



## Sonnet 130

by William Shakespeare

### In a Nutshell

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This sonnet is part of a group of poems by [William Shakespeare](#) that scholars think was addressed to someone they call "The Dark Lady." We get little glimpses of her in this poem. Shakespeare talks about her hair, the color of her skin, etc. Mostly, though, this poem is a gentle parody of traditional love poetry. Shakespeare uses this sonnet to poke fun at the kinds of exaggerated comparisons some poets of his day made when talking about their lovers. He makes fun of clichéd images that were worn out even then, like "eyes like the sun," and "skin as white as snow." These kinds of over-the-top compliments appear everywhere in poems by writers like [Petrarch](#), who wrote famous Italian sonnets in the 14th century. Although no one is sure whether the woman Shakespeare is talking about really existed, readers can see how well he uses this sonnet to skewer lame poetic clichés.

### Why Should I Care?

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So, when we say the words "love poem," what pops into your head? Maybe you've always thought that a love poem had to be sappy, like something you'd find in a Valentine's Day card. If we told you that the love poem we had in mind was over 400 years old, that might make it even worse, right? Old love poems bring to mind flowery language and the kind of unrealistic glop that you could never bring yourself to say with a straight face.

But, if you think sappy love poems are ridiculous, you're not alone - that's pretty much how [Shakespeare](#) felt too, and he spends these fourteen lines ripping that kind of poem apart. Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 is a parody of the kind of insincere, sickly sweet love poems that authors have been writing (and a lot of people have been hating) for centuries. Now, don't get us wrong, we're not anti-love poetry and we can get into the sappy stuff sometimes too. But we're not fans of lame clichés, and we think it's pretty fun to watch Shakespeare go to town on them in this sonnet.