

On Viewing Her Own Portrait

(Este, que ves, engaño colorido)

This tinted trumpery which you here behold,
Where Art displays his brightest blandishments
In all their sophistry of red and gold
To practice trickery on your feeble sense;

This painting, in which Flattery makes bold
To undo the damage pitiless Time has done,
And, by rebuffing his strong, icy hold,
To banish Old Age and Oblivion,

Is a vain artifice of worldly skill,
Is a frail flower in the wind's onslaught,
Is flimsy hedge against Fate's iron will,

Is a mistaken and misguided thought,
Is foiled ambition and, considered well,
Is a cadaver, is dust, is shadow, is *not*.

Where nothing is, but all things seem.

—Shelley, 'The Sensitive Plant'

All that is, at all,

Lasts ever, past recall.

—Browning, 'Rabbi ben Ezra'

