Sonnet XVIII

Considering the title the intelligent reader understands that the sonnet belongs to a collection, maybe to the collection dedicated to a “fair youth”.

Considering the layout the intelligent reader understands that the poem does not follow the Petrarch structure, indeed it is organize into three quatrain and a couplet rhyming. The three quatrains presents a problem or situation and the couplet solves or summarises the problem. The rhyme scheme is: in the first quatrain ABAB, in the second quatrain CDCD, in the third quatrain EFEF and in the couplet is GG.

The poem starts with a rhetorical question, indeed the speaking voice asks a question and himself gives the answer. In the rhetorical question the word “Thee” means the subject “you”. The answer that the poet gives is in favor of the mysterious “you” . The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison. He compares the “fair youth” to a summer’s day, thus he explains that his “fair youth” is desirable and has a more even temper than a summer’s day. With the adjective “fair” the poet wants to mean a beauty made of balance in its parts. All the sonnet is structure through a comparison between the “fair youth” and the nature. The sonnet is also constructed also two aspects: the nature and the time. The words that can be related to time are: “day”, “sometimes”, “declines” and “more and more”, while the words can be related to nature are: “summer” and “winds”.

Besides the sound devices the reader noticed that in the poem there are some alliterations, for example “more…more”(line two), “do darling” (line tree)and “fair from fair” (line seven). In the fifth line “the eye of heaven” is a metaphor to talk about the sun and in the sixth line there is the personification of the sun. In the ninth line the is another personification, but in this case it is the personification of the death.

In short, the poet wanted to tells that the “fair youth” is better than a summer’s day, indeed the poet writes this sonnet to make him immortal.