

*Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled  
 Thy beauty's form in table of my heart.  
 My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,  
 And perspective it is best painter's art.  
 For through the painter must you see his skill  
 To find where your true image pictured lies,  
 Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,  
 That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes:  
 Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done;  
 Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me  
 Art windows to my breast, wherethrough the sun  
 Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee.  
 Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art:  
 They draw but what they see, know not the heart.*

**T**he relationship between the senses and the emotions are developed further in Sonnet 24, which establishes once and for all the primacy of the heart over the eyes. The imagery used to explain this axiom is intricate. First, the speaker says that his eye has acted as the painter of his friend's beauty and has engraved it as a picture in his heart. The speaker's body is the frame for this picture. His eye (the painter) excels in perspective, and by this means the friend must see the truth and where it resides—the painter's shop, that is, the speaker's breast. To complicate this conceit further, the poet says that the windows to the shop are glazed with the friend's eyes. The image depends on the idea that one can see one's own reflection in another's eyes, a popular image in sixteenth and seventeenth poetry.

The lesson for the friend is that their pairs of eyes can do good deeds for each other. The speaker's have drawn the friend's beautiful form, and the friend's eyes are windows to the speaker's breast. In a further flight of fancy, the speaker describes how the sun takes delight in peering through the windows to look at the friend's portrait. However, despite all the accomplishments of the eyes, they draw only appearances; they never experience the reality of the heart.

The complexity of the sonnet borders on, if it does not cross into, the realm of the obscure and the

absurd. Shakespeare has the speaker composing conceits like those decried in Sonnet 21, thereby stressing the inconsistency of his character. This is a poetic form of self-betrayal. He simply does not practice what he preaches. Modern readers may be frustrated by such tangles, but it is necessary to unravel them to appreciate the sonnets.

At the close, Shakespeare juxtaposes the elaborate and the simple to achieve dramatic effect. After three intricate quatrains, he quickly and neatly summarizes all in the couplet. A similar device can be seen in Lady Macbeth's speech after the murder of Duncan:

. . . This my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas incarnadine  
Making the green one red. (II.ii. 58-60)

The polysyllabic Latinate words in the second line set off the plain and forceful monosyllables of the last.