

*O that you were your self, but love you are
 No longer yours than you yourself here live;
 Against this coming end you should prepare,
 And your sweet semblance to some other give.
 So should that beauty which you hold in lease
 Find no determination; then you were
 Your self again after your self's decease,
 When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
 Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
 Which husbandry in honor might uphold
 Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
 And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
 O none but unthrifths, dear my love you know;
 You had a father, let your son say so.*

The first suggestion of a closer relationship developing between the speaker and the youth comes in the couplet of Sonnet 10; in Sonnet 13 the single word *love* is the seedling vocative that in Sonnet 126 comes to full flower with "O thou, my lovely boy." Following Shakespeare's pronouns and assessing their significance is a tricky business. "Thou" may be more familiar than "you," or it may be the other way round. In the sonnets, it is best to take the words as interchangeable, as they became by the last decade of the sixteenth century. One thing is certain, in Sonnet 13 *you* (plus *your*, *yours*, and *yourself*) appears 17 times, *thou* not at all. Perhaps it was simply a matter of euphony, but the focus on the youth is unmistakable.

More importantly, the word *yourself* (ll. 1, 2, 7) was originally printed as two words, which reinforces the idea of the youth's two selves. The self can be the true soul, the immortal part of body and soul, or it can refer to the whole person. The sonnet's first lines, then, contain the speaker's wish that the youth were his true soul and that he could control himself. However, the youth is in charge of himself only as long as he is alive. Therefore, the argument begins, the youth must prepare for death and create another self, a "sweet semblance" (l. 4) in a child's body.

Furthermore, the speaker continues (in the second quatrain) the youth must prevent the expiration ("determination," l. 6) of that perfect

beauty, which he leases from nature. Then, he says, he will be his whole self again (in the form of a sweet child) after his body's dissolution.

The third quatrain switches to the imagery of the body as a house, picking up the thread from Sonnet 10, where the house refers to the youth's lineage. The speaker, ever the moralist, sermonizes on husbandry, the management of his estate, to hold off "death's eternal cold." (l. 12) Only a spendthrift would fail to be a good caretaker. The metaphor, of course, is aimed at procreation. Rather abruptly, the speaker says, "You had a father; let your son say so."

Because of his emphasis throughout on the youth's body, his physical beauty rather than his soul, the speaker is subordinating reality to appearances against his own advice elsewhere to be skeptical of the eyes' opinions.