

Sonnet 18

Poem by William Shakespeare

Sonnet XXX of *Fatal Interview*

Poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML10-810

What makes a good LOVE POEM?

COMMON CORE

RL 2 Determine a central idea of a text. **RL 5** Analyze an author's choices concerning how to structure a text. **RL 10** Read and comprehend poems.

How do you describe something you cannot see or taste or touch? Like a love song, a love poem uses familiar objects and experiences to make sense of the mysterious feelings of love. As you'll see in "Sonnet 18" and "Sonnet XXX," the results can be as different as day and night.

BRAINSTORM In a group, brainstorm a list of comparisons you might use to describe how it feels to be in love. Think of song lyrics you know or poems you have read. As you create your list, discuss what aspect or quality of love each comparison communicates.



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● POETIC FORM: SONNET

The sonnet has been a popular poetic form for centuries, and, traditionally, love has been its subject. While different types of sonnets have been developed by various poets, there are some characteristics that are common to all sonnets.

- Typically, the **sonnet** is a 14-line lyric poem written with a strict pattern of rhyme and rhythm.
- The **English**, or **Shakespearean**, **sonnet** has a rhyme scheme of *abab cdcd efef gg*. Notice how this divides the poem into four distinct line groups: three **quatrains**, or four-line units, followed by a **couplet**—a pair of rhymed lines, or two-line unit.
- The **meter**, or the repeated pattern of rhythm, in each line of a sonnet is typically **iambic pentameter**. Each rhythmic unit of meter is known as a **foot**. The most commonly used metrical foot is an **iamb**, which is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Note the iambs in the following example from Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18”:

*Sō lóng ās mén cān bréathe, ōr eyés cān sée,
Sō lóng livēs thís, ānd thís givēs lífe tō thée.*

In each line, notice that there are five units of iambs. When a line has five feet in it, it is referred to as **pentameter**. Therefore, this meter is called iambic pentameter.

As you read the poems in this lesson, compare their rhyme schemes and meter.

● READING STRATEGY: READING SONNETS

Through their structure, sonnets often express complex ideas. These strategies will help you identify those ideas:

1. Identify the situation, problem, or question introduced at the beginning of the poem.
2. Identify the turning point, if there is one.
3. Determine how the situation is clarified, the problem resolved, or the question answered.

As you read, apply these strategies and record the results on a chart like the one shown.

Strategy	Sonnet 18	Sonnet XXX
Situation/Problem/Question		
Turning Point		
Solution/Resolution/Answer		



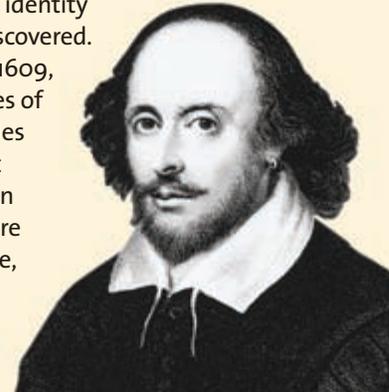
Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

William Shakespeare

1564–1616

Renaissance Man

Although Shakespeare is best known for his plays, he was also a brilliant poet. When Shakespeare began his career in the 1590s, the sonnet was a literary fashion in England, usually written as a longing tribute to a faraway beloved. In fact, many of Shakespeare’s sonnets are addressed to a “dark lady” whose identity has never been discovered. First published in 1609, the complete series of 154 sonnets includes some of the finest love poems written in English. For more about Shakespeare, see the extended biography on page 1186.



Edna St. Vincent Millay

1892–1950

A True Original

Edna St. Vincent Millay was only 19 when her poem “Rensance” made her an instant celebrity. Although Millay’s youth and free-spirited lifestyle fit the image of the rebellious artist, her highly crafted poems often took on traditional poetic forms, such as the sonnet. In 1923 she became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, a tribute to her technical skill.



Authors Online



Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML10-811

Analyze Visuals ▶

Describe the relationship of the figures shown. What specific details support your **inferences**?

SONNET 18

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:¹
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
5 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;² **A**
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
10 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;³
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

A READING SONNETS

Reread the second **quatrain**, or grouping of four lines. What situation does it describe?

1. **temperate** (tēm'pər-īt): moderate, mild.
2. **untrimmed**: stripped of beauty.
3. **thou owest** (*thou* ō'īst): you own; you possess.

Offering of the Heart (1400-1410).
French tapestry from Arras. Wool
and silk, 247 cm × 209 cm. Louvre,
Paris. Photo © Réunion des Musées
Nationaux/Art Resource, New York.





The Cathedral (1908), Auguste Rodin. Bronze, 24¹/₂" × 10³/₄" × 11³/₄". Photo © Timothy McCarthy/Art Resource, New York.

Sonnet XXX

OF FATAL INTERVIEW

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;
Nor yet a floating spar¹ to men that sink
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;
5 Love can not fill the thickened lung with breath,
Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;
Yet many a man is making friends with death
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone. **B**
It well may be that in a difficult hour,
10 Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,
Or nagged by want² past resolution's power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would.

B SONNET
How does the **rhyme scheme** of lines 1–8 compare with that of Shakespeare's sonnet?

1. **spar**: a pole used to support a ship's sails.
2. **want**: need.

Comprehension

- 1. Recall** What is the main comparison developed in “Sonnet 18”?
- 2. Clarify** In “Sonnet 18,” the speaker promises the subject of the poem that “thy eternal summer shall not fade.” What is the basis for this promise?
- 3. Recall** What contrast opens “Sonnet XXX”?
- 4. Paraphrase** Reread the second quatrain of “Sonnet XXX.” What is the speaker’s claim about love in these lines?

COMMON CORE

RL 2 Determine a central idea of a text. **RL 5** Analyze an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text. **W 2b** Develop the topic with quotations appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

Text Analysis

5. Identify Metaphor In poetry, an **extended metaphor** is a comparison between two things that is continued across a number of lines. What qualities does the extended metaphor in “Sonnet 18” help communicate?

6. Interpret Imagery Consider the images that Millay presents in describing what love is not, or what it cannot do. These images are examples of what kinds of human needs? What is the point of contrasting love with these needs? Use a chart like the one shown to record the images from the poem.

<i>Love Is Not</i>	<i>Love Cannot</i>
<i>meat</i>	<i>fill the lung with breath</i>

- 7. Analyze Sonnet Structure** Review the chart you developed as you read. How do the ideas expressed in the sonnet relate to its quatrains and couplets? Cite evidence from the poems to explain your answer.
- 8. Compare Form** Although they lived more than 300 years apart, Millay and Shakespeare both wrote poetry using the sonnet form. Determine the rhyme scheme and meter for both sonnets. Then reread the top of page 811. Is Millay’s poem a Shakespearean sonnet? Explain your answer.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION

WRITING PROMPT

Extended Constructed Response: Interpret
How would the speaker of each poem respond to the statement “Love lasts forever”? Use details from “Sonnet 18” and “Sonnet XXX” to **write a three- to five-paragraph response**.

REVISING TIP

Review your response. Have you correctly used quotation marks and commas to create embedded quotations when citing evidence?

What makes a good LOVE POEM?

Do the two sonnets agree with your own ideas about love?