My City
James Weldon Johnson

When I come down to sleep death's endless night,
The threshold of the unknown dark to cross,
What to me then will be the keenest loss,
When this bright world blurs on my fading sight?
Will it be that no more shall I see the trees
Or smell the flowers or hear the singing birds
Or watch the flashing streams or patient herds?
No, I am sure it will be none of these.

But, ah! Manhattan's sights and sounds, her smells,
Her crowds, her throbbing force, the thrill that comes
From being of her a part, her subtle spells,
Her shining towers, her avenues, her slums –
Oh God! the stark, unutterable pity,
To be dead, and never again behold my city!

A sonnet is a 14-line lyric poem that can have any of several possible rhyme schemes. One type of sonnet is the Petrarchan sonnet (named for Francesco Petrarch, the Italian poet who perfected the form). It consists of two parts. The first eight lines, called the octave, usually have the rhyme scheme abbaabba. In the last six lines, called the sestet, the rhyme scheme may be cdecde, cdecde, or another variation. Generally, the octave tells a story, introduces a situation, or raises a question, which is then commented on or responded to in the sestet. What characteristics make "My City" a Petrarchan sonnet?