81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten,
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die.
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'erread;
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse
When all the breathers of this world are dead.
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

SONNET 81. *1 Or* either. *3 From hence* from the earth. *4 in me each part* every one of my qualities. *5 from hence* from these poems. *6 to all the world* in so far as all men are concerned. *7 but a common grave* merely an ordinary undistinguished grave. *8 entombed in men's eyes* memorialized (as in a monumental tomb) in the eyes of the men who read my poems. *11 rehearse* recite. *13 virtue* power. *14 breath most breathes* language is most alive.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;
And therefore art enforc'd to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days
And do so, love; yet when they have devis'd
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou, truly fair, wert truly sympathiz'd
In true plain words by thy true-telling friend;
And their gross painting might be better us'd
Where cheeks need blood; in thee it is abus'd.

SONNET 82. *2 attaint* dishonour. *o'erlook* read over. *3 dedicated words* (a) words in a dedication of a book to a patron (b) words consecrated to their subject. *4 blessing every book* causing every book they write to be blessed (in being read by the friend). *5 hue* complexion, beauty. *6 Finding* The subject is "Thou." *limit* extent, reach. The unlearned poet is incapable of praising his friend's "knowledge" as his more learned "rival poet" apparently has done. *8 Some fresher . . . days* some newer representation of yourself (stamp) written in the manner of these superior days (in which poetic techniques have so improved). *10 What* whatever. *strained* exaggerated. *11–12 Thou, truly . . . true-telling friend* you, being truly beautiful, would be most truthfully represented in the simple words of your friend who speaks the truth (rather than in the rhetorical exaggerations of other poets). *14 in thee* in applying it to thee.