

# Sonnet 4: Unthrifty Loveliness, Why Dost Thou Spend

## by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare's Sonnet 4, "**Unthrifty Loveliness, Why Dost Thou Spend**" is one of the first seventeen sonnets out of 154 sonnets. Like the first three sonnets, this sonnet also carries the theme of procreation and the Fair Youth sequence once again. Here, again the poet addresses the Fair Youth and tries to force him to have a wife and carry on his lineage.

In the first quatrain, the poet addresses the Fair Youth. The poet asks the Fair Youth why he is spending his beauty on himself. Why has he confined his beauty to himself? The poet says that Nature gives us gifts only at the time of birth. It is the birth of the ones we are conferred at that time. However, Nature is not ready to lend to those who are generous with their own beauty. So, he should be ready to transfer his beauty to the next generations in the form of his beautiful children.

In the second quatrain, the poet asks the Fair Youth why he is spoiling and marring this beautiful and generous gift of beauty that he has been given. He asks why his friend is wasting his beauty on himself and not getting ready to transfer to the coming generations. Then, the poet asks his friend why he has pledged with himself to be a bad shareholder. He has been given this beauty to share with others i.e. his children. Here, the poet calls his friend a moneylender i.e. a usurer who has a lot of money, deals with others in the form of money but never gets back enough money to live on. In the same way, his friend will not be able to live on through his children after he is gone.

In the third quatrain, we see the poet addressing and convincing his friend to marry and have beautiful children. If he does not transfer his beauty to the coming generations, his beauty would be a waste of beauty. The poet says that there is no reason for his friend to remain alone and die with their beauty by confining to himself.

In the last two lines of the poem, the poet says that his friend will never be ready to use and transfer his beauty. That's what compels the reader to say so. "**Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee.**" His friend's beauty will be overwhelming and gifted if his friend gets ready to procreate.

## Structure of the Poem:

This sonnet is a typical Shakespearean sonnet. It has three quatrains and one couplet. William Shakespeare has used literary devices. The first and most prominent literary device is personification.

Personification is a device in which ideas are treated as if they were human beings having human qualities. We can give the example of personification used by William Davies in his poem, "Leisure." The poet uses "Beauty's Glance" as personification in the form of a beautiful girl. In the sonnet under discussion, the poet has used "Nature" as personification. The poet believes that nature gives us gifts at birth. He believes that nature calls on us to give something inhumane that must have human-like characteristics.

## **The Theme of the Poem:**

Like all the other sonnets i.e. 1-17, this sonnet has also the theme of procreation. The poet urges his friend to marry and have children. The poet declares his beauty a waste of beauty if he does not marry and produce his children to transfer his beauty to the coming generations. The second major theme is of beauty. The poet stresses the idea that one who is beautiful must transfer one's beauty to one's coming generations.