

*Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end,
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity, once in the main of light,
 Crawls to maturity; wherewith, being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight
 And time that gave doth now his gift confound.
 Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.*

Again the dominant thread of time appears, but now the speaker looks forward rather than back, and the emphasis is on the friend's loss of youthful glory rather than his success in competition with male beauties of the past. The wrinkles and decay so graphically rendered in Sonnet 2 are echoed here: Time doth transfix [i.e., destroy] the flourish set on youth, / And delves the parallels [furrows] in beauty's brow. (ll. 9-10)

This sonnet also looks ahead to Sonnet 116. But when we turn from [Time] feeds on the rarities of nature's truth, / And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow. . . . (ll. 11-12) to the familiar opening of Sonnet 116's sestet Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks / Within his bending sickle's compass come . . . we notice how abstract and negative Sonnet 60 is by comparison.

Similarly, the couplet is clearly not so forceful as those in the earlier and later sonnets cited. The overall effect weakens the idea of immortality through the poet's verse, which had been so firmly asserted in the couplets of Sonnets 18 and 55. These comparisons reveal how subtly Shakespeare prepares for the low points in the speaker's relationship with his friend. His state is shifting from hope to anxiety.

The imagery complements the emotions. In the famous opening lines, the minutes of our lives are likened to waves hastening to the shore. There is a turmoil in their

forward motion that suggests human struggles for survival. The waves also symbolize the emotional surges of the sonnets themselves. Another device used by Shakespeare is that of condensing the rise and fall of human life into a few lines; here, in the second quatrain, he begins with nativity, goes on to maturity, and then closes with man's losing fight against time: time "that gave [life] doth now his gift confound [destroy]." (l. 8)