One of the, if not the greatest writer of all time is no other than William Shakespeare. Intense study of his work fell into my lap in my junior year of high school, learning from a woman who has her doctorate in his literature. I was intrigued with her passionate and in depth teachings early in the year, and when we got to the Shakespeare portion of our syllabus that included *Twelfth Night* and an array of his sonnets, I fell in love. It wasn’t just the stories and complex characters he created that intrigued me; it was his influences on and contributions to the English language.

Shakespeare invented insults, words, and phrases that were never seen or heard of in our everyday language until he used them in his sonnets and plays. Some examples of his contributions are from http://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/resources/shakespeare-words-phrases.htm, and they include catch a cold, clothes make the man, eat out of house and home, fair play, flaming youth, heart of gold, housekeeping, long-haired, mind’s eye, and naked truth. It’s hard to think that he used these exact words in his writing and that we adapted them into our everyday language. I find it interesting that in the Renaissance time, people who saw these plays weren’t confused by the English Shakespeare wrote in that we students have so much trouble understanding, but these new words he invents like puking, which comes up in As You Like It, saying “They have their exits and their entrances; / And one man in his time plays many parts, / His acts being seven ages. At first the infant, / Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms” (II, vii, ). Puking is such a fitting word for his description in this quote, describing all men as having the same stages of life in which they go through, first being a baby and literally puking all over their
mothers. When actually thought about, the image of puking we have now burned into our minds fits perfectly in his usage of the word, since babies really do uncontrollably vomit all over their mothers and whoever else is in their path. Shakespeare also uses folklore in his stories to develop his characters and relationships. Some of the most intricate and moving relationships are seen first in his plays and simple ideas of human ideals and issues are also visited in his sonnets. Reflections of Shakespeare and what he is experiencing at a particular moment in his life can be felt in his sonnets as well. He is such a dynamic writer, it’s difficult to even begin to think you understand who he is as a human or a writer.