

# Sonnet 121

By

William Shakespeare

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,  
When not to be, receives reproach of being,  
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deemed,  
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing.  
For why should others' false adulterate eyes  
Give salutation to my sportive blood?  
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,  
Which in their wills count bad what I think good?  
No, I am that I am, and they that level  
At my abuses, reckon up their own,  
I may be straight though they themselves be bevel;  
By their rank thoughts, my deeds must not be shown  
Unless this general evil they maintain,  
All men are bad and in their badness reign.