

Poisonous Poetry Shakespearean Sonnet

The sonnet is a form of love poetry that has been used for centuries. Sonnets don't have to be about love, but they often are.

There are different forms of sonnet, but one of the most popular is the Shakespearean sonnet. This form of the sonnet was actually popular before the Bard used it, but because he is considered to be the master of the form, it was named after him.

Shakespearean sonnets are fourteen lines long (other types of sonnet can be longer). They follow a strict rhyme scheme of ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, and are written in a rhythm called iambic pentameter.

Shakespearean sonnets can be broken down into quatrains – lines of four – which each have a different message:

- quatrain one introduces the main idea;
- quatrain two develops it;
- quatrain three starts with the volta, or turn, at line nine. This is where the sonnet changes direction from its original idea or introduces something new;
- finally, the rhyming couplet ends the poem. It sums up the ideas of the sonnet. Sometimes, rhyming couplets are not all they seem to be – they can introduce a twist at the end of the poem!

