



L'ESCHERE
EDITORE

Expressions of Love in the Renaissance



Courtly Love

Love Poetry

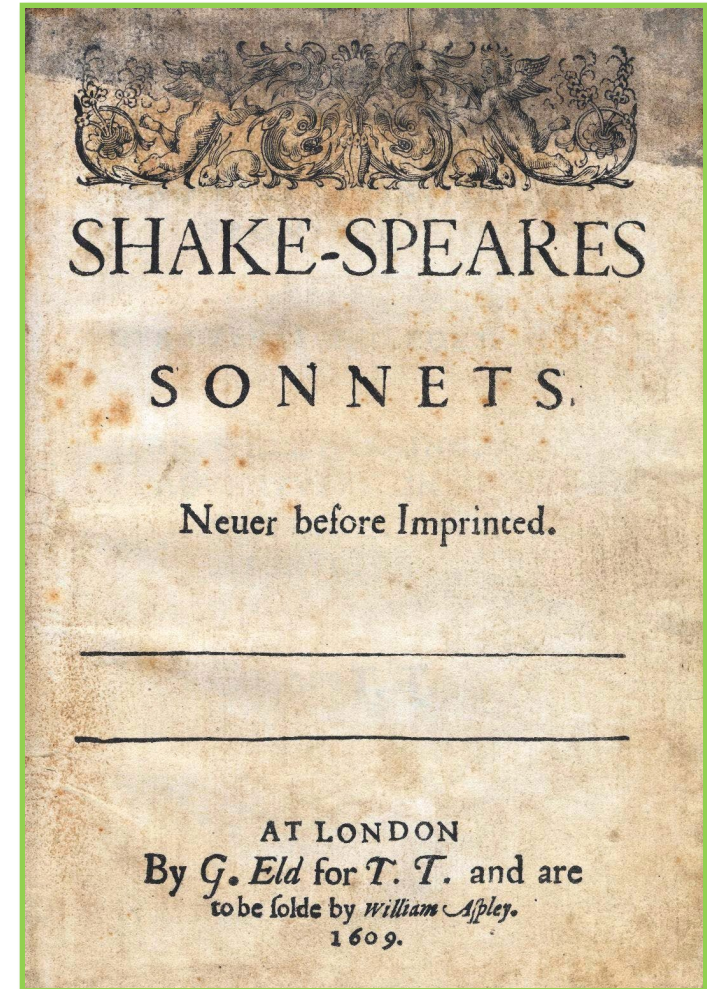
- In the Renaissance, love poetry:
 - owed much to the medieval tradition of **courtly love**;
 - was deeply influenced by the Italian poet, **Francis Petrarch**.
- In courtly love:
 - the **lady is idealised** as virtuous and saintly;
 - she is **beautiful but unattainable**, often married to another;
 - the **lover** exists to **serve** his lady;
 - his love is **forbidden and passionate**, unconsummated or **unrequited**, and he often goes into permanent exile to avoid temptation.



The Sonnet

A Renaissance Craze

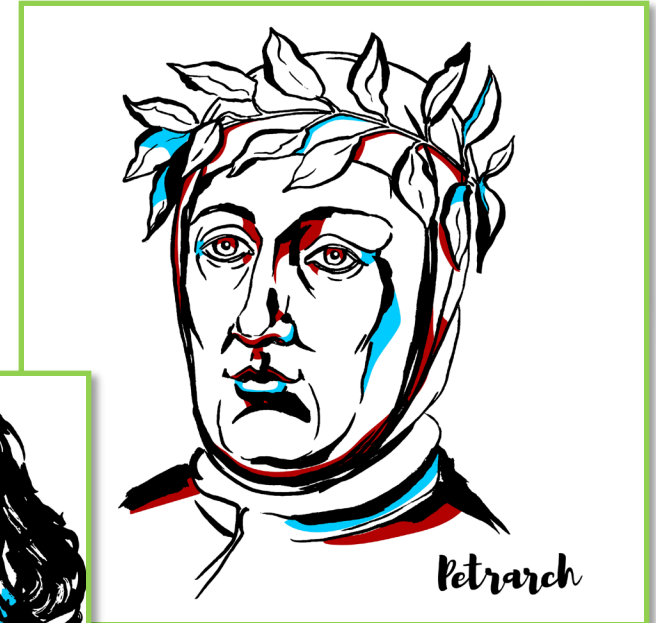
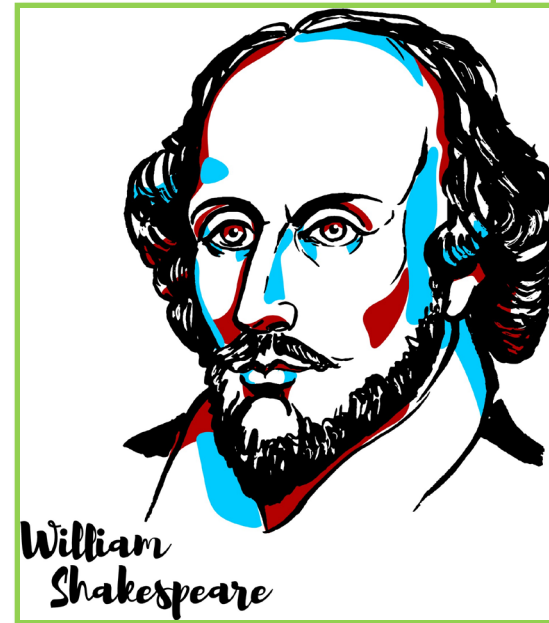
- It is the form most associated with **love poetry**.
- In Shakespeare's times, there was a craze for sonnets and sonnet sequences: collections of sonnets with unifying themes.
- Shakespeare wrote **a sequence of 154 sonnets** dedicated to a young man and a dark lady.



The Sonnet

Italian and English

- The sonnet is a short, lyrical poem in **14 lines**.
- Two main versions of the sonnet exist: the Italian or **Petrarchan sonnet**, and the English, or **Shakespearean sonnet**.
- They have a recognisable structure and rhyme scheme.



The Italian and the English Sonnet

A Comparison

Italian sonnets	English sonnets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Italian sonnets are divided into an octave (or two quatrains) and a sestet (or two tercets), so 8 + 6 or 4 + 4 + 3 + 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">English sonnets are divided into three quatrains and a couplet (4 + 4 + 4 + 2).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">They have a 'turn' (a change in the subject matter) between the octave and the sestet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">They have a 'turn' (a change in the subject matter) between the final quatrain and the couplet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">They often rhyme <i>abba abba cde cde</i> or <i>abba abba cdc cdc</i>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">They often rhyme <i>abab ccdcd efef gg</i>.



Sonnet XVIII

Content

- This is an English sonnet dedicated to a **young man**.
- The title and the first line of the poem is *'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?'*
- The speaker asks what would emerge if he made that comparison and finds that his **love** is more beautiful and more gentle than a **day in summer**.
- He says that summer days have their bad points, in particular, they last for such a short time.
- On the other hand, his love will remain beautiful **forever** and will live on eternally because he has been immortalised in his sonnet.



Sonnet CXXX

Content

- This is an English sonnet dedicated to a **dark lady**.
- It is **unusual** because it turns the traditions of courtly love and the idealised lady upside down.
- The title and the first line of the poem is *'My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun'*.
- The speaker goes on to describe other **aspects of his love's** looks, voice, breath, and way of walking.
- Each time he says they are far from the ideal, very **different from the accepted canons of beauty**.
- However, he concludes that his love is **special and unique**. It is as rare and as valuable as any love which is falsely idealised.



The Sonnet in Europe

The Origin

- The sonnet:
 - was probably invented by **Giacomo Da Lentini** in Sicily in the 1200s.
 - was established by **Francis Petrarch** with his *Canzoniere* in the 1300s.
 - became popular in France in the 1400s and was developed by **Pierre de Ronsard** in the 1500s.
 - influenced Spanish poetry in the 1500s, especially in the work of **Garcilaso de la Vega**.
 - came to England in the 1500s and developed as an English form thanks to the **Earl of Surrey** and **Sir Philip Sidney**.
 - was made great by **William Shakespeare** in the early 1600s.
 - was emulated by **Andreas Gryphius** in Germany in the 1600s.



Francis Petrarch

The Father of the Italian Sonnet

- **Petrarch** is considered the father of the sonnet form.
- He wrote more than **300 sonnets**, dedicated to **Laura**, a beautiful, virtuous, unattainable lady.
- The sonnet sequence is in two parts: poems written during Laura's life and those written after her death.
- His images, motifs and settings became the **basis for love sonnets** throughout Europe.



Comparing *Sonnet CCXCII* by Petrarch with *Sonnet LXXIII* by Shakespeare

Form

Petrarch's Sonnet	Shakespeare's Sonnet
Both <i>Sonnet CCXCII</i> and <i>Sonnet LXXIII</i> have 14 lines .	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Petrarch uses the Italian form sub-divided into two quatrains and two tercets with a rhyme scheme of <i>abba abba cdc cdc</i>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shakespeare uses the English form sub-divided into three quatrains and a couplet with a rhyme scheme of <i>abab cdcd efef gg</i>.



Comparing *Sonnet CCXCII* by Petrarch with *Sonnet LXXIII* by Shakespeare

Subject Matter

Petrarch's Sonnet	Shakespeare's Sonnet
Both poems present the reader with statements or arguments and both poems display a single 'turn' , that is, a change in the direction of the argument.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The sonnet contains an initial statement in the two quatrains (the speaker describes the beauty and attributes of his love).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The three quatrains give the reader three different sustained metaphors on old age and death (the tree in autumn/winter, the closing day and the dying fire).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The 'turn' occurs at lines 8 and 9 (we learn that his lady is dead while the grieving speaker is forced to live on).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The turn occurs at line 13 (the speaker addresses his love).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In the two tercets the speaker describes his own despair and the drying up of his creative powers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The final couplet contains the poem's conclusion (the nearness of the potential loss of the loved one makes the speaker's partner love him all the more).



Comparing *Sonnet CCXCII* by Petrarch with *Sonnet LXXIII* by Shakespeare

Themes

Petrarch's Sonnet	Shakespeare's Sonnet
Both poems deal with love and death and both call into play the poet's creative powers and how they are influenced by change.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Petrarch's sonnet speaks of the despair of a lover after the death of the woman he loves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shakespeare's sonnet reveals the sadness of a person at the passing of time, his ageing and inevitable death, tinged with the optimism which arises from being loved and wanted.



Petrarch's Influence on Art

Themes

- Petrarch's influence on the way in which **sentiment** was expressed in the Renaissance was not limited to poetry.
- It can also be found in art.
- **Paintings and miniatures** show similar images, motifs and settings such as the burning fires of passion, or the open exhibition of grief and melancholy for an unattainable woman.



Sources and references

- Slide 1: Laura crowns Petrarch, 15th century, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Firenze/Public Domain.
- Slide 2: Scene from the film *Tristan and Isolde*, directed by Kevin Reynolds, starring James Franco and Sophia Myles, 2006. Kevin Reynolds, Tristano e Isotta, fotogramma/USA, Regno Unito, Repubblica Ceca, Germania, 2006/20th Century Fox, Scott Free Productions.
- Slide 3: Title page of the first edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. folger.edu/commons.wikimedia.org/Public_Domain.
- Slide 4: William Shakespeare's portrait. © Maria_Domnikova/Shutterstock. | Petrarch's portrait. © Maria_Domnikova/Shutterstock.
- Slide 6: Spring leaves. © BrianAJackson/Istockphotos.
- Slide 7: Red roses in a summer garden lit by the evening sun. © Nadya So/Istockphotos.
- Slide 8: Giacomo da Lentini's Portrait, *Codex Palatino* 418, 13th century, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale. Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale/Public Domain.
- Slide 9: *Francesco Petrarch's Portrait*, 16th century, Turin, Galleria Sabauda. Italian School - Portrait of Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca) (1304-74) - (MeisterDrucke-105359).
- Slide 13: *An Unknown Man*, by Nicholas Hilliard, c.1600. © Granger/Shutterstock.

