Breaking the Book Known as Q

COLEMAN HUTCHISON

Readers, in fact, never confront abstract, idealized texts detached from any materiality. They hold in their hands or perceive objects and forms whose structures and modalities govern their reading or hearing, and consequently the possible comprehension of the text read or heard.

—Roger Chartier

O let my books be then the eloquence . . .

—"23" *Shake-speares Sonnets*

IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF HER *ART OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS*, Helen Vendler tells a little white lie: "I have reprinted both the 1609 quarto *Sonnets* and a modernized version of my own" (xiii). The crux of this declaration is "reprinted." Vendler does indeed *print* a version of the 1609 quarto—or "Q," as it is referred to bibliographically;[1] one could even say that she "reprints" the *type* of the quarto. Vendler does not, however, "reprint" the 1609 quarto *Sonnets*. Like nearly every modern editor before her, Vendler presents the poems as discrete units on a page, eliding and ignoring the page breaks that so often—and, I will argue, so meaningfully—interrupt the poems. In "reprinting" these poems, Vendler uses a deft cut-and-paste method to rearrange, re-member, and reconstitute the type of the 1609 quarto into uninterrupted material units, into what we would visually recognize as "sonnets." The result of Vendler's seemingly innocuous editorial decision is profound. On her page, the sonnets appear as and in

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a visual totality (fig. 1, Vendler's presentation of sonnet 55; cf. figs. 2 and 3, poem 55 as it appears in the 1609 quarto). Girded by an architecture of white space that focuses our visual as well as our interpretive gaze on the type, Vendler's poems are presented in a form that accentuates their status as visual objects. Thus, the materiality of this presentation reinforces and even produces the strict poetic form so often associated with the sonnet. Implicitly, and perhaps insidiously, Vendler's sonnets argue that material form recapitulates poetic form. Yet to reach this end, Vendler has significantly altered the materiality of the 1609 quarto by quieting its conspicuous interruptions.

Advocating a reading practice that might seem at first unusual, dubious, or even nonsensical, this essay considers a series of questions about the relations between material presentation and poetic meaning. In truth, the 1609 quarto evinces a far more complex relation between materiality and poetic form than Vendler's edition allows us to see; *Shake-speares Sonnets* renders its poems as both concrete and fluid material objects. Through a nonuniform, seemingly arbitrary imposition of page breaks, several quarto poems appear clipped, severed, and fractured; others are preserved and monumentalized in the field of the page.[2] Given this, and cribbing from Random Cloud, this essay will "scrutinize the evidence visually, spatially, even topologically" (61) and consider how the quarto's breaks, breaches, fissures, disruptions, and interruptions matter.[3] What happens when the sonnet—that paragon of structured, disciplined poetic unity—is cut in two? What textual effects do such breaks enact? What might it mean to read across the fold—to read, that is, the openings of this book? In addressing these questions, this essay will limn the ways that our epistemologies of poetic form seem blind to the visual registers through which that form is experienced or expressed.

As one recent sonnet critic urges, "we must first remember that a sonnet is a very highly coded form of text. The peculiarity of its code is that it combines to an unusual degree *visibility of formal elements* (due in part to its inflexible brevity) and an organized cumulative system of intertextuality" (Kuin 29; my emphasis). The status of a sonnet's formal elements (e.g., rhyme scheme, number of lines) is thus linked inextricably to its material presentation and, by extension, to its visual recognition and readerly reception. But, as this essay will suggest, the critical history of *Shake-speares Sonnets* evinces several moments in which readerly expectations have exceeded or ignored the material-visual presentation of the book known as Q—Vendler being but the latest in a distinguished line of critics to have done so.[4] At stake in such a critical history are a series of pressing issues: issues of authorship, textual authority, the recognition of poetic form, the history and sociology of reading practices, and, finally, the very idea of literature. Thus, by underscoring how the 1609 quarto's breaks might matter and mean, and by affirming that the page and the page break are units of meaning with particularly urgent implications, this essay argues for a reading practice that is attentive to both the materiality of the 1609 *Shake-speares Sonnets* and the effect of that materiality on the early modern scene of reading.

The Matter with Q

Even the most casual reader approaches a collection of sonnets with a set of expectations about the poetic form those sonnets should take. As one commonplace definition suggests, a sonnet is a "lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme" (Abrams 290). The pithiness and iterability of this definition bespeak the assumptions of continuity, stability, and fixity that attend—and produce—sonnets. The existence of such strict conventions suggests that a modern reader's encounter with a sonnet is

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determined in advance, that our reading is always and already guided by the proscriptive, disciplining signifier "sonnet." Given this sort of predetermination, we might consider the question, usefully articulated by Michael R. G. Spiller, "[W]hen is a sonnet not a sonnet?" Spiller's answer is provocative for the work this essay undertakes:

> The short answer is that there is by custom a basic or simple sonnet, of which the others are variations: it has proportion, being in eight and six, and extension, being in ten- or eleven-syllable lines, and duration, having fourteen of them. Any poem which infringes one of these parameters will remind us of a sonnet quite closely; a poem which infringes two will be more difficult to accommodate, but we will probably try to establish some procedure to account for the deformation; and a poem which infringes all three will not be recognisable as a sonnet at all, and we will regard it as something else unless there is contextual pressure—if, for example, we found it in the middle of a group of normal sonnets. (3–4)

Spiller's rhetoric deserves some attention: variation, infringement, recognition, "difficult to accommodate," "deformation," "something else," and, most urgently, "normal." All these figures establish an inside-outside binary and evoke a play of sameness and difference that betrays the stakes of reading poetry through its poetic form. Here the "parameters" of poetic form—that is, the lines between "normal" and aberrant sonnets—are constantly being policed. The presence of such a regime inevitably leads one to ask, If *Shake-speares Sonnets* interrupts or breaks several of its poems in two, are these poetic units still sonnets? Does the infringement of these breaks interfere with our ability to read them as sonnets per se? Or does the title *Shake-speares Sonnets* apply enough "contextual pressure" to allow us to recognize these poems as sonnets?[5]

Though Spiller will go on to read *Shakespeares Sonnets* as "not interested in formal variants at all" (159), the poems nevertheless seem constantly to be infringing on "normal," repeatedly varying from the norm, thematically and materially. As Arthur Marotti has noted, "Shakespeare's sonnets are a heterogeneous collection" ("Shakespeare's Sonnets" 155).[6] In the highly homogenous context of other sonnet sequences of the period, such heterogeneity paradoxically marks the 1609 quarto as abnormal. Perhaps the best way to register such abnormality is to locate the quarto within the field of cultural production of early modern sonnet sequences. Wendy Wall describes an "outpouring of sonnet sequences at the end of the sixteenth century" following the 1591 publication of Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (Wall 58). Of the fourteen "sonnet sequences" published between 1591 and 1609—Samuel Daniel's *Delia* (1592), Henry Constable's *Diana* (1592), Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593), Giles Fletcher's *Licia* (1593), Thomas Lodge's *Phillis* (1593), the anonymous *Zepheria* (1594), William Percy's *Coelia* (1594), Michael Drayton's *Ideas Mirrour* (1594), Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595), Richard Barnfield's *Cynthia* (1595), Richard Linche's *Diella* (1596), William Smith's *Chloris* (1596), Bartholomew Griffin's *Fidessa* (1596), Robert Tofte's *Laura* (1597)—all but one sequence maintain their sonnets as uninterrupted material units on the field of the page (figs. 4–15).[7] (The single exception, Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*, subtitled "Sonnettes, madrigals, elegies and odes," may be less a sequence of sonnets and more a poetic miscellany.)[8]

In accounting for historical shifts between manuscript and printed forms, Wall argues that the publication of sonnet sequences "altered the physical presentation of the poems in ways that bolstered . . . textual unity" (70). She suggests that this bolstering "arranged the poetic material within a more structured format, and highlighted the typographical features that stabilized the text" (70). The fourteen examples offered above

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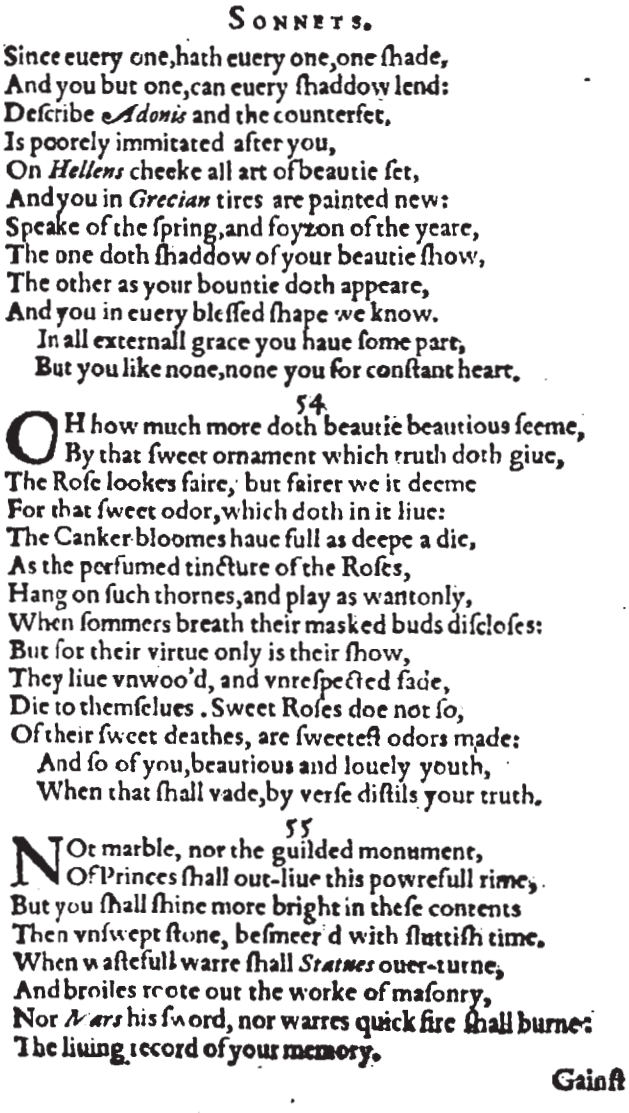
FIG. 1
Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1997) 267.

55

NOt marble, nor the guilded monument,
Of Princes ſhall out-liue this powrefull rime,
But you ſhall ſhine more bright in theſe contents
Then vnſwept ſtone, beſmeer'd with ſluttiſh time.
When waſtefull warre ſhall *Statues* ouer-turne,
And broiles roote out the worke of maſonry,
Nor *Mars* his ſword, nor warres quick fire ſhall burne:
The liuing record of your memory.
'Gainſt death, and all obliuious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praiſe ſhall ſtil finde roome,
Euen in the eyes of all poſterity
That weare this world out to the ending doome.
So til the iudgement that your ſelfe ariſe,
You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies.

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared 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 Judgement that your self arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

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SONNETS.

Since euery one,hath euery one,one ſhade,
And you but one,can euery ſhaddow lend:
Deſcribe *Adonis* and the counterfet,
Is poorely immitated after you,
On *Hellens* cheeke all art of beautie ſet,
And you in *Grecian* tires are painted new:
Speake of the ſpring,and foyzon of the yeare,
The one doth ſhaddow of your beautie ſhow,
The other as your bountie doth appeare,
And you in euery bleſſed ſhape we know.
In all externall grace you haue ſome part,
But you like none,none you for conſtant heart.

54.

O H how much more doth beautie beautious ſeeme,
By that ſweet ornament which truth doth giue,
The Roſe lookes faire, but fairer we it deeme
For that ſweet odor,which doth in it liue:
The Canker-bloomes haue full as deepe a die,
As the perfumed tincture of the Roſes,
Hang on ſuch thornes,and play as wantonly,
When ſommers breath their masked buds diſcloſes:
But for their virtue only is their ſhow,
They liue vnwoo'd, and vnreſpected fade,
Die to themſelues . Sweet Roſes doe not ſo,
Of their ſweet deathes, are ſweeteſt odors made:
And ſo of you,beautious and louely youth,
When that ſhall vade,by verſe diſtils your truth.

55

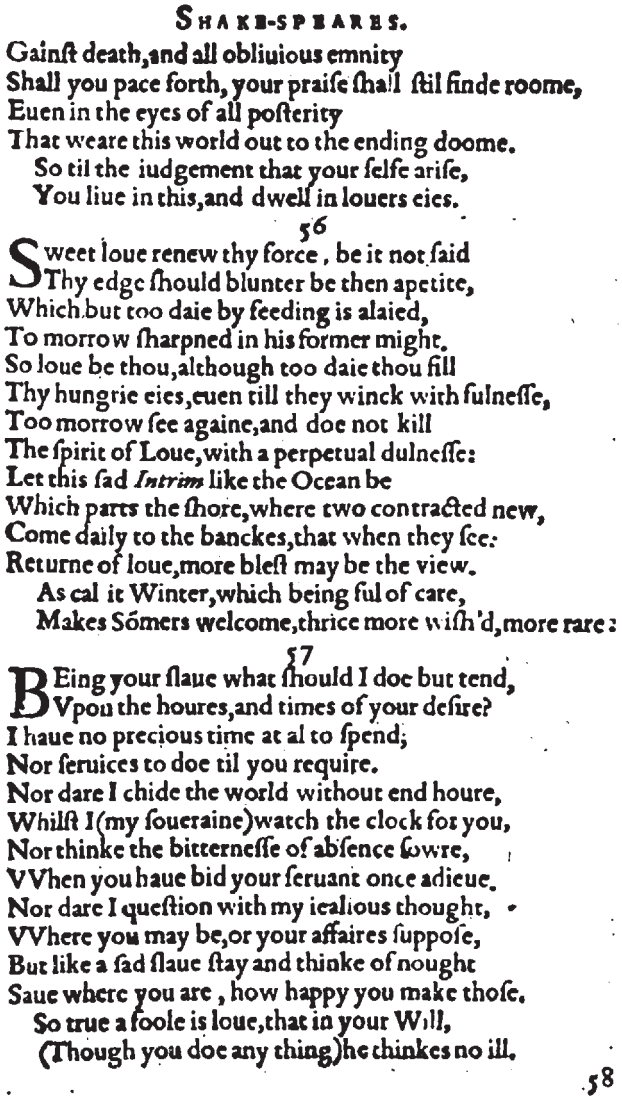
N Ot marble, nor the guilded monument,
Of Princes ſhall out-liue this powrefull rime,
But you ſhall ſhine more bright in theſe contents
Then vnſwept ſtone, beſmear'd with ſluttiſh time.
When waſtefull warre ſhall *Statues* ouer-turne,
And broiles roote out the worke of maſonry,
Nor *Mars* his ſword, nor warres quick fire ſhall burne:
The liuing record of your memory.

Gainſt

FIG. 2

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) D4r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SHAKE-SPEARES.

Gainſt death, and all obliuious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praiſe ſhall ſtil finde roome,
Euen in the eyes of all poſterity
That weare this world out to the ending doome.
So til the iudgement that your ſelfe ariſe,
You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies.

56

Sweet loue renew thy force, be it not ſaid
Thy edge ſhould blunter be then apetite,
Which but too daie by feeding is alaied,
To morrow ſharpned in his former might.
So loue be thou, although too daie thou fill
Thy hungrie eies, euen till they winck with fulneſſe,
Too morrow ſee againe, and doe not kill
The ſpirit of Loue, with a perpetual dulneſſe:
Let this ſad *Intrim* like the Ocean be
Which parts the ſhore, where two contracted new,
Come daily to the banckes, that when they ſee:
Returne of loue, more bleſt may be the view.
As cal it Winter, which being ful of care,
Makes Sómers welcome, thrice more wiſh'd, more rare:

57

BEing your ſlaue what ſhould I doe but tend,
Vpon the houres, and times of your deſire?
I haue no precious time at al to ſpend;
Nor ſeruices to doe til you require.
Nor dare I chide the world without end houre,
Whilſt I (my ſoueraine) watch the clock for you,
Nor thinke the bitterneſſe of abſence ſowre,
VVhen you haue bid your ſeruant once adieue.
Nor dare I queſtion with my iealious thought,
VVhere you may be, or your affaires ſuppoſe,
But like a ſad ſlaue ſtay and thinke of nought
Saue where you are, how happy you make thoſe.
So true a foole is loue, that in your Will,
(Though you doe any thing) he thinkes no ill.

58

FIG. 3

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) D4v. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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evince just such "unity" and "stabiliz[ation]." Take for instance figure 11, from Spenser's *Amoretti*. The visual effects created by the elaborate borders that ensconce the poems produce—not simply reinforce—the unity and totality of the sonnet form on the printed page. As Wall notes, borders in the period "served to create the effect of a closed and complete poetic unit, finished without the reader's collaborative aid" (71).

Thus, while monumentality, visual unity, borders, and the like were all conventional choices available to *Shake-speares Sonnets*, Q seems to have deferred such choice, choosing instead to "not choose" by presenting some but not all poems as visually unified (see Cameron). In the context of the above unified, monumental visual objects, *Shake-speares Sonnets* and its recurrent interruptions emerge as deviant, as infringing boldly on the "normal" materiality of the early modern sonnet sequence page. Page breaks are not the only abnormal material aspects of Q,[9] but a primary emphasis on page breaks here allows us to focus our attention on an aspect of materiality that has the broadest implications for the ways readers conceptualize literary form, encounter the page as a unit of meaning, and experience—or do not experience—what Barbara Herrnstein Smith dubs "poetic closure."

Given such abnormality, it is not surprising that generations of critics have labored to distance William Shakespeare—that apex of both poetic genius and author function—from the textual and thematic abnormalities of Q.[10] For instance, W. H. Auden famously declared: "How the sonnets came to be published—whether Shakespeare gave copies to some friend who then betrayed him, or whether some enemy stole them—we shall probably never know. Of one thing I am certain: Shakespeare must have been horrified when they were published" (105). Auden's projected horror is deeply indeterminate. Does this horror arise from the poems' frank and complex sexualities?[11] from the volume's deviant and complex textuality? from both? What about Q's circulation would have so horrified William Shakespeare? Undergirding this fictive horror is Auden's implicit but unbending belief that, despite its title, *Shake-speares Sonnets* was never authorized or approved for publication by the "bard"—put simply, that Shakespeare would never have allowed a volume as abnormal as Q to appear in print.

If we are to read Q's breaks as carrying meaning—to recognize them as being worthy of literary attention—we must first suspend the nagging questions of intentionality that Auden's horror raises: "yes, but did Shakespeare mean for those breaks to be there?"[12] Such questions of authorization and authorial intentionality have garnered an astonishing amount of attention from Shakespeare scholars.[13] Lisa Freinkel sees at stake in such long-raging and prolix debates about authorization the grounds of authority for readers' interpretations of the text: once the text of Q is authorized "we are ourselves authorized in our attempts to interpret the book as a whole: to ascribe to it a unified meaning, positing an Author behind its words" (171). Amid several incisive criticisms of "recursive" attempts to prove the authorization of Q, Freinkel cautions, "We cannot put an end to the question of authorization in this text, but we can demonstrate that the question is, indeed, the *end* of the text" (183). For Freinkel, authorization is a problem that the poems themselves thematize, "a problem *intrinsic* to our construction of meaning . . . a problem *of* the text" (182).[14]

In truth, and despite the better efforts of critics such as Katherine Duncan-Jones, we may never know what circumstances brought *Shake-speares Sonnets* to the publisher Thomas Thorpe and thus to print. Yet even if we could reconstruct such a narrative, would we be any closer to Shakespeare's intentions? Where would such a narrative get us? This desire to return to some fantastical, hypothesized intent bespeaks what Jerome

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FIG. 4

Samuel Daniel, *Delia* (1592) E1v–E2r. Reproduced by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

26. Sonnet XXVI.

Whilst by her eyes pursu'd, my poore hart flew it,
Into the sacred bosome of my deerest:
She there in that sweet sanctuary slew it,
Where it presum'd his safetie to be neerest.
My priuiledge of faith could not protect it,
That was with blood and three yeeres witnes signed:
In all which time she neuer could suspect it,
For well she saw my loue, and how I pined.
And yet no comfort would her brow reueale me,
No lightning looke, which falling hopes erecteth:
What bootes to lawes of succour to appeale me?
Ladies and tyrants, neuer lawes respecteth.
Then there I dye, where hop'd I to haue liuen:
And by that hand, which better might haue giuen.

Still

Sonnet XXVII. fol. 27.

Still in the trace of my tormented thought,
My ceaseleſſe cares muſt marſh on to my death:
Thy leaſt regarde too deerely haue I bought,
Who to my comfort neuer deign'st a breath.
Why ſhould'ſt thou ſtop thine eares now to my cryes,
Whoſe eyes were open ready to oppreſſe me?
Why ſhutt'ſt thou not the cauſe whence all did riſe,
Or heare me now, and ſeeke how to redreſſe me.
Iniurious *Delia*, yet Ile loue thee ſtill,
Whilſt that I breath in ſorrow of my ſmart:
Ile tell the world that I deſeru'd but ill,
And blame my ſelfe for to excuſe thy hart.
Then iudge who ſunes the greater of vs twaine:
I in my loue, or thou in thy diſdaine.

E 2 Oft

FIG. 5

Henry Constable, *Diana* (1592) B4v–C1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 28501), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

Sonnetto ottauo.

If true loue might true loues reward obtaine,
dumbe wonder onely might ſpeake of my ioy:
but too much woorth hath made thee too much coy,
and told me long agoe, I ſighd in vaine.
Not then vaine hope of vndeſerued gaine
hath made me paint in verſes mine annoy:
but for thy pleaſure, that thou mightſt enioy
thy beauties ſight, in glaſſes of my paine.
See then thy ſelfe (though mee thou wilt not heare)
by looking on my verſe: for paine in verſe,
loue doth in paine, beautie in loue appeare.
So, if thou wouldſt my verſes meaning ſee,
expound them thus, when I my loue rehearſe;
None loues like him; that is, None faire like mee.

Thine

Sonnetto nono.

Thine eye the glaſſe where I behold my hart,
mine eye the window, through the which thine eye
may ſee my hart, and there thy ſelfe eſpye
in bloudie colours how thou painted art.
Thine eye the pyle is of a murdring dart,
mine eye the ſight thou tak'ſt thy leuell by
to hit my hart, and neuer ſhootes awry;
mine eye thus helpes thine eye to worke my ſmart.
Thine eye a fier is both in heate and light,
mine eye of teares a riuer doth become:
Oh that the water of mine eye had might
to quench the flames that from thine eyes doo come.
Or that the fier kindled by thine eye,
the flowing ſtreames of mine eyes could make drie.

C Ladie

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38 Sonnet. XXXVIII.

I ſpeake (faire Licia) what my torments be:
But then my ſpeach too partiall doe I finde:
For hardlie words, can with thoſe thoughts agree:
Thoſe thoughtes that ſwarme, in ſuch a troubled mind.
Then doe I vowe, my tongue ſhall never ſpeake:
Nor tell my griefe, that in my heart doth lie:
But cannon-like, I then ſurcharg'd, doe breake,
And ſo my ſilence, worſe than ſpeach I trie.
Thus ſpeach, or none, they both doe breed my care.
I live diſmayd, and kill my heart with griefe:
In all reſpectes, my caſe alyke doth fare:
To him that wants, and dare not aske reliefe.
Then you (faire Licia) ſoveraigne of my heart:
Read to your ſelfe, my anguiſh, and my ſmart.

Sweet

Sonnet. XXXVIII. 39

Sweet, I proteſt, and ſeale it with an oath:
I never ſaw, that ſo my thoughtes did pleaſe:
And yet content diſpleaſ'd I ſee them wroth:
To love ſo much, and cannot have their eaſe.
I tolde my thoughts, my ſoveraigne made a pauſe,
Diſpoſ'd to graunt, but willing to delay:
They then repin'd, for that they knewe no cauſe,
And ſwore they wiſht, ſhe ſtaulie would ſay nay.
Thus hath my love, my thoughts with treaſon fild:
And gainſt my ſoveraigne, taught them to repine:
So thus my treaſon, all my thoughts hath kill'd,
And made faire Licia, ſay ſhe is not mine.
But thoughts too raſh, my heart doth now repent:
And as you pleaſe, they ſweare, they are content.

G Faire

FIG. 6

Giles Fletcher, *Licia* (1593) F4v–G1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 14668), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

Sonnet VI.

It is not death which wretched men call dying,
But that is very death which I endure:
When my coy looking Nimph (hir grace enuying,)
By fatall frownes my domage doth procure.
It is not life which we for life approue,
But that is life when on hir woul-ſoft pappes,
I ſeale ſweet kiſſes, which do batten loue:
And doubling them do treble my good happes.
T is neither loue the ſonne, nor loue the mother,
Which louers praiſe and pray to, but that loue is:
Which ſhe in eye and I in heart do ſmother,
Then muſe not tho I glory in my miſſe.
Since ſhe who holdes my heart, and me in durance,
Hath life, death, loue and all in hir procureance.

How

Sonnet VII.

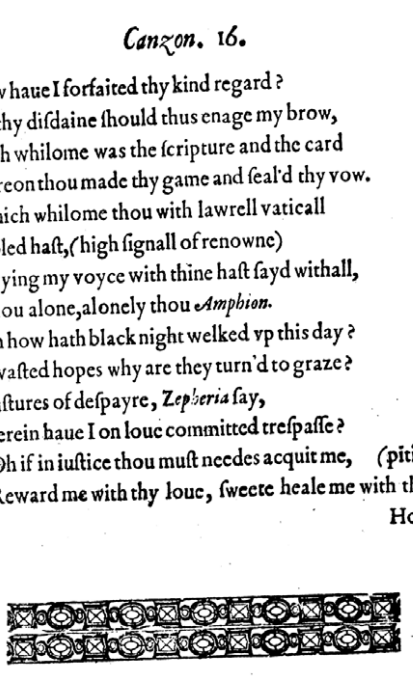
How languiſheth the Primroſe of loues garden?
*H*ow trill hir teares th'Elixar of my ſences:
Ambitious ſicknes, what doth thee ſo harden,
Oh ſpare and plague thou me for hir offences.
Ah Roſes, loues faire Roſes do not languiſh,
Bluſh through the milk-white vaile that holdes you couer-
*I*f heate or colde may mitigate your anguiſh, (ed,
Ile burne, Ile frize, but you ſhall be recouered.
Good God would beautie marke now ſhe is craſed,
How but one ſhower of ſickneſſe makes hir tender:
Hir *I*udgmentes then to marke my woes amazed,
To mercy ſhould opinions fort ſurrender:
And I (oh would, I might, or would ſhe ment it,)
*S*hould herrie loue, who now in hart lament it.

C NO

FIG. 7

Thomas Lodge, Phillis (1593) B4v–C1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 59549), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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Canzon. 16.

How haue I forfaited thy kind regard?
That thy diſdaine ſhould thus enage my brow,
Which whilome was the ſcripture and the card
Whereon thou made thy game and ſeal'd thy vow.
Which whilome thou with lawrell vaticall
Enobled haſt,(high ſignall of renowne)
Marrying my voyce with thine haſt ſayd withall,
Be thou alone,alonely thou *Amphion.*
Oh how hath black night welked vp this day?
My waſted hopes why are they turn'd to graze?
In paſtures of deſpayre, *Zepheria* ſay,
Wherein haue I on loue committed treſpaſſe?
Oh if in iuſtice thou muſt needes acquit me, (pitie
Reward me with thy loue, ſweete heale me with thy
How

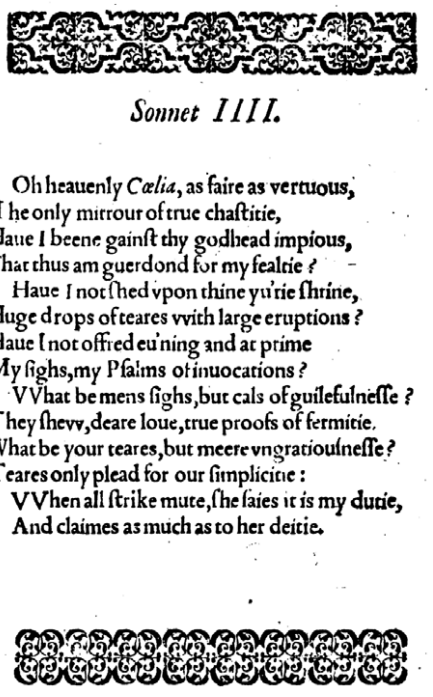
Canzon. 17.

How ſhall I deck my loue in loues habiliment,
And her embelliſh in a right depaint?
Sith now is left nor Roſe, nor *Hyacint*,
Each one their beauties with their hue acquaint.
The golden ſeeling of thy browes rich frame
Deſignes the proud pomp of thy faces architure:
Chryſtall tranſparant caſements to the ſame
Are thine eyes ſunne,which doe the world depure,
Whoſe ſiluerie canopie gold wier fringes:
Thy brow the bowling place for *Cupids* eye,
Loues true-loue knots,and lilly-lozenges
Thy cheekes depaynten in an immortall dye.
If well thou limn'd art now by face immagerie,
Iudge how by life I then ſhould pencill thee.

D *Exacter*

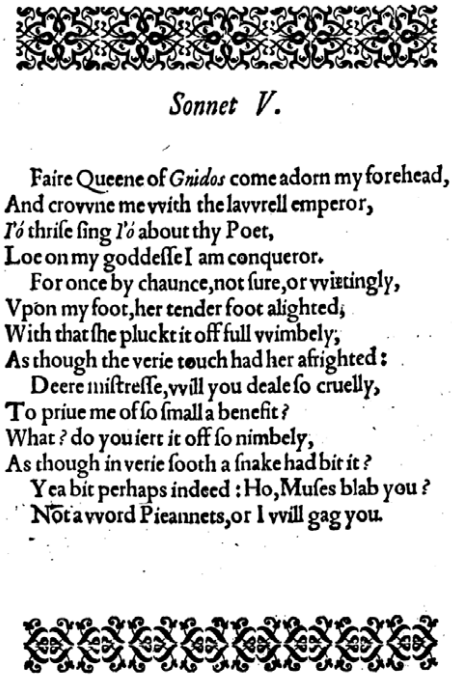
FIG. 8

Zepheria (1594) C4v–D1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 32077), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.



Sonnet IIII.

Oh heauenly *Cœlia*, as faire as vertuous,
The only mirrour of true chaſtitie,
Haue I beene gainſt thy godhead impious,
That thus am guerdond for my fealtie?
Haue I not ſhed vpon thine yuorie ſhrine,
Huge drops of teares with large eruptions?
Haue I not offred eu'ning and at prime
My ſighs,my Pſalms of inuocations?
What be mens ſighs,but cals of guilefulneſſe?
They ſhew,deare loue,true proofs of fermitie.
What be your teares,but meere vngratiouſneſſe?
Teares only plead for our ſimplicitie:
When all ſtrike mute,ſhe ſaies it is my dutie,
And claimes as much as to her deitie.



Sonnet V.

Faire Queene of *Gnidos* come adorn my forehead,
And crowne me with the lawrell emperor,
I'ó thriſe ſing *I'ó* about thy Poet,
Loe on my goddeſſe I am conqueror.
For once by chaunce,not ſure,or wittingly,
Vpon my foot,her tender foot alighted,
With that ſhe pluckt it off full wimbely,
As though the verie touch had her affrighted:
Deere miſtreſſe,will you deale ſo cruelly,
To priue me of ſo ſmall a benefit?
What? do you iert it off ſo nimbely,
As though in verie ſooth a ſnake had bit it?
Yea bit perhaps indeed: Ho,Muſes blab you?
Not a word Pieannets,or I will gag you.

B

FIG. 9

William Percy, *Coelia* (1594) A4v–B1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 62886), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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Amour. 40.

O thou vnkindeſt fayre, moſt fayreſt ſhee,
In thine eyes tryumph murthering my poore hart,
Now doe I ſweare by heauens, before we part,
My halfe-ſlaine hart ſhall take reuenge on thee.

Thy Mother dyd her lyfe to Death reſigne,
And thou an Angell art, and from aboue,
Thy father was a man, that will I proue,
Yet thou a Goddeſſe art, and ſo diuine.

And thus if thou be not of humaine kinde,
A Baſtard on both ſides needes muſt thou be,
Our Lawes alow no Land to baſterdy:
By natures Lawes we thee a Baſtard finde.

Then he..ce to heauen vnkind, for thy childs part,
Goe Baſtard, for ſure of thence thou art.

Rare

Amour. 41.

Rare of-ſpring of my thoughts, my deereſt Loue,
Begot by fancy, on ſweet hope exhortiue,
In whom all parenes with perfection ſtroue,
Hurt in the Embryon, makes my ioyes abhortiue.

And you my ſighes, Symtomas of my woe,
The dolefull Anthems of my endleſſe care,
Lyke idle Ecchoes euer aunſwering: ſo,
The mournfull accents of my loues diſpayre.

And thou Conceite, the ſhadow of my bliſſe,
Declyning with the ſetting of my ſunne,
Springing with that, and fading ſtraight with this,
Now haſt thou end, and now thou waſt begun.

Now was thy pryme, and loe, now is thy waine,
Now waſt thou borne, now in thy cradle ſlayne.

G Plac'd

FIG. 10

Michael Drayton, *Ideas Mirrour* (1594) F4v–G1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 51353), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

SONNET. XL.

MArk when ſhe ſmiles with amiable cheare,
And tell me whereto can ye lyken it:
when on each eyelid ſweetly doe appeare,
an hundred Graces as in ſhade to ſit.

Lykeſt it ſeemeth in my ſimple wit
vnto the fayre ſunſhine in ſomers day:
that when a dreadfull ſtorme away is flit,
thrugh the broad world doth ſpred his goodly ray

At ſight whereof each bird that ſits on ſpray,
and euery beaſt that to his den was fled:
comes forth afreſh out of their late diſmay,
and to the light lift vp theyr drouping hed.

So my ſtorme beaten hart likewiſe is cheared,
with that ſunſhine when cloudy looks are cleared.

Is

SONNET. XLI.

IS it her nature or is it her will,
to be ſo cruell to an humbled foe:
if nature, then ſhe may it mend with skill,
if will, then ſhe at will may will forgoe.

But if her nature and her wil be ſo,
that ſhe will plague the man that loues her moſt:
and take delight t'encreaſe a wretches woe,
then all her natures goodly guifts are loſt.

And that ſame glorious beauties ydle boaſt,
is but a bayt ſuch wretches to beguile:
as being long in her loues tempeſt toſt,
ſhe meanes at laſt to make her piteous ſpoyle.

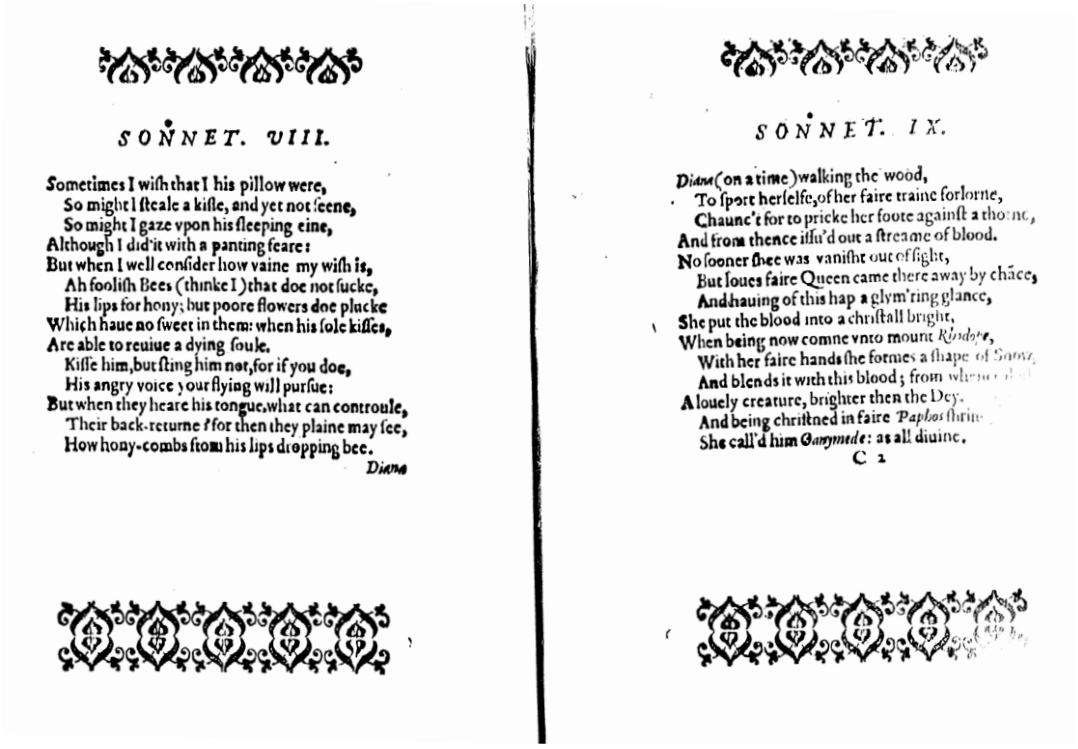
O fayreſt fayre let neuer it be named,
that ſo fayre beauty was ſo fowly ſhamed.

The

FIG. 11

Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti* (1595) 130–31. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69571), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SONNET. VIII.

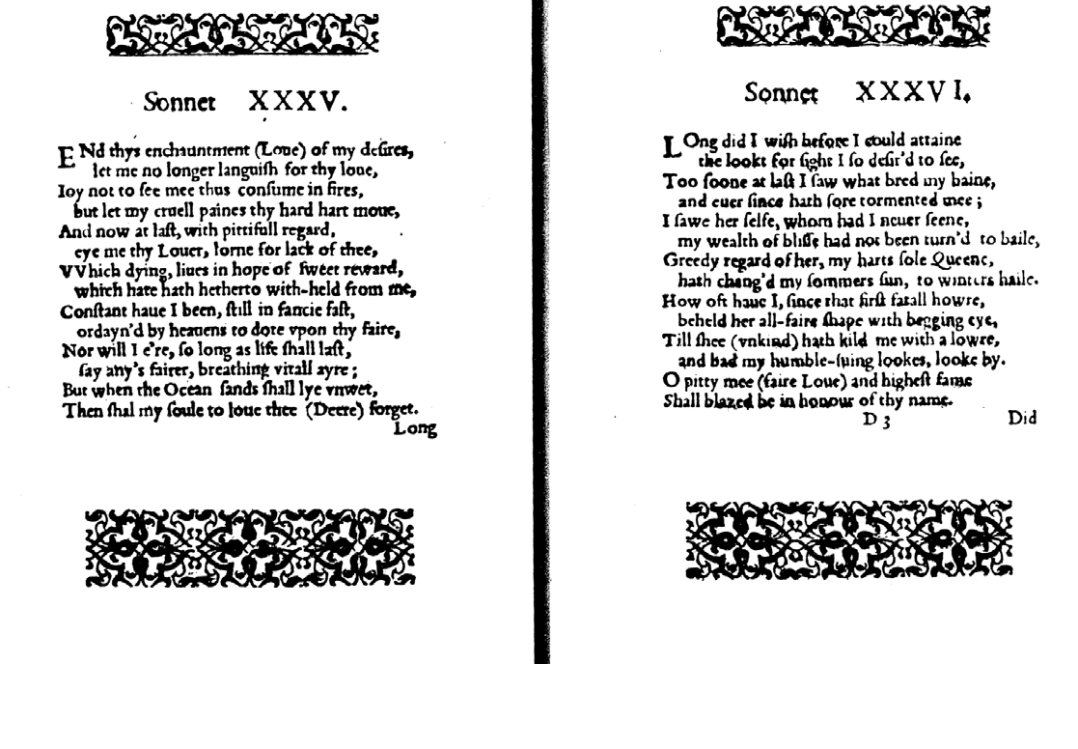
Sometimes I wiſh that I his pillow were,
So might I ſteale a kiſſe, and yet not ſeene,
So might I gaze vpon his ſleeping eine,
Although I did it with a panting feare:
But when I well conſider how vaine my wiſh is,
Ah fooliſh Bees (thinke I) that doe not ſucke,
His lips for hony; but poore flowers doe plucke
Which haue no ſweet in them: when his ſole kiſſes,
Are able to reuiue a dying ſoule.
Kiſſe him, but ſting him not, for if you doe,
His angry voice your flying will purſue:
But when they heare his tongue, what can controule,
Their back-returne? for then they plaine may ſee,
How hony-combs from his lips dropping bee.

Diana

SONNET. IX.

Diana (on a time) walking the wood,
To ſport herſelfe, of her faire traine forlorne,
Chaunc't for to pricke her foote againſt a thorne,
And from thence iſſu'd out a ſtreame of blood.
No ſooner ſhee was vaniſht out of ſight,
But Ioues faire Queen came there away by chãce,
And hauing of this hap a glym'ring glance,
She put the blood into a chriſtall bright,
When being now come vnto mount *Rhodope*,
With her faire hands ſhe formes a ſhape of Snow,
And blends it with this blood; from whence
A louely creature, brighter then the Day.
And being chriſtned in faire *Paphos* ſhrine
She call'd him *Ganymede*: as all diuine.

C 2



Sonnet XXXV.

END thys enchauntment (Loue) of my deſires,
let me no longer languiſh for thy loue,
Ioy not to ſee mee thus conſume in fires,
but let my cruell paines thy hard hart moue,
And now at laſt, with pittifull regard,
eye me thy Louer, lorne for lack of thee,
VVhich dying, liues in hope of ſweet reward,
which hate hath hetherto with-held from me,
Conſtant haue I been, ſtill in fancie faſt,
ordayn'd by heauens to dote vpon thy faire,
Nor will I e're, ſo long as life ſhall laſt,
ſay any's fairer, breathing vitall ayre;
But when the Ocean ſands ſhall lye vnwet,
Then ſhal my ſoule to loue thee (Deere) forget.

Long

Sonnet XXXVI.

LOng did I wiſh before I could attaine
the looke for ſight I ſo deſir'd to ſee,
Too ſoone at laſt I ſaw what bred my baine,
and euer ſince hath ſore tormented mee;
I ſawe her ſelfe, whom had I neuer ſeene,
my wealth of bliſſe had not been turn'd to baile,
Greedy regard of her, my harts ſole Queene,
hath chang'd my ſommers ſun, to winters haile.
How oft haue I, ſince that firſt fatall howre,
beheld her all-faire ſhape with begging eye,
Till ſhee (vnkind) hath kild me with a lowre,
and bad my humble-ſuing lookes, looke by.
O pitty mee (faire Loue) and higheſt fame
Shall blazed be in honour of thy name.

D 3 Did

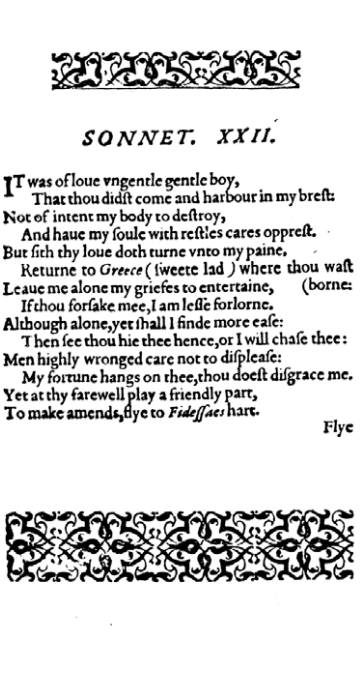
FIG. 12

Richard Barnfield, *Cynthia* (1595) C1v–C2r. Reproduced by permission of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

FIG. 13

Richard Linche, *Diella* (1596) D2v–D3r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 31525), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SONNET. XXII.

IT was of loue vngentle gentle boy,
That thou didſt come and harbour in my breſt:
Not of intent my body to deſtroy,
And haue my ſoule with reſtles cares oppreſt.
But ſith thy loue doth turne vnto my paine,
Returne to *Greece* (ſweete lad) where thou waſt borne:
Leaue me alone my griefes to entertaine,
If thou forſake mee, I am leſſe forlorne.
Although alone, yet ſhall I finde more eaſe:
Then ſee thou hie thee hence, or I will chaſe thee:
Men highly wronged care not to diſpleaſe:
My fortune hangs on thee, thou doeſt diſgrace me.
Yet at thy farewell play a friendly part,
To make amends, flye to *Fideſſaes* hart.

Flye

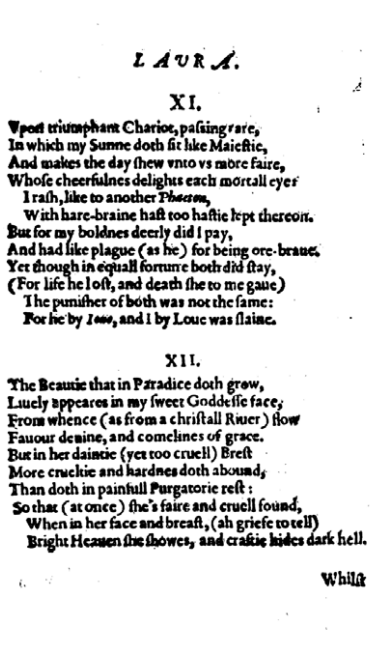


SONNET. XXIII.

FLye to her heart, houer about her heart,
With daintie kiſſes mollifie her heart:
Pierce with thy arrowes her obdurate heart,
With ſweet allurements euer moue her heart.
At midday and at midnight touch her heart,
Be lurking cloſely, neſtle about her heart:
With power, (thou art a god) command her heart,
Kindle thy coales of loue about her heart,
Yea euen into thy ſelfe transforme her heart.
Ah ſhe muſt loue, be ſure thou haue her heart,
And I muſt dye, if thou haue not her heart.
Thy bed (if thou reſt well) muſt be her heart:
He hath the beſt part ſure that hath the heart:
What haue I not, if I haue but her heart?

C 4 Striuing





LAVRA.

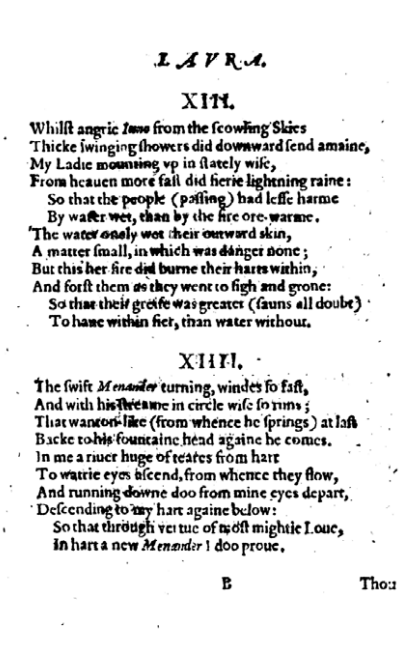
XI.

Vpon triumphant Chariot, paſsing rare,
In which my Sunne doth ſit like Maieſtie,
And makes the day ſhew vnto vs more faire,
Whoſe cheerfulnes delights each mortall eyes
I raſh, like to another *Phaeton*,
With hare-braine haſt too haſtie kept thereon.
But for my boldnes deerly did I pay,
And had like plague (as he) for being ore-braue.
Yet though in equall fortune both did ſtay,
(For life he loſt, and death ſhe to me gaue)
The puniſher of both was not the ſame:
For he by *Ioue*, and I by Loue was ſlaine.

XII.

The Beautie that in Paradice doth grow,
Luely appeares in my ſweet Goddeſſe face,
From whence (as from a chriſtall Riuer) flow
Fauour demine, and comelines of grace.
But in her daintie (yet too cruell) Breſt
More cruelty and hardnes doth abound,
Than doth in painfull Purgatorie reſt:
So that (at once) ſhe's faire and cruell found,
When in her face and breaſt, (ah griefe to tell)
Bright Heauen ſhe ſhowes, and craftie hides dark hell.

Whilſt



LAVRA.

XIII.

Whilſt angrie *Ioue* from the ſcowling Skies
Thicke ſwinging ſhowers did downward ſend amaine,
My Ladie mourning vp in ſtately wiſe,
From heauen more fell did fierie lightning raine:
So that the people (paſſing) had leſſe harme
By water wet, than by the fire ore-warme.
The water only wet their outward skin,
A matter ſmall, in which was danger none;
But this her fire did burne their harts within,
And forſt them as they went to ſigh and grone:
So that their greife was greater (ſauns all doubt)
To haue within fier, than water without.

XIIII.

The ſwift *Menander* turning, windes ſo faſt,
And with his Streame in circle wiſe ſo runs;
That wanton-like (from whence he ſprings) at laſt
Backe to his fountaine head againe he comes.
In me a riuer huge of teares from hart
To watrie eyes aſcend, from whence they flow,
And running downe doo from mine eyes depart,
Deſcending to my hart againe below:
So that through vertue of moſt mightie Loue,
In hart a new *Menander* I doo proue.

B Thou

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FIG. 14

Bartholomew Griffin, *Fidessa* (1596) C3v–C4r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 31301), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

FIG. 15

Robert Tofte, *Laura* (1597) A8v–B1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 31032), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

McGann has called our "hypnotic fascination with the isolated author" (122), our desire to locate ourselves at the level of the authentic, the originary, the most real. This mystification of the author and his or her work often distracts us from the matter at hand—in this case, several broken poems—and occasionally determines in advance our experience of that matter. Likewise, the desire to distance Q's author from the "vicissitudes of the printing-house" (Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets" 157)—from sloppy compositors errantly casting off copy; from thrifty publishers scheming to save paper—belies a deeper desire to keep this authorial narrative simple: one author, one authority. For better or worse, authorial narratives often prove anything but simple. Here, the concept of authority is vexed by the number of agents who took part in the production and reproduction of Q: several agents could make competing claims of responsibility for, or authority over, Q.[15]

To open up writing would be then (as Roland Barthes famously suggested [147]) to suspend this fixation on authorial intention and return again (as Freinkel admirably does) to the text itself. In doing so, we shift the focus from Shakespeare's original intention or "authentic" work to the material text or trace that remains: Q, the 1609 quarto, writing in its fullest textual sense. Though we will never know who intended these breaks—Shakespeare, Thorpe, the printer Thomas Eld, "Compositor Q"—we do (or will) know that they matter to the presentation, interpretation, and reception of the poems. If, in turn, we can accept such a premise, then we can begin resisting the doxa that these breaks are incidental and thus should be elided in modern editions. No matter who wrote or who authorized Q, or even who was responsible for Q's interruptions, the volume remains, in all its abnormality, a fascinating and urgent literary artifact that, despite hundreds of years of sustained criticism, has not been exhausted. Acknowledging the complexity of intention and authority enables us to trouble the equivalence on which modern editors such as Vendler rely: "it can be assumed that whatever I say in the Commentary [of *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*] is as true for the Quarto as of the modern text" (xiii). This acknowledgment enables us to move from the matter *with* Q to the matter *of* Q.

Building Monuments, Jotting Down Notes

In considering the quarto's imposition of breaks into its poems, perhaps we should begin with those instances where Q follows Vendler in presenting poems as visually unified or monumental objects. The collection's opening and closing poems, for instance, appear uninterrupted. We find Q's first poem under an ornate border and austere title; likewise, 154 stands alone on its page, punctuated by a large-font "FINIS" (figs. 16 and 18).[16] This visual presentation is, perhaps, to be expected. Common sense tells us that these two poems appear uninterrupted because they are the alpha and omega of this collection; they deserve or demand a certain attention and presence on the page because of their placement in the sequence or order of these poems. Yet the protocols of seventeenth-century printing houses meant that the decision to maintain or preserve these two poems on their respective pages necessarily affected the presentation of other poems as well.[17] The question to ask here is, Which poems were interrupted so that the first and the last could appear as visually unified objects? If we assume that whole is better than broken, was there already a distinction between "better" and "worse" poems guiding the casting off and laying out of this volume and these pages? If so, what were the criteria for such determinations?

Interestingly, several of the collection's best-known and eminently quotable sonnets appear without material interruption. Number 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?"), for instance, rests in the center of its

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SHAKE-SPEARES, SONNETS.

FRom faireſt creatures we deſire increaſe,
That thereby beauties *Roſe* might neuer die,
But as the riper ſhould by time deceaſe,
His tender heire might beare his memory:
But thou contracted to thine owne bright eyes,
Feed'ſt thy lights flame with ſelfe ſubſtantiall fewell,
Making a famine where aboundance lies,
Thy ſelfe thy foe, to thy ſweet ſelfe too cruell:
Thou that art now the worlds freſh ornament,
And only herauld to the gaudy ſpring,
Within thine owne bud burieſt thy content,
And tender chorle makſt waſt in niggarding:
Pitty the world, or elſe this glutton be,
To eate the worlds due, by the graue and thee.

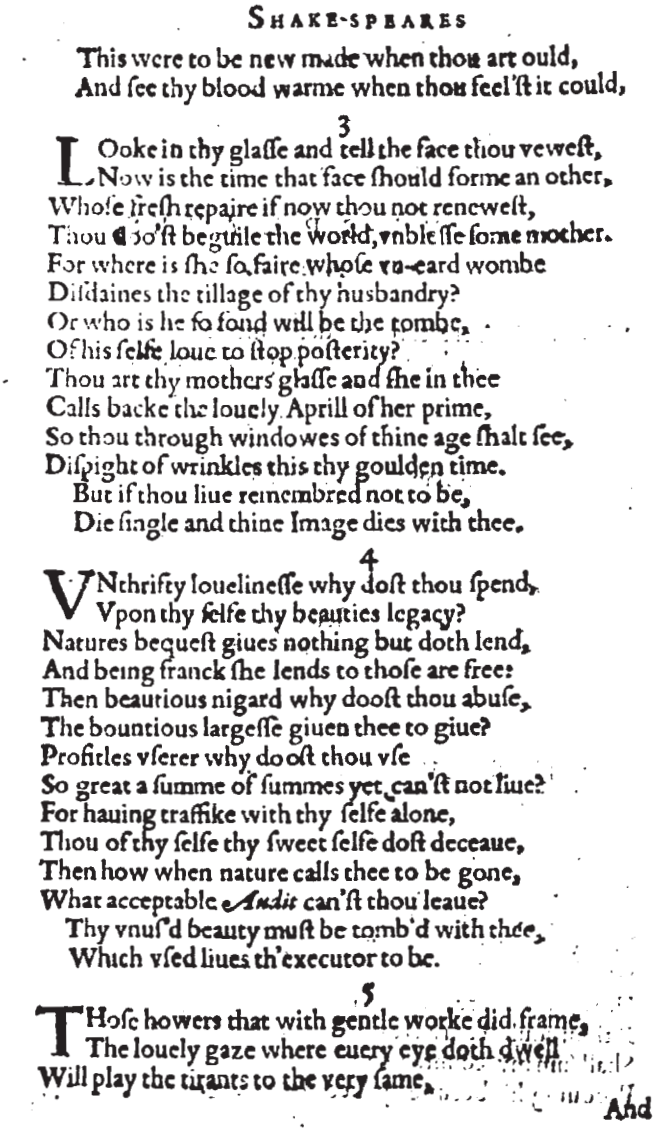
2

VVHen fortie Winters ſhall beſeige thy brow,
And digge deep trenches in thy beauties field,
Thy youthes proud liuery ſo gaz'd on now,
Wil be a totter'd weed of ſmal worth held:
Then being askt, where all thy beautie lies,
Where all the treaſure of thy luſty daies;
To ſay within thine owne deepe ſunken eyes,
Were an all-eating ſhame, and thriftleſſe praiſe.
How much more praiſe deſeru'd thy beauties vſe,
If thou couldſt anſwere this faire child of mine
Shall ſum my count, and make my old excuſe
Proouing his beautie by ſucceſſion thine.

FIG. 16

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) B1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SHAKE-SPEARES

This were to be new made when thou art ould,
And see thy blood warme when thou feel'st it could,

3

LOoke in thy glasse and tell the face thou vewest,
Now is the time that face should forme an other,
Whose fresh repaire if now thou not renewest,
Thou doo'st beguile the world, vnbles some mother.
For where is she so faire whose vn-eard wombe
Disdaines the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tombe,
Of his selfe loue to stop posterity?
Thou art thy mothers glasse and she in thee
Calls backe the louely Aprill of her prime,
So thou through windowes of thine age shalt see,
Dispight of wrinkles this thy goulden time.
But if thou liue remembred not to be,
Die single and thine Image dies with thee.

4

VNthrifty loueliness why dost thou spend,
Vpon thy selfe thy beauties legacy?
Natures bequest giues nothing but doth lend,
And being franck she lends to those are free:
Then beautious nigard why doost thou abuse,
The bountious largesse giuen thee to giue?
Profitles vserer why do ost thou vse
So great a summe of summes yet can'st not liue?
For hauing traffike with thy selfe alone,
Thou of thy selfe thy sweet selfe dost deceaue,
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable *Audit* can'st thou leaue?
Thy vnus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which vsed liues th'executor to be.

5

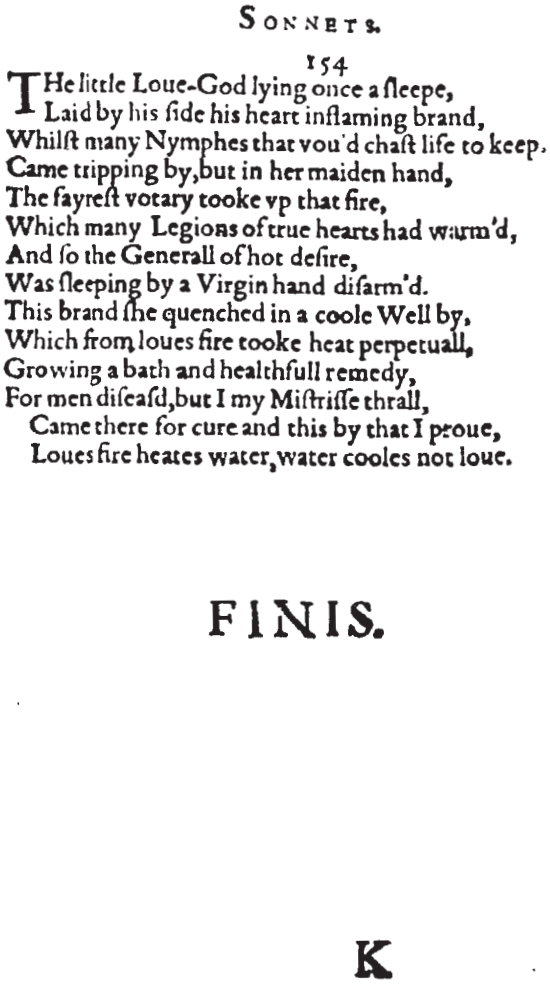
THose howers that with gentle worke did frame,
The louely gaze where euery eye doth dwell
Will play the tirants to the very same,

And

FIG. 17

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) B1v. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SONNETS.

154

THe little Loue-God lying once a ſleepe,
Laid by his ſide his heart inflaming brand,
Whilſt many Nymphes that vow'd chaſt life to keep.
Came tripping by, but in her maiden hand,
The fayreſt votary tooke vp that fire,
Which many Legions of true hearts had warm'd,
And ſo the Generall of hot deſire,
Was ſleeping by a Virgin hand diſarm'd.
This brand ſhe quenched in a coole Well by,
Which from loues fire tooke heat perpetuall,
Growing a bath and healthfull remedy,
For men diſeaſd, but I my Miſtriſſe thrall,
Came there for cure and this by that I proue,
Loues fire heates water, water cooles not loue.

FINIS.

K A

FIG. 18

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page, calling strong visual and interpretive attention to itself, possibly at the expense of the two fractured poems that enclose it (fig. 19). In contrast, 130 ("My Miſtres eyes are nothing like the Sunne") begins at the top of its page, allowing space for 131 to appear uninterrupted below it (fig. 20). Given the various thematic and rhetorical resonances between these two poems, their dual preservation as visually unified objects on the same page may enable a comparative reading that would slip through the cracks of a less materially sensitive reading or editorial practice. As such, the uninterruptions of these two poems matter, both at the level of the interrelations of poems in a single volume and at the level of cultural reception.

When we speak to the relations among poems, the above monumental examples must be understood as existing in a closed textual circuit. If one poem is maintained as a unified object, another poem in the collection likely cannot be. In terms of cultural reception, the two poems remain among the most enduring literary artifacts of the English language. Here we want to ask whether there might be a relation between the visual preservation of the poem on the page and the canonical preservation of the poem in a culture. If, as Jonathan Culler suggests, literature is a form of discourse that "promotes or elicits special kinds of attention," then the ways that the materiality of a text calls visual and interpretive attention to itself surely influences its definition or evaluation as literature (23).[18] That is, perhaps poems 18 and 130 are "literary" in part because they situate themselves in the field of the page in a way conducive to attracting attention.

Another related concern for this style of material reading might be the ephemerality of the short quarto book format. As Marotti notes, the "casual manner in which short quartos were treated" led to a "peculiarly perishable" status for copies of the 1609 quarto.[19] If only thirteen copies of these "self-destructing artefacts" remain ("Shakespeare's Sonnets" 157–58), a series of pressing questions emerges: Where did loose pages of the quarto go? Is it possible that the ephemerality of these quartos encouraged a return to sonnet circulation, that loose-leaf pages from the quarto may have had an afterlife in collections, miscellanies, pockets, or hands?[20] If so, then those poems fully preserved on any single leaf would stand the best chance to be read and reread after the inevitable disintegration of a complete quarto copy. Thus, it is not outside the realm of possibility that poem 18 may have outlived any copy of the 1609 quarto from which it came. Bringing all this to bear on our current critical moment, we might find it significant that of thirty-five sonnets anthologized in the seventh edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (Abrams et al.), twenty-three appeared uninterrupted in Q.[21] Does this anthologization signal a canonical privileging of monumental sonnets? Does such anthologization suggest that monumental sonnets enjoyed an afterlife in ways that broken sonnets did not? Such speculations are but first gropings toward a more complex engagement with the material quarto and its effects.

To return to the poems themselves, it appears that monumentality in the space of a page may matter thematically as well. Interestingly, Q's poem 81 both describes and performs an epitaph (fig. 21). Is it mere coincidence that a poem deploying the figures "monument," "Epitaph," "furuiue" (i.e., "survive"), "immortall," "graue," and "intombed" is presented in a visually unified form? The poem begins with a fractured correlative conjunction: "Or I ſhall liue your Epitaph to make. . . ." By Stephen Booth's account, the first two lines of the poem present equivocal alternatives: either the speaker will die first or the addressee will die first; the permanence that the epitaph promises to the addressee will be maintained regardless ("Commentary" 275). Yet, by beginning both in medias res and with a figure of equivalence and uncertainty ("Or"), 81 seems to extend

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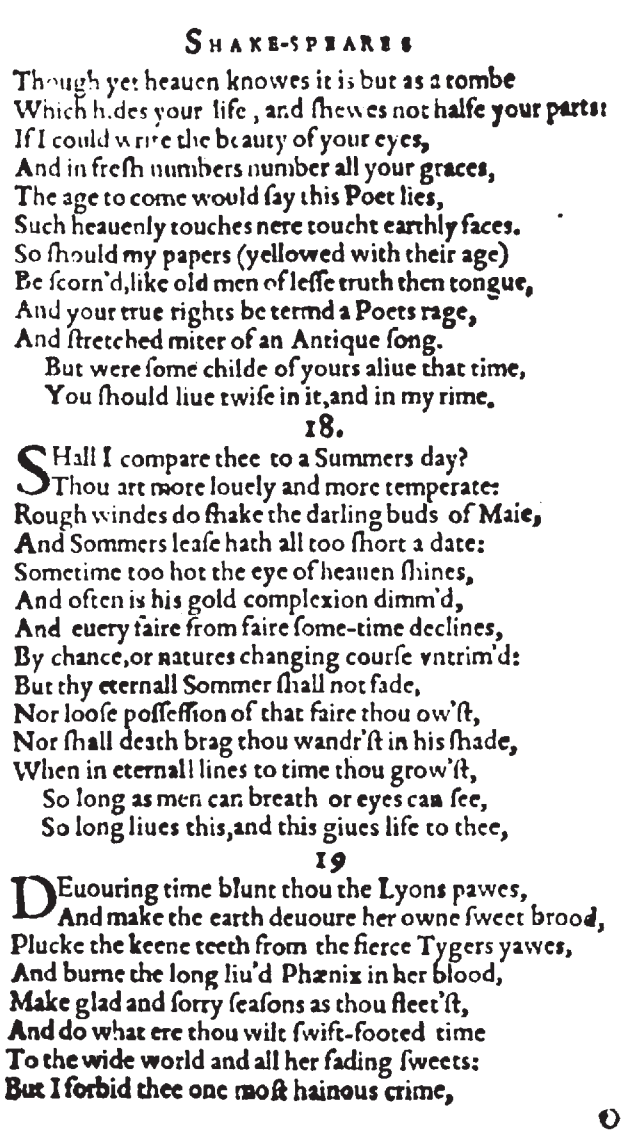
beyond the bounds of its form. Again, the materiality of the printed page suggests that "Or" might be functioning as an intertext to 80, which appears as a visually unified object directly above 81. Line 11 of poem 80 begins with a similar deployment of conjunction, "Or (being wrackt)." Interestingly, 80 closes with an image that is resonant with the imagery of 81: "my loue was my decay." If poem 80 ends with a scene of decay, 81 begins with an object of permanence being made (i.e., an "Epitaph"). Read in concert and as conjoined monumental objects presented in the same visual field, these two poems seem to support Kuin's definition of the sonnet; to reiterate: "a very highly coded form of text, [one that] combines to an unusual degree visibility of formal elements . . . and an organized cumulative system of intertextuality." In 80 and 81 that cumulative system of intertextuality has a highly visible material expression, as 80 literally lies on top of 81.

Returning to 81—but with an eye now back on 80—we see that lines 7–8 oppose a "common graue" with "mens eyes," displacing the act of remembrance from a physical to a cognitive register ("graue" to "mens eyes"). Such a displacement anticipates line 9's declaration that "Your monument ſhall be my gentle verſe." Any reading of this poem hinges on an interpretation of this movement. If one reads this as a transcendent movement, from the physical to the metaphysical, then the speaker of the poem offers the addressee everlasting life. If, more cynically, one reads this movement as anticlimactic, devolving from the physical and purportedly permanent ("monument") to the ethereal and ephemeral ("verſe"), then the value of the speaker's offer is called into question. The crux in line 9 is "gentle," which Booth glosses as having at least three significations: "(1) tender, meek, weak; (2) amiable, kindly meant; (3) noble, 'well-born' (as opposed to *common*—see line 7)" ("Commentary" 278). Not one of these significations suggests this "verſe" to be durable, resolute, or strong; indeed, these significations evoke a certain fragility. Yet the poem goes on to argue that "verſe," gentle or not, shall span time: "Which eyes not yet created ſhall ore-read" (10).

A vexed couplet closes the poem: "You ſtill ſhall liue (ſuch vertue hath my Pen) / Where breath moſt breaths, euen in the mouths of men" (13–14).[22] Generations of critics have troubled over what to do with this seeming ambivalence. Can "breath" (or "verſe") prove a more permanent resting place than a monument? Can an epitaph "intombed in mens eyes" and "mouths" outlive an epitaph inscribed in stone? More broadly, does this poem espouse or mock the poetic permanence its speaker offers? While such questions are arresting, the reading practice advocated here asks instead: If this poem posits and then explores two forms of remembrance and two registers of temporality, is it not significant that the poem's final material expression comes without break, fissure, or interruption? How can we hope to attend to either the transcendent or the cynical reading of the poem's movement if we do not take seriously its visually unified, monumental presentation? The poem rests at the bottom of its page with the last figure ("men") crowding its way onto the field of the page in a way that suggests a compositor laboring to maintain the poem as a whole. How might this poem "mean" if instead the final couplet had been shifted across to the opening's recto? Would the monument that the poem offers be then broken or mediated? The material presentation of 81 seems both entirely germane to and utterly provocative for a poem that meditates on yet remains ambivalent about the permanence of poetry.[23]

Having begun to consider how material form enables and in important ways produces Q's thematic engagement with issues of monumentality, permanence, and unity, let us now turn to the decidedly aconventional breaks that occur on nearly every page of the 1609 quarto. Given limited space in my pages, I will

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SHAKE-SPEARES

Though yet heauen knowes it is but as a tombe
Which hides your life, and shewes not halfe your parts:
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say this Poet lies,
Such heauenly touches nere toucht earthly faces.
So should my papers (yellowed with their age)
Be scorn'd,like old men of lesse truth then tongue,
And your true rights be termd a Poets rage,
And stretched miter of an Antique song.
But were some childe of yours aliue that time,
You should liue twise in it,and in my rime.

18.

SHall I compare thee to a Summers day?
Thou art more louely and more temperate:
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heauen shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And euery faire from faire some-time declines,
By chance,or natures changing course vntrim'd:
But thy eternall Sommer shall not fade,
Nor loose possession of that faire thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long liues this,and this giues life to thee,

19

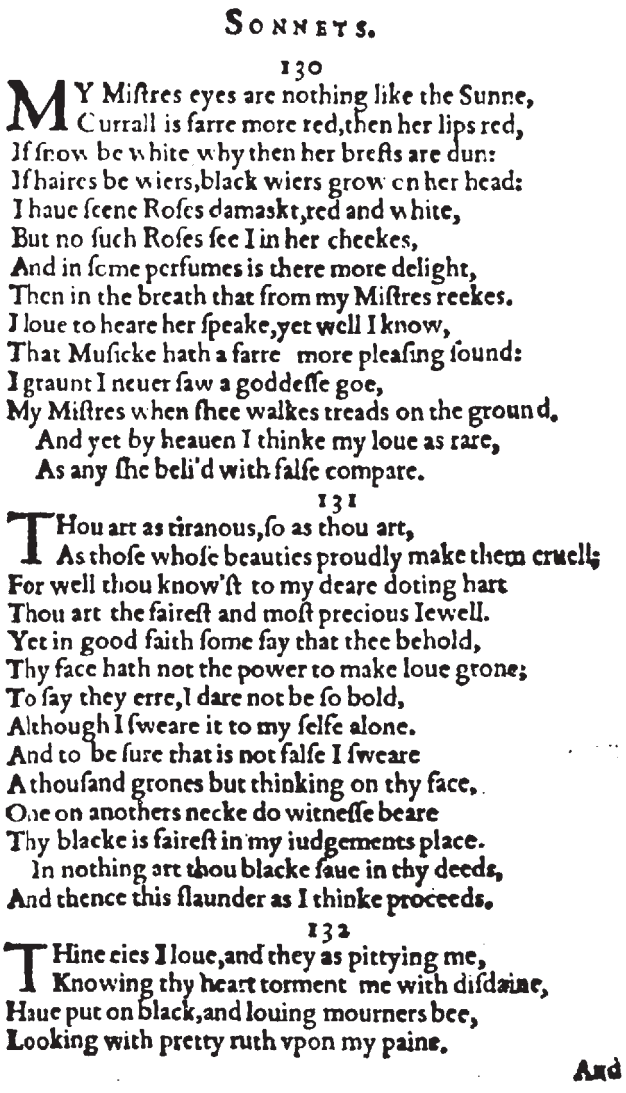
DEuouring time blunt thou the Lyons pawes,
And make the earth deuoure her owne sweet brood,
Plucke the keene teeth from the fierce Tygers yawes,
And burne the long liu'd Phœnix in her blood,
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do what ere thou wilt swift-footed time
To the wide world and all her fading sweets:
But I forbid thee one most hainous crime,

O

FIG. 19

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) B4v. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SONNETS.

130

MY Miſtres eyes are nothing like the Sunne,
Currall is farre more red,then her lips red,
If ſnow be white why then her breſts are dun:
If haires be wiers,black wiers grow on her head:
I haue ſeene Roſes damaskt,red and white,
But no ſuch Roſes ſee I in her cheekes,
And in ſome perfumes is there more delight,
Then in the breath that from my Miſtres reekes.
I loue to heare her ſpeake,yet well I know,
That Muſicke hath a farre more pleaſing ſound:
I graunt I neuer ſaw a goddeſſe goe,
My Miſtres when ſhee walkes treads on the ground.
And yet by heauen I thinke my loue as rare,
As any ſhe beli'd with falſe compare.

131

THou art as tiranous,ſo as thou art,
As thoſe whoſe beauties proudly make them cruell;
For well thou know'ſt to my deare doting hart
Thou art the faireſt and moſt precious Iewell.
Yet in good faith ſome ſay that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make loue grone;
To ſay they erre,I dare not be ſo bold,
Although I ſweare it to my ſelfe alone.
And to be ſure that is not falſe I ſweare
A thouſand grones but thinking on thy face,
One on anothers necke do witneſſe beare
Thy blacke is faireſt in my iudgements place.
In nothing art thou blacke ſaue in thy deeds,
And thence this ſlaunder as I thinke proceeds.

132

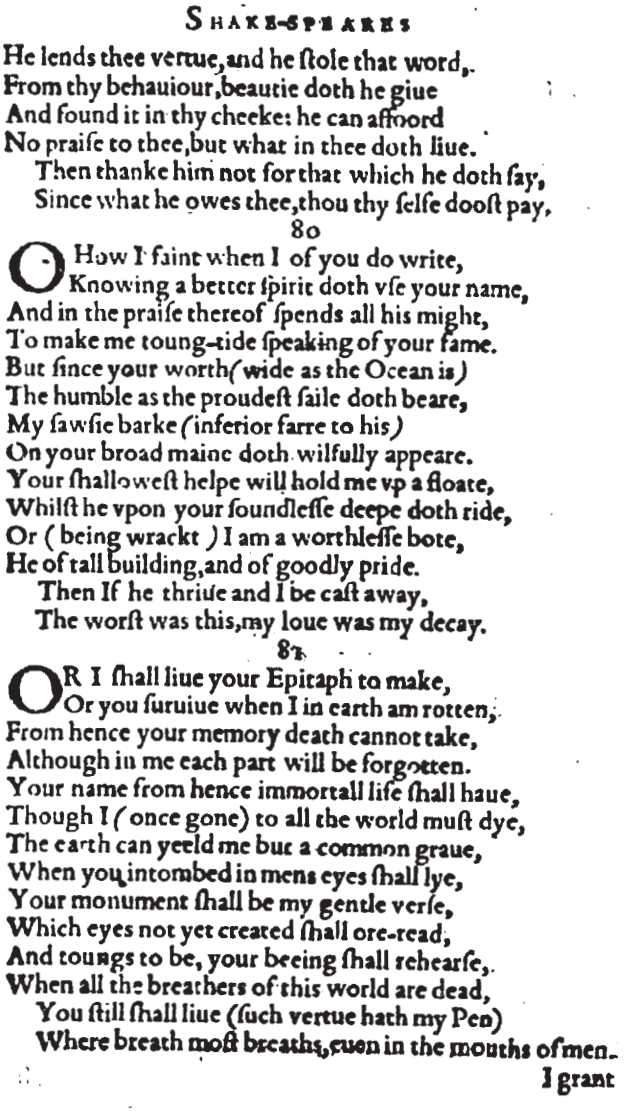
THine eies I loue,and they as pittying me,
Knowing thy heart torment me with diſdaine,
Haue put on black,and louing mourners bee,
Looking with pretty ruth vpon my paine.

And

FIG. 20

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) H4r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SHAKE-SPEARES

He lends thee vertue, and he ſtole that word,
From thy behauiour, beautie doth he giue
And found it in thy cheeke: he can affoord
No praiſe to thee, but what in thee doth liue.
Then thanke him not for that which he doth ſay,
Since what he owes thee, thou thy ſelfe dooſt pay.

80

O How I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better ſpirit doth vſe your name,
And in the praiſe thereof ſpends all his might,
To make me toung-tide ſpeaking of your fame.
But ſince your worth (wide as the Ocean is)
The humble as the proudeſt ſaile doth beare,
My ſawſie barke (inferior farre to his)
On your broad maine doth wilfully appeare.
Your ſhalloweſt helpe will hold me vp a floate,
Whilſt he vpon your ſoundleſſe deepe doth ride,
Or (being wrackt) I am a worthleſſe bote,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride.
Then If he thriue and I be caſt away,
The worſt was this, my loue was my decay.

81

OR I ſhall liue your Epitaph to make,
Or you ſuruiue when I in earth am rotten,
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortall life ſhall haue,
Though I (once gone) to all the world muſt dye,
The earth can yeeld me but a common graue,
When you intombed in mens eyes ſhall lye,
Your monument ſhall be my gentle verſe,
Which eyes not yet created ſhall ore-read,
And tounges to be, your beeing ſhall rehearſe,
When all the breathers of this world are dead,
You ſtill ſhall liue (ſuch vertue hath my Pen)
Where breath moſt breaths, euen in the mouths of men.

I grant

FIG. 21

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) F1v. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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simply gesture toward a series of more or less representative interruptions, before closing with an extended reading of monumentality interrupted in 55. First, the quarto interrupts at least three sonnets at their turns: 2, 14, and 110. In the latter two poems, the interruption forces the reader across the divide of facing pages. More emphatically, the interruption of 2 forces the reader to turn over a page (B1r) to reveal both page B1v and the poem's resolution. We turn a page to turn the sonnet (figs. 16 and 17). In all three of these examples, interruptions reinforce and yet also complicate the nature of the conventional sonnet turn. Yes, the interruption of or at the turn emphasizes the shift in tone and rhyme scheme that occurs between each poem's three quatrains and its rhyming couplet, effecting a material caesura that forces readers to pause as their gaze moves from page to page. At the same time, these interruptions of or at the turn also effect a sort of attentive slippage in which the reader's visual and interpretive gaze is displaced, delayed, and deferred. Such a slippage functions then as a sort of material enjambment. Poetic enjambment can be characterized as a "run[ning]-on" or "striding over" in which "the pressure of the incompleted syntactic unit toward closure carries on over the end of the verse-line" (Abrams 163). Thus Q's material enjambment might be thought of in terms of the pressure toward closure that the poem carries over the fold or, more dramatically, over the turn of the page. The effect of a poem's resolution running on to another page cannot be overstated. In addition to rupturing the continuity of the strict sonnet form, this enjambment also momentarily disappoints readerly expectations of poetic denouement and closure. One might think here of Spiller's three-part rubric and ask: If the turn is displaced, delayed, or deferred, is this poem still a sonnet? What must the reader do to recognize this fractured poem as a sonnet?

In addition to these ruptured turns, Q also presents a series of poems whose thematics seem grounded on or implicated in their interrupted representation on the page. For instance, 108, one of the quarto's most self-reflexive poems, appears as a palimpsest printed on both sides of page G3r (figs. 22 and 23). To read this poem in Q is to attend to a doubled writing, its figurative traces, and material bleeding of "Inck" through porous paper. Locally, line 12's reference to "page" changes significantly when we read this figure against the material presentation (an "outward forme") of a single poem printed on two sides of a page. Likewise, 36 engages a theme of unity between two seemingly autonomous subjects: "we two muſt be twaine." The poem also appears palimpsestically, but it is interrupted at a crucial moment: "In our two loues there is but one reſpect, / **[page break]** Though in our liues a ſeperable ſpight" (lines 5–6). What is the effect of placing a conjunction ("Though") immediately after a severe page break? Does this placement support or undermine the unity that the poem offers its subjects?

Finally, there is 126 (fig. 24)—with its excised lines and final encomium to the "louely Boy," perhaps the quarto's most deviant poem. Number 126 is often posited as the linchpin or pivot point for what many critics consider to be the sonnets' two narrative strains. While Joel Fineman and numerous others read these strains in terms of gender and sexual difference, Margreta de Grazia reads the strains in terms of racial and class difference ("Scandal").[24] Yet despite concurring that 126 marks the end of narrative strain one, neither camp has attended to the material presentation of the poem relative to the poems that accompany it. Even a cursory glance at 126 in the quarto tells us that the poem rests conspicuously at the center of its page, bridging 125 (narrative strain one) and 127 (narrative strain two) within the field of a single page.[25] Thus 126 becomes monumentalized on page H3r, but at a cost: both 125 and 127 are interrupted. Again, what are we to make of this rather fortuitous material fact? Is it

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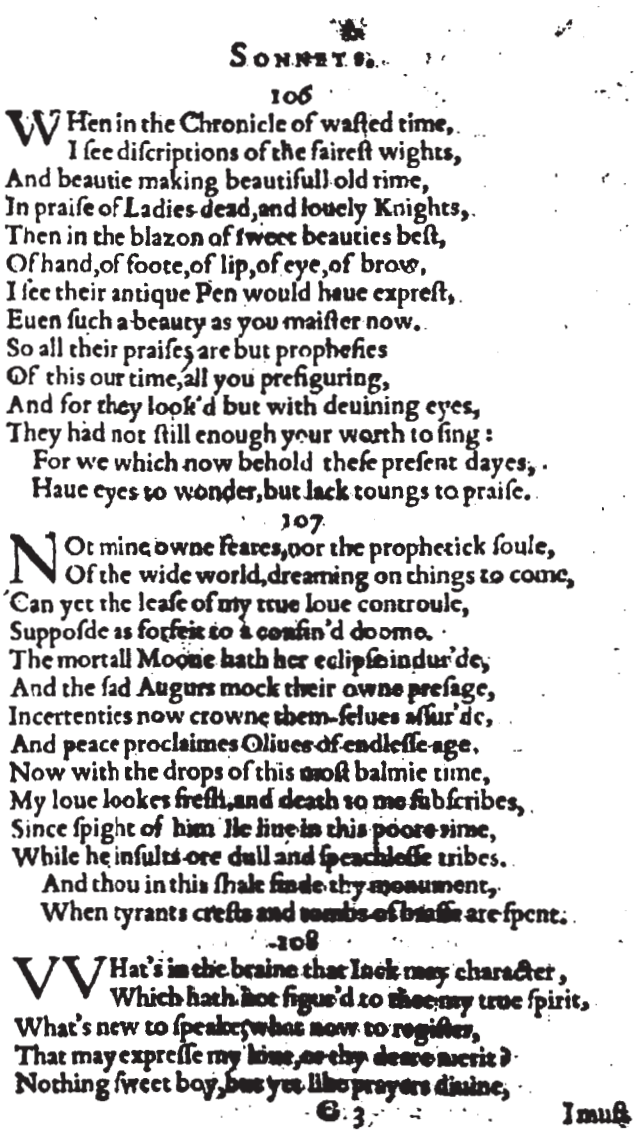
coincidence? Or, does it encourage us to read a narrative into the poems? Imagine a reader opening *Shake-speares Sonnets* to pages H2v–H3r. What would catch the eye? Perhaps the "structural peculiarity" of 126 (Booth, "Commentary" 430)? If so, that reader would find only one unified, whole poem on H3r. If one wished to read the poems that frame 126, one would be forced to read back across the fold to page H2v or over to H3v. Such a material presentation forces readers to move their field of vision out from 126 back or forward across Q's pages. The materiality of such a presentation constructs an eerily perfect visual bridge between these two narrative strains.

Poem 126 represents a crux; importantly, a crux through which critics have in fact paid attention to the materiality of Q. In considering the present absence of lines 13–14 and the brackets that seem to extend the quietus of line 12, critics have shown how visual presentation produces poetic meaning in this sonnet. In short, these blank lines maintain or project a poetic structure without a concomitant poetic content, frustrating readerly expectations of content while meeting readerly expectations of form.[26] For Booth, 126, "composed of six rhymed iambic couplets, is not a sonnet in any technical sense." Given the poem's "structural peculiarity," Booth concedes that "there is therefore some basis for the widespread critical belief that sonnet 126 is intended to mark a division" between the narratives that de Grazia, Fineman, and others chart ("Commentary" 430). Yet in view of Q's various "structural peculiarities"—all those broken sonnets and delayed turns—other poems in the volume might be similarly deemed not sonnets in any technical sense.

By way of closing this discussion of Q's monuments and interruptions, I consider 55, a poem that promises monumentality but whose material presentation breaks that promise (figs. 2 and 3). In many important ways 55 mirrors 81, both in its thematics and in several of its tropes. Poem 55 begins, however, with a more emphatic rejection of physical permanence: "Not marble, nor the guilded monument, / Of Princes ſhall outliue this powrefull rime. . . ." Echoing the truth-distilling "verſe" of 54, 55's "powrefull rime" thus promises to outlive or out-endure several sites of physical permanence. Indeed, "you" (now transubstantiated into a written subject) is opposed to "vnſwept ſtone" and "*Statues* ouer-turne[d]." All this builds to a crescendo as line 8 announces the "contents" and stakes of the "rime": "The liuing record of your memory." But as Booth points out, "Even as they assert the immortality of the poem [lines 7–8] remind a reader of the flimsiness and vulnerability of anything written on paper" ("Commentary" 229). Booth is no doubt thinking here of the figures "*Mars*," "quick fire," and "ſhall burne," all seeming threats to the paper on which the speaker would write this "liuing record." Yet this reference to the flimsiness and vulnerability of paper forces us to confront the material presentation of this poem, to think of this vulnerability in terms of the very paper on which 55 is printed. After line 8, Q readers must turn over the page, thus taking fragile paper into their hands. Here the thematic that Booth identifies is underscored by both the material presentation of the poem (i.e., the page break after line 8) and its staging of a physical reader-text interaction (i.e., the actual touch or contact between reader and quarto). Through this touch, metaphoric paper materializes.

Before turning the page, however, we would do well to put pressure on the punctuation mark that ends line 8. The period that follows "memory" ensures that line 8 is not enjambed onto page D4v. Thus 55's page break enacts more of a material caesura than a material enjambment. However, this break fractures the poem into two nearly autonomous poetic units. Although there are several resonances between the two, one could think of these units as being somewhat distinct. As such, does this fracture fragment the poem?

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SONNET. 63.

106

WHen in the Chronicle of wasted time,
I see discriptions of the fairest wights,
And beautie making beautifull old rime,
In praise of Ladies dead, and lovely Knights,
Then in the blazon of sweet beauties best,
Of hand, of foote, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique Pen would have expresst,
Euen such a beauty as you maister now.
So all their praises are but prophesies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,
And for they look'd but with deuining eyes,
They had not still enough your worth to sing:
For we which now behold these present dayes,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack toungs to praise.

107

NOt mine owne feares, nor the prophetick soule,
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true loue controule,
Supposde as forfeit to a confin'd doome.
The mortall Moone hath her eclipse indur'de,
And the sad Augurs mock their owne presage,
Incertenties now crowne themselues assur'de,
And peace proclaimes Olives of endlesse age.
Now with the drops of this most balmie time,
My loue lookes fresh, and death to me subscribes,
Since spight of him Ile liue in this poore rime,
While he insults ore dull and speachlesse tribes.
And thou in this shalt finde thy monument,
When tyrants crests and tombs of brasse are spent.

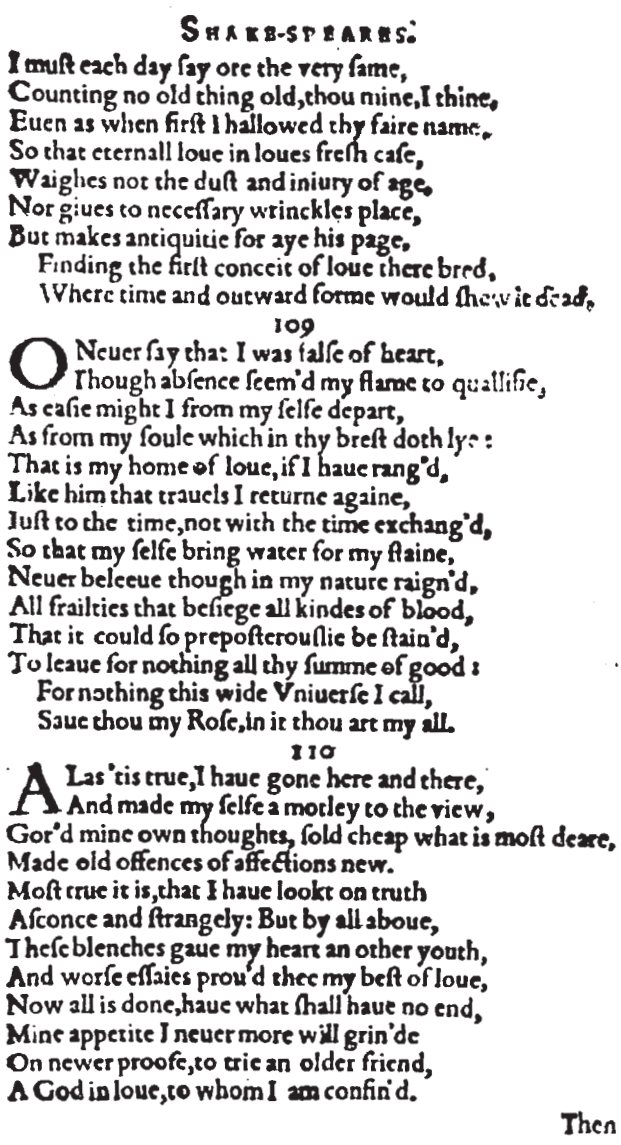
108

WHat's in the braine that Inck may character,
Which hath not figur'd to thee my true spirit,
What's new to speake, what now to register,
That may expresse my loue, or thy deare merit?
Nothing sweet boy, but yet like prayers diuine,

FIG. 22

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) G3r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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SHAKE-SPEARES.

I muſt each day ſay ore the very ſame,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Euen as when firſt I hallowed thy faire name.
So that eternall loue in loues freſh caſe,
Waighes not the duſt and iniury of age,
Nor giues to neceſſary wrinckles place,
But makes antiquitie for aye his page,
Finding the firſt conceit of loue there bred,
Where time and outward forme would ſhew it dead.

109

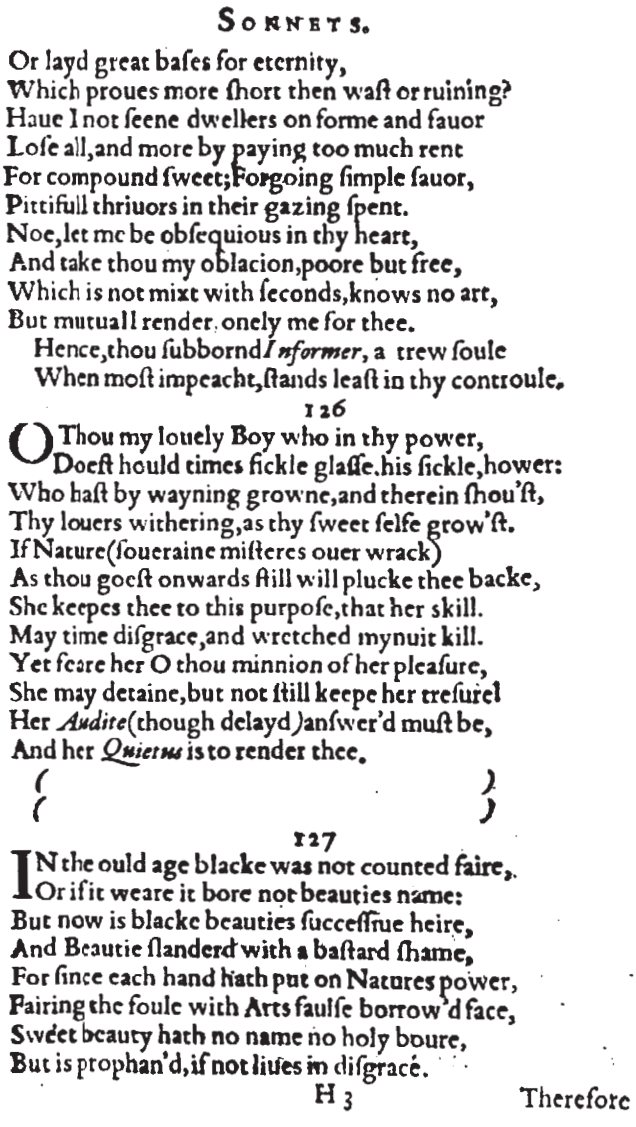
O Neuer ſay that I was falſe of heart,
Though abſence ſeem'd my flame to qualifie,
As eaſie might I from my ſelfe depart,
As from my ſoule which in thy breſt doth lye:
That is my home of loue, if I haue rang'd,
Like him that trauels I returne againe,
Iuſt to the time, not with the time exchang'd,
So that my ſelfe bring water for my ſtaine,
Neuer beleeue though in my nature raign'd,
All frailties that beſiege all kindes of blood,
That it could ſo prepoſterouſlie be ſtain'd,
To leaue for nothing all thy ſumme of good:
For nothing this wide Vniuerſe I call,
Saue thou my Roſe, in it thou art my all.

110

Alas 'tis true, I haue gone here and there,
And made my ſelfe a motley to the view,
Gor'd mine own thoughts, ſold cheap what is moſt deare,
Made old offences of affections new.
Moſt true it is, that I haue lookt on truth
Aſconce and ſtrangely: But by all aboue,
Theſe blenches gaue my heart an other youth,
And worſe eſſaies prou'd thee my beſt of loue,
Now all is done, haue what ſhall haue no end,
Mine appetite I neuer more will grin'de
On newer proofe, to trie an older friend,
A God in loue, to whom I am confin'd.

Then

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SONNETS.

Or layd great baſes for eternity,
Which proues more ſhort then waſt or ruining?
Haue I not ſeene dwellers on forme and fauor
Loſe all, and more by paying too much rent
For compound ſweet; Forgoing ſimple fauor,
Pittifull thriuors in their gazing ſpent.
Noe, let me be obſequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblacion, poore but free,
Which is not mixt with ſeconds, knows no art,
But mutuall render, onely me for thee.
Hence, thou ſubborn'd *Informer*, a trew ſoule
When moſt impeacht, ſtands leaſt in thy controule.

126

O Thou my louely Boy who in thy power,
Doeſt hould times fickle glaſſe, his ſickle, hower:
Who haſt by wayning growne, and therein ſhou'ſt,
Thy louers withering, as thy ſweet ſelfe grow'ſt.
If Nature (ſoueraine miſteres ouer wrack)
As thou goeſt onwards ſtill will plucke thee backe,
She keepes thee to this purpoſe, that her skill.
May time diſgrace, and wretched mynuit kill.
Yet feare her O thou minnion of her pleaſure,
She may detaine, but not ſtill keepe her treſure!
Her *Audite* (though delayd) anſwer'd muſt be,
And her *Quietus* is to render thee.

( )
( )

127

IN the ould age blacke was not counted faire,
Or if it weare it bore not beauties name:
But now is blacke beauties ſucceſſiue heire,
And Beautie ſlandred with a baſtard ſhame,
For ſince each hand hath put on Natures power,
Fairing the foule with Arts faulſe borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name no holy boure,
But is prophan'd, if not liues in diſgrace.

FIG. 24

Shake-speares Sonnets (1609) H3r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 69381), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

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To ask that question, we must first ask where the sonnet's turn occurs. Is it, *pace* the conventions of the "Shakespearean sonnet," after line 12, or, following a Petrarchan tradition, after line 8?[27] If the turn occurs after line 12, then it seems that the fracture does indeed fragment the poem. If after line 8, then the fracture accentuates in dramatic ways the sonnet's turn. Both sets of questions are integral to an interpretation of this poem, especially given the sonnet's couplet: "So til the iudgement that your ſelfe ariſe, / You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies." While the final phrase, "louers eies," resonates strongly with 81's "mens eyes," here "You liue in this" proves far more complicated than 81's similar occupancy of verse: "Your monument ſhall be my gentle verſe." The space substantiated by "this" proves fractured and fragmented in 55. Given the page break discussed above, one must ask, would the poem's addressee want to "liue" in a space jeopardized by its own materiality? Can a poem written on paper in fact "outliue" "marble"? More urgently, what is the status of a poem that promises permanence but is already fractured and fragmented?

Reading Past the Page

Thus far a spectral presence has haunted the margins of this essay—and not, fortunately, Auden's "horrified" Shakespeare. As the essay has progressed, it has made increasingly urgent apostrophes to a fictive reader who might find him- or herself confronting the materiality of *Shake-speares Sonnets*. As these repeated invocations suggest, this fictive reader is essential to the reading practice advocated herein. It is this reader who will or will not recognize these poems as sonnets, who will or will not read across an opening, who will or will not tear out a page of the quarto. With its final section, this essay will home in on an instance of the early modern scene of reading and ask, speculatively, What might an early modern reader have done with *Shake-speares Sonnets*? While such a consideration will stop short of a phenomenology of early modern reading practices, it will begin to account for what Tony Bennett has dubbed a "reading formation": "a set of discursive and intertextual determinations that organize and animate the practice of reading, connecting texts and readers in specific relations to one another by constituting readers as reading subjects of particular types and texts as objects-to-be-read in particular ways" (66). The challenge of the reading practice this essay espouses lies in reconstructing the "specific" or "particular" ways early modern readers oriented themselves physically, visually, and hermeneutically to their objects-to-be-read.[28]

While the proliferation of sonnet sequences in early modern England may tell us much about the literary marketplace of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this proliferation tells us next to nothing about how those sequences were read or experienced. For instance, did the early modern reader approach Q linearly (i.e., beginning with the first poem and then proceeding, in order, through to poem 154) or indexically (i.e., skimming the volume more or less at random)? Latter-day literary critics often impose a desire for linear reading and narrative development onto the sonnets, without asking if this imposition is consistent with early modern reading formations. More broadly, how would an early modern reader have received a fractured or fragmented poem? Would such fragmentation have alienated the reader, or would it have been experienced in concert with an indexical reading practice?[29] One notorious seventeenth-century reader of Q, John Benson, may help us to approach these questions. Benson's 1640 edition of *Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare, Gent.*—largely based on the text of Q—has been maligned by generations of scholars for being "outrageously piratical and misleading" (Duncan-Jones, Introduction 42), a work of base editorial "chicanery" (Rollins

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22). At stake in such a lambasting is Benson's decision to omit from his edition sonnets 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, and 126; to conflate and reorganize 115 of the remaining sonnets into longer poetic units made up of between two and five sonnets; to give the resulting poems titles such as "Loves crueltie"; to include in his edition poems from the apocryphal collection *The Passionate Pilgrime* (1612); and, most famously, to change many of the sonnets' masculine pronouns to feminine ones, radically revising Q's gender and sexual politics.[30]

While Benson's pronoun shifts have received the lion's share of critical attention, his conflation and reorganization of sonnets demands more careful explication. In her important reconsideration of Benson, de Grazia speculates that in such a conflated form it is "possible that readers could not recognize the sonnets as such when they were combined to form longer poetic units" (*Shakespeare Verbatim* 164). Here again we encounter the problem of readerly recognition. Would Benson's readers have recognized these longer poetic units as being conflated sonnets? (Again, Benson drew the text of his 1640 edition largely from Q, a volume whose page breaks already pose a number of problems of readerly recognition.) In Benson's edition, Q's sonnets were, Rollins fumes, "jumble[d] together in a new, unauthorized, and deceptive order" that gave them a "totally unfamiliar appearance" (20). Yet Benson's conflation evinces an editorial logic that has gone all but uncommented on: nearly every poem in the 1640 edition conflates sequential sonnets—sonnets, that is, that appeared on the same page, page opening, or leaf of Q: sonnets 67–69, 53–54, 92–95, 153–54, and so forth. For instance, the poem "Lovesicke" (D3v–D3r) conflates sonnets 80 and 81, whose dual monumental status is discussed above. Likewise, sonnets 2, 14, and 110, whose turns are interrupted by page breaks in Q, are conflated with adjacent sonnets in Benson's edition: 1–3, 13–15, and 109–10. The implications for such reorganization are significant. In these examples, two monumental Q sonnets have been collapsed together, and three sonnets with delayed turns have been subsumed into longer poetic units in which their interrupted turns would be less conspicuous.

In all these examples, the conflations seem sensitive to Q's page breaks—even as Benson imposes new page breaks. Indeed, given the sequential logic of the reorganization, such conflations necessarily respond to the presence and absence of page breaks, regardless of editorial intentionality. Had Benson conflated a series of universally monumental sonnets—sonnets sans page breaks—we could perhaps describe his editing as a piece of "misleading" "chicanery." However, Benson edited a series of sonnets already broken by recurrent page breaks. The poetic units he found in the 1609 quarto were already "jumbled," riddled with indeterminate turns, widowed couplets, and broken monuments. Especially when read sequentially, two to three pages at a time, Q's breaks may have suggested connections between adjacent poems that would not have been visible had Q followed the lead of so many of its peer sonnet sequences and presented its sonnets as visually unified poetic units. As such, Benson's act of editorial "chicanery" may well have been "authorized" by the abnormal materiality of Q. In Benson we find then a reader who engaged the sonnets in sequential but nonnarrative and nonlinear ways; a reader with a seemingly fluid sense of poetic form, who may have made the most of Q's fractured and fragmented poems: editing them together into longer poetic units. Benson's edition grants us at least partial access to a seventeenth-century reading practice in which page breaks made legible or possible linkages between individual sonnets. If nothing else, Benson's much maligned editorial decisions force us again to take seriously Q's page breaks and to consider the ways those breaks have haunted the Shakespearean editorial tradition.[31]

Shakespeare studies has long used the rhetoric of scandal to discuss Q. Given the

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recurrent, seemingly diurnal outpouring of scholarly articles and books about the sonnets, it is a minor scandal that no one has tended to this remarkable aspect of Q's materiality. It might make for a more significant one were it not that, historically, little attention has been paid—by literary critics, historians of the book, bibliographers—to the page break as a unit of meaning. While contemporary bibliography and literary criticism does well to tend to the most minute of textual elements, we have as yet been unable to find a language with which to discuss that most primary of textual units, the page. Metacritically, we even lack bibliographical notation for the page break. Why is it that critical convention so carefully registers line breaks but has no conventional impetus toward, or symbol for, representing page breaks: "Canſt thou O cruell, ſay I loue thee not, / When I againſt myſelfe with thee pertake : / [**page break**] Doe I not thinke on thee when I forgot / Am of myſelfe, all tirant for thy ſake?" (poem 149)?[32] We will tend to the ways a line break helps effect a given rhyme (e.g., "not" and "forgot") but ignore how a page break helps effect a given theme. (In this example, the page break elegantly complements the self-divisions the poem laments: "I . . . myſelfe," "thee," "pertake").

Page breaks have implications for all forms of lyric poetry, not simply the sonnet. In his criterion study *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*, Paul Fussell underscores not only the relation between form and meaning but also the relation between "typographic shape" and meaning (128). Fussell observes, "And now that we are fully accustomed to using printed texts for apprehending poems, our sense of stanzas has become a very complex act of mediation between what our eyes see and what our inner ears hear" (128). (This essay has shown in some detail the complexity of such mediation.) Particularly in his chapter "Some Critical Implications of Stanzaic Forms," Fussell acknowledges that "the white space between stanzas means something," since such space forces readers to ask, "Why is that white space there, and what am I supposed to do with it?" (155). No doubt Fussell is thinking here of intentional stanza breaks, not potentially incidental page breaks. However, his insistence on the interpretative possibilities and critical responsibilities that attend such typographic forms necessarily comprises page breaks. If, as Fussell argues, readers "expect every short poem to justify its form and to lay upon its form the obligation of speaking an appropriate part of its meaning" (158), why do not the same readers ask, "Why is that page break there, and what am I supposed to do with it?"[33]

Not reading page breaks is itself a reading practice, a historically specific, socially determined act in which certain elements of materiality are granted attention and authority while others are not. When, following critical convention, we read past the page, we return to an earlier definition of textuality in which the page is transparent, a "clean and familiar textual surface [that] allows reading to proceed unencumbered past matter and into the heart of the matter—into Shakespeare's 'meaning'" (de Grazia and Stallybrass 280). Espousing instead an approach to the materiality of *Shake-speares Sonnets* that would take seriously the matter of Q's page breaks, this essay has understood the page and the page break to be units of meaning with urgent implications for the recognition of poetic form and for the interrelations between a history of the book and the idea of literature. Given that the essay has put pressure on issues of authorship and authority, this closing emphasis on the reader and not the author—on the matter rather than the heart of the matter—supports both Barthes's contention that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (148) and Foucault's suggestion that the author is "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (118). In the absence of a disciplining authorial figure—no horrified Shakespeare need lurk over the quarto

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reader—the book known as Q authorizes readers to open the multiplicity or "proliferation of meaning" to and at the level of materiality and to ask after those quiet but obtrusive breaks we find in *every* book we read.

Notes

This essay has benefited in innumerable ways from incisive and appropriately skeptical readings by Lisa Freinkel, Carol Thomas Neely, Jay Grossman, Hunt Howell, Christopher Lane, Glenn Sucich, and Wendy Wall. My thanks go first and foremost, however, to Jeffrey Masten for his encouragement and example.

1. See, e.g., Giroux.

2. I emphasize *seemingly* arbitrary. There is at work in Q a precise logic as to where these breaks occur: the pages that contain sonnets 22–93, 106–17, and 142–53 break their poems in a five-page pattern that finds the following number of lines from fractured sonnets at the bottom of each page: 5, 11, 2, 8, and 0. The remaining sonnet pages differ only slightly from this pattern. Such a pattern suggests precision and care in composition, as if some agent were, for instance, laboring to fit as much print as possible onto each page. I am grateful to Carol Thomas Neely for helping me to articulate the unarbitrariness of these breaks. For a discussion of the care with which later seventeenth-century compositors "cast off copy," see Moxon 239–44 and Gaskell 41. For a related discussion of the "relatively arbitrary nature of [Q's typographical] distinctions," see Freinkel 226–36.

3. Cloud's essay on Herbert's "Easter-Wings" takes seriously the representation of a shape poem across the openings of a book. See also Targoff; McLeod, "Gerard Hopkins."

4. In the *Arden* edition of the sonnets, Katherine Duncan-Jones follows Vendler in re-presenting the poems as visually unified objects, despite assuring the reader that in "wording, *format* and punctuation, Q has been followed more closely than in any previous modernized edition" (Introduction 103; my emphasis). That an editor as sensitive to the materiality of the Shakespearean text as Duncan-Jones neglects to include these page breaks in her modern edition speaks to the transparency and pervasiveness of a reading practice that would ignore page breaks.

5. See also Duncan-Jones, "What." It should be noted that Q evinces several forms of "contextual pressure," chief among these the use of oversized first-letter capitals and the indentation of the first and final couplets of each poem. While several of Q's peer sequences mark the beginning of their sonnets with large capitals, Q uses a particularly big font to do so. Likewise, while several other sequences indent couplets, only two others indent their final couplets, and neither of those uses large-font first letter capitals (see figs. 4–15). It seems likely that these unusual material elements would have indeed applied some contextual pressure, perhaps helping readers to recognize the beginning and end of each sonnet and mitigating the disruption caused by Q's page breaks. One would also do well to consider the pressure applied by the catchwords that appear at the bottom of every page. Though common in early modern books, these too help to mitigate individual page breaks, cuing the reader to read past page breaks, even if this was not their original or practical purpose. To acknowledge such pressures is not, however, to accede to them. That such pressures would be necessary for a reader to recognize these poems as sonnets speaks to the hermeneutic disruptions these page breaks may have caused.

6. See also Duncan-Jones, "Unauthorized" 155 and Introduction 46.

7. In counting fourteen sequences, I follow Wall and Kuin in excluding collections of various verse forms (e.g., John Davies's *Wittes Pilgrimage*), which Spiller includes in his count. My count also elides multiple editions or printings of the same sequence, for instance Daniel's six editions of *Delia* and Drayton's nearly compulsive reissues of *Ideas*—though the iteration of the form in succeeding editions also supports my point. Tellingly, the first two poems in *The Passionate Pilgrime*—poems that appear, revised, as Q sonnets 138 and 144—are also monumentalized, as are all of Thomas Watson's one hundred "passions" in *The Hekatompathia*, the 1582 collection that predated Philip Sidney and anticipated the 1590s sonnet sequence craze. Regrettably, I am not able to reproduce images of William Smith's *Chloris* and Barnabe Barnes's *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* because the British Library was not willing to grant permanent permission for electronic reproduction.

8. Interestingly, Sidney's 1591 sequence also interrupts its sonnets. By 1598, however, the sonnets appear (mostly) as unified, monumental visual objects. See Wall 72. Wall addresses these differing arrangements of *Astrophel and Stella* as an "evolution into a more ordered form" (70). While Wall's discussion is persuasive and while Barnes's sequence raises several questions about genre, I do not want to dismiss these sequences and their interruptions too quickly. The heuristic or reading methodology this essay advocates forces us to consider how the breaks in *Parthenophil* and the 1591 *Astrophel* might also matter.

9. For example, Marotti is interested in the peculiar naming of Q: "rather than [having] a title alluding to a love object . . . or to a fictional amorous relationship," Q bears the name of its author ("Shakespeare's Sonnets" 154). See also Duncan-Jones, "What," and, on the gender indeterminacy of the beloved, de Grazia, "Scandal" 39–40. For instances of mislabeled catchwords and page signatures, see Rollins 4. Duncan-Jones draws attention to variations in the fonts and font sizes of the capital letters *W*, *H*, *S*, and *O* and to the sonnets' thirty-three italicized words (Introduction 39). See also Freinkel 226–36. Given the reading

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practice I am advocating here, these equally abnormal aspects of Q's materiality are worthy of attention in their own right, since they too have influenced the processes of meaning making that have informed Q's reception.

10. The number of studies that would distance Shakespeare from *Shake-speares Sonnets* is staggering; a representative example is that of Robert Giroux, who intimates that William Shakespeare "apparently had nothing to do with the production of Q, because, among other reasons, it was so badly proofread" (8). Giroux underscores several "absentminded" and even "blatant" "mistakes," "gaffes," and "errors" in the text of the poems (8–10). Instead of attending to how those "mistakes" might either matter or themselves be intended, Giroux blames these textual cruxes on sloppy or meddling compositors; see Jackson. For a critique of compositor study, see McKenzie; Masten, "Pressing Subjects"; and de Grazia, "Essential Author." Giroux goes on to count between fifty-three and eighty-four "errors" (11). This startling variance—a range of fifty-three to eighty-four being remarkable—betrays the subjective, arbitrary nature of such author-centric methodology; the inability to determine what is and what is not a mistake or error undermines the claims to truth to which Giroux's study aspires. Especially given the complexity and indeterminacy we so often associate with poetic discourse, what looks like a sloppy compositor error to one reader might look like a deft poetic effect to another. See also Rollins; McLeod, "Unemending"; and Duncan-Jones, Introduction.

11. The literature that treats sexuality in Q is enormous. Recent studies include: Bredbeck 167–80; Pequigney; Sedgwick 28–48; Bruce R. Smith 228–70; and Stallybrass.

12. Recent criticism has troubled readings such as Auden's. Putting pressure on several governing terms (e.g., "authorized," "literary property") and paying close attention to the materiality of the Shakespearean text, critics such as Marotti and de Grazia have rendered anachronistic our concern for authorization, book contracts, proprietary claims, and authorial proofing. See also Tribble; Roberts.

13. The most recent example: Duncan-Jones devotes some seventeen pages of her *Arden* sonnets introduction to the issue of Q's authenticity and authorization (Introduction 29–45). See also Duncan-Jones, "Unauthorized."

14. Freinkel goes on to offer readings of the "self-trespassing poetic authority that unites—*authorizes*" Q (189).

15. For a discussion of such a complex network of agents and intentions, see de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim* 169; Kastan 5; Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets" 143, 165–66; McGann; and Masten, "Textual Deviance."

16. All references to Q are to the Huntington Library's Chalmers-Bridgewater copy of the Aspley imprint, which is reproduced in facsimile in Booth, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1–133). For a discussion of the "small variations" between the extant copies, see Rollins 5.

17. See Moxon 242–43; Gaskell 41; and Blayney 12–14.

18. See also Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies* 4–5.

19. Elsewhere Marotti suggests that "short quarto pamphlets of poetry or drama [were] among the most perishable of printed words" (*Manuscript* 286), often "literally read out of existence" (Hyder Edward Rollins, qtd. in Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets" 158).

20. On the circulation of these poems in manuscript, see Taylor.

21. Likewise, twenty-four of the thirty-two sonnets included in the *Longman Anthology* (Damrosch et al.) are monumental in the 1609 text. A more comprehensive statistical study than I am able to undertake here would be required to support or refute the speculation that poems that appear as unified objects on the quarto page have fared better with critics than those that were broken. For now, the interrelations between quarto and anthology simply allow us to posit page breaks as yet another "contingency of value" that affects how and which poems enter our critical canon (Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies*).

22. On Shakespeare's troubling couplets, see Dubrow, "Monologues" 62, and Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure* 142–45.

23. Similarly, it seems telling that a poem that declares "Let me not to the marriage of true mindes / Admit impediments" (poem 119) would appear without material impediments, resting unified and unbroken near the center of its page.

24. On the difficulties of such "narration," see Dubrow, "'Incertainties.'"

25. A similarly conspicuous center-of-the-page placement attends two of Q's other "structural[ly] peculiar" poems: 99 and 145. Poem 99 is composed of fifteen lines; 145 is rendered in tetrameter rather than pentameter.

26. Numerous readers have commented on this aspect of the poem, many even deploying the quietus as evidence of a meddling compositor. See Giroux 8–9 and Booth, "Commentary" 430.

27. Duncan-Jones affirms that Shakespeare was "fully aware of the Italian form" (Introduction 96).

28. On the early modern reader as a daunting and a promising subject of study, see Zwicker 11 and Roberts 4. Roberts's study tends admirably to the "composite" nature of Q, reading the intra- and intertextual relations between "Shake-speares Sonnets" and "A Louer's Complaint"—regrettably, something this essay neglects entirely.

29. On the presence of the fragment in early modern humanistic pedagogy, see Bushnell 135–38.

30. For important recuperations of Benson, see Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets"; and de Grazia, "Scandal."

31. On the importance of Benson's edition to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reception of Shakespeare's sonnets, see Marotti, "Shakespeare's Sonnets" 163; and de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 132–76.

32. See Gibaldi 111–12.

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33. In his 1968 collection *Incarnations,* Robert Penn Warren attempted to answer that question for his readers. Throughout the volume Warren uses a symbol to "indicate a space between sections of a poem wherever such spaces are lost in pagination" (2).

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