

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?

Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:

Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,

Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy¹?

5 If the true concord² of well-tuned sounds,

By unions married³, do offend thine ear,

They do but sweetly chide⁴ thee, who confounds⁵

In singleness the parts⁶ that thou shouldst bear⁷.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,

10 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;

Resembling sire⁸ and child and happy mother,

Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:

Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,

Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

(110 words)

¹**thine annoy** what pains you – ²**concord** agreement, harmony – ³**unions married** harmony, marriage – ⁴**chide** rebuke –

⁵**confounds** destroys, ruins – ⁶**parts** roles, talents, melodies, sexual organs – ⁷**bear** play, sing, support, use – ⁸**sire** father