Origins

• Italian “sonetto” – “a little sound or song”
• Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374)
• Wrote hundreds of poems about a woman named Laura DeNoves.
• Focused on a particular theme
General Meter and Structure

• 14 lines
• iambic pentameter
  – 5 metric units or feet
  – foot = unstressed syllable (U) followed by a stressed syllable (/).
• 1 foot = U /
  U / U / U / U / U / U /
• My love is like to ice, and I to fire;
Rhyme Patterns

• Rhyme scheme based on the last word in each line. (See Sidney’s “Sonnet 39”)

Come sleep! O sleep, the certain knot of peace, \textit{a}
the baiting place of wit, the balm of woe, \textit{b}
The poor man’s wealth, the prisoner’s release, \textit{a}
The indifferent judge between the high and low; \textit{b}

• Sonnet forms can be differentiated by rhyme schemes:
  – Petrarchan Sonnet
  – English or Shakespearean Sonnet
  – Spenserian Sonnet
The Italian Sonnet

- Often called the Petrarchan sonnet
- Unrequited love a common topic for this form
- Octave (first 8 lines): presents a problem
- Sestet (last 6 lines): provides an answer or resolution to the problem
- Rhyme scheme
  - Octave: abbaabba
  - Sestet: cdecde or cdcddcd
Sonnet XII
by Francesco Petrarch

If my life find strength enough to fight the grievous battle of each passing day, that I may meet your gaze, years from today, lady, when your eyes have lost their light and when your golden curls have turned to white, and vanished are your wreaths and green array, and when your youthful hue has fled away, whose beauty make me tremble in its sight, perhaps then love will overcome my fears enough that I may let my secret rise and tell you what I’ve suffered all these years; and if no flame be kindled in your eyes, at least I may be granted for my tears the comfort of a few belated sighs.
The English Sonnet

- Also called the Shakespearean sonnet
- 3 quatrains (4 lines)
  - rhyme scheme: abab cdcd efef
  - question raised/problem presented
- 1 couplet
  - rhyme scheme: gg
- allows for a more detailed development of the question or problem
- demands a quick solution in the couplet
Sonnet 29
by William Shakespeare

When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur’d like him, like him with friends possess’d,
Desiring this man’s art, and that man’s scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate,
For thy sweet love rememb’red such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
Spenserian Sonnet

- Version crafted by Sir Edmund Spencer
- 3 Quatrains
- 1 Couplet
- Rhyme scheme: abab bcbc cdcd ee
- Interlocking rhyme scheme “pushes” the sonnet toward the final couplet
- Couplet: key point or comment
Literary Techniques

- Alliteration: repeating beginning word sounds.
- Symbolism:
  - Metaphor: comparing two unlike things
  - Simile: comparing two unlike things with the words “like” or “as”
  - Personification: assigning human characteristics to a non-human object
- Allusion: reference to a person, place, or event of history or legend; reference to a previously published work of literature.
- Enjambment: the running over of sentence from one line of verse to another.
- End stop line: A complete sentence contained in one line of verse.
Example of ejambment

• April is the cruellest month, breeding
  Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
  Memory and desire, stirring
  Dull roots with spring rain.
  Winter kept us warm, covering
  Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
  A little life with dried tubers."
Parallel Structure

• "Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This can happen at the word, phrase, or clause level. The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of coordinating conjunctions such as “and” or “or.”"
Examples of parallel structure

- Not Parallel:
  Mary likes hiking, swimming, and to ride a bicycle.

  Parallel:
  Mary likes hiking, swimming, and riding a bicycle.