**Shakespearean Sonnets**

All sonnets have fourteen lines of iambic pentameter – a line of five unaccented syllables each followed by an accented syllable. A Shakespearean sonnet, also known as an English sonnet, consists of three quatrains (four-line groups) and a couplet (two lines). Each quatrain has alternating rhymes at the end of its lines. The two lines of the couplet rhyme at the end. Generally, each quatrain explores a different aspect of the poem’s central idea. The couplet sums up the poem or comments on what was said in the quatrains.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer’s lease hath all too short a date.

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimmed,

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature’s changing course untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,

Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade

When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st.

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Sonnet 130

My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun,

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’s, 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 reeks.

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

As any she belied with false compare.

*Directions: Answer the following questions based upon Sonnets 18 and 130 by William Shakespeare.*

1. Who is the speaker and what is the subject of Sonnet 18?
2. What do you think is the strongest image in Sonnet 18?
3. What two things does the speaker praise in the first sonnet?
4. What words would you use to describe the sonnet’s tone?
5. In Sonnet 130, who is the speaker and what is the subject?
6. What do you think is the strongest image in Sonnet 130?
7. What does the speaker seem to be saying in lines 1-12?
8. What does he say in lines 13 and 14?
9. What words would you use to describe the tone of Sonnet 130?
10. What do these two poems have in common? How do they differ?