

PARAPHRASE -- THE DEADLY SIN

(all these remarks are based on Shakespeare's 73rd sonnet):

This is a PARAPHRASE (roughly, a "translation" of the specific words of the poem into your own language) --

You can see, in me, the season
when the leaves turn yellow on the trees,
and the limbs shake with cold,
those same limbs which just a bit ago
held singing birds.

This is a SUMMARY (roughly, a recapitulation of the information contained in a particular poem):

I'm getting older, as you can see, and soon, in fact, I will be dying. Doesn't that make you appreciate me all the more?

This is an ARGUMENT, which would then need development and proof in the body of an essay. It states its position and gives some indication about what sorts of evidence, or rather what aspects of the poem, it will go on to consider. The one thing that might improve this argument is to reshape it in the form of questions, rather than propositions:

Like many of the sonnets, #73 takes up the troublesome relationship between time and love. The poem does not gloss over the idea that time is the enemy of love. Indeed, it underscores that point but taking the reader through a series of images, each encompassing a shorter period of existence, and each ending with a more final conclusion, until "death" itself arrives on the scene. The poem as a whole reminds the beloved that love is "that which thou must leave ere long." But simultaneously, it assigns to the work of time an increasing force of understanding, building from passive onlooking to perception. And even the imminence of death has an empowering force, since its impact will be to compel the beloved to "love [me] well."