When Nature made her chief work, Stella’s eyes,
In colour black why wrapt she beams so bright?
Would she in beamy black, like painter wise,
Frame daintiest lustre, mixed of shades and light?
Or did she else that sober hue devise,
In object best to knit and strength our sight;
Lest, if no veil these brave gleams did disguise,
They sun-like should more dazzle than delight?
Or would she her miraculous power show,
That, whereas black seems beauty’s contrary,
She even in black doth make all beauties flow?
Both so and thus, she, minding Love should be
Placed ever there, gave him this mourning weed,
To honour all their deaths who for her bleed.

Come sleep! O sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man’s wealth, the prisoner’s release,
Th’ indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella’s image see.

Oft with true sighs, oft with uncallèd tears,
Now with slow words, now with dumb eloquence
I Stella’s eyes assail, invade her ears;
But this at last is her sweet-breathed defence:
That who indeed infelt affection bears,
So captives to his saint both soul and sense,
That, wholly hers, all selfness he forbears;
Thence his desires he learns, his life’s course thence.
Now since her chaste mind hates this love in me,
With chastened mind I straight must shew that she
Shall quickly me from what she hates remove.
O Doctor Cupid, thou for me reply
Driven else to grant by angel’s sophistry
That I love not, without I leave to love.

1582?                            1591, 1598