

Name: _____ Class: _____

Sonnet 5

By William Shakespeare
1609

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor. Shakespeare has written approximately 38 plays and 154 sonnets and is widely considered one of the greatest writers in the English language. In this sonnet, a speaker discusses how outer beauty fades. As you read, take notes on how the speaker defines beauty and what happens when it fades.

[1] Those hours that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants¹ to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel:
[5] For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter and confounds² him there;
Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite
gone,
Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where:
Then, were not summer's distillation³ left,
[10] A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,⁴
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter
meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still
lives sweet.



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1. **Tyrant (noun):** a cruel and oppressive ruler
 2. an archaic word for "overthrow" or "destroy"
 3. the action of purifying a liquid by a process of heating and cooling
 4. **Bereft (adjective):** to deprive or be deprived of something

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the meaning of the phrase “unfair which fairly doth excel” as it is used in Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 5”? [RL.4]
 - A. to cause to disappear
 - B. to destroy out of malice or spite
 - C. to treat without justice or reason
 - D. to make ugly what was once attractive

2. PART B: What line from the poem provides the best support for the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. “The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell” (Line 2)
 - B. “For never-resting time leads summer on” (Line 5)
 - C. “Beauty’s effect with beauty were bereft” (Line 11)
 - D. “But flowers distill’d, though they with winter meet” (Line 13)

3. PART A: Which statement best illustrates an overall theme from Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 5”? [RL.2]
 - A. Despite apparent loss, the essence of beauty transcends superficial changes.
 - B. Not even beauty can resist the damaging effects of the passage of time.
 - C. The fact that all things eventually perish is the source of the beauty of the present.
 - D. Because time changes all things, one must consider what the future might bring.

4. PART B: Which lines from the poem provide the best support for the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. “Those hours, that with gentle work did frame / The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell, / Will play the tyrants to the very same” (Lines 1-3)
 - B. “For never-resting time leads summer on / To hideous winter, and confounds him there” (Lines 5-6)
 - C. “Beauty o’er-snowed and bareness everywhere: / Then were not summer’s distillation left / A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass” (Lines 8-10)
 - D. “But flowers distill’d, though they with winter meet, / Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.” (Lines 13-14)

