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Sonnet XVIII

In Sonnet XVIII, Shakespeare is most likely talking to a male patron. In the first quadrant, Shakespeare is comparing the man to a beautiful summer day, by saying “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? Thou art mare lovely and more temperate.” He is telling the patron how beautiful he is. In quadrant two, Shakespeare says that even if he is the most beautiful person ever, his beauty will still fade as he ages, as summer fades when the seasons change. “And every fair from fair sometime declines, By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm’d.” Then in quadrant three, he tells him that even though he is aging the external beauty that he possesses will never fade, “But the external summer shall not fade.” Plus, that Death cannot claim him as Its own for he will forever live with his beauty, “Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade.” Finally, in the couplet, Shakespeare states that as long as there are people to read his poem, the man and his untold beauty will live forever. “So long lives this and this gives life to thee.”

The tone of Sonnet XVIII starts off as loving. You can understand this by looking at the diction and attitude of the speaker. Shakespeare is comparing this man to a summer’s day and telling him is “more lovely and more temperate.” His words are telling how beautiful the man is in a loving way. Then in quadrant three the tone turns to intimacy when Shakespeare tells him that he will never lose his beauty and that Death can never take him. For “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see. So long lives this and this gives life to thee.” He tells him in the most cherished way that he can never be taken from him and that he will forever live in his poem.

The theme of Sonnet XVIII is even though nature’s beauty will eventually fade, the man’s never will. Death will in no way be able to take his beauty away from him. For as long as people read this poem, the man’s beauty will forever live on. The way Shakespeare writes the poem and the cheery/happy attitudes he uses, helps to show that he is cheering the man up by telling him he will always be beautiful and nothing can ever take that away. Shakespeare shows him how beautiful he is and how nothing can ever take it away.