

The Sonnet

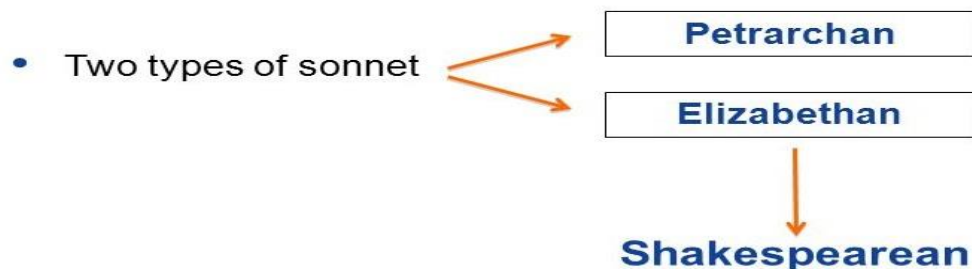
- ❖ Italian origin: The word **sonnet** comes from Italian *sonetto*, meaning "little sound" or "little song."
- ❖ Lyric poems
- ❖ 14 lines
- ❖ Iambic pentameter: **U / U / U / U / U /**
- ❖ Use of **conceits**: a metaphor that the poet usually extends and elaborates throughout the course of his poem.
- ❖ Poets chronicled stories of unrequited love in **sonnet sequences**, which were many sonnets tied together with the thread of narrative



The sonnet

1. The sonnet

- Introduced into England at the beginning of the 16th century.
- From Italy.



The Sonnet

- 14-line poem.
- Usually contains a contrast in ideas, images, emotions, states of mind, beliefs, actions, events to create a unique comparison.
- Three main types (but many different variations): Italian (“Petrarchan”), Spenserian and **English (“Shakespearean”)**.
- Basic meter of all sonnets written in English is **IAMBIC PENTAMETER**. (da-DUM, repeated in five metrical “feet”).

Development of the Sonnet

- ❖ The first sonnets were written in Italy in the Thirteenth Century. The most famous of the Italian sonneteers were **Dante** and **Petrarch** who wrote entire sonnet sequences in the Italian vernacular.
- ❖ The Italian sonnet was introduced into English poetry by **Sir Thomas Wyatt**.
- ❖ In the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, English writers began to imitate their earlier Italian counterparts by writing sonnets in the English vernacular.
- ❖ The most important sonnet sequences written in English were written by **Edmund Spenser** (*Amoretti*, published in 1595), **Sir Philip Sidney** (*Astrophel and Stella*, published in 1582), and **William Shakespeare** (his untitled sequence of 154 sonnets was published in 1609).
- ❖ By the reign of **Queen Elizabeth**, sonnet production became the vogue for its aspiring writers.

Sonnet I

_ / _ / _ / _ / _ /
From fair | est crea | tures we | desire | increase,
_ / _ / _ / _ / _ /
That there | by beau | ty's rose | might ne | ver die,
_ / _ / _ / _ / _ /
But as | the rip | er should | by time | decease,
_ / _ / _ / _ / _ /
His ten | der heir | might bear | his me | mory:

SONNETS

Italian or Petrarchan

❖ Stanzas:

- ❖ **Octave** – first 8 lines:
presents problem
- ❖ **Sestet** – last 6 lines:
presents resolution of or
meditation upon problem

❖ Rhyme:

- ❖ **Octave** – abba abba
- ❖ **Sestet** -- cdecde or cdccdc
or cddcdd or variation

English or Shakespearean

❖ Stanzas:

- ❖ **3 Quatrains** – each presents
similar images
- ❖ **Heroic Couplet** – presents a
paradoxical resolution

❖ Rhyme:

- ❖ **Quatrains** – abab cdcd efef
- ❖ **Couplet** --gg

Rhyme Scheme: Sonnet XCI (91)

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,	A
Some in their wealth, some in their bodies' force,	B
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill,	A
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse;	B
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,	C
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest:	D
But these particulars are not my measure;	C
All these I better in one general best.	D
Thy love is better than high birth to me,	E
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,	F
Of more delight than hawks or horses be;	E
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast:	F
Wretched in this alone, that thou mayst take	G
All this away and me most wretched make.	G

- ❖ In the court of **Henry VIII**, a group of poets arose who would make significant contributions to the development of English literature. Chief among these "courtly makers" were **Sir Thomas Wyatt** and **Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey**. With their translations of Petrarch's work, Wyatt and Surrey are responsible for introducing the sonnet form into English.
- ❖ Wyatt and Surrey also wrote their own sonnets in English, establishing a poetic form and a poetic tradition.
- ❖ Although its rules of order and arrangement are strict, the sonnet required the sort of discipline that prepared poets for more creative, original works. In polishing their own writing and technique, they also polished English as a fit language for poetic endeavors.

**Edmund
Spenser
(1552-1599)**



Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

- ❖ Spenserian sonnet: **abab bcbc cdcd ee**
- ❖ *Amoretti*: “little loves” or “little cupids”
 - ❖ Sonnet sequence celebrating the poet’s courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle
 - ❖ Portrays a happy and successful love



**Sir Philip
Sidney
(1554-1586)**

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)

- ❖ *Astrophel and Stella*: sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs
- ❖ Charts unhappy love of Astrophel (“lover of a star”) for Stella (“star”)
 - ❖ Stella identified with Penelope Rich
 - ❖ Real relationship with Sidney unknown
- ❖ Petrarchan sonnets

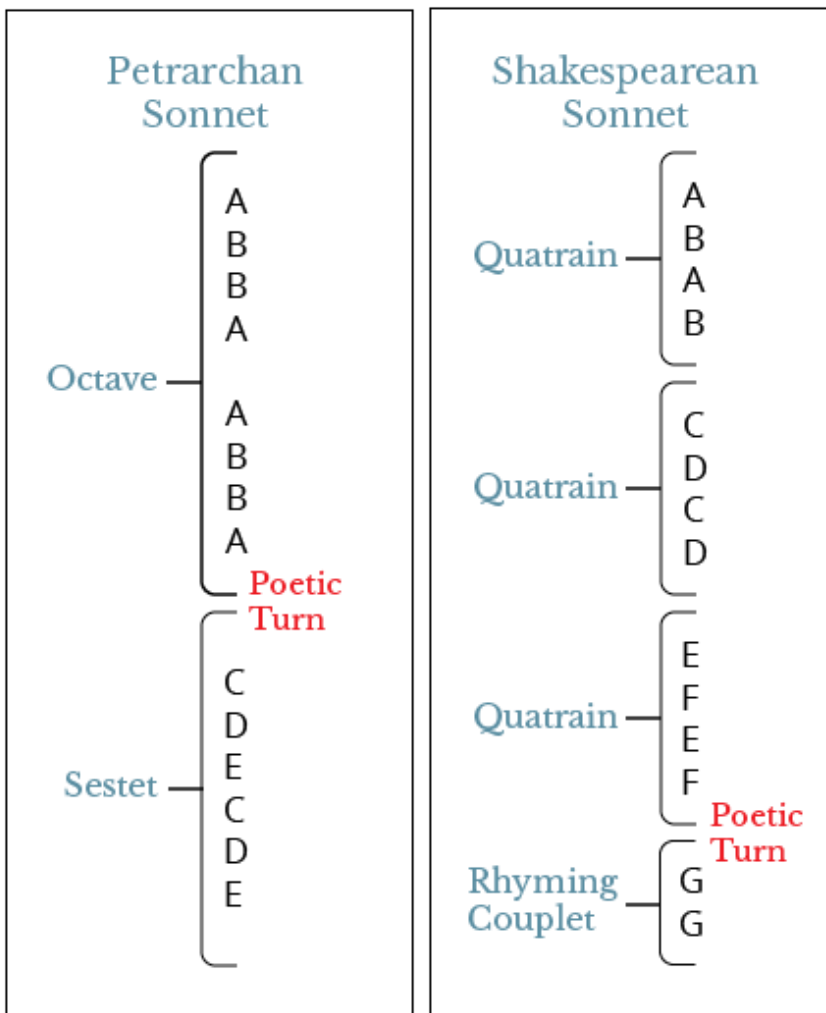
Shakespeare's Sonnets

- 154 total.
- Published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609, but written c.1592-c.1596.
- Dedicated to a mysterious “Mr. W.H.”
- Candidates may be:
 - **William Herbert**, third Earl of Pembroke (one of the dedicatees of the 1623 First Folio).
 - **Henry Wriothesley**, third Earl of Southampton (a patron of Shakespeare in the early 1590s to whom “Venus and Adonis” and “The Rape of Lucrece” were dedicated).

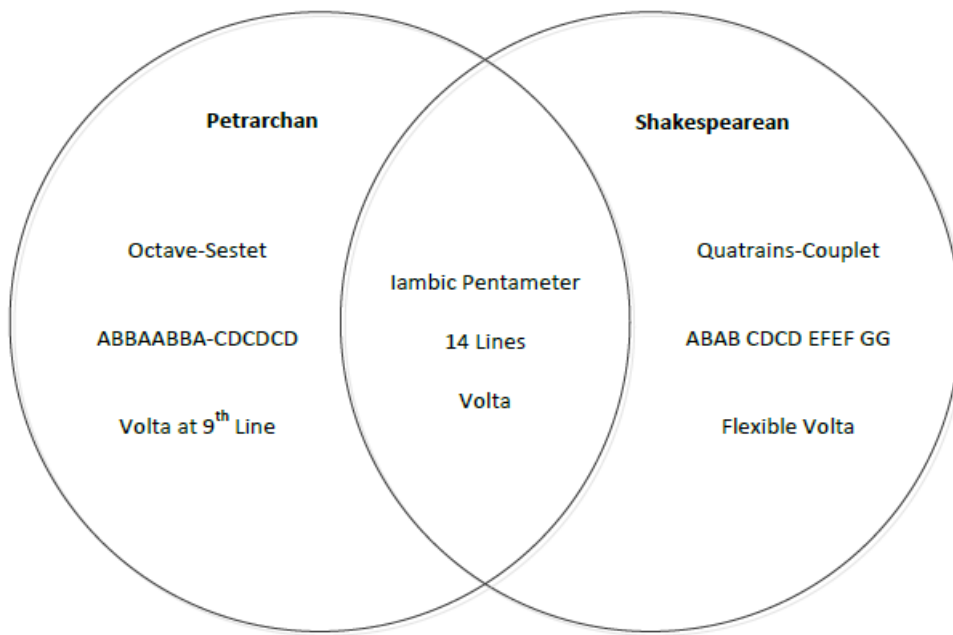
Shakespearean Sonnet-Meter

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Iambic
pentameter



1. Octave (the first eight lines) and
- 2 Sestet (the last six lines).



The great sonneteers of the Elizabethan era were Sir Thomas Wyatt, Earl of Surrey, Philip Sydney, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.