755LA44 POETRY

Unit I

Edmund Spenser: The Bridal Beauty (But if ye saw … and paired -- 19 Lines ... from Epithalamion) William Shakespeare: All the World is a Stage

Unit II

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POETRY

Definition

A piece of writing in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by particular attention to diction (sometimes involving rhyme), rhythm, and imagery.

William Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," and Emily Dickinson said, "If I read a book and it makes my body so cold no fire ever can warm me, I know that is poetry." Dylan Thomas defined poetry this way: "Poetry is what makes me laugh or cry or yawn, what makes my toenails twinkle, what makes me want to do this or that or nothing."

Types of Poetry

When studying poetry, it is useful first of all to consider the **theme** and the overall **development** of the theme in the poem. Obviously, the sort of

development that takes place depends to a considerable extent on the type of poem one is dealing with. It is useful to keep two general distinctions in mind (for more detailed definitions consult Abrams 1999 and Preminger et al 1993): lyric poetry and narrative poetry.

Lyric Poetry

A **lyric poem** is a comparatively short, non-narrative poem in which a single speaker presents a state of mind or an emotional state. Lyric poetry retains some of the elements of song which is said to be its origin: For Greek writers the lyric was a song accompanied by the lyre.

Subcategories of the lyric are, for example elegy, ode, sonnet and dramatic monologue and most occasional poetry:

In modern usage, **elegy** is a formal lament for the death of a particular person (for example Tennyson's *In Memoriam A.H.H.*). More broadly defined, the term elegy is also used for solemn meditations, often on questions of death, such as Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

An **ode** is a long lyric poem with a serious subject written in an elevated style. Famous examples are Wordsworth's *Hymn to Duty* or Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn*.

The **sonnet** was originally a love poem which dealt with the lover's sufferings and hopes. It originated in Italy and became popular in England in the Renaissance, when Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey translated and imitated the sonnets written by Petrarch (**Petrarchan sonnet**). From the seventeenth century onwards the sonnet was also used for other topics than love, for instance for religious experience (by Donne and Milton), reflections on art (by Keats or Shelley) or even the war experience (by Brooke or Owen). The sonnet uses a single stanza of (usually) fourteen lines and an intricate rhyme pattern (see stanza forms). Many poets wrote a series of sonnets linked by the same theme, so-called **sonnet cycles** (for instance Petrarch, Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, Barret-Browning, Meredith) which depict the various stages of a love relationship.

In a **dramatic monologue** a speaker, who is explicitly someone other than the author, makes a speech to a silent auditor in a specific situation and at a critical moment. Without intending to do so, the speaker reveals aspects of

his temperament and character. In Browning's *My Last Duchess* for instance, the Duke shows the picture of his last wife to the emissary from his prospective new wife and reveals his excessive pride in his position and his jealous temperament.

Occasional poetry is written for a specific occasion: a wedding (then it is called an **epithalamion**, for instance Spenser's *Epithalamion*), the return of a king from exile (for instance Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*) or a death (for example Milton's *Lucida's*), etc.

Narrative Poetry

Narrative poetry gives a verbal representation, in verse, of a sequence of connected events, it propels characters through a plot. It is always told by a narrator. Narrative poems might tell of a love story (like Tennyson's *Maud*), the story of a father and son (like Wordsworth's *Michael*) or the deeds of a hero or heroine (like Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*).

Sub-categories of narrative poetry:

Epics usually operate on a large scale, both in length and topic, such as the founding of a nation (Virgil's *Aeneid*) or the beginning of world history (Milton's *Paradise Lost*), they tend to use an elevated style of language and supernatural beings take part in the action.

The **mock-epic** makes use of epic conventions, like the elevated style and the assumption that the topic is of great importance, to deal with completely insignificant occurrences. A famous example is Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, which tells the story of a young beauty whose suitor secretly cuts off a lock of her hair.

A **ballad** is a song, originally transmitted orally, which tells a story. It is an important form of folk poetry which was adapted for literary uses from the sixteenth century onwards. The ballad stanza is usually a four-line stanza, alternating tetrameter and trimeter.

Descriptive and Didactic Poetry

Both lyric and narrative poetry can contain lengthy and detailed descriptions (**descriptive poetry**) or scenes in direct speech (**dramatic poetry**).

The purpose of a **didactic poem** is primarily to teach something. This can take the form of very specific instructions, such as how to catch a fish, as in James Thomson's *The Seasons* (*Spring* 379-442) or how to write good poetry as in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. But it can also be meant as instructive in a general way. Until the twentieth century all literature was expected to have a didactic purpose in a general sense, that is, to impart moral, theoretical or even practical knowledge; Horace famously demanded that poetry should combine **prodesse** (learning) and **delectare** (pleasure). The twentieth century was more reluctant to proclaim literature openly as a teaching tool.

UNIT I

Epithalamion
By Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser was born in London in the year 1552 or 1553. Little is known about his family or his childhood, except that he received a scholarship to attend the Merchant Taylor School, where he likely studied Latin and Greek. He went on to study literature and religion at Cambridge University's Pembroke Hall, receiving a BA in 1573 and an MA in 1576.

Spenser published his first volume of poetry, The Shepheardes Calender (Hugh Singleton), in 1579, dedicating it to the poet Sir Philip Sidney. He was also the author of The Faerie Queene (William Ponson by, 1596), a major English epic, and Amoretti and Epithalamion (William Ponson by, 1595), a sonnet sequence dedicated to his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle.

Epithalamion

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,

The inward beauty of her lively fairy,

Garnish with heavenly gifts of high degree,

Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,

And stand astonishlike to those which red

Medusa maze fulhed.

There dwells sweet love and constant chastity,

Unspotted faith and comely womanhood,

Regard of honour and mild modesty,

There virtueraynes as Queene in royal throne,

And givethlaws alone.

The which the base affections doe obay,

And yield their services unto her will,

Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may

Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.

Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures,

And unrevealed pleasures,

Then would ye wonder and her praises sing,

That al the woods should answer and your echo ring.

Edmund Spenser published Epithalamion in 1595 (Hollander and Kermode 323). In Greek *epithalamion* means marriage-song (literally "at the wedding chamber".) Spenser took his form for this poem from the wedding songs of the first-century-BC Roman poet Catullus. Spenser changed the form significantly to include Christian symbols with the pagan imagery, and also had the singer of the song be the bridegroom himself (unlike Catullus' songs -- Hollander, ibid.) Spenser wrote this poem for the occasion of his own wedding to his second wife, Elizabeth Boyle.

The poem runs 433 lines. It is divided into twenty-four parts, twenty-three stanzas and an "envoi', to mark the twenty-four hours of the wedding day. The progression of time is marked, more or less, through these stanzas, and most of the time Spenser addresses the Muses (the Nine Muses of Greek and Roman mythology who represent the various arts) and wedding guests. Though this piece was not set to music, it is supposed to be a song, and everywhere in it there are references to singing ("So I unto my selfe alone will sing/The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring." lines 19-20)

Spenser starts the poem by asking the muses to help him to describe the almost indescribable beauty of his wife-to-be as she rises on the morning of their wedding. Then Spenser invokes the sun to bless the union, but not to burn his or his wife's face with sunburn. When she appears, her beauty is dazzling "Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shinging bright /Her forehead ivory white,/Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,/Her lips lyke

cherries charming men to byte," (lines 171-4) But not only is the bride a perfect beauty on the outside, Spenser says, but her inward beauty matches and surpasses it.

The ceremony takes place, and the bride blushes in her innocence and purity. There is much rejoicing, and one stanza is devoted to the wedding feast and dancing. Then, as the married couple goes to bed, Spenser asks for the night to cover them and give them privacy. "Spread thy broad wing over my love and me,/That no man may us see,/And in thy sable mantle us enwrap,/From feare of perrill and foule horror free." (319-22) The final celestial body the poet addresses is the moon, whom he asks for blessings of children and happiness.

There is an underlying numerical structure to the poem. Besides the 24 stanzas (23 plus an "envoi") standing for the hours, there are 365 long lines (Hollander, ibid) in the poem, representing the days of the year. There are eight stanzas devoted to the hours of the night, for that is the number of hours on the day that the wedding took place -- the summer solstice. Spenser frames this poem not only as a personal event, but a ceremony expressing the harmony and rightness of nature.

Synopsis of 'Epithalamion' by Edmund Spenser

Like Catullus and many other writers of epithalamia before him, the poet Edmund Spenser begins his own with an invocation of the Muses. He asks their assistance in his artistic endeavor, but he also entreats them to round-up all the Nymphs they can find and to urge his sleeping love to wake.

With the bride awake and her beauty praised the poet transitions into a depiction of the procession to the church. As is common in epithalamia, we find young boys and girls prominently displayed in the festivities as minstrels and others sing the Hymen Hymenaeus - a traditional ritual chant dedicated to the Greco-Roman god of marriage.

The poet now digresses once more to comment on his bride's loveliness, with his assessments ranging from innocent praise of her white attire and 'eyes lyke Saphyres' to more overtly lusty descriptions of her breasts and other erogenous zones.

The poem quickly takes a more reverent tone as the celebrants enter the church. The language becomes decidedly more Christian with 'praises of the Lord' and the bride's inward beauty as the couple partakes in the sacrament of matrimony. Once the nuptials are complete, though, it's time for revelry and feasting.

As the long-awaited night begins to fall, the groom becomes increasingly anxious to end the festivities so he may consummate the union. With night fallen, the poet rebukes the idea of any curses or evil creatures that might ruin their happiness as the couple makes their way to the bridal bed. Blessings of childbearing, fidelity and all the good things of Heaven are also asked for as the poet closes his work and dedicates it to his new blushing bride.Fidelity- a quality of being faithful

'An Endlesse Moniment': Analyzing Spenser's 'Epithalamion'

Take a look at some of the buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C. and you might notice that many of them look like structures you might find along the streets of ancient Greece or Rome. That's because architects and other artisans have been emulating this Classical style out of reverence for centuries, and it's no different with literary artists. Edmund Spenser's 'Epithalamion,' which he composed to celebrate his marriage to Elizabeth Boyle in June of 1594, is one such example of a more recent author's participation in these ancient traditions.

Although he uses conspicuously Christian language and imagery for his depiction of the wedding sacrament, Spenser fills his poem with a plethora of pagan elements and references. Of course there's the numerous appeals to various deities, but the poem itself and what its genre entails are probably the closest connections Spenser held to ancient Rome and Greece.

Analysis

1.But if ye saw that which no eyes can see

……Medusaesmazfulhed

(Stanza 11, Lines 185-190)

EXP: In this stanza the speaker extols the virtues of his ladylove in a chivalric manner before the daughters of tradesmen who watch the bridal procession from the steps of their shops.

The speaker tells the onlookers that they could see only the outward beauty of the bride. If they could see the inner beauty of her lively spirit that is embellished with divine gifts, they would have been 'astonished' to see that beauty as anybody who stared at the head of the mythological Medusa was 'astonished', or converted into a stone. Although the comparison is not appropriate (Medusa being an image of ugliness), yet it conveys the sense that the inward beauty of the bride is of highest degree that can make the onlookers dumbfounded. Spenser uses this simile to play on the word, 'astonished'. According to the classical mythology Medusa was one of the Gorgons, the three monstrous sisters who lived in the Far East near the infernal region. When the sea-god Neptune defiled the temple of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and chastity transformed the hair of Medusa into snakes and gave her power to turn anyone who gazed at her into a stone ('astonished'). Petrarch makes Medusa a defence of Chastity against love; Spenser makes her a defence of virtuous love against vice.

In this stanza also we see Spenser's Platonism. Like Castiglione he also underlines the Platonic conception that external beauty is an index of internal or spiritual beauty. After describing the beauty of the body of his beloved he describes the beauty of the soul in Platonic terms.

2. There dwels sweet loue and constant chastity

…….

Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill. (Stanza 11, Lines 191- 197) s

EXP: In these lines the speaker showers praise on his bride's inward beauty which no one but he can perceive. He tells the daughters of the tradesmen that his bride's internal beauty is a repository of spotless faith, pleasing womanhood, great concern for honour and mild modesty. There Virtue reigns as the supreme queen in royal throne and proclaims laws of

her own free will. No evil thought can ever enter her mind to pollute her to evil designs. Virtue can suppress all evil thoughts and base affections that may approach her to tempt her mind to do something unbecoming of her beauty.

This exaggerated exaltation of beauty is typical of Renaissance scholars. This view was prevalent among almost all the poets including Shakespeare and John Donne who wrote love poems.

3. How the red roses flush up in her cheekes

……..The more they on it stare

(Stanza 13, Lines 226-233)

EXP: In these lines the speaker gives a beautiful description of the maidenly blushes of his bride at the church when the priest addresses her and blesses her with happy hands of her companion on their wedding day. While she blushes with emotion, her snow white cheeks flush into rosy hue, marking her spotlessly white cheeks stained with vermilion and her beauty makes even the angels guarding the sacred altar forget their holy office and stare on her face with amazement which grows more and more beautiful at every stage. After Spenser Alexander Pope also gives a similar description of beauty in his poem, Rape of the Lock: "The fair each moment rises in her charms, /Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace. /And calls forth all the wonders of her face, / Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,"(Canto I, Lines 140-43). Spenser is rightly called a poets' poet. We hardly find any parallel to Spenser's passage describing the blushes on the maidenly cheeks anywhere in the whole gamut of English poetry before him.

Structure:

Epithalamion follows a rhyme a scheme of ABACC, DEDEFF, and so on (except the 15th stanza.). The structure is 24 stanzas, each with either 18 lines or 19 (15th stanza has 17 lines). There are 365 lines in total.

Numerology

There are 24 stanzas and 365 lines in the poem to represent the year leading up to Spenser's wedding day[5]. The poem starts at midnight of the day of the wedding, as Spenser grows anxious of the future he is embracing. Every stanza is an hour of that day, eventually leading to the event and then to the consummation. Every hour is described in detail; from what is being worn to where the wedding is taking place to Spenser's own thoughts. The 24 stanzas are the 24 hours in a day and the 365 lines are every day in a year. Spenser's wedding is one day; the first 16 stanzas are the day time and the last 8 are the night time, and the relationship with Boyle has been occurring for a year.

Mysteries

In the 15th stanza, Spenser changes the structure. Throughout the poem, the stanzas are structured with 18 or 19 lines. In the 15th, there is a line missing. The rhyming structure typically goes ABABCC, then DEDEFF and so on. But stanza 15 is FEGGHH. This might have been done to keep the onomatopoeia of the poem or to keep the structure of the 365 lines as a metaphor for a year.

Greek Mythology

Most of the poem contains Greek Mythology references. Here are some examples and definitions of the mythologies.

Muses

Spenser calls on the Muses to help him in his artistic endeavors on this special day.

"Ye learned sisters which have oftentimes Beene to me ayding, others to adorne:"

Greek muses are the inspirational goddesses of the arts. Spenser calls on them to help him make the perfect poem for his bride. He calls on them later in the poem as well.

Orpheus

Spenser compares his love to that of the mythology of Orpheus.

"Ne let the same of any be envide: So Orpheus did for his owne bride, So I unto my selfe alone will sing,"

Orpheus was a legendary musician and poet (like Spenser) who could charm all living things. The story that is most known is about the love for his wife. After Orpheus' wife Eurydice died, Orpheus traveled to the Underworld. Hades was charmed by Orpheus, and allowed Eurydice to travel back up to Earth under one condition: Orpheus must walk in front of Eurydice and not look back at her the entire trip. Anxiety got the best of Orpheus, and right when they reached Earth he looked back, forgetting that they both needed to be in the upper world and that Eurydice was not in it. Eurydice was lost a second time forever.

Spenser uses the myth to insist he would do anything for his bride. Even travel to the underworld.

Echo

Spenser states his love will echo for all to hear, it will be repeated everywhere.

"So I unto my selfe alone will sing, the woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring."

Echo was a nymph who would attempt to protect Zeus when Hera would try to catch him having affairs. Echo would try to distract Hera with chatter. When Hera caught Zeus in the act, she made it so Echo could only repeat the last words she said. Echo was never able to tell Narcissus that she was in love with him, and had to watch from the side lines as he fell in love with someone else.

Spenser could be referencing Echo from the mythology, or the term Echo. But the word Echo derives from the Greek mythology. His love is all he hears echoed back, because it is all he can speak.

Hymen

Spenser wants his bride to wake, and calls on Hymen to do the duties of this day.

"Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake, and long since ready forth his maske to move,"

Hymen was the god of marriage ceremonies. Spenser calls him to his side on this day so that it will be perfect. He calls on him later in the poem to make sure their marriage will last.

Nymphs

Spenser needs the nymphs to make the location of the wedding, and nature, beautiful.

"Bring with you all the Nymphes that you can hear Both of the rivers and the forrests greene: And of the sea that neighbours to her neare, Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene."

Nymphs animate nature and the land. Spenser calls on them so that the ceremony will be beautiful.

All the World is a Stage

-William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April (see When was Shakespeare born), which is also believed to be the date he died on in 1616.

Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre (sometimes called the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Period). Shakespeare’s plays are perhaps his most enduring legacy, but they are not the only things he wrote. Shakespeare’s poems also remain popular to this day.

Shakespeare's Work

Shakespeare's work includes 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems. shakespeare wrote many of his most famous tragedies, such as “*King Lear”and “Macbeth”*, as well as great romances, like “The Winter’s Tale” and The “Tempest”.

Shakespeare died in Stratford-upon-Avon on 23 April 1616 at the age of 52. He is buried in the sanctuary of the parish church, Holy Trinity.

All The World's A Stage

-William Shakespeare

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,

With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

All the world's a stage

"All the world's a stage" is the phrase that begins a monologue from William Shakespeare's As You Like It, spoken by the melancholy Jaques in Act II Scene VII. The speech compares the world to a stage and life to a play, and catalogues the seven stages of a man's life, sometimes referred to as the seven ages of man: infant, schoolboy, lover, soldier, justice, Pantalone and old age, facing imminent death. It is one of Shakespeare's most frequently quoted passages.

The man in the poem goes through these stages all expressed in a sardonic when not bitter tone:

1. Infancy: In this stage he is a helpless baby and knows little.
2. Whining schoolboy: It is in that stage of life that he begins to go to school. He is unwilling to leave the protected environment of his home as he is still not confident enough to exercise his own discretion.
3. The lover: In this stage he is always sentimental, expressing his love in a silly and pointless manner. He makes himself ridiculous in trying to express his feelings.
4. The soldier: He is very easily aroused and is hot-headed. He is always working towards making a reputation for himself, however short-lived it may be, even at the cost of foolish risks.
5. The justice: In this stage he thinks he has acquired wisdom through the many experiences he has had in life, and is likely to impart it. He has reached a stage where he has gained prosperity and social status. He becomes vain and begins to enjoy the finer things of life.
6. Old Age: He is a shell of his former self — physically and mentally. He begins to become the butt of others' jokes. He loses his firmness and assertiveness, and shrinks in stature and personality.
7. Incapacity: Dependent on others for care and unable to interact with the world, he experiences "second innocence, and mere oblivion."

Ages of man

Likewise the division of human life into a series of ages was a commonplace of art and literature, which Shakespeare would have expected his audiences to recognize. The number of ages varied: three and four being the most common among ancient writers such as Aristotle. The concept of seven ages derives from medieval philosophy, which constructed groups of seven, as in the seven deadly sins, for theological reasons. The seven ages model dates from the 12th century.

Summary Analysis

The first role/age is that of an infant. He cries and whines and vomits in the hands of his nurse. In the second stage of life, man plays the role of a little child. He carries a small schoolbag with him and has a shiny face, walking as slowly as possible because of his dislike of school. In the third stage of life, man plays the role of a lover.

He follows love passionately and sings a sad ballad about love, praising the beauty of his lover's tiniest detail that seems to him its own universe. In the fourth stage of life, man plays the role of a soldier.

He is full of strange oaths, bearded, and strives for honour, recognition and reputation, even faced with cannon. In the fifth stage of life, man plays the role of a justice. He is well fed and has a fat belly. He is full of wise sayings.

He uses his experience, wisdom and knowledge in the dispensation of justice. In the sixth stage of life, man becomes weak and fragile. Man's last stage is that of extreme old age. This stage is compared to second childhood.

He loses control over his senses and becomes dependent on others just like a child. He is enveloped by forgetfulness and loses his teeth, eyesight, hearing, etc. and then, he passes away.

CONTEXT

In this poem 'Shakespeare' has very skillfully described the life of human beings in seven stages. He points out that the nature of human life is

transitory (here today and gone tomorrow). He says that this world is like a stage and all men and women are like actors on this stage. They play their roles on it and depart from this mortal stage.

Meaning of All the World's a Stage:

Shakespeare draws readers' attention toward the drama everyone lives throughout their lives. He is really reducing the life of human beings to a performance, or an acting role, which might look ridiculous. Simply, he means that all human beings are players, who play their assigned roles in every day. For instance, if somebody is a soldier now, he is playing the role Lord has allotted to him. Same is the case with other professionals. Even several roles are common such, as the role of a young lover, a haughty middle-aged man, or a great golfer.

According to the Shakespeare character, Jaques, in the play, As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII, a man's lifetime undergoes seven distinct ages.

First Movement: A No-Accomplishment Baby

At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.

Naturally and expectedly, the first age of a man's life is infancy. As a baby, a man acquires no accomplishments. In fact, he does little more than "mewl" and "puke" in the arms of a nurse.

By stating that the infant is cared for by a "nurse," the character reveals his level of aristocracy. A lower-class infant would be cared for by his mother.

Second Movement: Educated Against His Will

Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school.

After infancy, this any man passes into the stage of a "whining schoolboy." Pessimistically, the speaker paints a dire picture of this stage of life. This lousy little school kid bops off to school against his will.

The boy possesses a shiny face, scrubbed clean by his nurse, of course—or mother if he happens to be lower-class. The boy creeps toward the school

"like a snail," no doubt hating every step, wishing he was going anywhere else.

Third Movement: Of Heaving Breath

And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.

The lover's character seems more pleasing than the mewling, vomiting infant and the snotty-nosed little school-hating school-boy. But the lover's his behavior bears a resemblance to a "sighing" "furnace." The horny youth warbles a "woeful ballad / Made to his mistress' eyebrow," in his often vain attempt at seduction.

Jaques' focus on the "mistress' eyebrow," an inconsequential item on the face, reveals a lack of inspiration—that same lack he seems to be exhibiting for each stage of man's existence.

Fourth Movement: Feeding the Ego

Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth.

At this stage, the man becomes full of himself, as he goes in search of a reputation, even though it may be one that bursts as easily as a bubble. The man then takes "strange oaths," while wearing his facial hair "like a pard." Negativity sets in as he becomes "jealous in honour" and also "sudden and quick in quarrel."

Jaques decides that looking into the mouth of a cannon is an unsuitable place to establish a stellar reputation. It needs to be kept in mind that these ages of man's life and their evaluations are just the opinion of this speaker who is making these descriptions.

Fifth Movement: Only Playing a Part

And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;
And so he plays his part.

By the fifth age, the man is accumulating body flesh as he undergoes the unpleasant increase often called "middle-age spread." The unlucky bugger sports a "fair round belly." The man's eyes have become "severe." He wears his beard trimmed short, which contrasts with the soldier's scruff of a beard.

While the man at this state may seem capable of spouting wise aphorisms, Jaques does not take such wisdom seriously, asserting that the man is only playing "his part" in this life as a play where "all the world's a stage."

Sixth Movement: The Return of the Schoolboy

The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.

As chronological age has moved the man forward, he lands on the stage where he has difficulty even maintaining his earlier activities. He no longer fits into his clothes because he has become thin, losing that round belly from before.

The man at this advanced stage sports glasses to assist his failing vision. With his shrinking body, even his voice is undergoing a transformation from its "manly" huskiness to that of a childish whine, reminiscent of the schoolboy.

Seven Movement: The "Sans" Man

Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,

Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Jaques, who is after all French, then calls the last stage one wherein the man is "Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." Without all his adult features and qualities, this man is now reduced to a "second childhood."

Each stage has produced a progression leading to a state of virtual nothingness, or worse—a man, who has become a pathetic child, returning to near infancy from where he started.

UNIT II

On His Blindness

-John Milton

John Milton, (born December 9, 1608, London, England—died November 8?, 1674, London?), English poet, pamphleteer, and historian, considered the most significant English author after William Shakespeare.

Milton is best known for Paradise Lost, widely regarded as the greatest epic poem in English. Together with Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, it confirms Milton's reputation as one of the greatest English poets.

On His Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts: who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."

In "On His Blindness," Milton writes of his experience of blindness. He asks if God wants him to keep working, in spite of the fact that his job caused him to lose his sight. A personified Patience tells him that God rewards even those who stand and wait to be of service.

- Milton went blind working for the English Republic. His service to the government often required that he stay up late reading and writing. This caused him to lose his sight.

- The poem takes the form of a Petrarchan sonnet. Petrarchan sonnets traditionally focus on love and romance, but Milton subverts this in order to explore his relationship with God.

- Milton fears that his blindness will prevent him from doing God's work. Patience tells him that even his idleness is useful to God if he continues to have faith.

Summary and Analysis

John Milton's poem "On His Blindness" is an autobiographical sonnet in which Milton meditates on his own loss of sight. For most of his life, Milton had been able to see perfectly, but his late-night reading and writing on behalf of the government of the short-lived English Republic, in which he held a very prominent position, helped ruin his eyesight. This sonnet—written in the "Petrarchan" rhyme scheme associated with the fourteenth-century Italian poet Francesco Petrarca—is divided into an eight-line "octave" and a six-line "sestet." The octave rhymes a/b/b/a/a/b/b/a. The sestet rhymes c/d/e/c/d/e. The sonnet is therefore a typical Petrarchan sonnet in form, but in subject matter, the poem departs from the topics usually associated with Petrarchan poems. Petrarch (the English version of Petrarca's name) was most famous for writing about love; Milton departs from that conventional topic to deal with a very practical, very physical problem, but a problem with many broader spiritual implications.

By beginning line one with the word "When," Milton immediately signals that he is opening with a subordinate clause (a dependent clause) that introduces the main idea to follow. Beginning the poem this way creates a certain suspense; the main idea is postponed so that we have to continue reading in anticipation of its eventual arrival. Shakespeare also often used this kind of sentence pattern in constructing his own sonnets. By opening with a dependent clause, Milton heightens our sense of anticipation by delaying the key statement.

The word "consider" implies careful, rational thought rather than purely emotional reaction. Here and throughout the poem, the speaker uses his reason, which Renaissance Christians considered one of the greatest gifts that God had bestowed upon human beings. The ability of humans to reason,

they believed, linked them to God and distinguished them from animals. The speaker feels that his “light” is “spent” (extinguished) in several senses of the word “light.” This word clearly alludes, at least eventually, to the speaker’s loss of sight, but "light" may also suggest one’s intelligence. The opening line may at first seem to mean “When I think about how I have used my intelligence,” but it soon comes to mean “When I ponder how my ability to see has become extinguished.” This latter meaning is, of course, foreshadowed by the poem’s title.

The idea of losing one’s sight is obviously a deeply troubling one. The blind person is suddenly at risk in all kinds of ways. The speaker in the poem feels vulnerable; he can no longer literally see his own way or easily protect himself from dangers. The special tragedy of this particular speaker is that he has lost his sight at an unusually early stage of life. Rather than becoming blind when elderly, he has become blind in middle age. He now inhabits a world that seems “dark” (2) in at least two senses: it is no longer physically visible, and it is a world full of sin and spiritual darkness. The world, moreover, is not only dark but also “wide”: the speaker will somehow have to navigate, both literally and figuratively, in a world which, because of its width or breadth, will prose many dangers. If the speaker were confined to a single dark room, he might quickly and easily learn his way around. Instead, he will have to make his way through a “world” that is both “dark” and “wide” and thus especially challenging.

In line three, the speaker refers to “one talent,” thereby alluding to the famous passage in the Bible (Matthew 25:14-30) in which a master gives three servants different numbers of “talents” (coins) before he departs. The servant given five talents invests them wisely and earns five in return, which he gives to his master when the master reappears. Similarly, the same happens with the servant given two talents. However, the servant given one talent, mistrustful of his master, buries that talent so that he will risk losing nothing on his master’s behalf. His master is angered by such selfishness and sloth, and the “unprofitable servant” is condemned. The speaker in Milton’s poem fears that he, too, will be condemned for failing to use his “talent” (3) profitably in God’s service. ("Talent," of course, puns with "ability.") The irony is that Milton lost his sight precisely *because* he was trying to serve God (and the English Commonwealth) to the very best of his abilities.

Milton's speaker fears a kind of spiritual "death" (3) because either he or his talent (or both) has proven "useless."

Ironically but admirably, the speaker in Milton's poem feels more "bent" (6) to serve God despite his blindness; he is more determined, more dedicated, and more inclined to serve, but he fears that his blindness will make it difficult for him to do so. He hopes he will be able to present to God a "true account" of his service, and he hopes to do so before God, like the master in the parable, returns to "chide" him for being unprofitable (6). In an allusion to Matthew 20:1-16, the speaker "fondly" (foolishly) asks whether God expects him to perform "day-labor" in the dark. Although the speaker considers such a query foolish, the mere fact that he raises the question implies a bit of exasperation, a bit of concern about whether he will be judged fairly by God. Paradoxically, the speaker's willingness even to raise such a question suggests an ultimate trust in God. He seems to assume that he will not be punished merely for voicing his concerns; he seems to assume that he can voice his honest thoughts without needing to fear retaliation. He can be frank, because he perceives God as a god of mercy and love.

The speaker claims that a personified Patience intervenes to "prevent / That murmur" (8-9), but of course (paradoxically) the speaker has just now expressed that murmur, as the word "replies" acknowledges. God does not speak openly in the poem; rather, the voice of God speaks through the speaker's own patience, one of the speaker's own most godly traits. The poem has now become a kind of dialogue between the part of the speaker that is tempted to complain and the part of the speaker that is willing to wait on God and trust Him to do what is good and right. The emphasis on "Patience" here foreshadows the very end of the poem.

The speaker's patience responds by enunciating the Protestant idea, associated with John Calvin, that God is totally self-sufficient and needs nothing at all from human beings. He does not need man's "work," nor does he even need "his own gifts" (10), given by Him to man and returned to Him with profit *by* man, as in the parable of the talents. God, in short, needs nothing at all from people. Instead, they depend upon Him utterly; the only way for them to receive salvation is through God's freely given grace, a key tenet of Calvinism. The best way to serve God is simply to "Bear his mild

yoke" (11). In other words, the best way to be a good Christian and human is to behave like a completely tamed and contented work animal, such as an obedient ox. However, the speaker here alludes once more to the Bible, this time to Matthew 11:28-20:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

This Biblical passage, far from making God sound like a hard and exacting taskmaster, instead makes Him sound like a thoughtful, caring, humble caretaker who loves and comforts the creatures who serve Him.

Nevertheless, God's "state"—both His inherent condition and the nature of His rule—is "Kingly" (11-12), a word that implies His autonomy, His glory, His greatness, His exalted power, and His dignity. Thousands (especially angels) do His "bidding," and not only do they perform His commands, but they also perform them with "speed" (12). They can move with utter quickness, partly because they are sighted and can avoid any obstacle before them. The speaker in the poem, of course, can no longer move with such speed, at least not physically. The angels move about the wide world, "land and ocean," rapidly and without tiring, unlike the handicapped speaker, who is not now capable of rapid motion. However, the poem ends on a note of supreme consolation and reassurance: "They also serve who only stand and wait" (14). In other words, rapid movement is not required to serve God truly. Merely waiting for God to decide how one can *be* most useful can also be true service to God who really needs no servants. The life of the mind can be as valuable, in God's eyes, as the active life. Since God needs nothing, the mere fact of standing and waiting can be sufficient service in God's eyes, especially if one waits with sincere hope and faith for the Second Coming of Christ.

Appropriately enough, the last two words of the poem—the words that bring it to a halt—are "stand and wait." The poem ultimately expresses Milton's

faith that God will know best how to use him despite Milton's blindness. In the same way that a soldier standing on guard duty can be at least as worthy as an active soldier, if not even more worthy, so, Milton concludes, can he best serve God by patiently accepting the fate God has imposed upon him. Faith is ultimately more important than any kind of active service.

Symbol Analysis

This poem is sometimes called "On His Blindness," but the speaker might respond, "Blindness? What blindness? I'm not the one who's blind. It's the world that has run out of light." This argument is like saying that you aren't really running – it's the world that is rolling beneath you like a treadmill. As you can see, Milton uses complicated wordplay to describe why the speaker has a hard time serving God. His "blindness" is like a lamp that runs out of fuel, like the daylight that turns to night, and like a currency that hasn't been used to maximum effect.

- Line 1: Vision is not same thing as "light," although vision requires light. So, we can't just substitute one word for the other. Milton is using a **metaphor** to compare his vision to a light source that could run out, like an old-fashioned lamp that burns through its oil.
- Line 2: "Ere half my days" is a way of saying, "Before my life is through." But "days" also introduces the idea of daylight. The speaker's "days" are now more like nights. He uses another **metaphor** to compare his lack of vision to an imagined world that does not have light. The phrase "this dark world and wide" is also an example of **alliteration**.
- Line 7: The speaker compares God – again using **metaphor** – to a master who makes his servants work in darkness. He "denies" them light, which sounds heartless.
-

The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is ABBAABBAC CDECDE. So, you can see that lines 1, 4, 5, and 8 all rhyme with each other. Unlike a classic Italian sonnet, "When I consider how my light is spent" does not divide cleanly into eight lines and six lines, however. The first section of the poem consists of the speaker trying to frame his foolish question, and the second consists of

the response to the question by a figure named "patience." Most Italian sonnets have a sharp thematic turn or "volta" between the two sections, but in this poem the turn is a bit muddled between lines 8 and 9. If you think about it, the confusion makes perfect sense, as it conveys the awkwardness of someone (patience) interrupting someone else (the speaker) before the speaker can say something stupid.

A verse form consisting of 14 lines with a fixed rhyme scheme is known as a sonnet.

John Milton's poem "On His Blindness" is an autobiographical sonnet in which Milton meditates on his own loss of sight. For most of his life, Milton had been able to see perfectly, but his late-night reading and writing on behalf of the government of the short-lived English Republic, in which he held a very prominent position, helped ruin his eyesight. This sonnet—written in the "Petrarchan" rhyme scheme associated with the fourteenth-century Italian poet Francesco Petrarca—is divided into an eight-line "octave" and a six-line "sestet." The octave rhymes a/b/b/a/a/b/b/a. The sestet rhymes c/d/e/c/d/e. The sonnet is therefore a typical Petrarchan sonnet in form, but in subject matter, the poem departs from the topics usually associated with Petrarchan poems. Petrarch (the English version of Petrarca's name) was most famous for writing about love; Milton departs from that conventional topic to deal with a very practical, very physical problem, but a problem with many broader spiritual implications.

A Red, Red Rose

-Robert Burns

Robert Burns, (born January 25, 1759, Alloway, Ayrshire, Scotland—died July 21, 1796, Dumfries, Dumfriesshire), national poet of Scotland, who wrote lyrics and songs in Scots and in English. He was also famous for his amours and his rebellion against orthodox religion and morality.

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetlyplay'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only Luve
And fare thee well, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

In "A Red, Red Rose," the speaker of the poem compares his love to a rose. He addresses the girl he loves, proclaiming that his love will flow until the seas dry up, because she is so beautiful. He then bids her farewell for a short time, promising to return, no matter the distance between them.

- The poem opens with the famous line, "O, my luve is like a red, red rose."
- He declares that his love for her is so deep and everlasting that it will survive until the sea dries up.
- For some reason, he feels the need to leave her for a while. He promises to come back, even if he must travel ten thousand miles to get back to her.

Lines 1-2

O my Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:

- The poem opens with one of the most famous similes of all time.
- The speaker is saying his love is like a really red rose that is "newly sprung in June." In other words, the speaker's love is like a flower that has just emerged from the ground.

- You know what that means, Shmoopers: his love is new, fresh, and young. It's doin' just fine.
- Oh, and didn't we tell you we're also experts in Scottish dialects? "Luve" is an older spelling of love, and "'s" is an abbreviation of "is."
- Burns often spells things in strange ways, partly because he wrote over two hundred years ago and partly because he was Scottish (which means he pronounced and spelled words slightly differently).

Lines 3-4

O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune!

- Not satisfied with the whole rose comparison? No worries. The speaker's got another **simile** for ya.
- The speaker next compares his love to a melodie (an older spelling of the word melody) that is "sweetly play'd in tune."
- The speaker's "luve," then, is like a song that is sung or "play'd" just right, so right in fact that it's kind of sweet.
- Okay. Let's tally it up. So far, we know that the speaker's love is like an oh so red rose, and like an awesome jam. What's next?
- And here's a question. Is the speaker talking about his love for a girl—a bonnie lass? Or is he talking about the girl herself?
- These lines also repeat the **metrical** pattern we got in the first two lines. A line of **tetrameter**, followed by a line of **trimeter**. Only now we've added a rhyme **scheme**, too.
- June and tune rhyme, which means that our rhyme scheme goes a little something like this: ABCB.
- This repeated meter, combined with the catchy rhyme scheme, can only mean one thing: ballad meter.

Lines 5-6

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:

- The speaker says he is as "deep in luve" as the "bonnie lass" is fair (a word that, once upon a time, meant pretty, beautiful, or attractive).
- Really, this is a fancy pants way of saying something that's not so fancy pants at all. Imagine a really hot girl or guy, and now imagine that you love that person as much as he or she is hot.
- It is, for the most part, a Scottish dialect word. As is lass, which just refers to a girl (although sometimes it means something like sweetheart).
- This guy is one sweet talker.

Lines 7-8

And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

- The speaker says he will "luve" his "bonnie lass" until all the seas dry up.
- The word "a'" is a shortened form of the word "all"; this elision (the removal of letters from a word) is very common in Scots English
- "Gang" doesn't refer to a group of people; it is an old word that means "go" or "walk." Say it to yourself. Doesn't it kind of sound like "gone" or "going"?
- The seas will probably never "gang dry," so the speaker seems to be saying that he will love his "lass" forever. Or at least until the apocalypse.

Lines 9-10

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;

- With a healthy dose of repetition, the speaker tells us again that he will love his "bonnie lass" until the seas "gang dry"; he also tells us he will love her until the "rocks melt wi' the sun."
- In the line 10, you have to pretend the word "till" is at the beginning; the lines are saying "till a' the seas…*and till* the rocks."
- "Till" is just a shortened form of the word until, and "wi'" is a shortened form of the word with,
- What does he mean by rocks melting with sun? Does he mean when the rocks melt *in* the sun? Or does he mean melt at the same time as the sun is melting?
- Like the sea going dry, it is unlikely that rocks are going to "melt" (unless they get thrown into a volcano, or a meteor strikes the earth) so the speaker is again emphasizing the fact that he will love her forever or at least until long after their lives are over.

Lines 11-12

I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

- Oh for crying out loud, we get it, dude. You really dig this girl.
- Yet again, the speaker pledges that he will love his lass for a really long time—as long as he lives, to be exact.
- That's where that "sands o' life shall run" comes in. It means, "while I'm still alive." So the **metaphor** here is of an hourglass, or some other device that measures time with sand.
- The words, however, make us think of the "sands o' life" running out; the phrase "I will luve thee still" makes us think the speaker wants to say "I will love thee still, even after the sands o' life shall run out." He doesn't say that, but we can't help thinking it, can we?
- After all, we're thinking that the sands of this guy's life will probably run out long before the rocks might melt and the sea may burn.

- We've got a new**rhyme scheme** on our hands, because in these final two stanzas, not only do the second and fourth lines of each stanza rhyme, but the first and third do, too. This pattern is commonly referred to as common meter.

Lines 13- 14

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!

- Suddenly, it's time to say goodbye. Or in this case, "fare thee weel." Hey, same diff.
- "Weel" does not mean "wheel" but is rather an older form of the word "well"; say it aloud, and you'll see that it sounds really Scottish.
- The phrase "fare thee weel a while" means something like "farewell, for now" or "farewell for the time being."
- But it could also mean "take care of yourself for now" or "may you be well." The word "fare" can be a verb that means do or go.
- For whatever reason, these two lovebirds are splitting like a banana. But we think they're gonna be just fine at the whole long-distance thing. We mean, if your love outlasts the sun, what's a few miles?

Lines 15-16

And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

- The speaker says his final farewell; he tells his Luve that he will come again, even if he has to walk ten thousand miles (that's a long way!).
- So hey, at least we know he's head over heels.
- Here's hoping these two crazy kids can make it work.

Summary of "A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns

“A Red, Red Rose” is a romantic poem written by evergreen writer Robert Burns. This writer is very genius and knows actually what he is writing. He is very clear with his thoughts and stick to his aim. He is simply guiding youth about how to impress any girl.

Love is the chief point in this poem. Everything in this world goes around love. Love is the only sacred thing which takes nothing more than a two pure hearts. If two hearts are beating for each other then surely no power or no storm can make them different. This poem is nothing but the lines written by a man who knew impulsively how to prevail a woman’s heart. There so much hidden in this poem which is necessary to learn. Really the poem sounds great as it gives reader a true guidance and tells them to work for love.

The reader may get previously well-known with the poem’s much-quoted initial headline. Its plea over time most likely shoots from the valor of its contention, the speaker’s love is expressed through the predictable picture of the flower rose and during the line’s four sturdy beats. The poet’s preference for a rose may initially look stale, along with the color “red” may look too apparent a sign of love and enthusiasm. Thus, far if the relationship between the adored one and the rose limits on line, a vigilant reading explores the subtler modes in which the speaker communicates about his passion.

Why, for example, is the expression “red” constant? The answer for this might be found in the next line. Since red is estimated color of the flower, the reappearance of the adjective stands for the complete and most lovely sign of the flower rose, it’s a perfect state.

New spring season speaks about the romantic climate and the things goes even good if two loving hearts are close to each other. In a love life it is more important to make opposite person happy and thus for this it is necessary to do small things which can make her happy. Offering a rose is the same thing and it can even increase love. The speaker gives an exact guidance through his lines and each and every word that he has used.

This poem is significant concerning the sturdy yet caring love on a moan headed for a lady. The poet applies the regular thoughts about love by using

word like “Red Roses”. As the flower rose signs love, zealous and sturdy relation.

The poem tells the meaning of love, and it is durable to believe those reminiscences if fall in love to somebody. Robert Burns sought to get married with his love that was pregnant by his twins; however the father-in-law would not agree to it. Burns turned into a legendary success and did really revisit to marry his first love. It is said that this is a true story that he has lived, and therefore he is very passionate about love and inspiring others to get bind into true love.

UNIT-III

Lines Written in Early Spring

by William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth, (born April 7, 1770, Cockermouth, Cumberland, England—died April 23, 1850, Rydal Mount, Westmorland), English poet whose *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), written with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped launch the English Romantic movement.

I heard a thousand blended notes,

While in a grove I sate reclined,

In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts

Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link

The human soul that through me ran;

And much it grieved my heart to think

What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,

The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;

And 'tis my faith that every flower

Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,

Their thoughts I cannot measure:—

But the least motion which they made

It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,

To catch the breezy air;

And I must think, do all I can,

That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,

If such be Nature's holy plan,

Have I not reason to lament

What man has made of man?

ANALYSIS

The poem we have here is a ballad composed in six quatrains; six stanzas of four lines, being each line composed by four iambic feet. The rhyme scheme is ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GHGH, DIDI, JDJD.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes, A
While in a grove I sate reclined, B
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts A
Bring sad thoughts to the mind. B

In the first quatrain Wordsworth looks at Nature and through his views sad thoughts come to his mind. Here he expresses his conviction in that knowledge of reality is reached through emotions and intuitions that Nature generates at being observed by man. Being Nature the real representation of reality and godliness as well.

To her fair works did Nature link C

The human soul that through me ran; D
And much it grieved my heart to think C
What man has made of man. D

In the second stanza the poet uses a figure of speech called personification by which he gives Nature the ability to create at her will elements, what he calls “her fair works”, and make the human soul that lives in the poet feel linked with them. This is a way of humanizing Nature by giving her the feature of being a creator which could be seen as an attribution to the Nature of the concept of God, understood as that who performs reality at his own will. In third and fourth verses, the poet expresses the affliction this knowledge causes to his soul, and he wonders about the direction taken by mankind, as he does again at the end of the poem.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower, E
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths; F
And 'tis my faith that every flower E
Enjoys the air it breathes. F

In the third quatrain he observes Nature, at its peak, in all its splendour and beauty. He tells about its dynamic development when he describes how the periwinkle trains its branches through the grass. He also displays his implication in this development of natural events expressing his desire for the flowers to rejoice at their existence.

In the third and fourth verses we can see a personification again, when flowers are endowed with particular human abilities such breathing and enjoying.

The birds around me hopped and played, G
Their thoughts I cannot measure:-- H
But the least motion which they made G
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

He continues to observe nature and describes the birds playing and hopping around him, he says he cannot measure their thoughts. This again shows how Wordsworth gives human attributes to the elements of Nature being the

action of thinking and making elaborate thoughts part of the human condition. But it shows too, how, through his only observation, he cannot reach the knowledge of their thinking. Although by his observations he supposes his last movement was one expressing pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan, D
To catch the breezy air; I
And I must think, do all I can, D
That there was pleasure there. I 20

Again, he provides will to events occurring in Nature: the newborn branches expand to get the air they need, and, once more, attributes to elements the capacity to feel, and enjoy their existence. These opinions derive from his long observations of this place and its nature.

If this belief from heaven be sent, J
If such be Nature's holy plan, D
Have I not reason to lament J
What man has made of man? D

He wonders if the will and the ability to enjoy the simple development of life by every natural element which he observes are sent from heaven, and next he considers whether it may be as well a holy plan of Nature. He gives again, as seen in the second stanza, godly attributes to Nature, as creator of life and death, as the force compelling the world. She is able to plan and, moreover, to develop a holy plan. If this holy plan is created deliberately, with its harmony and beauty, the humankind, with their wars and their unnatural activities, have moved away from what stills can be glimpsed in natural events, and it is because of this he regrets what man has made of man.

ACCORDING TO WORDSWORTH MOMENT

Wordsworth wrote this poem while he went for a walk in a spot near the village of Alford, he describes the moment and the place as a natural scene in motion, branches looking for the sun trying to escape from the water where its tree had fallen and had remained as a natural bridge and water falling

down a sloping rock. Through this image we can imagine the sounds and the moment described in the poem.
His real communion with Nature is shown in these verses, by his observations and his feelings on the different events, the growing of the periwinkle, the birds' recreation or the branches' breathing and his idea of the ability of these elements to rejoice in their existence.
Having been born in the Lake District Wordsworth considered Nature as the representation of creation if it was not creation itself.
By the time he wrote this poem, written in the second half of the 1790's decade, Wordsworth had graduated in 1791 and had gone to France where he became a supporter of the French Revolution and strongly believed in social reforms which mean he was concerned about social and poverty problems. In those years he had economic problems as well as he and his brothers had not been able to get their legacy from his father's employer and his uncles, who were in charge of him when his father died, did not take care of him after graduating. The war between France and England divided his feelings because he wanted to stay loyal to his country but in his inner self he thought England was fighting liberty. This war was the reason why Wordsworth missed his daughter's infancy as he could not come to France until 1802. He had ideas based on men's equality and freedom. These ideas made him relate to radical people such as Godwim and Wollstonecraft.
In 1795 he met Coleridge and their friendship grew over the next two years until they came to publish Lyrical Ballads in October of 1798. In these moments of his life Wordsworth was concerned about social problems and the development of civilization men were carrying out. We can see these concerns in the poem above analyzed. He frames the scene in a natural environment and thinks about what men have made of man despite all the marvellous surroundings Nature offers us.
Where Nature is the creation/creator and men are her destroying creatures.

The rise of Modernism, of science and technology has dealt a severe blow to the ideas of Romanticism; to the idea of man's nature being intrinsically good, to the sublimity of the untamed Nature. Nature has almost been tamed by Civilisation, Industrial growth and Urbanisation, which have driven people (and poets too) far from the company of nature. The 20th century witnessed two world wars, the rise in weapon of mass destruction and unprecedented level of innovation in areas of torture, mass-killing,

genocides, terrorism etc, all combining to make the idea of "man's nature being of good" explicitly theoretical.

Nevertheless, the ideas of Romanticism still hold value among contemporary writers. The song of the Nightingale, the beauty of a flower, the rising and falling of waves, the company of nature (both tamed and wild) still inspire a lot of artists, philosophers, thinkers, writers etc as it did in that moment when William Wordsworth penned one of his great poems; "Lines Written in Early Spring."

Spring, the season immediately following Winter is one of awakening. The Spring season is usually seen as a period of rebirth, of resurrection, of reincarnation from the death that the harsh realities of winter had brought. Wordsworth by picking this title did not just want to put a time-line on his creation but also wished to draw the reader to the significance of the moment; the newness, freshness, youthfulness of that very hour that only Spring, early spring can offer.

Kubla Khan

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

A stately pleasure-dome decree:

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round;

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;

Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (born October 21, 1772, Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, England—died July 25, 1834, Highgate, near London), English lyrical poet, critic, and philosopher. His *Lyrical Ballads*, written with William Wordsworth, heralded the English Romantic movement, and his *Biographia Literaria*(1817) is the most significant work of general literary criticismproduced in the English Romantic period.

A poem or song narrating a story in short stanzas. It can be also slow sentimental or romantic song, having been passed on orally from one generation to the next.

This poem describes Xanadu, the palace of Kubla Khan, a Mongol emperor and the grandson of Genghis Khan. The poem's speaker starts by describing the setting of Emperor's palace, which he calls a "pleasure dome." He tells us about a river that runs across the land and then flows through some underground caves and into the sea. He also tells us about the fertile land that surrounds the palace. The nearby area is covered in streams, sweet-smelling trees, and beautiful forests.

Then the speaker gets excited about the river again and tells us about the canyon through which it flows. He makes it into a spooky, haunted place, where you might find a "woman wailing for her demon lover." He describes how the river leaps and smashes through the canyon, first exploding up into a noisy fountain and then finally sinking down and flowing through those underground caves into the ocean far away.

The speaker then goes on to describe Kubla Khan himself, who is listening to this noisy river and thinking about war. All of a sudden, the speaker moves away from this landscape and tells us about another vision he had, where he saw a woman playing an instrument and singing. The memory of her song fills him with longing, and he imagines himself singing his own song, using it to create a vision of Xanadu.

Toward the end, the poem becomes more personal and mysterious, as the speaker describes past visions he has had. This brings him to a final image of a terrifying figure with flashing eyes. This person, Kubla Khan, is a powerful

being who seems almost godlike: "For he on honey-dew hath fed/And drunk the milk of paradise" (53-54).

Canyon

A ravine formed by a river in an area with little rainfall.

Ravine- A deep narrow steep-sided valley (especially one formed by running water)

Lines 1-2

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree:

- Here's the famous opener.
- This line gets a lot of work done quickly. It introduces us to the title character (Kubla Khan), and begins to describe the amazing setting of the poem (Xanadu).
- That "stately pleasure dome decree" means that he had a really fancy and beautiful palace built.
- We want you to know right away that Coleridge is actually talking about a real place and a real guy.
- Kubla Khan was the grandson of the legendary Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan, and he built a summer palace (called Xanadu, in English) in Mongolia.
- Marco Polo visited Xanadu, and helped to start the legend of its magnificence.
- We're starting with actual history here, although by Coleridge's time Xanadu is already a bit of a legend.
- Keep this little historical nugget in mind, as you read. Does this feel like a real place and a real person? Or does it seem completely imaginary? Maybe a little of both?

Lines 3-5

Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

- The speaker begins to describe the geography of Xanadu. He starts by introducing us to the River Alph.
- There's certainly no river in Mongolia by this name. Some scholars think that this is an allusion to the river Alpheus, a river in Greece that was made famous in classical literature.
- The name "Alph" might also make us think of the Greek letter "Alpha" which is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and a symbol of beginnings.
- These associations, and the fact that the river has a name at all, really make the Alph stand out in the beginning of this poem.
- Notice how Coleridge is already stepping away from history: he is transforming this place, this person, and this story into his own creation.
- "Kubla Khan" is definitely a poem as much about the journeys of the mind and the imagination as it is about the real world.
- If this is partly an imaginary landscape, how does the poem's speaker make it look and feel? When he talks about "caverns measureless to man" we get a sense that this landscape is both huge and unknowable.
- That slightly spooky feeling continues when we get to the "sunless sea." That's a pretty gloomy image to start out with, and it casts a shadow over these first few lines. It also gives us a sense of being in an imaginary landscape, because where else could a sea always be "sunless" and never bright or cheerful, or any of the other things a sea can be?
- Also, check out how much shorter line 5 is than all the others. In a poem where all the lines have a carefully planned length, short lines stand out and make us take notice. It makes this image just a little

lonelier. It also makes this line into more of a dead end, a stopping place, just like the sea is for the River Alph.

Lines 6-11

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

- Now things become a little more cheerful.
- The speaker takes us away from those gloomy, endless caverns, and tells us a little bit about the gardens around the palace.
- You might have noticed that the language gets fancy here. A "sinuous rill" (line 3) is really just a twisty stream.
- Coleridge often uses beautiful language to illustrate simple underlying concepts.
- Here, the speaker is setting up a contrast between the scary, strange caverns and the pleasant, familiar space around the palace. He describes how the palace is "girdled" (that just means surrounded) by walls and towers. While the caverns were "measureless" (line 4) this space can be measured very precisely at "twice five miles."
- Everything about this place feels safe and happy. It's protected by the walls, it's "fertile," the gardens are "bright," even the trees smell good ("incense-bearing").
- Even though the forests are "ancient" the speaker manages to make them seem comforting too, since he tells us they are "enfolding sunny spots of greenery" (line 11).
- Notice how the idea of "enfolding" echoes the sense of "girdled." The forest wraps around those little sunny spots and keeps them safe, just like the walls wrap around the palace and keep it safe.

- The natural world outside is wild and strange, but within the palace walls things are peaceful and protected.

Lines 12-16

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!

- Then, just like that, we get pulled back into the wild, slightly scary natural world. The speaker takes us back to the river Alph, which is beginning to seem almost like a character in this poem.
- Xanadu is located in a valley surrounded by hills. The river cascades down the side of one of these hills, cutting a "deep chasm," or canyon, through it.
- The chasm cuts a path "athwart a cedarn cover" which means that the entire hillside is covered in cedar trees. This river is violent and uncontrollable, completely unlike those poky little rills we heard about it line eight.
- The speaker seems to be pulled toward this river like a magnet. He could have imagined himself sitting in those gardens, having someone feed him grapes.
- But it's the "romantic" chasm that appeals to him, and gives the poem its life.
- Can you feel how excited the speaker is when he talks about the river?
- One way Coleridge tips us off to his excitement is with all of those exclamation points. They are all over the place in the first few lines of this section.
- Look at just two examples: "a cedarn cover!"(line 13), "a savage place!"(line 14). The exclamation points really make those images pop out at you, don't they?

- And how about that woman, the demon lover, and that waning moon?
- The speaker is using them to let us know just how romantic and spooky the chasm really is.
- Our speaker wants us to imagine a woman, maybe even the ghost of a woman, since she haunts this place.
- Maybe she has been cursed, or has had a spell cast on her, and she has fallen in love with an evil spirit.
- If this woman wanted to scream about her terrible fate, to let out all her sadness and her anger and her longing, where would she go? She'd go to a place just like this: a lonely, wild canyon, where no one could hear her but the "waning moon" (that just means the moon is getting smaller).
- These images are really intense, and it gives us a little glimpse of a whole new story.
- The speaker isn't saying that any of these things are there in the poem; he's saying that this is the kind of place where they would beat home.
- He's coloring the mood of the landscape, not introducing new characters, so don't let the details throw you off too much.
- Remember that we're hearing a description of a dream or a vision.
- Have you ever been at that moment where you're about to fall asleep and something flashes across your mind? One minute it's there, and its really intense, maybe as intense as this woman and her demon. Then the next minute it's gone, just like the woman in this poem.

Lines 17-24

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.

- More about this river. Seriously, he really likes it. Apparently it comes rushing down the hillside at every moment ("momently") like a "fountain."
- Of course, rivers don't usually stop moving, so Coleridge doesn't need to tell us that it flows at every moment. However, he wants us to think of the river not as something continuous, but as something that is created each moment.
- The speaker wants us to focus on the wild, rushing, violent excitement of the water.
- Coleridge and his poet-friends, the Romantics, loved scenes like this, where the tremendous power of nature is unleashed and we get to watch.
- Coleridge gets so carried away by this scene that he turns the earth into a kind of "seething," "breathing" animal.
- The rushing water becomes the sound of its "fast thick pants," as if the earth were really tired from doing a lot of exercise. He really wants you to hear and almost feel the rushing force of that river.
- You can't just dip into an image like this. It's like trying to get a drink from a fire hose.
- Coleridge keeps this intensity up line after line, plunging us into the river again and again.
- After a while, this turns into a snowstorm of images and analogies.
- Apparently the river is bouncing off the rocks, which reminds the speaker of the clatter of hail, or grain raining down out of the air as it is being separated from the chaff.
- We could dig into each one of these images, and we definitely wouldn't want to stop you from looking as closely as possible at every one of these lines. But we think what the speaker is really after here is a feeling.

- Do you feel the rushing of the river, the crash of the water against the rocks?
- If yes, then the poem is doing its job. Each image is meant to drive home that feeling of wild natural force.
- In a sense these lines are like a symphony – a rush of feeling and sound and excitement that's meant to pick you up and carry you along.

Lines 25-28

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

- Suddenly things calm down a little.
- Our favorite river reaches the flat plain of the valley where Xanadu is located, and it begins to "meander with a mazy motion" (line 25).
- So, now we've gotten the whole story of the river, from the perspective of someone in Xanadu.
- The first glimpse is of the river rushing down a deep canyon cut into a wooded hillside. The water is moving fast and furious, almost like a waterfall, but not quite so steep. It bounces off rocks and creates a lot of big ruckus.
- The river then flattens out and turns into a proper river, flowing gently through Xanadu for five miles until it reaches a bunch of caves or "caverns."
- Nobody knows how deep these caverns are. They are so huge you couldn't possibly measure them. But we do know that they seem to contain an underground ocean, into which the river flows.

  See all those "m" sounds? We call that repetition of the first sound in a word "alliteration."

- Coleridge has gotten us all worked up, and now, to show us he can, he slows it all down.
- One minute the river's making a "fast thick pant," then it's lazy and murmuring in the woods and dales.
- You know how some pop songs start out quiet, build up until they are fast and loud and then quiet down again?
- That's what's happening here. The speaker took us up to peak, and now he's taking us down again, circling back to the quiet, spooky images that started the poem.
- To bring this idea home, the speaker repeats the phrase "caverns measureless to man" that we first heard in line 4. Remember that "sunless sea" in line 5? It's back too, this time as a "lifeless ocean" (line 28).
- Different words, same gloomy idea.

Lines 29-30

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

- Coleridge could have ended the poem there, with that "lifeless ocean."
- In that case, it would have been almost perfectly symmetrical.
- But what fun would that be? This is supposed to an intense vision, after all.
- Plus, what about Kubla, our title character? It almost seems like Coleridge has forgotten him.
- Well now he's back, in the last two lines of this section. As the poem's pace slows down, the "tumult" of the river becomes an echo of the intense rush we just felt.
- Like us, Kubla listens from a distance, and what does he hear? "Ancestral voices prophesying war" (line 30).

- This is Genghis Khan's grandson, after all, so he probably spent a lot of time thinking about war, even when he wasn't listening to rushing rivers.
- This new image takes us away from the river, and into the even wilder second half of the poem. Think this is all a little strange already? Just wait!

Line 31-34

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.

- Now we rise up and zoom out, looking across the "dome of pleasure" and the shadow it is casting on the ocean.
- Coleridge is starting to have fun here, taking all the elements he has introduced so far and scrambling them together.
- In just four lines we get the waves, the caves, the fountain, the dome. Everything is mixed up, including the different sounds of the river, which make a "mingled measure."
- All this mingling shows up in the rhyme and the meter of the poem too.
- These lines make a good example. Now, they do have an even rhyme scheme. Just look at the last words in each line: pleasure, waves, measure, caves – ABAB.
- But this is different from most of the rest of the poem, which uses all kinds of other rhyme schemes. Plus these four lines have a varying number of syllables.
- There really is a kind of music in this poem, but it is strange and irregular, basically, a "mingled measure."

- We'll be the first to admit that Coleridge seems to be taking himself pretty seriously here, but if you look around the edges, he's playing around a little bit too.

Lines 35-36

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

- These two quick lines bring up that same obsession with contrasts that we saw with the palace and the river.
- In the opening lines, the speaker never said anything about the caves being cold, or the dome being hot, but he goes out of his way to makes these points here.
- Actually there's a whole world of contrasts between the dome and the caverns: Natural vs. man-made, above ground and below ground, symmetrical and irregular, sunny and frozen.
- This is what gives the poem a lot of its energy: opposites clashing together and then making a weird kind of harmony.

Lines 37-41

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.

- Now the poem takes a major turn.
- Without any warning, the speaker changes the subject. He starts to describe another vision that he once had.
- In this vision he sees a girl. He tells us three things about her, in three lines: 1) She was Abyssinian (that's an old way of saying Ethiopian). 2) She was playing a dulcimer (an instrument with strings that you pluck or hit with a mallet). 3) She was singing about a place called Mt. Abora (a name that Coleridge made up).

- That's a pretty clear description in some ways, but what are we supposed to take away from it? Why does this combination of images matter? Why does it show up here?
- One way to look at these lines would be to dig around and see if there's a kind of code here.
- For example, where and what is Mt. Abora?
- Some people think the speaker is referring to a real place in Ethiopia, some think it's a biblical reference, and others tie it to a place that Milton mentions in Paradise Lost.
- You could ask the same questions about the other parts of this vision.
- Why is she from Ethiopia, what does the dulcimer symbolize?
- We think this question is important, but we also think that this part of the poem is also meant to be personal and mysterious.
- Coleridge could definitely have been more explicit if he wanted to.
- In one sense, though, all dreams and visions are private, and they can't be completely explained. That sense of mystery is part of what makes this poem beautiful.

Lines 42-48

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,

- Now the speaker looks back on the powerful music he heard in that vision.
- He can describe it to us, but he can't really get back to experiencing that intense feeling. And yet he's longing for that experience, for the sense of wonder that disappeared with that vision.

- The speaker wants to "revive" the music, to bring it back to life. If he could tap into the power of that vision, he imagines that it would inspire him, and allow him to create amazing things himself.
- The music of the Abyssinian maid would fill him, and he could make his own "music loud and long" (line 45). This music would let him bring back the spirit of Xanadu, to "build that dome in air" (line 46).
- This all sounds pretty strange at first. When you think about it, though, this is a great description of what artists do.
- Composers, poets, musicians all build things in the air. They use words or sounds to make their visions come to life.
- Even though the speaker says he wishes he could do relive the musical experience, that's actually what Coleridge is doing in this poem.
- He uses his words to transport us, like he says on line 48: 'And all who heard should see them there."

Line 49-54

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

- But this vision isn't just about a dome. When the speaker calls up Xanadu, he also calls up a strange spirit, and this other creature is a lot scarier than the palace, the caverns, or the ocean.
- You know in those horror movies when a bunch of kids say a magic word three times and call up an evil creature? That's pretty much the idea here.
- The speaker imagines that his vision has become so real that it can actually scare people, and make them cry out "Beware, Beware!" (line 49).

- He describes a terrifying figure, complete with "flashing eyes" and "floating hair" (line 50).
- This creature is so scary that you have to perform rituals to protect yourself from a demon: "Weave a circle round him thrice" (line 51).
- Who is this weird spirit?
- The speaker doesn't say, exactly. He might be talking about himself.
- Maybe his song and his vision have become so powerful that he has turned into a kind of god, eating "honey-dew" and drinking "the milk of Paradise" (line 54).
- Maybe these images are reference the opium Coleridge took, which made this vision possible in the first place.
- Or maybe this is a final vision of Kubla Khan, turned into some kind of strange new creature.
- What really sticks with us though, is that super-intense image, made even more exciting by its mysterious description.

Coleridge's Poems Summary and Analysis of "Kubla Khan" (1798)

Summary

The unnamed speaker of the poem tells of how a man named Kubla Khantraveled to the land of Xanadu. In Xanadu, Kubla found a fascinating pleasure-dome that was “a miracle of rare device” because the dome was made of caves of ice and located in a sunny area. The speaker describes the contrasting composition of Xanadu. While there are gardens blossoming with incense-bearing trees and “sunny spots of greenery,” across the “deep romantic chasm” in Xanadu there are “caverns measureless to man” and a fountain from which “huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail.” Amid this hostile atmosphere of Nature, Kubla also hears “ancestral voices prophesying war.” However, Kubla finds relief from this tumultuous

atmosphere through his discovery of the miraculous sunny pleasure-dome made of ice.

In the last stanza of the poem, the narrator longs to revive a song about Mount Abora that he once heard a woman play on a dulcimer. The speaker believes that the song would transport him to a dream world in which he could “build that dome in air” and in which he can drink “the milk of Paradise.”

What is the theme of "Kubla Khan"?

The interaction between man and nature is a major theme for Coleridge. It's painted all over "Kubla Khan," as we go from the dome to the river, and then from the gardens to the sea. Sometimes he's focused on human characters, sometimes on natural forces. In fact, it's difficult to get away from this theme in this poem.

What does symbolize in **"Kubla Khan"?**

Kubla Khan is in Xanadu for the duration of the poem. The mind of Kubla Khan is represented by “a stately pleasure-dome.” In his mind roams “the sacred river” called “Alph” which represents Kubla Khan's search for inner peace. The river “ran/ Through caverns measureless to man/ Down to a sunless sea.”

UNIT-IV

Ode to the West Wind

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth

Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Poet, Playwright, Author (1792–1822)

Born in Broadbridge Heath, England, on August 4, 1792, Percy Bysshe Shelley is one of the epic poets of the 19th century, and is best known for his classic anthology verse works such as Ode to the West Wind and The Masque of Anarchy. He is also well known for his long-form poetry, including Queen Mab and Alastor. He went on many adventures with his second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of Frankenstein. He drowned in a sudden storm while sailing in Italy in 1822.

Ode to the West Wind

The speaker of the poem appeals to the West Wind to infuse him with a new spirit and a new power to spread his ideas. In order to invoke the West Wind, he lists a series of things the wind has done that illustrate its power: driving away the autumn leaves, placing seeds in the earth, bringing thunderstorms and the cyclical "death" of the natural world, and stirring up the seas and oceans.

The speaker wishes that the wind could affect him the way it does leaves and clouds and waves. Because it can’t, he asks the wind to play him like an

instrument, bringing out his sadness in its own musical lament. Maybe the wind can even help him to send his ideas all over the world; even if they're not powerful in their own right, his ideas might inspire others. The sad music that the wind will play on him will become a prophecy. The West Wind of autumn brings on a cold, barren period of winter, but isn't winter always followed by a spring?

Lines 1-5

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes:

- The speaker appeals to the West Wind four times in this first canto, or section, of the poem. (We don't find out what he's actually asking the wind to do for him until the end of the canto.)
- Lines 1-5 are the first appeal, in which the speaker describes the West Wind as the breath of Autumn.
- Like a magician banishing ghosts or evil spirits, the West Wind sweeps away the dead leaves. These dead leaves are multicolored, but not beautiful in the way we usually think of autumn leaves – their colors are weird and ominous and seem almost diseased (like "pestilence-stricken multitudes").

Lines 5-8

O Thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until

- The speaker appeals to the West Wind a second time.
- This time, the West Wind is described as carrying seeds to their grave-like places in the ground, where they'll stay until the spring wind comes and revives them. The wind burying seeds in the ground is like a charioteer driving corpses to their graves.

Lines 8-12

Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

- Once the West Wind has carried the seeds into the ground, they lie there all winter, and then are woken by the spring wind.
- Shelley thinks of the spring wind as blue (or, to be specific, "azure").
- The spring wind seems to be the cause of all the regeneration and flowering that takes place in that season. It blows a "clarion" (a kind of trumpet) and causes all the seeds to bloom. It fills both "plain and hill" with "living hues and odours." It also opens buds into flowers the way a shepherd drives sheep.

Lines 13-14

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, O hear!

- The speaker appeals to the West Wind twice more, describing it as a "Wild Spirit" that's everywhere at once.
- The West Wind is both "Destroyer and Preserver"; it brings the death of winter, but also makes possible the regeneration of spring.

- Now we find out (sort of) what the speaker wants the wind to do: "hear, oh, hear!" For the moment, that's all he's asking – just to be listened to. By the wind.

Lines 15-18

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like Earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread

- The speaker continues to describe the West Wind.
- This time, he describes the wind as having clouds spread through it the way dead leaves float in a stream. Leaves fall from the branches of trees, and these clouds fall from the "branches" of the sky and the sea, which work together like "angels of rain and lightning" to create clouds and weather systems.
- Yep, there's a storm coming!

Lines 18-23

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm.

- The speaker creates a complex simile describing the storm that the West Wind is bringing. The "locks of the approaching storm" – the thunderclouds, that is – are spread through the airy "blue surface" of

the West Wind in the same way that the wild locks of hair on a Mænad wave around in the air. Got that?

- Let's put it in SAT analogy form: thunderclouds are to the West Wind as a Mænad's locks of hair are to the air.
- A Mænad is one of the wild, savage women who hang out with the god Dionysus in Greek mythology. The point here about Mænads is that, being wild and crazy, they don't brush their hair much.
- Oh, and the poet reminds us that these Mænad-hair-like clouds go vertically all the way through the sky, from the horizon to the center.

Lines 23-28

Thou Dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain and fire and hail will burst: O hear!

- The speaker develops a morbid metaphor to describe the power of the West Wind. The wind is described as a "dirge," or funeral song, to mark the death of the old year. The night that's falling as the storm comes is going to be like a dark-domed tomb constructed of thunderclouds, lightning, and rain.
- The poet ends by asking the West Wind once again to "hear" him, but we don't know yet what exactly he wants it to listen to.

Lines 29-32

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his chrystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,

- The speaker tells us more about the West Wind's wacky exploits: the Mediterranean Sea has lain calm and still during the summer, almost as though on vacation "beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay," a holiday spot for the ancient Romans. But the West Wind has woken the Mediterranean, presumably by stirring him up and making the sea choppy and storm-tossed.
- The Mediterranean is personified here as male.

Lines 33-36

And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!

- During his summertime drowsiness, the Mediterranean has seen in his dreams the "old palaces and towers" along Baiæ's bay, places that are now overgrown with plants so that they have become heartbreakingly picturesque.

Lines 36-38

Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below

- The speaker claims that the "level" Atlantic Ocean breaks itself into "chasms" for the West Wind.
- This is a poetic way of saying the wind disturbs the water, making waves, but it also suggests that the ocean is subservient to the West Wind's amazing powers.

Lines 38-42

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

- In the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, the different kinds of marine plants hear the West Wind high above and "suddenly grow gray with fear" and thrash around, harming themselves in the process.
- Once again, the speaker ends all these descriptions of the West Wind by asking it to "hear" him.

Lines 43-47

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O Uncontrollable!

- The speaker begins to describe his own desires more clearly. He wishes he were a "dead leaf" or a "swift cloud" that the West Wind could carry, or a wave that would feel its "power" and "strength."
- He imagines this would make him almost as free as the "uncontrollable" West Wind itself.

Lines 47-51

If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,

As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision;

- The speaker is willing to compromise: even if he can't be a leaf or a cloud, he wishes he could at least have the same relationship to the wind that he had when he was young, when the two were "comrade[s]."
- When he was young, the speaker felt like it was possible for him to be faster and more powerful than the West Wind.

Lines 51-53

I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

- The speaker claims that, if he could have been a leaf or cloud on the West Wind, or felt young and powerful again, he wouldn't be appealing to the West Wind now for its help.
- He begs the wind to treat him the way it does natural objects like waves, leaves and clouds.

Lines 54-56

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

- The speaker exclaims, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"
- He explains that the passage of time has weighed him down and bowed (but not yet broken) his spirit, which started out "tameless, and swift, and proud," just like the West Wind itself.

Lines 57-58

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!

- Finally, the speaker asks the West Wind for something: he wants the wind to turn him into its lyre.
- This image is related to the æolian harp, a common metaphor in Romantic poetry. The æolian harp is sort of like a stringed version of a wind chime; it's an instrument that you only have to put out in the breeze and nature will play its own tunes.
- Here Shelley's speaker describes himself as the harp, or "lyre," that the wind will play. He'll be the instrument, and the West Wind will play its own music on him, just as it does in the branches of trees in the forest. That way, it won't matter that he's metaphorically losing his leaves.

Lines 59-61

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness.

- The speaker and the trees of the forest are both decaying – the trees are losing their leaves, and he's been bowed down by life.
- But that doesn't matter; if the wind plays both of them as instruments, they'll make sweet, melancholy, autumn-ish music.

Lines 61-62

Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

- Now the speaker changes tactics; instead of asking the wind to play him like an instrument, he asks the wind to become him. He wants the wind's "fierce" spirit to unite with him entirely, or maybe even replace his own spirit.

Lines 63-64

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Likewither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth!

- The speaker compares his thoughts to the dead leaves; perhaps the West Wind can drive his thoughts all over the world in the same way it moves the leaves, and they'll become like a rich compost or mulch from which new growth can come in the spring. That way, even if his thoughts are garbage, at least that garbage can fertilize something better.

Lines 65-67

And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

- The speaker comes up with another metaphor to describe what he wants the wind to do to his thoughts, and this one isn't about fertilizer. He describes his own words – perhaps the words of this very poem – as sparks and ashes that the wind will blow out into the world.
- The speaker himself is the "unextinguished hearth" from which the sparks fly; he's a fire that hasn't gone out yet, but is definitely waning.

Lines 68-69

Be through my lips to unawakened Earth

The trumpet of a prophecy!

The speaker returns to the metaphor of the wind playing him as an instrument, but this time he describes his mouth as a trumpet through which the wind will blow its own prophecy.

Lines 69-70

O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

- The speaker ends by asking the wind a question that seems very simple: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"
- The symbolic weight that he's attached to the seasons, however, makes us realize that this is more than a question about the wheel of the year. He's asking whether or not the death and decay that come at the end of something always mean that a rebirth is around the corner.
- He's hoping that's true, because he can feel himself decaying.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND THEME OF MAN AND THE NATURAL WORLD

In "Ode to the West Wind," Nature is grander and more powerful than man can hope to be. The natural world is especially powerful because it contains elements like the West Wind and the Spring Wind, which can travel invisibly across the globe, affecting every cloud, leaf, and wave as they go. Man may be able to increase his status by allowing Nature to channel itself through him.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND THEME OF TRANSFORMATION

As the speaker of "Ode to the West Wind" feels himself waning and decaying, he begs the wind to use him as an instrument, inhabit him, distribute his ideas, or prophesy through his mouth. He hopes to transform himself by uniting his own spirit with the larger "Spirit" of the West Wind and of Nature itself.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND THEME OF MORTALITY

The West Wind in Shelley's ode is depicted as an autumnal wind, preparing the world for winter. As a result, the poem is filled with images of death and decay, reminders of both natural and human mortality. The speaker hopes

that the death of one world will be inevitably followed by a new rebirth and a new spring, but the poem leaves this rebirth uncertain.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

By John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,

And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

John Keats

John Keats was an English Romantic poet. He was one of the main figures of the second generation of Romantic poets, along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, despite his works having been in publication for only four years before his death from tuberculosis at the age of 25.

Born: October 31, 1795, Moorgate, City of London, United Kingdom

Died: February 23, 1821, Rome, Italy

Cause of death: Tuberculosis

Poems: To Autumn, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode to a Nightingale

The poem begins as the speaker starts to feel disoriented from listening to the song of the nightingale, as if he had just drunken something really, really strong. He feels bittersweet happiness at the thought of the nightingale's carefree life.

The speaker wishes he had a special wine distilled directly from the earth. He wants to drink such a wine and fade into the forest with the nightingale. He wants to escape the worries and concerns of life, age, and time.

He uses poetry to join the nightingale's nighttime world, deep in the dark forest where hardly any moonlight can reach. He can't see any of the flowers or plants around him, but he can smell them. He thinks it wouldn't be so bad to die at night in the forest, with no one around except the nightingale singing.

But the nightingale can't die. The nightingale must be immortal, because so many different kinds of generations of people have heard its song throughout history, everyone from clowns and emperors to Biblical characters to people in fantasy stories.

The speaker's vision is interrupted when the nightingale flies away and leaves him alone. He feels abandoned and disappointed that his imagination is not strong enough to create its own reality. He is left confused and bewildered, not knowing the difference between reality and dreams.

Lines 1-2

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

- The speaker says that his heart hurts as if he has just drunken poison.
- "Hemlock" is the poison that the Greek philosopher Socrates took when he was put to death for corrupting the youth.
- The speaker feels woozy and numb, like when the dentist puts you on Novocain. Imagine him swaying back and forth, kind of drunk and out of it.
- The "ache" in his heart almost sounds pleasurable, the way he describes it. Like when you hear a sad song you really love that just pierces your heart, and you're like, "This makes me so sad!" but if anyone tried to turn it off you'd throttle them. Like that.

Lines 3-4

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

- OK, so maybe "poison" is a bit exaggerated. He's not dying, after all. He tries another approach to explain how he feels.
- He feels as though he has drank some powerful drug or painkiller ("opiate") that causes him to "sink" into a kind of oblivion.
- In Greek mythology, "Lethe" was a river in Hades (the Underworld) that made people forget all their memories if they drank from it.
- There's really no way to dance around it: the speaker is comparing his feeling to being totally strung out on drugs.
- "Opium" is a powerful drug made from the poppy flower, and it was all the rage among certain adventurous types in the 19th century. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, was an opium addict, as was the writer Thomas de Quincy, who wrote an essay titled, "Confessions of an Opium Eater." This was before people discovered just how toxic opium is for the body.

Lines 5-6

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—

Now we know that the speaker must be addressing the nightingale of the title.

- He wants to clarify that the pain he feels is not because he is jealous of the bird's happiness. Instead, he is excessively happy for the bird's happiness. He's like that friend who bursts into tears when you share really good news and cries, "I'm just . . . so . . . happy . . . for you!" — but you're not sure if they are really happy for you or just sad for themselves.

Lines 7-10

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

- And why is the nightingale so happy? Because it gets to sit in the trees all day and sing about summertime. It's to the trees what Jimmy Buffet is to the beach (hey-ya!).
- The nightingale is not a large bird, and it can fly, which seems like enough grounds to call it "light-winged" (which is pronounced with three syllables, by the way).
- And in Greek mythology, a "dryad" is a nymph (female spirit) that lives in the trees.
- The bird makes whatever space or "plot" it inhabits "melodious," and this particular plot seems to have beech trees, giving it a "beechen green" color.

- The nightingale doesn't hold back. It sings with a "full throat," like an opera singer in a solo. We imagine that this poem takes place in the peak of summer.

Lines 11-12

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,

- The speaker longs for a drink of wine or some other spirit that has been kept cool deep in the earth. "Vintage" wine is made from grapes from the same harvest, and people often refer to a particular year at a winery as a "vintage."
- We have no explanation at this point for his sudden desire to get his drink on. He wants wine to just start bubbling up out of the ground, as if you could stick a tap right into the soil and let the good times flow.
- Good wine needs to be kept cool, which is why people often store it in their cellars. According to Keats, the earth is like a giant wine cellar.

Lines 13-14

Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!

- Well, that makes sense. If you drink wine out of the earth, it's no surprise that it might taste like flowers ("Flora") and plants ("country green").
- People sometimes jokingly say they want to "squeeze every last drop" out of the day, but the speaker seems to mean it literally.
- Not only does the earth's wine taste like flowers, but it also tastes like dancing, song, and happiness ("sunburnt mirth"). Specifically, he is thinking of "Provencal," a region in the south of France known for its

wine, sun, and a kind of poetic song known as "Troubadour poetry." Many Troubadours wrote poems addressed to an unattainable lover.

Lines 15-16

O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

- The speaker wants to stick the south of France, or just the South in general, into a bottle ("beaker") and guzzle the whole thing down! He wants to distill the earth down to its powerful, intoxicating essence.
- It's like when you go to the beach and wish you could just bottle the breezy ocean air to take back with you to school or the office.
- "Hippocrene" is a reference that there is no reason you should know – Keats is showing off his knowledge of Greek mythology again.
- Hippocrene is the "fountain of the Muses," a group of eight women (again, in Greek mythology) who inspire struggling poets. The fountain bubbles up out of the earth where Pegasus, the famous flying horse, is supposed to have dug his hoof into the ground.
- He wants to drink something that will make him a great poet…and that'll get him drunk. The liquid from the Hippocrene is "blushful" because it is reddish, the color of both wine and a blush.

Lines 17-18

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;

- In delicious detail, the speaker describes the appearance of the wine. It has little bubbles at that burst, or "wink," at the brim of the beaker, like little eyes.
- It also stains your mouth purple when you drink it, like any strong red wine will do.

Lines 19-20

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

- What does all this talk about wine, inspiration, and drunkenness have to do with the nightingale? What happened to that old bird, anyhow?
- The speaker sums up his intentions in these final two lines of the stanza.
- He wants to get drunk on this magical wine so that he can leave the "world" without anyone noticing and just "fade" into the dark forest with the nightingale.
- But isn't the forest part of the "world"? Apparently not. By "world" he might mean the world of human society, work, responsibility, and all that. The nightingale lives apart from this world.
- Putting aside all this business about Provencal and Hippocrene, the speaker wants to drink for the same reason many people drink: to forget his problems for a while and to have a more carefree state of mind.

Lines 21-22

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,

- If this were a movie, now would be the part when the screen gets all blurry, a harp starts playing, and the dream sequence begins.
- The speaker dreams of "fading" out of the world, of just disappearing in a very quiet way.
- He wants to forget about those things that the nightingale has never had to worry about. Again, we don't know much about which things he means specifically, but we assume they must have to do with the stresses and cares of living in human society.
- The bird is free of such cares.

Lines 23-24

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

- Wait, this is supposed to be a dream sequence: why is he talking about these depressing things? It seems just he just can't leave the world behind.
- The world is full of tired and "weary" people, sickness ("fever"), and massive stress ("fret"). He reduces all of society down to one depressingly exaggerated image: people sitting around and listen to each other "groan" and complain.
- That's a pretty bleak view of the world, but it just goes to show how much of an effect the nightingale has had on him. Compared to the nightingale's carefree song, our voices sound like groans.

Lines 25-26

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

- He decides to take the whole depressing images thing to a new level, describing the world as a place where the uncontrollable movements of illness shake the "last gray hairs" on a dying man's head. Palsy is a disease the causes sudden involuntary movements, and so this gray-hair person is no long capable of controlling his own body.
- He's also almost bald.
- In this section, Keats confronts one of his favorite enemies: time. After you read this poem, check out the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in which he tries magically to stop time.
- Time is the speaker's enemy because it causes young and beautiful people to turn old, "pale," thin as a ghost, and, eventually, dead as a doornail.
- Put simply, time = death, death = bad, so time = bad.

Lines 27-28

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,

- The world is a place where any kind of thinking leads to depressing thoughts and worries. There are no thoughts that can ultimately bring joy or peace: thinking itself is the problem.
- These sad and "despairing" thoughts make your eyelid like lead weights. You have trouble just staying awake and conscious during the day. The world totally wears people down and tires them out.

Lines 29-30

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

- The speaker continues to explain why the world of human time is such a bad place. Neither Beauty nor Love can survive there for long.
- Beauty loses her glowing ("lustrous") eyes, probably when they become "leaden" from depressed thoughts. Or maybe just from old age.
- And new Love cannot fawn ("pine") over Beauty's eyes once they have lost their luster. Love is fickle like that, and, as anyone who has ever been through junior high school knows, it often doesn't last "beyond to-morrow."

Lines 31-32

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

- All this thinking about how depressing the world is makes the speaker think, "Get me outta here!" He needs to hatch an escape plan.

- He wants fly away to join the nightingale in its refuge from the world. But he knows that the booze isn't going to take him. He can't rely on Bacchus, the Greek god of wine, or any of Bacchus's buddies ("pards"), which is what he wanted earlier in the poem.

Lines 33-34

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

- Instead of wine, he's going to fly on the wings of his own poetry. Poetry's wings are invisible, or "viewless."
- He's hopeful that poetry will take him to the nightingale's world even though his brain is not so helpful in making the trip. His brain confuses him and slows him down.

Lines 35-36

Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

- And, the, all of a sudden, he's with the nightingale. How did that happen? Count us slightly suspicious of how he can be "already with" the bird, even though he just complained about how his brain was such a big roadblock.
- One possibility is that he joins the nightingale in his dreams, because the imagery in this section is associated with darkness and night.
- He is in the kingdom of the night, which is soft and "tender," and the moon is visible in the sky. The imagery is more fanciful and imaginative here.
- The phrase "tender is the night" was made famous by the American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald, who used it as the title of one of his novels. (To find out more about what it's about, check out our Shmoop guide to Tender is the Night.)

Lines 37-40

Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

- The moon is surrounded by her attendants ("fays"), the stars. Despite all these sources of light, there is no light in the nightingale's world beyond what filters down through the trees.
- What he is really describing in this complicated-sounding line is the fact that the nightingale lives in the forest, where trees block the light. "Verdurous glooms," just means the darkness that is caused by plants getting in the way of the moon.
- Still, the nightingale's home sounds like a magical place, something out of a fairy tale.

Lines 41-42

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

- The speaker remains in the nightingale's nighttime world. (Get it? The night-ingale's home is the night? Keats, you're so clever!)
- Without light, the speaker can't see the flowers on the forest floor or the plants that produce that pleasant smell ("soft incense") in the trees. (We don't know if he's talking about the trees themselves or something that grows on them...)

Lines 43-46

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

- Marco! Polo! The speaker is still groping around in the dark, but he's having fun.
- Because he can't see, he has to guess what "sweet" flowers and plants he smells, which depends on what month it is. It's a delicious guessing game.
- The darkness is "embalmed," where "balm" is a sweet-smelling substance like a perfume.
- He's guessing all kinds of different plants: "Grass!' "Fruit tree!" "Wait, wait, I know this one: white hawthorn! No, it's eglantine!"
- Or maybe he smells all of them at once, like a bouquet.

Lines 47-50

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

- The speaker names more plants that he smells in the darkness. He also begins listing things that he can hear. This section all relates to the experience of being alone in a dark – but not a frightening – forest.
- He sees violets, a summer flower, and the musk rose, a flower that blooms in May. The dew of the musk rose is intoxicating, like the wine he spoke of earlier.
- He hears the sound of flies on a summer evening.
- In short, he seems to experience both spring and summer at the same time, which tells us that we have left the world of strict reality. As Dorothy might say, we're not in Kansas anymore.

Lines 51-52

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,

- The stanzas in this poem actually connect seamlessly. At the end of stanza 5, the speaker moved from smells to sounds. Now he says that he is listening in the darkness.
- The experience of being alone in the dark seems related to the experience of death, and he thinks maybe death wouldn't be so bad. "This is easy," he thinks. "I could get used to this."
- Death would be another way to free himself of all his worldly cares. Maybe he's confusing death for sitting on a beach in Barbados….

Lines 53-54

Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;

- This is turning into a love story between the speaker and death. The speaker whispers sweet nothings to death. And by whisper we mean, "writes rhyming poetry about." Yeah.
- It's true: Keats was obsessed with the idea of death, and he often wrote about it.
- Line 54 is mysterious: we think it means either that he wants death to take the air from his lungs, or that the air takes his breath along with his verses.

Lines 55-56

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,

- He's really quite taken with this death idea. While in the world of the nightingale, he thinks it would be "rich to die." Many people are afraid that death will be empty, but richness is associated with an abundance of good things, which is almost the opposite of emptiness.
- He'd like to go out quietly, in the middle of the night. He'd just stop existing: "cease."

- This part of the poem is kind of creepy, because Keats did die very young.

Lines 57-58

While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!

- He wants to die at midnight, while listening to the nightingale singing.
- We were wondering what happened to the nightingale. He seems to forget about the nightingale at the beginning of the stanzas and then return to it at the end, as if he suddenly remembered: "Oh, right: this is supposed to be a poem about a bird!"
- The nightingale is kind of like a poet, sending its voice into the air just as Keats sends his rhyme into the air. The bird's music expresses its "soul." Birds have souls? This one does.
- The bird is completely lost in the moment of pure joy and "ecstasy."

Lines 59-60

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

- He imagines what would happen after the moment of his death. Basically, the bird would keep singing as if nothing had happened.
- The speaker would still have "ears," of course: or at least. his corpse would. But the ears would be useless ("vain") because there is no brain to process the sounds.
- The bird would be then singing a "high requiem," a kind of church service with music sung for a dead person. Lots of classical musicians have composed amazing requiems, like Mozart, but we'd bet the nightingale probably doesn't know it is singing one.

- And neither would the speaker, of course. By that point, he'd just be an inanimate object, like a piece of grassy soil or "sod."

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;

- He thinks that the nightingale must be immortal: it can't die. (Someone needs to buy him a book on biology.)
- Being immortal, the nightingale is not followed by future generations, which are metaphorically "hungry" in that they take the place of their parents. This is a very pessimistic view of the cycle of life. Basically, the younger folks are hunting down their own parents to run them off the planet.

Lines 63-64

The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:

- Oh, OK, so he doesn't necessarily mean that each nightingale is immortal. He means that the nightingale's voice is immortal, because all nightingales produce the same beautiful, haunting sound.
- His talk of generations leads him to think of human history.
- Emperors and clowns in the old days listened to the same voice of the nightingale that he hears now How old? The reference to emperors makes us think of Ancient Rome. Keats was an Italian buff.

Lines 65-67

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

- The speaker moves slightly further back through history, from Imperial Rome (we think) to the Old Testament of the Bible (also known as the Hebrew Bible).
- The Book of Ruth is one of the lesser-known books in the Hebrew Bible. The story goes that Ruth married a guy and moved to a new country. Then her husband died, and Ruth's mother-in-law told her to return home and get married again. But Ruth was like, "I'm totally loyal to you and can't leave you." She supports her mother-in-law by working in the fields of this (to her) completely strange and random place. Eventually she finds a new husband. The end.
- Keats imagines that Ruth heard the nightingale's song while she was working in the fields in this foreign or "alien" place, and it caused her to start weeping. We wish we had more info on why exactly he chose this story: it's a curious reference!

Lines 68-70

The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

- He notes another time that the nightingale's song might have been heard. But now he has left regular human history all together in favor of fantasy.
- A "casement" is either a normal case or a window that opens on a hinge. The speaker thinks the nightingale's song has "charmed" a casement on a ship, and the casement opens. Somehow "magic" is involved, but we think Keats is just using words that conjure up the images of fantasy.
- The nightingale flies out the window and over the open ocean. There is an air of danger: this is no regular ocean. It is the ocean surrounding a fantasy world or "faery land."

- Keats might be thinking of the stories of knights, fairies, and monsters from Edmund Spenser's famous Renaissance poem, The Faerie Queene.
- After it flies out the window, the nightingale is alone and abandoned – "forlorn" – in this strange land.

Lines 71-72

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toil me back from thee to my sole self!

- Oh, no! Why did he have to use the word "forlorn?" It reminds the speaker of how he has also been abandoned – by the nightingale itself.
- All of a sudden, he gets sucked back into the normal world after several pleasant stanzas of exploring the nightingale's realm.
- For him, the word "forlorn" is like, when you are having a really great dream and then all of a sudden you hear your alarm clock and remember that you have to wake up and go to class. It's a big disappointment.
- The speaker is pulled back into his own mind, his "sole self."

Lines 73-74

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.

- He admits that his attempts to use his imagination ("fancy") to "cheat" his way into the nightingale's world have not been as effective as he would have liked. He bids good-bye to the bird and then lashes out at his imagination for being a "deceiving elf," like the character Puck from Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.
- Although "fancy" is famed for being able to create new worlds, the speaker has not been successful at permanently escaping the everyday world.

Lines 75-78

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:

- Now it becomes clear that the nightingale is flying away.
- The speaker bids goodbye twice more to the nightingale using the French word, "adieu," which means, "good-bye for a long time."
- The bird's sad or "plaintive" song grows harder to hear, as the bird flies from the nearby meadows, across a stream, up a hill, and into the next valley. Now he can't hear it at all.

Lines 79-80

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

- Now that the bird is left, the speaker's not sure if he ever entered its world at all. He thinks that maybe the experience was just a "waking dream" and not really true.
- But has the speaker returned to the "real" world? Maybe the nightingale's world was reality, and the "real" world is just a dream.
- Everything is topsy-turvy, and he doesn't know what is true from what is fancy. He wonders if he is a awake or sleeping.

***Ode to a Nightingale*: Imagery, symbolism and themes**

Imagery and symbolism in ***Ode to a Nightingale***

Communication

The nightingale (and particularly its song) is the poem's central image and symbol. The music it produces becomes a symbol of pure beauty. It is not restricted by any translatable 'meaning' as words are. It is direct communication from the world of nature to that of human beings, the response of each hearer being unique and equally valid.

The bird's song is therefore unlike the products of the human imagination: art, poetry, music and sculpture need to be interpreted and may need education to be appreciated. The bird's song derives its power and directness from the fact that it is pure, non-representational and needs no 'interpretation' to be understood and to inspire.

Since the nightingale sings chiefly at night, it may appear invisible or disembodied. In this way it can be seen as transcending the transitory human world, thus making it appear 'immortal'.

From ancient times the nightingale has been symbolic of love. In Greek mythology Philomel ('lover of song') was a beautiful girl who, after she had been raped and had her tongue cut out by her attacker, was turned into a nightingale by the gods.

Death

The poem also contains images associated with death, such as 'hemlock', 'Lethe', 'embalmed', 'darkness', 'requiem', tolling bell, 'plaintive anthem' etc. When associated with 'palsy', 'fret' and 'despairs', death is a negative presence that quenches the human spirit. But death also has positive associations: it is 'easeful', a 'rich' experience which releases the poet into a pain-free eternity.

All living things are, of course, subject to death. This is why the nightingale can only be considered 'immortal' as a symbol. Individual birds die, but the species continues. However, a 'symbol' lacks the warmth of an actual living creature – hence Keats' ambivalence towards it.

THEMES IN ***ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE***

The power of the imagination

This is not a poem about how a bird's joyful singing inspires and revitalises the poet. Instead what follows is a troubled meditation on the power of human imagination to encounter joy within the world and for it to transform the soul (what Keats refers to elsewhere as part of the 'vale of soul-making').

There is a fundamental paradox in the poem. On the one hand the nightingale's song is seen as offering relief from the day-to-day pains of living – 'the weariness, the fever and the fret'; on the other hand the 'immortality' of the bird and the eternal nature of its song makes Keats painfully aware of human transience and the fragility of his own life.

Escape

The poet imagines escaping from humanity's tragic existence, 'Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies', first through an ecstasy of intoxication, drinking 'a beaker full of the warm South', and then 'on the viewless wings of Poesy', that is, through imagination itself. In the central section of the poem, the mind's attempt both to transcend life and remain aware of itself leads to its becoming lost. Keats describes an 'embalmed darkness' of transitory sensations under the canopy of the tree surrounding him that suggest not escape but rather death.

The snare of immortality

These thoughts of mortality, however, are in sharp contrast to what the nightingale itself symbolises: immortality. In 'ancient days' it belonged to a world of enchantment. It is the same song that:

> oft-times hath
>
> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
>
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.'

In other words, its enticement is dangerous. The word 'forlorn' is a turning-point for the poet. Keats uses the word in two main senses: 'long ago' and 'sad'. The beauty of an imagined 'long ago' seems to evaporate. As so often in Keats the contemplation of beauty leads to a painful awareness that perfection cannot last. The human imagination allows us to transcend the mind's transitory sensations.

Can beauty be transfixed?

The artist can create beauty and is able to awaken in his audience a desire to experience beauty as something eternal. However, this is just an illusion: human life is subject to time and change. Keats knows that art has its limitations. If it redeems experience at all, it is not because it is eternal and unchanging but rather because it offers beauty of a more rational kind: that is, it offers us a more profound comprehension of ourselves rather than allowing us to escape from the constraints of daily life.

UNIT-V

Ulysses

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades

For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Ulysses blank-verse poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, written in 1833 and published in the two-volume collection *Poems* (1842). In a stirring dramatic monologue, the aged title character outlines his plans to abandon his dreary kingdom of Ithaca to reclaim lost glory in a final adventure on the seas. It was one of several poems that Tennyson composed in response to the death of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam.

Restless and bored with Ithaca, Ulysses turns his throne over to his prudent son Telemachus and rallies his men with inspiring words of heroism. The ironic distance of the narrative voice intensifies the ambiguity as to whether Ulysses is proving his noble courage or shirking his responsibilities in Ithaca for a journey that may prove to be futile, fatal, or both. Tennyson based his two-sided view of Ulysses on Book XI of Homer's *Odyssey* and Canto XXVI of Dante's *Inferno*.

Tennyson's Poems Summary and Analysis of "Ulysses"

Ulysses complains that he is "idle" as a king, home with his elderly wife, stuck passing enlightened laws for a "savage race" that sleeps and eats but does not know him. He does not want to cease his travels; he has made the most of his life, having suffered and experienced pleasure both with others and alone and both at sea and on the shore. He is a famous name; he has seen the world and has been honored everywhere. He also has enjoyed battling at Troy with his fellow warriors.

He is "a part of all that I have met," but this is not the end, for his experience is an archway to new experiences, with the horizon always beyond reach. It is boring to stop and wither away and be useless in his old age; simply breathing is not life. Multiple lives would be too little to get the most out of existence, and little of his one life remains, but at least he is alive and there is time for "something more." It would be a shame to do nothing for even three days; he does not want to store himself away. His "gray spirit" yearns to attain knowledge and follow it "like a sinking star, / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

In contrast, his son Telemachus, who will succeed him as king, seems content to stay put and simply rule the people. Ulysses loves him and knows that he will use his prudence to govern wisely, turning the “rugged” people “mild,” and he is “blameless” and “decent” in his “common duties.” He honors the family’s gods. Yet, Telemachus does not have his father’s energy; “He works his work, I mine.”

Ulysses looks at the port and the sea beyond, calling to him. He recalls “the thunder and the sunshine” of his mariners’ exciting travels together, their “free hearts” and free minds, and understands that he and they are old now. Yet, they still can do something noble and suited to their greatness, especially as they are men who once fought with gods.

Light fades, and the day wanes. Ulysses calls out that it is not too late to discover a “newer world.” They can leave this shore and sail beyond the sunset, exploring until he dies. Perhaps they even will reach the Happy Isles and meet Achilles. Although they are weak in age, much vigor remains; they still have “heroic hearts” which are “strong in will” and want to persevere, to explore and discover and never give up.

Lines 1-5

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

- The poem begins by telling us that a king gains nothing from just sitting around by the fire with his wife and making laws for people who don't even know him.
- The speaker at first seems at to be some kind of observer or impersonal figure who knows a lot about how to be a king, but in line 3 we learn that the king himself, Ulysses, is speaking.
- The phrase "it little profits" is another way of saying, "it is useless" or "it isn't beneficial."

- "Mete" means "to allot" or "measure out." Here it refers to the king's allotment of rewards and punishments to his subjects.
- "Unequal" doesn't mean that the rewards and punishments are unjust or unfair, but rather variable.
- "Match'd" doesn't refer to a tennis match or other sporting event; it means something like "paired" or "partnered with."
- Ulysses' subjects are presented to us as a large group of drones who do nothing but eat and sleep.

Lines 6-11

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vexed the dim sea:

- After his moralistic opening, Ulysses tells us more about why sitting around doling out rewards and punishments bores him.
- We learn that he is a restless spirit who doesn't want to take a break from roaming the ocean in search of adventure. He will not let life pass him by.
- The word "lees" originally referred to the sediment accumulated at the bottom of a bottle of wine; to "drink life to the lees" means to drink to the very last drop. Nowadays we might say something like "live life to the fullest."
- Ulysses tells us that he has had a lot of good times and a lot of bad times, sometimes with his best friends, and sometimes alone, both on dry land and while sailing through potentially destructive storms.
- "Scudding drifts" are pounding showers of rain that one might encounter at sea during a storm or while crab fishing off the coast of Alaska.

- The "Hyades" are a group of stars in the constellation Taurus often associated with rain; their rising in the sky generally coincides with the rainy season. Here they are presented as agitators of the ocean.

Lines 11-18

…I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known – cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all –
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,
I am a part of all that I have met;

- Ulysses elaborates on the good times and bad times – well, mostly the good times – he's enjoyed during his travels.
- The phrase "I am become a name" means something like "become a household name." Ulysses has become famous because he's traveled to so many places.
- Ulysses tells us that he's visited a variety of different places, with different manners, weather, governments, etc. He portrays himself as a Renaissance traveler of sorts with an insatiable desire ("hungry heart") to see as many places as he can, try as many foods as he can, etc.
- The phrase "myself not least, but honoured of them all" is a little tricky. It means something like "I wasn't treated like the least little thing but was honored by everybody I met."
- Ulysses also describes the time he spent "on the ringing plains of windy Troy," the famous city where the Trojan War took place: you know, that famous war dramatized in the Brad Pitt movie Troy? The "plains" are "ringing" because of the armor clashing together in battle.
- "I am a part of all that I have met" is a strange phrase. Usually we say something like "all the places I have seen are now a part of me." The

phrase suggests that Ulysses left parts of himself everywhere he went; this sounds like another way of saying "I don't belong here in Ithaca."

Lines 19-24

Yet all experience is an arch where through
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life!

- Ulysses further justifies his desire to keep traveling and living a life of adventure.
- He compares his life or experiences to an arch and describes the "untravelled world" as a place that "gleams" at him through that arch. All he has to do is walk through the arch…
- The first two lines of the passage are very tricky, and we're not entirely sure what they mean. One way to read "Untravelled world" is as a reference to death; it is always looking at him through the "arch" of his experiences, but somehow seems to recede ("margin fades") as he keeps moving.
- You could also think of the "Untravelled world" as an arch. As Ulysses moves, his experiences make an arch covering the arch of the "Untravelled world." The more he travels, the more the margins or edges of that world recede or are covered up.
- Ulysses reiterates how boring it is just sitting around when he could be out exploring the world. It's a lot like that feeling you get when you're just getting into the rhythm of things and have to stop.
- He likens himself to some kind of metallic instrument that is still perfectly useful and shiny but just rusts if nobody uses it, like that ancient bicycle in your garage. If Ulysses weren't a soldier, he might say he's just collecting dust.

- For Ulysses, life is about more than just "breathing" and going through the motions; it's about adventure.

Lines 24-32

…Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

- Ulysses continues to a radiate a desire for adventure, claiming that even multiple lifetimes wouldn't be enough for him to do all the things he wants.
- At this point, though, he's an old man – a "grey spirit" – near the end of his life, and he wants to make the most of what's left. It's a waste of time for him to hang out in Ithaca for three years when his desire for adventure is still so alive.
- The phrase "but every hour is saved / From that eternal silence, something more, / A bringer of new things" is strange. It means something like "each additional hour that I live, or each hour that I am saved from death, brings me new experiences."
- "Three suns" doesn't mean three days, but rather three years. Ulysses has apparently been wasting his time for quite a while.
- The phrase "follow knowledge like a sinking star" is ambiguous. On the one hand, Ulysses wants to chase after knowledge and try to catch it as it sinks like a star. On the other hand, Ulysses himself could be the "sinking star." That makes sense too; he is a great personality who is moving closer to death (though, in our opinion, he's also kind of a rock star).

Lines 33-38

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle –
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.

- Ulysses introduces us to his son and heir, Telemachus, who seems like the right guy to take over the job of King of Ithaca. He's smart, and he knows how to make his people do things without being too harsh about it.
- A "Sceptre" is a ceremonial staff that symbolizes authority. Ulysses means something like "I leave him in charge."
- When compared with Ulysses, Telemachus seems a lot less restless. He has "slow prudence," meaning he's patient and willing to make the best decision for the people of Ithaca without being too hasty.
- The people of Ithaca are "rugged," which means that they're a little uncivilized and uncultured. They're like country-bumpkins with a little bit of an attitude. That's why they need to be reigned in ("subdued," made "mild") and put to good use.
- "Soft degrees" implies that Telemachus will civilize the citizens of Ithaca in stages and in a nice way; it's kingship as constructive criticism.

Lines 39-43

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

- Ulysses tells us more about Telemachus' qualifications; he's a straight shooter all the way, a nice guy.

- "Decent not to fail" means that Telemachus is smart enough not to fail at doing nice things for people and paying the proper respects to the gods.
- "Meet" means "appropriate" or "suitable."
- We're not sure whether "when I am gone" means that Ulysses is planning on going back to sea for some more adventures, or if he's thinking about his own death.

Lines 44-50

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me –
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads – you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;

- Ulysses shifts our attention from his son to the port of Ithaca, where he tells us a ship is preparing to set sail. Looks like he's planning on skipping town after all, and with his old friends as well.
- "Gloom" is usually a noun but here it's a verb that means "appearing dark" or "scowling."
- "Thunder and sunshine" is used here to mean something like "good times and bad times." They have gladly ("with a frolic welcome") gone through thick and thin for Ulysses.
- The phrase "opposed / Free hearts, free foreheads" is a little tricky. Ulysses means that his sailors "opposed" whatever came in their way – "thunder," for example – and they did it as free men and with a lot of confidence ("free foreheads").
- While at first it seems as though Ulysses has just been musing to himself, it turns out he's speaking to someone. We don't know whom he's talking to, but the other person is an old man.

- Speaking of old age, Ulysses suggests that even though old people are respected, they also have responsibilities.

Lines 51-56

Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices.

- Ulysses knows that death will end everything, but he still believes he can do great things, things worthy of men who fought against the will of the gods during the Trojan War.
- The Trojan War wasn't a war between men and gods, but occasionally the gods would come down and fight with either the Greeks or the Trojans.
- "Ere" is an old poetic word that means "before," as in "I will come ere nightfall."
- Ulysses observes the sunset and the arrival of night, but it seems like he's thinking about his own death as well. What's with the moaning? It reminds us of ghosts or people mourning a death.
- "Lights begin to twinkle from the rocks" is an elegant way of saying the stars are coming out.

Lines 56-64
…Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

- It turns out that Ulysses is addressing his friends, at least during this part of the poem. He tells them what he's been telling us all along: it's never too late to go in search of new lands.
- Here a "furrow" refers to the track or mark made in the water by the ship. He tells his sailors to "smite" or strike it, most likely with oars.
- "Purpose" can mean two different things; it can mean either "destiny," as in "sailing is my purpose in life," or it can mean "intention," as in "I intend to sail as far as I can."
- The "baths / Of all the western stars" isn't a place where the stars go to bathe themselves. It refers to the outer ocean or river that the Greeks believed surrounded the (flat) earth; they thought the stars descended into it.
- To sail beyond the "baths" means Ulysses wants to sail really, really far away – beyond the horizon of the known universe – until he dies.
- The "happy isles" refers to the Islands of the Blessed, a place where big-time Greek heroes like Achilles enjoyed perpetual summer after they died. We might say Heaven.
- Ulysses realizes that he and his companions might die, but he's OK with that. If they die, they might even get to go to the "Happy Isles" and visit their old pal Achilles.

Lines 65-70
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

- Ulysses yet again tells us that even though he and his sailors are old and don't have a lot of gas left in the tank, there's enough left to go a little farther.
- "Abides" is a word that means "remains."

- These guys are a team with one heartbeat. They're old and broken, but they still have the will to seek out and face challenges without giving up. They can't bench-press 200 pounds anymore, but that won't stop them from trying anyway.
- The phrase "strong in will / To strive, to seek, to find, and not yield" means something like "we're strong because of our will to strive" or "our will to strive is strong."

What is the theme of the poem Ulysses?

The central theme of “Ulysses” is that there is a search for adventure, experience and meaning which makes life worth living. Tennyson used Ulysses as the old adventurer, unwilling to accept the settling of old age, longing for one more quest. Tennyson also wrote this in memory of his friend Arthur Hallam.

Who was Ulysses?

The legendary Greek hero, Odysseus was the king of Ithaca, a small island in the Ionian sea, where he lived with his wife Penelope. He was known to Romans asUlysses. After fighting the war against the city of Troy with the Greeks, he started his journey home. His sailing journey was obstructed by the sea god Poseidon.

SYMBOLS

1) Travelling is a significant symbol throughout the poem and it is clear that Ulysses has travelled for the ten years previous. This can be seen in lines 12-15, where Ulysses informs the reader of the different places he has been with different governments, people, and foods. When he returns home to Ithaca, he realises he needs to keep travelling in order to get the most out of life (Line 6). He compares life as an arch with which the ‘untravelled world’ gleams through it. He describes where he intends on travelling as ‘beyond the sunset’, further illustrating that he wishes to travel places he hasn’t been before.

Another symbol of this poem is consumption. Ulysses spends his time as king of Ithaca eating and sleeping. He sees his people around him content with eating and sleeping day in day out, referring to them as a ‘savage race’

and he loses his appetite for food. Ulysses says he will ‘drink / Life to the lees’ which shows us that he believes that drink will not lead him to getting the most out of life. In line 12, we see his real hunger is for travel and knowledge where he says he has a ‘hungry heart’.

The symbolism of animals also features in this poem, mainly in regard to the citizens of Ithaca, whom Ulysses refers to as a ‘savage race’, ‘rugged’, and in need to be ‘subdued’. He depicts his people to ‘feed’ instead of eat and to ‘hoard’ as if intending to hibernate. Ulysses, however, refuses to end up like them and regards himself as a type of predatory animal who hungers for larger prey, or better things in life, ‘roaming’ the seas with a ‘hungry heart’.

A Prayer for My Daughter

By William Butler Yeats

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid

Under this cradle-hood and coverlid

My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle

But Gregory's Wood and one bare hill

Whereby the haystack and roof-levelling wind,

Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;

And for an hour I have walked and prayed

Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour,

And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,

And under the arches of the bridge, and scream

In the elms above the flooded stream;

Imagining in excited reverie

That the future years had come

Dancing to a frenzied drum
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

May she be granted beauty, and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass; for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness, and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen, being chosen, found life flat and dull,
And later had much trouble from a fool;
While that great Queen that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless, could have her way,
Yet chose a bandy-leggèd smith for man.
It's certain that fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift, but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful.
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise;

And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree,
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound;
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
Oh, may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born

Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is heaven's will,
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

W. B. Yeats

William Butler Yeats was an Irish poet and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature. A pillar of the Irish literary establishment, he helped to found the Abbey Theatre, and in his later years served as a Senator of the Irish Free State for two terms.

Born: June 13, 1865, County Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Died: January 28, 1939, Cannes, France

Poems: The Second Coming, Sailing to Byzantium, MORE

Plays: The Countess Cathleen, At the Hawk's Well, On Baile's Strand, Mosada, Purgatory, Diarmuid and Grania

SUMMARY:

Stanza 1:

A violent, dreadful storm is blazing outside. The poet says that the 'haystack and roof-leveling wind' is blowing directly from the Atlantic but is obstructed by just one naked hill and the woods of Gregory's estate. The poet then introduces her infant daughter who is sleeping in her cradle, well protected from the assaults of the dreadful storm that is raging outside. The poet keeps pacing the cradle up and down while praying for her daughter because a storm has been raging in his soul too. He is worried for his daughter's future and his mind is full of apprehension for the future of humanity.

Stanza 2:

In the following stanza, the poet describes the condition of the place the poet dwells in. The poet can hear the shrill sound of the sea-wind that is hitting the tower and below the arches of the bridge which connects the castle with the main road and in the elms above the flooded river. The poet has been praying for over an hour and he is disturbed by the shrill sound of the sea-wind. He is haunted by fear. The poet imagines the future, in course of his excitement and fear; that the future years have come out of the sea and it is dancing to the crazy beat of the drums. Like every affectionate and caring father, the poet is anxious for his infant daughter.

Stanza 3:

Now the poet talks about what he is praying for his daughter. He says he is praying that his daughter may be granted beauty but not so much that it disturbs or distracts others. The poet says that women who are very beautiful forget their natural kindness and are unable to accept sincere love. Thus, they fail to have an appropriate life partner and hence they remain unsatisfied.

Stanza 4:

Here the poet refers to the Greek mythological character, Helen. Helen was the beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda. She eloped with Prince Paris of Troy which led to the destruction of Troy. Aphrodite also married Hephaestus and betrayed him later on. In the same manner, Maud Gonne too had rejected Yeats' proposal and had married a foolish man and was not happy with him. Yeats says that beautiful women are too proud and foolish and therefore they suffer and lead a miserable life.

Stanza 5:

The poet prays for his daughter that she should have something more than just bewitching beauty. She should be courteous. The poet believes that hearts can be won by the virtue of courtesy; even those who are not beautiful can win hearts by their courtesy. Maud Gonne was very beautiful and Yeats was a fool to believe that she loved him too. Later on he realized his mistake and he ultimately understood that it was courtesy and not beauty that won his heart.

Stanza 6:

The poet pleads that the soul of his daughter should flourish and reach self-fulfillment like a flourishing tree. Like the linnets, her life should be clustered around happy and pure thoughts. These little creatures are symbols of innocence and happiness that make others happy too. So he wishes his daughter to be happy within as well as keep others happy too.

Stanza 7:

The poet then talks about his own mind and heart. He says that on looking into his own heart, he finds hatred which has come because of the experience of life and the sort of beauty he loved. He prays for his daughter to keep away from such evils and says that if the soul is free from any kind of hatred, nothing can ruin one's happiness and innocence.

Stanza 8:

The poet feels that intellectual hatred is the worst kind of hatred. He considers it as a great flaw in someone's character. So he wants his daughter to shun any such kind of hatred or strong bitter feelings for anyone. He wants his daughter to avoid the weaknesses that Maud Gonne had. Maud Gonne's good upbringing and charming beauty proved useless when she chose a worthless person for a husband.

Stanza 9:

The poet says if his daughter is free from this intellectual hatred, she will be a happy soul. She will have inner peace within herself. She will be able to keep herself and others happy even when she is going through hardships and misfortunes.

Stanza 10:

In the final stanza of "Prayer for My Daughter", the poet prays that her daughter gets married to a good, aristocratic and decent family. He prays that she would get a husband from such a family who would take her to a house where the aristocratic traditions are followed. He wants his daughter to live a life on high, spiritual values. Arrogance and hatred should not be entertained there. He believes that in the atmosphere of custom and ceremony, real beauty and innocence can take place.

Summary of A Prayer for My Daughter by William Butler Yeats

The **summary of A prayer for My Daughter by William Butler Yeats** opens up with an image of the poet's daughter who is fast asleep in her cradle. The storm he talks about at the very onset of the poem is nothing but a contrast to the quiet sleep of the baby. The poet is worried about his child and his gloominess of mind is well portrayed through the first stanza itself.

In the first stanza itself, the backdrop of the weather with the storm raging is nothing but a potent representation of Yeats feelings and his concern for the well-being of his daughter. This poem was penned after the World War has ended and the phase where he is a dangerous one which makes him worried about the future and how her daughter will fit in. The innocence and vulnerability of his daughter is well symbolized by the words "*coverlid*" and "*cradle-hood*" which shows how protected she is in her cradle.

The theme of **A Prayer for My Daughter** is a significant portrayal of the violent forces that surrounds the baby; something that she is ignorant of and is still unaffected or unmoved. The several different forces which pose a threat for the baby; famine, riots, starvation, violence is a sharp contrast to her innocence knowledge that protects her as she sleeps on.

The second stanza of the poem continues to head on and progress still depicting the gloominess of the poets mind and that he is worried about his daughter; Anne. ("I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour). The usage of the term "Flooded stream" represents the **idea of A Prayer for My Daughter** as the poet continues to explain how worried he is at the existence of the troublemakers in the society and in this world as he talks about the "elms" that are tossed out by the destructive forces. The tone of the poem reflected in **A Prayer for My Daughter by William Butler Yeats** is one of frenetic and chaotic in nature where human emotions are on display.

However, the poem does experience a sudden shift of mood when the poet employing his power of imagination fancies how he would help his daughter that gradually puts down his worries to rest for some time. Further, it also grants the poem a pessimistic mood, and all of a sudden Yeats seems to be

excited about the impending future. ("Imagining…the future years had come/Dancing to a frenzied drum." Anne's life will pass in chaos. "Dancing to a frenzied drum"). The passing years when his daughter grows up into a girl is echoed in the drum beats which is both responsible for the rhythm and tempo that is important in one's life.

In the **summary of A prayer for my daughter by William Butler Yeats,** the innocence of the baby is juxtaposed in a contrasting flavor; "murderous". Her world is her sea all around and it's evil and bodes ill for one and all. The usage of "murderous" makes the sea even more dangerous as the poet feels that there are people in this society who would try to manipulate and mold his daughters mind and might do evil things to her.

Yeats also talks about her beauty which he feels will be her strength and give her the feeling of fulfillment and help her make a better of character in times to come. At the same time, he also prays to God to retain her feminine innocence so that she can shake off all negative virtues that reside within a human being and emerge strong and decisive in her won good mannered way. Yeats refers to the story of Helen of Troy who had married a stupid man called Paris and that her life was doomed in a certain way as she wasn't a good judge of character.

In the following stanza of the poem, Yeats wants her daughter to be courteous and polite, benevolent and helpful and that she must know that love doesn't come freely; one has to earn it in the right way.("Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned.")

STYLE:

The poem is composed of ten stanzas each having eight lines following the couplet pattern. The poem is simple but the poet has enhanced it with imagery. The violence of nature is symbolic of the violence of man. The poet uses many examples of the great mythological beauties like Helen, Aphrodite who represent his lover, Maud Gonne. Images of tree and storm are used to represent ideas like tradition, custom, innocence etc.

"Prayer for My Daughter" is remarkable for Yeats' dexterous manipulation of symbols and images.

Structural Analysis

The poem is written in a lyric form containing ten stanzas with eight lines in each stanza. The poem follows a regular rhyme scheme, which is AABBCDDC as shown below:

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour **A**
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower, **A**
And-under the arches of the bridge, and scream **B**
In the elms above the flooded stream; **B**
Imagining in excited reverie **C**
That the future years had come, **D**
Dancing to a frenzied drum, **D**
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea. **C**

The meter of this poem alternates between iambic pentameter and trochaic pentameter, as
in **"***I have* **walked** *and* **prayed** *for* **this** *young* **child** *an* **hour** */*
And **heard** *the* **sea**-*wind* **scream** *up***on** *the* **tow***er."*

The poem is rich in literary devices such
as symbolism, personification, paradox, sibilance, assonance, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. The line *"murderous innocence of the sea"* is an examples of paradox. Sibilance is found in the words "*sea-wind* **s***cream,"* while *"scream"* is also an example of an onomatopoeia. The use of personification can be noted in the lines *"future years ... dancing"*, which implies the transience of life. The poet uses symbols such as *"sea wind"* and *"flooded stream"* which denote turbulent forces at work. Alliteration is present in the phrase "*be granted* **b***eauty."*

Literary Analysis

"A Prayer for My Daughter" is a reflection of the poet's love for his daughter. It is also about surviving the turmoil of the contemporary world, where passions have been separated from reason. The setting of the poem is unspecified. The speaker is the poet himself talking to his daughter. The tone is gloomy, precarious, and frightening, as well as didactic.

The poem opens with a description of the speaker praying for his innocent infant daughter, Anne, lying in the middle of a storm *"howling, and half hid."* The poet demonstrates his feelings through the use of symbols of weather. The newborn baby girl is sleeping *"Under this cradle-hood and coverlid,"* implying the innocence and vulnerability of Anne. Though the external world is violent, she is protected from it. The storm is a metaphor for the Irish people's struggle for their independence, which was an uncertain political situation in Yeats's day. He further presents the situation of the storm with *"roof-leveling wind",*representing turbulence, in the midst of which the poet has *"walked and prayed for this young child an hour."* Intense and threatening forces surround her like a *"flooded stream."* The poet symbolizes the sea thus: *"Out of the murderous innocence of the sea."* Despite his apprehensions for his child in this turbulent world, he is hopeful for her.