

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 147

My love is as a fever, longing still¹
For that which longer nurseth² the disease,
Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
The uncertain³ sickly appetite to please.

5 My reason, the physician to my love,
Angry that his prescriptions are not kept⁴,
Hath left me, and I desperate now approve⁵
Desire is death, which physic did except⁶.
Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
10 And frantic-mad with evermore unrest⁷;
My thoughts and my discourse⁸ as madmen's are,
At random⁹ from the truth vainly express'd¹⁰;
For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

(107 words)

¹**longing still** always desiring – ²**longer nurseth** prolongs and nourishes – ³**uncertain** unpredictable – ⁴**kept** followed – ⁵**approve** find, prove – ⁶**physic did except** medicine prevented – ⁷**evermore unrest** continual uneasiness – ⁸**discourse** talk – ⁹**At random** far from, different – ¹⁰**vainly express'd** foolishly spoken