

*O me! What eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight?
Or if they have, where is my judgment fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?
If that be fair wheron my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote,
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no,
How can it? O how can love's eye be true,
That is so vexed with watching and with tears?
No marvel then though I mistake my view,
The sun itself sees not till heav'n clears.*

*O cunning Love, with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes, well seeing, thy foul faults should find.*

The content of this sonnet is similar to that of Sonnet 147 and follows the thread of many prior poems that deplore the faulty sight of lovers' eyes. But the tone is sad wonderment rather than anger. Like Sonnet 147, it does not address the person apostrophized until the couplet. Here Cupid ("Love," l. 1) is immediately blamed for putting into the speaker's head new eyes "which have no correspondence with true sight" (l. 2). Or, if this is not so, the speaker asks, what has happened to my judgment which should have corrected false sight?

In a crafty fashion the speaker also asks, if the lying eyes dote on some "fair" person, how can "the world" say it isn't so? If it is not, then love can in truth point out ("denote," l. 7) that love's eyes are not so true as other men's are.

After this complicated bit of logic, the speaker clarifies his meaning by asking, how can love's eyes be true if they are so painfully distressed by watching and tears? It follows that it is no wonder his vision is obscured. "The sun itself sees not till heaven clears." (l. 12) For once the speaker defends, not humiliates, himself as an ordinary lover.

At the close, the speaker calls on Cupid ("cunning Love," l. 13), charging him that he keeps the speaker blind because if he weren't he would see the "foul faults" of the mistress (or the friend). Cupid has been hovering in the background of the whole sequence and now becomes a major thread to be paired with disease in the final sonnets.