IT'S A SONNET (NOT SESTINA)

Mike Keith
Richmond, Virginia

Did you know that Shakespeare’s 115th 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,**
**DIVERSE 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 BEST,’**
**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 DOETH 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 MAINTAIN’D THAT SHARE OF LOVE,**
**Bewitched by treachant 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 BEST?’,**
**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 KNOWN THEIR END.**