

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

## Sonnet 125

Were't aught to me<sup>1</sup> I bore the canopy,  
With my extern the outward honouring,  
Or laid great bases<sup>2</sup> for eternity,  
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?

- 5 Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour  
Lose all and more by paying too much rent  
For compound sweet<sup>3</sup>; forgoing simple savour<sup>4</sup>,  
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing<sup>5</sup> spent?  
No; let me be obsequious<sup>6</sup> in thy heart,  
10 And take thou my oblation<sup>7</sup>, poor but free,  
Which is not mix'd with seconds<sup>8</sup>, knows no art,  
But mutual render, only me for thee.  
Hence, thou suborned informer! a true soul  
When most impeach'd<sup>9</sup>, stands least in thy control.  
(105 words)

<sup>1</sup>**Were't aught to me** was it anything to me that – <sup>2</sup>**great bases** gigantic foundations – <sup>3</sup>**compound sweet** artificial sweetness, false compliments – <sup>4</sup>**simple savour** natural flavours, plain truth – <sup>5</sup>**gazing** false adoring looks – <sup>6</sup>**obsequious** dutiful, devoted – <sup>7</sup>**oblation** offering, praise – <sup>8</sup>**seconds** flattery, inferior material – <sup>9</sup>**impeach'd** accused, maligned