DUMAINE SIDES

DUMAINE *reads his sonnet.*

*On a day—alack the day!—* 105

*Love, whose month is ever May,*

*Spied a blossom passing fair,*

*Playing in the wanton air.*

*Through the velvet leaves the wind,*

*All unseen, can passage find;* 110

*That the lover, sick to death,*

*Wished himself the heaven’s breath.*

*“Air,” quoth he, “thy cheeks may blow.*

*Air, would I might triumph so!”*

*But, alack, my hand is sworn* 115

*Ne’er to pluck thee from thy thorn.*

*Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,*

*Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.*

*Do not call it sin in me*

*That I am forsworn for thee—* 120

*Thou for whom Jove would swear*

*Juno but an Ethiope were,*

*And deny himself for Jove,*

*Turning mortal for thy love.*

This will I send, and something else more plain 125

That shall express my true love’s fasting pain.

O, would the King, Berowne, and Longaville

Were lovers too! Ill to example ill

Would from my forehead wipe a perjured note,

For none offend where all alike do dote.

LONGAVILLE*, picking up the papers*

It is Berowne’s writing, and here is his name.

BEROWNE

Guilty, my lord, guilty. I confess, I confess. 220

KING What?

BEROWNE

That you three fools lacked me fool to make up

the mess.

He, he, and you—and you, my liege—and I

Are pickpurses in love, and we deserve to die. 225

DUMAINE

Now the number is even.

BEROWNE True, true, we are four.

Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace.

As true we are as flesh and blood can be.

The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face; 235

Young blood doth not obey an old decree.

We cannot cross the cause why we were born;

Therefore of all hands must we be forsworn.

DUMAINE

What, did these rent lines show some love of thine?

BEROWNE

Did they, quoth you? Who sees the heavenly 240

Rosaline

That, like a rude and savage man of Ind

At the first op’ning of the gorgeous East,

Bows not his vassal head and, strucken blind,

Kisses the base ground with obedient breast? 245

What peremptory eagle-sighted eye

Dares look upon the heaven of her brow

That is not blinded by her majesty?

KING

What zeal, what fury, hath inspired thee now?

My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon, 250

She an attending star scarce seen a light.

BEROWNE

My eyes are then no eyes, nor I Berowne.

O, but for my love, day would turn to night!

Of all complexions the culled sovereignty

Do meet as at a fair in her fair cheek. 255

Where several worthies make one dignity,

Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.

Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues—

Fie, painted rhetoric! O, she needs it not!

To things of sale a seller’s praise belongs. 260

She passes praise. Then praise too short doth blot.

A withered hermit, fivescore winters worn,

Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye.

Beauty doth varnish age, as if newborn,

And gives the crutch the cradle’s infancy. 265

O, ’tis the sun that maketh all things shine!

But what of this? Are we not all in love?

LONGAVILLE

Nothing so sure, and thereby all forsworn.

KING

Then leave this chat, and, good Berowne, now prove

Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn. 305

DUMAINE

Ay, marry, there, some flattery for this evil.

LONGAVILLE

O, some authority how to proceed,

Some tricks, some quillets, how to cheat the devil.

DUMAINE

Some salve for perjury.

BEROWNE O, ’tis more than need. 310

Have at you, then, affection’s men-at-arms!

O, we have made a vow to study, lords,

And in that vow we have forsworn our books.

For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,

In leaden contemplation have found out 315

Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes

Of beauty’s tutors have enriched you with?

From women’s eyes this doctrine I derive.

They sparkle still the right Promethean fire. 345

They are the books, the arts, the academes

That show, contain, and nourish all the world.

Else none at all in ought proves excellent.

Then fools you were these women to forswear,

Or, keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools. 350

For wisdom’s sake, a word that all men love,

Or for love’s sake, a word that loves all men,

Or for men’s sake, the authors of these women,

Or women’s sake, by whom we men are men,

Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves, 355

Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.

It is religion to be thus forsworn,

For charity itself fulfills the law,

And who can sever love from charity?

KING

Saint Cupid, then, and, soldiers, to the field! 360

BEROWNE

Advance your standards, and upon them, lords.

Pell-mell, down with them. But be first advised

In conflict that you get the sun of them.

LONGAVILLE

Now to plain dealing. Lay these glozes by.

Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France? 365

KING

And win them, too. Therefore let us devise

Some entertainment for them in their tents.

BEROWNE

First, from the park let us conduct them thither.

Then homeward every man attach the hand

Of his fair mistress. In the afternoon 370

We will with some strange pastime solace them,

Such as the shortness of the time can shape;

For revels, dances, masques, and merry hours

Forerun fair love, strewing her way with flowers.

KING

Away, away! No time shall be omitted 375

That will betime and may by us be fitted.

BEROWNE

*Allons! Allons!* Sowed cockle reaped no corn,

And justice always whirls in equal measure.

Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn;