

*My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
 I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks,  
 And in some perfumes is there more delight  
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound.  
 I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
 My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.  
     And yet by heav'n I think my love as rare  
     As any she belied with false compare.*

**R**eadings Sonnets 129 and 130 together gives both more depth. Sonnet 130 is a graphic series of particulars that parody the Petrarchan tradition, which sublimated lust. The speaker satirizes the conventional traits in a long list, contending that his mistress has none of them. Most preceding sonneteers held the ideal mistress to be fair (blonde), have eyes brighter than the sun, lips redder than coral, breasts whiter than snow, cheeks surpassing roses, breath sweeter than perfume, and a voice more harmonious than music. Finally, the speaker's mistress is not a goddess who walks on air; instead she simply treads the ground. The Petrarchan tradition was stale by Shakespeare's time, as already shown in Sonnet 127: "black" (brunette) is now in vogue, and the speaker in that poem claims a superiority for the blackness of his mistress because it is natural and not artificial.

Sonnet 129, in revolt against tradition, shows the unpoetic nature of the lust that underlies the speaker's attraction to a naturally "black" mistress. Sonnet 130 derides the Petrarchan conventions, but the speaker still asserts the equal beauty of his own beloved. The speaker does not understand that bragging about such a beauty shows both succumbing to his lust and capitulation to the values of "the world." He is driven by conflicting forces and he is trying hard to reconcile these with his values.