

## SONNET 23

William Shakespeare

As an unperfect actor on the stage,  
Who with his fear is put beside his part,  
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,  
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;  
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say  
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,  
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,  
O'ercharg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.  
O! let my looks be then the eloquence  
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,  
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,  
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.  
O! learn to read what silent love hath writ:  
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.