

Mila University Center

Lesson Five: Sonnet 9 by William Shakespeare

Academic Year 2024/2025

Lecturer: Dr Laouar

Sonnet 9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
That thou consum'st thyself in single life?
Ah, if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
The world will wail thee like a makeless wife;

The world will be thy widow and still weep
That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
When every private widow well may keep,
By children's eyes, her husband's shape in mind.

Look what an unthrift in the world doth spend
Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it;
But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
And, kept unused, the user so destroys it.

No love toward others in that bosom sits
That on himself such murd'rous shame commits.

Analysis Stanza One :

Shakespeare opens the first stanza by a rhetorical question, asking the young man whether they are refusing to procreate for fear of causing grief to their widow. Then, he proceeds by stating that the whole world would grieve his death like a widow because they would lose the legacy of the beauty of the young man.

Stanza two:

The poet develops the first quatrain further, personifying the whole world as a widow who mourns the death of their loved one. In this case, the world mourns the loss of the young man because they will not have a living reminder of his extraordinary beauty.

Stanza Three:

The poet in this stanza compares the young man to an unthrift. While the money that an unthrift spends still circulates around the world for other people to enjoy it, the young man's beauty would be wasted if it is left unused.

Couplet:

In this stanza, the poet compares the young man to murderer as he destroys his own potential legacy of beauty.