

10 Nor in hid ways do guide philosophy;
Look at my hands for no such quintessence,
But know that I in pure simplicity
Breathe out the flames which burn within my heart,
Love only reading unto me this art.

31

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer^o his sharp arrows tries?
5 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks: thy languished grace,
To me that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
10 Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?⁸

37

My mouth doth water, and my breast doth swell,
My tongue doth itch, my thoughts in labor be:
Listen then, lordings, with good ear to me,
For of my life I must a riddle tell.
5 Towards Aurora's court a nymph doth dwell,⁹
Rich in all beauties which man's eye can see,
Beauties so far from reach of words, that we
Abase her praise, saying she doth excel:
Rich in the treasure of deserved renown,
10 Rich in the riches of a royal heart,
Rich in those gifts which give th'eternal crown;
Who though most rich in these and every part,
Which make the patents¹ of true worldly bliss,
Hath no misfortune, but that Rich she is.

39

Come sleep! O sleep the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place² of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent^o judge between the high and low;

7. The mysterious "fifth element" of matter (supplementary to earth, air, fire, and water), which alchemists labored to extract.
8. I.e., is the lady's ingratitude considered virtue in heaven (as here)? Also, is the lover's virtue (fidelity) considered distasteful in heaven (as here)?

9. Aurora (the dawn) has her court in the east; Penelope Devereux Rich, the original of Stella, dwells in Essex, one of the eastern counties. Sidney puns on her married name throughout this sonnet.
1. Grants, titles to possession.
2. Resting place on a journey.

With shield of proof shield me from out the prease^o *through*
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland, and a weary head:³
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
Livelier than elsewhere Stella's image see.

41

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France;⁴
5 Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Townfolks my strength; a daintier^o judge applies *more precise*
His praise to sleight,^o which from good use^o doth rise; *art / experience*
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
10 My blood from them who did excel in this,⁵
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shoot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

45

Stella oft sees the very face of woe
Painted in my beclouded stormy face,
But cannot skill^o to pity my disgrace,⁶ *is unable to*
Not though thereof the cause herself she know.⁷
5 Yet hearing late a fable which did show,
Of lovers never known, a grievous case,
Pity thereof gate^o in her breast such place *got*
That, from that sea derived, tears' spring did flow.
Alas, if fancy,^o drawn by imaged things, *fantasy*
10 Though false, yet with free scope more grace doth breed
Than servant's wrack, where new doubts honor brings,⁸
Then think, my dear, that you in me do read
Of lover's ruin some sad tragedy:
I am not I; pity the tale of me.

3. The offer of gifts to Morpheus, god of sleep, is a poetic convention. A likely source is Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, lines 240-69. "Proof" (line 5): proven strength.
4. Sidney took part in several tournaments between 1579 and 1585 with French spectators present, but the one in May 1581 was devised specifically to entertain French commissioners.
5. Sidney's father and grandfather and his maternal uncles, the earls of Leicester and Warwick, were frequent participants in tournaments.
6. The state of being out of favor.
7. I.e., even though she knows she herself is the cause of it.
8. I.e., than the ruin of her lover ("servant"), caused by the new scruples ("doubts") her honor brings up.