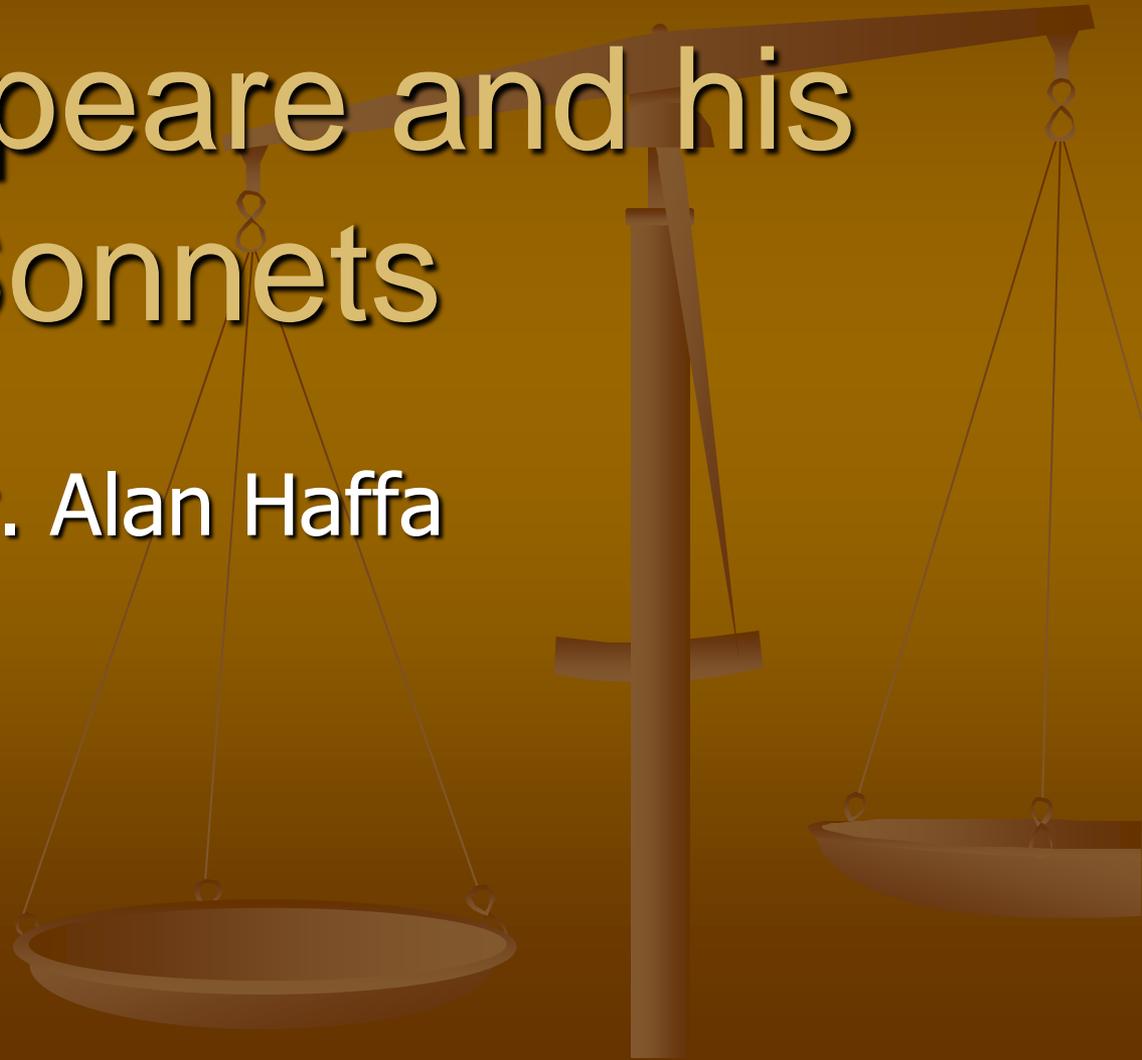


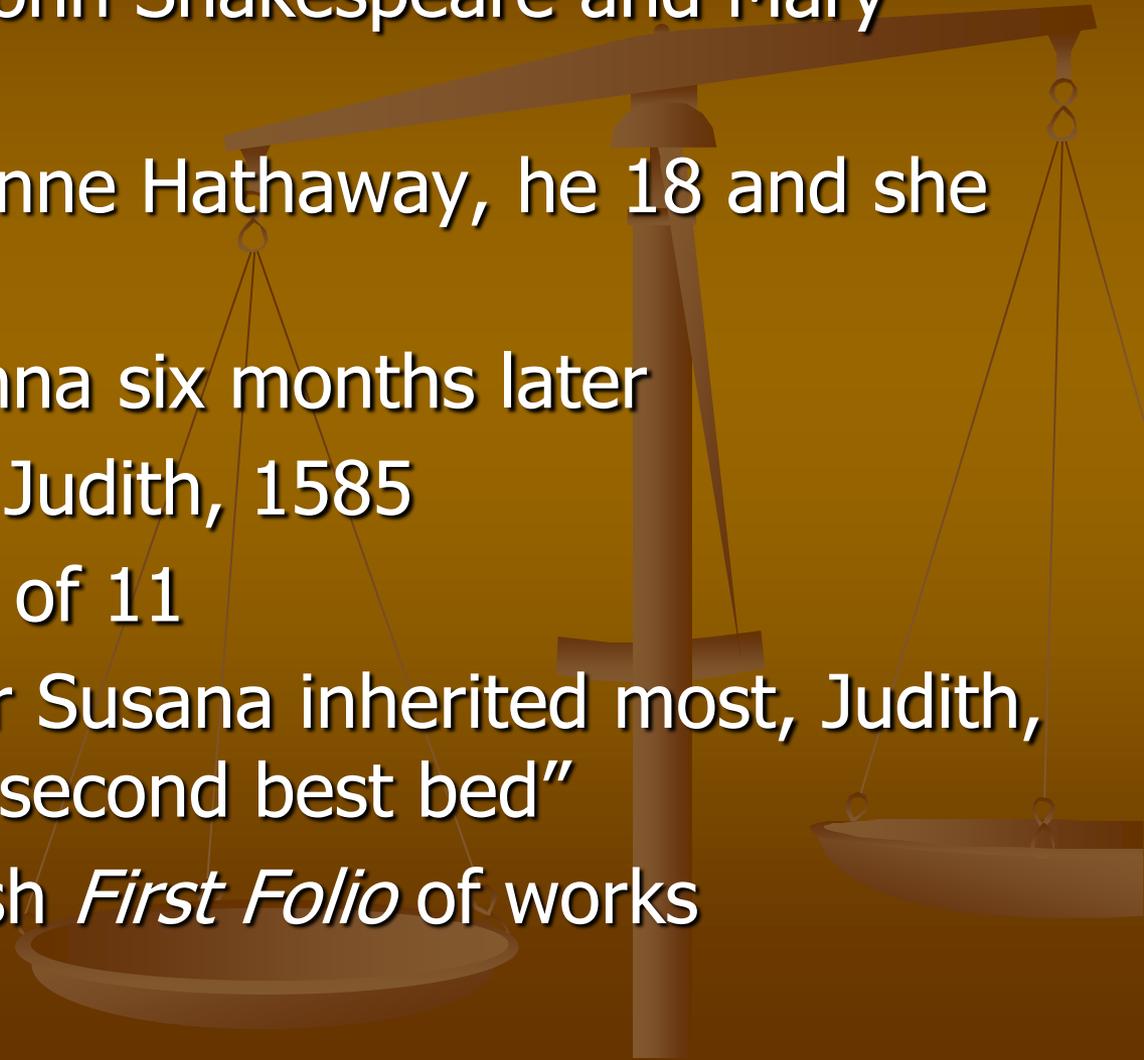
# Shakespeare and his Sonnets

Dr. Alan Haffa



# William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- Born third child to John Shakespeare and Mary Arden
- 1582, Marriage to Anne Hathaway, he 18 and she 26 at the time
- 1583: birth of Susanna six months later
- Twins, Hamnet and Judith, 1585
- Hamnet died at age of 11
- Will, 1611: daughter Susana inherited most, Judith, \$300, and wife his "second best bed"
- 1623: Friends publish *First Folio* of works



# Dedication to 1609 Publication

- Unauthorized publication by printer, Thomas Thorpe
- Who is Mr. W.H.?
- William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke
- Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton

TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF.  
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.  
M<sup>r</sup>. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.  
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.  
PROMISED.

BY.  
OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET.  
WISHETH.  
THE. WELL-WISHING.  
ADVENTVRER. IN.  
SETTING.  
FORTH.

T. T.

# William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (1580-1630)

- Esteemed and loved by many in Elizabethan court
- The First Folio Edition dedicated to him in 1623.
- In 1597 his parents were engaged in negotiations to marry him.
- Was Shakespeare supporting his parents with the 17 sonnets advocating marriage and children?



# Mary Fitton: The Dark Lady?

- Maid of Honor to Queen Elizabeth
- William Herbert had a relationship with her and she became pregnant
- Both were exiled from court when he refused to marry
- He was sent to prison for a short spell but was released



# Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southhampton (1573-1624)



- Shakespeare dedicated two narrative poems to him
- Other writers dedicated works to him: Thomas Nashe
- Involved in several court duels and brawls
- Married in 1598 and had children
- Connected with theatre
- Associated with coup attempts

# Dedication to Rape of Lucrece

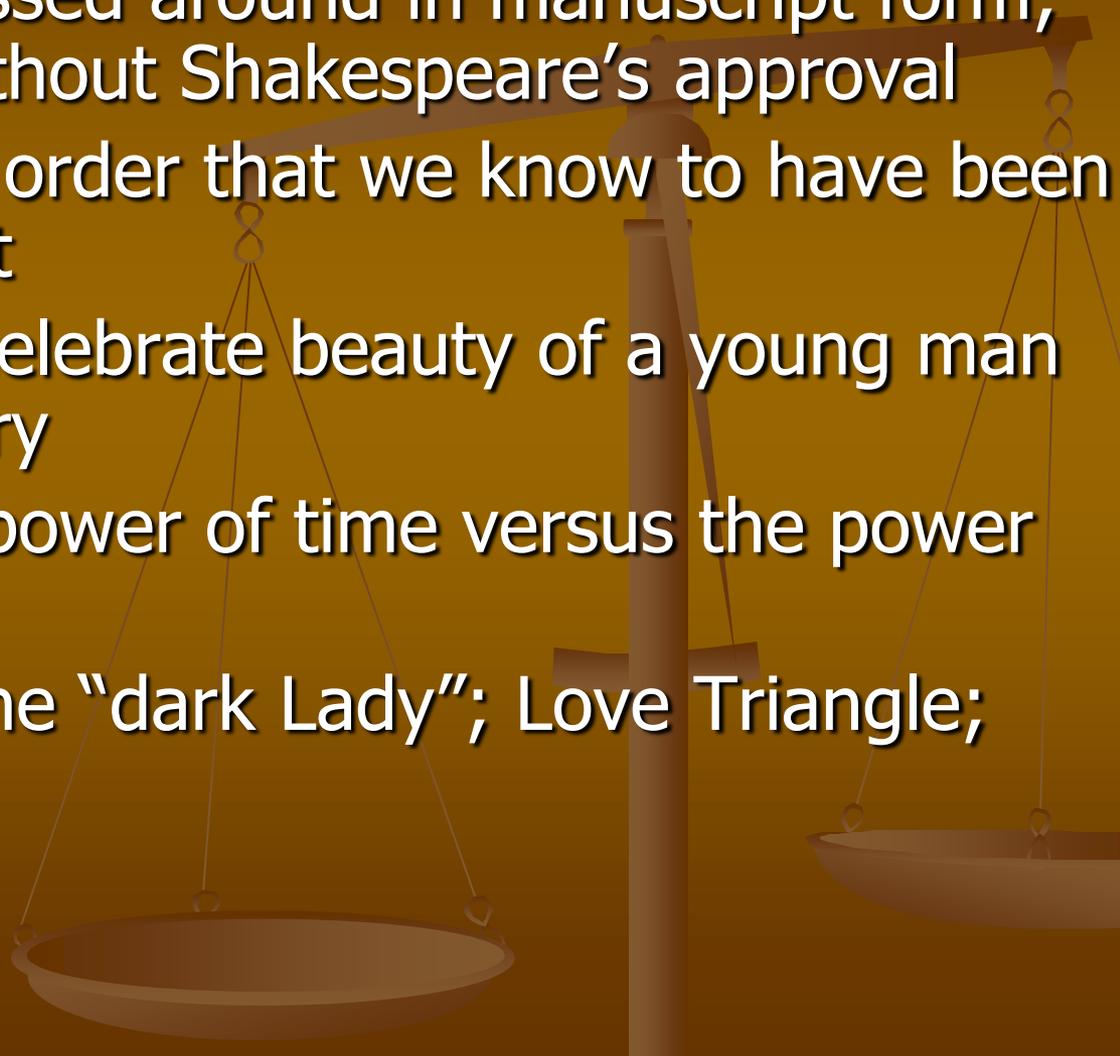
- THE love I dedicate to your lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

- Your lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

# Sonnets

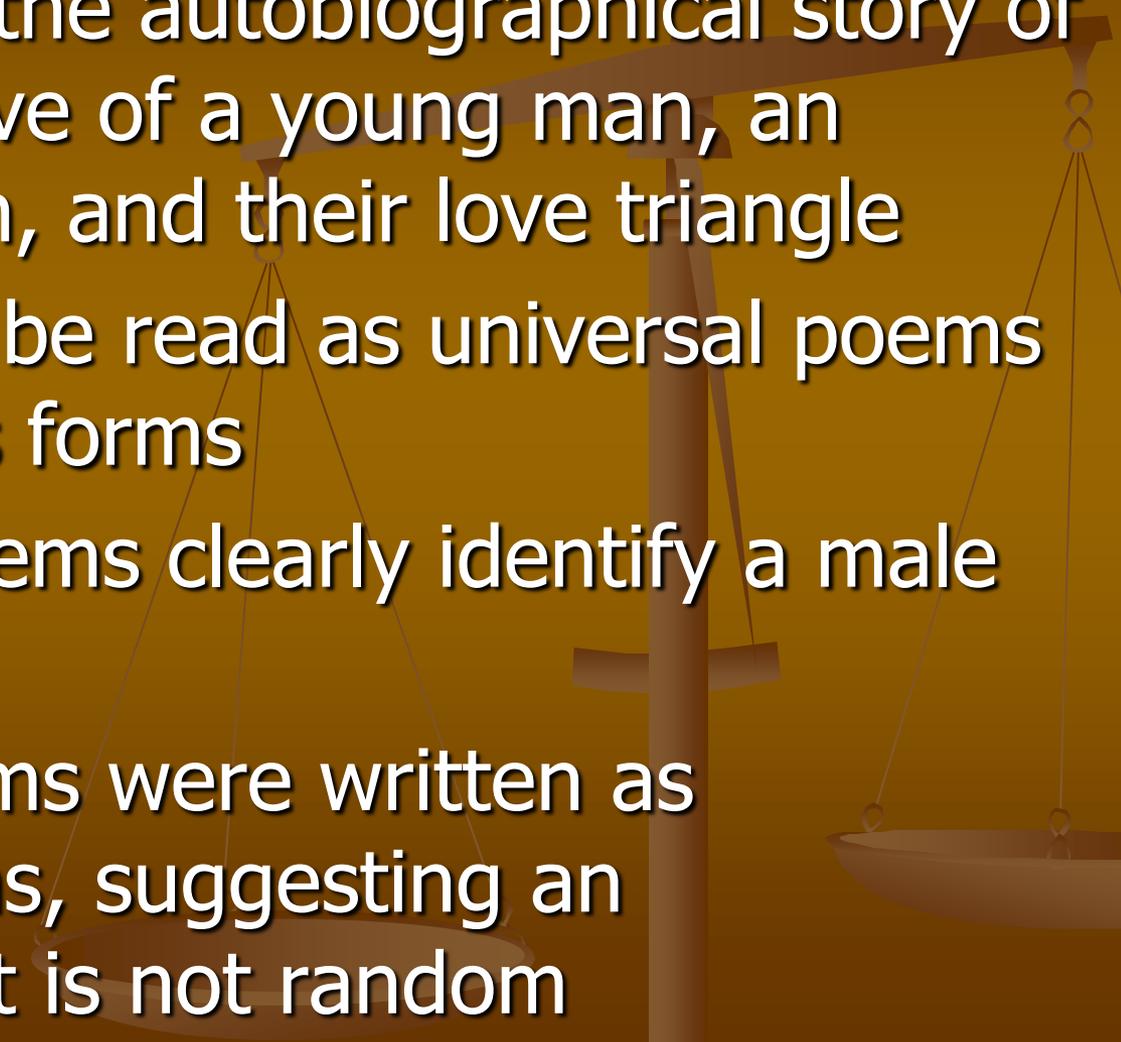
- Written in 1590s; passed around in manuscript form; published in 1609 without Shakespeare's approval
- Not published in any order that we know to have been approved by the poet
- 1-17: Introductory; celebrate beauty of a young man and urge him to marry
- 18-126: Destructive power of time versus the power of Love and Poetry
- 126-147: celebrate the "dark Lady"; Love Triangle;



# Sonnet Form

- English sonnet or Shakespearean: Three quatrains, often with three separate metaphors; closing couplet; **abab cdcd efef gg**
- Italian Renaissance sonnet: octet plus sestet; **a b b a a b b a**; final six can be a variety of rhyme schemes; **No closing couplet**
- Volta: turning point
- England: Thomas Wyatt; Sir Philip Sidney
- Spenserian Sonnet: **a b a b b c b c c d c d e e**; Interlocking rhyme scheme between quatrains

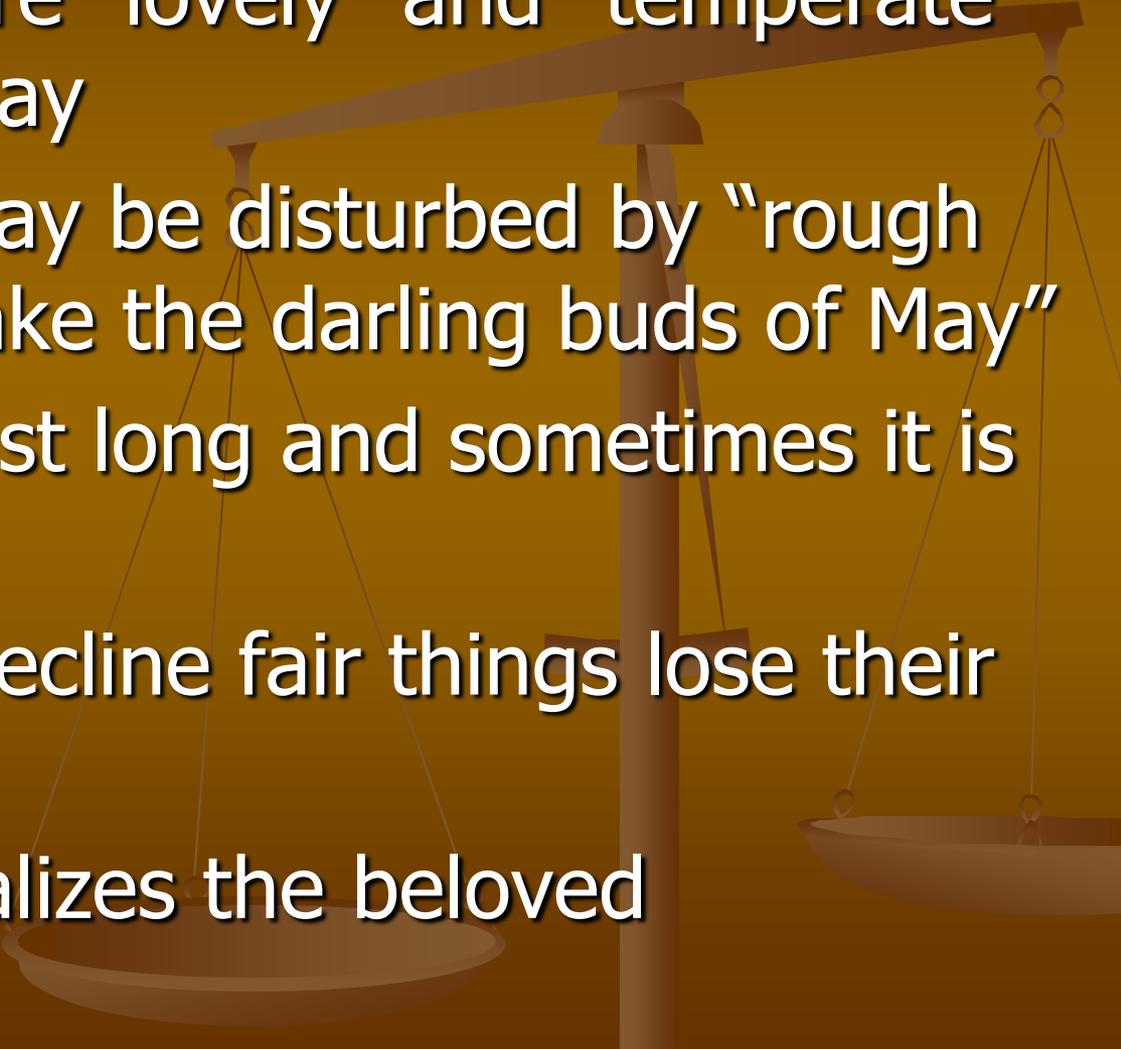
# Theories

- The sonnets are the autobiographical story of Shakespeare's love of a young man, an unfaithful woman, and their love triangle
  - The sonnets can be read as universal poems of love in various forms
  - 25 of the 154 poems clearly identify a male object
  - Many of the poems were written as companion poems, suggesting an arrangement that is not random
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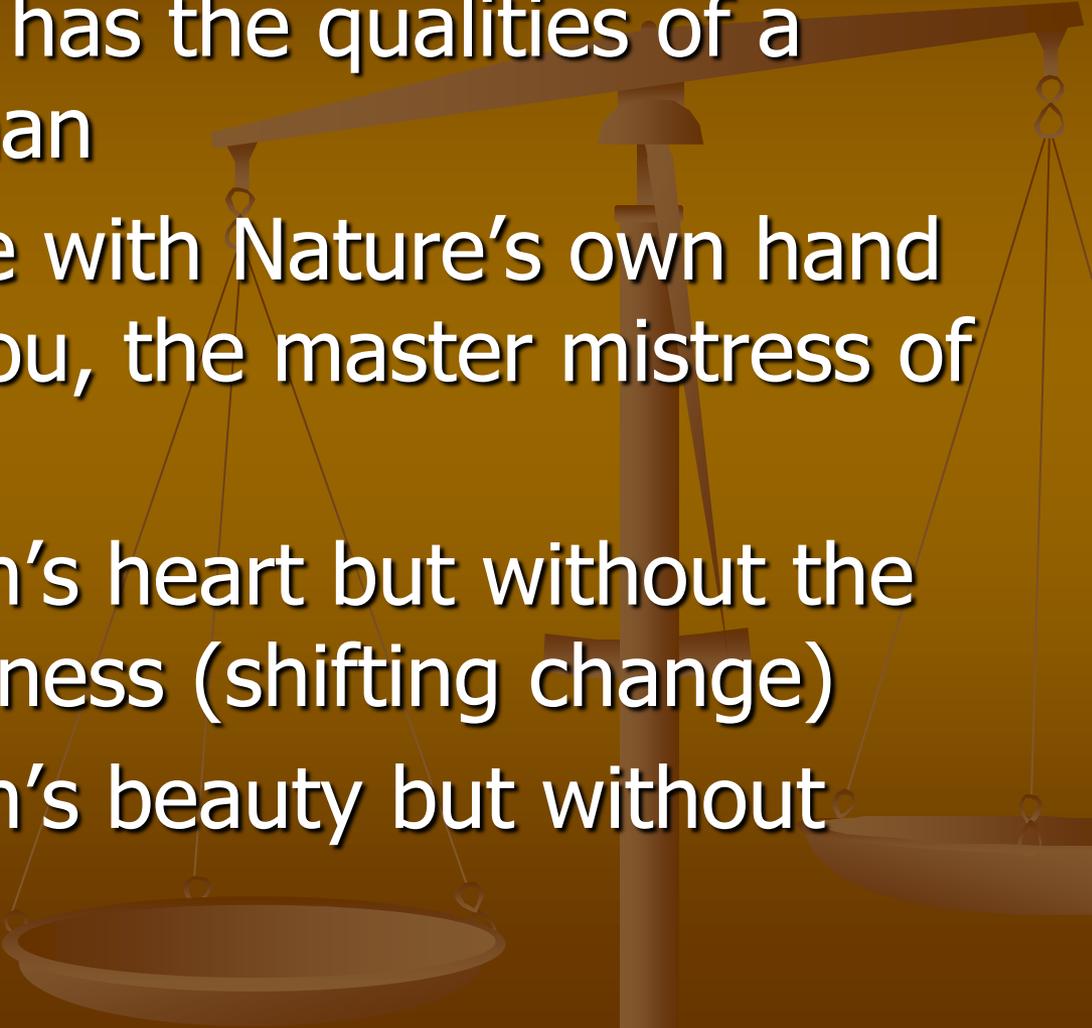
# Sonnet 1: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/1.html>

- 1) Generation and reproduction by the "fairest creatures" is desired so that beauty might never die (the riper should by time decrease)
- 2) As the beauty declines his heir might reflect his beauty (bear his memory)
- 3) You are too narcissistic and feed thy own flame while making a famine for others (making a famine where abundance lies)
- 4) You, a herald of spring, 'bury your bud' and waste it
- 5) Either pity the world and have children or be a glutton by eating what you owe the world, namely, children

# Sonnet 18: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/18.html>

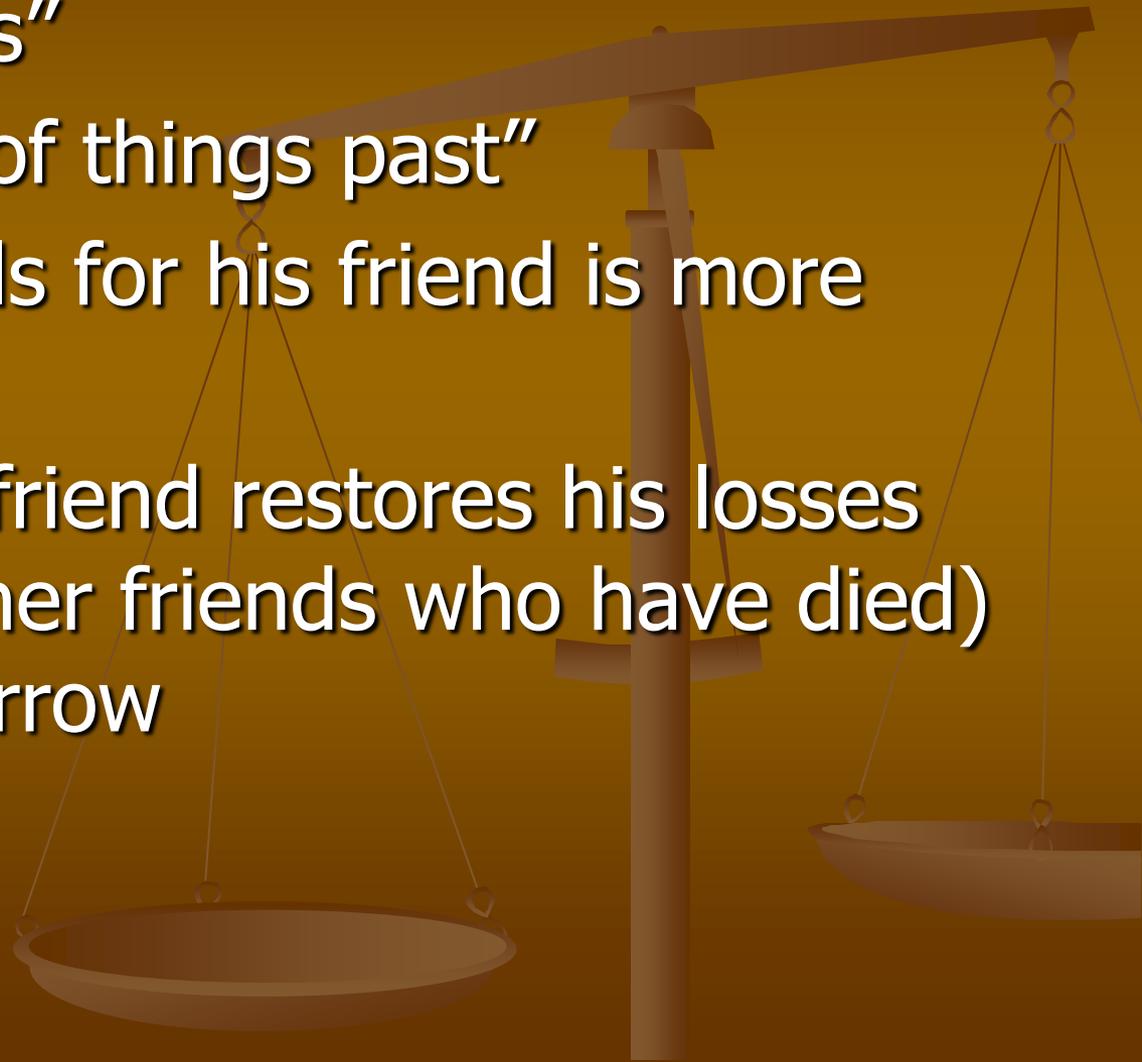
- The beloved is more “lovely” and “temperate” than a summer’s day
  - A summer’s day may be disturbed by “rough winds”, which “shake the darling buds of May”
  - Summer doesn’t last long and sometimes it is too hot
  - Things in Nature decline fair things lose their fairness
  - The poem immortalizes the beloved
- 

# Sonnet 20: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/20.html>

- The Young Man has the qualities of a woman and a man
  - "A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted/Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;"
  - He has a woman's heart but without the alleged faithlessness (shifting change)
  - He has a woman's beauty but without their faults
- 

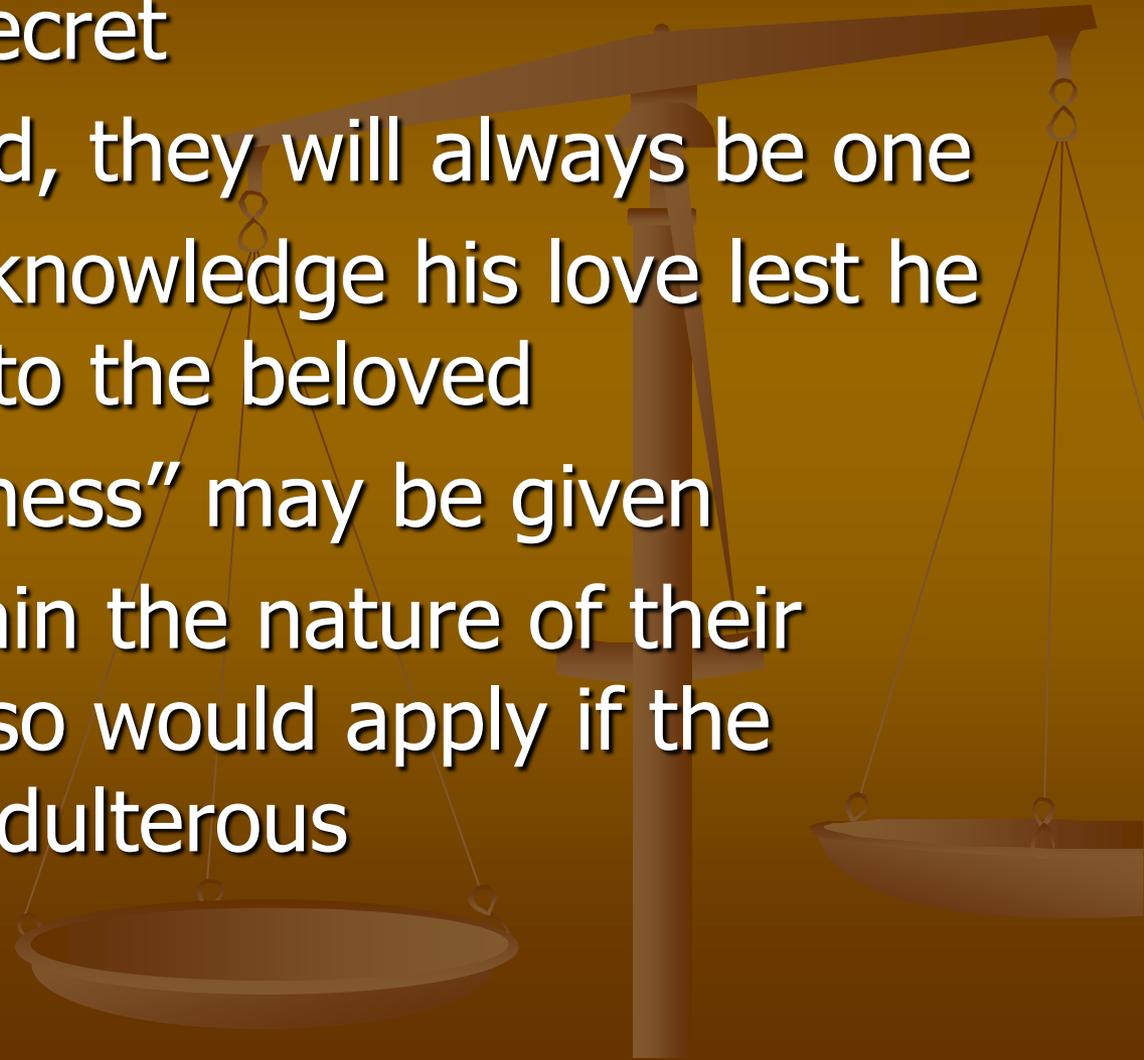
# Sonnet 30: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/30.html>

- Alliteration on "s"
- "remembrance of things past"
- The love he feels for his friend is more than physical
- Thinking of his friend restores his losses (thoughts of other friends who have died) and ends his sorrow



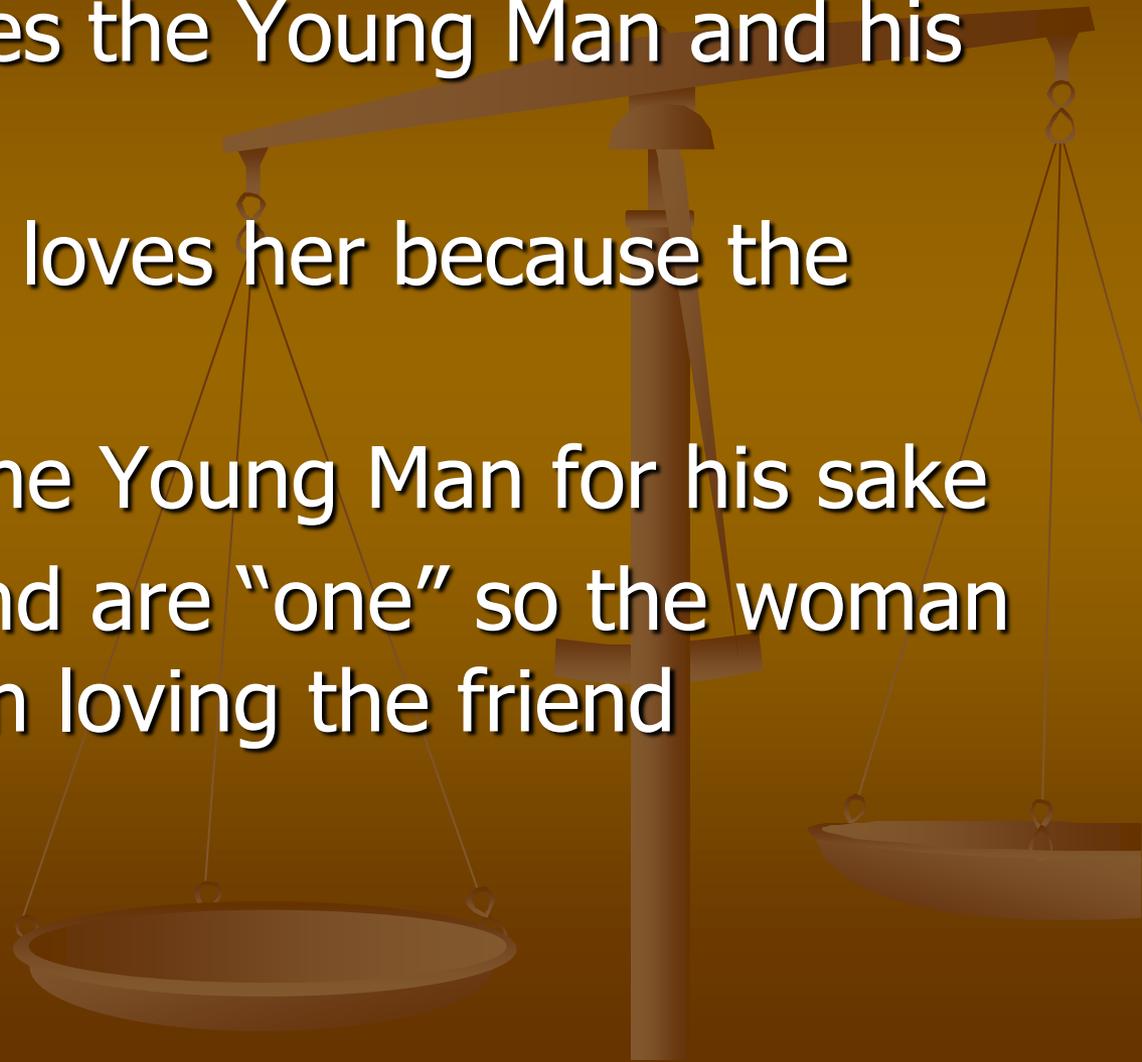
# Sonnet 36: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/36.html>

- Love must be secret
- Although divided, they will always be one
- He must not acknowledge his love lest he cause “shame” to the beloved
- No “public kindness” may be given
- This could explain the nature of their relationship—also would apply if the relationship is adulterous



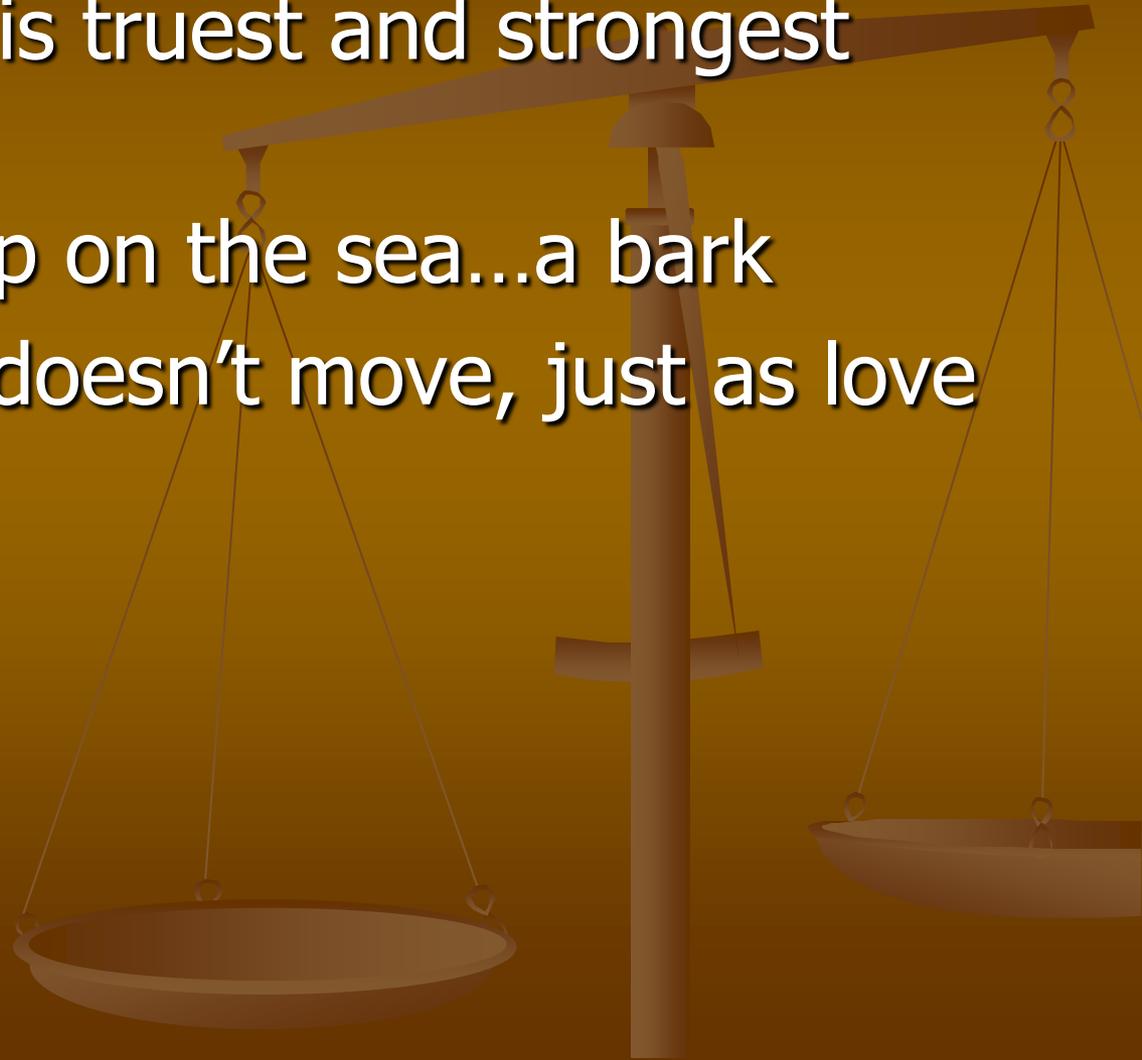
# Sonnet 42: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/42.html>

- The poet excuses the Young Man and his Mistress
- The Young Man loves her because the poet loves her
- And she loves the Young Man for his sake
- He and the friend are "one" so the woman loves the poet in loving the friend



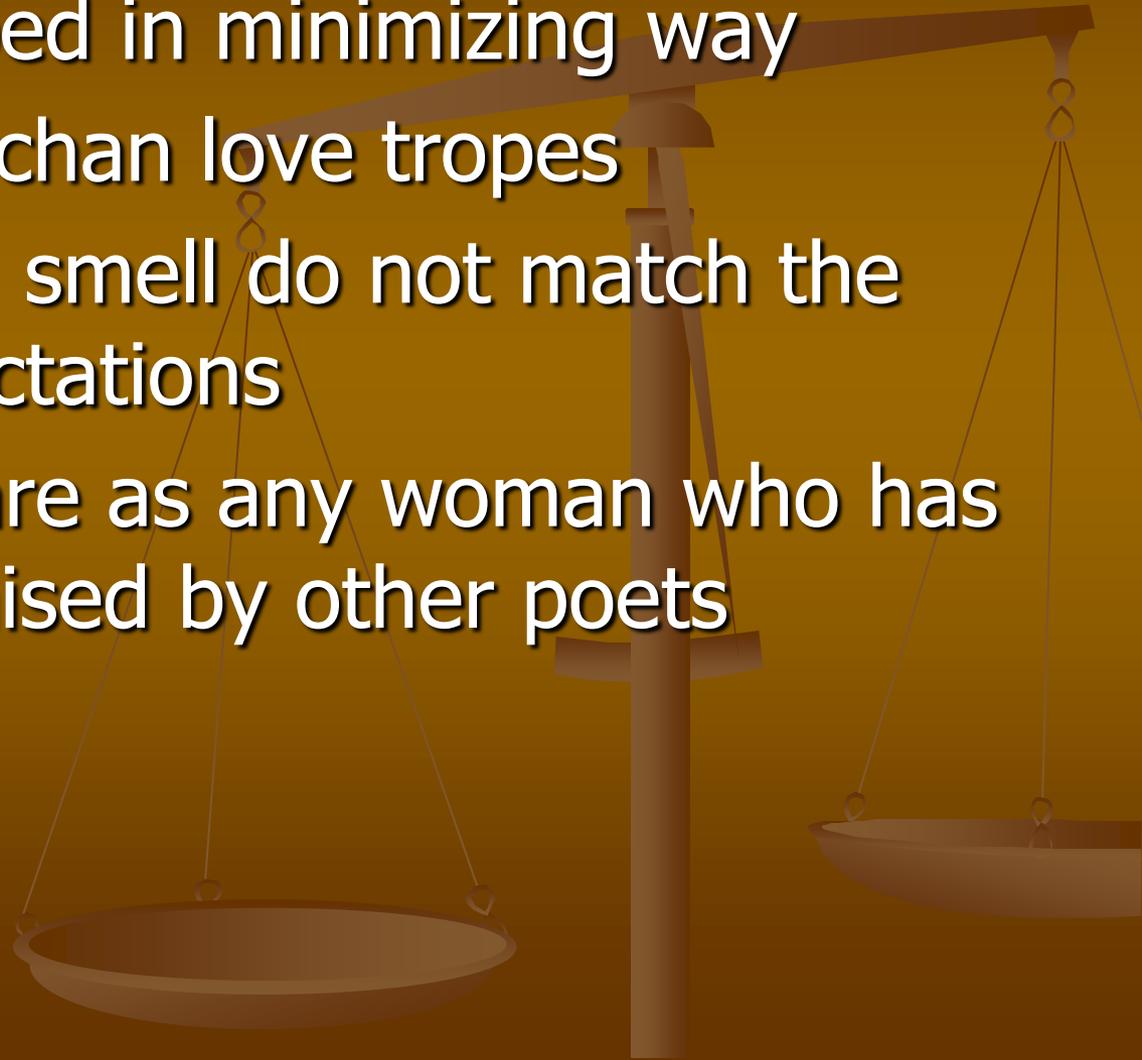
# Sonnet 116: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/116.html>

- Union of minds is truest and strongest form of love
- Metaphor of ship on the sea...a bark
- The North Star doesn't move, just as love doesn't change



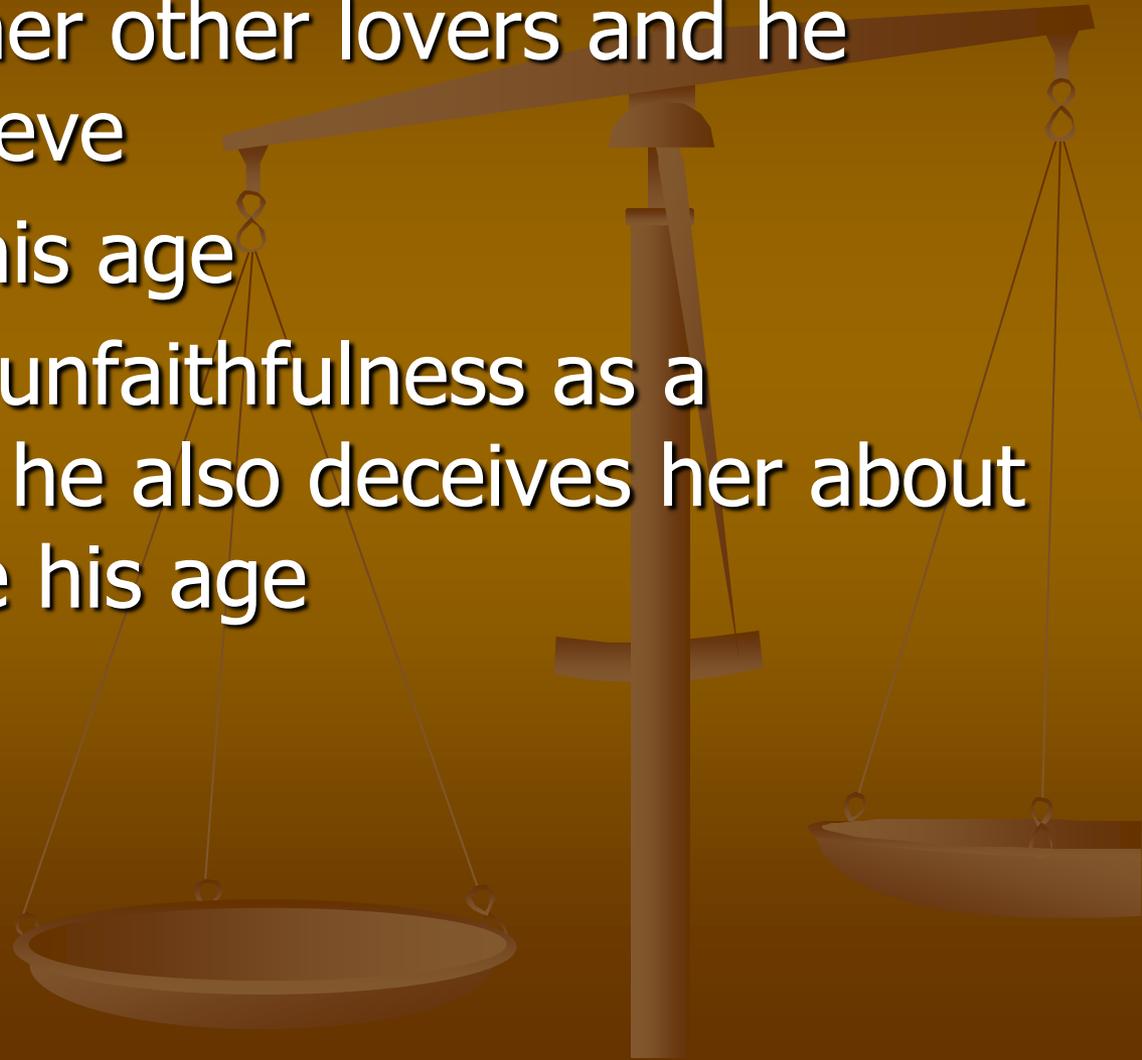
# Sonnet 130: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/130.html>

- Mistress described in minimizing way
- Reverses Petrarchan love tropes
- Eyes, hair, skin, smell do not match the traditional expectations
- Yet, she is as rare as any woman who has been falsely praised by other poets



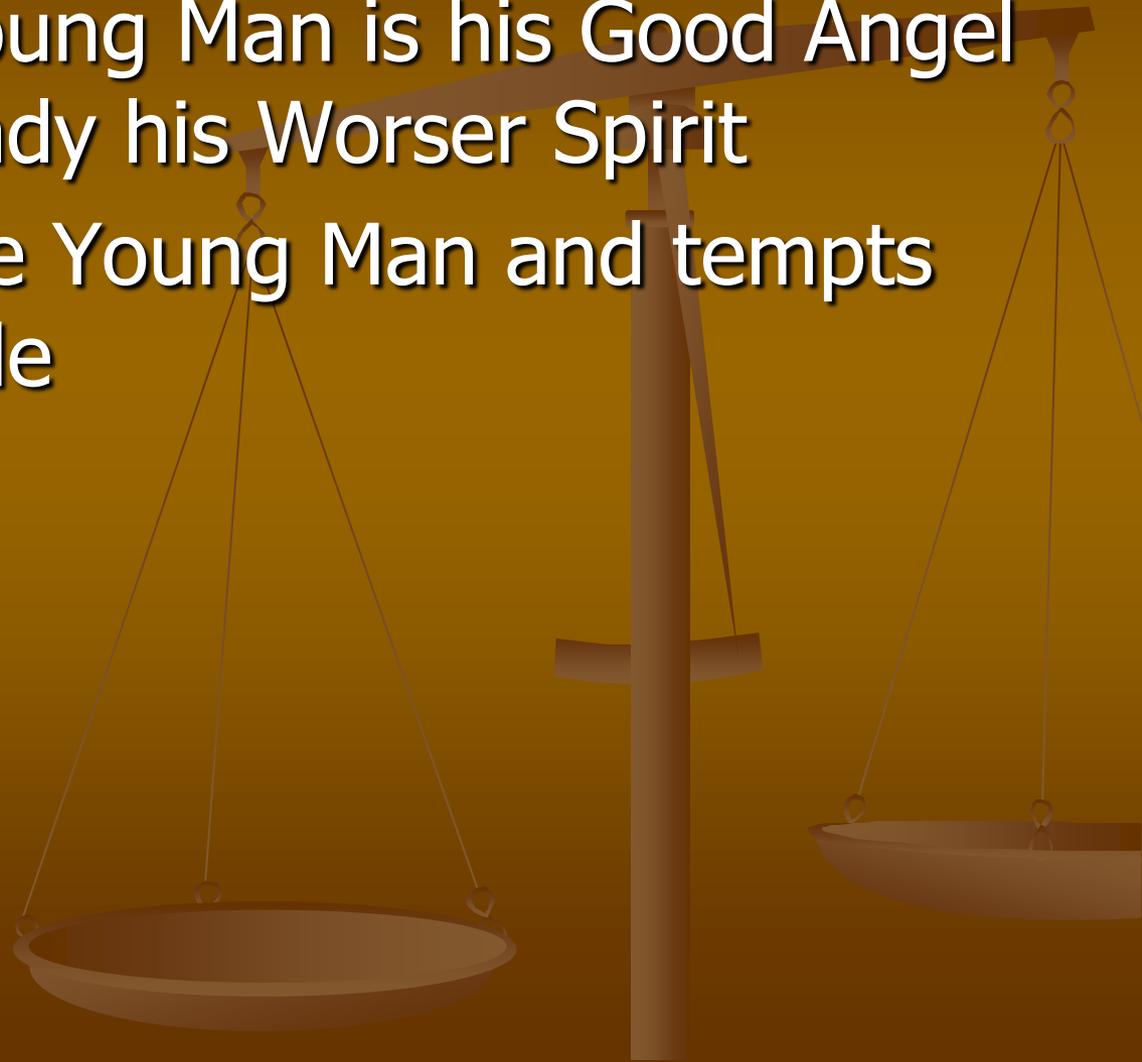
# Sonnet 138: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/138.html>

- She lies about her other lovers and he pretends to believe
- He lies about his age
- He justifies her unfaithfulness as a deception since he also deceives her about other things like his age



# Sonnet 144: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/144.html>

- Allegory: the Young Man is his Good Angel and the Dark Lady his Worser Spirit
- She corrupts the Young Man and tempts him from his side



# Summary

- Impossible to know for sure how these poems connect to Shakespeare's biography
  - It seems likely he wrote them for a young man who was a patron
  - Hard to deny the homosexual nature of some of the poems
  - The love he describes is in direct opposition to the idealized love of Petrarch
  - Whatever the intent of the poems, they remain as universal expression of love and lust in many different forms
- 