sonnet

Poem of 14 lines, most often in iambic pentameter and usually employing Petrarchan or Shakespearean rhyme schemes. The Petrarchan consists of an octet and a sextet, usually with an abbaabbaabdecde rhyme scheme. The Shakespearean, having a final rhyming couplet, is ababcdcdefefgg.

Summary Article: sonnet
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Genre of 14-line poem of Italian origin introduced to England by English poet Thomas Wyatt in the form used by Italian poet Petrarch and followed by English poets John Milton and William Wordsworth; English playwright and poet William Shakespeare wrote 14-line sonnets consisting of three groups of four lines (quatrains) and two final rhyming lines (a couplet), following the rhyme scheme abab cdcd efef gg.

The sonnet was very popular in Elizabethan literature and some of the finest lyric poetry of the period was written in the sonnet form. The sonnet sequence enjoyed a vogue during the 1590s, when several remarkable collections appeared, including Astrophel and Stella (1591) by English poet Sir Philip Sidney, Delia (1592) by English poet Samuel Daniel, and Amoretti (1595) by English poet Edmund Spenser. It was during this period that Shakespeare wrote his sonnet sequence.

Sonnet form In a Petrarchan sonnet, the difference in the rhyme scheme of the first eight lines (the octet) and the last six (the sestet) reflected a change in mood or direction. The rhyme scheme generally follows the pattern abba abba cdcdcd or cdecde). The first four lines of a Shakespearean sonnet set out the theme or ‘argument’; the next two quatrains develop variations on this theme (sometimes with a sharp change of mood between the two quatrains); and the final couplet presents a resolution. The sonnet form has continued into 20th-century literature; of particular note are examples by the English World War I poet Wilfred Owen, in which he uses formal sonnet forms to discipline the portrayal of extreme horror and explicit violence.

Shakespeare's sonnets The identity of the man and woman addressed in Shakespeare's sonnets (if they are more than mere literary conventions) is still uncertain, though many ingenious solutions have been proposed. Though each sonnet can be read as an independent poem, the sequence develops a broad narrative. In the first group (1–126) the poet begins by expressing his love and affection for the young man. Gradually a note of uncertainty enters: the young man seems not to return the poet’s love and is even disloyal. By the end of this group, however, the poet and the young man are reconciled. In the second group (127–54) the poet addresses a woman who is now known as the ‘Dark Lady’. This relationship is more complex and troubled: the poet frequently accuses the Dark Lady of unfaithfulness (with the young man of the first group as well as others) and the tone of several of the sonnets is bitter and cynical.

essays
'I am very bothered' by Simon Armitage

Sonnets

http://libdatab.strayer.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/sonnet
documents
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor: ‘To Nature’
Donne, John: ‘At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners’
Donne, John: ‘Death, Be Not Proud’
Keats, John: ‘On the Grasshopper and Cricket’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 18’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 29’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 30’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 60’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 87’
Shakespeare, William: ‘Sonnet 116’
Sidney, Philip: From Astrophel and Stella
Spenser, Edmund: ‘Sonnet 75’
Wordsworth, William: ‘Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802’
Wordsworth, William: ‘The World Is Too Much with Us’

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