Translation of Sonnet LXXIII (by Shakespeare)

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,

**Tu vedi in me quel periodo dell’anno,**When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

**Quando nessuna o poche foglie gialle sono appese**  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

**Sopra quei rami che si agitano per il freddo,**  
Bare ruin’d choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

**Cappelle nude in rovina, dove gli uccelli cantavano precedentemente.**

In me thou seest the twilight of such day

**Vedi in me il crepuscolo di un tale giorno**  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,

**Che dopo il tramonto svanisce ad occidente,**  
Which by and by black night doth take away,

**Che la notte scura a poco a poco porterà via,**Death’s second self, that seals up all in rest.

**Ombra della morte, che tutto confina in pace.**

In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire

**Vedi in me il bagliore di un tale fuoco**

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

**Che giace tra le ceneri della sua giovinezza,**  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,

**Come nel letto di morte su cui dovrà spirare,**

Consumed with that which it was nourish’d by.

**Consumato da ciò che lo nutriva.**

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,

**Questo percepisci, che rende il tuo amore più forte,**To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

**Per amare meglio chi dovrai lasciare a breve.**

Textual Analysis

The sonnet is organised into four stanzas. The Sonnet Form is arranged into fourteen lines: three quatrains and a rhyming couplet. Sonnet 73 is a part of the 126 sonnets addressed to Shakespeare’s beloved, the so-called “Fair Youth”.

The poem talks about the melancholic feeling that Shakespeare feels about the quick passing of time, in fact he uses some elements like the trees, the fire, the twilight, the sunset and love. This elements are used as metaphore of life and death. Even though the hole sonnet has miserable images, the author still wants to give hope to his beloved “Fair Youth” and he doesn’t want him to give up on the becoming old age.

In this poem the structure is clear and the intelligent reader can easely sees that there are some refrains, which are the pronoun “thou”, referred to the “Fair Youth” and the words “in me thou seest”, used to bring forward a sequence of metaphores. The poem’s prosody creates a particolar rhythm capable of spreading calm and relaxing feelings towards the reader.

The sonnet has the following rhyme scheme: ABAB in the first stanza (behold-cold, hang-sang), in the second quatrain (day-away, west-rest), AA in the rhyming couplet (strong-long) and in the third quatrain the reader can detect a rhyme, “fire-expire” and an alliteration, “lie-by”.

In the three stanzas the intelligent reader can notice some enjambement. One of them is in the first stanza exactly in verses 2-3, the other two are in the second and third stanzas respectively in verses 1-2.

The sonnet was written by Shakespeare in the English language used in the 16th century. The reader can understand this through words such as “thou”, “fadeth”, “youth” or “doth”.

In the first quatrain the poet compares himself to autumn. This makes the intelligent reader think, that he wrote it during the fading of his youth.

In the second stanza, in verses 1 and 2, the speaking voice compares himself to the dusk that fades when the sunset falls. Also, in this case, the author reveals that he has already lost his youth. However, in the last two verses of the quatrain, Shakespeare compares the night to death and he defines it as the “shadow” of the “sad reaper”.

In the third quatrain the speaking voice defines himself as the glow that releases a fire that soon will be extinguished among his ashes (representing the remains of his youth). Shakespeare writes that he feels consumed by life itself.

In the final rhyming couplet the poet invites his loved one to love him harder, because soon the death will come to take the speaking voice.

In conclusion, Sonnet LXXII mainly deals the themes of time, which passes inexorably and the “autumn of life”, that refers to the old age.