

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd¹ with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain,
Beyond all date; even to eternity:

5 Or, at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty² by nature to subsist³;
Till each to raz'd oblivion⁴ yield his part
Of thee, thy record⁵ never can be miss'd.
That poor retention⁶ could not so much hold,

10 Nor need I tallies⁷ thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables⁸ that receive thee more:
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import⁹ forgetfulness in me.

(105 words)

¹**character'd** inscribed – ²**faculty** power, capacity – ³**subsist** survive – ⁴**raz'd oblivion** destructive forgetfulness – ⁵**record** memory
– ⁶**That poor retention** your notebook – ⁷**tallies** notched sticks used for calculations – ⁸**those tables** my memory – ⁹**import** imply, signify