1. Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur’d piteous overthrows
Doth, with their death, bury their parents’ strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark’d love,
And the continuance of their parents’ rage,
Which, but their children’s end, naught could remove,
Is now the two hours’ traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

2. Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew.
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the furthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora’s bed,
Away from the light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out
And makes himself an artificial night:
Black and portentous must this humour prove,
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

3. Well, in that hit you miss: she’ll not be hit
With Cupid’s arrow; she hath Dian’s wit;
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm’d,
From love’s weak childish bow she lives unharm’d.
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold:
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor,
That when she dies with beauty dies her store.

4. Where shall we dine? O me! What fray was here?
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.
Here’s much to do with hate, but more with love.
Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
O any thing, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
5. If I profane with my unworthiest hand
   This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:
   My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
   To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

   Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
   Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
   For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
   And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

   Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

   Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

   O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;
   They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

   Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

   Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

6. What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,
   As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

7. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
   But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.

8. What say you? Can you love the gentleman?
   This night you shall behold him at our feast;
   Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,
   And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;
   Examine every married lineament,
   And see how one another lends content
   And what obscured in this fair volume lies
   Find written in the margent of his eyes.
   This precious book of love, this unbound lover,
   To beautify him, only lacks a cover:
   The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride
   For fair without the fair within to hide:
   That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,
   That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;
   So shall you share all that he doth possess,
   By having him, making yourself no less.

9. A man, young lady! lady, such a man
   As all the world -- why, he's a man of wax.

   Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.
10. O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;
Her wagon-spokes made of long spiders' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The traces of the smallest spider's web,
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams,
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,
Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat,
Not so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love.

11. True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air
And more inconstant than the wind, who wooes
Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

12. I fear, too early: for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,
Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen.

13. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

14. My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!