Breaking the Book Known as Q

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Readers, in fact, never confront abstract, idealized texts detached from any materiality. They hold in their hands or perceive objects and forms whose structures and modalities govern their reading or hearing, and consequently the possible comprehension of the text read or heard.

—Roger Chartier

O let my books be then the eloquence . . .

—“23” Shakespeare Sonnets

IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF HER ART OF SHAKESPEARE’S SONNETS, Helen Vendler tells a little white lie: “I have reprinted both the 1609 quarto Sonnets and a modernized version of my own” (xiii). The crux of this declaration is “reprinted.” Vendler does indeed print a version of the 1609 quarto—or “Q,” as it is referred to bibliographically; one could even say that she “reprints” the type of the quarto. Vendler does not, however, “reprint” the 1609 quarto Sonnets. Like nearly every modern editor before her, Vendler presents the poems as discrete units on a page, eliding and ignoring the page breaks that so often—and, I will argue, so meaningfully—interrupt the poems. In “reprinting” these poems, Vendler uses a deft cut-and-paste method to rearrange, re-member, and reconstitute the type of the 1609 quarto into uninterrupted material units, into what we would visually recognize as “sonnets.” The result of Vendler’s seemingly innocuous editorial decision is profound. On her page, the sonnets appear as and in

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a visual totality (fig. 1, Vendler’s presentation of sonnet 55; cf. figs. 2 and 3, poem 55 as it appears in the 1609 quarto). Girded by an architecture of white space that focuses our visual as well as our interpretive gaze on the type, Vendler’s poems are presented in a form that accentuates their status as visual objects. Thus, the materiality of this presentation reinforces and even produces the strict poetic form so often associated with the sonnet. Implicitly, and perhaps insidiously, Vendler’s sonnets argue that material form recapitulates poetic form. Yet to reach this end, Vendler has significantly altered the materiality of the 1609 quarto by quieting its conspicuous interruptions.

Advocating a reading practice that might seem at first unusual, dubious, or even nonsensical, this essay considers a series of questions about the relations between material presentation and poetic meaning. In truth, the 1609 quarto evinces a far more complex relation between materiality and poetic form than Vendler’s edition allows us to see; *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* renders its poems as both concrete and fluid material objects. Through a nonuniform, seemingly arbitrary imposition of page breaks, several quarto poems appear clipped, severed, and fractured; others are preserved and monumentalized in the field of the page. Given this, and cribbing from *Random Cloud*, this essay will “scrutinize the evidence visually, spatially, even topologically” (61) and consider how the quarto’s breaks, breaches, fissures, disruptions, and interruptions matter. What happens when the sonnet—that paragon of structured, disciplined poetic unity—is cut in two? What textual effects do such breaks enact? What might it mean to read across the fold—to read, that is, the openings of this book? In addressing these questions, this essay will limn the ways that our epistemologies of poetic form seem blind to the visual registers through which that form is experienced or expressed.

As one recent sonnet critic urges, “we must first remember that a sonnet is a very highly coded form of text. The peculiarity of its code is that it combines to an unusual degree visibility of formal elements (due in part to its inflexible brevity) and an organized cumulative system of intertextuality” (Kuin 29; my emphasis). The status of a sonnet’s formal elements (e.g., rhyme scheme, number of lines) is thus linked inextricably to its material presentation and, by extension, to its visual recognition and readerly reception. But, as this essay will suggest, the critical history of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* evinces several moments in which readerly expectations have exceeded or ignored the material-visual presentation of the book known as Q—Vendler being but the latest in a distinguished line of critics to have done so. At stake in such a critical history are a series of pressing issues: issues of authorship, textual authority, the recognition of poetic form, the history and sociology of reading practices, and, finally, the very idea of literature. Thus, by underscoring how the 1609 quarto’s breaks might matter and mean, and by affirming that the page and the page break are units of meaning with particularly urgent implications, this essay argues for a reading practice that is attentive to both the materiality of the 1609 *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* and the effect of that materiality on the early modern scene of reading.

The Matter with Q

Even the most casual reader approaches a collection of sonnets with a set of expectations about the poetic form those sonnets should take. As one commonplace definition suggests, a sonnet is a “lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme” (Abrams 290). The pithiness and iterability of this definition bespeak the assumptions of continuity, stability, and fixity that attend—and produce—sonnets. The existence of such strict conventions suggests that a modern reader’s encounter with a sonnet is
determined in advance, that our reading is always and already guided by the proscriptive, disciplining signifier “sonnet.” Given this sort of predetermination, we might consider the question, usefully articulated by Michael R. G. Spiller, “[W]hen is a sonnet not a sonnet?” Spiller’s answer is provocative for the work this essay undertakes:

The short answer is that there is by custom a basic or simple sonnet, of which the others are variations: it has proportion, being in eight and six, and extension, being in ten- or eleven-syllable lines, and duration, having fourteen of them. Any poem which infringes one of these parameters will remind us of a sonnet quite closely; a poem which infringes two will be more difficult to accommodate, but we will probably try to establish some procedure to account for the deformation; and a poem which infringes all three will not be recognisable as a sonnet at all, and we will regard it as something else unless there is contextual pressure—if, for example, we found it in the middle of a group of normal sonnets. (3–4)

Spiller’s rhetoric deserves some attention: variation, infringement, recognition, “difficult to accommodate,” “deformation,” “something else,” and, most urgently, “normal.” All these figures establish an inside-outside binary and evoke a play of sameness and difference that betrays the stakes of reading poetry through its poetic form. Here the “parameters” of poetic form—that is, the lines between “normal” and aberrant sonnets—are constantly being policed. The presence of such a regime inevitably leads one to ask, If Shakespeare’s Sonnets interrupts or breaks several of its poems in two, are these poetic units still sonnets? Does the infringement of these breaks interfere with our ability to read them as sonnets per se? Or does the title Shakespeare’s Sonnets apply enough “contextual pressure” to allow us to recognize these poems as sonnets?

Though Spiller will go on to read Shakespeare’s Sonnets as “not interested in formal variants at all” (159), the poems nevertheless seem constantly to be infringing on “normal,” repeatedly varying from the norm, thematically and materially. As Arthur Marotti has noted, “Shakespeare’s sonnets are a heterogeneous collection” (“Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 155). In the highly homogenous context of other sonnet sequences of the period, such heterogeneity paradoxically marks the 1609 quarto as abnormal. Perhaps the best way to register such abnormality is to locate the quarto within the field of cultural production of early modern sonnet sequences. Wendy Wall describes an “outpouring of sonnet sequences at the end of the sixteenth century” following the 1591 publication of Philip Sidney’s Astrophel and Stella (Wall 58). Of the fourteen “sonnet sequences” published between 1591 and 1609—Samuel Daniel’s Delia (1592), Henry Constable’s Diana (1592), Barnabe Barnes’s Parthenophili and Parthenophoe (1593), Giles Fletcher’s Licia (1593), Thomas Lodge’s Phyllis (1593), the anonymous Zepharia (1594), William Percy’s Coelia (1594), Michael Drayton’s Ideas Mirrour (1594), Edmund Spenser’s Amoretti (1595), Richard Barnfield’s Cynthia (1595), Richard Linche’s Diella (1596), William Smith’s Chloris (1596), Bartholomew Griffin’s Fidessa (1596), Robert Tostie’s Laura (1597)—all but one sequence maintain their sonnets as uninterrupted material units on the field of the page (figs. 4–15). (The single exception, Barnes’s Parthenophili and Parthenophoe, subtitled “Sonnettes, madrigals, elegies and odes,” may be less a sequence of sonnets and more a poetic miscellany.)

In accounting for historical shifts between manuscript and printed forms, Wall argues that the publication of sonnet sequences “altered the physical presentation of the poems in ways that bolstered . . . textual unity” (70). She suggests that this bolstering “arranged the poetic material within a more structured format, and highlighted the typographical features that stabilized the text” (70). The fourteen examples offered above
Not marble, nor the gilded monument,
Of princes shall outlive this pow’rful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war’s quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
‘Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the Judgement that your self arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.

Sonnets

Since every one, hath every one, one shade,
And you but one, can every shadow lend:
Describe Adonis and the counterfeit,
Is poorly imitated after you,
On Hellen's cheeke all art of beautie set,
And you in Grecian tires are painted new:
Speak of the spring, and joyson of the eye:
The one doth shadow of your beautie show,
The other as your bountie doth appear,
And you in every blessed shape we know.

In all externall grace you have some part,
But you like none, none you for constant heart.

Oh how much more doth beautie beautious seeme,
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give,
The Rose lookes faire, but fairer we it deeme
For that sweet odor, which doth in it liue:
The Canker bloomes have full as deepe a die,
As the perfumed tincture of the Roses,
Hang on such thornes, and play as wantonly,
When sommers breath their masked buds discloses:
But for their virtue only is their show,
They liue vnwoode, and vnrespected fade,
Died to themselves. Sweet Roses doe not so,
Of their sweet deaths, are sweetest odors made:
And so of you, beautesious and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, by verse distils your truth.

Not marble, nor the gilded monument,
Of princes shall out-lie this powerfull rime,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Then vnswep't stone, belmeere'd with flatness time.
When wastefull warre shall Straines out-turne,
And broiles out of the worke of masonry,
Nor Art are his sword, nor warres quick fire shall burne:
The lively record of your memory.

Gains
Shake-speare
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Shakespeare.
Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth, your praise shall still finde roome,
Euen in the eyes of all posterity
That ware this world out to the ending doome.
So til the judgement that your selfe arive,
You live in this, and dwell in louers eies.

56
Sweet loue renew thy force, be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be then apetite,
Which but too daie by feeding is alaid,
To morrow sharpened in his former might.
So loue be thou, although too daie thou fill
Thy hungrie eies, even till they winck with fulnesse,
Too morrow see againe, and doe not kill
The spirit of Loue, with a perpetual dulnesse:
Let this sad Intrie like the Ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new,
Come daily to the banckes, that when they see:
Returne of loue, more blest may be the view.
As cal it Winter, which being ful of care,
Makes Somes welcome, thrice more wish'd, more rare:

57
Being your slave what should I doe but tend,
By you the hours, and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at al to spend;
Nor seruices to doe til you require.
Nor dare I chide the world without end houre,
Whils I (my soueraine) watch the clock for you,
Nor thinke the bitterness of absence lowre,
When you haue bid your servaunt once aneie,
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought,
Where you may be, or your affaires suppose,
But like a sad slave stay and thinke of nought
Save where you are, how happy you make those.
So true a foole is loue, that in your Will,
(Though you doe any thing) he thinkes no ill.

58
evince just such “unity” and “stabiliz[ation].” Take for instance figure 11, from Spenser’s Amoretti. The visual effects created by the elaborate borders that ensconce the poems produce—not simply reinforce—the unity and totality of the sonnet form on the printed page. As Wall notes, borders in the period “served to create the effect of a closed and complete poetic unit, finished without the reader’s collaborative aid” (71).

Thus, while monumentality, visual unity, borders, and the like were all conventional choices available to Shake-speares Sonnets, Q seems to have deferred such choice, choosing instead to “not choose” by presenting some but not all poems as visually unified (see Cameron). In the context of the above unified, monumental visual objects, Shake-speares Sonnets and its recurrent interruptions emerge as deviant, as infringing boldly on the “normal” materiality of the early modern sonnet sequence page. Page breaks are not the only abnormal material aspects of Q, but a primary emphasis on page breaks here allows us to focus our attention on an aspect of materiality that has the broadest implications for the ways readers conceptualize literary form, encounter the page as a unit of meaning, and experience—or do not experience—what Barbara Herrnstein Smith dubs “poetic closure.”

Given such abnormality, it is not surprising that generations of critics have labored to distance William Shakespeare—that apex of both poetic genius and author function—from the textual and thematic abnormalities of Q.10 For instance, W. H. Auden famously declared: “How the sonnets came to be published—whether Shakespeare gave copies to some friend who then betrayed him, or whether some enemy stole them—we shall probably never know. Of one thing I am certain: Shakespeare must have been horrified when they were published” (105). Auden’s projected horror is deeply indeterminate. Does this horror arise from the poems’ frank and complex sexualities?11 from the volume’s deviant and complex textuality? from both? What about Q’s circulation would have so horrified William Shakespeare? Undergirding this fictive horror is Auden’s implicit but unbending belief that, despite its title, Shake-speares Sonnets was never authorized or approved for publication by the “bard”—put simply, that Shakespeare would never have allowed a volume as abnormal as Q to appear in print.

If we are to read Q’s breaks as carrying meaning—to recognize them as being worthy of literary attention—we must first suspend the nagging questions of intentionality that Auden’s horror raises: “yes, but did Shakespeare mean for those breaks to be there?”12 Such questions of authorization and authorial intentionality have garnered an astonishing amount of attention from Shakespeare scholars.13 Lisa Freinkel sees at stake in such long-raging and prolix debates about authorization the grounds of authority for readers’ interpretations of the text: once the text of Q is authorized “we are ourselves authorized in our attempts to interpret the book as a whole: to ascribe to it a unified meaning, positing an Author behind its words” (171). Amid several incisive criticisms of “recursive” attempts to prove the authorization of Q, Freinkel cautions, “We cannot put an end to the question of authorization in this text, but we can demonstrate that the question is, indeed, the end of the text” (183). For Freinkel, authorization is a problem that the poems themselves thematize, “a problem intrinsic to our construction of meaning . . . a problem of the text” (182).14

In truth, and despite the better efforts of critics such as Katherine Duncan-Jones, we may never know what circumstances brought Shake-speares Sonnets to the publisher Thomas Thorpe and thus to print. Yet even if we could reconstruct such a narrative, would we be any closer to Shakespeare’s intentions? Where would such a narrative get us? This desire to return to some fantastical, hypothesized intent bespeaks what Jerome
Sonnet XXVI

While by her eyes pining, my poor heart flew it,
Into the sacred bosoms of my drearfe:
She there in that sweet sanctuary flew it,
Where it presum'd his sanctuary to be.<br>
My pruilled ge of faith could not proceed<br>
That was with blood and three true witness signed:<br>
In all which time the cherub could suspect it.<br>
For well the sawd my love, and how I pined:<br>
And yet no comfort would her brow reveal me,<br>
No lightning lookes, which falling severest shrill.<br>
What beates to lowes of Succour to appeale me?<br>
Ladies and tyrants, newer lawes respected.<br>
Then there I dye, where hop'd I to have suav'd.<br>
And by that hand, which better might have guided.<br>

Fig. 4

Samuel Daniel,<br>Delia (1592) E1v–E2r. Reproduced by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

Sonnetto ottavo.

If true love might true loves reward obtaine,<nubr>dumbe wonder ouely might speake of my joy:<nubr>but too much woorh hath made thee too much cey,<nubr>and told me long agoe, I fighid in vaine:<nubr>Not then vaine hope of vnderfined game:<nubr>hath made me paint in verfe mine annoy:<nubr>but for thy pleasure, that thou mightst enjoy:<nubr>thy beauties fight, in glaffes of my paine.<nubr>See then thy felte (though mee thou wilt not heare):<nubr>by looking on my verfe: for paine in verfe:<nubr>love doth in paine, beautie in love appear:<nubr>So, if thou wouldst my verfe meaning fee:<nubr>expound them thus, when I my love rehearse:<nubr>None loyts like him; that is, None faire like mee.<nubr>

Thine eye the gllif where I behold my hart,<nubr>mine eye the window, through the which thine eye may fee my hart, and these thy felte efye in bloudie colours how thou painted art.<nubr>Thine eye the pyle is of a murthering dart,<nubr>mine eye the fight thou tak it thy leuell by to hit my hart, and never thouest aways;<nubr>mine eye thus helps thine eye to worke my hart.<nubr>Thine eye a fier is both in heat and light,<nubr>mine eye of teares a ricer doth become;<nubr>Oh that the water of mine eye had might to quench the flames that from thine eyes doe come.<nubr>Or that the fier kindled by thine eye,<nubr>the flowing flamees of mine eyes could make drie.<nubr>

Fig. 5

Henry Constable,<br>Diana (1592) B4v–C1r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 28501), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.
Sonnets

Sonnets XXXVIII.

59

I speak, faire Licia, what my follow on me:
But then my speech was partial do I judge.
For hard and sudden words, my thoughts were true:
Those thoughts, that were, were made in a troubled mind.
Then do I yon new trope shall never speak:
Not tell my grief, that has my heart冬 tire;
But cannot hide, I then the voice of the, dote beside,
And to the silence, worse, than I speak I trie.
Thus speak, sorwise, they both do breed my care.
I live dismayed, and kill my heart with grief:
In all respects, my sad, aleke doth fare.
To him that pain, and dare not ask relief.
Then yon faire Licia, everaigne of my heart,
Read to your felke, my anguish, and my fear.

Sweet

Sonnets VI.

It is new death which wreath each men call dying,
But that is very death which I endure:
When my coy looking Nimph grace my know,
By fallow waves my damage doth procure:
It is not life which we for life approve,
But that it be life when hir woul-fof papes,
I sale sweet kis, which do batten love;
And doubting them do treble my good happes.
T is neither lose the soules nor lose the mother,
Which lovers praise and pray to, but that love is:
Which he in eye and I in heart do smoother,
Then must not tho I glory in my mule,
Since she who holds my heart, and me in durance
Hath life, death, love and all in hir procureance.

Sonnets VII.

How languisheth the Primrose of hir's garden:
How tall hir teares th'Elixar of my fens:
Ambition sicknes, what doth thee so harden,
Oh spare and plague thoue me for hir offences.
Ah Roses, love faire Roses do not languish,
Blush through the milk-white veil that holds you cover,
Thate or cold may mitigate your anguish, (ed,
Ile burne, He frize, but you shall be recover.
Good God would beustie marke now thee is crazed,
How but one showr off sicknesse makes hir tender:
Hir Judgmentes then to marke my woes amazed,
To mercy should opinions fort surrender:
And I (oh would, I might, or would thee ment it) should herrie love, who now in hart lament it.

Fig. 6
Giles Fletcher, Licia
(1593) F4v–G1r.
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Fig. 7
Thomas Lodge, Phyllis (1593) B4v–Ctr.
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**Canzon, 16.**

How have I forsook thy kind regard?
That thy disdain should thus enrage my brow,
Which whilome was the scripture and the card
Whereon thou made thy game and seal'd thy vow.
Which whilome thou with lawfull vairall
Enabled hast (high signall of renowne)
Marrying my joyce with shine half fast withall,
Be thou alone, alone thou Zepheria.
Oh how hath black night welked vp this day?
My wafted hopes why are they turn'd to do graze?
In pulitures of despayre, Zepheria say,
Wherein haue I on louse committed trespasse?
Oh if in justice thou must needs acquit me, (pity)
Reward me with thy lour, sweete heale me with thy How

**Sonnet III.**

Oh heavenly Celia, as faire as vertuous,
The only mirror of true chastitie,
Have I beene gaueyn thy godhead impious,
That thus am gaused for my feallie?—
Haue I not shed vp upon thine virtue shrine,
Huge drops of teares with large eruptions?
Haue I not offed eating and at prime
My fighs, my Patience of invocations?
What be mens fighs, but calcs of guilefulnisse?
They snee, deare loue, true proofs of termite.
What be your teares, but mee enmangrasiounesse?
Teares only plead for our simplicie:
When all strike mute, she failest it is my duty,
And claims as much as to her desiere.

**Canzon, 17.**

How shal I deck my loue in loues habiliment,
And her embellish in a right depaint?
Shall nowis be lost me faire, me Hyacin?
Each one their beauties with their hue acquaint.
The golden feeling of thy browes rich frame
Defignes the proud pomp of thy faces architure:
Chrysfal transparent eaments to the same
Are thine eyes soome, which doe the world depure,
Whose fustierie canopie gold wier fringes:
Thy brow the bowling place for Cupid's eye,
Loves true-loue knots, and lilly-lozenges
Thy cheeckes despayted in an immortall dye.
If well thou lim'd art now by face immagerie,
Judge how by life I then should penchild thee.

**Sonnet V.**

Fair Queene of Guido's come adorn my forehead,
And crowne me with the lawrell emperor,
'Tis thynke fynge 'tis about thy Poet,
Loe on my goddeesse I am conquerer.
For once by chance, not fure, nor vitewingly,
Upon my foot, her tender foot alighted,
With that the plucks it off fulm wimbely,
As though the verie teache had asphighted:
Deere mistrefle, will you deale so cruelly,
To proue me of so small a benefite?—
What? doe you lett it off so nimbely,
As though in verie foot a snake had bit it?
Yea bit perhaps indeed: Ho, Muses blab you?
Not a word Pleannes, or I will gag you.
Amour. 4.0.
O thou vnkind left hayre, moft hayreft thee,
In thine eyes triumph murthing my poore hart,
Now doe I sware by heastens, before we part,
My hath-flaine hart shall take reuenge on thee.
Thy Mother dyd her lyfe to Death regigne,
And thou an Angell art, and from aboue,
Thy father was a man, that will I prowe,
Yet thou a Goddeffe art, and do dounge.
And thus if thou be not of humane kindes,
A Battard on both sides needes must thou be,
Our Lawes allow no Land to bafardy:
By nature Lawes we thee a Battard finde.
Then he.. to heauen vnkind, for thy childe part,
Goe Battard, for sute of thence thou art.

Amour. 4.1.
Rare of spring of my thoughts, my dereft Lour,
Begot by fancy, on sweet hope exhortorie,
In whom all purenes with perfection floure,
Hurt in the Embryon, makes my joyes abhorrtere.
And you my lighe, Symtomes of my woe,
The dolefull Antheums of my endleffe care,
Lyke idle Ecchoes ever aunswering so,
The mournefull accents of my lones dispayre.
And thou Conceite, the shadow of my bliffe,
Declyning with the setting of my Humane,
Springing with that, and faling straight with this,
Now halfe thou end, and now thou wait begun.
Now was thy pryme, and loe, now is thy waine,
Now wait thou borne, now in thy cradle flayre.

SONNET. XL.

Mark when the fines with amiable chesse,
And tell me whereeto can ye lyken it:
When on each eydeld sweethde doe appeare,
An hundred Graces as in blnde to te.
Lyke it cometh in my ample wit
Into the layre sunshine in somers day;
That when a dreadyd florne away is flit,
Throughe the broad world doeth fyrshd its goodly ray
At fighth whereout echa bird that fitts on play,
And evry beath that to his den was red:
Comes forth stetch out of their late dimay,
And to the light lift ye their drooping beed.
Some florne beaten hart unlike is cheated,
With that sunshine when cloudy looks are cleazed.

SONNET. XLI.

Is it her nature or is it her will,
To be so cruel to an humbled one:
If nature, then she may contend with skill,
If will, then the at will may will forgo.
But in her nature and her will be so,
That she will plagued the man that loves her moft:
And take delight to create a wretches wo,
Then all her natures goodly guifts are lost.
And that same glorious beauteous ydle beaute,
Is but a hayre fuch wretches to beguile,
As being long in her lones temple red,
The meanes at last to make her piteous joye.
O hayre fayre let nature it be named,
That do fayre beauty was so foully damned.

Fig. 10
Michael Drayton, 
"Ideas Mirror" (1594)
F4v–G1r. Reproduced 
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Fig. 11
Edmund Spenser, 
"Amoretti" (1595) 130–31. Reproduced 
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FIG. 12
Richard Barnfield,
Cynthia (1595) C1v–C2r. Reproduced by permission of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

SONNET. VIII.

Sometimes I wish that his pillow were,
So might I see a kille, and yet not sense,
So might I gaze upon his sleeping eye,
Although I did it with a phiong feare.

But when I well consider how vain was my wish,
Ah foolish cries (thinkes I) that doe not tyme,
His lips for hony, but poore flowers doe plaice
Which base no sweet in them when his solekille.

Are able to receive a dying soule.
Kille him, but thing him now, for if you doe,
His angry voice over flying wall peruse;
But when they heare his tongue what can reseale,
Their backe returnse for then they plaine may see,
Howlowly-came from his lips dropping dee.

Diana

SONNET. IX.

Diane (on a time) walking the wood,
To loose her left of her faire name forlorn,
Chans's not so pricks her fount against a stone,
And from thence she doth a shoot of blood.

No sooner shee was vinsile out of sight,
But looue faire Queen came there away by chauce,
And having of that had a gleamingiance
She put the blood into a chansile bottle.

When being now commite your charmed toke,
With her faire hands shee gives a shape of powre,
And blends it with the blood; from where else
A slaty creature, bogetter then the Dean,
And being chomfed in faire Paphion from,
She call'd him Omgmide as all dissayne.

FIG. 13
Richard Linche,
Diella (1596) D2v–D3r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (RB 31525), and of ProQuest Information and Learning Company. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission.

SONNET XXXV.

End this enchantment (Lome) of my desires,
Let me no longer languish for thy loss.
Joy not to see mee thus confusit in fires,
But let my cruel paines thy hard hart more.
And now at last, with poyntall regard,
Eye me thy Louer, lorn for lack of thee.

Which dying, hopes in hope of futter reward,
Which hare hath hether wthold from me.
Confust hare I been, full in famirc fall,
Ovayd yd by bemens to dote upon thy faire.
Nor will I err, so long as life shall last,
Say any's fater, breathing vital eyre;
But when the Ocean finds shall lye vromer,
Then shal my foule to lose thee (Desire) forget.

Long

SONNET XXXVI.

Long did I wish before I could attaine
The lookt for fight I so desir'd to see,
Tow foonse at lest I saw what bred my bane,
And easer since hath boren tention mee.
I saw her selfe, whom had I never seene,
My wealth of blisse had not been turend to bale,
Greedly regared of her, my harts sole Queenter,
Hath shewing my sommers sun, to winterdaile.

How of haste I, since that fell fastall houres,
Beheld her all-faire shape with beging eye,
Till thm (yokind) hath held me with a love,
And had my humble-faire looks, looke by.
O petty mee ( faire Louer) and high felie name
Shall blazed be in bounse of thym name.

Long
SONNET. XXIII.

Fare thee to her heart, house of her heart;
With dainty letters make her heart bare.
With more alliterative verse more her heart.
At midnight and in the middle of the night;
For beauty she’s a god, consider her heart.
Herein thy heart’s fiery flame transforms the heart.
All the love he bore thou hast to bear.
And in such dye so she has noted thee.
Ye built (if thou sayest well) must be her heart.
He hath the best part there that hath the heart.
What have I not (if I have but her heart)?

C 4

Staining

The fairest of all fair, less to love,
Less than a summer’s flower in spring,
To make another fairest, but to love,
For he is fairest, and she is fairest.

B 5

Thos.
McGann has called our “hypnotic fascination with the isolated author” (122), our desire to locate ourselves at the level of the authentic, the originary, the most real. This mystification of the author and his or her work often distracts us from the matter at hand—in this case, several broken poems—and occasionally determines in advance our experience of that matter. Likewise, the desire to distance Q’s author from the “vicissitudes of the printing-house” (Marotti, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 157)—from sloppy compositors errantly casting off copy; from thrifty publishers scheming to save paper—belies a deeper desire to keep this authorial narrative simple: one author, one authority. For better or worse, authorial narratives often prove anything but simple. Here, the concept of authority is vexed by the number of agents who took part in the production and reproduction of Q: several agents could make competing claims of responsibility for, or authority over, Q.15

To open up writing would be then (as Roland Barthes famously suggested [147]) to suspend this fixation on authorial intention and return again (as Freinkel admirably does) to the text itself. In doing so, we shift the focus from Shakespeare’s original intention or “authentic” work to the material text or trace that remains: Q, the 1609 quarto, writing in its fullest textual sense. Though we will never know who intended these breaks—Shakespeare, Thorpe, the printer Thomas Eld, “Compositeor Q”—we do (or will) know that they matter to the presentation, interpretation, and reception of the poems. If, in turn, we can accept such a premise, then we can begin resisting the doxa that these breaks are incidental and thus should be elided in modern editions. No matter who wrote or who authorized Q, or even who was responsible for Q’s interruptions, the volume remains, in all its abnormality, a fascinating and urgent literary artifact that, despite hundreds of years of sustained criticism, has not been exhausted. Acknowledging the complexity of intention and authority enables us to trouble the equivalence on which modern editors such as Vendler rely: “it can be assumed that whatever I say in the Commentary [of The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets] is as true for the Quarto as of the modern text” (xiii). This acknowledgment enables us to move from the matter with Q to the matter of Q.

Building Monuments, Jotting Down Notes

In considering the quarto’s imposition of breaks into its poems, perhaps we should begin with those instances where Q follows Vendler in presenting poems as visually unified or monumental objects. The collection’s opening and closing poems, for instance, appear uninterrupted. We find Q’s first poem under an ornate border and austere title; likewise, 154 stands alone on its page, punctuated by a large-font “FINIS” (figs. 16 and 18).16 This visual presentation is, perhaps, to be expected. Common sense tells us that these two poems appear uninterrupted because they are the alpha and omega of this collection; they deserve or demand a certain attention and presence on the page because of their placement in the sequence or order of these poems. Yet the protocols of seventeenth-century printing houses meant that the decision to maintain or preserve these two poems on their respective pages necessarily affected the presentation of other poems as well.17 The question to ask here is, Which poems were interrupted so that the first and the last could appear as visually unified objects? If we assume that whole is better than broken, was there already a distinction between “better” and “worse” poems guiding the casting off and laying out of this volume and these pages? If so, what were the criteria for such determinations?

Interestingly, several of the collection’s best-known and eminently quotable sonnets appear without material interruption. Number 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?”), for instance, rests in the center of its
Shakespeare's Sonnets

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauties may stand in our view,
But as the riper should by time decrease,
His tender heir may bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine owne bright eyes,
Feed'st thy lights flame with felte substantiall fewell,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy felte thy foe, to thy sweet felte too cruel:
Then is the world's fresh ornament
And only herauld to the gaudy spring,
Within thine owne bud burieth thy content,
And tender chorle makst wait in niggarding:
Pitty the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the worlds due, by the grave and thee.

When fortie Winters shall besiege thy brow,
And digge deep trenches in thy beauties field,
Thy youthes proud livery go gaz'd on now,
Wili be a twalter'd weed of smal worth held;
Then being askt, where all thy beautie lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lustie daies;
To say within thine owne deeps sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame, and thristlesse praise.
How much more praife deserved thy beauties vfe,
If thou couldest anwere this faire child of mine
Shall sum my count, and make my old excuse
Prouing his beautie by succession thine.

This
Shake-speare's Sonnets (1609) B1v.
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Shake-speare's Sonnets

This were to be new made when thou art cold,
And see thy blood warme when thou feelst it cold,

Look in thy glasse and tell the face thou seest,
Now is the time that face should forme an other,
Whose freshe reparre if now thou not renewest,
The softebegyn the world, ybists re some mother.
For where is she so faire whose vcard wombe
Dilamines the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will bse the tombe,
Of his felis love to stop pestery?
Thou art thy mothers glasse and she in thee
Calls backe the louely, April of her prime,
So thou through windowes of thine age shalt see,
Dilpights of wrinkles this thy goulden time,
But if thou live remembred not to be,
Die single and thine Image dies with thee.

V

Vnthry louelinesse why dost thou spend
Upon thy selfe thy beauties legacy?
Natures bequest giues nothing but doth lend,
And being franck she lends to those are free,
Then beautious nigard why doost thou abuse,
The bountious largesse giuen thee to giue?
Profilest vferer why doost thou vse,
So great a summe of summes yet canst not finde?
For having traffike with thy selfe alone,
Thou of thy selfe thy sweet selfe dost decease,
Then how when nature calls thee to be gone,
What acceptable Antis canst thou leave?
Thy vnuil'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
Which vsest lies th'executioner to be.

T

Those bowers that with gentle worcke did frame,
The louely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very fame,
Sonnets

154
The little Lute-God lying once a sleepe,
Laid by his side his heart inflaming brand,
Whilst many Nymphes that you’ld chait life to keep,
Came tripping by, but in her maiden hand,
The fayrest vortary tooke vp that fire,
Which many Legions of true hearts had warm’d,
And so the Generall of his desire,
Was sleeping by a Virgin hand disarm’d.
This brand the quenched in a coole Well by,
Which from Loues fire tooke heat perpetuall,
Growing a bath and healthfull remedy,
For men diseased, but I my Miltrisse thrall,
Came there for cure and this by that I prove,
Loues fire heates water, water cooles not loue.

FINIS.
page, calling strong visual and interpretive attention to itself, possibly at the expense of the two fractured poems that enclose it (fig. 19). In contrast, 130 (“My Mifres eyes are nothing like the Sunne”) begins at the top of its page, allowing space for 131 to appear uninterrupted below it (fig. 20). Given the various thematic and rhetorical resonances between these two poems, their dual preservation as visually unified objects on the same page may enable a comparative reading that would slip through the cracks of a less materially sensitive reading or editorial practice. As such, the uninterruptedness of these two poems matter, both at the level of the interrelations of poems in a single volume and at the level of cultural reception.

When we speak to the relations among poems, the above monumental examples must be understood as existing in a closed textual circuit. If one poem is maintained as a unified object, another poem in the collection likely cannot be. In terms of cultural reception, the two poems remain among the most enduring literary artifacts of the English language. Here we want to ask whether there might be a relation between the visual preservation of the poem on the page and the canonical preservation of the poem in a culture. If, as Jonathan Culler suggests, literature is a form of discourse that “promotes or elicits special kinds of attention,” then the ways that the materiality of a text calls visual and interpretive attention to itself surely influences its definition or evaluation as literature (23).18 That is, perhaps poems 18 and 130 are “literary” in part because they situate themselves in the field of the page in a way conducive to attracting attention.

Another related concern for this style of material reading might be the ephemerality of the short quarto book format. As Marotti notes, the “casual manner in which short quartos were treated” led to a “peculiarly perishable” status for copies of the 1609 quarto.19 If only thirteen copies of these “self-destructing artefacts” remain (“Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 157–58), a series of pressing questions emerges: Where did loose pages of the quarto go? Is it possible that the ephemerality of these quartos encouraged a return to sonnet circulation, that loose-leaf pages from the quarto may have had an afterlife in collections, miscellanies, pockets, or hands?20 If so, then those poems fully preserved on any single leaf would stand the best chance to be read and reread after the inevitable disintegration of a complete quarto copy. Thus, it is not outside the realm of possibility that poem 18 may have outlived any copy of the 1609 quarto from which it came. Bringing all this to bear on our current critical moment, we might find it significant that of thirty-five sonnets anthologized in the seventh edition of The Norton Anthology of English Literature (Abrams et al.), twenty-three appeared uninterrupted in Q.21 Does this anthologization signal a canonical privileging of monumental sonnets? Does such anthologization suggest that monumental sonnets enjoyed an afterlife in ways that broken sonnets did not? Such speculations are but first gropings toward a more complex engagement with the material quarto and its effects.

To return to the poems themselves, it appears that monumentality in the space of a page may matter thematically as well. Interestingly, Q’s poem 81 both describes and performs an epitaph (fig. 21). Is it mere coincidence that a poem deploying the figures “monument,” “Epitaph,” “furuiue” (i.e., “survive”), “immortall,” “graeu,” and “intombd” is presented in a visually unified form? The poem begins with a fractured correlative conjunction: “Or I fhall liue your Epitaph to make...” By Stephen Booth’s account, the first two lines of the poem present equivocal alternatives: either the speaker will die first or the addressee will die first; the permanence that the epitaph promises to the addressee will be maintained regardless (“Commentary” 275). Yet, by beginning both in medias res and with a figure of equivalence and uncertainty (“Or”), 81 seems to extend
beyond the bounds of its form. Again, the materiality of the printed page suggests that “Or” might be functioning as an intertext to 80, which appears as a visually unified object directly above 81. Line 11 of poem 80 begins with a similar deployment of conjunction, “Or (being wrackt).” Interestingly, 80 closes with an image that is resonant with the imagery of 81: “my loue was my decay.” If poem 80 ends with a scene of decay, 81 begins with an object of permanence being made (i.e., an “Epitaph”). Read in concert and as conjoined monumental objects presented in the same visual field, these two poems seem to support Kuin’s definition of the sonnet; to reiterate: “a very highly coded form of text, [one that] combines to an unusual degree visibility of formal elements . . . and an organized cumulative system of intertextuality.” In 80 and 81 that cumulative system of intertextuality has a highly visible material expression, as 80 literally lies on top of 81.

Returning to 81—but with an eye now back on 80—we see that lines 7–8 oppose a “common graue” with “mens eyes,” displacing the act of remembrance from a physical to a cognitive register (“grae” to “mens eyes”). Such a displacement anticipates line 9’s declaration that “Your monument shall be my gentle verfe.” Any reading of this poem hinges on an interpretation of this movement. If one reads this as a transcendent movement, from the physical to the metaphysical, then the speaker of the poem offers the addressee everlasting life. If, more cynically, one reads this movement as anticlimactic, devolving from the physical and purportedly permanent (“monument”) to the ethereal and ephemeral (“verfe”), then the value of the speaker’s offer is called into question. The crux in line 9 is “gentle,” which Booth glosses as having at least three significations: “(1) tender, meek, weak; (2) amiable, kindly meant; (3) noble, ‘well-born’ (as opposed to common—see line 7)” (“Commentary” 278). Not one of these significations suggests this “verfe” to be durable, resolute, or strong; indeed, these significations evoke a certain fragility. Yet the poem goes on to argue that “verfe,” gentle or not, shall span time: “Which eyes not yet created shall ore-read” (10).

A vexed couplet closes the poem: “You sall ljue (fuch vertue hath my Pen) / Where breath mof breaths, even in the mouths of men” (13–14). Generations of critics have troubled over what to do with this seeming ambivalence. Can “breath” (or “verfe”) prove a more permanent resting place than a monument? Can an epitaph “intombed in mens eyes” and “mouths” outlive an epitaph inscribed in stone? More broadly, does this poem espouse or mock the poetic permanence its speaker offers? While such questions are arresting, the reading practice advocated here asks instead: If this poem posits and then explores two forms of remembrance and two registers of temporality, is it not significant that the poem’s final material expression comes without break, fissure, or interruption? How can we hope to attend to either the transcendent or the cynical reading of the poem’s movement if we do not take seriously its visually unified, monumental presentation? The poem rests at the bottom of its page with the last figure (“men”) crowding its way onto the field of the page in a way that suggests a compositor laboring to maintain the poem as a whole. How might this poem “mean” if instead the final couplet had been shifted across to the opening’s recto? Would the monument that the poem offers be then broken or mediated? The material presentation of 81 seems both entirely germane to and utterly provocative for a poem that meditates on yet remains ambivalent about the permanence of poetry.23

Having begun to consider how material form enables and in important ways produces Q’s thematic engagement with issues of monumentality, permanence, and unity, let us now turn to the decidedly aconventional breaks that occur on nearly every page of the 1609 quarto. Given limited space in my pages, I will
Shakespeare

Though yet heaven knowes it is but as a tombe
Which hides your life, and shewes not halfe your parts:
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say this Poet lies,
Such heauenly touches never toucht earthly faces.
So shou'd my papers (yellowed with their age)
Be scorn'd, like old men of lesse truth then tongue,
And your true rightes be termed Poets rage,
And stretched meter of an Antique song.
But were some childe of yours alive that time,
You should liue twise in it, and in my rime.

Shall I compare thee to a Summers day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of May,
And Summers lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And euery faire from faire some-time declines,
By chance, or nature changing course vntrim'd:
But th' eternall Summer shall not fade,
Nor loose possession of that faire thou owst,
Nor shall death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long liues this, and this giues life to the.

Duerous time blunt thou the Lyons pawes,
And make the earth devoure her owne sweet brood,
Pluckle the keene teeth from the fierce Tygers yowes,
And burne the long tud'd Phenix in her blood,
Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleetit,
And do what ere thou wilt swift Footed time
To the wide world and all her fading sweets:
But I forbid thee one most hainous crime,
SONNETS.

130

My Mistress' eyes are nothing like the Sunne,
Her lips are reade more red, then her lips red,
If snow be white why then her breasts are dun:
If hairs be wiers, black wiers grow on her head.
I have seen Roses damask, red and white,
But no such Roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight,
Then in the breath that from my Mistress spekes.
I love to hear her speake, yet well I know,
That Musick hath a farre more pleasing sound:
I grante I never saw a goddesse goe,
My Mistress when shee walkes treads on the ground.
And yet by heauen I think my love as rare,
As any the beli'd with false compare.

131

Thou art as tirous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my deare doting hart
Thou art the fairest and most precious Jewell.
Yet in good faith some say that thee behold,
Thy face hath not the power to make loue grone;
To say they erre, I dare not be so bold,
Although I sware it to my selfe alone.
And to be sure that is not sware I sware
A thousand grones but thinking on thy face,
One on anotheres necke do witnesse beare,
Thy blacke is fairest in my judgementes place.
In nothing are thou blacke save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander as I thinke proceeds.

133

Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,
Knowing thy heart torment me with disdain,
Have put on black, and loving mourners bee,
Looking with pretty ruth vpon my pains.

And
Shakespeare

He lends thee virtue, and he stole that word,
From thy behavioure, beautie doth he give
And found it in thy cheeke: he can afford
No praisse to thee, but what in thee doth liue.
Then thanke him not for that which he doth say,
Since what he owes thee, thou thy selfe dost pay.

O
How I faint when I of you do write,
Knowing a better spirit doth vie your name,
And in the praisse thereof spends all his might,
To make me tongue-tide speaking of your fame.
But since your worth (wide as the Ocean is)
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My fawtie barke (inferior farre to his)
On your broad maine doth willfully appear.
Your shallowes helpe will hold me up a floate,
Whilst he upon your soundlesse depe doth ride,
Or (being wrackt) I am a worthlesse bote,
He of tall building, and of goodly pride.
Then if he thrive and I be cast away,
The worst was this, my love was my decay.

O
Or I shall write your Epitaph to make,
Or you supplie when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I (once gone) to all the world must dye,
The earth can yeeld me but a common graue,
When you intomb’d in mens eyes shall lye,
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall ore-read.
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead,
You still shall liue (such vertue hath my Pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.
simply gesture toward a series of more or less representative interruptions, before closing with an extended reading of monumentality interrupted in 55. First, the quarto interrupts at least three sonnets at their turns: 2, 14, and 110. In the latter two poems, the interruption forces the reader across the divide of facing pages. More emphatically, the interruption of 2 forces the reader to turn over a page (B1r) to reveal both page B1v and the poem’s resolution. We turn a page to turn the sonnet (figs. 16 and 17). In all three of these examples, interruptions reinforce and yet also complicate the nature of the conventional sonnet turn. Yes, the interruption of or at the turn emphasizes the shift in tone and rhyme scheme that occurs between each poem’s threequatrain and its rhyming couplet, effecting a material caesura that forces readers to pause as their gaze moves from page to page. At the same time, these interruptions of or at the turn also effect a sort of attentive slippage in which the reader’s visual and interpretive gaze is displaced, delayed, and deferred. Such a slippage functions then as a sort of material enjambment. Poetic enjambment can be characterized as a “run[ning]-on” or “striding over” in which “the pressure of the incompleted syntactic unit toward closure carries on over the end of the verse-line” (Abrams 163). Thus Q’s material enjambment might be thought of in terms of the pressure toward closure that the poem carries over the fold or, more dramatically, over the turn of the page. The effect of a poem’s resolution running on to another page cannot be overstated. In addition to rupturing the continuity of the strict sonnet form, this enjambment also momentarily disappoints readerly expectations of poetic denouement and closure. One might think here of Spiller’s three-part rubric and ask: If the turn is displaced, delayed, or deferred, is this poem still a sonnet? What must the reader do to recognize this fractured poem as a sonnet?

In addition to these ruptured turns, Q also presents a series of poems whose thematics seem grounded on or implicated in their interrupted representation on the page. For instance, 108, one of the quarto’s most self-reflexive poems, appears as a palimpsest printed on both sides of page G3r (figs. 22 and 23). To read this poem in Q is to attend to a doubled writing, its figurative traces, and material bleeding of “Inck” through porous paper. Locally, line 12’s reference to “page” changes significantly when we read this figure against the material presentation (an “outward forme”) of a single poem printed on two sides of a page. Likewise, 36 engages a theme of unity between two seemingly autonomous subjects: “we two must be twaine.” The poem also appears palimpsestically, but it is interrupted at a crucial moment: “In our two loues there is but one respect, / [page break] Though in our lies a feerable fplight” (lines 5–6). What is the effect of placing a conjunction (“Though”) immediately after a severe page break? Does this placement support or undermine the unity that the poem offers its subjects?

Finally, there is 126 (fig. 24)—with its excised lines and final encomium to the “louely Boy,” perhaps the quarto’s most deviant poem. Number 126 is often posited as the linchpin or pivot point for what many critics consider to be the sonnets’ two narrative strains. While Joel Fineman and numerous others read these strains in terms of gender and sexual difference, Margreta de Grazia reads the strains in terms of racial and class difference (“Scandal”). Yet despite concurring that 126 marks the end of narrative strain one, neither camp has attended to the material presentation of the poem relative to the poems that accompany it. Even a cursory glance at 126 in the quarto tells us that the poem rests conspicuously at the center of its page, bridging 125 (narrative strain one) and 127 (narrative strain two) within the field of a single page. Thus 126 becomes monumentalized on page H3r, but at a cost: both 125 and 127 are interrupted. Again, what are we to make of this rather fortuitous material fact? Is it
coincidence? Or, does it encourage us to read a narrative into the poems? Imagine a reader opening *Shake-speares Sonnets* to pages H2v–H3r. What would catch the eye? Perhaps the “structural peculiarity” of 126 (Booth, “Commentary” 430)? If so, that reader would find only one unified, whole poem on H3r. If one wished to read the poems that frame 126, one would be forced to read back across the fold to page H2v or over to H3v. Such a material presentation forces readers to move their field of vision out from 126 back or forward across Q’s pages. The materiality of such a presentation constructs an eerily perfect visual bridge between these two narrative strains.

Poem 126 represents a crux; importantly, a crux through which critics have in fact paid attention to the materiality of Q. In considering the present absence of lines 13–14 and the brackets that seem to extend the quietus of line 12, critics have shown how visual presentation produces poetic meaning in this sonnet. In short, these blank lines maintain or project a poetic structure without a concomitant poetic content, frustrating readerly expectations of content while meeting readerly expectations of form.36 For Booth, 126, “composed of six rhymed iambic couplets, is not a sonnet in any technical sense.” Given the poem’s “structural peculiarity,” Booth concedes that “there is therefore some basis for the widespread critical belief that sonnet 126 is intended to mark a division” between the narratives that de Grazia, Fineman, and others chart (“Commentary” 430). Yet in view of Q’s various “structural peculiarities”—all those broken sonnets and delayed turns—other poems in the volume might be similarly deemed not sonnets in any technical sense.

By way of closing this discussion of Q’s monuments and interruptions, I consider 55, a poem that promises monumentality but whose material presentation breaks that promise (figs. 2 and 3). In many important ways 55 mirrors 81, both in its thematics and in several of its tropes. Poem 55 begins, however, with a more emphatic rejection of physical permanence: “Not marble, nor the guilded monument, / Of Princes shal out-liue this powrefull rime. . . .” Echoing the truth-distilling “verfe” of 54, 55’s “powrefull rime” thus promises to outlive or out-endure several sites of physical permanence. Indeed, “you” (now transubstantiated into a written subject) is opposed to “vnfwept ftone” and *Statues ouer-turn[e]*. All this builds to a crescendo as line 8 announces the “contents” and stakes of the “rime”: “The liuing record of your memory.” But as Booth points out, “Even as they assert the immortalitie of the poem [lines 7–8] remind a reader of the flimsiness and vulnerability of anything written on paper” (“Commentary” 229). Booth is no doubt thinking here of the figures “Mars,” “quick fire,” and “Thall burne,” all seeming threats to the paper on which the speaker would write this “liuing record.” Yet this reference to the flimsiness and vulnerability of paper forces us to confront the material presentation of this poem, to think of this vulnerability in terms of the very paper on which 55 is printed. After line 8, Q readers must turn over the page, thus taking fragile paper into their hands. Here the thematic that Booth identifies is underscored by both the material presentation of the poem (i.e., the page break after line 8) and its staging of a physical reader-text interaction (i.e., the actual touch or contact between reader and quarto). Through this touch, metaphoric paper materializes.

Before turning the page, however, we would do well to put pressure on the punctuation mark that ends line 8. The period that follows “memory” ensures that line 8 is not enjambed onto page D4v. Thus 55’s page break enacts more of a material caesura than a material enjambment. However, this break fractures the poem into two nearly autonomous poetic units. Although there are several resonances between the two, one could think of these units as being somewhat distinct. As such, does this fracture fragment the poem?
Shakespeares
Sonnets (1609) G3r. 
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No min ownes fears, nor the prophetick soule, 
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come, 
Can yet the least of my true love controule, 
Suppose de for'feit so a comin'd doom. 
The mortall Mowe hath her spirit induste, 
And the sad Augurs mock their owne prefage, 
Incertenties now crowne them-selves allus an, 
And peace proclaims Olusses of endless age, 
Now with the drops of this most balmie time, 
My love lookes freth, and death to me subscribes, 
Since spight of him I live in this poor time, 
While he influtes ore douland speachless tribes. 
And thou in this shak finde thy moniment, 
When tyrants crests and tombs of braves are spent.

What's in the braine that lack may charactar, 
Which hath not sign'd to the my true spirit, 
What's new to speake what now to register, 
That may express my love, or thy demesnes? 
Nothing sweet boy, but yet, like prayers divine,
Shake-speare's
I must each day say ere the very same,
Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
Even as when first I hallowed thy faire name,
So that eternall love in loues fresh case,
Weighes not the dust and injury of age,
Nor givens to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquitie for aye his page,
Finding the first conceit of love there bred,
Where time and outward forme would show it dead,

O
Neuer say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to quellifie,
As case might I from my case depart,
As from my soule which in thy brest doth lye,
That is my home of love, if I have rang'd,
Like him that travel's I returne agayne,
Just to the time, not with the time exchang'd,
So that my selfe bring water for my flame,
Neuer beleue though in my nature rain'd,
All frailties that betiege all kindes of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leue for nothing all thy fumme of good,
For nothing this wide Vniuersell I call,
Sauc thou my Rose, in it thou art my all,

A
Las'tis true, I haue gone here and there,
And made my selfe a motley to the view,
Gor'd mine own thoughts, told cheap what is most dear,
Made old offfences of affections new,
Most true it is, that I haue lookt on truth,
Affonce and strangely: But by all saue,
These blemishes gae my heart an other youth,
And worse afflaites prou'd thee my best of love,
Now all is done, haue what shall haue no end,
Mine appetite I never more will grin'de,
On newer proofes, so trie an older friend,
A God in love, so whom I am confind.'
SONNETS.

Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waft or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favor
Lost all, and more by paying too much rent
For compound sweets; forgoing simple favor,
Pittifull thriours in their gazing spent.
Noe, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblacon, poor but free,
Which is not mixt with seconds, knows no art,
But mutuell render onely me for thee.

Hence, thou stubborn Informer, a trew soule
When most impeache, stands least in thy controule.

O Thou my lovely Boy who in thy power,
Doest hould times fickle glasse, his fickle, hower:
Who hant by wayning growne, and therein should,
Thy louers withering, as thy sweet self grown it.
If Nature (foureaine mistress oubre wack)
As thou goest onwards still will plucke thee backe,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill.
May time disgrace, and wretched mynight kill.
Yet see, her O thou munion of her pleasure,
She may detaine, but not still keepe her trefure
Her Audeite (though delayd) answer'd must be,
And her Quieto is to render thee.

IN the cold age blacke was not counted faire,
Or if it were it bore no beauties name:
But now is blacke beauties suceede heire,
And Beautie flandered with a ballast shame,
For since each hand hath put on Natures power,
Pairing the soule with Arts faulfe borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name: no holy boure,
But is prophan'd, if not lutes in disgrace.

Therefore
To ask that question, we must first ask where the sonnet’s turn occurs. Is it, pace the conventions of the “Shakespearian sonnet,” after line 12, or, following a Petrarchan tradition, after line 8?27 If the turn occurs after line 12, then it seems that the fracture does indeed fragment the poem. If after line 8, then the fracture accentuates in dramatic ways the sonnet’s turn. Both sets of questions are integral to an interpretation of this poem, especially given the sonnet’s couplet: “So til the judgement that your felse arife, / You liue in this, and dwell in louers eies.” While the final phrase, “louers eies,” resonates strongly with 81’s “mens eyes,” here “You liue in this” proves far more complicated than 81’s similar occupancy of verse: “Your monument shall be my gentle verfe.” The space substantiated by “this” proves fractured and fragmented in 55. Given the page break discussed above, one must ask, would the poem’s addressee want to “liue” in a space jeopardized by its own materiality? Can a poem written on paper in fact “out-liue” “marble”? More urgently, what is the status of a poem that promises permanence but is already fractured and fragmented?

Reading Past the Page

Thus far a spectral presence has haunted the margins of this essay—and not, fortunately, Auden’s “horrified” Shakespeare. As the essay has progressed, it has made increasingly urgent apostrophes to a fictive reader who might find him- or herself confronting the materiality of Shakespeare’s Sonnets. As these repeated invocations suggest, this fictive reader is essential to the reading practice advocated herein. It is this reader who will or will not recognize these poems as sonnets, who will or will not read across an opening, who will or will not tear out a page of the quarto. With its final section, this essay will home in on an instance of the early modern scene of reading and ask, speculatively, What might an early modern reader have done with Shakespeare’s Sonnets? While such a consideration will stop short of a phenomenology of early modern reading practices, it will begin to account for what Tony Bennett has dubbed a “reading formation”: “a set of discursive and intertextual determinations that organize and animate the practice of reading, connecting texts and readers in specific relations to one another by constituting readers as reading subjects of particular types and texts as objects-to-be-read in particular ways” (66). The challenge of the reading practice this essay espouses lies in reconstructing the “specific” or “particular” ways early modern readers oriented themselves physically, visually, and hermeneutically to their objects-to-be-read.28

While the proliferation of sonnet sequences in early modern England may tell us much about the literary marketplace of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this proliferation tells us next to nothing about how those sequences were read or experienced. For instance, did the early modern reader approach Q linearly (i.e., beginning with the first poem and then proceeding, in order, through to poem 154) or indexically (i.e., skimming the volume more or less at random)? Latter-day literary critics often impose a desire for linear reading and narrative development onto the sonnets, without asking if this imposition is consistent with early modern reading formations. More broadly, how would an early modern reader have received a fractured or fragmented poem? Would such fragmentation have alienated the reader, or would it have been experienced in concert with an indexical reading practice?29 One notorious seventeenth-century reader of Q, John Benson, may help us to approach these questions. Benson’s 1640 edition of Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare, Gent.—largely based on the text of Q—has been maligned by generations of scholars for being “outrageously piratical and misleading” (Duncan-Jones, Introduction 42), a work of base editorial “chicanery” (Rollins
22). At stake in such a lambasting is Benson’s decision to omit from his edition sonnets 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, and 126; to conflate and reorganize 115 of the remaining sonnets into longer poetic units made up of between two and five sonnets; to give the resulting poems titles such as “Loves crueltie”; to include in his edition poems from the apocryphal collection *The Passionate Pilgrimage* (1612); and, most famously, to change many of the sonnets’ masculine pronouns to feminine ones, radically revising Q’s gender and sexual politics.30

While Benson’s pronoun shifts have received the lion’s share of critical attention, his conflation and reorganization of sonnets demands more careful explication. In her important reconsideration of Benson, de Grazia speculates that in such a conflated form it is “possible that readers could not recognize the sonnets as such when they were combined to form longer poetic units” (*Shakespeare Verbatim* 164). Here again we encounter the problem of readerly recognition. Would Benson’s readers have recognized these longer poetic units as being conflated sonnets? (Again, Benson drew the text of his 1640 edition largely from Q, a volume whose page breaks already pose a number of problems of readerly recognition.) In Benson’s edition, Q’s sonnets were, Rollins fumes, “jumble[d] together in a new, unauthorized, and deceptive order” that gave them a “totally unfamiliar appearance” (20).

Yet Benson’s conflation evinces an editorial logic that has gone all but uncommented on: nearly every poem in the 1640 edition conflates sequential sonnets—sonnets, that is, that appeared on the same page, page opening, or leaf of Q: sonnets 67–69, 53–54, 92–95, 153–54, and so forth. For instance, the poem “Love-sicke” (D3v–D3r) conflates sonnets 80 and 81, whose dual monumental status is discussed above. Likewise, sonnets 2, 14, and 110, whose turns are interrupted by page breaks in Q, are conflated with adjacent sonnets in Benson’s edition: 1–3, 13–15, and 109–10. The implications for such reorganization are significant.

In these examples, two monumental Q sonnets have been collapsed together, and three sonnets with delayed turns have been subsumed into longer poetic units in which their interrupted turns would be less conspicuous.

In all these examples, the conflations seem sensitive to Q’s page breaks—even as Benson imposes new page breaks. Indeed, given the sequential logic of the reorganization, such conflations necessarily respond to the presence and absence of page breaks, regardless of editorial intentionality. Had Benson conflated a series of universally monumental sonnets—sonnets sans page breaks—we could perhaps describe his editing as a piece of “misleading” “chicanery.” However, Benson edited a series of sonnets already broken by recurrent page breaks. The poetic units he found in the 1609 quarto were already “jumbled,” riddled with indeterminate turns, widowed couplets, and broken monuments. Especially when read sequentially, two to three pages at a time, Q’s breaks may have suggested connections between adjacent poems that would not have been visible had Q followed the lead of so many of its peer sonnet sequences and presented its sonnets as visually unified poetic units. As such, Benson’s act of editorial “chicanery” may well have been “authorized” by the abnormal materiality of Q. In Benson we find then a reader who engaged the sonnets in sequential but nonnarrative and nonlinear ways; a reader with a seemingly fluid sense of poetic form, who may have made the most of Q’s fractured and fragmented poems: editing them together into longer poetic units. Benson’s edition grants us at least partial access to a seventeenth-century reading practice in which page breaks made legible or possible linkages between individual sonnets. If nothing else, Benson’s much maligned editorial decisions force us again to take seriously Q’s page breaks and to consider the ways those breaks have haunted the Shakespearean editorial tradition.31

Shakespeare studies has long used the rhetoric of scandal to discuss Q. Given the
recurrent, seemingly diurnal outpouring of scholarly articles and books about the sonnets, it is a minor scandal that no one has tended to this remarkable aspect of Q’s materiality. It might make for a more significant one were it not that, historically, little attention has been paid—by literary critics, historians of the book, bibliographers—to the page break as a unit of meaning. While contemporary bibliography and literary criticism does well to tend to the most minute of textual elements, we have as yet been unable to find a language with which to discuss that most primary of textual units, the page. Metacritically, we even lack bibliographical notation for the page break. Why is it that critical convention so carefully registers line breaks but has no conventional impetus toward, or symbol for, representing page breaks: “Canst thou O cruel, fay I loue thee not, / When I against myselfe with thee pertake: / [page break] Doe I not thinke on thee when I forgot / Am of myselfe, all tirant for thy fake?” (poem 149)?22 We will tend to the ways a line break helps effect a given rhyme (e.g., “not” and “forgot”) but ignore how a page break helps effect a given theme. (In this example, the page break elegantly complements the self-division of the poem laments: “I . . . myselfe,” “thee,” “pertake”).

Page breaks have implications for all forms of lyric poetry, not simply the sonnet. In his criterion study Poetic Meter and Poetic Form, Paul Fussell underscores not only the relation between form and meaning but also the relation between “typographic shape” and meaning (128). Fussell observes, “And now that we are fully accustomed to using printed texts for apprehending poems, our sense of stanzas has become a very complex act of mediation between what our eyes see and what our inner ears hear” (128). (This essay has shown in some detail the complexity of such mediation.) Particularly in his chapter “Some Critical Implications of Stanzac Form,” Fussell acknowledges that “the white space between stanzas means something,” since such space forces readers to ask, “Why is that white space there, and what am I supposed to do with it?” (155). No doubt Fussell is thinking here of intentional stanza breaks, not potentially incidental page breaks. However, his insistence on the interpretative possibilities and critical responsibilities that attend such typographic forms necessarily comprises page breaks. If, as Fussell argues, readers “expect every short poem to justify its form and to lay upon its form the obligation of speaking an appropriate part of its meaning” (158), why do not the same readers ask, “Why is that page break there, and what am I supposed to do with it?”

Not reading page breaks is itself a reading practice, a historically specific, socially determined act in which certain elements of materiality are granted attention and authority while others are not. When, following critical convention, we read past the page, we return to an earlier definition of textuality in which the page is transparent, a “clean and familiar textual surface [that] allows reading to proceed unencumbered past matter and into the heart of the matter—into Shakespeare’s ‘meaning’” (de Grazia and Stallybrass 280). Espousing instead an approach to the materiality of Shake-speares Sonnets that would take seriously the matter of Q’s page breaks, this essay has understood the page and the page break to be units of meaning with urgent implications for the recognition of poetic form and for the interrelations between a history of the book and the idea of literature. Given that the essay has put pressure on issues of authorship and authority, this closing emphasis on the reader and not the author—on the matter rather than the heart of the matter—supports both Barthes’s contention that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (148) and Foucault’s suggestion that the author is “the principle of theft in the proliferation of meaning” (118). In the absence of a disciplining authorial figure—no horrified Shakespeare need lurk over the quarto
reader—the book known as Q authorizes readers to open the multiplicity or “proliferation of meaning” to and at the level of materiality and to ask after those quiet but obtrusive breaks we find in every book we read.

Notes

This essay has benefited in innumerable ways from incisive and appropriately skeptical readings by Lisa Freinkel, Carol Thomas Neely, Jay Grossman, Hunt Howell, Christopher Lane, Glenn Sucich, and Wendy Wall. My thanks go first and foremost, however, to Jeffrey Masten for his encouragement and example.

1. See, e.g., Giroux.

2. I emphasize seemingly arbitrary. There is at work in Q a precise logic as to where these breaks occur: the pages that contain sonnets 22–93, 106–17, and 142–53 break their poems in a five-page pattern that finds the following number of lines from fractured sonnets at the bottom of each page: 5, 11, 2, 8, and 0. The remaining sonnet pages differ only slightly from this pattern. Such a pattern suggests precision and care in composition, as if some agent were, for instance, laboring to fit as much print as possible onto each page. I am grateful to Carol Thomas Neely for helping me to articulate the unarbitrariness of these breaks. For a discussion of the care with which later seventeenth-century composers “cast off copy,” see Moxon 239–44 and Gaskell 41. For a related discussion of the “relatively arbitrary nature of [Q’s typographical] distinctions,” see Freinkel 226–36.

3. Cloud’s essay on Herbert’s “Easter-Wings” takes seriously the representation of a shape poem across the openings of a book. See also Targoff; McLeod, “Gerard Hopkins.”

4. In the Arden edition of the sonnets, Katherine Duncan-Jones follows Vendler in re-presenting the poems as visually unified objects, despite assuring the reader that in “wording, format and punctuation, Q has been followed more closely than in any previous modernized edition” (Introduction 103; my emphasis). That an editor as sensitive to the materiality of the Shakespearean text as Duncan-Jones neglects to include these page breaks in her modern edition speaks to the transparency and perverseness of a reading practice that would ignore page breaks.

5. See also Duncan-Jones, “What.” It should be noted that Q evinces several forms of “contextual pressure,” chief among these the use of oversized first-letter capitals and the indentation of the first and final couplets of each poem. While several of Q’s peer sequences mark the beginning of their sonnets with large capitals, Q uses a particularly big font to do so. Likewise, while several other sequences indent couplets, only two others indent their final couplets, and neither of those uses large-font first letter capitals (see figs. 4–15). It seems likely that these unusual material elements would have indeed applied some contextual pressure, perhaps helping readers to recognize the beginning and end of each sonnet and mitigating the disruption caused by Q’s page breaks. One would also do well to consider the pressure applied by the catchwords that appear at the bottom of every page. Though common in early modern books, these too help to mitigate individual page breaks, cuing the reader to read past page breaks, even if this was not their original or practical purpose. To acknowledge such pressures is not, however, to accede to them. That such pressures would be necessary for a reader to recognize these poems as sonnets speaks to the hermeneutic disruptions these page breaks may have caused.

6. See also Duncan-Jones, “Unauthorized” 155 and Introduction 46.

7. In counting fourteen sequences, I follow Wall and Kuin in excluding collections of various verse forms (e.g., John Davies’s Wits Pilgrimage), which Spiller includes in his count. My count also omits multiple editions or printings of the same sequence, for instance Daniel’s six editions of Delia and Drayton’s nearly compulsive reissuings of ideas—though the iteration of the form in succeeding editions also supports my point. Tellingly, the first two poems in The Passionate Pilgrime—poems that appear, revised, as Q sonnets 138 and 144—are also monumentalized, as are all of Thomas Watson’s one hundred “passions” in The Hekatompathia, the 1582 collection that predated Philip Sidney and anticipated the 1590s sonnet sequence craze. Regrettably, I am not able to reproduce images of William Smith’s Chloris and Barnabe Barnes’s Parthenophil and Parthenope because the British Library was not willing to grant permanent permission for electronic reproduction.

8. Interestingly, Sidney’s 1591 sequence also interrupts its sonnets. By 1598, however, the sonnets appear (mostly) as unified, monumental visual objects. See Wall 72. Wall addresses these differing arrangements of Astrophel and Stella as an “evolution into a more ordered form” (70). While Wall’s discussion is persuasive and while Barnes’s sequence raises several questions about genre, I do not want to dismiss these sequences and their interruptions too quickly. The heuristic or reading methodology this essay advocates forces us to consider how the breaks in Parthenophil and the 1591 Astrophel might also matter.

9. For example, Marotti is interested in the peculiar naming of Q: “rather than [having] a title alluding to a love object . . . or to a fictional amorous relationship,” Q bears the name of its author (“Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 154). See also Duncan-Jones, “What,” and, on the gender indeeterminacy of the beloved, de Grazia, “Scandal” 39–40. For instances of mislabeled catchwords and page signatures, see Rollins 4. Duncan-Jones draws attention to variations in the fonts and font sizes of the capital letters W, H, S, and O and to the sonnets’ thirty-three italicized words (Introduction 39). See also Freinkel 226–36. Given the reading
practice I am advocating here, these equally abnormal aspects of Q’s materiality are worthy of attention in their own right, since they too have influenced the processes of meaning making that have informed Q’s reception.

10. The number of studies that would distance Shakespeare from *Shake-speares Sonnets* is staggering; a representative example is that of Robert Giroux, who intimates that William Shakespeare “apparently had nothing to do with the production of Q, because, among other reasons, it was so badly proofread” (8). Giroux underscores several “absentminded” and even “blatant” “mistakes,” “gaffes,” and “errors” in the text of the poems (8–10). Instead of attending to how those “mistakes” might either matter or themselves be intended, Giroux blames these textual cruxes on sloppy or meddling composers; see Jackson. For a critique of composer study, see McKenzie; Masten, “Pressing Subjects”; and de Grazia, “Essential Author.” Giroux goes on to count between fifty-three and eighty-four “errors” (11). This startling variance—a range of fifty-three to eighty-four being remarkable—betrays the subjective, arbitrary nature of such author-centric methodology; the inability to determine what is and what is not a mistake or error undermines the claims to truth to which Giroux’s study aspires. Especially given the complexity and indeterminacy we so often associate with poetic discourse, what looks like a sloppy composer error to one reader might look like a deft poetic effect to another. See also Rollins; McLeod, “Unmending”; and Duncan-Jones, *Introduction*.

11. The literature that treats sexuality in Q is enormous. Recent studies include: Bredbeck 167–80; Pequigney; Sedgwick 28–48; Bruce R. Smith 228–70; and Stallybrass.

12. Recent criticism has troubled readings such as Auden’s. Putting pressure on several governing terms (e.g., “authorized,” “literary property”) and paying close attention to the materiality of the Shakespearean text, critics such as Marotti and de Grazia have rendered anachronistic our concern for authorization, book contracts, proprietary claims, and authorial proofing. See also Tribble; Roberts.

13. The most recent example: Duncan-Jones devotes some seventeen pages of her *Arden* sonnets introduction to the issue of Q’s authenticity and authorization (Introduction 29–45). See also Duncan-Jones, “Unauthorized.”

14. Freinkel goes on to offer readings of the “self-trespassing poetic authority that unites—a authorizes” Q (189).

15. For a discussion of such a complex network of agents and intentions, see de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim* 169; Kastan 5; Marotti, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 143, 165–66; McGann; and Masten, “Textual Deviance.”

16. All references to Q are to the Huntington Library’s Chalmers-Bridgewater copy of the Aspley imprint, which is reprinted in facsimile in Booth, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1–133). For a discussion of the “small variations” between the extant copies, see Rollins 5.

17. See Moxon 242–43; Gaskell 41; and Blayney 12–14.

18. See also Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies* 4–5.

19. Elsewhere Marotti suggests that “short quarto pamphlets of poetry or drama [were] among the most perishable of printed words” (Manuscript 286), often “literally read out of existence” (Hyder Edward Rollins, qtd. in Marotti, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets” 158).

20. On the circulation of these poems in manuscript, see Taylor.

21. Likewise, twenty-four of the thirty-two sonnets included in the *Longman Anthology* (Damrosch et al.) are monumental in the 1609 text. A more comprehensive statistical study than I am able to undertake here would be required to support or refute the speculation that poems that appear as unified objects on the quarto page have fared better with critics than those that were broken. For now, the interrelations between quarto and anthology simply allow us to posit page breaks as yet another “contingency of value” that affects how and which poems enter our critical canon (Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies*).


23. Similarly, it seems telling that a poem that declares “Let me not to the marriage of true minds / Admit impediments” (poem 119) would appear without material impediments, resting unified and unbroken near the center of its page.

24. On the difficulties of such “narration,” see Dubrow, “Incertainties.”


26. Numerous readers have commented on this aspect of the poem, many even deploying the quietus as evidence of a meddling composer. See Giroux 8–9 and Booth, “Commentary” 430.

27. Duncan-Jones affirms that Shakespeare was “fully aware of the Italian form” (Introduction 96).

28. On the early modern reader as a daunting and a promising subject of study, see Zwicker 11 and Roberts 4. Roberts’s study tends admirably to the “composite” nature of Q, reading the intra- and intertextual relations between “Shake-speares Sonnets” and “A Lover’s Complaint”—regrettably, something this essay neglects entirely.

29. On the presence of the fragment in early modern humanistic pedagogy, see Bushnell 135–38.

30. For important recuperations of Benson, see Marotti, “Shakespeare’s Sonnets”; and de Grazia, “Scandal.”


32. See Gibaldi 111–12.
33. In his 1968 collection *Incarnations*, Robert Penn Warren attempted to answer that question for his readers. Throughout the volume Warren uses a symbol to “indicate a space between sections of a poem wherever such spaces are lost in pagination” (2).

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