TIS BETTER TO BE VILE
(from "Book of Sonnets" - for Leslie)
Michael A. Gray (Los Angeles, 2022)
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Wm. Shakespeare (Sonnet CXXI)
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Soprano
Alto
Baritone
Piano

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And the just, and the just pleasure, And the just pleasure
lost, ceises re-proach of be-ing, __

And the just, and the just pleasure

lost, Which is So deem'd Not by our feeling

But

Which is So deem'd Not by our feeling, But

lost, Which is So deem'd Not by our feeling Not by our feeling

But
by others’ seeing. For why should others’ false adulterate eyes, For
by others’ seeing. For why, For why should others’ false adulterate eyes
by others’ seeing. For why, For why should others’ false adulterate eyes
by others’ seeing. For why, For why should others’ false adulterate eyes

Give salutation to my sportive blood? My sportive blood?
others’ false adulterate eyes Give salutation to my sportive blood?
Give salutation, Give salutation to my sportive blood? Or
Or on____ my frail - ties, Or on____ my frail - ties,
Why, Why____ are frail-er, frail -er spies;
on____ my frail - ties, Or on____ my frail - ties,
Why____ are frail -er spies, Why____ are

frail-er, frail -er spies;
Which in their wills count bad

Which in their wills count bad what I think good?

frail-er, frail -er spies;
what I think good?

No! I am that I am!

No! I am that I am!

No! I am that I am!

am, Am that I am!

And they that lev-el At my a-bus-es_ reck-on up their am that I am! Am that I am.

And they that lev-el at my a-
And they that level
At my abuses_
reck'on up their own, I may
Be straight own,
And they that level
At my abuses...
I may
Be straight
Though
bus-es_
reck'on up their own,
I may,
I may
Be straight Though

Though they them-selves be bevel
By their rank thoughts, I may
Be straight
they them-selves be bevel
By their rank thoughts,
...Be straight Though
they them-selves be bevel
By their rank thoughts,
Though they them-
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Though they them-selves be bev-el
By their rank thoughts,
My deeds must not be shown,
Unless this gen-er-al

Themselves be bev-el
By their rank thoughts,
My deeds must not be shown,
Unless this gen-er-al

-th less this gen-er-al e-vil they main-tain:
My deeds must not be

My deeds must not be shown,
Unless this gen-er-al e-vil they main-tain,

-e-vil they main-tain,
My deeds must not be shown,
Unless this gen-er-al e-vil they
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They maintain, they maintain: "All men are bad,

All men are bad," And in their bad-ness reign!

And in their bad-ness reign!

And in their bad-ness reign!