

THE INVENTION

(THE CENTER OF THE MONUMENT)

SONNETS 76-77

26 sonnets	----- (100 SONNETS) -----	26 sonnets
(1-----26)	27-----76 77-----126	(127-----152)
	<i>(50 sonnets)</i> <i>(50 sonnets)</i>	

Sonnet 76: "My Verse"

Sonnet 77: "Thy Book"

**THE INVENTION OF THE SONNETS
DAY FIFTY IN THE TOWER**

(Center of the Monument)

Sonnet 76

***And Keep Invention in a Noted Weed
That Every Word Doth Almost Tell My Name
29 March 1601***

Sonnets 76-77 are at the exact center of the 100-sonnet sequence (27-126), which in turn forms the center of the larger 152-sonnet structure. Here in the middle of the monument, Oxford reveals and describes his “invention,” or method of composing these private verses. It involves the strict limiting of his subject matter to “all one, ever the same” (Southampton, Elizabeth and himself) while “dressing old words new” around the family triangle, to create an appearance of variety. Sonnets 76-77 also anticipate the so-called “Rival Poet” series (78-86) in which Oxford records the sacrifice of his identity to the name “William Shakespeare.”

Sonnet 76

Translation

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods, and to compounds
strange?

Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?

O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument:
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:

For as the Sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling what is told.

Why is this womb so barren of new royal blood?
Why is it always the same without any change?
Why, with the succession coming, don't I use
New methods and stranger mixtures of words?

Why do I write always of you, Elizabeth and me,
And hide my method in the familiar garb of poetry,
So that every word conceals and reveals me,
Chronicling your birth and growth to now?

O know, royal son, I always write of you,
And you and your royal blood are always my topic:
So all my best is using new words for old ones,
Spending blood [in words] that I've already spent:

For as my royal son daily lives and dies,
So he always informs this verse with his blood.

THE INVENTION

Sonnet 76

Here is the key to the Special Language of the Sonnets, describing how their words revolve around the family triangle – *All One, Ever the Same* – or Southampton, Elizabeth and Oxford. The two most important of the special words are *Love*, representing royal blood, and *Time*, signifying the ever-dwindling life span and reign of the Queen.

The story of the Sonnets is the struggle of *love*, or royal blood, to survive the *time* leading to Elizabeth's death and the succession to her throne. By this language, we are able to determine the chronological framework of the diary. The *time*, or chronology, leads to the Queen's death on March 24, 1603, marked by Sonnet 105, and then to her funeral on April 28, 1603, marked by Sonnet 125, and finally to Oxford's farewell to his royal son in the envoy of Sonnet 126, the last entry in the central 100-sonnet sequence.

MY VERSE = These private verses, the Book of Sonnets, the subject herein; this is the most important verse, as it holds the key to Oxford's special language and design.

WHY WRITE I STILL ALL ONE, EVER THE SAME = My unvarying subject matter consists of *all one* (Southampton, whose motto is *One for All, All for One*); *Ever the Same* (Queen Elizabeth, whose motto is *Ever the Same*); and me, *E. Ver* or *Ever*, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. All my writing in these private verses is focused upon the three of us (although the two most important are Southampton and Elizabeth).

AND KEEP INVENTION IN A NOTED WEED = And I maintain my method (my "invention") by means of the familiar costume of conventional poetry.

EVERY WORD DOTH ALMOST TELL MY NAME = I do this so each and "every" word in these sonnets serves almost, but not quite, to reveal my identity.

SHOWING THEIR BIRTH AND WHERE THEY DID PROCEED = Every word here is also chronicling the life of my royal son, from his "birth" up to and including the record of your life in the tomb and womb of these sonnets, within which he continues to grow.

O KNOW, SWEET LOVE, I ALWAYS WRITE OF YOU = O know, my royal son, I am always writing about you in this chronicle of your life as a prince.

AND YOU AND LOVE ARE STILL MY ARGUMENT = And you and your *love* (royal blood) continue to be my topic.

SO ALL MY BEST IS DRESSING OLD WORDS NEW = Therefore, given that I restrict my topic to you, Elizabeth and me, the best I can do is use different words to express the same thoughts. For example, I consistently refer to the Queen (or her royal blood in you) as *Beauty* while also consistently representing her as *Fortune, Nature, Heaven, Mistress, Moon, Phoenix, Woman* and so on. In this way, *every word* revolves around my sole topic and spins outward to encompass all the lines of these verses. The words of this Special Language are akin to the letters of the DNA code on the ladder of the double helix.

THE SUN = my royal son: "Even so *my Sunne* one early morn did shine" – Sonnet 33, line 9

Sonnet 76

1 WHY IS MY VERSE SO BARREN OF NEW PRIDE?

The Book of Sonnets has now reached the halfway point in terms of the one hundred and fifty-two sonnets (not including the Bath epilogue); also this is the fiftieth verse since the Rebellion, so Oxford intends to write fifty more prison verses, with Sonnets 76-77 at their exact center; Oxford apparently will make adjustments to the “monument” later, to ensure this exact numerical arrangement; **MY VERSE** = The topic of this sonnet is *my verse*, i.e., all the verses of this diary of the Sonnets; and Oxford writes as a father attempting to give new birth to his royal son in these lines and to keep growing him until his royal claim to the throne is determined one way or the other; because of his disgrace and imprisonment, however, Southampton has virtually no prospect of becoming king, at least not by immediately succeeding Elizabeth; **BARREN** = as a womb is empty; “The conjunction of *verse* and *barren* anticipates the introduction in line 8 of the traditional idea of poems as poets’ children” – Booth

“But if the *first heir of my invention* prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so *barren* a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest.”

- Oxford’s first public dedication as “Shakespeare” to Southampton
Venus and Adonis, 1593

BARREN OF NEW PRIDE = lacking additional royal blood; lacking new support for my son’s royal claim

Alack, what *poverty* my Muse brings forth,
That, having such a scope to show her *pride* Sonnet 103, lines 1-2
(*Brings Forth* = gives birth to)

PRIDE = “Magnificent, splendid, or ostentatious adornment or ornamentation” – *OED*; recalling Southampton as “the world’s *fresh ornament*” of Sonnet 1; “Began to clothe his wit in *state and pride*” – *Lucrece*, 1809-1810; “O noble English, that could entertain with half their forces the full *pride* of France” – *Henry V*, 1.2.111-112; “For *time* hath set a blot upon my *pride*” – *Richard II*, 3.2.81; “The *pride* of kingly sway” – *Richard II*, 4.1.206; “Thy kingly doom and sentence of his *pride*” – *Richard II*, 5.6.23; “And Richard fall in *height of all his pride*” – *Richard III*, 5.3.177; “See also *proud* in 98.9 where it means ‘swelling,’ ‘pregnant’” – Booth, citing “Or from their *proud lap* pluck them where they grew” – Sonnet 98, line 8, referring to flowers, i.e., Henry Wriothesley as new flower of the Tudor Rose; “Made *proud by princes*, that advance their *pride*” – *Much Ado About Nothing*, 3.1.10

2 SO FAR FROM VARIATION OR QUICK CHANGE?

VARIATION = different subject matter, different method or technique; my topic never changes, only the words used to express it: “Fair, kind, and true, *varying to other words*” – Sonnet 105, line 10; **QUICK CHANGE** = sudden alteration; the only change is that of the words: “And *in this change* is my invention spent” – Sonnet 105, line 11; **QUICK** = “Living, endowed with life, in contrast to what is naturally inanimate” – *OED*, also citing “quick with child” said of a female in the stage of pregnancy when the motion of the fetus is felt, i.e., the quickening; apparently an inversion of an earlier phrase “with quick child” as in, “She was great with *quyk childe*,” circa 1450; “Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquetta that is *quick by him*” – *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 5.2.674-675; “O, ‘tis a parlous boy, bold, *quick*, ingenious, forward, capable; he is all the mother’s from top to toe” – *Richard III*, 3.1.154-156; “our *quick blood*” – *Henry V*, 3.5.21; “The King with mighty and *quick-raised power*” – *1 Henry IV*, 4.4.12; also burning or “quick” fire; and lively or “quick” speech “full of vigor or acute reasoning,” *OED*, citing *Art of English Poesie*, 1589: “An

inscription ... in few verses, pithie, *quicke* and sententious”; also related to the power of medicine to give life; “I have seen a medicine that’s able to breathe life into a stone, *quicken* a rock” – *All’s Well That Ends Well*, 2.1.71-73; also related to sexual desire or “heat” in the female who will conceive, carry and give birth to a child who will *proceed* or issue from the womb, as in “Showing their *birth*, and where they did *proceed*” – line 8 below

3 WHY WITH THE TIME DO I NOT GLANCE ASIDE

WITH THE TIME = According to the time left in Elizabeth’s life and reign; the chronological basis for this diary, which records “Love” or royal blood in Southampton in relation to “*Time*” or Elizabeth’s ever-dwindling life span; with “*Love*” or royal blood introduced as the main topic in line 10; the time itself is often noted similarly, as in “the tenth (etc.) year of Her Majesty’s reign”

England ne’er had a king *until his time* 1 *Henry VI*, 1.1.8

Where *wasteful time* debateth with decay
To change your day of youth to sullied night:
And *all in war with Time* for love of you Sonnet 15, lines 11-13

Time’s thievish progress to eternity Sonnet 77, line 8

When in *the Chronicle of wasted time* Sonnet 106, line 1

“In *the Queen’s time* lately deceased” – Oxford to King James, January 30, 1604

GLANCE ASIDE = turn away; look elsewhere

4 TO NEW FOUND METHODS, AND TO COMPOUNDS STRANGE?

METHODS = technique of writing these verses; an announcement that this sonnet will explain the method or “invention” of writing the Sonnets; Poetry was not an art “until by studious persons fashioned and reduced into a method of rules and precepts” – *Art of English Poesie*, 1589, cited by *OED*; **COMPOUNDS** = mixtures of chemicals used in alchemy, here mixtures of words; a glance at “compound words” such as verbs carrying a prefix; “And that *your love taught it this alchemy*” – Sonnet 114, line 4; also medical: “Every kynde of disease hath his owne Methode” – 1541, cited by *OED*; a “compound” or compound drug, mixing two or more elements as a remedy; suggesting that Oxford’s method of writing is a kind of medicine for the wounds he and his son have suffered; “Reason, in itself confounded/ Saw division grow together,/ To themselves yet neither either,/ Simples were so well *compounded*” – *Phoenix and Turtle*, 1601, 41-44

5 WHY WRITE I STILL ALL ONE, EVER THE SAME,

STILL = constantly; always; eternally; **WHY WRITE I STILL** = a rhetorical question, stating that in fact I write always and consistently about **ALL ONE, EVER THE SAME**, i.e., the three family members (Southampton, Elizabeth, Oxford), around whom all the words of the Sonnets revolve, forming a “Family Triangle of Words” expanding outward to include all the words of the entire diary of Southampton’s life in relation to that of his mother the Queen and the coming date with succession to the throne; I write only about these three members of the royal family triangle, which is further compressed into the *one* royal son and heir to the “seat” or throne:

Resembling *sire, and child, and happy mother*,
Who *all in one, one* pleasing note do sing Sonnet 8, lines 11-12

Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords...
Which *three*, till now, never kept seat in *one* Sonnet 105, lines 12, 14

Of *him, myself, and thee*, I am forsaken,
A torment *thrice threefold* to be crossed Sonnet 133, lines 7-8

STILL = constantly, always; repeated in lines 10 and 14, with “always” in line 9; **ALL ONE** = “only one way” – Booth; all about “one” thing

6 AND KEEP INVENTION IN A NOTED WEED,

And I do not dress up my special language in any new costume, but, rather, I keep it by means of (and hide it within) the familiar costume of conventional love poems; **KEEP** = hold, retain, guard, occupy, inhabit, remain in, maintain, preserve, retain; echoing Southampton’s imprisonment in the sense of being kept in prison, as in “Well have you argued, sir, and, for your pains, of capital treason we arrest you here. My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge to *keep* him safely till his day of trial” – *Richard II*, 4.1.150-154; echoing the Keeper of the Tower, who has the care of a prisoner, i.e., a gaoler; **INVENTION** = special language and design created uniquely for the Sonnets; “literary creation” – Booth; “something new found out or devised ... imagination, imaginative faculty as well as poetic fiction ... activity of the mind generally ... thought, idea, *device* ... skill employed in *contriving any thing to meet a difficulty*” – Schmidt; the latter definition aptly describing Oxford’s need to create his “invention” for the Sonnets in order to avoid being charged with treason for putting forth a claim to the throne, i.e., to enable him to argue that, after all, the lines of these verses are merely poetry without and political (much less unlawful) content; “used of thoughts couched in writing” – Schmidt; as in letters of correspondence, i.e., “I say she never did *invent this letter*; this is a man’s *invention*, and his hand” – *As You Like It*, 4.3.28-29

Fair, kind, and true, *varying to other words*,
And in *this change is my invention* spent Sonnet 105, lines 10-11

How can my Muse want subject to *invent*
Whilst thou dost breathe, that pour’st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse...
For who’s so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give *invention* light? Sonnet 38, lines 1-4, 7-8

Which, *laboring for invention, bear amiss*
The second burden of a former child! Sonnet 59, lines 3-4

O blame me not if I no more can write!
Look in your glass, and there appears a face
That overgoes *my blunt invention* quite,
Dulling my lines, and doing me disgrace. Sonnet 103, lines

“The matter, after it had received many crosses, many *inventions* of delay” – Oxford to Robert Cecil, January 1602; “But if *the first heir of my invention* prove deformed” – dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton, 1593, referring to the invented name “William Shakespeare” and now, by extension, to his method of writing privately to Southampton; creating a means of both concealing and revealing at the same time, the way an ambassador memorizes his secret message before delivering it orally: “To thee I send this written ambassage” – Sonnet 26, line 3; **A NOTED WEED** = A familiar costume of conventional Elizabethan poetry; a disguise; a covering or concealment; a costume that includes the sexual allusions that spring from the royal/dynasty subject matter involving sexual attraction, sexuality, sexual intercourse, sperm and blood, conception, pregnancy, childbirth and blood lineage; **NOTED** = known; echoing “note-book” in which memorandums are written; also echoing “note-worthy”; marked with musical characters (these verses being “my songs and praises” of Sonnet 105, line 3 as well as “hymns” (Sonnet 29, line 12) and “prayers” (Sonnet 108, line 5); set down, committed to memory; observed, attended to; “An amber-coloured raven was *well noted*” – *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 4.3.85; “I told you, I, he was a frantic fool, hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior. And to be *noted* for a merry man” – *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.2.12-14; “In this the antique and *well-noted* face of plain old form is much disfigured” – *King John*, 4.2.21-22; “But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips as are

companions *noted* and most *known* to youth and liberty” – *Hamlet*, 2.1.22-24; **WEED** = costume, garment, disguise; livery, dressing, outward appearance; “Thy youth’s proud livery, so gazed on now,/ Will be a tottered *weed*” – Sonnet 2, lines 3-4; “And there the snake throws her enameled skin, *weed* wide enough to wrap a fairy in” – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 2.1.255-256; echoing Southampton as the Tudor Rose who has become a weed among “infection” or potential traitors in the Tower: “But if that flower with base infection meet,/ The basest *weed* outbraves his dignity./ For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;/ Lilies that fester smell far worse than *weeds*” – Sonnet 94, lines 11-14

7 THAT EVERY WORD DOTH ALMOST TELL MY NAME,

THAT = so that; similar to “*That* thereby beauty’s *Rose* might never die” – Sonnet 1, line 2; **EVERY** = **EVER** = E. Ver, Edward de Vere; **EVERY WORD** = the *word* “EVERY” doth *almost* tell my name; literally each and *every word* of these verses is being used to almost, but not quite, reveal Edward de Vere’s name and identity, as well as to show the growth of Southampton and his royal blood along the timeline of the diary as Elizabeth’s own life rapidly dwindles on the way to her death and the date with succession.

“And *the Word* was made *flesh*” – *John*, 1.14, *Geneva Bible*, 1560

“Man shall not live by bread only, but by *every word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” – *Gospel of Mathew*, 4.4

EVERY WORD of the Sonnets stems from, and revolves around, the family triangle represented by *All One, Ever the Same*; the magical quality of the *invention* is created by the restriction of subject matter combined with the diversity of the words revolving around that consistent topic; **ALMOST TELL MY NAME** = (Q has ‘fel’ for *tell*); almost, or indirectly, reveals my identity; in an early poem, written before 1576, Oxford demonstrated another way in which *every word* could almost tell his name:

When thus the echo answered her to *every word* she spake:
Oh heavens! Who was the first that bred in me this *fever*? *Vere*
Who was the first that gave the wound whose fear I wear for *ever*? *Vere*
What tyrant, Cupid, to my harm usurps thy golden *quiver*? *Vere*
What sight first caught this heart and can from bondage it *deliver*? *Vere*

(“The Earle of Oxforde”; *Fuller’s Worthies’ Library*, 1872, Vol. 1V)

8 SHOWING THEIR BIRTH, AND WHERE THEY DID PROCEED?

SHOWING THEIR BIRTH: revealing the birth of the words and of Southampton; “The conceit by which the poet speaks of himself and his poem as mother and child” – Booth

What makes him *show* besides *his birth*, such *pride* and such *untruth*? Youth.
“The Earle of Oxforde” (same verse noted in line 7)

SHOWING = presenting to the view; displaying; giving the appearance of; letting be seen, i.e., not concealing; revealing, communicating, instructing; proving, demonstrating; offering or committing; pointing the way to, guiding; “And all the more it seeks to hide itself, the bigger bulk it *shows*” – *The Tempest*, 3.1.80-81; **THEIR BIRTH** = the birth of the words is equated with the birth of Southampton, since the words (and numbers) of the Sonnets are woven together to form a womb within which to recreate his life and blood; “O vouchsafe me but this loving thought:/ ‘Had my friend’s Muse grown with this growing age,/ A *dearer birth* than *this* his love had brought/ To march in ranks of better equipage” – Sonnet 32, lines 9-12; “Even so *my Sunne one early morn did shine*” – Sonnet 33, line 9

As a decrepit *father* takes delight
To see his active *child* do deeds of youth,

So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.
For whether beauty, *birth*, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store.

Sonnet 37, lines 1-8

(NOTE: the word "their" in "their birth" refers to the words, but Oxford is telling his son that the diary is recording "thy" birth; and in fact editors routinely emend "their" to "thy" elsewhere in the collection, as in these three examples: Q = "Excusing *their* sins more than their sins are" – Sonnet 35, line 8, usually emended to "*thy* sins"; Q = "When in dead night *their* fair imperfect shade," usually emended to "*thy* imperfect shade"; and Q = "Of *their* fair health, recounting it to me" – Sonnet 45, line 12, usually emended to "*thy* fair health"; leaving open the possibility that this line can be emended to "Showing *thy* birth, and where *thou* didst proceed"); "*Nativity*, once in the main of light,/ *Crawls to maturity*, wherewith being *crowned*" – Sonnet 60, lines 5-6; "Commit to these waste blanks (the Sonnets), and thou shalt find/ Those *children nursed, delivered* from thy brain" – Sonnet 77, lines 10-11; "Yet be most *proud* of *that which I compile* (the Sonnets),/ Whose influence is thine, and *born of thee*" – Sonnet 78, lines 9-10; "Making *their tomb the womb* wherein they grew" – Sonnet 86, line 4; "Find the first conceit of love there *bred* (begotten, procreated)" – Sonnet 108, line 13; "You are so strongly in my purpose *bred*" – Sonnet 112, line 13; "If *my dear love* were but the *child of state*,/ It might for *fortune's bastard* be unfathered" – Sonnet 124, lines 1-2; **WHERE THEY DID PROCEED** = Where "every word" has issued or come forth in this diary up to now; where the life of Henry Wriothesley has proceeded to this entry, which corresponds with real time; **PROCEED** = issue or come forth, as from the womb

"I believe in the Holy Ghost ... who *proceedeth* from the Father and the Son"
– Communion Service, Nicene Creed

"Man shall not live by bread only, but by *every word* that *proceedeth* out of the mouth of God"
– *Gospel of Mathew*, 4.4

"Look how *the father's face lives in his issue*"
– Ben Jonson on Shakespeare in the First Folio of plays, 1623

"Which I will esteem and acknowledge only to *proceed* from you"
– Oxford to Robert Cecil, December 4, 1601

PROCEED = "Continue, go on, carry on ... behave, pursue a course, conduct oneself ... advance through, make progress ... *result, arise, come from*" – Crystal & Crystal; **PROCEEDINGS** = "*line of descent*" – Crystal & Crystal

Hadst thou like us from our first swath *proceeded*
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords... *Timon of Athens*, 4.3.255-256

So, if the *issue* of the elder son
Succeed before the younger, I am King.
What plain *proceedings* is more plain than this?
Henry doth claim the crown...
And in this private plot be we the first
That shall salute our sovereign
With *honour of his birthright to the crown*. *2 Henry VI*, 2.2.50-61

But he hath forc'd us to compel this offer,
And it *proceeds from policy, not love*. *2 Henry IV*, 4.1.147-148

“When therefore he writes with precise and well-chosen words, with skillfully constructed and crystal-clear sentences, and with every art of dignified rhetoric, it cannot be but that some noble quality should be felt to *proceed* from his work” – Oxford’s Letter to the Reader of *The Courtier*, 1572; “*Love is a Babe*: then might I not say so./ *To give full growth* to that which *still doth grow*” – Sonnet 115, lines 13-14; “*O Thou my lovely Boy.../ Who hast by waning grown*” – Sonnet 126, lines 1, 3

9 O KNOW, SWEET LOVE, I ALWAYS WRITE OF YOU,

O = Oxford; **KNOW** = be certain; possibly in the sense of receiving these instructions to a prince from his father, i.e., be informed, or know this to be the truth; recognize, perceive, learn; echoing the next verse: “And of this book this *learning* mayst thou taste/ ... These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,/ Shall profit thee, and much enrich thy book” – Sonnet 77, lines 4, 13-14; **SWEET** = royal; **LOVE** = royal son of royal blood; **O KNOW, SWEET LOVE** = oh, know this, my royal son; “*O my son*” – the King to Prince Hal in *2 Henry IV*, 4.5.177; “*Sweet Prince*” – *Richard III*, 3.1.7; “*That sweet aspect of princes*” – *Henry VIII*, 3.2.369; “*Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel*” – Sonnet 1, line 8; “*And your sweet semblance* to some other give” – Sonnet 13, line 4; “*What’s new to speak, what now to register./ That may express my love, or thy dear merit?/ Nothing, sweet boy, but yet like prayers divine./ I must each day say o’er the very same./ Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine./ Even was when first I hallowed by thy fair name*” – Sonnet 108, lines 3-8; “*The living record of your memory*” – Sonnet 55, line 8; “*Your monument shall be my gentle verse*” – Sonnet 81, line 9; **I ALWAYS WRITE OF YOU** = You are the supreme, constant topic of my private verses of the Sonnets; “*Since all alike my songs and praises be/ To one, of one, still such, and ever so*” – Sonnet 105, lines 3-4; *always* is echoed in the next line by *still*

10 AND YOU AND LOVE ARE STILL MY ARGUMENT:

YOU AND LOVE = You (your person, your life) and your royal blood; “*And all in war with Time for love of you./ As he takes from you, I engraft you new*” – Sonnet 15, line 13; “*Love is not love/ Which alters when it alteration finds/ Or bends with the remover to remove*” – Sonnet 116, lines 2-4, declaring that royal blood does not change, even amid the “alteration” of monarchs on the throne (i.e., amid the succession of James); “*O thou my lovely Boy, who in thy power/ Doth hold time’s fickle glass, his sickle hour*” – Sonnet 126, lines 1-2

Thy love is better than high birth to me

Sonnet 91, line 9

STILL = always, eternally; repeated from “*Why write I still all one, ever the same*” (line 5 above) and repeated again in “*So is my love still telling what is told*” (line 14 below); “*Since all alike my songs and praises be/ To one, of one, still such, and ever so./ Kind is my love today, tomorrow kind./ Still constant in a wondrous excellence*” – Sonnet 105, lines 3-6; **MY ARGUMENT** = My topic in the Sonnets, which is “you and love” or you and your royal blood; the “argument” of a poem or play (or piece of literary work such as this diary), as in the *Argument* printed as preface to *The Rape of Lucrece*, dedicated in 1594 to Southampton

O my son,

God put it (i.e., the crown) in thy mind to take it hence,

That thou mightst win the more thy father’s love...

For *all my reign hath been but as a scene*

Acting that argument

2 Henry IV, 4.5.177-179, 197-198

Belike this show imports the *argument* of the play...

Have you heard the *argument*? Is there no offence in’t? *Hamlet*, 3.2.141, 234

In Sonnet 105, Oxford again shows how his *invention* works by “*dressing old words new*” (line 11 below), i.e., how his *argument* itself may be stated using different words:

Fair, kind, and true, is all *my argument*

Fair, kind, and true, *varying to other words*,
 And in this change is my *invention* spent,
 Three themes in one, which *wondrous scope affords* Sonnet 105, line 9

The result is that his topic of *you and love* is the same as *fair, kind, and true*, the latter words also referring to Southampton and his royal blood; my son is *fair* or royal; he is *kind* or the natural son of the Queen, having inherited her Tudor blood; and he is *true* because of his true rights to the throne and in relation to me, Oxford, *Nothing Truer than Truth*.

How can my Muse want subject to *invent*
 Whilst thou dost breathe, that pour'st into *my verse*
 Thine own sweet **argument** Sonnet 38, lines 1-3

I grant, sweet love, thy lovely **argument**
 Deserves the travail of a worthier pen Sonnet 79, lines 5-6

Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem
 In gentle numbers time so idly spent;
 Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem
 And gives thy pen both skill and **argument**. Sonnet 100, lines 5-8

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth (begets),
 That, having such a *scope* to show her *pride*,
 The **argument** all bare is of more worth
 Than when it hath my added praise beside. Sonnet 103, lines 1-3

11 SO ALL MY BEST IS DRESSING OLD WORDS NEW,

ALL = Southampton, *One for All, All for One*; **ALL MY BEST** = all the best that I can do, to create an appearance of variety in these sonnets ; **DRESSING OLD WORDS NEW** = The central method of the *invention* or special language of the Sonnets; replacing old words with new ones, while maintaining consistent meanings; such as *Beauty* for the Queen but also *Heaven, Nature, Fortune, Dian, Mistress, Phoenix, Moon*, etc; “putting new clothes on old words” or “dressing old words up as new ones” – Booth; “Fair, kind, and true, *varying to other words*,/ *And in this change is my invention spent*,/ *Three themes in one*, which *wondrous scope affords*” – Sonnet 105, lines 10-12

12 SPENDING AGAIN WHAT IS ALREADY SPENT:

SPENDING = exhausting, depleting; spending his invention and spending his son’s royal blood to fill up these lines; “We shall not *spend* a large expense of time” – *Macbeth*, 5.9. 26; **ALREADY** = echoing “all” for Southampton; **ALREADY SPENT** = words and time and blood already used up, in this diary; exhausted, as in “And in this change is my *invention spent*” of Sonnet 105, line 11; “To royalize his blood, I *spent* mine own” – *Richard III*, 1.3.125

13 FOR AS THE SUN IS DAILY NEW AND OLD,

THE SUN = The royal son, i.e., Southampton, my royal son; “Even so *my Sunne* one early morn did shine/ With all triumphant splendor on my brow/ ... *Suns of the world* (princes of England) may stain, when *heaven’s sun* (Elizabeth’s son) staineth” – Sonnet 33, lines 9-10, 13-14; **DAILY** = as these verses have been written/compiled *day-by-day* since the Rebellion; the rising and setting of the sun or royal son, setting the pace for the entries of this diary; **NEW AND OLD** = (reflecting “dressing *old* words *new*” in line 11 above, i.e., the words of the sonnets rise and fall in synchronization with “the Sun” or with my royal son); new with royal hope and genuine Tudor blood (recorded in this monument to preserve him) and yet older with the onrush of time, i.e., Elizabeth’s mortal decay, leading to succession; “In the *old* age black (our son in disgrace) was not counted fair,/ Or if it were it bore not beauty’s name” – Sonnet 127, lines 1-2

14 SO IS MY LOVE STILL TELLING WHAT IS TOLD.

MY LOVE = my royal son; “the simile invites the reader momentarily to take *my love* as ‘my beloved’ – ‘my sunlike beloved’” – Booth; **STILL** = “eternally, unfailingly” – Booth; **TELLING** = narrating, writing, informing; Southampton is informing these verses or “telling” their story with his identity and blood as I record his life in this diary; therefore, my royal son is “*the onlie begetter of these ensuing sonnets*” as the dedication of 1609 will state; echoing “That every word doth *almost tell* my name” – line 7 above; to “tell” is also to count or number, as in counting these “numbers” or sonnets (“And in fresh *numbers number* all your graces” – Sonnet 17, line 6); “the measure then of *one* is easily *told*” – *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, 5.2.190; **TELLING WHAT IS TOLD** = my royal son is speaking for himself, through me, in these verses; in effect, we have changed places; the book is written with my son’s “love” or royal blood; in the next verse, Oxford dedicates this diary of the Sonnets to Southampton as “thy book” – Sonnet 77, line 14

May I requite *his birth* with faith? Then faithful will I die? Ay.
And I, that knew *this lady* well,
Said, Lord how great a miracle,
To her how Echo *told* the *truth*,
As *true* as Phoebus’ oracle

(The Earl of Oxford; written by 1576; *His Birth* = the birth of his royal son in 1574; *This Lady* = Queen Elizabeth, the sovereign lady; *Truth* = Oxford, the buried truth of their son)

O God, Horatio, what a *wounded name*,
Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me.
If thou didst *ever* hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To *tell* my story

Hamlet, 5.2.351-356