

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 4

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thy self thy beauty's legacy¹?
Nature's bequest² gives nothing, but doth lend,
And being frank³ she lends to those are free⁴:

5 Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
The bounteous largess⁵ given thee to give?
Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live⁶?
For having traffic⁷ with thy self alone,

10 Thou of thy self thy sweet self dost deceive:
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable audit⁸ canst thou leave?
Thy unused⁹ beauty must be tombed with thee,
Which, used, lives th' executor¹⁰ to be
(104 words)

¹**legacy** inheritance – ²**Nature's bequest...** **lend** Nature only loans her gifts – ³**frank** generous, bountiful – ⁴**free** generous –
⁵**largess** gifts – ⁶**live** have children – ⁷**traffic** commerce, trade – ⁸**audit** account of your life – ⁹**unused** not invested – ¹⁰**executor**
administrator of a will