

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 103

Alack! what poverty¹ my Muse brings forth,
That having such a scope² to show her pride³,
The argument all bare is of more worth
Than when it hath my added praise beside!

5 O! blame me not, if I no more can write!

Look in your glass⁴, and there appears a face
That over-goes⁵ my blunt invention quite,
Dulling⁶ my lines, and doing me disgrace.
Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,

10 To mar the subject that before was well?

For to no other pass⁷ my verses tend⁸
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
And more, much more, than in my verse can sit,
Your own glass shows you when you look in it.

(117 words)

¹**poverty** poor poetry – ²**a scope** an opportunity – ³**pride** splendid creativity – ⁴**glass** mirror – ⁵**over-goes** surpasses, defeats –
⁶**Dulling** making dull – ⁷**pass** end, purpose – ⁸**tend** aim