

SONNET I

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's Rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
 Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
 To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

This is the Guide's first appeal to the poet. The Guide explains to the poet what his potential is and what his responsibilities are. In the Guide's vocabulary, "increase" refers to the development of the inner being. He compares the inner being to beauty's Rose.

The development of the inner being is the ultimate goal of human evolution. This is why the poet's primary responsibility is to fulfil his evolutionary potentiality ("from fairest creatures we desire increase, that thereby beauty's rose might never die"). The inner being allows to break through the limitations of time and space. The correctly developed inner being will supersede the poet's mortal body and will preserve his inner beauty ("but as the ripper should by time decease, his tender heir might bear his memory"). But as long as the poet is preoccupied with his egotistic goals, he is just idly burning his life energy ("but thou contracted to thine own bright eyes, feed'st thy light's flame with self substantial fuel"). Right now, instead of actualizing his great potentiality, the poet is wasting his time ("making a famine where abundance lies"). In this way he is cruel to himself and his worst enemy ("thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel"). The Guide tells the poet that he is the world's newest jewel, but in his current state he is only an indication of such a potentiality ("thou that art now the world's fresh ornament, and only herald to the gaudy spring"). This potentiality is still buried within himself. But, tells him the Guide, he is ruining all of that by his indolent behaviour ("within thine own bud buriest thy content, and, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding"). The Guide warns the poet that if he does not take pity on the world, he will finish like a miser who takes with him to his grave that which rightly belongs to the world ("pity the world, or else this glutton be, to eat the world's due, by the grave and thee").

(Excerpt from "Shakespeare Sonnets or How heavy do I journey on the way" by Wes Jamroz)