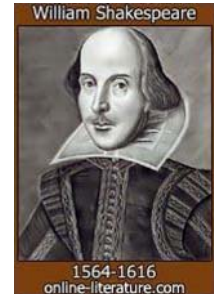


Shakespeare's Language

I. Pronouns

In Shakespeare's time, pronouns for *you* and *your* were as follows:

Thou = you (subject)
Thee = you (direct object, indirect object, obj. of the prep)
Thy = your
Thine = your, yours
Thyself = yourself



Exercise A

Rewrite the following sentences in modern language:

1. Three civil brawls have been caused by thee, Old Capulet.
2. Death, where is thy sting?
3. Thou must respect my will.
4. Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is taken away.
5. Thou *art as glorious as the night.
6. What man art thou that accidentally hears me?
7. There is more danger in thine eye than from twenty swordsmen.
8. I did give thee my promise before thou gave me thine.
9. Drink to me only with thine eyes.
10. Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

II. Verbs

In modern English we have changed the endings on verbs from *-th* and *-eth* to *-s* or *-es*. We have also dropped the endings of *-t* and *-st* that were once part of some verbs. Note the following examples:



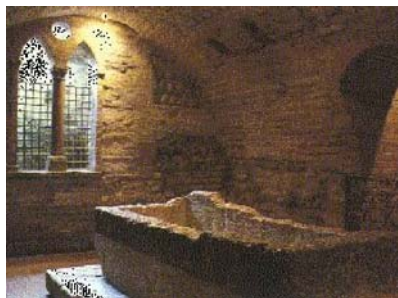
Dost (dust) = do, does
Doth (duth) = does
*Art = are
Camest = came
Found'st = found
Think'st = think
Loveth = loves

Wilt = will
Shalt = shall
Mayst = may
Hath = has
Spakest = spoke
Darest = dare
Canst = can

Exercise B

Rewrite the following sentences into modern English. Be sure to change both the verbs and the pronouns.

1. Thou art my true love.
2. Canst thou give me thy heart?
3. Wilt thou exchange thy love with me?
4. What, art thou hurt?
5. Thou wilt lie upon the wings of night.
6. What devil art thou, thou dost torment me so?
7. Spakest thou of Juliet?
8. Go, get thee to thy lover.
9. Wilt thou be gone?
10. If thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.
11. Earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she.
12. Thou shalt be my own true love.
13. He prayeth best who loveth best all creatures great and small.
14. She hath foresworn to love.
15. And, art thou changed?



III. *Contractions*

While we still use certain contractions today such as *isn't* for *is not*, *aren't* for *are not*, or *it's* for *it is*, Shakespeare used many more. Note the following examples of contractions he used most often:

Ere = before
E'er = ever
Ne'er = never
'Twill = it will
'Tis = it is

Ta'en = taken
E'en = even
O'er = over
Oft = often

Exercise C

Rewrite the following sentences into modern language. Be sure to change pronouns, verbs, and contractions

1. 'Tis a pity you lived at odds so long.
2. I wilt answer thee by saying o'er what I said before.
3. Is it e'en so?
4. I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks.
5. With love's light wings didst I o'erperch these walls.
6. I gave thee mine ere thou didst request it.
7. Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.
8. 'Tis not so deep as a well, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.
9. Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.
10. I ne'er saw beauty ere now.

IV. *Archaic words*

Some words which were used in Shakespeare's time are no longer part of our regular vocabulary. These old, relatively unused words are called archaic words. Note the following examples:



Henceforth = from now on
Fain = gladly
Lest = for fear that
Hence = away, go away, later
Aye (I as in bike) = yes
Whither = where
Thither = there
Wherefore = why
Woo = speak of love
(marriage)
Wrought = made, brought
about

Beseech = beg
Visor = mask
Weal = well being
Woe = sadness, trouble
Chide = scold
Procure = send
Naught = nothing
Aught = anything
Marry = exclamation of
surprise such as Goodness!
Or gracious!

Exercise D

Change the following sentences into modern language:

1. How camest thou hither, and wherefore?
2. Fain would I deny what I have spoke.
3. I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay so thou wilt woo.
4. Oh, let us hence. I stand on haste.
5. Aye, aye, a scratch—marry, 'tis enough.
6. Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself?
7. What unaccustomed cause procures her hither?
8. Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
9. Death, that hath ta'en her hence, ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.
10. Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar? How doth my lady?
11. Thou knowest my lodgings. Hire post horses. I will hence tonight.
12. Come hither, man. I see thou art poor.
13. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.
14. A fair assembly. Wither should they come?
15. Call me but love and henceforth I ne'er will be Romeo.

