

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 42

Thou hast her it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly;
That she hath thee is of my wailing chief¹,
A loss in love that touches² me more nearly³.

5 Loving offenders thus I will excuse ye:

Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her;
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suffering⁴ my friend for my sake to approve⁵ her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,

10 And losing her, my friend hath found that loss;

Both find each other, and I lose both twain⁶,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross⁷:
But here's the joy; my friend and I are one;
Sweet flattery⁸! then she loves but me alone.
(129 words)

¹**of my wailing chief** the major reason for my sorrow – ²**touches** affects – ³**nearly** deeply – ⁴**Suffering** allowing – ⁵**approve** seduce, love – ⁶**both twain** both of you – ⁷**cross** suffering (echoing the Crucifixion) – ⁸**flattery** deception