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# Anti-hermeneutics; Anti-anti-hermeneutics: Thoughts on a methodological introduction to a first year course on "Elizabethan & Jacobean poetry"

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ANTI-HERMENEUTICS

And now we come to Shakespeare's sonnets. We groan,
and ask, what false turning brought us here?
To pick dead flesh, to rattle ancient bones?
Who'm I to William S? His punkish gear,
his weirdo words: they all mean zilch to me.
Must we dissect a rotten corpse, and look
inside a rubbish bin - for literacy?
Hacking out his meaning's just a fluke.
And Donne and Herbert, too. Their words are ash,
their feelings safely locked away in lib-
raries; nice tombs for antiquated trash.
Dealing with stiffs, you catch some nasty vibes.
So much wind and water passed twixt now and then;
who wants to piece cadavers up again?

ANTI-ANTI-HERMENUETICS

Juice that cannot run, time will clot,
as in fruit which has returned to seed.
Stored too long, it swells and starts to rot
deep within the husk where maggots feed-
Stagnant words - like water - evaporate
in the harsh glare of a stony reader's eye
that, solid-cast in its own conglomerate,
fails to rise and melt them from the sky.
It's not old words, but dull experience
that's locked away like Ariel in cloven pine;
words whisper truth in thousand variants
each unique to an ear, a space, a time.
Thought and feeling they both take and give;
still dead, awaiting my command to live.