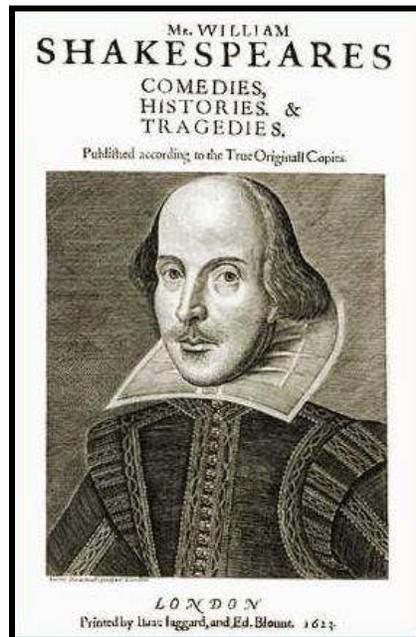


Poem #2

“Sonnet 116” by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.



This is one of Shakespeare's most famous love sonnets. The idea behind it is that love doesn't try to change people. If you really love someone, you love the person for who he/she is, and you don't try to make the person someone else. The poem also says that love should last forever and not just go away when the person isn't beautiful any more.

Taking it apart

This poem is a sonnet, so it has a strong rhyme scheme. That makes memorizing it easier. A sonnet has three sections of four lines (called a quatrain), and then a couplet (two rhyming lines) at the end. Each quatrain has an ABAB rhyme scheme, which means that the first and third lines rhyme with each other, and the second and fourth lines rhyme with each other. Remember that he had an English accent, so the rhyme may not seem as strong to us.

“Sonnet 116” by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove:

Impediments are things that get in the way. “Ped” means “foot,” so an impediment is something that makes your foot stumble.

To alter is to change.

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wandering bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Tempests are storms.

A bark is a boat.

To be something's star is to guide it like the North Star guides sailors.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come:

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

A sickle is a tool used to harvest grain by cutting it down. This is saying that even though beauty (rosy lips and cheeks) will fade with time, love is not at the mercy of time, but rather will last forever.

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

If I'm wrong about this, I never wrote anything worth anything.
This is saying that he is really sure he's right about this.

Memorizing it

Can you draw a picture for each section?

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Memorizing it

Can you tap out the beats to the poem? Tap your foot on the first beat, and then clap the second beat. The first quatrain is divided into beats for you. You should clap five times and tap five times in each line.

“Sonnet 116” by William Shakespeare

Let - me - not - to - the - mar- riage - of - true - minds
Ad- mit - im - ped - i - ments. - Love - is - not - love
Which - al - ters - when - it - al - ter - a - tion - finds,
Or - bends - with - the - re - mo - ver - to - re - move:

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
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