

LYSANDER
 How now, my love? Why is your cheek so pale?
 How chance the roses there do fade so fast? 130

HERMIA
 Belike for want of rain, which I could well
 Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER
 Ay me! For aught that I could ever read,
 Could ever hear by tale or history, 135
 The course of true love never did run smooth.
 But either it was different in blood—

HERMIA
 O cross! Too high to be enthralled to low.

LYSANDER
 Or else misgraffèd in respect of years—

HERMIA
 O spite! Too old to be engaged to young. 140

LYSANDER
 Or else it stood upon the choice of friends—

HERMIA
 O hell, to choose love by another's eyes!

LYSANDER
 Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
 Making it momentary as a sound, 145
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and Earth,
 And, ere a man hath power to say "Behold!"
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up. 150
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

HERMIA
 If then true lovers have been ever crossed,
 It stands as an edict in destiny.
 Then let us teach our trial patience
 Because it is a customary cross, 155
 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

LYSANDER
 A good persuasion. Therefore, hear me, Hermia:
 I have a widow aunt, a dowager
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child. 160
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues,
 And she respects me as her only son.
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then 165
 Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow night,
 And in the wood a league without the town
 (Where I did meet thee once with Helena
 To do observance to a morn of May),
 There will I stay for thee. 170

HERMIA My good Lysander,
 I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head,
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves, 175
 And by that fire which burned the Carthage queen
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
 By all the vows that ever men have broke
 (In number more than ever women spoke),
 In that same place thou hast appointed me, 180
 Tomorrow truly will I meet with thee.