

Name: _____ Class: _____

Sonnet 5

By William Shakespeare
1609

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor. Shakespeare has written approximately 38 plays and 154 sonnets and is widely considered one of the greatest writers in the English language. In this sonnet, a speaker discusses how outer beauty fades. As you read, take notes on how the speaker defines beauty and what happens when it fades.

[1] Those hours that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants¹ to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:
[5] For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds² him there;
Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite
gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where:
Then, were not summer's distillation³ left,
[10] A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,⁴
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter
meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still
lives sweet.



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1. **Tyrant (noun):** a cruel and oppressive ruler
 2. an archaic word for "overthrow" or "destroy"
 3. the action of purifying a liquid by a process of heating and cooling
 4. **Bereft (adjective):** to deprive or be deprived of something