



English Sonnets The Basics

- Developed by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)
- 14-line poem with a careful rhyme scheme

English Sonnet Rhyme Scheme

ABAB CDCD EFEF GG

- Written in iambic pentameter
(unstressed/stressed syllables OR
the sound of a heartbeat – ba BUM ba BUM ba BUM)
- The poet is using the structure of the poem as part of the language act: we will find the "meaning" not only in the words, but partly in the pattern as well.

A sonnet is an intellectual puzzle.

- One pattern in a Shakespearean Sonnet:
Idea is introduced – 1st Quatrain (abab)
Idea is complicated – 2nd Quatrain (cdcd)
Idea is further complicated – 3rd Quatrain (efef)
Idea is resolved – Rhyming Couplet. (gg)

Information on Sonnets from <http://www.utm.edu/departments/english/everett/sonnet.htm>