Petrarch, Spenser, Shakespeare & the Sonnet Form

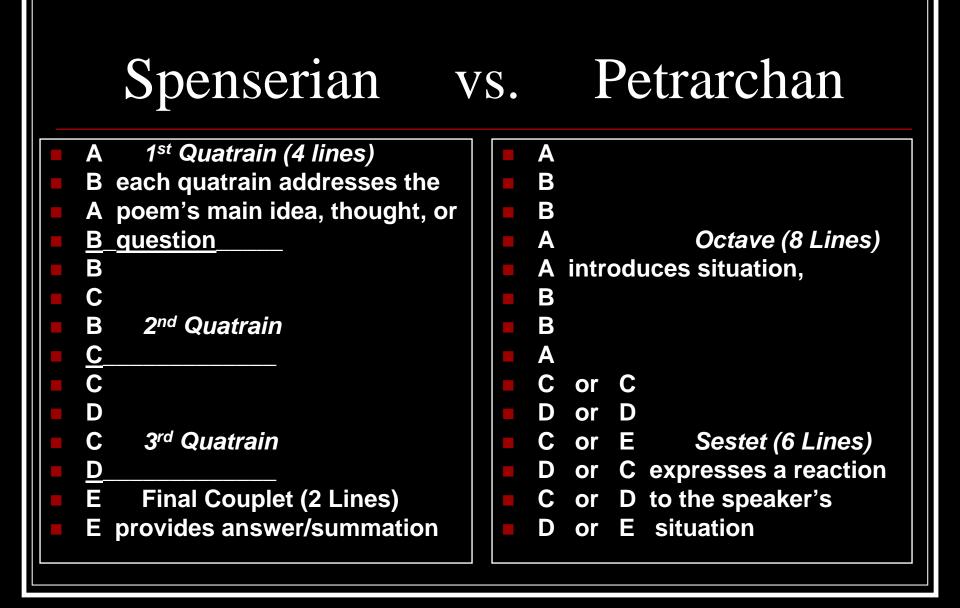
Sonnet 290 Sonnet 75 Sonnet 130

The Sonnet Form

- The sonnet is a 14-line lyric poem with a complicated rhyme scheme and a defined structure.
- 13th Century Italian poets introduced the sonnet form.
- The Italian poet Francesco Petrarch perfected the form that became known as the Italian Sonnet.

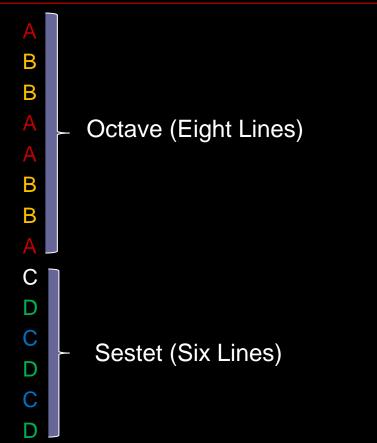
The Sonnet Form

- The sonnet is used to express personal feelings, especially those of love.
- Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the sonnet into English literature.
- William Shakespeare mastered the form, and English sonnets became known as Shakespearean sonnets.



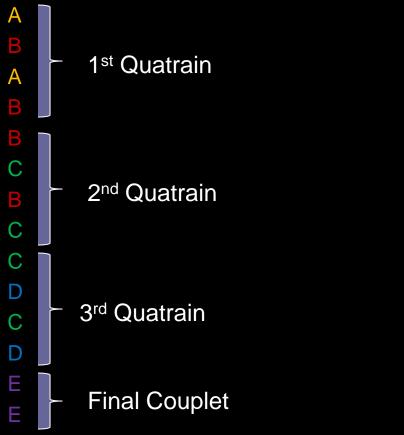
Sonnet 292—Francesco Petrarch

The eyes I spoke of once in words that burn The arms and hands and feet and lovely face, That took me from myself for such a space. Of time, and marked me out from other men, The waving hair of unmixed gold that shone. The smile that flashed with the angelic rays, That used to make this earth a paradise. Are now a little dust, all feeling gone. And yet I live, hence grief and rage for me Left where the light I cherished never shows, In fragile bark on the tempestuous sea, Here let my loving song come to a <u>close</u>. The vein of my accustomed art is dry, And this, my lyre, turned at last to tears.



Sonnet 75—Edmund Spenser

One day I wrote her name upon the strand, Came the waves and washed it away: Again I wrote it with a second hand, A But came the tide, and made my pains his prey. B "Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay, A moral thing so to <u>immortalize</u>. For I myself shall like to this decay, B And eke my name be wiped out likewise." "Not So," quod I, "let baser things devise To die in dust, but you shall live by <u>fame</u> My verse your virtues rare shall eternize, С And in the heavens write your <u>name</u>, D Where whenas death shall all the world subdue, Our love shall live, and later life renew." Ε



Shakespearean Sonnet

| Α | 1st Quatrain (4 lines) |
|---|--|
| Β | sets up a situation |
| Α | |
| B | |
| С | |
| D | |
| С | 2nd Quatrain (explores the situation) |
| D | |
| Ε | |
| F | |
| Ε | 3rd Quatrain— (explores the situation) |
| F | Usually a shift in thought occurs here or in the Final Couplet |
| G | Final Couplet (2 Lines) |
| G | (Resolves the situation.) |
| | |

Sonnet 130—William Shakespeare

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the <u>sun</u>; 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 <u>reeks</u>. 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 <u>subdue</u>, As any she belied with false compare renew."

