

*Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes
 That they behold and see not what they see?
 They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
 Yet what the best is, take the worst to be.
 If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks
 Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,
 Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks
 Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
 Why should my heart think that a several plot
 Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
 Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not
 To put fair truth upon so foul a face,
 In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
 And to this false plague are they now transferred.*

After all the amorous advances of Sonnets 135 and 136 (nicknamed the "Will Sonnets") and keen hopes of satisfaction, the speaker – is he really the same? – addresses Cupid as "Thou blind fool, Love," and re-enters the realm of pessimism in Sonnets 131 through 134. The speaker also returns to the paradox of seeing and yet not seeing. He indicts himself for taking the worst appearance for the best although his eyes "know what beauty is [and] see where it lies." (l. 3)

The second quatrain continues his harangue against his eyes, which are corrupted by prejudice ("overpartial looks," l. 5) and "anchored in the bay where all men ride" (l. 6) The metaphor suggests promiscuity by likening the woman to a bay and "all men" to ships that ride upon her. "Cupid," the speaker asks, "why have you forged the hooks of attraction from my eyes' falseness?"

Now, revising the role of the heart, the speaker says that its judgment is swayed by the eyes and therefore it is not the seat of reality and truth that it has been. Otherwise the heart would not think that the mistress was his private property. Instead, it would perceive that she was "the wide world's common place." (l. 10) In plain English, a whore. Still questioning Cupid, the speaker asks him why he didn't say "this is

not" (l. 11), thus evading his own mistake in taking foul for fair.

The couplet also puts the blame on the heart (which, surprisingly, is now "right true" again), and on the erring eyes. Using the passive voice in the last line, the speaker absolves himself of any guilt in their transference to "this false plague" (the mistress, who may well have a venereal disease).