

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 153

Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep:

A maid of Dian's this advantage¹ found,

And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep²

In a cold valley-fountain of that ground³;

5 Which borrow'd from this holy fire of Love

A dateless lively⁴ heat, still to endure⁵,

And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove⁶

Against strange maladies⁷ a sovereign cure.

But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,

10 The boy⁸ for trial⁹ needs would touch my breast;

I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,

And thither hied¹⁰, a sad distemper'd¹¹ guest,

But found no cure: the bath for my help lies

Where Cupid got new fire--my mistress' eyes.

(108 words)

¹**advantage** opportunity – ²**steep** extinguish – ³**of that ground** nearby – ⁴**dateless lively** eternally living – ⁵**still to endure** always lasting – ⁶**prove** take, find to be – ⁷**strange maladies** extreme illnesses (sexually transmitted diseases) – ⁸**The boy** Cupid – ⁹**for trial** to try it out – ¹⁰**hied** hastened – ¹¹**distemper'd** sick