

Sonnet 4

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth or boundless sea

But sad mortality o'er sways their power.

How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

O how shall summer's honey breath hold out

Against the wreckful siege of battering days,

And rocks impregnable are not so stout

Nor gates of steel so strong but Time decays?

O fearful meditation, where alack

Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid,

Or what strong hand will hold his swift foot back

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

None, unless this miracle have might,

That in black ink my love may still shine bright.