

Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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

1. Facts about William Shakespeare

- Born: Exact date unknown, but baptized 26 April 1564
- Hometown: **Stratford-upon-Avon**, England
- Occupation: Playwright, actor and poet
- Died: 23 April 1616
- Best known for: Writing hugely successful theatre plays
- Also known as: **The Bard of Avon** 艾芬河的吟游诗人 (莎士比亚的别称)

1) During his lifetime, William Shakespeare wrote around **37 plays** for the theatre and **over 150 poems**. No one can say the exact number, because some of his work may have been lost over time – **and some may have been written with the help of other people**.

2) William was born **in Stratford-upon-Avon** in 1564, during England's **Tudor period**. He was one of eight children born to John Shakespeare, a well-to-do glove-maker and leather worker, and his wife, Mary Arden, an heiress from a wealthy family.

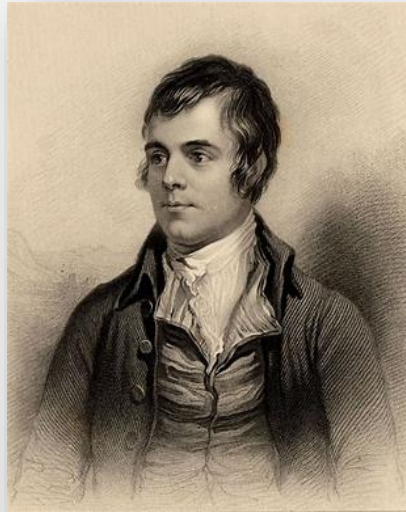
3) **Modern English** started around the time of William Shakespeare, towards the end of the sixteenth century. (现代英语大约开始于莎士比亚时代, 直至十六世纪末。)



(1564-1616)

◆ The Bard Of Avon: Why Is Shakespeare Called The Bard?

- He seems to have been given the title in recognition of his stature as “great poet” and the **unofficial national poet of England**.
- It was only as the twentieth century advanced that he became identified with that title. Before that, the mind sprang to the name “Robert Burns”, the Scottish poet. The Scots, proud of their national poet, would still argue that point as to who “The Bard” actually is!



■ Robert Burns

(1759-1796)

- the national poet of Scotland
- wrote lyrics and songs in Scots and in English
- famous for his amours and his rebellion against orthodox religion and morality
- exhibited his greatest poetic powers in his satires

- The word is very old and referred, originally, to a poet, especially one who wrote impassioned, lyrical, or epic verse.
- Bards were originally Celtic composers of eulogy and satire; the word came to mean more generally a tribal poet-singer gifted in composing and reciting verses on heroes and their deeds. As early as the 1st century AD, the Latin author Lucan, referred to bards as the national poets or minstrels of Gaul and Britain.
- Shakespeare's stories are all filled with those ingredients: war, death, and love.



Lucan, Roman poet
AD 39-65

- ◆ **The Tudor Dynasty** was a series of monarchs that ruled England and Ireland from 1485 until 1603.
- The dynasty started when **Henry Tudor defeated Richard III** at the Battle of Bosworth Field, **making him King Henry VII of England**.
- The Tudor dynasty gave **five sovereigns** to England: Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I.
- Under the Tudor dynasty, England developed into a powerful and influential state, an important center of **Protestant (新教) resistance to papal (教皇的) authority**, and a leader in **Renaissance letters, science, and art**.
- The Tudor dynasty was in the **transitional period from feudalism to capitalism** in England and is considered the golden age in the history of British monarchy.

The Tudor monarchs

(a monarch is a king OR queen who has all the power)



Henry VII



Henry VIII



Edward VI



Mary I



Elizabeth I



4) In 1582, William married a farmer's daughter called **Anne Hathaway**. They had **three children** together – a daughter called Susanna, and twins, Judith and Hamnet.

5) **Come 1585**, the mysterious William Shakespeare disappeared from records for around seven years. Historians often refer to this part of the writer's life as 'the lost years'. (*come可以作为一个介词使用，且位置必须放在日期、时间或者事件之前，意思是“当……到来时”)

6) Then, in 1592 he suddenly turned up in London as an actor and playwright. But poor William didn't have it easy – his jealous rivals, known as the “**University Wits**”, criticized and made fun of his work. One writer, named Robert Greene, referred to him as “**an upstart crow**”! (*the University Wits: “大学才子派”，与莎士比亚同处于英国文艺复兴的黄金时代，其成员间的协作与竞争，带来了英国戏剧领域的空前繁荣。作为英国第一批职业剧作家，“大学才子派”的成员都毕业于知名高校，他们将人文知识、古典传统与民间艺术相结合，为英国的戏剧创作作出了重要贡献。代表人物包括克里斯托弗·马洛（Christopher Marlowe）、罗伯特·格林（Robert Greene）等。** an upstart crow: 莎士比亚的创作早期曾经受到这种指责“an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers.”（得意忘形的寒鸦，用我们的羽毛美饰自己），出自Greene, *Groats-Worth of Wit* 《万千悔恨换一智》）。

7) William was part of a theatre company called **Lord Chamberlain's Men** (宫内大臣剧团), who regularly performed at a place called 'The Theatre'. But after a dispute with the landlord, they took the building apart, rebuilt it across the river and named it the **Globe** (环球剧场).

8) A large, open-air theatre, the Globe accommodated for people from all walks of life, meaning that anyone could watch a performance there. If you were poor, you could only afford tickets to the ground floor where there were no seats and you were exposed to the cold, wind and rain that came in through the open top. If you were rich, you could afford to sit in the higher-level, covered galleries in a comfy (舒服的) seat – away from the smelly poor people below!

9) Shakespeare's plays were immediately big hits (畅销). He wrote different kinds of plays, all of which could be divided into three categories:

Tragedy – including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet*

Comedy – including *Twelfth Night* and *the Taming of the Shrew*

History – including *Henry IV*, *Henry V* and *Richard III*

His plays made him very rich and famous. So much so that by 1598, William owned houses in London and Stratford-up-Avon.

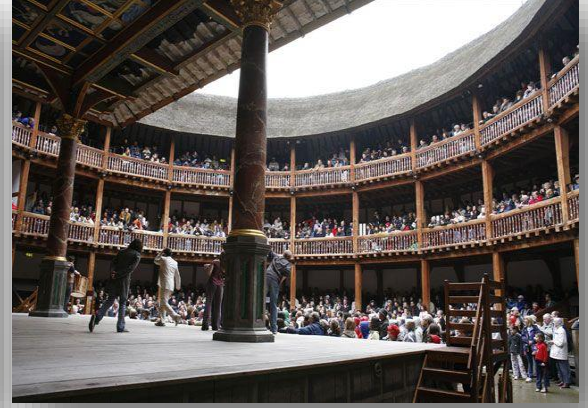
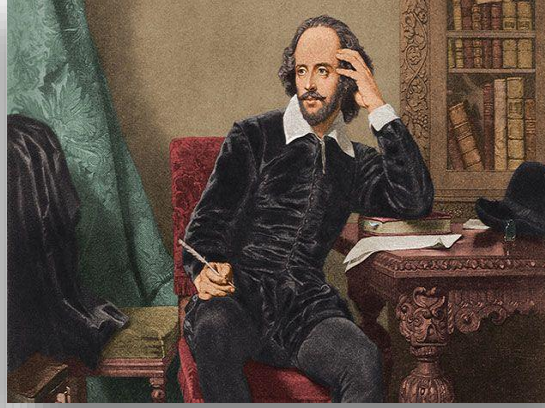
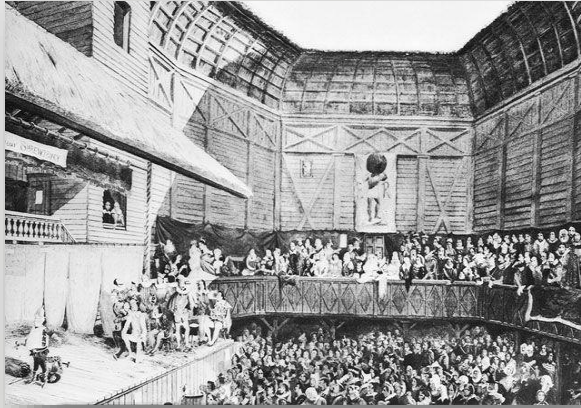
10) Shakespeare's plays had the royal seal of approval. Both Queen Elizabeth I and James VI of Scotland would often hire Shakespeare's company to come and perform at the royal court.

11) Plays in Shakespeare's time were different to the ones we have today. There were no female actors (women's parts were played by men), and audiences could be very rowdy (吵闹). They would shout, boo (发出嘘声) and even throw food at the actors they didn't like.

12) Plays at the Globe featured lots of exciting special effects, with trap doors (暗门), actors lifted on wires, smoke, fire and even cannons. Disaster struck in 1613 when a cannon shot set fire to the roof of the Globe and burned it down. It wasn't long after that Shakespeare retired from the theatre.

13) Towards the end of his life, William lived quietly back in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon. He died on 23 April 1616, aged 52, after falling ill. It's believed he may have died on his birthday, but without an official birth record, no one can be sure.

14) Today, Shakespeare's work is studied in schools and universities around the world, and his stories are depicted on TV and in films. In 1997, the modern Globe Theatre was opened in London. A reconstruction of the original, it's just a few hundred metres from where the original one once stood. People can go to watch plays – just like in Shakespeare's day!





Written on Shakespeare's gravestone in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, is a curse written by the famous **wordsmith** (词语大师) himself. It reads:

*"Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones."*

朋友，看在上帝的情分上，
千万别掘此墓。
保护者会得福，
动土者将受灾。

2. Introduction to Sonnet 18

- “Sonnet 18” is a sonnet written by English poet and playwright William Shakespeare. The poem was likely written in the 1590s, though it was not published until 1609.
- It contains 14 lines, including three quatrains and a couplet, and is written in iambic pentameter. The poem follows the rhyme scheme abab cdcd efef gg.
- Like many sonnets of the era, the poem takes the form of a direct address to an unnamed subject.
- Like many of Shakespeare’s sonnets, the poem wrestles with (处理；对付) the nature of beauty and with the capacity of poetry to represent that beauty. Praising an anonymous person (usually believed to be a young man), the poem tries out a number of clichéd metaphors and similes, and finds each of them wanting (缺失). It then develops a highly original and unusual simile: the young man’s beauty can be best expressed by comparing him to the poem itself.

3. Introduction to Sonnet

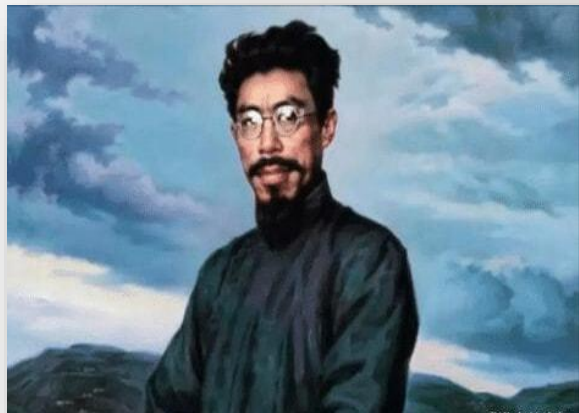
■ What is a sonnet?

- ✓ A sonnet is a type of fourteen-line poem. Traditionally, the fourteen lines of a sonnet consist of **an octave**(两段四行) (or two quatrains making up a stanza of 8 lines) and **a sestet** (两段三行) (a stanza of six lines).
- ✓ Sonnets generally use **a meter of iambic pentameter, and follow a set rhyme scheme**. Within these general guidelines for what makes a sonnet, there are a wide variety of variations.
- ✓ **The two most common sonnet variations are the Italian sonnet** (also called **a Petrarchan sonnet** 彼特拉克十四行诗), and **the English sonnet** (also called **a Shakespearean sonnet**). The main difference between the Italian and English sonnet is in the rhyme schemes they use.

■ Some additional key details about sonnets:

- ✓ For hundreds of years, the sonnet form was reserved for poems about unrequited love, but since the 17th century sonnets have been written about a wide variety of subjects.
- ✓ Sonnets have become so popular, and are written in so many places, that over time many, many variations of the sonnet form have evolved.
- ✓ Sonnets are sometimes written in groups, where each individual sonnet can stand alone but are also linked with the others in the group.

- 十四行诗，意大利文sonetto，英文sonnet、法文sonnet的音译，是欧洲一种格律严谨的抒情诗体。
闻一多把 Sonnet 翻译成“商籁体”，商籁体”与Sonnet 发音相似；就意思而论，商乃五音之一，籁是自然声响；且商者，伤也（欧阳修《秋声赋》），而伤情、苦恋正是Sonnet的传统主调。
- 简单而言，传统的十四行诗是短的抒情诗，由十四个诗行组成，每个诗行则是由抑扬格五音步构成（即由十个有一定规律组成的轻/重音节），遵循一定的韵律。



闻一多
1898-1946

■ 十四行诗体的主要特征:

1) 诗行数:

整首诗由14个诗行组成

2) 音步:

以抑扬格五音步为主

3) 韵律:

—— 彼特拉克十四行诗

(abba abba cde cde) or

(abba abba cdc dcd) 或

—— 莎士比亚十四行诗

(abab cdcd efef gg)

—— 或其它的十四行诗体的押韵格式

4) 独特的风格:

在诗歌快到结尾处, 有一个回转 (折回或转折点)

5) 主题:

通常主题是写爱情和浪漫的情怀, 但也常有关信念、时间、宗教、个人情感、革命、神话、哲学以及社会、政治等问题



● **十四行诗体的类型：**

- 1) 彼特拉克十四行诗 (**Italian or Petrarchan Sonnets**)
- 2) 莎士比亚十四行诗 (**English or Shakespearean Sonnets**)
- 3) 斯宾塞十四行诗 (**Spenserian Sonnets**)
- 4) 弥尔顿十四行诗 (**Miltonic Sonnet**)
- 5) 现代十四行诗 (**Modern Sonnets**)
- 6) 三行体押韵的十四行诗 (**Terza Rima Sonnet**)
- 7) 削减的十四行诗 (**Curtal Sonnet**)
- 8) 十四行组诗 (**Sonnet Sequences**)



4. Analysis of Sonnet 18

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

- 1) **thee** : 莎士比亚所处的时代在某些英语单词的拼写形式上与现代标准英语有所不同, 古英语” **thee** ”是古英语 “**thou**”的宾格, 可译为 “你、汝”, 在这首诗里泛指所有美丽的事物 (**everything**) 。
- 2) **darling**在此处修饰**buds** (花苞), 表达了对花苞的怜惜之情。
- 3) **lease**表示 “租赁”, 是一个法律术语, 在本诗中把夏日比作是向大自然租借而来的房屋, 使用是有期限的。
- 4) **date**这里指持续时间**duration**。英国属温带海洋性气候, 全年温和湿润。在英国, 夏季是一年中最美好的季节, 阳光明媚而天气不炎热, 百花含苞待放。这个季节, 英国国花玫瑰盛开, 英国历史上有很多诗人曾在诗作中称颂玫瑰的美丽。
- 5) **the eye of heaven** 指代太阳 **the sun**, 这里用了拟人修辞手法, 把天空比作人, 像人一样拥有眼睛。
- 6) **his gold complexion** 指太阳金黄的面色。这里同样用了拟人修辞手 (**personification**), 人们一般谈到人时才会谈论其肤色如何或面色如何。此处将太阳比作人, 面色是金黄色的。
- 7) 第7行两个 “**fair**”是英语中的双关修辞手法 (**pun**) 的运用。双关是指利用读音或词根相似的词的不同含义或语法功能, 在同一句话里表达不同含义, 以使得语言更生动活泼, 或达到某种特定的修辞效果。第一个 **fair** 指 **a beautiful person or thing** 美丽的人或事物, 第二个 **fair** 则指美丽本身 (**beauty**) 。
- 8) **dimm'd**即 **dimmed** : **coverd with clouds**.在这首诗里指太阳的光辉被云朵所覆盖而显得暗淡。**untrimm'd**即 **untrimmed**, “未修饰的”; “未经整理的”
- 9) 古英语 **thy**=现代英语 **your**
- 10) **Death** 死神。当英语诗歌中的 **death** 首字母大写时, 一般特指死神。

11) **Dimm'd**与**untrimme'd**是一种英语诗歌中常见的“省音”手法。字母**e**并不发音，且整个句子在诵读上是押韵的，但**e**的存在，在视觉上却造成了有碍韵律的不佳效果，因此常常省掉，目的就是为了让视觉上的押韵。

12) 在早期现代英语中，**lose** 和 **loose** 可以互通

13) **十四行诗中的'st**

在动词后加'**st**，这是中世纪英语的一种语法，第二人称单数后的动词一般都要加'**st**，无特殊意义，形态变化的需要，对动词本身的意思几乎没影响，就像现代英语中第三人称单数的动词要加**s**或**es**一样。用'**st**是为了迁就音尺而作出省略。

Ow 'st 是 **ownest**, 即现在的 **own (possess)**

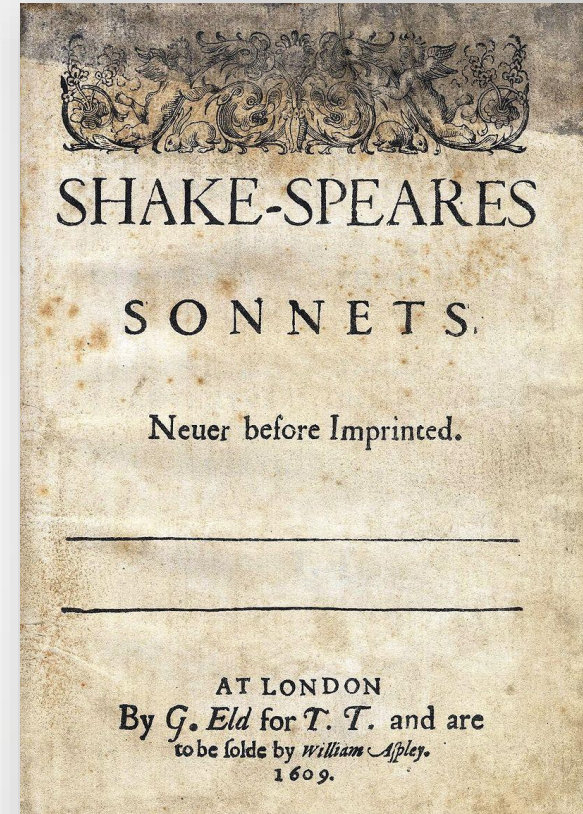
Grow 'st 是 **greatest**, 即现在的 **grow**

Wander 'st 是 **wanderest**, 即现在的 **wander**

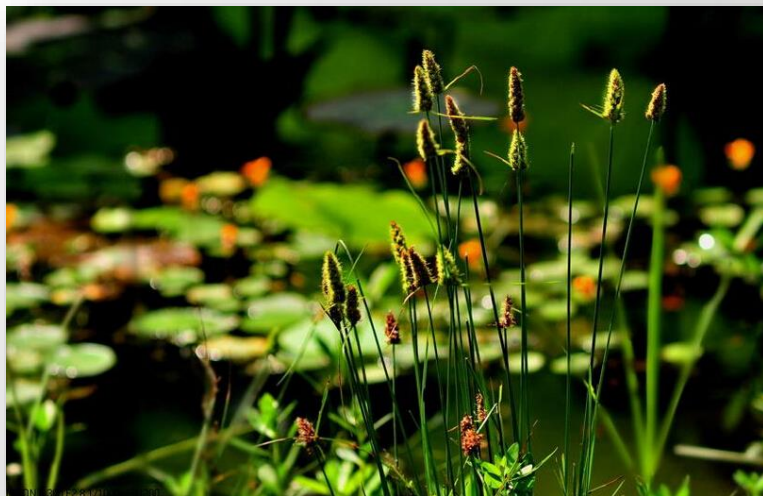
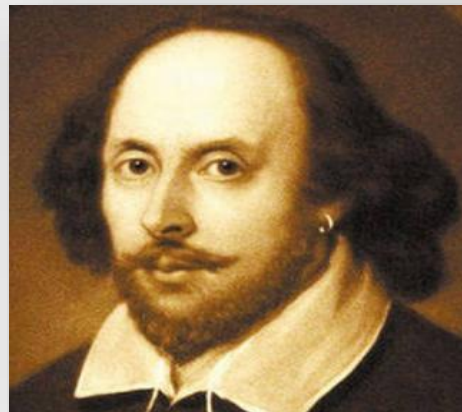


5. Paraphrase of Sonnet 18

Should I compare you to a summer's day?
You are lovelier and milder.
In May rough winds shake the delicate flower buds,
And the duration of summer is always too short.
Sometimes the Sun, the eye of heaven, is too hot,
And his golden face is often dimmed;
And beauty falls away from beautiful people,
Stripped by chance or nature's changing course.
But your eternal summer will not fade,
Nor will you lose possession of the beauty you own,
Nor will death be able to boast that you wander in his shade,
When you live in eternal lines, set apart from time.
As long as men breathe or have eyes to see,
As long as this sonnet lives, it will give life to you.



Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
我能否将你比作夏天?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
你比夏天更美丽温婉。
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
狂风将五月的蓓蕾凋残,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
夏日的勾留何其短暂。
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
休恋那丽日当空,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
转眼会云雾迷蒙。
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
休叹那百花飘零,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd
催折于无常的天命。
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
唯有你永恒的夏日常新,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
你的美貌亦毫发无损。
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
死神也无缘将你幽禁,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
你在我永恒的诗中长存。
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
只要世间尚有人吟诵我的诗篇,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.
这诗就将不朽, 永葆你的芳颜。



6. What is the theme of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18?

- The theme of Shakespeare's is the idea that while natural beauty, such as that of a person, fades, poetry is eternal. The speaker is thus assured that their sonnets and the beauty that their sonnets describe will last long after they die.



Stratford-upon-Avon



Shakespeare's birthplace

- Shakespeare doesn't ask, "May I," or "Can I," or "Would you mind if I," nor in any way does he ask for permission or even for acquiescence from the person to whom the poem is addressed, to compare them to a summer's day. Shakespeare instead employs a rhetorical question, **which effectively turns the question into a statement.**
- In asking, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Shakespeare has already done it. He's already compared the person to whom the poem is addressed to a summer's day, at least in the abstract (抽象意义上). He continues the comparison through the next seven lines by referring to and comparing the person to whom the poem is addressed to certain, specific aspects of a summer's day.
- "Thou art more lovely and more temperate," Shakespeare writes, then lists the ways in which the person to whom the poem is addressed isn't like a summer's day.
- Nothing that Shakespeare writes about in these eight lines expresses the true theme of the poem. The first eight lines are simply the preamble (序言; 开场白) to the next four lines, in which Shakespeare moves a little closer to the theme.

- The ninth line, “But thy eternal summer shall not fade,” intentionally leads the person to whom the poem is addressed to ask the question, “Why not? Why won’t my eternal summer fade?”
- Three lines later, Shakespeare answers the question: “When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st.” When someone writes a poem (“eternal lines”) about you, Shakespeare says, speaking to the person to whom the poem is addressed, then your “eternal summer,” your eternal youth, your eternal beauty can never fade.
- In the concluding couplet, Shakespeare finally gets to the theme of the poem:

*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

- The poem isn’t about a summer’s day or even about the person to whom the poem is addressed. The poem is about Shakespeare himself. Through “this,” through “my” poem, Shakespeare says to the person to whom the poem is addressed **that poetry can immortalize people and qualities that are, in reality, fleeting and ephemeral** (稍纵即逝的).

7. Who is “thee”?

- the missing persons of love poetry
- Scholars have never identified the “Fair Youth” Shakespeare celebrated; he may have been a lover, friend, patron, or fantasy. Of course, the sonnets promise to keep alive a spirit, not a name.
- In what sense, then, does the poet give them life?
- More than narrative, lyric encourages a fixed inward gaze. Lyric is static and narrative committed to change. Lyric is internalized whereas narrative evokes an externally realized situation. Lyric attempts to impede the forward thrust of narrative, and so on.
- Yet when you look at the great sequences of English love poetry, you find that they overwhelmingly portray wanting or missing, not shared experience. In other words, they thrive on isolation.
- These disparate works share a tendency to foreground the poet’s emotions while lending the beloved—the distant or departed one—a tinge of unreality.
- The resulting poems may not eliminate pain, but they can, in a real sense, transcend it. We are satisfied in the end by the way Shakespeare’s sonnets anonymize their subjects—by the way they float free of any context at all.

我们有时度过一个亲密的夜 冯至 (1905-1993)

我们有时度过一个亲密的夜
在一间生疏的房里，它白昼时
是什么模样，我们都无从认识，
更不必说它的过去未来。原野——

一望无边地在我们窗外展开，
我们只依稀地记得在黄昏时
来的道路，便算是对它的认识，
明天走后，我们也不再回来。

闭上眼吧！让那些亲密的夜
和生疏的地方织在我们心里：
我们的生命像那窗外的原野，
我们在朦胧的原野上认出来
一棵树、一闪湖光、它一望无际
藏着忘却的过去、隐约的未来。

The Sonnet of Chinese lyricist Feng Zhi

- received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Heidelberg in 1935
- a distinguished translator and professor of German literature with a deep knowledge of the poetry of Goethe, Novalis and Rilke
- Regarded as one of the most refined lyricists and sonnet writers in early modern Chinese literature, Feng Zhi's mystical poetry manifest a gradual shift from Romanticism to Modernism and addresses some of the most relevant themes that interested Chinese intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century: individualism, love, poetic transcendence, loneliness and interpersonal relationships.
- 鲁迅：中国最杰出的抒情诗人。

