That you were once unkind befriends me now,  
And for that sorrow, which I then did feel,  
Needs must I under my transgression bow,  
Unless my nerves were brass or hammered steel.

For if you were by my unkindness shaken,  
As I by yours, y' have passed a hell of time,  
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken  
To weigh how once I suffered in your crime.

O that our night of woe might have rememb'red  
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,  
And soon to you as you to me then tend’red  
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits!

But that your trespass now becomes a fee;  
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.
“salve” (balm, l. 12) of humility. The wording, especially bosoms (l. 12), underscores the closeness of the two men and the intensity of their emotions.

The poem is at base a persuasive argument. Yet we never know whether the young man was won over, that he accepted the speaker’s apology as readily as the speaker accepted his. Though the tone of the couplet is lighter, a touch of the tyrant reappears in the last phrase: your trespass “must ransom me.” The note of warning may be detected.