

[32]

I'm content when my bones  
withstand time and thought.

You strip them for love,  
for their rhyme.



## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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Melissa Frederick composed [32] from words and letters in Sonnet 32 by William Shakespeare.

About the poem and the process of creating it, Melissa says:

“This poem is part of a series of erasures—deletions, I’m calling them—of Shakespeare’s sonnets. What I do to construct the poems is this: I go to the ‘Shakespeare’s Sonnets’ page on EServer, an open-access arts and humanities web site founded in 1990. The sonnets page presents you with a block of three-digit numbered links—no quotations, no first lines—from 001 to 154. I choose a number at random, click on the link, and type the sonnet I find there into my computer. I read the text as many times as I have to for the meaning to sink in. Then, when I have the first few words in my head, I start hitting the backspace button. The only rule of law I adhere to is letter order. Words and parts of words in the original sonnet can be eliminated, and line breaks and punctuation can be removed or added at will (hah!) by me.

I do my best to make some sort of connection between my piece and Shakespeare’s vision. Sonnet 32 is one of Shakespeare’s more passive-aggressive pieces, where he tells his lover to appreciate his work for the feeling behind it should the writing quality not withstand the test of time. My vision for the deletion was of the lover answering back that Shakespeare only appreciates him (or her) as a literary subject.”

Melissa Frederick is the author of *She* (Finishing Line Press 2008), and her work has also appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Moon City Review*, and *Queen Mob’s Tea House*. She is a freelance medical editor and lives in suburban Philadelphia. She can be found online at *Miss Fickle Reader’s Backwater Domain* ([missficklereader.wordpress.com](http://missficklereader.wordpress.com)).

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