

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Sonnet 104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd¹,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold,
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride²,
5 Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd³,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green⁴.
Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial-hand,
10 Steal from his figure, and no pace⁵ perceiv'd;
So your sweet hue⁶, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceiv'd:
For fear of which, hear this thou age unbred⁷:
Ere⁸ you were born was beauty's summer⁹ dead
(117 words)

¹**your eye I ey'd** I saw you – ²**pride** splendid foliage – ³**April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd** fading of spring flowers (or incense made from April's flowers) – ⁴**green** young – ⁵**pace** movement – ⁶**hue** appearance – ⁷**age unbred** times unborn, future ages – ⁸**Ere** before – ⁹**beauty's summer** the height of beauty (the young man)