why Hear'st Thou Music Sadly?

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?  
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:  
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,  
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?  
If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,  
By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.  
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;  
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,  
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:  
Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,  
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

### Sonnet 8 Translation

You're like the music to listen to, so why does listening to music make you sad? Delightful and joyful things should complement one another. So why do you love things that make you unhappy and enjoy things that are bad for you? If music played well and in tune sounds bad to you, it's because that music is rebuking you for not playing your own part, not making your own harmony, by getting married and having children. Notice how the sound of two strings vibrating together in harmony is like a father and a child and happy mother who all sing one pleasing note together. Though their music has no words, the unity of their voices sings this warning to you: If you stay single, you'll be a childless nobody.

## Sonnet 12: When I Do Count the Clock That Tells Time

When I do count the clock that tells the time,  
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;  
When I behold the violet past prime,  
And sable curls, all silvered o'er with white;  
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,  
Then of thy beauty do I question make,  
That thou among the wastes of time must go,  
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake  
And die as fast as they see others grow;  
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence  
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

### Sonnet 12 Translation

When I count the chimes of the clock and watch the bright day sunken into terrifying night; when I see violets fading, and black curls all silvered over with white; when I see tall trees which previously offered shade to sheep and cattle but now with no leaves; and the green crops of summer tied up in harvested sheaves covered with scratchy dried out leaves, carried away on a wagon; then I begin to think about the endurance of your beauty and that you will have to decline and decay like everything else, because sweet and beautiful things lose their sweetness and beauty and die while watching new sweet and beautiful things taking their place. The only defense against Time's knife is to defy him when he takes you away, by having children.

## Sonnet 18: 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 owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

### Sonnet 18 Translation:

Shall I compare you to a summer's day? You are more lovely and more moderate: Harsh winds disturb the delicate buds of May, and summer doesn't last long enough. Sometimes the sun is too hot, and its golden face is often dimmed by clouds. All beautiful things eventually become less beautiful, either by the experiences of life or by the passing of time. But your eternal beauty won't fade, nor lose any of its quality. And you will never die, as you will live on in my enduring poetry. As long as there are people still alive to read poems this sonnet will live, and you will live in it.