

With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st⁵ *governest*
 The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,⁶
 5 Do I envÿ those jacks⁶ that nimble leap
 To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
 Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
 At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.
 To be so tickled they would change their state
 10 And situation⁷ with those dancing chips,
 O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
 Making dead wood more blessed than living lips.
 Since saucy jacks⁸ so happy are in this,
 Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action;⁹ and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude,^o cruel, not to trust;
 5 Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight:
 Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
 Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
 10 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
 A bliss in proof¹ and proved, a very^o woe;
 Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
 All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;²
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 5 I have seen roses damasked,^o red and white,
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
 And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.³
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 10 That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

5. The harmony from the strings that overcomes my ear with delight.
 6. The keys (actually, "jacks" are the plectra that pluck the strings when activated by the keys).
 7. Physical location. "State": place in the order of things.
 8. With a quibble on the sense "impertinent fellows."
 9. The word order here is inverted and slightly obscures the meaning. Lust, when put into action, expands "spirit" (life, vitality; also semen) in a "waste" (desert; also with a pun on *waist*) of shame.
 1. A bliss during the experience.
 2. An anti-Petrarchan sonnet. All of the details commonly attributed by other Elizabethan sonnetters to their ladies are here denied to the poet's mistress.
 3. Not with our pejorative sense, but simply "emanates."

I grant I never saw a goddess go;⁹ *walk*
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare^o *admirable, extraordinary*
 As any she belied^o with false compare. *misrepresented*

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,⁴
 And Will to boot, and Will in overplus;
 More than enough am I that vex thee still,^o *always*
 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
 5 Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
 Not once vouchsafe^o to hide my will in thine?
 Shall will in others seem right gracious,
 And in^o my will no fair acceptance shine?
 The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
 10 And in abundance addeth to his store,^o *plenty*
 So thou being rich in Will add to thy Will
 One will of mine to make thy large Will more.
 Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;⁵
 Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth,
 I do believe her, though I know she lies,⁶
 That she might think me some untutored youth,
 Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.
 5 Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
 Although she knows my days are past the best,⁷
 Simply^o I credit her false-speaking tongue: *like a simpleton*
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?^o *unfaithful*
 10 And wherefore say not I that I am old?
 Oh, love's best habit⁸ is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told.^o *counted*
 Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

144

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,⁹
 Which like two spirits do suggest me still:^o *tempt me constantly*

4. (1) Wishes, (2) carnal desire, (3) the male and female sexual organs, (4) a lover—Shakespeare?—named Will. This is one of three, possibly four, sonnets punning on the word.
 5. I.e., do not kill with unkindness any of your wooers.
 6. With the obvious sexual pun (as also in lines 13–14). "Made of truth": (1) is utterly honest, (2) is faithful.
 7. Shakespeare was thirty-five or younger when he wrote this sonnet (it first appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599).
 8. Appearance, deportment.
 9. I have two beloveds, one bringing me comfort and the other despair.