



[Sonnet 130](#), by William Shakespeare

In A Nutshell

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.

Visit Shmoop for much more analysis:

- [Sonnet 130 Themes](#)
- [Sonnet 130 Quotes](#)
- [Sonnet 130 Summary](#)
- Also: literary devices, characters, trivia, audio, photos, links, and more

Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 Do you think the last two lines make up for the rest of the things the speaker says about his mistress? Would you think it was charming if someone wrote this poem about you?

Visit Shmoop for full coverage of [Sonnet 130](#)

[Shmoop: study guides](#) and [teaching resources](#) for [literature](#), [US history](#), and [poetry](#)



Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0

This document may be modified and republished for noncommercial use only.

You must attribute Shmoop and link to <http://www.shmoop.com>.

- 2 Does Shakespeare make a fair point? Do some love poems take these comparisons too far? Or this exactly the place for fancy phrases?
- 3 Have you ever tried to write someone a love poem? Did you actually send it? How did it go over?

Visit Shmoop for many more [Sonnet 130 Study Questions](#)

Visit Shmoop for full coverage of [Sonnet 130](#)

[Shmoop: study guides](#) and [teaching resources](#) for [literature](#), [US history](#), and [poetry](#)



Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0

This document may be modified and republished for noncommercial use only.
You must attribute Shmoop and link to <http://www.shmoop.com>.