

Sonnet 116: Let me not to the marriage of true minds
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Critical Appreciation: Shakespeare's sonnets are our life's breath, the sole delight of our existence, the passion of our much agonized soul. William Wordsworth says of Shakespeare's sonnets: "With this key/ Shakespeare unlocked his heart." The poem is read as a paean to ideal and eternal love. The sonnet defines love. In the first quatrain the speaker says that love is the union of true minds. Love, the marriage of true minds is perfect and unchanging. It does not admit impediments. It does not with the change of circumstances. In the second stanza, the poet says that love is a polestar to the lost ships (wandering barks). Love does not succumb to the storms. It is not susceptible to time. Though beauty fades in time as rosy lips and cheeks come within "his bending sickle's compass," love does not change with hours and weeks: instead, it "bears it out even to the edge of doom." In the couplet, the speaker affirms and declares that if his statements about love are wrong, he must never have written a word, and no man can ever have been in love.

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonnet_116

<http://www.shakespeares-sonnets.com/sonnet/116>