Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

W. S. narrowly avoided a quadruple negative.
Experts believe that one more "no" or "nor"
Would have cancelled out the couplet,
Destroying the Sonnet Matrix and
altering "poetry forever."

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Text of Shakespeare's Sonnet 116:

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Definition of Terms

Enjambment — continuing a sentence or phrase past the line break. This poetic technique can be used to create a more interesting sound, as well as a play on words or twist of thought as in Shakespeare’s cynical example above.

Alliteration — regular repetition of consonant sounds (usually the initial) which can result in a certain resonance or reverberation which, when run riot, can also result in resentment.

Assonance — repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming. Those who over-manipulate their sounds through this technique can be accused of being assonant, as in the complaint, “I hate reading that guy’s poems. He’s such an assonance.”

Couplet — a pair of lines, often comprising a complete stanza. A couplet will often rhyme, but is not ostracized for its failure to do so.

Sonnet Matrix — the fictional way a certain poet characterizes a complex array of lines making up the traditional Shakespearean sonnet, in iambic pentameter and comprised of three four-line stanzas which rhyme in the required manner and ending with a rhyming, but not necessarily negative, couplet.