

*Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,
 And will to boot, and will in overplus;
 More than enough am I that vex thee still,
 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
 Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
 Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
 Shall will in others seem right gracious,
 And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
 The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
 And in abundance addeth to his store;
 So thou being rich in will add to thy will,
 One will of mine to make thy large will more.
 Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;
 Think all but one, and me in that one will.*

Sonnet 135 is startling for a number of reasons: First, the completely different portrayals of sexual and emotional relationships between this and previous poems; the formal address and groveling submission of Sonnet 134 are replaced by intimate bawdy language in open sexual pursuit and witty, confident argument. Second, the overwhelming plays on the word *will* (much discussed by scholars): the word can mean any drive in general or lust in particular; it can be slang for the sexual organs, both male and female; and it can be a shortened form of William. Suddenly the speaker, who has always been nameless, is now "Will," as the last line of Sonnet 136 affirms. If Shakespeare is revealing himself as the author, this is a very strange way to do it indeed. In Sonnet 134, we saw an abject speaker bound to a cruel mistress, which is consistent with the preceding narrative. In Sonnets 135 and 136, we find a Will punning his way to sexual domination of a desirable and willing woman. Can either he or she be the same? One cannot help wondering whether these sonnets are inserted arbitrarily.

That said, we can take the sonnet in context using the meanings of *will* as best suit the sequence. In the opening line the speaker declares that no matter what desires other women have fulfilled, you, the mistress, have got your way (will in l. 1), and me as well, and superlative sexual satisfaction on top of that (l. 2). I am man enough to keep pursuing you and so enhance your desire. (ll. 3-4) Will you, who have a strong sexual urge, refuse to merge my

desire with yours? (Because *will* can refer to both the male and female genitals in Elizabethan slang, line six implies sexual intercourse.) Shall sexual advances by others seem pleasing to you while mine are not? (ll. 7-8)

Here the speaker switches to a persuasive simile: The sea, which is all water, is always willing to receive more rain because it merely increases its wealth. Therefore you who are rich in sexual desire will simply gain by adding my desire to yours. (l. 11) Do not by unkindness cut off other suitors; just think of all of them equal to only one – that one am I. The implication is that the speaker is confident of his sexual prowess and she will no longer need others.