

Winter-Love in a Dark Corner

by Con Chapman

What a deal of cold business doth a man spend the better part of his life in!—in scattering compliments, tendering visits, gathering and venting news, following feasts and plays, making a little winter-love in a dark corner.

Ben Jonson, Discoveries

I agree, for the most part;
scattering compliments is an art
I've never mastered, at least
when it comes to mere flattery.
I don't care where it doesn't get me.



As for visiting folks, well, my mother
Told me never to outstay my welcome
and so I'm always on edge, wondering

whether I should be going, whether the offer of another drink is meant to be declined.

Following feasts? Right time of the year to ask me, exhausted as I am from turkey, pies, Christmas cookies from a realtor and a banker who want our business, the thank-you notes that cramp the hand.



Plays? I wish I could see more of them, even yours, my good man, though that's unlikely, given how your star's in decline while Shakespeare, whom you praised, lives on, outside of English departments.

But making a little winter-love in a dark corner? Surely, Ben, you can find

worse things to complain about than
“cold business” that starts out snuggling
and ends in a glow like a low blue flame.

