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Immortality in Verse: An Analysis of Sonnet 81

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Immortality in Verse

An Analysis of Sonnet 81

Savannah Lund, Brooke Tingey, Clay Reed, Tambi Clark, and Sadie Leonhardt

A Guide to Analyzing

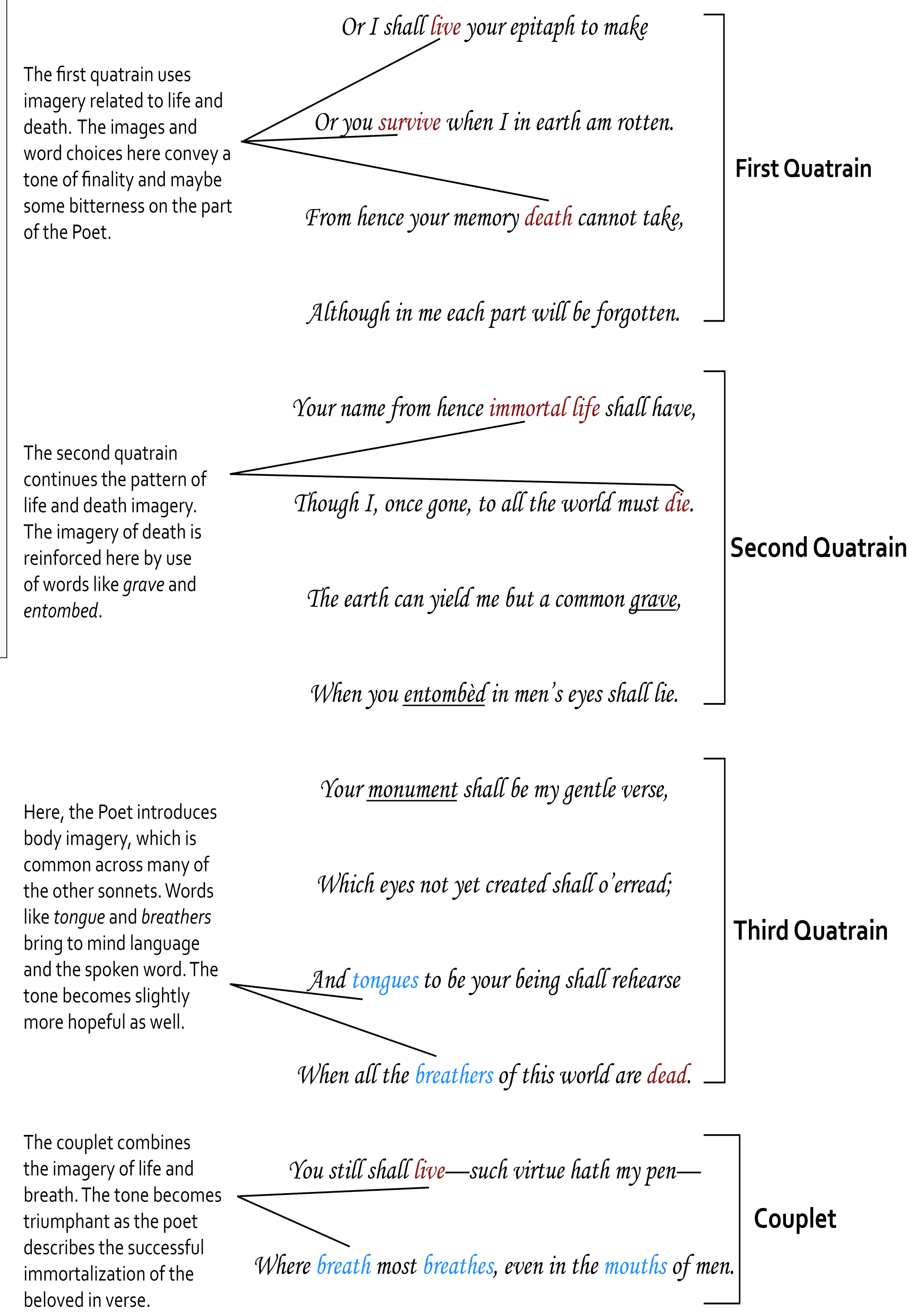
Shakespeare's sonnets are like language puzzles. Each one is packed with so much rich detail and complex ideas, it can be difficult to see how the pieces fit together. This poster acts as a guide to analyzing Shakespeare's sonnets and gives an example of a brief analysis with the focus on the themes of death and immortality. To analyze:

- Read sonnet at least twice (preferably out loud)
- Analyze by quatrain and final couplet
- Identify figurative language
- Identify the volta (shift in tone)
- Interpret overall theme



"Death Surprising a Young Couple" by Jan van de Velde (II), c. 1610 - c. 1650.

Sonnet 81



Death and Immortality

- The speaker of the poem is jealous of his beloved because, while he will be buried in the ground and forgotten in the coming years, his beloved will go on to live in immortality.
- The beloved can only achieve this through the words of the poet.
- The speaker will soon be forgotten, but his beloved will always be remembered

Irony

This sonnet discusses the speaker's fear that he will be forgotten, and the beloved will be remembered. There is irony in how Shakespeare sees the future. He mentions that the beloved's name will have "immortal life," although the name is never mentioned and the inspiration for the beloved is unknown. Shakespeare is well-known, and the beloved has been forgotten.

The Body

- Imagery of the body is a common theme in Shakespeare's sonnets.
- This poem is talking about how the beloved is immortalized by the speaking of Shakespeare's verse in the future.
- We get images of tongues, mouths, and breath which represent the poem being spoken and viewed by the eyes of people in the future.



"Saint Jerome Writing" by Hans Springinklee, 1522