

Sonnets: Dreaming

by Pennfana

"And so, I see thee only in my dreams,/ Who I wish were yet in my waking life."

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Take 1: "A Dream of Thee"

I wonder, sometimes, how it came to this,
That in my mind's eye, all that I can see
When in my nightly wand'rings' tranquil bliss
I never see more than a dream of thee.
Thou never strayest from my thoughts for long,
And longing thoughts yet shake me to the core—
How could that love of mine e'er have been wrong
Enough to separate us evermore?
And so, I see thee only in my dreams,
Who I wish were yet in my waking life.
I miss thee more than I know that it seems;
If thou had asked, I would have been thy wife.
And yet, thou treasured not my love for thee;
Our separation, therefore, pleaseth me.

Take 2: "A Dream of You" in Modern English

I wonder, sometimes, how it came to this,

That in my mind's eye, all that's in my view
When in my nightly journey's tranquil bliss
I never see more than a dream of you.
You never stray far from my thoughts for long,
And longing thoughts unnerve me deeply, friend—
How could my love for you ever be wrong
Enough that I will not see you again?
And so, I see you only in my dreams,
Though I wish you were in my waking life.
I miss you more than I know that it seems;
If you had asked, I would have been your wife.
And yet, my love meant nothing to your heart;
Therefore, I'm truly pleased that we're apart.

Author's Notes: I know that it seems a bit redundant to have essentially written the same poem twice, but I wanted to do a bit of experimentation. I wanted to see if I could write a poem in an older form of English and then translate it accurately into the way it's currently spoken. It was surprisingly difficult to do, and I'm afraid a bit did get lost in translation; lines five and seven, as well as the final couplet, gave me the most trouble.

"A dream of thee" isn't my phrase, by the way. It comes from a poem by John Donne called "The Good Morrow", which is one of my favourites. The line itself is "If ever any beauty I did see/And desired and got, 'twas but a dream of thee." Donne himself is my favourite poet; his work is extremely clever. In fact, Donne's poetry often reminds me of my favourite painting—I could look at it again and again and come away with some new insight or train of thought every single time.

In any case, this particular phrase is actually the reason why I attempted to put this poem into Elizabethan English first; it just sort of popped into my mind once I woke up from my most recent dream of him. I hope I haven't butchered the language of Donne, Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson *too* badly.