

*Your love and pity doth th' impression fill,
 Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow,
 For what care I who calls me well or ill,
 So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
 You are my all the world, and I must strive
 To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
 None else to me, nor I to none alive,
 That my steeled sense o'er-changes right or wrong.
 In so profound abysm I throw all care
 Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
 To critic and to flatt'rer stopped are:
 Mark how with my neglect I do dispense;
 You are so strongly in my purpose bred
 That all the world besides me thinks y'are dead.*

After just saying in Sonnet 111 that his friend's pity would be enough to cure him, the speaker in the first line of Sonnet 112 adds love, shifting the focus from his love for the friend to the friend's love for him. The love and pity together have already filled up the brand impressed ("stamped," l. 2) on his brow by public scandal. Now the speaker can toss off the rabble's cries both for and against him. All will be well if his friend will acknowledge his good points and so gloss over ("o'er-green," l. 4) his faults.

As we have seen, "the world" of the sonnets is a powerful judge, a social force to be reckoned with. Now the speaker defies it, shakes it off, and replaces it with his friend: "You are my all the world." (l. 5) (This statement will come back to haunt him when the woman of the sonnets appears.) In most worshipful terms he vows to learn which of his acts have been shameful and which laudable. No one else, he says, will tell me – and I will tell no one else – when to stand firm or when to change my values. With his usual hyperbole, he goes so far as to say that he will toss all worries about the world's opinion into such an abyss that his "adder's sense" (snakes were thought to be deaf) will silence all his detractors and flatterers.

To conclude, the speaker brags to his friend how he will foil the public's attacks simply by

neglecting them. You, he says, have so completely mastered me that I see the world as dead. At this point, then, the speaker thinks he has conquered the world by adhering solely to his lover.

The use of *bred* and *dead* as rhyme words in the couplet (a feature of Sonnet 108 as well) may have an ominous sound (in contrast to the rhymes of Sonnet 111), but we are left to ponder what might happen.