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ROMEO AND JULIET, AND SOME RENAISSANCE NOTIONS OF LOVE, TIME, AND DEATH

THE LITERATURE OF RENAISSANCE ENGLAND is second to none in its rich explorations of all possible manifestations of human love, in both their healthy and their distorted states. Generally speaking, when one loves God and his fellow man as Christ commanded, one loves wisely and well; one loves with entire affection. But for fallen man in a fallen world, maintaining harmonious and temperate balances in love relationships is among the most arduous of human tasks. Indeed, it is often an heroic task. It is not difficult for Spenser to assert in *The Faerie Queene* that "loue in thousand monstrous forms doth oft appear" (III, xi, 51)¹ and then to illustrate abundantly various deviations (both in degree and kind) from an ideal of love that is a compound of the classical and the Christian. If one follows Spenser's three main categories of human love: "The deare affection vnto kindred sweete", the "raging fire of loue to woman kind", and the "zeale of friends combynd with vertues meet" (*FQ*, IV, ix, 1), then one can perceive something of the variety to be found in English Renaissance literature. Under love for one's kindred, the obedience and respect that Prince Hal demonstrates for his dying father and that Juliet initially demonstrates for her mother illustrate its wholesome form; examples of its perversion are Regan's and Goneril's relationship with Lear and the incestuous brother-sister relationship of Giovanni and Annabella in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. In its healthy state, love between friends is illustrated by the friendship between Hamlet and Horatio and the friendship between Pyrocles and Musidorus in Sidney's *Arcadia*; Marlowe's Edward II and Gaveston and Spenser's Blandamour and Paridell exhibit defective friendship.

Even if one omits these two categories, there remain the numberless variations on the possible relationships under the heading of *eros*, the "raging fire of loue to woman kind." The male may love a beautiful female, struggling to bridle his passion against lust, but the female may be cold and unresponsive, proud and disdainful, as are such ladies, derived from the traditions of Petrarch and of courtly love, as Sidney's Stella and Spenser's Mirabella. Or the situation may be reversed and the male may not respond: Lodge's Glaucus (at least

at the end of *Scilla's Metamorphosis*), Spenser's Marinell initially, and Shakespeare's Adonis throughout. Or both parties may be reluctant, as—at the outset—are Beatrice and Benedick.

There are yet further variations. One may love the wrong object; in *Arcadia*, Queen Gynecia and King Basilius both wrongly love a person worthy of love, Pyrocles disguised as the female Zelmane; deceived, the Red Cross Knight loves an unworthy object, Duessa disguised as Fidessa. Or one may properly love the proper object even under the misapprehension that it is the wrong person: Philoclea, in *Arcadia*, discovers that she loves the worthy Pyrocles although she initially believes Pyrocles to be her handmaiden Zelmane and thus believes the love to be "unpossible". Olivia in *Twelfth Night* may love Cesario not knowing that Cesario is Viola, but an impossible love is suddenly made possible when Olivia marries Sebastian under the misapprehension that Sebastian is Cesario.

Although other variations are possible, there remains one kind of love that frequently excited the Renaissance poet's imagination—that erotic, heterosexual love that is intense, mutual, and short-lived. As it is treated in the *Metamorphoses*, the love between Pyramus and Thisbe (Book IV) and between Venus and Adonis (Book X) may be considered members of this informal category.² The love between Hero and Leander and between Troilus and Cressida may be considered other examples from antiquity.³ In each instance the love is generated between the lovers intensely, mutually, and except for Pyramus and Thisbe who grow up together, at first sight.

Long before Shakespeare wrote his play, there is some evidence that Romeo and Juliet were becoming associated with this company of love's martyrs. Thomas Peend in his *The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis . . . With a Moral in English Verse* (1565) lists several pairs of famous lovers, and included are Romeo and Juliet together with Hero and Leander, Pyramus and Thisbe, and Venus and Adonis. What these stories have in common for Peend is that they illustrate the "viciousness of women". Peend, along with Arthur Golding, belongs to the long list of the moralizers of Ovid's otherwise vain and amatorious tales, and he is equally willing and able to moralize the Romeo and Juliet love story as he is those he finds in Ovid. Perhaps it was inevitable that the story of Romeo and Juliet would be associated with Ovid's tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, since it "is extremely similar, on the face of it, to the story of Romeo, which also hinges on surreptitious meetings and an accidental misunderstanding leading to a double suicide."⁴ Both involve parental disapproval and death in front of a tomb in Ovid and

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within a tomb in Shakespeare. Boswell, the son of the biographer, goes so far as to wonder if, after all, the story of Romeo and Juliet "is not the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, enlarged and varied. . . ."⁵

The story of Hero and Leander also bears some similarities to the Pyramus and Thisbe story in that it ends in double death if not in double suicide, and in that there is a physical barrier, the Hellespont, between the lovers as there is the physical barrier of the wall between Pyramus and Thisbe. Although Marlowe can hardly be said to be an Ovidian moralizer, he certainly stresses the mutuality and the intensity of the (somehow innocent) attraction at first sight that Hero and Leander experience for the physical beauty of each other: "Sweet are the kisses, the embracements sweet,/When like desires and affections meet" (II, 20-30).⁶

The mutual and intense love experienced by these related pairs of lovers is scarcely an unalloyed blessing. Associated with these love stories is the notion that destiny has ordained that such love and such beauty cannot long survive in a mutable and time-ridden world; such beauty as Juliet possesses is "too rich for use, for earth too dear." Indeed, such a "moral" notion is very strongly hinted at (through the inset story of Mercury's winning the disfavour of the three sister destinies) in Marlowe's poem. Shakespeare is quite explicit on this point. In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Lysander and Hermia discuss intense, true love. Using images that appear again in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lysander's speech could easily be made to apply to the love between Romeo and Juliet:

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany [*sic*] as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion (I, i, 141-49).

In reply, Hermia admits that such is the given condition of "sympathetic" love, but she also suggests that means by which one might govern and ameliorate such fortune:

If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
 It stands as an edict in destiny:
 Then let us teach our trial patience,
 Because it is a customary cross,
 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers (I, i, 150-55).

Reflected in Hermia's speech is the Renaissance (and medieval) commonplace that it is often possible to make a virtue of necessity; it is sometimes possible for Virtue to withstand and overcome Fortune.⁷ Friar Laurence repeatedly preaches such a doctrine:

Therefore love moderately, long love doth so;
 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow (II, v, 14-15).

Juliet, too, in the first balcony scene, recognizes that the love between herself and Romeo

. . . is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden,
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
 Ere one can say "It lightens!" (II, i, 160-62).

But Shakespeare is not writing Book II of *The Faerie Queene*, nor is he dramatizing Aristotle's ethic of the golden mean or Boethius' doctrine on the goddess Fortuna. Rather, he is dramatizing the given conditions of one kind of human love. Friar Laurence, like Hermia, enunciates the moral view that such love *ought* to be tempered by reason, but Shakespeare dramatically emphasizes that such control is beyond the means of Romeo and Juliet. They can confine their passion within the bounds of holy wedlock, but they can in no way attenuate the intensity and forward rush of their passion. After all, they live in an intemperate world: witness the feud; witness the rashness of Old Capulet, Mercutio, and Tybalt. Benvolio tries to temper the wrath of the feuding parties (as Friar Laurence tries to temper the rashness of the lovers) in both the first and the second street fights, but the citizens of Verona will no more listen to him than will the lovers to Friar Laurence. Juliet does remain practical and hard-headed enough to insist on marriage before consummation, but the contract of love between Romeo and Juliet cannot be faithfully executed in a world of time, and recklessly they draw up a second contract, "a dateless bargain to engrossing Death!" (V. iii, 115).⁸ The second contract they fulfil as they faithfully, albeit rashly, follow each other into death.

The advantage of seeing the love of Romeo and Juliet as a familiar type of love with certain given conditions is that we may then recognize that, throughout his play, Shakespeare makes two thematic emphases simultaneously. The love between Romeo and Juliet is true and intense star-crossed love, and at the same time it is intemperate and rash. Fortune smiles on the lovers in granting them true love, but Fortune darkly compounds what she gives by setting their love in the context of the feud which makes all the more necessary their love's prudent and temperate management. Their love is, at once, both the smile and the frown of Fortune. In Arthur Golding's famous translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567) there are two very similar emphases for the love between Pyramus and Thisbe. Their love, the dying Thisbe tells us, is "chaste and stedfast",⁹ but in an introductory comment Golding also tells us that "the piteous tale of Pyramus and Thisbe doth containe / The headlong force of frenetick loue whose end is wo and payne."¹⁰

It is precisely in stressing both viewpoints equally and simultaneously that Shakespeare's version of the Romeo and Juliet story is unique.¹¹ The other two most popular Elizabethan versions of the story stress only one or only the other. In the preface to his *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), generally considered to be the major source of Shakespeare's play, Brooke asserts that the story illustrated the tragical end of those who abuse "the honorable name of lawefull mariage."¹² This moralization seems to be as arbitrarily extrapolated from the text of the poem as many of Golding's moralizations seem to be. Brooke apparently is aware of no contradiction when, near the end of his poem, he follows his sources in referring to the love of Romeo and Juliet as "so perfect, sound and so approued loue" (1. 3012). The other well-known version of the story appears as the twenty-fifth novella in the second tome of William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* (1567), from which Shakespeare may have taken the detail about the two and forty hours of the duration of the potion Friar Laurence gives Juliet. Painter's prose version, like Brooke's metrical version, is mainly based on the French prose version of Boaistuau; the phraseology is often very close.¹³ And Boaistuau translates the Italian of Bandello, who probably has it from Luigi da Porto's version of about 1530. Painter's thematic emphasis is that of the Italian and French versions and is suggested in his title: "The goodly History of the true and constant Loue between Rhomeo and Iulietta, the one of whom died of Poyson, and the other of sorrow, and heuinesse: wherein be comprysed many aduentures of Loue, and other deuises touchinge the same." In all these pre-Shakespearean versions, the action of the story is extended over several months,

and there is no suggestion that the love is rash and intemperate; it is only star-crossed. Shakespeare does not hold up Brooke's mirror of "unhonest desire", nor does he hold up a mirror that reflects only "true and constant Loue". Rather, he condenses the action to a few days, and perhaps taking a cue from Golding's moralization of the Pyramus and Thisbe story, he holds up a mirror of greater optical refinement, one that more nearly reflects a whole picture, a mirror of a love that is *both* constant and rash.

The dual and simultaneous thematic emphasis that Shakespeare gives the love story in *Romeo and Juliet* is paralleled and reinforced by the dualistic thematic role played by time. That time was popularly conceived during the Renaissance as both a destroyer and a healer has recently been thoroughly studied and documented.¹⁴ Time may be one, the other, or both at once, as Shakespeare's Lucrece explicitly acknowledges in her apostrophe: "O Time, thou tutor both to good and bad" (l. 955). In her long catalogue amplifying the functions and powers of time, Lucrece addresses it variously as an

Eater of youth, slave to false delight,
Base watch of woes, sin's pack-horse, virtue's snare;
Thou nursest all and murder'st all that are (ll. 927-29).

But in the succeeding stanzas, Lucrece dwells on the regenerative powers of time:

Time's office is to fine the hate of foes;
To eat up errors by opinion bred,
Not spend the dowry of a lawful bed.

Time's glory is to calm contending kings,
To unmask falsehood and bring truth to light,
To stamp the seal of time in aged things,
To wrong the wronger till he render right (ll. 937-43).

Despite his apparent mastery, Time, Lucrece concludes (as do Spenser and Milton), is, in reality, a "ceaseless lackey to eternity" (l. 967).

In *Romeo and Juliet*, time performs several of the functions listed by Lucrece. Destructively, it eats up youth (Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet), but constructively, it "fines" the hate of foes. The fine the feuding families pay for their hatred is the deaths of their children, who are, in Capulet's phrase, "Poor sacrifices of our enmity!" (V, iii, 304). And that fine

writes *finis* to the feud. And in still another role, time not only dissevers the lovers and leads to death, but Death timelessly joins what in a temporal world was consumed even as it united, an idea associated not only with the Romeo and Juliet story but also with the Pyramus and Thisbe and the Hero and Leander stories. In da Porto's version, the dying Giulietta begs Friar Lorenzo "by the love I have spoken of, that you pray our unhappy parents, in the name of both of us, not to object to leaving in the same sepulcher those whom love burned in one fire and led to one death."⁵¹ Similarly, in Golding's translation, the dying Thisbe prays that one grave may join together what the wall and the enmity of the parents divided in life (IV, 185-91). Donne's epigram on Pyramus and Thisbe plays with the same idea: "Two by themselves, each other, love and fear / Slain, cruel friends by parting have join'd here." And in his epigram on Hero and Leander, Donne uses the same idea: "Both robb'd of air, we both lie in one ground, / Both whom one fire had burn'd, one water drowned."

Romeo and Juliet, unable to follow Friar Laurence's teaching to wait out time and "to drink adversity's sweet milk, Philosophy" (III, iii, 55), are propelled into their love for each other with a force that dominates their wills and that permits time to propel them into death. Juliet urges time to "gallop apace"; time will bring her lover to her, but time will take him away again. To be eternally joined, they must escape the sublunar world where time has dominion. Thus the marriage of Romeo and Juliet, their union in time, leads to their union outside time.

There is much talk in the play about those forces that have power to overrule man's will and to turn marriages into funerals.¹⁶ Romeo and Juliet repeatedly see themselves at the mercy of forces more powerful than they—the stars, destiny, accident, fortune. Even Friar Laurence refers to "A greater power than we can contradict" (V, iii, 153), but he does not give it a specific name. But the contraries of the love of Romeo and Juliet, and the contrary effects that time and fortune work upon the lovers, imply a kind of balance in the larger order of things, and it remains for Prince Escalus in the closing lines of the play to identify that larger balancing power as providence: "See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate, / That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love" (V, ii, 292-3). In seeing that heaven has had a hand in the reversals, ironies, and contradictions, the Prince is merely affirming the Renaissance view that "ultimately fortune herself is, like nature, the tool of God and the educator of man."¹⁷

The love of Romeo and Juliet, because it is rash as well as being true,

contains the power to redeem time and to conquer death. Although sonnet 116 speaks of "the marriage of true minds" (certainly a more idealized and more mature love than that between Romeo and Juliet), Shakespeare asserts that "Love's not Time's fool", but instead endures "even to the edge of doom"—that is, it will last as long as time lasts, until the day of judgment. In his excellent study of Shakespeare's sonnets, J. B. Leishman discovers that "In no other poet, perhaps in no other great secular writer except Plato, do we find such defiance of the world of Time and Appearance (*phainomena*) as we do in Shakespeare." Part of Leishman's thesis is that when Shakespeare was writing some of his earlier sonnets "He was too much afraid of the tyranny of Time and too little aware of the growing and counteracting power of Love. He did not then realise (or sufficiently realise) that Love, no less than Time, does not stand still."¹⁸ Similarly, Romeo and Juliet seem to have little faith that the destructive effects of time can be nullified by sustained love, and no awareness at all that time can heal as well as destroy.

Nonetheless, the truth and constancy of the love of Romeo and Juliet afford its power to redeem their parents' hatred and to achieve some sort of victory over time: the lovers are to be memorialized by a pair of statues made of pure gold, and they are to secure a greater degree of literary fame and immortality by means of Shakespeare's play.¹⁹ But these redemptive powers of love and time manifest themselves only ironically, in ways which the lovers certainly never foresaw and in ways which Friar Laurence never anticipated. The love of Romeo and Juliet dissolves the hatred of the feud through the means of time and love as Friar Laurence originally intended, but also, ironically, through the means of death which the Friar sought to avoid. Rather than narrowly moralize about wanton women as Peend does, or about the perversion of marriage as Brooke does, or about the woeful end of intemperate lovers as Golding does, Shakespeare dramatically reveals that one thing (love) can turn out to be something quite different (death), but that, on second look, the second thing can turn back again into the first. Time conquers love, but Shakespeare seems to take the Virgilian precept, *omnia amor vincit*, quite literally, so that love may conquer—at least outwit—time. As Capulet observes when he discovers his daughter apparently dead, "And all things change them to the contrary" (IV, v, 90).

In his first speech in the play,²⁰ Friar Laurence draws an analogy between nature and man. Earth is both womb and tomb of its fruits, and in all of earth's fruits, "Poison hath residence, med'cine power." Man, too, is fruit of the earth, and he too is compounded of contraries, of medicine and poison,

of "Grace and rude Will." Thus, "Virtue itself turns vice being misapplied, / And vice sometime by action dignified" (II, ii, 17-18.) Here again Shakespeare echoes Renaissance commonplaces about the mixture of contraries that comprise the fallen world. *Euphues*, for example, is replete with illustration of the doctrine: "for neither is there anything but that hath his contraries."²¹ Spenser, in sonnet 26, has "So every sweet with sour tempered still." In Paradox 7, Donne tells us "yet we see physicians allow some virtue in every poison." Francis Quarles' Emblem 7 (Book 2) gives a fuller illustration:

All things are mixt; the usefull with the vaine;
The good with bad; the noble with the vile;
The world's an Ark, wherein things pure and grosse
Present their losseful gain, and gainfull losse,
Where ev'ry dram of Gold contains a pound of drosse.

Probably the roots of this viewpoint lie in the Augustinian view of evil as the absence of good. Whatever the source, this essentially medieval idea remains active in the Renaissance, animating both popular thought and literature. If something is not wholly good, then some of it is bad; good and bad are so inextricably intermixed in the fallen world that it is impossible to have one without the other, and thus Milton can argue in *Aereopagitica* that as a result of the Fall man can know good only by knowing evil.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, as in a great deal of the literature of the English Renaissance, love, time, and death all play ambivalent roles. The playwright carefully shows that the love between Romeo and Juliet is simultaneously praiseworthy and blameworthy, that time works simultaneously against and for the lovers, and that simultaneously their deaths represent a kind of gain as well as a poignant if not a tragic loss. As twentieth-century readers of Renaissance literature, we must be constantly alert not to fall into an easy either-or trap inimical to a clear understanding of what we read. *Romeo and Juliet* is not unique when it stresses that the natural and human condition is one simultaneously compounded of both good and bad, and as readers and viewers of the play, we must have energy enough to respond to a sense of opposites simultaneously sustained. But in being alert to a viewpoint that stresses the contraries that exist within a unity, we must also distinguish between the explicit exposition of the idea and the urgency and power with which Shakespeare dramatizes this theme. During the two hours' traffic of his stage he presents the rash albeit true love that leads to the dis severing albeit

unifying deaths of Romeo and Juliet in a fallen world where good is compounded and constantly interchanging with evil and where time can renew as well as destroy.

NOTES

1. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser* (Oxford, 1912). All line references are to this edition and are cited in the text.
2. Although Ovid emphasizes Venus's passion, clearly Adonis is not reluctant as he is in Shakespeare's poem. On the tradition of a reluctant Adonis, see Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition*, new rev. ed. (New York, 1963), pp. 141-144.
3. Although they are not youthful lovers in the throes of first passion, Antony and Cleopatra in the intensity and mutuality of their love and in their love-death may perhaps be admitted to this company.
4. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, 1959), p. 142, n. 25.
5. *Variorum Shakespeare*, ed. H. H. Furness, 10th ed. (Philadelphia, 1899), p. 398.
6. Some of the images suggest links between Shakespeare's play and Marlowe's poem. "Love performing night" will bring Romeo to Juliet, and he will be her "day in night" (III, ii, 17) just as for Marlowe's martyrs to love, "dark night is Cupid's day" (I, 191). There will be "Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light" (I, ii, 25) at Capulet's feast, and in Marlowe's poem, the streets of Sestos "Like to a firmament, / Glistered with breathing stars" (I, 87-88). Throughout this paper all quotations of Shakespeare are from Hardin Craig's edition of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1951) and are cited in the text. The text of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* is that appearing in Hebel and Hudson's *Poetry of the English Renaissance* (New York, 1929).
7. For discussion and ample illustration of this doctrine in the Renaissance, see Samuel C. Chew, *The Pilgrimage of Life* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 64-69. In *Hero and Leander*, however, Marlowe flatly denies that man has any such power: "For will in us is over-ruled by fate" (I, 168). Further, love "resisted once, grows passionate, / And nothing more than counsel lovers hate" (II, 139-40).
8. Romeo seals the bargain with "a righteous kiss". Chew points out that in Renaissance thinking all mortals have a contract with death which they must abide by, having violated God's command (*Pilgrimage of Life*, p. 245).
9. *Shakespeare's Ovid Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the "Metamorphoses"*, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (Carbondale, 1961), IV, 189.

10. *Ibid.*, The Epistle, ll. 109-110.
11. One of the most influential views of *Romeo and Juliet* is that the play is a tragedy of speed and accident and that Shakespeare is portraying the passion and mystery of blinding young love, "suddenly ignited, and as swiftly quenched". See Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 312. More recent studies stress the ironies, contraries, paradoxes, and reversals in the structure and the language of the play. A view consonant in a general way with the one presented in this paper is that the play deals with "the wholeness and complexity of things, in contrast with a partial and simple view" (Lawrence Bowling, "The Thematic Framework of *Romeo and Juliet*", *PMLA*, LXIV (1949), 198). For a psychological study of the play as "a dynamic image of the impulsive-inhibited ambivalence of the human psyche itself", see Stephen A. Shapiro, "*Romeo and Juliet*: Reversals, Contraries, Transformations, and Ambivalence", *College English*, XXV (April, 1964), 498-501.
12. Arthur Brooke, *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London and New York, 1957), I, 284.
13. For texts of both Brooke's and Painter's version and a discussion of their relationships with Boastuau, see *Origins and Analogues*, Part I, ed. P. A. Daniel, New Shakspeare Society (London, 1875). For my comments on the relevance of the time schemes in the earlier versions to the time scheme (only apparently consistent) in Shakespeare's play, see "Remnants of Earlier Time Schemes in *Romeo and Juliet*", *Papers on Language & Literature*, II (Summer, 1966), 253-58.
14. Chew, pp. 12-22. Time is both a destroyer and a "nurse and breeder of all good." Chew also examines the relationships between Death and Time. They are often iconographically represented as partners, the one with a skull, the other with a scythe. When Time goes, Death comes (pp. 247-50).
15. *Romeo and Giulietta* in *The Palace of Pleasure: An Anthology of the Novella*, eds. Maurice Valency and Harry Levstow (New York, 1960), p. 150.
16. For example, Romeo's speech at I, iv, 106-113 and Juliet's remark, "Alack, alack, that heaven should practise strategems / Upon so soft a subject as myself!" (III, v, 211-12), as well as the speeches by Old Capulet and Friar Laurence at the end of Act IV when Juliet is discovered apparently dead.
17. E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London, 1943), p. 56.
18. J. B. Leishman, *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York, 1961), pp. 108, 104.
19. The literary immortality gained by Romeo and Juliet is stressed even in the earliest versions of da Porto, Bandello, and Boastuau, and is apparently meant to begin the re-telling of the story by the Friar. In da Porto, Friar Lorenzo is made to re-tell the whole story at the end; in addition, the story is to be carved

on the monument erected to the lovers. In Boaistuau, Brooke, and Painter, many epitaphs honouring the lovers' deaths are to be carved on a tomb or a monument. Following is Brooke's version:

And lest that length of time might from our myndes remoue
 The memory of so perfect, sound and so approued loue,
 The bodies dead, remoued from vaulte where they did dye
 In stately tombe or pillars great of marble rayse they hye
 On euery syde aboue were set, and eke beneath,
 Great store of cunning Epitaphes, in honour of theyr death (ll. 3011-16).

20. See R. M. Frye's illuminating discussion of this speech in his *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 216-19.
21. John Lyly, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* in *Elizabethan Fiction*, eds. Robert Ashley and Edwin M. Mosely (New York, 1953), p. 103.

LONG RETURN

John V. Hicks

The rooms could do with a good dusting. Age
 taints the nostrils. The bread has taken mould.
 Expiry date of an old subscription
 is uncertain; papers require to be sorted.
 What touch triggered the drawn blind
 will never be known. It was long since, before
 the settling of the dust shower. Winter sun
 seeped in, printing day by declining day
 its restricted circuit there on the panels
 of the north wall. That so pallid a light
 should have faded the fine finish where it fell
 speaks of a persistent penetration, asks
 what and to what purpose in the year's strengthening
 has time traced in an empty room. There was a tale
 out of time that faltered and fell silent here.
 Let it be seen what virtue is in a change
 of air, in sound of the wound clock set to
 take up ticks of talk it took from other hours.