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OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

The Complete Sonnets
and Poems

Edited by
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This and the following sonnet (linked in a cycle of woe by their opening word) make use of the conventions of complaint: the lover is isolated and apparently deprived of all means of comfort until thoughts of the friend dispel his gloom.

- 1 in disgrace out of favour
Fortune is capitalized as in Q.
 men's eyes the opinions of the many
- 3 bootless fruitless, vain
- 5 one more rich in hope (a) someone with better prospects of material success; (b) someone blessed by having a greater capacity for hope
- 6 Featured having his (beautiful) looks like him, like him The repetition of the end of one clause at the start of the next (*anadiplosis*) locks the poet into his desire to resemble others.
- 7 scope mental range (*OED* s.v. 'scope' n.² 6a; first cited usage); perhaps also 'The subject, theme, argument chosen for treatment' (*OED* 3a); and 'opportunity or liberty to act' (*OED* 7a); hence the poet

envies both the potential skill ('art') and freedom of others as well as their actual range of achievement.

- 10 Haply by chance (and also 'happily')
- 11 (Like . . . arising) The parentheses are placed as in Q. Many editors extend them to include *From sullen earth* on the grounds that it is a lark rather than an abstract *state* which arises from the *sullen* (i.e. heavy, dark, melancholy) earth. *Earth*, however, can convey the sense of 'mortal nature' in this period. As punctuated here the phrase suggests a sudden uplifting of the spirit from its clayey lodging, which none the less still retains its grip on the poet: he sings hymns at heaven's gate, but *from* a position on earth.
- 12 sings The sound of the word is anticipated in 'despising' and 'arising', making the poem at this point 'fairly carol' (Vendler).
- 14 kings Q does not use possessive apostrophes, so its form 'kings' also encompasses the possessive plural 'kings'.

29

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state 10
 (Like to the lark at break of day arising)
 From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate.
 For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

11-12 (Like . . . arising) . . . earth] Q; (~ . . . ~ ^ ~) MALONE; ^ ~ . . . ~ ^ ~, GILDON 1714 13 remembered] Q (remembered) 14 kings] Q; kings' OXFORD (*con*); Wells)