

*Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
 For that deep wound it gives my friend and me;
 Is't not enough to torture me alone,
 But slave to slav'ry my sweet'st friend must be?
 Me from my self thy cruel eye hath taken,
 And my next self thou harder hast engrossed.
 Of him, my self and thee I am forsaken,
 A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossed.
 Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
 But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;
 Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
 Thou canst not then use rigor in my jail.
 And yet thou wilt, for I being pent in thee,
 Perforce am thine and all that is in me.*

The undercurrents of Sonnet 132 scarcely prepare us for the groans, wounds, torture and slavery of Sonnet 133. The friend is brought back in line two as the third party in a triangle; he appears as someone already seriously hurt by the mistress who has stolen him from the speaker. The surprise comes to the reader, not to any of the three parties. They now know each other intimately.

The story is one of theft, bondage and imprisonment. The cruel eye of the mistress – now harshly deceptive – has snatched the friend (“me” of l. 5) from “my self” (l. 5) and bound the friend more firmly to her (l. 6). As a result, the speaker is betrayed not only by the mistress but also by himself. (He and his friend are still one.) He is also thwarted (“crossed,” l. 8) and tortured in “thrice threefold” ways – a typical hyperbole, but one that suggests promiscuity.

In the third quatrain the speaker makes a strange request. He wants to be imprisoned in his mistress’ heart of steel (she was not persuaded by his plea for pity in Sonnet 132). And he wants his heart to serve as bail for his friend’s. In a quixotic gesture he also offers his heart to be the guardian of “whoe’er keeps me” (l. 11). As if this were not bizarre enough, he argues that the mistress cannot use cruelty (“rigor,” l. 120) on his heart in her jail. He is already there.

The speaker immediately retracts this conclusion in the couplet. Why? Because, he says, if I am “pent” (jailed) in you, I am therefore thine and whatever is in me – including the friend, my other self – is yours, too.