

*Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend  
 Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?  
 Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend,  
 And being frank she lends to those are free:  
 Then beauteous niggard why dost thou abuse  
 The bounteous largesse given thee to give?  
 Profitless usurer, why dost thou use  
 So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?  
 For having traffic with thyself alone,  
 Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive.  
 Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,  
 What acceptable audit canst thou leave?  
     Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,  
     Which used lives th'executor to be.*

**T**he speaker's reproaches to the youth grow stronger here. His argument is repetitious but more insistent, and the suggestions of masturbation are expanded. The tone is set by the three semi-harsh, semi-comic names he uses to address the youth: "unthrifty loveliness" (l. 1), "beauteous niggard" (l. 5), and "profitless usurer" (l. 7), all of which revert to the vocabulary of the first sonnet. Similarly, the threads of money, death and beauty are carried over and combined with legal terms: "beauty's legacy" (l. 2), "nature's bequest" (l. 3), and the "executor" (l. 14). Paradoxically, the youth is both a spendthrift and a miser, another echo of Sonnet 1 (l. 12).

Time has been the youth's greatest enemy so far, but here nature is added as a major force. Nature has bequeathed him beauty, but only as a loan. As a generous lender ("frank," l. 4), she lends to those as generous ("free," l. 4) as she is. But she is not likely to extend his lease on beauty. Almost like a lawyer, the speaker charges the youth with miserliness because he will not marry and have children; therefore the youth abuses nature's largess, which is meant to be spent. Even worse, he can't make a profit, spending huge sums and not investing in legitimate offspring.

The logic continues: since you don't have traffic (sexual) except with yourself, you deprive others of your "sweet self." (l. 10) Therefore you cannot give an "acceptable audit" (l. 12) when nature calls you to the

grave. The conclusion of the argument is also paradoxical. If the youth does not use his beauty (to procreate), his "unused beauty" (l. 13) must go to the grave with him; whereas, if he had used it properly and begot a son as beautiful as he is, that beauty (the son) would live on to be the executor of his will.

Note that the phrase "sweet self," which is repeated from Sonnet 1, reinforces the affectionate feeling that the speaker evinces for the "tender" youth despite the speaker's harsh language concerning his failure to marry. If the youth is betraying his duty to procreate, the speaker is betraying his own attraction by urging the youth to marry.