

THE PRISON YEARS

ELIZABETH SPARES SOUTHAMPTON'S LIFE  
DAY FORTY IN THE TOWER

Sonnet 66  
*By Limping Sway Disabled  
Tongue-Tied by Authority*  
19 March 1601

*Queen Elizabeth spares Southampton's life, after Oxford makes a bargain with hunchbacked Robert Cecil to gain his son's eventual release and pardon in return for his relinquishment of any claim to the throne. Southampton's "gilded honor" has been "shamefully misplaced" and his young "virtue" as a prince has been violated as now, in the eyes of the world, he is "supposed as forfeit to a confined doom (Sonnet 107) or facing perpetual imprisonment. All his lands will be confiscated and titles will be stripped away, reducing his status to that of a base commoner known as "Mr. Henry Wriothesley" or (in legal terms) "the late earl". Oxford responds with relief and exhaustion, but also with such profound grief over the bargain that he contemplates suicide. His stated grievances, on the immediate level, all relate to what has happened to his son and not to himself. For all these reasons he prefers to die; except that, by dying, he would be leaving him alone – alone in the Tower.*

Sonnet 66

Translation

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry:  
As to behold desert a beggar born,  
And needy Nothing trimmed in jollity,  
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,

And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,  
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,  
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,  
And strength by limping sway disabled,

And art made tongue-tied by authority,  
And Folly, (Doctor-like) controlling skill,  
And simple-Truth miscalled Simplicity,  
And captive-good attending Captain ill.

Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,  
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

I would like to die, for these many reasons:  
Such as to behold my royal son born as a bastard,  
And see him become a nobody given an earldom,  
And faith in Elizabeth torn by her broken vows,

And his claim disgraced and promised to another,  
And his perfect royal blood falsely ruined,  
And his royal blood wrongfully disgraced,  
And his royal strength by Robert Cecil disabled,

And this verse forced by policy to be indirect,  
And pompous folly having power over royalty,  
And my plain truth mistakenly called foolishness,  
And my captive royal son serving evil Cecil.

Tired with all these, from these I would die,  
Except, dying, I'd leave my royal son in prison.

(This sonnet corresponds with Sonnet 145 of the Dark Lady series, where Oxford records that Queen Elizabeth extended her "mercy" and "saved" her son's "life".)

### Sonnet 66

“As late as March 25<sup>th</sup> spectators came to Tower Hill, drawn by a rumor that Southampton was to be executed there that day. They were disappointed. The decision had already been made to commute his sentence to imprisonment.” - Akrigg, p. 131

#### 1 TIRED WITH ALL THESE, FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY:

**TIRED** = exhausted, emotionally spent; “Weary with toil” – Sonnet 27, line 1; **ALL** = Southampton, *One for All, All for One*; **ALL THESE** = for the following reasons, all related to my son; **FOR RESTFUL DEATH I CRY** = I wish for the peacefulness of death; “To die, to sleep – no more; and by a sleep to say we end the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to; ‘Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished” – *Hamlet*, 3.1.68-73, the prince’s “to be or not to be” soliloquy that expresses similar complaints.

#### 2 AS TO BEHOLD DESERT A BEGGAR BORN,

**DESERT** = deserving; what Southampton was due, because of his blood; “If it were filled with *your most high deserts*” – Sonnet 17, line 2; **A BEGGAR BORN** = Southampton, born without acknowledgment; “Experience of my youth, made think *humble truth in deserts born*” – Poem in *Astrophel and Stella*, 1591, signed with Oxford’s initials E. O.; “Sometimes am I *king*, then *treasons make me wish myself a beggar*” – *Richard II*, 5.5, 32-33

#### 3 AND NEEDY NOTHING TRIMMED IN JOLLITY,

**NEEDY NOTHING** = Southampton, a royal bastard who is both needy and a “nobody,” especially now, in prison (and also because of the loss of his titles and estates); **TRIMMED IN JOLLITY** = dressed up as an earl in great splendor, as Southampton was before this tragedy; “*Trimm’d up your praises with a princely tongue, spoke your deservings like a chronicle*” – *I Henry IV*, 5.2.56-57

#### 4 AND PUREST FAITH UNHAPPILY FORSWORN,

**FORSWORN** = perjured; Elizabeth broke her vow to name Southampton in succession; Oxford’s “purest faith” in the Queen was betrayed, although he himself had kept that faith; as he writes with bitter irony in Sonnet 152: “In loving thee thou know’st *I am forsworn*,/ But *thou art twice forsworn* to me love swearing” – lines 1-2; she was “twice” forsworn in promising her “love” or concern for her blood, because she broke faith with both Oxford and Southampton; (Dowden glosses “unhappily” as “evilly”)

#### 5 AND GILDED HONOUR SHAMEFULLY MISPLACED,

**GILDED** = made royal; made bright and shining like gold; made rich, i.e., with royal blood; “An *eye more bright* than theirs, less false in rolling,/ *Gilding* the object whereupon it gazeth” – Sonnet 20, lines 5-6; “When sparkling stars twire not, *thou gild’st the heaven*” – Sonnet 28, line 12; **GILDED HONOUR** = the gilded honor due Southampton as king; “Full many a glorious morning have I seen/ Flatter the mountain tops with *sovereign eye*,/ Kissing with golden face the meadows green,/ *Gilding* pale streams with heavenly alchemy” – the royal sun/son of Sonnet 33, lines 1-4; “Not marble, nor *the gilded monument of Princes*” – Sonnet 55, lines 1-2, as Southampton himself is a prince; “Right **Honourable** ... Only, if your **Honour** seem but pleased ... I leave it to your **Honourable** survey, and your **Honour** to your heart’s content” - Dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton, 1593; **SHAMEFULLY MISPLACED** = taken from him because of Elizabeth’s shame; (“And Beauty slandered with a *bastard shame*” – Sonnet 127, line 4; with shame and disgrace; and now because of her son’s own “shame” as a convicted traitor; “For I am *shamed* by that which I bring forth” – Sonnet 72, line 13, speaking as father of Southampton, whom he “brought forth” into the world, and as the creator of these Sonnets, which

he is “bringing forth” as a rebirth of his son to keep alive his royal blood and claim for posterity; in each case he is filled with “shame” over the fact that the true identity of Southampton cannot be told; **MISPLACED** = echoing that Southampton must remain in “the place” or the Tower

#### 6 AND MAIDEN VERTUE RUDELY STRUMPETED,

**MAIDEN VERTUE** = (or virtue); youthful or “fresh” and “green” royalty and kingly qualities, echoing *Ver* (Vere) as father; **RUDELY STRUMPETED** = “As when parents sell their daughters” – Tucker; Southampton’s young royal status brutally taken from him

But thou from loving England art so far,  
That thou hast *underwrought his lawful king*,  
*Cut off the sequence of posterity*,  
*Outfaced infant state*, and done a *rape*  
Upon the *maiden virtue of the crown*

*King John*, 2.1.94-98

**MAIDEN VIRTUE** = there is also the sense that Oxford’s own “maiden virtue” had been “rudely strumpeted” by the Queen, as depicted by the attempted seduction of the young god Adonis by the mature goddess Venus; “He burns with bashful shame: she with her tears/ Doth quench the *maiden burning of his cheeks*” – *Venus and Adonis*, stanza 8; “And many *maiden* gardens yet unset” – Sonnet 16, line 6, with “maiden gardens” referring to virgin wombs; “but in her *maiden* hand/ The fairest votary took up that fire” – Sonnet 154, line 4, referring to Elizabeth as the so-called Virgin Queen; “And the imperial votaress passed on, in *maiden* meditation, fancy free” – *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 2.1 163-164, referring to Elizabeth as “the imperial votaress” who continued onward, passing herself off as a virgin, even though she had given birth to “a little western” flower (Southampton) prior to moving westward on her royal progress to Bristol and Bath; “but as when the bird of wonder dies, the *maiden* Phoenix, her ashes new create another heir” – *Henry VIII*, 5.5.39-41, Archbishop Cranmer of Canterbury, referring to the infant Princess Elizabeth, who will grow up to be Queen and, from her own ashes, create another heir

Sweet prince, the untainted *virtue* of your years  
Two props of *virtue* for a Christian Prince

*Richard III*, 3.1.7

*Richard III*, 3.7.95

England ne’er had a king of so much worth...  
England ne’er had a king until his time,  
*Virtue* he had, deserving to command

*1 Henry VI*, 1.1.7-9

“So gracious and *virtuous* a sovereign ... *Nothing adorns a king more than justice, nor in anything doth a king more resemble God than in justice, which is the head of all virtue, and he that is endued therewith hath all the rest*”

- Oxford to Robert Cecil, May 7, 1603, speaking of King James

#### 7 AND RIGHT PERFECTION WRONGFULLY DISGRACED,

**RIGHT PERFECTION** = rightful kingship; “The *perfect* ceremony of *love’s right*” – Sonnet 23, line 6; **PERFECTION** = “When I consider everything that grows/ Holds in *perfection* but a little moment” – Sonnet 15, line 5, referring to Southampton, who is “growing” within this diary of the Sonnets; “Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble./ Creating every bad a *perfect* best/ As fast as objects to his beams assemble” – Sonnet 114, lines 6-8; “I would wish such *perfection* govern, sir” – *The Tempest*, 2.1.168; “Do you not read some tokens of my son in the large composition of this man? ... Mine eye hath well examined his parts and finds them *perfect* Richard” – *King John*, 1.1.87-90; **WRONGFULLY DISGRACED** = Southampton was disgraced wrongfully by Elizabeth at his birth; now he is wrongfully kept a prisoner in disgrace for high treason

#### 8 AND STRENGTH BY LIMPING SWAY DISABLED,

**STRENGTH** = royal power (of Southampton); “To leave poor me thou hast *the strength of laws*” – Sonnet 49, line 13; If thou wouldst use *the strength of all thy state*” – Sonnet 96, line 12, both to Southampton; “That in the very refuse of thy deeds/ There is such *strength* and warranties of skill”

– Sonnet 150, lines 6-7, to Elizabeth; “The king’s name is a tower of *strength*” – Richard III, 5.3.12; **STRENGTH BY LIMPING SWAY DISABLED** = Royal power rendered impotent by the limping, swaying, hunchbacked Secretary of State Robert Cecil; (“*It is tempting to suspect a glance at the control of the State, including vigorous military men like Raleigh and Essex, by the limping Robert Cecil*” – Dover Wilson); there is also a glance at Oxford’s own lameness as a result of a duel in the streets in the early 1580s; “The pride of *kingly sway*” – *Richard II*, 4.1.206; “Who now in Court doth bear the greatest sway” – Spenser, *Mother Hubbard’s Tale*, line 616

#### 9 AND ART MADE TONGUE-TIED BY AUTHORITY,

**ART** = the careful writing and compilation of these private verses; “art” usually refers to letters, learning, science; **TONGUE-TIED** = “not allowed to speak” – Tucker; **ART MADE TONGUE-TIED BY AUTHORITY** = Forced to write indirectly, and secretly, by officialdom; because it is treasonous to speak or write of a claim to the throne; censored by the supreme authority of the monarch; “Your *sovereign greatness and authority*” – *King John*, 5.1.4, speaking of the king); “to obtain the *protection of that authority*, to strengthen it with gifts, and to mark it with the superscription of her name” – Oxford’s Letter to the Reader for *The Courtier*, 1572, writing of Queen Elizabeth as “patroness” of that literary translation and, by extension, of all English literature; “and that he may have *from Her Majesty equal authority*” – Oxford to Burghley, June 7, 1595

Before a true and lawful magistrate,  
That hath *authority* over him that swears 3 *Henry VI*, 1.2.23-24

**AUTHORITY** = persons in authority; the right to command; position of power, prerogative; “*Authorizing thy trespass with compare*” – Sonnet 35, line 6, Oxford saying he had authorized Southampton to attempt the Rebellion against the crown, by means of “compare” through his plays; in the plural, “authorities” often refer to legal powers; “soaks up the king’s countenance, his rewards, his *authorities*” – *Hamlet*, 4.2.17

Kent: No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call *master*.  
Lear: What’s that?  
Kent: *Authority*. *King Lear*, 1.4.27-30

#### 10 AND FOLLY (DOCTOR-LIKE) CONTROLLING SKILL,

**FOLLY** = Robert Cecil, now in control; but probably alluding also to the folly of the Rebellion itself; **DOCTOR-LIKE** = with authority; acting with the airs of a doctor who knows best; Doctor of Divinity, etc.; **CONTROLLING SKILL** = wielding the skill or power (the knowledge and science) to exercise control over Southampton, a prince who should be the one who is “controlling” or exercising authority over everyone, including Cecil; “A man in hew all *Hews* in his *controlling*” – Sonnet 20, line 7; “Can yet the lease of my true love *control*” – Sonnet 107, line 3; “Two *controlling bounds shall you be, kings*” – *King John*, 2.1.444

#### 11 AND SIMPLE TRUTH MISCALLED SIMPLICITY,

**TRUTH** = Oxford, *Nothing Truer than Truth*; **SIMPLE TRUTH** = the plain, unmixed truth; my own truth about Southampton’s royal claim as my son by Elizabeth; “But she tells to your Highness *simple truth*” – *The Comedy of Errors*, 5.1.211; “*They do me wrong ... Cannot a plain man live and think no harm, but thus his simple truth must be abus’d with silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?*” – the King in *Richard II*, 1.3.42-53; **SIMPLE** = consisting of one thing only, echoing “one” for Southampton; pure, being no more nor less than; uncompounded, unmixed; “For compound sweet, forgoing *simple savor*” – Sonnet 125, line 7; “*Simple were so well compounded*” – *The Phoenix and Turtle*, 1601, line 44; “And take thou my oblation, poor but free,/ Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,/ But mutual render, only me for thee” – Oxford’s final offering to Southampton in Sonnet 125, lines 10-12; **TRUTH** = “Thy end is *Truth’s* and Beauty’s doom and date” – Sonnet 14, line 14; “And your *true* rights be termed a Poet’s rage” – Sonnet 17, line 11; “Thou *truly* fair wert *truly* sympathized/ In *true* plain words by thy *true*-telling friend” – Sonnet 82, lines 11-12; “Let me not to the marriage of *true* minds/ Admit impediments” – Sonnet

116, lines 1-2; **SIMPLICITY** = “plainness, naturalness, absence of everything that seems extraordinary ... silliness, folly” - Schmidt; i.e., the simple truth of Southampton’s royal blood has been viewed erroneously as un-royal or reduced to the merely plain; “Beauty, Truth, and Rarity,/ Grace in all simplicity,/ Here enclosed in cinders lie” – *The Phoenix and Turtle*, 1601, lines 53-55, which Oxford is now writing about the death of Elizabeth, himself, and Southampton, as a royal family, and to which he will allude seven verses after this one, in Sonnet 73.

#### 12 AND CAPTIVE-GOOD ATTENDING CAPTAIN ILL.

**CAPTIVE GOOD** = Southampton as prisoner; “Never did *captive* with a freer heart cast off his chains of bondage and embrace his golden uncontrolled enfranchisement” – *Richard II*, 1.3.88-90; “Master lieutenant, now that God and friends have shaken Edward from the regal seat, and turned *my captive state* to liberty” – *3 Henry VI*, 4.6.1-3; “And in a *captive* chariot into Rouen bring him our prisoner” – *Henry V*, 5.3.53-54; “Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke” – *Titus Andronicus*, 1.1.114; “To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels” – *Julius Caesar*, 1.1.35; “Therefore so please thee to return with us, and of our Athens, thine and ours, to *take the captainship*, thou shalt be met with thanks, *allowed with absolute power*, and thy good name live with *authority*” – *Timon of Athens*, 5.1.159-163; **ATTENDING** = waiting upon; “*Attending* on his golden pilgrimage” – Sonnet 7, line 8; “And will that thou henceforth *attend* on us” – the king in *2 Henry VI*, 5.1.80; “*Also my great change in giving attendance in Your Highness’ service*” – Oxford to Queen Elizabeth, May 9, 1592, BL Lansdowne MS 71.10.f.18; Chiljan, 47; “*And if it be so, what order is resolved on amongst you, either for the attending or meeting of His Majesty*” – Oxford to Robert Cecil, April 25/27, 1603, referring to King James on the eve of Elizabeth’s funeral; **CAPTAIN ILL** = Robert Cecil, now “captain” in charge of the English government and the cause of Southampton’s downfall; probably further alluded to by the use of “ILL,” echoing the last two letters of Cecil’s name (**CAPTAIN ILL** = C. [EC] IL – Alex McNeil); James VI of Scotland wrote to his ambassadors in England, telling them to give assurance of his favor “to Mr. Secretary (Cecil), *who is king there in effect*” – April 8, 1601, *The Secret Correspondence of Sir Robert Cecil with James VI King of Scotland*, edited by Edmund Goldsmid, privately printed, Edinburgh, 1887, vol. 1, p. 8; “His *captain*, steward, deputy-elect” – *Richard II*, 4.1.126; calling this a “climax” of the verse, Tyler interprets: “Evil is a victorious *captain*, with Good as a *captive* attending to grace his triumph”; “And herein I am forced, like a good and politic *captain*” – Oxford’s Prefatory Letter to *Cardanus’ Comfort*, 1573

#### 13 TIRED WITH ALL THESE, FROM THESE I WOULD BE GONE,

**ALL** = Southampton, *One for All, All for One*; **GONE** = dead;

#### 14 SAVE THAT TO DIE, I LEAVE MY LOVE ALONE.

**SAVE THAT** = except that; **MY LOVE** = my royal son; “O know, *sweet love*, I always write of you/ And *you and love* are still my argument” – Sonnet 76, lines 9-10; “Can yet the least of *my true love* control,/ Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom” – Sonnet 107, line 3-4; “If *my dear love* were but the child of state” – Sonnet 124, line 1; **ALONE** = in the Tower; the “all” and “one” Southampton’s motto

**THE PRISON YEARS**

**DAY FORTY-ONE IN THE TOWER**

**Sonnet 67**  
***Why Should He Live?***  
***His Rose is True***  
**20 March 1601**

*Upon the sparing of his son's life, Oxford's immediate reaction is to wonder why Southampton must continue to live with "infection" or criminals in the Tower. He wonders why Elizabeth should keep her heir in the shadow of disgrace, when his Rose is "true" or legitimate. The Queen is "bankrupt" of any other heirs, yet she "stores" Southampton in the Tower for a term of life. In that case, why should he live? Oxford's sonnets continue day to day, as he refers to "days long since, before these last so bad."*

Sonnet 67

Translation

Ah wherefore with infection should he live,  
 And with his presence grace impiety,  
 That sin by him advantage should achieve,  
 And lace itself with his society?

Ah, why should he live with criminals in prison,  
 And grace such traitors with his kingly presence,  
 Allowing sinners to use him to their advantage,  
 And adorn themselves with his company?

Why should false painting imitate his cheek,  
 And steal dead seeming of his living hew?  
 Why should poor beauty indirectly seek  
 Roses of shadow, since his Rose is true?

Why should his royalty be pictured falsely,  
 As if it's dead when his royal blood is alive?  
 Why should the bankrupt Elizabeth seek  
 Disgraced Tudor heirs, since his blood is real?

Why should he live, now nature bankrupt is,  
 Beggared of blood to blush through lively veins?  
 For she hath no exchequer now but his,  
 And, proud of many, lives upon his gains.

Why should he live in prison, now that Elizabeth  
 Is bankrupt of Tudor blood in any other heirs?  
 For the Queen has no source of heirs but him,  
 And perpetuate her proud line only if he succeeds.

O him she stores, to show what wealth she had,  
 In days long since, before these last so bad.

O she keeps him in the Tower, to show the heir  
 She once had, before these terrible recent days.

### Sonnet 67

#### 1 AH WHEREFORE WITH INFECTION SHOULD HE LIVE

Immediately following the last line of the previous verse: But why should he be forced to continue living in the Tower with other prisoners who are criminals or traitors, i.e., with others urging him to further rebellion; **LIVE** = “*Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv’st*,” and take deep traitors for thy dearest friends” – *Richard III*, 1.3.223-224; **WITH INFECTION** = with disgrace; with traitors; with other conspirators of the Rebellion, in the Tower; “in the company of moral corruption” – Duncan-Jones; “among the corrupt, in a corrupt society” – Booth; “moral contamination” – Riverside Shakespeare; later this year, when other conspirators of the Rebellion visit with Southampton in the Tower, Oxford will lecture his royal son to be “unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow” in Sonnet 94, line 4 (recalling “For still *temptation* follows where thou art” – Sonnet 41, line 4); and he will continue to counsel: “But if that flower (Southampton) with base *infection* meet,/ The basest weed (again Southampton, a base commoner in the Tower) outbraves his dignity” – Sonnet 94, lines 11-12, i.e., even a base commoner will surpass his own dignity by not allowing himself to be corrupted

When Essex was about to be executed, he “spoke with dignity and composure admitting, in the words of one report, ‘this my last sin, this great, this bloody, this crying, this *infectious sin*, whereby so many have for love of me been drawn to offend God, to offend their Sovereign, to offend the world.’” – Akrigg, 127

Darest thou support a publish’d *traitor*? Hence;  
Lest that the *infection* of his fortune take  
Like hold on thee.

*King Lear*, 4.6.228-230

For, sure, my thoughts do hourly prophesy  
Mischance unto my state by Suffolk’s means:  
And therefore, by His Majesty I swear,  
Whose far unworthy deputy I am,  
He shall not breathe *infection* in this air  
But three days longer, on the pain of death

*2 Henry VI*, 3.2.283-288

This royal throne of kings...  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against *infection* and the hand of war

*Richard II*, 2.1.40, 43-44

But such is the *infection* of the time  
That, for the health and physic of our right,  
We cannot deal but with the very hand  
Of stern injustice and confused wrong

*King John*, 5.2.20-24

#### 2 AND WITH HIS PRESENCE GRACE IMPIETY,

**HIS PRESENCE** = His Majesty’s presence; (“my sovereign’s presence” – *2 Henry VI*, 3.2; “The *presence of a king* engenders love amongst his subjects” – *1 Henry VI*, 3.1); **GRACE IMPIETY** = confer his royal grace upon criminals; “Please’t your Highness to *grace us with your royal company*?” – *Macbeth*, 3.4.42-43; “Ay, *gracious* sovereign” – *3 Henry VI*, 4.1; “If one so rude and of so mean condition may pass into the presence of a king, lo, I present *your grace* a traitor’s head” – *2 Henry VI*, 5.1)

### 3 THAT SIN BY HIM ADVANTAGE SHOULD ACHIEVE

So that thereby those sinners should gain advantage because of his royal presence among them; **SIN** = recalling Essex's description of his treason, when he was about to be executed, as "my last *sin*, this great, this bloody, this crying, this *infectious sin*," noted in line 1 above.

### 4 AND LACE ITSELF WITH HIS SOCIETY

And be the ones who enjoy his presence or royal company; **LACE** = adorn; literally to adorn with a texture sewed on; fasten with a string through eyelet holes; i.e., the other prisoners in the Tower are the ones who now "lace" themselves with his princely presence; "Here lay Duncan, his silver skin laced with his golden blood" – *Macbeth*, 2.3.109-110

### 5 WHY SHOULD FALSE PAINTING IMITATE HIS CHEEK

**FALSE PAINTING** = a false image or imitation of him; reports of him that fail to contain the truth; Elizabeth's own false view (and her false public depiction) of her son, i.e., hiding his identity

### 6 AND STEAL DEAD SEEING OF HIS LIVING HEW?

**DEAD SEEING** = now Southampton is seen as a base commoner, at best "Mr. Henry Wriothesley" but legally as "the late earl of Southampton," i.e., dead in the eyes of the law; Booth notes the suggestion in "dead seeing" of "a look at – a sight of – that which is "dead"; **HIS LIVING HEW** = the appearance of his living blood; **HEW** = Henry Wriothesley ("He.W."); "A man in hew all *Hews* in his controlling" – Sonnet 20, line 7

### 7 WHY SHOULD POOR BEAUTY INDIRECTLY SEEK

**POOR BEAUTY** = Elizabeth, bankrupt of heirs other than him; "For our losses, his exchequer is too *poor*" – *Henry V*, 3.6.130

Hath that <i>poor monarch</i> taught thee to insult?	3 <i>Henry VI</i> , 1.4.124
<i>Poor queen and son</i> , your labour is but lost	3 <i>Henry VI</i> , 3.1.32
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York	
Usurps the regal title and the seat	
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.	
This is the cause that <i>I, poor Margaret</i> ,	
<i>With my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir</i> ,	
<i>Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid</i>	3 <i>Henry VI</i> , 3.3.27-33
And, interchanging blows, I quickly shed	
Some of <i>his bastard blood, and in disgrace</i>	
<i>Bespoke him thus: 'Contaminated, base</i>	
<i>And misbegotten blood I spill of thine,</i>	
<i>Mean and right poor</i> , for that pure blood of mine	
Which thou didst force from Talbot, my grave boy'	1 <i>Henry VI</i> , 4.6.19-24
<i>Poor painted Queen...</i>	<i>Richard III</i> , 1.3.241

**INDIRECTLY SEEK:** The word "indirectly" suggests this reading of lines 7-8: Why should Elizabeth (and, by extension, Cecil), who has no heirs but Henry Wriothesley, be *indirectly* looking for successors of *shadow*? That is, why are they looking for someone like James – who's not in the *directly line* of succession, and is thus a *shadow* – when there exists someone – Henry Wriothesley – with a *true* claim? (Alex McNeil)

### 8 ROSES OF SHADOW, SINCE HIS ROSE IS TRUE?

**ROSES OF SHADOW** = Tudor Rose heirs (Southampton) covered by shadows of disgrace, their identities hidden; "The ghosts of dead roses" – Booth; "Presents *thy shadow* to my sightless view" – Sonnet 27, line 10; "The *region cloud* hath *masked him* from me now" – Sonnet 33, line 12; **HIS ROSE IS TRUE** = his Tudor Rose blood is genuine; "We will unite the white rose and the red" –

*Richard III*, 5.5.19; **TRUE** = related to Oxford, *Nothing Truer than Truth*; “And your *true* rights be termed a Poet’s rage” – Sonnet 17, line 11; “For he that steeps his safety in *true* blood” – *King John*, 3.3.147;

#### 9 WHY SHOULD HE LIVE? NOW NATURE BANKRUPT IS,

**NATURE** = Elizabeth; **NOW NATURE BANKRUPT IS** = Now Elizabeth is bankrupt, i.e., of any other heirs to her Tudor Rose lineage; “Since it is *bankrupt of his majesty*” – *Richard II*, 4.1.267; the imagery of her “beauty” or royal blood as “treasure” is carried forward here with the Queen as Nature, as in “*Nature’s bequest* gives nothing but doth *lend*” – Sonnet 4, line 3; and “blood” in the following line serves to secure this meaning

#### 10 BEGGARED OF BLOOD TO BLUSH THROUGH LIVELY VEINS,

**BEGGARED OF BLOOD** = without royal blood; “As to behold desert a *beggar* born” – Sonnet 66, line 2; **BLUSH THROUGH LIVELY VEINS** = flow through veins of any living heirs

#### 11 FOR SHE HATH NO EXCHEQUER NOW BUT HIS,

Continuing the treasury-royal blood metaphor; because Elizabeth has no other source of royal-blood-revenue now but her son’s possession of that blood and his ability to gain the throne; glancing also at Oxford’s annual grant of 1,000 pounds from the Queen’s Exchequer; **EXCHEQUER** = “Source of revenue, like the ‘King’s exchequer’ or treasury” – Duncan-Jones; the source of “beauty’s *treasure*” in Sonnet 6, line 4., i.e., Elizabeth’s treasure of royal blood within her son; “For our losses, his *exchequer* is too *poor*; for *th’effusion of our blood*, the muster of his kingdom too faint a number” – Henry V, 3.6.130-132; (“that if I would make him my receiver of the annuity in the *Exchequer*” – Oxford to Robert Cecil, Jan. 11, 1597; “sith Her Majesty might have had with less trouble a more perfect intelligence, and with less charge here at home, by perusing the books of the *Exchequer*” – Oxford to Burghley, June 15, 1595

“*Elizabeth, etc., to the Treasurer and Chamberlains of Our Exchequer, Greeting. We will and command you of Our treasure being and remaining from time to time within the receipt of Our Exchequer, to deliver and pay, or cause to be delivered and paid, unto Our right trusty and well beloved Cousin the Earl of Oxford, or to his assigns sufficiently authorized by him, the sum of One Thousand Pounds good and lawful money of England. The same to be yearly delivered and paid...*” - Pivy Seal Warrant, signed by Queen Elizabeth, June 26, 1586

#### 12 AND PROUD OF MANY, LIVES UPON HIS GAINS.

**PROUD OF MANY** = rich with many of her son’s royal qualities; “the sense may be ‘proud (mother) of many offspring’ – Duncan-Jones; also, Elizabeth is proud of previous English monarchs, especially her Tudor predecessors; “proud” = “swollen with many offspring” – Booth

And Bolingbroke  
Hath seized the wasteful king. O, what pity is it  
That he had not so trimm’d and dress’d his land  
As we this garden! We at time of year  
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,  
Lest, *being over-proud* [swollen] *in sap and blood*,  
With too much riches it confound itself. *Richard II*, 3.4.54-59

But rising at thy name doth point out thee  
As his triumphant prize – *proud of this pride*,  
He is contented thy poor drudge to be. Sonnet 151, lines 9-11  
To Elizabeth; re: Southampton

**LIVES UPON HIS GAINS** = Elizabeth’s own blood will live only if her son gains the throne and, thereby perpetuates her Tudor lineage; if not her blood and lineage or dynasty will die

#### 13 O HIM SHE STORES, TO SHOW WHAT WEALTH SHE HAD

**O** = Oxford; **O HIM** = Oxford and his royal son, as one; **HIM SHE STORES** = Elizabeth keeps Southampton (and his blood, which is hers) in storage, i.e., in the prison, failing to acknowledge him; **STORES** = keeps, preserves; (Booth notes overtones of “store” as an agricultural term meaning “breed livestock” or “continue or improve the breed”); also to populate, as in: “To new-store France with bastard warriors” – *Henry V*, 3.5.31; “The sacred *storehouse* of his predecessors” – *Macbeth*, 2.4.33; “How many sons has thou of mine in *store*” – *Titus Andronicus*, 1.1.97; **TO SHOW WHAT WEALTH SHE HAD** = Elizabeth keeps Southampton in prison to “show” herself the royal successor she once had; but, of course, she is not showing that to the world; **WEALTH** = royal blood in her son; “For in monarchy, the *wealth* of the prince is the riches of the commonwealth” – Oxford, March 1595, unaddressed; Cecil Papers 25.76 (Chiljan, 86); same as “treasure” in the Sonnets

**14 IN DAYS LONG SINCE, BEFORE THESE LAST SO BAD.**

**IN DAYS LONG SINCE** = prior to the Rebellion; the past golden days, when Southampton was “fair” or royal before he became “black” or disgraced; “In the *old age* black was not counted fair,/ Or if it were it bore not beauty’s name,/ But now is black beauty’s successive heir,/ And Beauty slandered by a bastard shame” - Sonnet 127, lines 1-4; **THESE LAST SO BAD** = these last agonizing days leading up to the sparing of Southampton’s life, which occurred on the previous day; also Oxford is letting us know that he is still writing these verses day-by-day; as he does on other occasions, such as: “If my slight Muse do please *these curious days*” – Sonnet 38, line 13; “For we which now behold *these present days*” – Sonnet 106, line 13; “Unless this general evil they maintain:/ All men are *bad* and in their *badness* reign” – Sonnet 121, lines 13-14; *bad* also suggesting criminal, related to treason