

## IT'S A SONNET (NOT SESTINA)

Mike Keith  
Richmond, Virginia

Did you know that Shakespeare's 115<sup>th</sup> sonnet contains a hidden message? When the poem is formatted with the appropriate font and character spacing, as shown below, the underlined letters spell IT'S A SONNET BY W.S. The second sonnet is an anagram of Shakespeare's, and contains its own similarly-arranged message.

THOSE LINES THAT I BEFORE HAVE WRIT DO LIE,  
EVEN THOSE THAT SAID I COULD NOT LOVE YOU DEARER.  
YET THEN MY JUDGMENT KNEW NO REASON WHY  
MY MOST FULL FLAME SHOULD AFTERWARDS BURN CLEARER.  
BUT RECKONING TIME, WHOSE MILLIONED ACCIDENTS  
CREEP IN 'TWIXT VOWS, AND CHANGE DECREES OF KINGS,  
TAN SACRED BEAUTY, BLUNT THE SHARP'ST INTENTS,  
DIVERT STRONG MINDS TO THE COURSE OF ALT'RING THINGS:  
ALAS, WHY, FEARING OF TIME'S TYRANNY,  
MIGHT I NOT THEN SAY 'NOW I LOVE YOU BBEST,'  
WHEN I WAS CERTAIN O'ER INCERTAINTY,  
CROWNING THE PRESENT, DOUBTING OF THE REST?  
LOVE IS A BABE. THEN MIGHT I NOT SAY SO,  
TO GIVE FULL GROWTH TO THAT WHICH STILL DOTH GROW.

WITH VOWS I'VE OFTEN SWORN TO BARE UNTRUTH,  
IN THOUGHTLESS WRONGS AND STRAINED CONVICTION BORN;  
TRANSCENDING NOW THE GHOST-LIKE TIES OF YOUTH,  
TIME'S LIMIT LEAVES IT VACANT AND FORLORN.  
THOUGH GAYLY I MAINTEIN'D THAT SHARE OF LOVE,  
BEWITCHED BY TRENCHANT THOUGHT BEYOND BELIEF,  
CAME DOWN RELENTLESSLY THE GUILT THEREOF  
TO GERMINATE DESPAIR AND ROOTS OF GRIEF.  
WHILE YET IN FRANTIC WORRY NOW TODAY  
WE TEST OUR CLIMATE BY 'WHO LOVES ME BBEST?',  
JUST AS THE AGING LOVE-FORCE HERE CAN'T STAY  
WHEN HUMBLE COURTESY IS NOT EXPRESSED.  
THIS STRANGE AND CHILD-LIKE ACT I NOW SUSPEND  
UNTIL MY STREAMING TEARS MIGHT KNOW THEIR END.