

Love

Shakespeare's 116th Sonnet, with comments

1. *Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments.*

Is this poem about love? Yes, because only love can really connect beings. The impediment or obstacle is always our thoughts of us. Only by removing the impediment of yourself is it possible to truly see with another's eyes. Love, and only love, makes this possible.

2. *Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove:*

Trying to change another is like altering a jacket to fit you better. Treating other people as if they were pieces on your chessboard is common today, but it isn't love. If you bend to remove another's fault, love does not follow. To find fault is to lose love. We love another when we accept them as we accept ourselves, without alterations or reservations. That is love.

3. *O no! It is an ever-fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken;*

Love is a fixed mark because it is above the emotional storms of personal life. To say "You offended me", "You hurt me", or "You were unfair to me" feeds the storms. If we only knew, the "I"s of these storms are empty. Love is not about you - if it is about you it is not love.

4. *It is the star to every wandering bark, whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.*

A bark is a wooden ship and we are ships wandering on the ocean of life. We look for love as ships look for a star to follow. And if you are loved it is as if a star shone upon you. It has no price, as you can't buy or sell it.

5. *Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle's compass come:*

Everything that changes is Time's fool because it dies. A candle that burns must eventually burn out. Our bodies, like the candle, also burn out. Yet love doesn't die with that, because its focus isn't us.

6. *Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
but bears it out even to the edge of doom.*

The edge of doom is the moment of death. A lover doesn't worry about their death because the lover thinks only of the beloved. We all know that when we die, we will be put aside, like a chess piece put back into the drawer when a game is over. When we love, we put ourselves aside right now. We take our own piece off the board, even though the game is on-going.

7. *If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

Shakespeare's final proof is that we are only here now by love. So without love, he could not have writ. Today we have the Internet and smartphones, but the nature of love has not changed at all. Without the love of mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and grandparents we couldn't do what we do. We all know that is so, but few know that without love nothing could exist at all. We only exist because we are loved by the great universe.

When you look at those you love, remember:

*Love is easy to do,
Just forget about you,
Tear down the veil,
Of yourself.*

Brian Whitworth, 2013