

FULL MANY A SONNET END-WORD HAVE I SEEN

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The poem below is constructed from the 308 first and last words of the 154 Shakespearean sonnets. Although done in a free-verse style, it is based on the 'ballade supreme' form, with three stanzas, each ending with the same refrain, followed by an 'envoy'.

Shall I compare thee to a knife-edge pain?
 Alas! Blind Cupid is gone from thee.
 O how cold the hand, when dead so long.
 O farewell look! What's truth?
 When the king's one son
 Remains alone?
 Or when told in th' book, as
 "Let thee then beshrew me when 'tis night"?
 Why, no! How so untrue,
 As wrong wit, like bad rhyme.
 Ah, where was thy love?
 Were't transferred? Why? How? When?
 If so, that rare show
 Canst not begin again.
 Control your hate –
 Bright hope, grow green near me:
 O love, be mine:
 So let my heart praise thee!

If when those deeds
 Betwixt effect or cause
 Lack worth, then, since removed,
 Thy breast will full well lose
 The treasure that thou spent,
 Then report that song being but none,
 Thus die alone.
 O, how foes that accuse me
 Find delight in crime, sell me;
 Lo, how they play!
 O Lord, take me (if all be thine);
 Go out, against whoever staineth thee.

Devouring those days,
 Remain near me;
 O love, be mine:
 So let my heart praise thee!

When men owe some matter,
 Fall behind, thus pay,
 So my ignorance (no 'how', no 'when')
 Proceeds in unthrifty skill,
 Whilst my young will (if tired, if spent)
 Commits sin – like when thou
 Abused those who loved not thee.
 O woe is me, since yore!
 Lo, thy poor heir, denied music:
 Alack, what ill report!
 (O from it now make me free)
 But worse: what dead, weary Hell,
 As when you devise some new end
 Against those who kiss you.
 O hence, pain –
 So away, dead weeds!
 O love, be mine:
 So let my heart praise thee!

O how those two sad eyes
 (Date-sweet eyes so wide)
 Still reign – but not for me.
 O find me dear, I say;
 That sweet love grow stronger,
 Not decay.