

*Let me confess that we two must be twain
 Although our undivided loves are one.
 So shall those blots that do with me remain,
 Without thy help by me be borne alone.
 In our two loves there is but one respect,
 Though in our lives a separable spite,
 Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
 I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
 Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
 Nor thou with public kindness honor me,
 Unless thou take that honor from thy name.
 *But do not so; I love thee in such sort,
 As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.**

Here the thread of “one soul in bodies twain” is picked up and followed in what appears to be a voluntary separation. The injuries that have been suffered by the speaker remain with him and must be borne alone. Oddly, the matter of shared guilt doesn't seem to apply to the friend, who is a soul mate. If their loves are united can their disgraces be separated? The speaker's logic is shaky.

In the second quatrain he begins by asserting that in their two loves “there is but one respect.” (l. 5) That is, they have nothing but mutual love and esteem. However, some spiteful force has split them. (l. 6) Though the speaker insists that this does not affect their oneness, still it steals hours of pleasure from their “love's delight.” (l. 8) At this point it does not seem that the speaker wishes prudence to prevail. If their souls are true, no “separable spite” should be able to tear them apart.

But the speaker is trapped by his fear that “the world” will shame his friend if his fault is openly acknowledged. He is also afraid that if his friend should honor him with some “public kindness” it would sully his friend's reputation. The speaker concludes by asking the friend not to do him any honor. His argument? That he loves his friend so much that they are one person; therefore if the friend has a good reputation (“good report,” l. 14), so will the speaker. Clearly, he has given in to “the world.”