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 (1) of May,

And summer’s lease (2) hath all too short a date.

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,

And often is his gold complexion dimmed (3),

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature’s changing course untrimmed (4);

But thy eternal summer shall not fade

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st (5),

Nor shall death brag (6) 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.

(1)blossoms, flowers in embryo; (2)time of occupancy; (3)obscured, made dark; (4)not ornamented; (5) own, possess; (6) boast; wander’st: wander; grow’st: grow

1) Shakespeare starts the sonnet with a question. What does he ask? 2) In the second line he answers his own question: What does he say exactly? 3)Then the poet justifies his answer. Rearrange the order of what he says a…nothing beautiful lasts for long b…summer lasts too short a time c…even in summer the sun is often covered by clouds d…the wind shakes the buds from the trees e… sometimes summer is excessively hot

4) in the third stanza the poet makes a promise. Which one exactly? 5) What does the poet assert in the final couplet? 6) Decide what is the rhyme scheme. 7) Which metaphor does the poet use to refer to the sun? 8) Where is the “turning point” in the sonnet? What new argument does it introduce? 9) What possessive adjective and verb does the poet attribute to death? What is this poetic device called? 10) The sonnet reflects in part on the effects of time. Which words can you find that refer to time? 11) The poem expresses two notions of summer, conveyed in the phrase “a summer’s day” and “thy eternal summer”. Compare and contrast these two ideas. In what way do you think the poet considers the young man’s summer eternal?