

*No more be grieved at that which thou hast done;
 Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud;
 Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
 And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
 All men make faults, and even I in this,
 Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
 My self corrupting salving thy amiss,
 Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are:
 For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense;
 Thy adverse party is thy advocate,
 And 'gainst my self a lawful plea commence,
 Such civil war is in my love and hate
 That I an accessory needs must be
 To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.*

The waves of condemnation and forgiveness rise and fall throughout Sonnets 33, 34 and 35. The focus is at first on the friend's disastrous fall from grace (33.9), but it shifts ultimately to the speaker's internal war between love and hate (35.12). At the beginning of Sonnet 35 the speaker continues to soften the remorse his friend feels. Using four comparisons that center on natural imagery, the speaker argues their parallels to human behavior: All men misbehave, just as roses have thorns, silver fountains have mud, the moon and sun are stained by clouds and eclipses, and the sweetest buds harbor cankerworms. Sin is simply natural—so far.

But the speaker then takes on a larger role, that of an accomplice who admits to endorsing his friend's trespasses, even by the innocent comparisons he has just made. (l. 5) He argues now that he is corrupting himself by minimizing the sins and even excusing them more than is necessary.

The next stage of the argument against himself reaches a moment of greater self-awareness. As he says, he combines reason ("sense") with natural sympathy for his friend's sensual fault (l. 9). The sestet becomes a series of paradoxes, beginning with "Thy adverse party is thy advocate" (l. 10). The irony of using legal language to express an irrational situation is inescapable. The speaker knows what he is doing and yet does it anyway.

The legal paradoxes that give way to the civil war of love and hate end in self-condemnation. By condoning his friend's sinful acts he becomes an accessory to them. The sweet-sour oxymoron of the final line contains a sudden outburst against the friend, who as a thief robs the speaker. The tide of forgiveness has suddenly turned, but only briefly. The friend, after all, is still sweet. The speaker realizes that because he is an accomplice, his friend's betrayal is also a self-betrayal.