

GETTING TO KNOW SHAKESPEARE



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE SONNETS

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SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

HOW SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS WERE WRITTEN, PERFORMED AND PUBLISHED!

SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

Never before Imprinted

AT LONDON
By G. Eld for T. T. and are
to be sold by William Play.
1609.

THE SONNETS WERE PUBLISHED AS A COLLECTION IN 1609 - APPARENTLY **WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION!**

THOMAS THORPE.
AT THE TIME, SOME
CALLED HIM "A
PUBLISHING UNDER-
STRAPPER OF PIRATICAL
HABITS"!!...

... BUT SOME SCHOLARS
SUGGEST HE MAY
HAVE HAD PERMISSION
FROM AND EVEN WORKED
WITH THE AUTHORS
WHOSE WORK HE
PUBLISHED.

BUT, SHAKESPEARE WAS WRITING THEM FOR
AT LEAST TEN YEARS BEFORE THIS...



... AND READING THEM TO HIS FRIENDS...



...WHICH IS HOW WE KNOW!

BUT WE DON'T KNOW IN WHAT ORDER SHAKESPEARE WROTE THE SONNETS:

(WELL, IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED LIKE THIS...!)



THE GROUPING OF THE SONNETS

THE FIRST 126 SONNETS ARE ADDRESSED TO 'THE FAIR YOUTH', AN UNKNOWN YOUNG MAN WITH WHOM SHAKESPEARE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD A RELATIONSHIP: THE THEMES OF THE POEMS ARE ... ADMIRATION, JEALOUSY, CORRUPTION, BETRAYAL, AND LEAVING AN HEIR FOR THE FUTURE. THE FRIENDSHIP HAS ITS HIGHS AND LOWS DUE TO INTERFERENCE FROM A RIVAL POET, AND 'A DARK LADY'...

"Oh thou, my lovely boy"

"TENDER CHURL!"

127-152

'THE DARK LADY'

"My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun..."



... And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare As any she belied with false compare."

THE NEXT 26 SONNETS ARE ABOUT A 'DARK LADY' WITH WHOM THE POET SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INFATUATED, EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS PROBABLY MARRIED - AS WAS HE! THERE IS A SIMILAR STORY TO THAT OF THE FAIR YOUTH, WITH **SIMILAR THEMES** - ATTRACTION, DECEPTION, REJECTION AND JEALOUSY. SOME OF THE POEMS ALSO PLAY ON THE MEANINGS OF THE POET'S NAME: **WILL**.

THE FINAL TWO POEMS AREN'T REALLY LINKED TO THESE TWO CHARACTERS.



THE **LAST TWO SONNETS** ARE **EPIGRAMS** - SHORT, FUNNY POEMS - BASED ON **ANCIENT GREEK MYTHS** ABOUT THE **GOD OF LOVE EROS (CUPID)**, WHOSE TORCH OF LOVE IS EXTINGUISHED BY A MAID OF THE GODDESS OF VIRGINITY, **ARTEMIS (DIANA)** IN A SPRING, WHICH GIVES THE SPRING THE POWER TO HEAL, LIKE THE WATERS AT **BATH, UK**.



THE GROUPING AND NUMBERING IS LOGICAL, EVEN IF IT'S NOT CORRECT.

SHAKESPEARIAN/*

The BODY of a/SONNET

USING SONNET 15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

THE FIRST FOUR LINES, OR QUATRAIN, ESTABLISH THE SONNET'S THEME FROM AN INITIAL ANGLE. HERE THE SPEAKER TELLS US HE HAS BEEN THINKING ABOUT ('CONSIDER') THE TRANSIENT ('A LITTLE MOMENT') AND INSUBSTANTIAL ('SHOWS') NATURE OF LIFE

When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and cheque'd even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;

LINES 5-8, OR THE SECOND QUATRAIN, DEVELOP THE THEME FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE. HERE THE SPEAKER TELLS US WHAT HE'S SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD ('PERCEIVE') OF MAN'S 'INCREASE' IN NUMBERS AND AGE, ONLY TO FALL INTO DECAY ('AT HEIGHT DECREASE') AND BE FORGOTTEN ('OUT OF MEMORY').

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;

THE THIRD QUATRAIN DEVELOPS THE THEME OF DECAY BUT NOW ALERTS US TO THE SONNET'S YOUTHFUL ADDRESSEE ('YOU').

A CONCEIT IS A METAPHOR THAT DEVELOPS WITH A COMPLEX OR SURPRISING LOGIC. HERE, MUSING ON THE METAPHOR OF MAN'S TRANSIENT AND CHANGING STATE ON EARTH ('INCONSTANT STAY') LEADS THE SPEAKER TO REASON THAT THE VALUE OF THE ADDRESSEE'S YOUTH IS EVEN GREATER ('MOST RICH') BECAUSE IT WILL PASS!

THE FINAL TWO LINES, OR COUPLET, BRING THE POEM TO A POINT OF RESOLUTION.

HERE THE SPEAKER OVERTURNS THE SONNET'S THEME BY STATING, AS TIME LEADS TO THE DECAY OF YOUTH, HE REMAKES THE YOUTH ('I ENGRAFT YOU NEW') THROUGH HIS VERSE

EXPECT A TURN, OR VOLTA, THAT ALTERS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEME. THIS WILL APPEAR IN EITHER LINE 9 OR LINE 13. HERE THE VOLTA IS IN LINE 13, AND IS WHERE THE SPEAKER OVERTURNS THE THEME.

And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF SONNET, BUT SHAKESPEARE MADE THIS ONE SO FAMOUS IT'S NAMED AFTER HIM!

WILL EXPLAINS:



IN SONNET 135, I PLAY WITH AND PUN ON MY NAME, DRAWING ON THE MANY POSSIBLE MEANINGS OF WILL. IN THE LINE 'WHO EVER HATH HER WISH, THOU HAST THY WILL', 'WILL' CAN MEAN 'DESIRE' OR REFER TO ANOTHER MAN CALLED WILL – A RIVAL FOR THE LADYS AFFECTIONS!

THE FOLLOWING LINE, 'AND WILL TO BOOT, AND WILL IN OVERPLUS', IS INTENDED TO SUGGEST NOT ONLY THAT MY LADY HAS AN EXCESS OF SUITORS CALLED WILL (ME AND MY RIVAL), BUT ALSO THAT SHE HAS AN EXCESS OF DESIRE.

HOWEVER, 'WILL', LIKE 'WILLY', HAS ANOTHER WELL-KNOWN MEANING, WHICH YOU'LL SEE LENDS SOME NAUGHTY POSSIBILITIES!

THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER NAMES THAT COULD MAKE GOOD STARTING POINTS FOR YOUR OWN PUNNING SONNET – PERHAPS YOURS IS ONE OF THEM! OR MAYBE YOU KNOW A MARK, OR NICK OR MAY... YOU COULD EVEN PLAY WITH A VERY FAMOUS NAME CONNECTED TO PORTSMOUTH, MARY ROSE!

Sonnet 135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

Sonnet 17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet Heaven knows it is but as a tomb,
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, 'This poet lies,
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
So should my papers yellow'd with their age,
Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage,
And stretched metre of an antique song;
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, – in it and in my rhyme.



SONNET 17 DEVELOPS THE THEME OF HOW MY MORTAL 'FAIR YOUTH' MIGHT BE MADE IMMORTAL THROUGH THE POWER OF MY WRITING.

HERE, THOUGH, THE EMPHASIS IS ON POETRY'S INADEQUACY TO THE TASK: INSTEAD OF MY VERSE MAKING THE YOUTH IMMORTAL, IT'S 'BUT AS A TOMB / WHICH HIDES YOUR LIFE AND SHOWS NOT HALF YOUR PARTS'.

EVEN IF I COULD DO JUSTICE TO MY YOUTH'S BEAUTY AND GRACES, I SAY, FUTURE GENERATIONS WHO HADN'T SEEN HIM WOULD THINK I LIED, NOT BELIEVING SUCH BEAUTY COULD EVER HAVE EXISTED ON EARTH.

I PROPOSE A SOLUTION IN THE COUPLET: IF MY FAIR YOUTH BE THE YOUTH'S IMAGE, AND WOULD ALSO PROVE THE TRUTH OF MY RECREATION OF HIM IN VERSE.

COULD YOU WRITE A SONNET THAT DEALS WITH THE POWER OF WRITING TO MEMORIALISE (PRESERVE IN WRITING) PEOPLE, PLACES OR THINGS? OR MIGHT YOU USE THE SONNET FORM TO CONVEY AN IMAGE OR IDEA TO A FUTURE GENERATION – PERHAPS ONE THAT YOU THINK FUTURE GENERATIONS MIGHT STRUGGLE TO BELIEVE?

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, THE IDEAL FEMALE BEAUTY WAS A **FAIR-HAIRED LADY**, BUT BY THE TIME I CAME TO WRITE MY SONNETS, THAT IDEAL HAD BEGUN TO SEEM **LESS FRESH**

(AS INDEED DID THE 'FAIR' **ELIZABETH I**!) BAD WRITERS LISTED THIS KIND OF LADY'S ATTRIBUTES IN POETICIZED TERMS THAT HAD **NOTHING** TO DO WITH REAL WOMEN, AND YOU CAN SEE THOSE KINDS OF DESCRIPTIONS PARODIED IN THIS IMAGE OF A '**SONNET LADY**' FROM CHARLES SORÉL'S **THE EXTRAVAGANT SHEPHERD**.



AS YOU CAN SEE, THE LADY HAS **FLOWERS IN HIS CHEEKS**, **PEARLED CHEEKS**, AND **CUPID SITS ON HER BROW!**

IN SONNET 130, YOU CAN SEE ME LIST ALL THE WAYS IN WHICH MY '**DARK LADY**' IS THE **ANTITHESIS** (OPPOSITE) OF THIS IDEAL FEMININITY. MY '**SONNET LADY**' IS **EARTHLY**: 'WHEN SHE WALKS, SHE TREADS ON THE **GROUND**'. THE **VOLTA** REVEALS THAT VALUE IS NOT FOUND IN FALSELY COMPARING WOMEN TO IDEAL BEAUTY: MY LOVE (MY LADY AND THE LOVE I HAVE FOR HER) IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT'S **REAL**.



Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

DRAW YOUR OWN **SONNET-LADY** USING SONNET 130

3 STEPS TO THE PERFECT SONNET

Step 1: pick a theme

PICK A THEME THAT YOU CAN HAVE A BIT OF FUN WITH: YOUR SONNET MUST HAVE POINT AND PURPOSE, BUT IT ALSO NEEDS TO BE PLAYFUL IN HOW IT ADDRESSES ITS THEME.



NOTE: MOST OF THESE THEMES ARE NOT VERY POSITIVE, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOURS CAN'T BE!

Step 2: practise the form

① RHYTHM: POETRY RHYTHM IS CALLED METER.

METER IS MADE UP OF GROUPS OF SYLLABLES, CALLED FEET.
THE METRICAL FEET USED BY SHAKESPEARE ARE IAMBS.

THERE ARE FIVE (pente' in Greek) IAMBIC FEET IN A LINE OF POETRY.

THUS, THIS METER IS CALLED IAMBIC PENTAMETER!



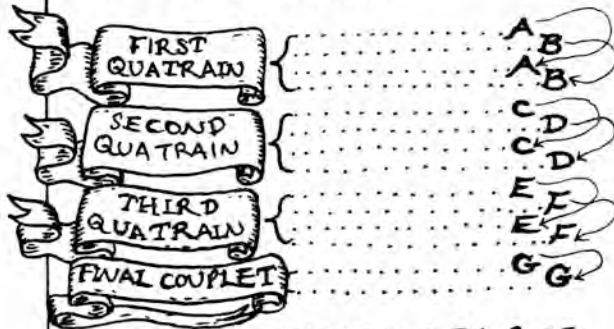
I AM_(s)
light syllable HEAVY SYLLABLE

I am the best at writing sonnets now!
FOOT 1 FOOT 2 FOOT 3 FOOT 4 FOOT 5
A line of IAMBIC PENTAMETER

② RHYME:

SONNETS RHYME AT THE END OF EACH LINE.

EACH QUATRAIN'S LINES RHYME ALTERNATELY, AND THERE ARE TWO END-RHYMES IN EACH.



THE COUPLET IS A PAIR OF RHYMING LINES

SONNET 18 FIRST QUATRAIN:

Shall I compare thee to a
Summer's day? A

Thou art more lovely and
more temperate: B

Rough winds do shake the
darling buds of May, A

And summer's lease hath
all too short a date: B

THE AS
AND BS
MATCH
RHYMES!



CAN YOU USE THESE
SETS OF RHYMING WORDS
TO WRITE A SONNET?
WHICH SET WILL BE
RHYME A, B, C, D, E, F?
(YOU'LL NEED YOUR
OWN FOR G!)

Sugred Words

Set 1: ALONE, BLOWN, OWN, GROWN, POSTPONE, STONE

Set 2: CRIED, GUIDE, DENIED, LIED, WIDE, REPLIED

Set 3: BEAT, COMPLETE, DELETE, HEAT, TWEET, RETREAT

Set 4: AWAKE, BREAK, FAKE, MAKE, MISTAKE, SAKE

Set 5: LINE, MINE, RECLINE, SIGN, SHINE, UNDERMINE

Set 6: ADD, CLUE, OVERDO, YOU, RENEW, REVIEW

Step 3: make your (sonnet) body move like Shakespeare



HAVE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SONNET BODY ON PAGE 3 -
CAN YOU MAKE YOUR IDEAS MOVE LIKE THAT?

1st QUATRAIN

OFFER YOUR THEME
INITIALLY FROM ONE
ANGLE - PERHAPS, LIKE
SHAKESPEARE, AS SOME-
THING YOU HAVE THOUGHT
ABOUT.

2nd QUATRAIN

THEN OFFER
AN ADDITIONAL
ANGLE ON YOUR THEME -
PERHAPS WHAT YOU SEE AROUND
YOU, OR WHAT YOU'VE HEARD
OTHERS SAY.

3rd QUATRAIN

DEVELOP YOUR THEME YET
FURTHER, EITHER IN ANOTHER
WAY OR BY ADDING MORE DEPTH
TO THE PERSPECTIVES YOU HAVE
OFFERED

GIVE THAT THEME A KICK
WITH A VOLTA! HERE YOU COULD
SUMMARISE, OR CONTRAST, OR
COMPLETELY OVERTURN EVERY-
THING YOU'VE WRITTEN SO FAR

COUPLET



QUATRAINS
COUPLET
WORDPLAY

SONNET
INGREDIENTS

HEY MISTER,
CAN WE BE IN
ONE OF YOUR
PLAYS?

ADDRESSEE

SPEAKER

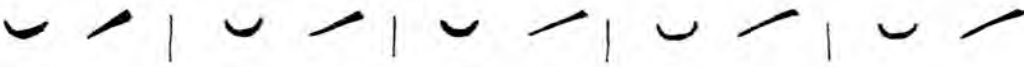


MAKE YOUR SHAKESPEARIAN SONNET MAGIC!

Write your own sonnet!

TITLE: _____





Rhythm



Rhyme





1st
QUATRAIN

Four horizontal lines for writing the first quatrain.

A 
B 
A 
B 





2nd
QUATRAIN

Four horizontal lines for writing the second quatrain.

C 
D 
C 
D 

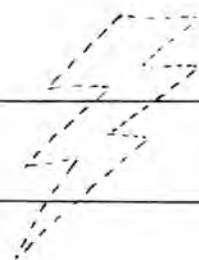
3rd
QUATRAIN



Four horizontal lines for writing the third quatrain.

E 
F 
E 
F 

COUPLET

Two horizontal lines for writing the final couplet.



G 
G 

LEARN ABOUT SHAKESPEARE
THE FUN WAY
WITH THIS ILLUSTRATED GUIDE
TO HIS SONNETS -
AND FOLLOW OUR
THREE STEPS
TO WRITE LIKE THE BARD !

I HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED
A MORE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
MY SONNETS !



SONNETS

My that thou
y telle art lo vn
u wilt, thou art be
ou none louft is mo
i lo poffelt with mor
A thy telle thou Rickt
at beauteous roole torn
epoire fhould be thy
my thought, that I m
fairer lodg then
refence is grac
de at leaft kind
miner telle

SHAKE-SPEARES

From faireft creat
That thereby hem
But as the ripen flou
His tender hair mi
But thou, contrac
Feed'tt thy light
Making a famine
Thyfelt thy foe
Thou that art
And only here
Within thine
And, tender ch
Pity the world
To eat the w