

*My glass shall not persuade me I am old,  
 So long as youth and thou are of one date;  
 But when in thee time's furrows I behold,  
 Then look I death my days should expiate.  
 For all that beauty that doth cover thee  
 Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,  
 Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me.  
 How can I then be elder than thou art?  
 O therefore, love, be of thy self so wary,  
 As I not for my self, but for thee will,  
 Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary  
 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.  
 Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,  
 Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.*

**A**fter his satire on the extravagant language used by previous sonneteers, Shakespeare shows how it should be done by writing a true love song in conspicuously direct diction. He also performs a tour de force by blending conventional images with some of his own key threads. The "glass" of the opening line picks up the thread of the mirror used in the opening of Sonnet 3, where the speaker tells the youth to look into his own glass to remind himself that he should marry soon. The speaker calls the youth his "mother's glass" (l. 9), and imagines him in the future looking into the mirror, which, despite his wrinkles, will show the vestiges of his "golden time" (3. 13). Thus, early on, the glass becomes a thread that connects generations and loved ones.

In Sonnet 22 the thread is extended to the speaker, who at first argues that his own youth will remain as long as the young man has his. But when the speaker sees wrinkles ("time's furrows," l. 3) in his friend's face, he will look for death to end his days. The thread of time's furrows can be traced back to Sonnet 2, which opens with the image of time digging trenches in the youth's aging forehead. When the speaker imagines the youth with wrinkles, he is, in effect, using him as a mirror. Later, in Sonnet 73, the process will be reversed when the speaker says to the youth that he can see the approach of death in his older friend's appearance. ("That

time of year thou mayst in me behold . . . . ”)

The chief theme of Sonnet 22 is that of “one soul in bodies twain,” a commonplace in Elizabethan literature. Enthusiastically, the speaker claims in the second quatrain that his friend’s beauty is “the seemly raiment” (l. 6) of his heart because the speaker’s heart is in the friend’s breast and vice versa. The speaker continues this fanciful argument by asserting that they are therefore the same and one cannot be older than the other. Moreover, they must be mutually caring: Like a “tender nurse” (l. 12) each must shield the other from illness.

With a slightly saucy warning in the couplet, the speaker declares that his friend must not count on getting his heart back when the speaker dies because, according to the tradition, when the friend gave his heart to the speaker he did so for eternity.