

Who is Being Compared to Whom in “Sonnet 18”?

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William Shakespeare’s (1564-1616) “Sonnet 18” (1609) is one of his most famous poems. It talks about love and beauty. The poet compares someone very special to a summer’s day. This sonnet shows how poetry can make someone’s beauty live forever.

Who is being compared to whom?

In this sonnet, the poet compares his beloved to a summer’s day. A summer’s day is beautiful, bright, and full of life. But the poet says the beloved is even more beautiful. The beloved is also calmer and gentler than summer. The poet says,

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:”

The poet explains why summer is not perfect. Sometimes, strong winds shake the flowers. Sometimes, the sun is too hot. Other times, clouds make the day dark. Summer also does not last forever. Its beauty fades as the season changes.

But the poet says his beloved’s beauty will never fade. The beloved’s ***“eternal summer”*** will stay forever. Death cannot take away their beauty. This is because the poet’s words will keep the beloved alive in memory. As long as people read this poem, the beloved will never be forgotten.

The poem ends with a strong promise. The poet says,

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

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

This means the beloved’s beauty will last as long as people are alive to read the poem.

Through this sonnet, Shakespeare shows that poetry is powerful. It can make love and beauty eternal.