A **sonnet** is poetic a form which allows the poet to examine the nature and of two **contrasting** ideas, emotions, states of mind, beliefs, actions, events, images, etc., by juxtaposing the two against each other, and possibly resolving ***or*** just revealing the tensions created and operative between the two.

**III. The English (or Shakespearian) Sonnet:**

The basic meter of all sonnets in English is 14 lines long, in iambic pentameter. However, unlike Blank Verse, Sonnets have a rhyme scheme. Consider the following:

It has 3 quatrains of alternating rhyme, and ends in a ***couplet***:

a b a b
c d c d
e f e f
g g

As in the Spenserian, each quatrain develops aspecific idea, but one closely related to the ideasin the other quatrains.

Not only is the English sonnet the easiest in terms of its rhyme scheme, calling for only pairs ofrhyming words rather than groups of 4, but it isthe most flexible in terms of the placement of the *volta*.

**"Sonnet LXXIII"**

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,

When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day,

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

Which by and by black night doth take away,

Death's second self that seals up all in rest.

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

As the deathbed, whereon it must expire,

Consumed by that which it was nourished by.

*This* thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,

To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.