Revising Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is working on a new play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and he wants you to read his first draft. After reading through the first few scenes you realize that Shakespeare has used a lot of troubling imagery to describe beauty. When you point this out to Willy he becomes extremely embarrassed and begs for your help in fixing it.

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“A racist bone is not inside my body” quoth Billy Shakes.

Your Task: Select TWO of Shakespeare’s passages describing Juliet’s beauty. Using modern English, write a revised version of the passage that does not rely solely on “white, bright, light, and fair” imagery to describe beauty. Your passages should be of equal length to Shakespeare’s passages.

### Passage One – Act I. Scene v.

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear; Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows, As yonder lady o’er her fellows shows.

*doth - does*  
*Ethiope – Ethiopian/African*

### Passage Two – Act II. Scene ii.

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art As glorious to this night, being o’er my head As is a winged messenger of heaven Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds And sails upon the bosom of the air.

*art - are*  
*o’er - over*  
*unto - to*  
*bestrides – travels across/spans*

### Passage Three – Act II. Scene ii.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, Who is already sick and pale with grief, That thou her maid art far more fair than she Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, do entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres till they return. What if her eyes were there, they in her head? The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars, As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night.

*yonder – over there*

### Passage Four – Act III. Scene ii.

Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night; For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night Whiter than new snow on a raven’s back. Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow’d night, Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars, And he will make the face of heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night And pay no worship to the garish sun.