

ARULMIGU PALANIANDAVAR ARTS COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,

PALANI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

LEARNING RESOURCES

ENGLISH POETRY

MIDDLE ENGLISH POETRY

THE GENERAL PROLOGUE - GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Introduction:

Geoffrey Chaucer was an English writer, poet and philosopher. He is widely considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages. He wrote in Middle English. He has been called the “Father of English poetry”. He became famous for his masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales*. The book contains twenty four stories; yet it is incomplete. He is seen as crucial in legitimizing the literary use of Middle English. *The Canterbury Tales* is Chaucer’s richly detailed text. John Dryden described the book as “God’s plenty is here”.

Purpose of the Journey:

The Canterbury Tales is set out with 858 lines of Middle English which makes up the Prologue. It is of a religious pilgrimage. The narrator of the poem is Chaucer himself. The setting is April. A group of pilgrims including Chaucer is preparing a pilgrimage to Canterbury. They stay at the Tabard Inn in Southwark in London. Congregating at the Tabard Inn, the pilgrims decide to tell stories to pass their time on the way to Canterbury. The Host of the Tabard Inn sets the rules for the tales. Each of the pilgrims has to tell two stories on the way to Canterbury, and two stories on the return trip. The Host will decide whose tale is the best for meaningfulness and fun.

The Pardoner:

The Pardoner, with his mincing, feminine ways and long hair, has been interpreted as potentially homosexual. He carries a full bag of pardons and fake relics from Rome, which he uses to dupe gullible parishioners into giving him money. He says that every sermon he gives is always on the same theme: “Radix malorum est Cupiditas,” or “Greed is the root of all evils.” In these sermons, he shows his bag of fake relics to the congregation. He himself lives a very greedy life. He brings pardons and fake relics back from Rome and gets the gullible parishioners to make offerings to these trinkets. The Pardoner doesn’t care about saving souls: all he wants to do is get rich. He claims that sheep bones can cure ailments. The parishioners always believe him, and he tricks them into buying trinkets and hocus-pocus charms. It doesn’t bother the pardoner that when his congregation has been buried, their souls are left to wander: he is in the business of making money, not absolving sins. In his sermons, the Pardoner always preaches about greed, the same sin that he himself freely admits possessing. “Do as I say, not as I do, the Pardoner preaches”: although he is guilty of avarice, he warns people about the dangers of covetousness through lots of examples. However, he himself would rather take a penny from a starving widow than give up his creature comforts. Having finished his ale, the Pardoner begins his tale.

The Pardoner’s Tale:

The Pardoner tells the story of three young rioters who spend their days carousing and drinking. They hear a coffin passing outside the tavern and learn that one of their friends has been stabbed by a thief named Death. The revelers pledge a bond of brotherhood among them and declare that they will slay Death. The Pardoner launches into a long criticism about their sinful lives, citing many Biblical examples as support. First, he denounces their gluttony, which he says caused the fall of Man. He next decries their drunkenness, which makes men witless and lecherous. He then denounces their gambling: dice, he says, are the mothers of

lies. The Pardoner criticizes the swearing of false oaths, saying that cursing and perjury are wretched.

Finally, after his long tirade, the Pardoner returns to the three young rioters, who are drinking at a tavern when they hear the bell signaling the sound of a passing coffin. A servant tells them that the dead man was a friend of the revelers who had been stabbed in the night by a thief called Death. The revelers declare that they will seek and slay this false traitor Death. They pledge to be true to each other as brothers in this quest. The revelers meet an old man in rags who says that he must wander the earth restlessly because Death will not take his life. He makes a move to leave, but the rioters demand that he tell them where they can find Death. The old man says that he has just left Death a moment ago sitting under an oak tree. The youths run down the crooked path to the tree, where they find not Death but eight bushels of gold. The worst of the rioters speaks first, saying that this is their lucky day, but if they take the treasure down to the town by daylight, they will be accused as thieves, and therefore they must wait for nightfall to move the gold. He proposes that they draw straws, and whichever one gets the short straw must go to town to get food and drink so they can wait out the day.

The Nun's Priest:

The Nun's Priest is the priest of the church who accompanies the nuns so that they may offer up their confessions. There are three priests in the prioress's party

The Nun's Priest's Tale:

He is barely mentioned in the General Prologue, yet he gets to tell one of the most memorable and lively of the Tales.

A poor widow lives a simple life in a little cottage with her two daughters. Her greatest possession is her noble rooster, Chanticleer, who is the best singer in the land. Chanticleer crows the time more accurately than the church clock. His cockcomb is red as coral, his beak black as jet, and his feathers shine like burnished gold. Chanticleer has seven hens, and his favorite is the lovely Pertelote. One morning, Chanticleer awakens from a terrible nightmare. He tells Pertelote that a savage, reddish, beast was about to swallow him. Pertelote chides him, saying that she cannot love such a coward. The Roman philosopher Cato, she says, tells men not to be scared of dreams. She says that the dream comes from some physical melancholy and urges him to take a laxative to get rid of this black bile.

Chanticleer argues that men of even greater authority than Cato argue that dreams are extremely important. He cites authors who describe premonitions of murders in dreams in order to prove to Pertelote that "Mordre wol out" through dreams that show the truth. Chanticleer continues to cite many books and legends that tell about men who have portentous dreams, referring to Macrobius, Scipio, Joseph, and Croesus, among others. Chanticleer praises Pertelote's beauty, saying that "In principio, mulier est hominis confusion," which he translates as "Woman is man's joy and all his bliss." Therefore, in spite of all his evidence that dreams are important, Chanticleer decides to abide by his wife's advice and ignore his dreams. He then makes love to Pertelote.

The Physician:

The physician is a learned man. In the Prologue, Chaucer says: "A doctor too emerged as we proceeded; / No one alive could talk as well as he did / On points of medicine and of surgery." The physician is able to diagnose his patients based on his belief in the four humours. Humours are components of the body that the ancient Greeks believed needed to stay in balance in order for a person to be in optimal health. He treats his patients based on horoscopes and then sends them to the apothecary where both the apothecary and the physician gain profit from the transaction. The physician is greedy and cheats his patients in this way. While the physician loves his riches, he is, in general, a temperate man.

The Physician's Tale:

"The Physician's Tale" begins as the physician describes a noble knight by the name of Virginius and his beautiful and virtuous daughter, Virginia. This tale contains several allusions or references to the moral allegory entitled, "The Rape of Lucretia." "The Rape of Lucretia" is a retelling of the story of Tarquinius and Lucretia in which the latter is raped and then takes her own life afterwards. This all happens after the husband, Tarquinius, extols the virtue of his wife. Likewise, The Physician's Tale spends multiple paragraphs describing the virtues of Virginia, the knight's daughter. Nature itself says that it created the 14-year-old girl "for the worship of my Lord." The physician continues to describe her beauty, "Of exceeding loveliness was she / Above all others that a man might see." After discussing Virginia's beauty and honour, the physician goes on to warn older women that it is their job to protect the virtue of the younger ones. He declares that older women who did not protect their virtue in their younger years could make great supervisors of these young women. A thief who has given up his villainous activities will make the best gamekeeper.

One day, Virginia goes into town with her mother, and she catches the eye of a judge who desires to have her. The judge, Appius, knows that he will not be able to seduce the girl because her virtue is too strong, so he devises a plan. He calls on Claudius, a blackguard, and convinces Claudius to bring Virginius to court claiming that Virginia is really Claudius's slave and that Virginius stole the girl. The plan is then for Claudius to hand the girl over to Appius. Claudius agrees, and an unfair trial ensues whereby Virginius is not even able to speak for himself. Virginius learns that he must hand his daughter over, and he understands what will happen. He confronts Virginia and says, "Virginia, I must name / The ways that lie before you, death or shame." The two believe it will be better for Virginius to kill her than for her to fall into the clutches of Appius. Virginia says, "Blessed be God that I shall die a maid!" Virginius cuts off the girl's head and takes it to Appius who, enraged, sentences Virginius to death. The townspeople rise up, however, and they let Virginius go, and they send Appius to prison where he kills himself. They want to kill Claudius as well, but Virginius asks for exile for him instead. As a moral to this story, it ends with, "I offer you this counsel; let it make you / Forsake your sins before your sins forsake you."

The Friar:

The Friar is a mendicant who takes confessions from the well-to-do for a price, and spends the money on himself rather than to benefit the poor. The silver-tongued Friar is a prime example of Chaucer's satire of corrupt clergy. The Friar is a womanizer, saying that he is "beloved and familiar" with various women. This line abuts another line describing that he hears confessions. The Friar has paid the dowry for several young women hints that the Friar

may have alleged relationship with many women and paid for their marriages to cover up the scandal. The friar is a persuasive and impressive speaker when playing his role as alms collector. His manner of talk will be sweet and pleasant. The Friar employs his natural gift of persuasion to encourage people to atone for their sins by giving more money to people like him. However, his lavish garb of fine, heavy fabric suggests where the money he collects actually goes. The Friar picks a fight with the Summoner with his tale, which features a corrupt summoner who befriends a demon and ends up in hell. The specific story the Friar tells focuses on the power of a curse that is meant from the heart, which may be a direct refutation of the Summoner's unorthodox statement that if someone pays him they needn't fear excommunication.

The Friar's Tale:

In his tale, the Friar paints an unsavory image of summoners which is refuted, in the next tale, by the Summoner himself. A church official (an archdeacon) has spies that work around his town and report back to him about who has sinned, so he can extort money from them in exchange for forgiveness for their sins. Under the archdeacon, there is a Summoner (a person who calls sinners in front of the court of the church to face punishment for their sins). One day, he meets a demon and they swear to be partners and share their winnings with each other. The Summoner is someone who is manipulative and someone who easily blackmails people for money, even if their victims haven't actually sinned, by charging them large amounts of money for sinners to not be summoned to the church. The yeoman is a demon who takes many forms and who takes people down to hell. The yeoman can only take people to hell if someone was sincere and honest in their wish for something or someone to go to hell. One day, they both come upon a farmer whose cart is stuck in the mud. In frustration, he yells for the devil to take everything. The demon says that since the wish was not truly sincere he has no power to do anything. Later, they come upon a widow, who refuses to pay for her sins because she claims that she hasn't sinned. The Summoner falsely claims she had been unfaithful. She tells the summoner to go to hell unless he repents for his sin of lying. The summoner refuses to repent for his sins and the demon takes the summoner to hell. The story ends with the wish that one day summoners will be good men and repent for their own sins.

THE ELIZABETHAN POETRY

EDMUND SPENSER - EPITHALAMION

Text:

Ye learned sisters which have oftentimes
Beene to me ayding, others to adorne:
Whom ye thought worthy of your gracefull rymes,
That even the greatest did not greatly scorne
To heare theyr names sung in your simple layes,
But joyed in theyr prayse.
And when ye list your owne mishaps to mourne,

Which death, or love, or fortunes wreck did rayse,
Your string could soone to sadder tenor turne,
And teach the woods and waters to lament
Your dolefull dreriment.

Now lay those sorrowfull complaints aside,
And having all your heads with girland crownd,
Helpe me mine owne loves prayses to resound,
Ne let the same of any be envie:
So Orpheus did for his owne bride,
So I unto my selfe alone will sing,
The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring.

Early before the worlds light giving lampe,
His golden beame upon the hils doth spred,
Having disperst the nights unchearefull dampe,
Doe ye awake, and with fresh lusty hed,
Go to the bowre of my beloved love,
My truest turtle dove,
Bid her awake; for Hymen is awake,
And long since ready forth his maske to move,
With his bright Tead that flames with many a flake,
And many a bachelor to waite on him,
In theyr fresh garments trim.
Bid her awake therefore and soone her dight,
For lo the wished day is come at last,
That shall for al the paynes and sorrowes past,
Pay to her usury of long delight:
And whylest she doth her dight,
Doe ye to her of joy and solace sing,
That all the woods may answer and your eccho ring.

Bring with you all the Nymphes that you can heare
Both of the rivers and the forrests greene:
And of the sea that neighbours to her neare,
Al with gay girlands goodly wel beseene.
And let them also with them bring in hand
Another gay girland
For my fayre love of lillyes and of roses,
Bound truelove wize with a blew silke riband.
And let them make great store of bridale poses,
And let them eeke bring store of other flowers
To deck the bridale bowers.
And let the ground whereas her foot shall tread,
For feare the stones her tender foot should wrong

Be strewed with fragrant flowers all along,
And diapred lyke the discolored mead.
Which done, doe at her chamber dore awayt,
For she will waken strayt,
The whiles doe ye this song unto her sing,
The woods shall to you answer and your Eccho ring.

Ye Nymphes of Mulla which with carefull heed,
The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well,
And greedy pikes which use therein to feed,
(Those trouts and pikes all others doo excell)
And ye likewise which keepe the rushy lake,
Where none doo fishes take,
Bynd up the locks the which hang scatterd light,
And in his waters which your mirror make,
Behold your faces as the christall bright,
That when you come whereas my love doth lie,
No blemish she may spie.
And eke ye lightfoot mayds which keepe the deere,
That on the hoary mountayne use to towre,
And the wylde wolves which seeke them to devoure,
With your steele darts doo chace from comming neer,
Be also present heere,
To helpe to decke her and to help to sing,
That all the woods may answer and your eccho ring.

Wake, now my love, awake; for it is time,
The Rosy Morne long since left Tithones bed,
All ready to her silver coche to clyme,
And Phoebus gins to shew his glorious hed.
Hark how the cheerefull birds do chaunt theyr laies
And carroll of loves praise.
The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft,
The thrush replyes, the Mavis descant playes,
The Ouzell shrills, the Ruddock warbles soft,
So goodly all agree with sweet consent,
To this dayes merriment.
Ah my deere love why doe ye sleepe thus long,
When meeter were that ye should now awake,
T'awayt the comming of your joyous make,
And hearken to the birds lovelearned song,
The deawy leaves among.
For they of joy and pleasance to you sing,
That all the woods them answer and theyr eccho ring.

My love is now awake out of her dreames,
And her fayre eyes like stars that dimmed were
With darksome cloud, now shew theyr goodly beames
More bright then Hesperus his head doth rere.
Come now ye damzels, daughters of delight,
Helpe quickly her to dight,
But first come ye fayre houres which were begot
In Joves sweet paradice, of Day and Night,
Which doe the seasons of the yeare allot,
And al that ever in this world is fayre
Doe make and still repayre.
And ye three handmayds of the Cyprian Queene,
The which doe still adorne her beauties pride,
Helpe to addorne my beautifullest bride:
And as ye her array, still throw betweene
Some graces to be seene,
And as ye use to Venus, to her sing,
The whiles the woods shal answer and your eccho ring.

Now is my love all ready forth to come,
Let all the virgins therefore well awayt,
And ye fresh boyes that tend upon her groome
Prepare your selves; for he is comming strayt.
Set all your things in seemely good aray
Fit for so joyfull day,
The joyfulst day that ever sunne did see.
Faire Sun, shew forth thy favourable ray,
And let thy lifull heat not fervent be
For feare of burning her sunshyny face,
Her beauty to disgrace.
O fayrest Phoebus, father of the Muse,
If ever I did honour thee aright,
Or sing the thing, that mote thy mind delight,
Doe not thy servants simple boone refuse,
But let this day let this one day be myne,
Let all the rest be thine.
Then I thy soverayne prayses loud will sing,
That all the woods shal answer and theyr eccho ring.

Harke how the Minstrels gin to shrill aloud
Their merry Musick that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling Croud,
That well agree withouten breach or jar.

But most of all the Damzels doe delite,
When they their tymbrels smyte,
And thereunto doe daunce and carrol sweet,
That all the sences they doe ravish quite,
The whyles the boyes run up and downe the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noyce,
As if it were one voyce.
Hymen io Hymen, Hymen they do shout,
That even to the heavens theyr shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill,
To which the people standing all about,
As in approvance doe thereto applaud
And loud advaunce her laud,
And evermore they Hymen Hymen sing,
That al the woods them answer and theyr eccho ring.

Loe where she comes along with portly pace
Lyke Phoebe from her chamber of the East,
Arysing forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seemes a virgin best.
So well it her beseemes that ye would weene
Some angell she had beene.
Her long loose yellow locks lyke golden wyre,
Sprinckled with perle, and perling flowres a tweene,
Doe lyke a golden mantle her attyre,
And being crowned with a girland greene,
Seeme lyke some mayden Queene.
Her modest eyes abashed to behold
So many gazers, as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affixed are.
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to heare her prayses sung so loud,
So farre from being proud.
Nathlesse doe ye still loud her prayses sing,
That all the woods may answer and your eccho ring.

Tell me ye merchants daughters did ye see
So fayre a creature in your towne before?
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
Adornd with beautyes grace and vertues store,
Her goodly eyes lyke Saphyres shining bright,
Her forehead yvory white,
Her cheekes lyke apples which the sun hath rudded,
Her lips lyke cheryes charming men to byte,

Her brest like to a bowle of creame uncrudded,
Her paps lyke lillies budded,
Her snowie necke lyke to a marble towre,
And all her body like a pallace fayre,
Ascending uppe with many a stately stayre,
To honors seat and chastities sweet bowre.
Why stand ye still ye virgins in amaze,
Upon her so to gaze,
Whiles ye forget your former lay to sing,
To which the woods did answer and your eccho ring.

But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
The inward beauty of her lively spright,
Garnisht with heavenly guifts of high degree,
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,
And stand astonisht lyke to those which red
Medusaes mazeful hed.
There dwels sweet love and constant chastity,
Unspotted fayth and comely womenhed,
Regard of honour and mild modesty,
There vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne,
And giveth lawes alone.
The which the base affections doe obey,
And yeeld theyr services unto her will,
Ne thought of thing uncomely ever may
Thereto approch to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seene these her celestial treasures,
And unrevealed pleasures,
Then would ye wonder and her prayses sing,
That al the woods should answer and your eccho ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the postes adorne as doth behove,
And all the pillours deck with girlands trim,
For to recyve this Saynt with honour dew,
That commeth in to you.
With trembling steps and humble reverence,
She commeth in, before th'almighties vew:
Of her ye virgins learne obedience,
When so ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces;
Bring her up to th'high altar that she may,
The sacred ceremonies there partake,

The which do endlesse matrimony make,
And let the roring Organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes,
The whiles with hollow throates
The Choristers the joyous Antheme sing,
That al the woods may answere and their eccho ring.

Behold whiles she before the altar stands
Hearing the holy priest that to her speakes
And blesseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheekes,
And the pure snow with goodly vermill stayne,
Like crimson dyde in grayne,
That even th'Angels which continually,
About the sacred Altare doe remaine,
Forget their service and about her fly,
Ofte peeping in her face that seemes more fayre,
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes still fastened on the ground,
Are governed with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one looke to glaunce awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsownd.
Why blush ye love to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing ye sweet Angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answere and your eccho ring.

Now al is done; bring home the bride againe,
Bring home the triumph of our victory,
Bring home with you the glory of her gaine,
With joyance bring her and with jollity.
Never had man more joyfull day then this,
Whom heaven would heape with blis.
Make feast therefore now all this live long day,
This day for ever to me holy is,
Poure out the wine without restraint or stay,
Poure not by cups, but by the belly full,
Poure out to all that wull,
And sprinkle all the postes and wals with wine,
That they may sweat, and drunken be withall.
Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of vine,
And let the Graces daunce unto the rest;
For they can doo it best:

The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,
To which the woods shal answer and theyr eccho ring.

Ring ye the bells, ye yong men of the towne,
And leave your wonted labors for this day:
This day is holy; doe ye write it downe,
That ye for ever it remember may.
This day the sunne is in his chiefest hight,
With Barnaby the bright,
From whence declining daily by degrees,
He somewhat loseth of his heat and light,
When once the Crab behind his back he sees.
But for this time it ill ordained was,
To chose the longest day in all the yeare,
And shortest night, when longest fitter weare:
Yet never day so long, but late would passe.
Ring ye the bells, to make it weare away,
And bonefiers make all day,
And daunce about them, and about them sing:
That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring.

Ah when will this long weary day have end,
And lende me leave to come unto my love?
How slowly do the houres theyr numbers spend?
How slowly does sad Time his feathers move?
Hast thee O fayrest Planet to thy home
Within the Westerne fome:
Thy tyred steedes long since have need of rest.
Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
And the bright evening star with golden creast
Appeare out of the East.
Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of love
That all the host of heaven in rankes doost lead,
And guydest lovers through the nightes dread,
How chearefully thou lookest from above,
And seemst to laugh atweene thy twinkling light
As joying in the sight
Of these glad many which for joy doe sing,
That all the woods them answer and their echo ring.

Now ceasse ye damsels your delights forepast;
Enough is it, that all the day was youres:
Now day is doen, and night is nighing fast:
Now bring the Bryde into the brydall boures.

Now night is come, now soone her disaray,
And in her bed her lay;
Lay her in lillies and in violets,
And silken courteins over her display,
And odour sheetes, and Arras coverlets.
Behold how goodly my faire love does ly
In proud humility;
Like unto Maia, when as Jove her tooke,
In Tempe, lying on the flowry gras,
Twixt sleepe and wake, after she weary was,
With bathing in the Acidalian brooke.
Now it is night, ye damsels may be gon,
And leave my love alone,
And leave likewise your former lay to sing:
The woods no more shal answeare, nor your echo ring.

Now welcome night, thou night so long expected,
That long daies labour doest at last defray,
And all my cares, which cruell love collected,
Hast sumd in one, and cancelled for aye:
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.
Let no false treason seeke us to entrap,
Nor any dread disquiet once annoy
The safety of our joy:
But let the night be calme and quietsome,
Without tempestuous storms or sad afray:
Lyke as when Jove with fayre Alcmena lay,
When he begot the great Tiryinthian groome:
Or lyke as when he with thy selfe did lie,
And begot Majesty.
And let the mayds and yongmen cease to sing:
Ne let the woods them answer, nor they eccho ring.

Let no lamenting cryes, nor dolefull teares,
Be heard all night within nor yet without:
Ne let false whispers, breeding hidden feares,
Breake gentle sleepe with misconceived dout.
Let no deluding dreames, nor dreadful sights
Make sudden sad affrights;
Ne let housefyres, nor lightnings helpelesse harmes,
Ne let the Pouke, nor other evill sprights,

Ne let mischivous witches with theyr charmes,
Ne let hob Goblins, names whose sence we see not,
Fray us with things that be not.
Let not the shriech Oule, nor the Storke be heard:
Nor the night Raven that still deadly yels,
Nor damned ghosts cald up with mighty spels,
Nor griesly vultures make us once affeard:
Ne let th'unpleasant Quyre of Frogs still croking
Make us to wish theyr choking.
Let none of these theyr drery accents sing;
Ne let the woods them answer, nor theyr eccho ring.

But let stil Silence trew night watches keepe,
That sacred peace may in assurance rayne,
And tymely sleep, when it is tyme to sleepe,
May poure his limbs forth on your pleasant playne,
The whiles an hundred little winged loves,
Like divers fethered doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about your bed,
And in the secret darke, that none reproves,
Their prety stelthes shal worke, and snares shal spread
To filch away sweet snatches of delight,
Conceald through covert night.
Ye sonnes of Venus, play your sports at will,
For greedy pleasure, carelesse of your toyes,
Thinks more upon her paradise of joyes,
Then what ye do, albe it good or ill.
All night therefore attend your merry play,
For it will soone be day:
Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing,
Ne will the woods now answer, nor your Eccho ring.

Who is the same, which at my window peepes?
Or whose is that faire face, that shines so bright,
Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,
But walkes about high heaven al the night?
O fayrest goddess, do thou not envy
My love with me to spy:
For thou likewise didst love, though now unthought,
And for a fleece of woll, which privily,
The Latmian shephard once unto thee brought,
His pleasures with thee wrought.
Therefore to us be favorable now;
And sith of wemens labours thou hast charge,

And generation goodly dost enlarge,
Encline thy will t'effect our wishfull vow,
And the chast wombe informe with timely seed,
That may our comfort breed:
Till which we cease our hopefull hap to sing,
Ne let the woods us answeare, nor our Eccho ring.

And thou great Juno, which with awful might
The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize,
And the religion of the faith first plight
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnize:
And eeke for comfort often called art
Of women in their smart,
Eternally bind thou this lovely band,
And all thy blessings unto us impart.
And thou glad Genius, in whose gentle hand,
The bridale bowre and geniall bed remaine,
Without blemish or staine,
And the sweet pleasures of theyr loves delight
With secret ayde doest succour and supply,
Till they bring forth the fruitfull progeny,
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.
And thou fayre Hebe, and thou Hymen free,
Grant that it may so be.
Til which we cease your further prayse to sing,
Ne any woods shal answer, nor your Eccho ring.

And ye high heavens, the temple of the gods,
In which a thousand torches flaming bright
Doe burne, that to us wretched earthly clods,
In dreadful darknesse lend desired light;
And all ye powers which in the same remayne,
More then we men can fayne,
Poure out your blessing on us plentifully,
And happy influence upon us raine,
That we may raise a large posterity,
Which from the earth, which they may long possesse,
With lasting happinesse,
Up to your haughty pallaces may mount,
And for the guerdon of theyr glorious merit
May heavenly tabernacles there inherit,
Of blessed Saints for to increase the count.
So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
And cease till then our tymely joyes to sing,

The woods no more us answer, nor our eccho ring.

Song made in lieu of many ornaments,
With which my love should duly have bene dect,
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
Ye would not stay your dew time to expect,
But promist both to recompens,
Be unto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endlesse monument.

Introduction:

Epithalamion is an ode written as the finale of *Amoretti*. It commemorates Spenser's marriage to Elizabeth Boyle, daughter of James Boyle, the relation of Earl of Cork, Richard Boyle, on June 11, 1594. The music begins before sunrise and continues through the wedding ceremony and into the newlywed couple's consummation night. This poem has 24 stanzas which represent the hours of Midsummer Day. It has 365 long lines, corresponding to the days in a year. Its novelty lies in the narrator being the poet who is also the bridegroom.

Features of *Epithalamion*:

The poem *Epithalamion* begins with an invocation to the Muses to help the groom, and moves through the couple's wedding day, from Spenser's impatient hours before dawn while waiting for his bride to wake up, to the late hours of night after Spenser and Boyle have consummated their marriage. Its chief features are the invocation of the Muse, the procession, feasting, the decoration of the bride, the praise of her beauty, the bride's arrival at the church, the marriage ceremony, the preparation of the bridal chamber and prayer for their fruitful union. It concludes with a prayer for the fruitfulness of the marriage.

Invocation by Spenser:

The groom invokes the muses to inspire him to correctly laud the praises of his beloved bride. He claims he will sing to himself "as Orpheus did for his own bride." This stanza, like the majority of the subsequent stanzas, concludes with the refrain "The woods shall to me answer and my Eccho ring." In the tradition of classical authors, the poet invokes the muses to inspire him. Unlike many poets who invoked a single muse, Spenser invokes all the muses here, implying that his subject necessitates a wide variety of mythic inspiration. The reference to Orpheus is an allusion to that hero's seduction of his bride's spirit from the realm of the dead using his lovely music; the groom, too, intends to awaken his bride from her slumber, leading her into the light of their wedding day.

Sacredness of the Wedding:

Before dawn, the groom summons the muses to his beloved's bower in order to rouse her. Hymen, the deity of marriage, is already awake, and so should the bride. The groom begs the muses to remind his bride that today is her wedding day, a day that will bring her great joy for all the "paynes and sorrowes past." Another classical figure, Hymen, is mentioned here, and not for the first time. If the god of marriage is ready, and the groom is ready, he expects his wife to be ready as well. The emphasis is on the sacredness of the wedding day, which should entice the bride to attend as soon as feasible. It is the marriage ceremony, not the bride (or groom), that determines what is necessary in this case.

The groom orders the muses to call all the nymphs they can to join them to the bridal chamber. On their way, they are to collect all the fragrant flowers they can and decorate the route leading from the “bridal bower,” where the marriage ceremony will take place, to the entrance of the bride’s chambers. If they do, she will walk from her accommodations to the wedding location solely on flowers. Their music will awaken the bride as they decorate her doorstep with flowers. With the summoning of the nymphs, this celebration of Christian nuptials becomes firmly rooted in Greek mythology.

Adorned by the Celestials:

Addressing the numerous nymphs of other natural settings, the groom requests that they tend to their speciality in order to make the wedding day ideal. The nymphs who care about the ponds and lakes should ensure that the water is pure and free of lively fish so that they can see their own reflections in it and thus best prepare themselves to be seen by the bride. The nymphs of the mountains and woods who keep deer safe from ravaging wolves should use their skills to keep these same wolves away from the bride on her wedding day. Both groups are expected to be present to help beautify the wedding venue with their beauty. The groom now addresses his bride personally in order to persuade her to wake up. Sunrise has long passed, and Phoebus, the sun god, is displaying “his glorious hed.” The birds are already singing, and the groom argues that their song is a joyful invitation to the bride. The mythical characters of Rosy Dawn, Tithones, and Phoebus are invoked here to continue the ode’s classical theme. He encourages the latter to do for his wife what they do for Venus: sing to her as she dresses for her wedding.

Tribute by the poet:

The bride is ready with her attendant virgins, so now it is time for the groomsmen and the groom himself to prepare. The groom implores the sun to shine brightly, but not hotly lest it burns his bride’s fair skin. He then prays to Phoebus, who is both sun-god and originator of the arts, to give this one day of the year to him while keeping the rest for himself. The mortal wedding guests and entertainment move into action. The minstrels play their music and sing, while women play their timbrels and dance. Spenser shifts to the real-world participants in the wedding ceremony, the entertainment and possible guests. He offers to exchange his own poetry as an offering for this great favour.

Beauty of the Bride:

The groom beholds his bride approaching and compares her to Phoebe (another name for Artemis, goddess of the moon) clad in white “that seems a virgin best.” He finds her white attire so appropriate that she seems more angel than woman. In modesty, she avoids the gaze of the myriad admirers and blushes at the songs of praise she is receiving. The groom asks the women who see his bride if they have ever seen anyone so beautiful in their town before. He then launches into a list of all her virtues, starting with her eyes and eventually describing her whole body. The bride’s overwhelming beauty causes the maidens to forget their song to stare at her. Her eyes and forehead are described in terms of valuable items (sapphires and ivory), her cheeks and lips compared to fruit (apples and cherries), her breast is compared to a bowl of cream, her nipples to the buds of lilies, her neck to an ivory tower, and her whole body compared to a beautiful palace. The groom moves from the external beauty of the bride to her internal beauty, which he claims to see better than anyone else. He praises her lively spirit, her sweet love, her chastity, her faith, her honour, and her modesty.

He insists that could her observers see her inner beauty, they would be far more awestruck by it than they already are by her outward appearance.

Post wedding celebration:

The Christian part of the wedding ceremony is over, and the groom asks that the bride to be brought home again and the celebration to start. He calls for feasting and drinking, turning his attention from the “almighty” God of the church to the “God Bacchus,” Hymen, and the Graces. The groom restates his affirmation that this day is holy and calls everyone to celebrate in response to the ringing bells. He exults that the sun is so bright and the day so beautiful, then changes his tone to regret as he realizes his wedding is taking place on the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, and so his nighttime nuptial bliss will be delayed all the longer, yet last only briefly.

Prayer of the Poet:

The groom continues his frustrated complaint that the day is too long, but grows hopeful as at long last the evening begins its arrival. The groom urges the singers and dancers to leave the wedding, but take the bride to her bed as they depart. He is eager to be alone with his bride and compares the sight of her lying in bed to that of Maia, the mountain goddess with whom Zeus conceived Hermes. Night has come at last, and the groom asks Night to cover and protect them. He makes another comparison to mythology, this time Zeus’ affair with Alcmena and his affair with Night herself. The groom prays that no evil spirits or bad thoughts would reach the newlyweds this night. The entire stanza is a list of possible dangers he pleads to leave them alone. The groom notices Cinthia, the moon, peering through his window and prays to her for a favourable wedding night. He specifically asks that she make his bride’s “chaste womb” fertile this night. Time was too short to procure these outward decorations for his beloved, so the groom hopes his ode will be an “endlesse monument” to her.

JOHN DONNE - A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

Text:

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say
The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love

(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

Introduction:

'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' is an elegiac poem written by John Donne. It is a poem on the untimely death of his wife Anne More Donne in 1611. It serves as a farewell to her, a parting note where he makes the readers beware of death and its consequences and asks them not to mourn. It also captures the undying love they share. John Donne (1572-1631) was a prominent English poet and scholar. A cleric in the Church of England, he was considered the greatest of the metaphysical poets at that time.

Anguish of the Poet:

The poem begins with the poet stating how honourable men passed away with quiet and peace, their souls leaving in a whisper. They depart silently as some of their grieving friends declare that they are gone while some remain in denial, refusing to accept their demise. The poet now addresses his wife. He implores that they too part silently, without tears and raging anguish. For he feels that it would be a slander to their past happiness should they announce their love and grief to everyone.

The poet can be seen to be musing here. He states how the moving of the Earth, that is, earthquakes, makes humans fear whereas the moving of celestial spheres, which is far greater in significance, seems innocent enough. What he means here is to state that the passing away of ordinary people is an event of much turbulence while that of greater beings is quiet. Here, the poet states how the souls of the lovers under the moon can never be parted as they are 'elemented' by the love that binds them together, that constitutes their very being.

Love of the Poet as a Compass:

The poet states how the love that he shares with his wife is far more 'refined', so refined that they themselves were unable to define it. So connected in the mind are they that the demise of mere bodily organs such as 'eyes, lips, and hands' does not affect their love in any way. The poet declares their souls to be one. Even as he has to leave his wife, for now, all he sees is not a separation but an expansion of their love, just like how gold expands upon being hammered. However, if it was to be said that their souls were two distinct souls, then it would imply that their souls are entwined like the two legs of a compass. The soul of his beloved wife is the foot that is stationary, the one that moves only, himself if the other does.

The imagery of the compass continues here. He reiterates how the foot that remains fixed, his wife, only is seemingly stationary. The fixed foot is always drawn to the one that moves, leaning towards it, longing. It goes erect with excitement each time the roaming foot comes 'home'. The poet asserts that such is how his beloved wife was to him, the stationary point in his life around which he revolved. Her stability makes him circle her again and again, ending right where he began—with her, in love.

Conclusion:

This metaphysical poem beautifully portrays love and grief entwined. The grief he pushes aside to immortalize their love and cherish her forms the crux of this poem.

JOHN DONNE - THE CANONIZATION

Text:

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his honor, or his grace,
Or the king's real, or his stampèd face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,

Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find the eagle and the dove.
The phoenix riddle hath more wit
By us; we two being one, are it.
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tombs and hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns, all shall approve
Us canonized for Love.

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love
Made one another's hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes
(So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize)
Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
A pattern of your love!"

Introduction:

"The Canonization" is a famous poem by John Donne. It was published in 1633 after Donne's death. In Christianity, canonization is the process by which an ordinary man is recognized as a saint by a church. In this poem, the love of the speaker and his lover is immortalized like a canonized saint.

Unceasing love:

In the first part of the poem, the middle-aged speaker tells his scornful friend to shut up. Because he wants to love his lover. And he does not like any kind of interference. The old lover has no problem with who is doing what and where. He just wants to think about his lover alone. The old lover asks his friend to do his own business, and oil his own machine. He advises him to think about his own position. That person can also think about the king's affairs if he wants.

The speaker then asks some questions. He asks, is there any harm caused by his love? Or did his sigh sink a merchant ship? Or his tears flooded? Or is the coldness of his love driving away the spring? Or is the warmth of the blood flowing through his body increasing the number of patients dying of the plague?

Greatness of Love:

The soldiers are fighting fiercely. Meanwhile, the lawyer is also fighting his case. Nothing stops. Everything is moving at its own pace. If he and his girlfriend spend time alone, people should not have problems. Here the poet says something comparable. He says, to let people say whatever they want, he will not mind anything. He compares himself to a candle that is responsible for its own decay. He suggests he would rather die loving. He compares himself to an eagle and a dove. He also compares their love to the phoenix of a fairy tale. He and his lover mysteriously die in love, then come back to life.

The old lover says, if he and his beloved cannot live in love, they will not hesitate to die. It is not necessary that their tombstones should have their love story written on them. Rather, their love story will be remembered through this poem. Within the poem, they take their place and are happy with it. Just as a beautiful ash urn gives greatness to the bones of a dead man, a poem will give greatness to the poet and his lover.

Conclusion:

Later generations will recognize the greatness of their love. They will compare the old lover's eye to a mirror in which the image of the whole world is reflected. The lover and his beloved will be canonized will be immortalized as a symbol of love everywhere.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY POETRY JOHN MILTON - PARADISE LOST - BOOK IX

Introduction to *Paradise Lost*:

Milton's speaker begins *Paradise Lost* by stating that his subject will be Adam and Eve's disobedience and fall from grace. He invokes a heavenly muse and asks for help in relating his ambitious story and God's plan for humankind. The actions begins with Satan and his fellow rebel angels who are found chained to a lake of fire in Hell. They quickly free themselves and fly to land, where they discover minerals and construct Pandemonium, which will be their meeting place. Inside Pandemonium, the rebel angels, who are now devils, debate whether they should begin another war with God. Beelzebub suggests that they attempt to corrupt God's beloved new creation, humankind. Satan agrees, and volunteers to go himself. As he prepares to leave Hell, he is met at the gates by his children, Sin and Death, who follow him and build a bridge between Hell and Earth.

Invocation to the Muses:

Milton says that unfortunately he can no longer talk about friendly discussions between humans and heavenly beings, but must now turn to the inevitable tragedy of his tale – Adam and Eve's disobedience and the Fall of Man. Though his story is sad, Milton declares that it is more heroic than the epic tales of Homer or Virgil because it deals with morality, not just physical strength. He invokes the Muse again, his "celestial patroness," though in the third person this time instead of directly. Milton hopes she will visit him in his sleep and

inspire him, as he worries he began this task too late in life and cannot finish it alone. Milton also asks the Muse to keep him from being distracted by vain descriptions of “long and tedious havoc” (battles), as Homer and Virgil did in their epics. He wants to finish his divine task before he gets too old or the world starts decaying with “cold / Climate.”

Satan’s Entry and his evil plan:

The scene then turns to Satan, who has been hiding on the dark side of the Earth for seven days after being banished by Gabriel. On the eighth day Satan returns to Eden disguised as a mist, following the Tigris River and rising up in the fountain next to the Tree of Life. Satan studies all the creatures of Eden, considering which one he should disguise himself in, and finally he settles on the snake for its “wit and native subtlety.” Before continuing with his plan Satan hesitates, grieving what might have been. He decides that Earth is more beautiful than Heaven ever was, but as he praises its glory he laments how he cannot take any joy in this wondrous new creation. Adam and Eve’s happiness only causes him greater anguish. Satan finally controls his thoughts and reaffirms his purpose to bring evil out of God’s good, and in one day to mar what took it six days for God to create. In this way Satan hopes to have revenge on God, who he assumes created humans to “repair his numbers” and to spite Satan, by corrupting humans so they become Hell’s instead of “Heav’nly spoils.

Satan further laments how far he has fallen, from the highest Archangel to the “mazy folds” and “bestial slime” of a serpent, but he accepts that he must deal with lowly things first if he is to fulfill his lofty ambitions. He then creeps along like a “black mist” until he finds a sleeping snake and possesses its body, which is curled up upon itself like a labyrinth.

Eve’s adamancy over winning Satan:

The next morning Adam and Eve wake up and give their usual spontaneous praise to God. Then Eve proposes that she and Adam work separately instead of together as she usually do, as she hopes to get more work done this way. Adam doesn’t approve of this idea, as he worries that the two will be more susceptible to Satan’s temptation if they are alone, and in times of danger the woman’s place is “by her husband.” He also assures Eve that their labor is not a strict necessity, as there is no way they could complete all of it until they have children to help them.

Eve responds that she “overheard” Raphael’s warning about Satan, but she wishes to prove herself should Satan attack her alone. She also recognizes that she and Adam are “not capable of death or pain,” and so have little to fear. Adam again tries to dissuade her, saying that if they are together he will be able to protect her from Satan, who is surely very clever, and that in her presence Adam feels even “More wise, more watchful, stronger” than usual.

Eve is slightly put out by this, and argues that if they defend themselves against Satan alone, they will gain “double honour,” and that surely God would not make their happiness so fragile as to depend on them always being together. Adam responds, calling Eve “O woman” and reminding her of their free will, which allows them to ruin Paradise on their own. He also warns her of Satan’s wiles, and how he might deceive her into disobedience without her even realizing it, but finally Adam relents.

Satan’s success and Eve’s Temptation:

Satan has been seeking out the pair, hoping but not expecting to find them separated. He is then delighted to see Eve by herself, tending to her flowers. Satan is momentarily stunned by her beauty and innocence, but then “the hot Hell that always in him burns” reminds him of his hate. Satan (within the serpent) coils himself elaborately and seems to stand upright in a “surging maze,” lifting his “head / Crested aloft” to get Eve’s attention.

When Eve notices Satan speaks to her, praising her beauty and grace and calling her a “goddess amongst gods.” Eve is amazed that the serpent can speak now, as she thought none of Eden’s creatures could talk except for she and Adam, and she asks how this came to be. Satan explains that he found a tree with beautiful, delicious apples, and when he ate the fruit he suddenly found himself with the ability to speak and with an expanded intellect, able to perceive both heavenly and earthly knowledge. He says the apples also made him seek out Eve so that he could give her the praise and worship she deserves.

Eve’s great blunder:

Eve is amazed by the power that this fruit supposedly gives the snake. Curious to know about the fruit, Eve follows Satan until he brings her to the Tree of Knowledge. She recoils, telling him that God has forbidden them to eat from this tree. But Satan persists arguing that God actually wants them to eat from the tree. God forbids it only because he wants them to show their independence. Eve is now seriously tempted. The flattery has made her desire to know more. She reasons that God claimed that eating from this tree meant death. But the serpent ate and he still lives. Moreover, he is able to speak and think. God would have no reason to forbid the fruit unless it makes them powerful. All the warnings seem exaggerated before the eyes of Eve. She reaches an apple, plucks it from the tree and takes a bite. The Earth then feels wounded and nature sighs in woe. For this foolish blunder of Eve, humankind has fallen.

Adam tempted by Eve:

Eve’s first fallen thought is to find Adam and to have him eat the forbidden fruit so that they might be equal. She urges Adam to eat the fruit and that by eating it, her eyes have been opened. Adam drops the wreath of flowers he made for her. He is horrified because he knows that they are now doomed, but immediately decides that he cannot possibly live without Eve. Eve does not want Adam to remain and have another woman; she wants him to suffer the same fate as she. Adam realizes that if she is to be doomed, then he must follow. He eats the fruit. He too feels invigorated at first. He turns a lustful eye on Eve, and they run off into the woods for sexual play.

Recognition of Adam and Eve’s sin:

Adam and Eve fall asleep briefly. But upon awakening they see the world in a new way. They recognize their sin, and realize that they have lost Paradise. At first, Adam and Eve both believe that they will gain glorious amounts of knowledge, but the knowledge that gained by eating the apple was only the good that they had lost and the evil that they had brought upon themselves. They now see each other’s nakedness and are filled with shame. They cover themselves with leaves. Milton explains that their appetite for knowledge has been fulfilled, and their hunger for God has been quenched.

Conclusion:

Angry and confused, they continue to blame each other for committing the sin,

while neither will admit any fault. Their shameful and tearful argument continues for hours. One of the immediate effects of sin is for Adam and Eve to blame each other and the serpent. This becomes the beginning of the corruption of the inner lives of all people. Milton portrays a weak woman who brings harm to others and them blames them for it through the character of Eve. Tragically, Adam ate the fruit out of love for Eve. But his disobedience causes him to fall out of true love of God.

ANDREW MARVELL - TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,

And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Introduction:

Andrew Marvell, one of the best metaphysical English poets, was born on March 31, 1621, in Yorkshire, England. His political reputation dominated his poetry until the twentieth century when his fame as a satirist was at a higher place. His poetry was recommended by Charles Lamb in the 19th century, and afterward, it appealed to many readers in the 20th century. His major works include: "To his Coy Mistress," a metaphysical poem; *The Last Instructions to a Painter*, a political satire; and *The Rehearsal Transpros'd*, a prose political satire. He died on August 18, 1678. "To his Coy Mistress," one of the finest metaphysical poems by Andrew Marvell, was written during English Interregnum (1649-60) and was first published after his death in 1681, in a collection of miscellaneous poems. This poem is a renowned *carpe diem* poem in English Literature.

Life-Time Cycle:

The poem centers on a man's lustful longings endeavoring to induce his virgin beloved into a sexual relationship. The speaker wants to deflower his beloved before it gets late. He mentions that if they had plenty of time in the world to waste, then he would have waited for her, and there would be no need for him to provoke her. However, unfortunately, they don't have enough time in the world. The life of the world is short, and the grave is waiting for them like a vast desert where they will turn to dust and ashes. He also mentions that one's beauty is not forever. It dies with the passage of time, which is not a pleasant prospect. The speaker addresses his beloved that before this time devours us, let us devour it.

"To his Coy Mistress" belongs to the categories of cavalier poems and *carpe diem* poems. Cavalier poems are characterized by their unprecedented subject matter. Unlike the ordinary and traditional themes of philosophy, religion, and art, these poems discussed much livelier and celebratory themes. "To his Coy Mistress" also does the same. It tackles the issue of a lover persuading his beloved in a very lively tone. The speaker speaks of his limitless love and the reasons why his beloved should accept his love. *Carpe diem* poems are the poems that reflect on the theme of enjoying the little time we have now. "To his Coy Mistress" is one of the most recognized poems of this category. It describes the mortality and shortness of life and asks the reader to take full advantage of the present time.

The Patient Lover:

The speaker, in the poem, addresses his beloved and says that if they had enough time and space in the world to spend, then her coyness (shyness) would be accepted. They would

sit somewhere and plan the ways in which they can spend their time. His beloved would sit by the side of the river Ganges and search for precious stones while he (the speaker) would sit at the side of Humber River and would love her silently and wait for her. The speaker, furthermore, adds that even she could refuse him for as much time as she wants. Her refusals will not be annoying, and he will not object to any such action. The speaker claims that he would have loved her even before the start of the time only if such a thing was possible. If they were not entrapped in the claws of the swift time, he would have let her refuse his love till the doomsday.

Everlasting Love:

The speaker addresses her beloved that his love for her would be like vegetables that will grow slowly but surely with the passage of time. He mentions his deep love for his beloved by claiming that he would praise each part of her body for a hundred years, and in the end, her heart will get open for him. He says that he will praise her eyes for two hundred years and then turn to gaze at her forehead. This gaze will last no less than one hundred years. Then, he will take a hundred years to adore each of her breasts. The speaker claims that his beloved deserves this much love, and he would not love less than she deserves.

However, the speaker says they don't have enough time as life is limited, and every living being has to die one day. Furthermore, time waits for no one. It flies, leaving everything behind. He says that the afterworld is like a vast desert where everything vanishes with time, and the same is the case with beauty. It will also fade.

Beauty and Virginity of the Beloved:

After mentioning his beloved's beauty, the speaker speaks of her beloved's virginity that she has preserved for a long time. He says that in the grave, her preserved virginity will be attacked by worms, and the honor, for which she has saved her virginity, will turn to dust. At the same time, his lust for her beauty, too, will turn ashes. He says that a grave is an isolated place, and no two persons meet there.

The speaker suggests that youth is the best time of life. They should enjoy their lives just like birds. As long as the young-looking skin of a person is garden-fresh, he/she should take advantage of the youthful moments. During youth, the fire of desire blisters in them, and they have the opportunity to do whatever they want to do. To the speaker, life is filled with struggle and resentment, while the youth is the greatest chance to cross the arid and dull Iron Gate of life with love and affection. They can't make their bad times wait for them. However, they can make the most of their time with love and unitedness.

Major themes:

Time Flies:

One of the major themes of the poem is "time waits for no one," and it flies as if it has wings. The speaker, time and again, mentions in the poem that everything would have been acceptable on behalf of his beloved if they had a lot of time. However, the time they have in their lives is limited and very short. To add to this, the age of youth is shorter, and they will not be able to have the same fiery spirits once it passes. Since they don't have enough time to live and enjoy her shyness; to him is a crime. Marvell lived in the time of Galileo and Newton, who revolutionized the way we think of time. It was a hot topic of debate in that era. For Marvel, time is an antagonist of love. It takes away everything with it and leaves nothing

but dust. Therefore, his poem warns young people to be happy at the moment and enjoy the very short life we have.

Mortality:

The speaker of the poem envisions the images of the afterlife. To him, humans are nothing more than dust and ashes in the vast deserts after death. On the other hand, life and especially youth is the best time to enjoy. Without worrying about the future, one should live his/her youthful life with full enthusiasm and passion. This is the only time when life presents all its glories to humans. They are capable of enjoying every moment to the fullest. Moreover, the mortal nature of humans' lives makes love the essence of life. When life is going to end in any way, it is better to spend it in love and affection. This way, life can become beautiful.

The Negation of Ideal Love:

The ideas of platonic love and unrequited love are celebrated in many poems. However, this poem negates all such concepts and emphasizes the point that physical relation is necessary for love. The ideal notions of love and respect are mere talks. It manifests the idea that lovers should meet and find happiness in the closeness of each other.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETRY:

JOHN DRYDEN - LINES 150 – 476 FROM *ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL*

Text:

150Of these the false Achitophel was first:
151A name to all succeeding ages curst.
152For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
153Sagacious, bold and turbulent of wit:
154Restless, unfixt in principles and place;
155In pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace.
156A fiery soul, which working out its way,
157Fretted the pigmy-body to decay:
158And o'er inform'd the tenement of clay.
159A daring pilot in extremity;
160Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves went high
161He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
162Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
163Great wits are sure to madness near alli'd;
164And thin partitions do their bounds divide:
165Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
166Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
167Punish a body which he could not please;
168Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
169And all to leave, what with his toil he won
170To that unfeather'd, two-legg'd thing, a son:
171Got, while his soul did huddled notions try;
172And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.

173In friendship false, implacable in hate:
174Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the state.
175To compass this, the triple bond he broke;
176The pillars of the public safety shook:
177And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke.
178Then, seiz'd with fear, yet still affecting fame,
179Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.
180So easy still it proves in factious times,
181With public zeal to cancel private crimes:
182How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
183Where none can sin against the people's will:
184Where crowds can wink; and no offence be known,
185Since in another's guilt they find their own.
186Yet, fame deserv'd, no enemy can grudge;
187The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
188In Jewish courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin
189With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean:
190Unbrib'd, unsought, the wretched to redress;
191Swift of dispatch, and easy of access.
192Oh, had he been content to serve the crown,
193With virtues only proper to the gown;
194Or, had the rankness of the soil been freed
195From cockle, that opprest the noble seed:
196David, for him his tuneful harp had strung,
197And heav'n had wanted one immortal song.
198But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand;
199And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land:
200Achitophel, grown weary to possess
201A lawful fame, and lazy happiness;
202Disdain'd the golden fruit to gather free,
203And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
204Now, manifest of crimes, contriv'd long since,
205He stood at bold defiance with his prince:
206Held up the buckler of the people's cause,
207Against the crown; and skulk'd behind the laws.
208The wish'd occasion of the plot he takes;
209Some circumstances finds, but more he makes.
210By buzzing emissaries, fills the ears
211Of list'ning crowds, with jealousies and fears
212Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
213And proves the king himself a Jebusite.
214Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well,
215Were strong with people easy to rebel.
216For, govern'd by the moon, the giddy Jews

217Tread the same track when she the prime renews:
218And once in twenty years, their scribes record,
219By natural instinct they change their lord.
220Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
221Was found so fit as warlike Absalom:
222Not, that he wish'd his greatness to create,
223(For politicians neither love nor hate:)
224But, for he knew, his title not allow'd,
225Would keep him still depending on the crowd:
226That kingly pow'r, thus ebbing out, might be
227Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
228Him he attempts, with studied arts to please,
229And sheds his venom, in such words as these.
230 Auspicious Prince! at whose nativity
231Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
232Thy longing country's darling and desire;
233Their cloudy pillar, and their guardian fire:
234Their second Moses, whose extended wand
235Divides the seas, and shows the promis'd land:
236Whose dawning day, in very distant age,
237Has exercis'd the sacred prophet's rage:
238The people's pray'r, the glad diviner's theme,
239The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!
240Thee, Saviour, thee, the nation's vows confess;
241And, never satisfi'd with seeing, bless:
242Swift, unbespoken pomps, thy steps proclaim,
243And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
244How long wilt thou the general joy detain;
245Starve, and defraud the people of thy reign?
246Content ingloriously to pass thy days
247Like one of virtue's fools that feeds on praise;
248Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
249Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight.
250Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be,
251Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
252Heav'n has to all allotted, soon or late,
253Some lucky revolution of their fate:
254Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill,
255(For human good depends on human will,)
256Our fortune rolls, as from a smooth descent,
257And, from the first impression, takes the bent:
258But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind;
259And leaves repenting folly far behind.
260Now, now she meets you, with a glorious prize,

261And spreads her locks before her as she flies.
262Had thus Old David, from whose loins you spring,
263Not dar'd, when fortune call'd him, to be king.
264At Gath an exile he might still remain;
265And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.
266Let his successful youth your hopes engage;
267But shun th'example of declining age:
268Behold him setting in his western skies,
269The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.
270He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand
271The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
272Cov'ring the beach, and black'ning all the strand:
273But, like the Prince of Angels from his height,
274Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd light:
275Betray'd by one poor plot to public scorn:
276(Our only blessing since his curst return:)
277Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,
278Blown off, and scatter'd by a puff of wind.
279What strength can he to your designs oppose,
280Naked of friends and round beset with foes?
281If Pharaoh's doubtful succour he should use,
282A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
283Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring;
284Foment the war, but not support the king:
285Nor would the royal party e'er unite
286With Pharaoh's arms, t'assist the Jebusite;
287Or if they should, their interest soon would break,
288And with such odious aid, make David weak.
289All sorts of men, by my successful arts,
290Abhorring kings, estrange their alter'd hearts
291From David's rule: And 'tis the general Cry,
292Religion, Common-wealth, and Liberty.
293If, you, as champion of the public good,
294Add to their arms a chief of royal blood;
295What may not Israel hope, and what applause
296Might such a general gain by such a cause?
297Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flow'r,
298Fair only to the sight, but solid pow'r:
299And nobler is a limited command,
300Giv'n by the love of all your native land,
301Than a successive title, long, and dark,
302Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's Ark.
303 What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
304When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds!

305Desire of pow'r, on earth a vicious weed,
306Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
307In God 'tis glory: And when men aspire,
308'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
309Th' ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
310Too full of angel's metal in his frame;
311Unwarily was led from virtue's ways;
312Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with praise.
313Half loath, and half consenting to the ill,
314(For loyal blood within him struggled still)
315He thus repli'd.--And what pretence have I
316To take up arms for public liberty?
317My Father governs with unquestion'd right;
318The Faith's defender, and mankind's delight:
319Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws;
320And Heav'n by wonders has espous'd his cause.
321Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful reign?
322Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
323What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
324Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
325Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good;
326Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood.
327If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
328His crime is God's beloved attribute.
329What could he gain, his people to betray,
330Or change his right, for arbitrary sway?
331Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign,
332His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.
333If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
334The Dog-star heats their brains to this disease.
335Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
336Turn rebel, and run popularly mad?
337Were he a tyrant who, by lawless might,
338Oppress'd the Jews, and rais'd the Jebusite,
339Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
340Would curb my spirits, and restrain my hands:
341The people might assert their liberty;
342But what was right in them, were crime in me.
343His favour leaves me nothing to require;
344Prevents my wishes, and out-runs desire.
345What more can I expect while David lives?
346All but his kingly diadem he gives:
347And that: but there he paus'd; then sighing, said,
348Is justly destin'd for a worthier head.

349For when my father from his toils shall rest,
350And late augment the number of the blest:
351His lawful issue shall the throne ascend;
352Or the collat'ral line where that shall end.
353His brother, though oppress'd with vulgar spite,
354Yet dauntless and secure of native right,
355Of every royal virtue stands possess'd;
356Still dear to all the bravest, and the best.
357His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;
358His loyalty the king, the world his fame.
359His mercy ev'n th'offending crowd will find:
360For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.
361Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree;
362Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
363Yet oh that Fate, propitiously inclin'd,
364Had rais'd my birth, or had debas'd my mind;
365To my large soul, not all her treasure lent,
366And then betray'd it to a mean descent.
367I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
368And David's part disdains my mother's mold.
369Why am I scanted by a niggard-birth?
370My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth:
371And made for empire, whispers me within;
372Desire of greatness is a god-like sin.
373 Him staggering so when Hell's dire agent found,
374While fainting virtue scarce maintain'd her ground,
375He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:
376 Th'eternal God, supremely good and wise,
377Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain;
378What wonders are reserv'd to bless your reign?
379Against your will your arguments have shown,
380Such virtue's only giv'n to guide a throne.
381Not that your father's mildness I contemn;
382But manly force becomes the diadem.
383'Tis true, he grants the people all they crave;
384And more perhaps than subjects ought to have:
385For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
386And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
387But when should people strive their bonds to break,
388If not when kings are negligent or weak?
389Let him give on till he can give no more,
390The thrifty Sanhedrin shall keep him poor:
391And every shekel which he can receive,
392Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.

393To ply him with new plots, shall be my care;
394Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
395Which, when his treasure can no more supply,
396He must, with the remains of kingship, buy.
397His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears
398Call Jebusites; and Pharaoh's pensioners:
399Whom, when our fury from his aid has torn,
400He shall be naked left to public scorn.
401The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
402My arts have made obnoxious to the state;
403Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
404And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
405His right, for sums of necessary gold,
406Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold:
407Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,
408To pass your doubtful title into law:
409If not; the people have a right supreme
410To make their kings; for kings are made for them.
411All empire is no more than pow'r in trust:
412Which when resum'd, can be no longer just.
413Succession, for the general good design'd,
414In its own wrong a nation cannot bind:
415If altering that, the people can relieve,
416Better one suffer, than a nation grieve.
417The Jews well know their pow'r: ere Saul they chose,
418God was their king, and God they durst depose.
419Urge now your piety, your filial name,
420A father's right, and fear of future fame;
421The public good, the universal call,
422To which even Heav'n submitted, answers all.
423Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
424'Tis Nature's trick to propagate her kind.
425Our fond begetters, who would never die,
426Love but themselves in their posterity.
427Or let his kindness by th'effects be tri'd,
428Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
429God said he lov'd your father; could he bring
430A better proof, than to anoint him king?
431It surely show'd he lov'd the shepherd well,
432Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
433Would David have you thought his darling son?
434What means he then, to alienate the crown?
435The name of godly he may blush to bear:
436'Tis after God's own heart to cheat his heir.

437He to his brother gives supreme command;
438To you a legacy of barren land:
439Perhaps th'old harp, on which he thrums his lays:
440Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.
441Then the next heir, a prince, severe and wise
442Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
443Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
444And marks your progress in the people's hearts.
445Though now his mighty soul in grief contains,
446He meditates revenge who least complains;
447And like a lion, slumb'ring in the way,
448Or sleep-dissembling, while he waits his prey,
449His fearless foes within his distance draws;
450Constrains his roaring and contracts his paws:
451Till at the last, his time for fury found,
452He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground:
453The prostrate vulgar, passes o'er, and spares;
454But with a lordly rage, his hunters tears.
455Your case no tame expedients will afford;
456Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
457Which for no less a stake than life, you draw;
458And self-defence is Nature's eldest law.
459Leave the warm people no considering time;
460For then rebellion may be thought a crime.
461Prevail yourself of what occasion gives,
462But try your title while your father lives:
463And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
464Proclaim, you take them in the king's defence:
465Whose sacred life each minute would expose
466To plots from seeming friends and secret foes.
467And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
468Perhaps his fear, his kindness may control.
469He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
470For plighted vows too late to be undone.
471If so, by force he wishes to be gain'd;
472Like women's lechery, to seem constrain'd:
473Doubt not; but when he most affects the frown,
474Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
475Secure his person to secure your cause;
476They who possess the prince, possess the laws.

Introduction:

Absalom and Achitophel is a satirical poem in heroic couplets written by John Dryden. It was published in 1681. The poem deals in allegorical form with the attempt by

Lord Shaftesbury's party to exclude the Duke of York from the succession to the throne of England and to set the Duke of Monmouth in his place. It was written at the time when Shaftesbury's success or failure hung in balance, and was designed to influence the issue by showing, under their scriptural disguise, the true characters of the various political leaders involved. Chief among these are Monmouth who is depicted in the poem as Absalom, Shaftesbury as Achitophel, and King Charles II as David.

Shaftesbury was arrested and was to be tried for treason. It was fifteen days before the commencement of his trial that Dryden published his satire "Absalom and Achitophel" (on Nov. 9, 1681). Later on, Shaftesbury was acquitted and he fled to Holland where he died in 1683 and the Duke of Monmouth went into hiding and in 1685 led a revolt against James II and was defeated and executed.

Personal Allegory:

In the present poem, the false character of Shaftesbury has been highlighted. He misguided Monmouth to rebel against his own father. Dryden describes this situation with the help of a Biblical story of Absalom and Achitophel. Just as in the Biblical story Achitophel instigated Absalom to revolt against his own father King David, here in this case Shaftesbury instigated Monmouth to rise in rebellion against his father King Charles. In the Biblical story, Achitophel, in utter frustration, hanged himself and Absalom was caught and killed, and in this political scene Shaftesbury fled to Holland where he died in 1683 and the Duke of Monmouth was defeated and executed in 1685.

Witty and Moral Achitophel:

The false Achitophel is a man of wisdom, wit, restlessness, and flexible morality. He does not brook disgrace and always desires more power. He has a "fiery soul" and is a "daring pilot in extremity" who loves the storms more than the calm. Certainly, the poet notes, "Great wits are sure to madness near allied; / And thin partitions do their bounds divide." Achitophel toils and bears anarchy; he desires nothing more than to ruin or rule Israel. In carrying out his machinations, he breaks the triple bond, shakes the public's safety, and opens Israel up to a foreign power.

Not even one of the Abbethdin (the Jewish High Court) is as clean and honest as Achitophel. If only he had been content to serve David; if only the weed had not destroyed the noble seed. Sadly, though, "wild ambition loves to slide, not stand," and Achitophel is bored and restless. He wants fame and thus "lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree." He takes up the old crimes and defies his prince, pretending to espouse the will of the people. He hides behind the law and buzzes his words into the crowd's ears. He claims David is a Jebusite, and even though this is a weak argument, it is easy enough to sway the people with it. After all, the scribes record that it seems as if the Jews change their lord every twenty years. Achitophel has to have a leader, though, and no one seems better than Absalom. Achitophel begins to spew his venom in the following words.

Absalom – the saviour:

Achitophel begins by heralding Absalom's birth as noble, calling him a second Moses and a savior whom the kingdom loves (parents even teach babies to lisp his name!). Achitophel wonders how long Absalom will deprive the Jews of his reign. His glories will soon tarnish, his youthful fruit will rot on the tree. Heaven calls for this "lucky revolution"; if

it is not seized, then fortune will glide away and leave only “repenting folly” behind. David knew when to seize power, and Absalom should look to the *young* David as his model.

Importantly, though, he should *not* look at David now. The people do not look upon their king with glee: he is like Satan tumbling down and losing his light. He was betrayed by a public plot and should not be in power anymore. He will have no strength to defy Absalom, Achitophel explains, because he has no friends—only foes. David may turn to the Pharaoh of Egypt for help, but Achitophel is confident Egypt’s friendship would be false. Absalom is of royal blood and is the “champion of the public good.” David is merely an empty monarch with no claim to power except the line of succession drawn from “the mouldy rolls of Noah’s Ark.”

The Ambitious Absalom:

Flattery is dangerous, and young Absalom is too ambitious and desirous of fame. Achitophel helps lead him away from virtue, making him “drunk with honour” and “debauch’d with praise.” Absalom still struggles, though, and asks Achitophel what right he has to take up arms. He says his father governs rightfully, defending the Faith and the people. David has not wronged anyone: he has even pardoned millions. He is “mild, easy, humble,” and merciful; he shies away from spilling blood. Why should mildness, which is favorable in the eyes of God, be wrong in David? Pharaoh may rule Egypt haughtily, but Jerusalem does not need that.

Continuing, Absalom asks why he should rebel. His father is no tyrant; he does not hurt the Jew and raise the Jebusite. He freely gives Absalom all but his crown, and even in regard to the crown, David had told Absalom that he *wished* he could give it to him. Sadly, when David rests from his toils, it will be his brother who assumes the throne, but even though David’s brother is spiteful, he still has the right to rule and is loyal to the king. Thus, Absalom concludes, why should he try to go against Heaven when he has no “pretence to royalty?” A moment later, though, he ruminates that he wishes he did not have a debased birth. He feels that he was made for empire, and he desires greatness.

Achitophel’s Plan to deceive David:

Achitophel sees that Absalom is faltering, so he “pours fresh forces in”: he assures the young man that God blessed him with his gifts on purpose. David’s mildness is admirable, but the throne needs “manly force.” If a king is too forthcoming with gifts and grants, people will see him as witless, negligent, and weak.

Achitophel explains the plan. He will ply David with plots or an expensive war; David will have to seek friends, and Achitophel will make sure the people see those friends as Jebusites and Pharaoh’s men. David will be left naked and scorned. Then, Achitophel will make his successor, whom he hates, obnoxious to the people. The elders will see the successor as a foe and sell off his right. David will have no choice but to turn to Absalom to “pass [his] doubtful title into law.”

This succession will be acceptable to the people, and it will be better for Israel overall. The Jews know what they are doing, after all, for they got rid of God and put Saul where they wanted him.

Achitophel urges Absalom to not let David enchant his mind or sway him with love and kindness. He also points out that God loved David and gave him Israel; David loves Absalom, so why should he not do the same? Why should his brother succeed and Absalom inherit barren land? His brother already sees how much the people love Absalom and is jealous of him. He “marks [Absalom’s] progress in the people’s hearts” and like a lion is waiting for his prey. He will wait for that perfect moment and then spring on Absalom.

Conclusion:

Because of this, Absalom must try *now* for the title. He can do nothing if David is gone and David’s brother has the throne. He must state that he will take up arms in David’s defense and protect him from all of the plots that will begin to besiege him. He must pretend loyalty and “secure [David’s] person to secure [his] cause.”

THOMAS GRAY - ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Text:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimm'ring landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
 The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
 Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
 How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
 If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
 Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,

Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

Introduction:

Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" belongs to the genre of elegy. An elegy is a poem written to mourn a person's death. Gray wrote this elegy in the year 1742. However, he published it only in the year 1751. He wrote this poem after the death of his friend Richard West. The poem is an elegy of the common man. It is Gray's masterpiece. The poem is philosophical and emotional at the same time. The beauty of the poem lies in its simplicity. Nonetheless, the poet brings out the ultimate truth about life and death in free-flowing poetic lines.

Inevitability of Death:

Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," presents the omniscient speaker who talks to the reader. First, he stands alone in a graveyard deep in thought. While there, he thinks about the dead people buried there. The graveyard referred to here is the graveyard of the church in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. The speaker contemplates the end of human life throughout the poem. He remarks on the inevitability of death that every individual has to face.

Besides mourning the loss of someone, the speaker in the elegy reminds the reader that all people will die one day. Death is an unavoidable and natural thing in everyone's life. When one dies today, tomorrow, a stranger will see the person's tombstone. Out of curiosity, he will ask about the person buried there to a villager. The villager will reply that he knew the man. He would add that he had seen him in various spots. Sometimes, he will also remark that he had stopped seeing the man one day, and then there was the tombstone.

Tribute to the Ancestors:

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," begins with the description of the evening in a rural place. The evening church bell tells the passing of the day. Cattle bleed as they turn homewards. Tired farmers also follow. Darkness begins to cover the world. The speaker, that is, the poet is standing in a graveyard. All is quiet and. Only the beadle buzzes and the owl hoots. Among a group of elm trees, there is the graveyard. It belongs to the village. There are burials of the villagers' ancestors in the graveyard.

The poet goes on to talk about the people buried in the graveyard. They are sleeping in beds that are low to the ground. No sound can wake them up. The twittering of the swallow, the morning call of the cock, even a horn cannot wake them. Their wives and their children, nobody care for them anymore. They were hard-working men when they were alive. Their plowing, their harvesting, and their farming, all were efficient. The speaker asks not to look down upon their simple life and hard work. Ambitious people think of village life as simple. But the villagers had their joy and sorrow much like others.

The Rich Ancestral Past:

The poet says that the poor are not inferior to the rich in death. Invariably, every human life ends in death. The beauty, the wealth, the glory all lead to the unavoidable end. The villager's grave does not have the grandness in ceremonies and tombstones. But, none of that can bring a person back to life. So, there is no use of them. One should remember that no one knew that one of the dead villagers may have achieved greatness in life. Therefore, there may be a ruler or a poet buried in there. The poet remarks, the villagers who were dead would also have talent. There might be a Milton or a Cromwell buried there. They did not get opportunities to prove themselves. Like gems hidden deep under the ocean and like desert

flowers, they have perished without notice. Given opportunities, they would have also succeeded. People would have read their deeds in history.

The Moralistic Rustics:

The villagers did not wish to involve in treachery and deceit. They were honest people and wished to lead simple lives. So, they kept themselves away from the mad crowd of the cities and kingdoms. They were true to themselves. They liked peace and honesty. But still, there were markings to note their memory. The tombstones were simple. The language was ordinary. But, there is truth in their memory. The dead villagers rest in the graveyard without recognition. Also, this poem will be a tribute to them. They lived their lives with morals. They died in the care of a loving person. And, they closed their eyes with prayers in one's eyes. One day, a kind soul may come and enquire after the dead one out of curiosity.

If someone asks about the poet who rests in the graveyard, one of the villagers may talk about him. A free-spirited man was the poet. He went to the mountains in the morning, stood under the beach tree sometimes. Then, he went to the brook. Besides, he was sometimes muttering his fancies. The villager would say that he missed seeing the man one day. The poet was missing. The villager did not see him in his usual places. But, he saw the funeral procession and how the man was buried in the graveyard

The Epitaph:

In the poem, Gray, the poet himself, writes the epitaph of his own. He says that his life is full of sadness and depression. However, he feels proud of his knowledge. He calls it incomparable. In addition to this, he says that 'No one is perfect in this world.' So, he asks the reader not to judge anyone in the graveyard. Each and every soul is different and takes rest for eternity in the graveyard. In conclusion, the poet, through the speaker, ends the elegy by saying that death is an inevitable event in this world. Also, he says that man's efforts and his struggles to succeed in life comes to an end in death. Thus, death conquers man regardless of his successes and/or failures in his endeavors during his life.

Conclusion:

The poem, "*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*", speaks of ordinary people. It is an elegy for poor villagers. They are not famous but they are honest. So, the poet has written this poem in honoring them. The poem talks about death as an equalizer. Rich or poor should end in death. Moreover, no man can escape death. In death, all are equal. Besides, nothing including any amount of rich or glory can bring the dead to life. Even poor people deserve respect for their death. Given opportunities, they would have become great men in their times.

THOMAS GRAY - THE BARD

Text:

I.1.

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion on thy banners wait,
Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing
They mock the air with idle state.
Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor even thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail

To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scatter'd wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance;
To arms! cried Mortimer, and couch'd his quiv'ring lance.

I.2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Rob'd in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Stream'd, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre;
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I.3.

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hush'd the stormy main;
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smear'd with gore, and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famish'd eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:

With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line:—

II.1.

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonising King!
She-Wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heav'n. What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combin'd,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II.2.

"Mighty victor, mighty lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the Sable Warrior fled?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising Morn.
Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

II.3.

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare;
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast.
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?

Long years of havoc urge their destin'd course
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
The bristled Boar in infant-gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III.1.

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.)'
Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblest'd, unpitied, here to mourn!
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies!
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
All-hail, ye genuine kings, Britannia's issue, hail!

III.2.

"Girt with many a baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strings of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-colour'd wings.

III.3.

"The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
In buskin'd measures move
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice, as of the cherub-choir,
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious man, think'st thou, yon sanguine cloud,
Rais'd by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: with joy I see
The different doom our Fates assign.
Be thine Despair, and scept'red Care,
To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless night.

Introduction:

The poem '*The Bard: A Pindaric Ode*,' by the 18th-century English poet Thomas Gray (1716-1771), was written in 1755. It is said that the poem took two years to complete because the poet suffered from writer's block. In 1757, Thomas Gray completed the masterpiece, which is another example of his poetic excellence. The first word from the title, i.e., "Bard," means poet. The poem is an ode written in the Pindaric form in which Thomas Gray portrays the blood-stained time of King Edward I. In the poem '*The Bard: A Pindaric Ode*,' the poet expresses anger at King Edward I for the genocide of the bards and commemorates their deaths.

Prophesy upon Future:

The poem tells the story of a Welsh bard who, after seeing the defeat of his people by Edward I of England, curses the conquerors and throws himself to his death from a cliff. The poem has three parts, written in different styles, featuring vivid imagery and displaying emotional intensity. The first part of the poem, '*The Bard: A Pindaric Ode*' by Thomas Gray, describes the bard's prophetic vision of the future, in which the glory of Wales is restored, and the English are defeated. In this stanza, Gray sets the scene for the poem and establishes a mood of gloom and foreboding.

The stanza begins with the description of a "ruined" and "lonely" tower that stands "amidst the desert" of a Welsh landscape. The tower is said to have been the dwelling of a

legendary bard, who is now long dead. The stanza goes on to describe the “awful” sound of the bard’s harp, which is said to have echoed through the valley and struck fear into the hearts of the English invaders who once tried to conquer Wales.

The Bard’s Anger:

The second stanza of *‘The Bard: A Pindaric Ode’* continues to describe the bard’s mournful song, which is directed now towards the English conquerors. The bard curses them and calls upon the spirits of the Welsh heroes who have died in battle to rise and seek revenge. He imagines the fallen warriors as ghosts who haunt the battlefield, seeking vengeance for their defeat. The stanza ends with the bard warning the English that their victory is temporary and that the Welsh will one day rise again and reclaim their land. The language in this stanza is powerful and intense, reflecting the bard’s anger and grief over the defeat of his people.

The Bard’s despair:

The third stanza is a highly emotional description of the bard’s rage and despair. The stanza begins with the bard calling on the spirits of his ancestors and the gods of his people to avenge the defeat of the Welsh. He then describes a series of violent and destructive natural phenomena, such as thunder, lightning, and earthquakes, which symbolize the anger of the gods and the power of the people of Welsh. The stanza ends with the bard throwing his harp into the sea and declaring that he also will join his people in death by throwing himself from the cliff.

The main theme of *‘The Bard: A Pindaric Ode’* by Thomas Gray is the idea of national identity and the struggle of a people to resist conquest and preserve their cultural heritage. The poem explores the tensions between the Welsh and the English and how conquest and defeat can lead to feelings of anger, despair, and a desire for revenge. It also examines the poet as a voice of the people and a defender of their history and culture.

Conclusion:

The poem touches on the themes of heroism, sacrifice, and the power of prophecy and myth to shape our understanding of the past and the future. Overall, *‘The Bard: A Pindaric Ode’* is a complex and powerful exploration of the themes of nationalism, historical memory, and the poet’s role in society.

THOMAS GRAY - ON A FAVOURITE CAT DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLDFISHES

Text:

’Twas on a lofty vase’s side,
Where China’s gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,

Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The genii of the stream;
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,
She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.
Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to every watery god,
Some speedy aid to send.
No dolphin came, no Nereid stirred;
Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard;
A Favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize;
Nor all that glisters, gold.

Introduction:

In the *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes*, Thomas Gray uses a cat and fish to teach a moral. In the "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes", the setting was set in the first stanza. The poem gave you an idea that it took place in a very nice house that had a large china vase, that held water, also it gives the allusion that in this vase were flowers and fish. It describes beautiful blue-

tinted flowers in bloom and the fish as **an** angel-like Beta fish, which had a coat of armour made in gold with the hint of royal purple. When Gray went into describing a fluffy black and white tabby cat with deep green eyes.

Helplessness of Selima:

The cat's name is Selima and she is perched at the top of the vase watching the fish glide through the water. Selima was planning to eat the fish as soon as she could catch them. So she slowly reached with her paw to nab one of the fishes, her first attempt fails so she thinks again of how she can reach them. Eventually, she falls in and tries to get out eight times while crying for help from a forgiving soul. No one seems to hear her and she drowns in the water where the fish swam. In the second to last stanzas, it talks about how she cried out to a "wat'ry God" to send aid to her. "No dolphins came, no Nereid stirr'd: Nor cruel Tom, nor Susan heard" which in my opinion means that no one heard Selima not even another cat, servant or even her owner came to help her in her dismay. The last stanza is basically the moral to the little story. The first two lines make the reader believe that the beauty of the vase nor the fishes were disturbed and that one false step could mean your life.

The rest of the poem has the bases of the moral, which is do not always go for everything that you want cause it could turn out that it is not what it seemed to be in the first place. An example of this moral in today's society would be a company that relies on its stock to help it succeed. As the stock goes up the company seem to get cocky with the money they have until the stock starts to drop. Then eventually the company will have to file for bankrupts cause they choose to send their money foolishly.

Hidden Imagery:

Thomas Gray originally wrote this poem in honour of Selima, Walpole's cat that drowned after tumbling into a china goldfish bowl. Gray wrote this poem to put in the underlying moral to get his readers to think of their choices in life. The language usage through word choice, syntax, and style create a dimension all their own. Gray uses an array of words commonly found in someone who is highly educated and knowledgeable. He uses descriptive words with hidden meanings and connotations. For example, he uses the names of Tom and Susan for people who will not come to his aid. Tom and Susan are generally the names of household servants who should be around to come to his aid, and yet, in fact, are not. This implies the relationship and feelings the servants have toward their Master and toward his possessions. The word choice for the title, ode, in particular, suggests this is a tribute to a loved one or someone of meaningful significance. This in fact is true; the cat's owner as a tribute writes this poem to his beloved friend the cat. The sentences are long as well as the complexities of the thoughts. The descriptions are vivid; they come to life; they leave much to the imagination.

Theme of the Poem:

Tonality and mood is set through the interaction of the speaker. The speaker of this poem is the owner of the cat. He is the only speaker and his tone stays consistent throughout. He uses parodies by making the simplest things seem so complex, humorous to some degree. Over-exaggeration and colourful descriptions add to the flow of the poem. The speaker is direct with his feelings. He is honest and open about the world as he sees it. His specific word choice displays this openness. He makes references to mythology, references to family, and references to mankind.

ROBERT BURNS - HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

Text:

And send the Godly in a pet to pray.

— Alexander Pope.

O Thou that in the Heavens does dwell!

Wha, as it pleases best thysel,

Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell,

A' for Thy glory!

And no for ony gude or ill

They've done before Thee.—

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,

When thousands Thou has left in night,

That I here before Thy sight,

For gifts and grace,

A burning and a shining light

To a' this place.—

What was I, or my generation,

That I should get such exaltation?

I, wha deserv'd most just damnation,

For broken laws

Sax thousand years ere my creation,

Thro' Adam's cause!

When from my mother's womb I fell,

Thou might hae plunged me deep in hell,

To gnash my gooms, and weep, and wail,

In burning lakes,

Where damned devils roar and yell

Chain'd to their stakes.—

Yet I am here, a chosen sample,

To shew Thy grace is great and ample:

I'm here, a pillar o' Thy temple

Strong as a rock,

A guide, a ruler and example

To a' Thy flock.—

[O Lord thou kens what zeal I bear,

When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,

And singin' there, and dancin' here,

Wi' great an' sma';

For I am keepet by the fear,

Free frae them a'.—]

But yet—O Lord—confess I must—

At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust;

And sometimes too, in wardly trust

Vile Self gets in;

But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd wi' sin.—
O Lord—yestreen—thou kens—wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg!
O may 't ne'er be a living plague,
To my dishonor!
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.—
Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times—I trow—
But L—d, that friday I was fou
When I cam near her;
Or else, Thou kens, thy servant true
Wad never steer her.—
Maybe Thou lets this fleshy thorn
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he o'er proud and high should turn,
That he's sae gifted;
If sae, thy hand maun e'en be borne
Untill Thou lift it.—
Lord bless Thy Chosen in this place,
For here Thou has a chosen race:
But God, confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy rulers to disgrace
And open shame.—
Lord mind Gaun Hamilton's deserts!
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony taking arts
Wi' Great and Sma',
Frae God's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.—
And when we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
And set the warld in a roar
O' laughin at us:
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.—
Lord hear my earnest cry and prayer
Against that Presbytry of Ayr!
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upon their heads!
Lord visit them, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds!

O Lord my God, that glib-tongu'd Aiken!
My very heart and flesh are quaking
To think how I sat, sweating and shaking,
An' pish'd wi' dread,
While Auld wi' hingin lip gaed sneaking
And hid his head!
Lord, in thy day o' vengeance try him!
Lord visit him that did employ him!
And pass not in thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their prayer;
But for thy people's sake destroy them,
An' dinna spare!
But Lord, remember me and mine
Wi' mercies temporal and divine!
That I for grace and gear may shine,
Excell'd by nane!
And a' the glory shall be thine!
AMEN! AMEN!

Introduction:

Holy Willie's Prayer stands apart from other poems as it is far more universal in its implications. The reader needs no glosses, as he does to understand fully *The Ordination* and *The Kirk's Alarm*, and *Holy Willie* defines his own character as the poem proceeds so that it becomes irrelevant whether or not Burns was drawing a real person. Burns did, however, supply an argument in one of the manuscripts of the poem, and it is of some interest. First printed anonymously in an eight page pamphlet in 1799 it is without doubt, the greatest of all Burns satirical poems. It is the most brilliant assault ever delivered against the practical bigotry of the kirk. This is an attack against bigotry and hypocrisy as you will never find in any of Burns works a single word against religion.

Holy Willie:

Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tipping orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline, a Mr. Gavin Hamilton, Holy Willie and his priest, Father Auld, after a full hearing in the Presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel, but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the country. On losing his process, the muse overheard him at his devotions.

Holy Willie as a Spy:

The story behind the poem is - Daddy Auld was a strict Calvinist minister in the parish of Mauchline. Willie Fisher (Holy Willie) was an elder of Daddy Auld's Kirk. Gavin Hamilton was a respected landlord and was almoner in the kirk. He had the job of collecting the penny fees from every parishioner but was of such a kindly heart that if someone honestly

could not pay then Gavin Hamilton acted in a Christian manner by either letting them off or letting them pay later. As a result of this the money was short and the finger was pointed at Gavin Hamilton as having taken the money for his own ends. For this he was asked to appear before the Kirk Session to explain the shortage of money.

Willie Fisher decided to spy on Gavin Hamilton to see if any other charges could be brought against him.

Gavin Hamilton asked Aitken, a lawyer in Ayr, to defend him, and he won his case. The Kirk appealed to the presbytery and again Hamilton won. The Kirk finally appealed to the Synod of Glasgow and for a third time Hamilton won. This case would not have been a trifling local matter but would be known the length and breadth of Scotland at the time. Willie Fisher was broken man, and ended up found dead in a ditch with a bottle of whisky not far from his hand.

The Ruined Characteristic of Holy Willie:

The device of having Holy Willie condemn himself by reciting a prayer overheard by the reader is a simple one, but it enables Burns to achieve a crushing indictment of the Calvinist doctrine of election by showing the kind of hypocrisy such a belief forces on one who considers himself among the elect. The point of the poem is not simply that Holy Willie is a hypocrite, it is that some kind of unconscious hypocrisy is made inevitable by the views he professes. If you imagine you are predestined to salvation you become both self righteous and morally reckless, if, on the other hand, you believe that your lot is cast with the great majority of predestinately damned, then it does not matter how you behave. Either way your character is ruined.

Message of the Poem:

The poem never degenerates into farce or burlesque; the liturgical note is maintained throughout, but it becomes more monstrous as the poem progresses and the character of the speaker reveals itself, until, with that final "Amen, Amen" the whole religious tradition of which Holy Willie is the spokesman dissolves itself in irony. The first verse, with its slow movement and deliberate psalmlike opening, makes a point about the complacency of the speaker with powerful suddenness. The reader follows the solemn, religious diction until he finds himself, unaware, caught up in the calm statement that man's ultimate fate is arranged by God without reference to his behavior.

ROBERT BURNS - AULD LANG SYNE

Text:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my dear,

For auld lang syne.

We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,

For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint stowp!
And surely I'll be mine!

And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit,
Sin' auld lang syne.

Chorus

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

Chorus

And there's a hand, my trusty fere!
And gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude-willie waught,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus

Introduction:

The best known and most often sung of all songs, reminds us that Burns is as much the poet of friendship as of love. This song is now generally sung at the end of a convivial evening and at New Year the world over. That it speedily took the place of Scotland's older parting song "Good Night and Joy Be with You All" and that it has become the traditional song among English-speaking peoples for bidding farewell to the old year and hailing the new are evidence of the success with which Burns was able to present the theme of passing time through a context of remembered friendship. The song very cunningly combines a note of present conviviality with a poignant sense of the loss of earlier companionship brought by time and distance. Such a note is just right for New Year's Eve, when the mind hovers between retrospect and anticipation and we think equally of days gone for ever and days to come.

Man's relationship with Time:

Of course Auld Lang Syne is **more** than a New Year's song. It is one of the great expressions of the tragic ambiguity of man's relation to time, which mixes memory with desire, carrying away old friendships and bringing new, turning childhood escapades into old men's recollections, making change the very condition of consciousness, and at the same time the creator and the destroyer of human experience. All this is done in the purest folk idiom, with no abstract statements or generalizations, except for the chorus itself, which states in simple but powerful terms the question that lies at the heart of so much human emotion. The song appeared in the fifth volume of the Museum, published at the end of 1796 after Burns' death, and Burns probably saw it in proof. There are minor variations from the version communicated to Thomson in 1793.

**UNIT – V: MODERN POETRY:
RUPERT BROOKE - THE SOLDIER**

Text:

If I should die, think only this of me:
 That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;
A body of England's, breathing English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Introduction:

"The Soldier" is a poem written in 1914 by Rupert Brooke. It was published the following year in the book *1914 and Other Poems*. The poem was originally written during World War I and features a narrator discussing the practice of burying dead soldiers near the places they died instead of being returned home. Brooke never saw combat in the war, but his poems written during that time made him a popular poet to this day. Brooke died shortly after finishing the poem. On April 25, 1915, Brooke died of a blood infection from a mosquito bite and was himself buried abroad on the island of Skyros in Greece.

Introduction to the Poem:

"The Soldier" is narrated by a soldier reminiscing about the practice of burying dead soldiers near the places where they were killed. It was not routine to ship soldiers back home during World War I. The narrator is generally agreed to be Brooke himself, though many poems are considered to be narrated by someone other than the writer themselves.

The narrator speaks to an unknown party to comfort them about the burial of English soldiers on foreign lands. He tells them that graves are a part of England, that they are a piece of home for those soldiers who died abroad. He concludes the poem by stating that if he should meet the same fate, he is connected both physically and mentally to England, and anywhere he is buried will thusly become English soil.

Martyrdom of the Soldiers:

"The Soldier" is a poem written during wartime to provide comfort to those who have lost loved ones abroad. It is a highly patriotic poem, one written early in the war when the nation was far more optimistic about the war and its outcome. The poem's repetition of "England" reinforces this patriotic sentiment. The poem is intended to romanticize the deaths of soldiers by essentially showing that England survives despite their loss, that their sacrifice has symbolically brought a piece of England to other lands. The graves and battlefields are

not described in dark or ominous terms, but rather with images of flowers and of nature seemingly at peace. This is, of course, in stark contrast to the descriptions and accounts of the Great War that came in the following months and years. The poem's overall tone is one of hope and dignity in the face of death. It doesn't deny that there will be sacrifices in the War, but it implies that those sacrifices are for a greater good.

Structure of the poem:

‘The Soldier’ is a sonnet, a style of poetry traditionally associated with William Shakespeare. However, Brooke’s poem is not the three four-line units of English sonnets, but rather the format of an Italian sonnet. It begins with an opening octave, or eight-line stanza, and ends with a closing sestet, or six-line stanza. The poem follows an ‘ababcdcd efgfg’ rhyme scheme.

WILFRED OWEN - ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

Text:

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Introduction:

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) is widely regarded as one of Britain’s greatest war poets. Writing from the perspective of his intense personal experience of the front line, his poems, including ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’ and ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, bring to life the physical and mental trauma of combat. Owen’s aim was to tell the truth about what he called ‘the pity of War’. In 1915, Owen enlisted in the army and in December 1916 was sent to France, joining the 2nd Manchester Regiment on the Somme. Within two weeks of his arrival he was commanding a platoon on the front line. In the midst of heavy gunfire, he waded for miles through trenches two feet deep in water with the constant threat of gas attacks. The brutal reality of war had a profound effect on him, as he recounted in letters to his mother. His poems ‘The Sentry’ and ‘Exposure’ record specific ordeals of this time.

War and Poetry – a besiege:

Written in sonnet form, ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’ serves as a dual rejection: both of the brutality of war, and of religion. The first part of the poem takes place during a pitched battle, whereas the second part of the poem is far more abstract and happens outside

the war, calling back to the idea of the people waiting at home to hear about their loved ones. It was Siegfried Sassoon who gave the poem the title 'Anthem'. This poem also draws quite heavily on Wilfred Owen's love of poetry.

Owen's Prayer and Lack of Faith:

The first stanza of '*Anthem for Doomed Youth*' continues in the pattern of a pitched battle, as though it were being written during the Pushover the trenches. Owen notes the 'monstrous anger' of the guns, the 'stuttering rifles', and the 'shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells'. It's a horrible world that Owen creates in those few lines, bringing forward the idea of complete chaos and madness, of an almost animalistic loss of control – but in the same paragraph, he also points out the near-reluctance of the soldiers fighting. At this point, a great deal of the British Army had lost faith in the war as a noble cause and was only fighting out of fear of court-martial, therefore the rifles stutter their 'hasty orisons'. Orisons are a type of prayer, which further points out Owen's lack of faith.

The Poignant War:

Owen moves away from the war to speak about the people who have been affected by it: the civilians who mourn their lost brothers, fathers, grandfathers, and uncles, the ones who wait for them to come home and wind up disappointed and miserable when they don't. The acute loss of life that Owen witnessed in the war is made all the more poignant and heartbreaking in the second stanza, which, compared to the first, seems almost unnaturally still. He speaks about the futility of mourning the dead who have been lost so carelessly, and by making the mourners youthful, he draws further attention to the youthfulness of the soldiers themselves. Note the clever use of words like pallor most often associated with death or dying.

Brutality of War:

The final line – '*And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds*' – highlights the inevitability and the quiet of the second stanza, the almost pattern-like manner of mourning that has now become a way of life. It normalizes the funeral and hints at the idea that this is not the first, second, nor last time that such mourning will be carried out.

W. H. AUDEN – IN MEMORY OF W. B. YEATS

Text:

I

He disappeared in the dead of winter:

The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,

And snow disfigured the public statues;

The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.

What instruments we have agree

The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Far from his illness

The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,

The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;

By mourning tongues

The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,

An afternoon of nurses and rumours;

The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed; he became his admirers.
Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections,
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.
But in the importance and noise of to-morrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of the bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are fairly accustomed
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual.
What instruments we have agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

II

You were silly like us; your gift survived it all:
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

III

Earth, receive an honoured guest:
William Yeats is laid to rest.
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry.
In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;
Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye.
Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,

With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;
With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;
In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

Introduction:

‘In Memory of W. B. Yeats’ by W. H. Auden (1907-73) was written in 1939, following the death of the Irish poet W. B. Yeats in January of that year. As well as being an elegy for the dead poet, ‘In Memory of W. B. Yeats’ is also a meditation on the role and place of poetry in the modern world.

PART I:

In the first section, W. H. Auden discusses the death of W. B. Yeats ‘in the dead of winter’ (well, Yeats did die in January, after all), a time when the brooks were all frozen over and snow made it difficult to make out the public statues. It was so cold the mercury in the thermometers dropped. As Yeats lay ill and dying, the world – and, specifically, Ireland – went on as usual (a common theme of Auden’s when dealing with death. When Yeats died, his death ‘was kept from his poems’: in other words, the poetry Yeats wrote remains unaltered by the fact that Yeats the man has now died.

Auden then describes Yeats’s death, in the third stanza, concluding that, with his passing, Yeats ‘became his admirers’: once Yeats the man had ceased to be, Yeats the poet became whatever his readers and fans decided he was. Here, we can sense Auden making a broader point about the ‘immortality’ of poets: they survive or don’t survive depending on who reads them, and *how* those readers read them. Auden says that the words of a dead man are ‘modified in the guts of the living’: we cannot help but change the meaning of what a poet wrote, adapting it to suit out our times and our own feelings.

Auden concludes this first section of ‘In Memory of W. B. Yeats’ by acknowledging that the world will go on tomorrow, but a ‘few thousand’ will think of the day Yeats died as ‘one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual’. There is a refusal to indulge in sentimental public mourning here (something that also underscores the surprising origins of Auden’s most famous poem, which had its roots in parody rather than sincere elegy), and a classical downplaying of the importance of Yeats’s death. It *is* important and noteworthy, but it is like a day on which one does something out of the ordinary (*slightly*), rather than a dramatic day that changes everything.

PART II:

In the second section of ‘In Memory of W. B. Yeats’, Auden turns to address (or apostrophise) the dead Yeats directly. Auden begins to turn away from Yeats in particular to think about poetry more generally. It is here that Auden makes his famous statement that ‘poetry makes nothing happen’. This is often analysed as an admission of poetry’s limitations

as a tool for social and political change. Auden says in the previous line that 'Ireland has her madness and her weather still', because 'poetry makes nothing happen'. But who in their right mind would expect a poem to change the weather? This is absurd, and deliberately so: Auden is wryly remarking on the failure of poetry to change things, but this is not quite the cry of despair and powerlessness it is often taken for.

Auden goes on to say that poetry 'survives' in a whole host of places, and although it doesn't make anything happen, it is itself a 'way of *happening*', not something that makes history happen but part of history itself, perhaps, and part of life.

PART III:

The final section of 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats' is addressed the burial of Yeats, Auden concludes by addressing the shade of the dead Yeats again, asking him to 'persuade us to rejoice' and to heal us with the 'fountain' of his work. The final couplet sees Auden commanding Yeats – Yeats the poet, for Yeats the man has gone – to teach the free man, the living, to praise and celebrate in the short time allotted to us ('the prison of his days').

Throughout the poem, there is a taut restraint that prevents the poem from spilling over into mawkishness or sentimentality. Auden describes the day of Yeats's death as 'a dark cold day', but this is objectively true, rather than mere pathetic fallacy or Romantic expression. Auden feels the day of Yeats's passing to have been 'cold' and 'dark' in a more abstract, even metaphysical sense, but it is also something on which all of the instruments can 'agree': it *was* cold and it *was* dark.

W. H. AUDEN - MUSEE DES BEAUX ARTS

Text:

About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or
just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen,
skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the
torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns
away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun

shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the
green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have
seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Introduction:

Musee des Beaux Arts, ' or *'Museum of Fine Arts,'* by W.H. Auden is a free verse poem that is separated into two parts, or stanzas. It was written in December of 1938 while the poet was living in Brussels, Belgium. When it was first published it appeared under the title, *'Palais des beaux arts,'* or *'Palace of Fine Arts.'* The modernist magazine *New Writing* published it in their Spring 1939 issue. The title of the poem is drawn from the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels, an institution which is known for its extensive collection of Early Netherlandish paintings. It housed works which the poet would later refer to as those done by "Old Masters".

Sufferings of Mankind:

'Musee des Beaux Arts' describes, through the use of one specific artwork, the impact of suffering on humankind. The poem begins with the speaker stating that the "Old Masters" who were responsible for the art he was looking at, knew struggle well. Through their paintings, they were able to portray suffering in a way that most people never see it. It goes on in the background while others sit, eat, and go about their normal lives.

He continues on to say that suffering can take many forms and even revolve around the same event, such as the birth of a child. In the final lines of the first stanza, the speaker mentions martyrs and how their sacrifice is never properly appreciated. It fades into the background and is overtaken by the mundane world.

Comparison to Icarus:

In the second stanza, he refers directly to a piece of art, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*. In this work, one can observe Icarus falling into the sea in the bottom right-hand corner. In the foreground, there are figures ploughing the land and preparing to sail. No one notices the boy's suffering or if they do, they make no effort to help. Their lives take precedence over another's struggle. The final lines of *'Musee des Beaux Arts'* describe the "delicate" ship which can be seen in the green water of the painting. The speaker thinks that it certainly saw something, such as a boy falling into the ocean, but chose to do nothing about it. There is something of greater importance to the sailors—somewhere they are more interested in going than to investigate a splash. Everyone is calm, carrying on with their lives as if nothing happened.

DYLAN THOMAS - DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT,

Text:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Introduction:

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is a 1951 poem by Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. Dedicated to his father, the poem is considered a son’s plea to his dying father to maintain a zeal for life in the face of death. In a broader sense, the poem celebrates the vivacity and joy of human life despite its fleetingness.

Classification of Men:

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” takes its name from its opening sentence, which suggests that people should not go willingly to death or “gentle into that good night,” in other words. The poem comprises six stanzas in which the speaker categorizes men into four classes: wise men, good men, wild men, and grave men, with the intention of offering the reader a peek into the minds of such men as they near death.

Throughout the poem, the speaker dissuades those facing death from succumbing without a fight, an effort evoked predominantly by the speaker’s repeated plea that they should “rage, rage against the dying of the light.” All the while, the speaker acknowledges that death is unavoidable. Despite this acknowledgement, the speaker maintains that people should not give in and accept death so easily.

Wise Men versus Wild Men:

In the second stanza, the speaker suggests that “wise men” do not give in to death easily because they feel they have not given enough during their life and could have done more to improve the world. Nothing they have said or done has been as powerful or impactful as something like a lightning bolt, so they refuse to “go gentle into that good night.” In the

third stanza, the speaker similarly suggests that good people resist death, feeling they could have accomplished more. Seeing their last moments pass them by like a wave, they mourn the small actions that might have made a significant difference in the world.

According to the speaker, “wild men,” or those who have lived life to the fullest, appreciating its beauty and complexity, realize too late that the sun is leaving them behind and so refuse to peacefully welcome death now that they are faced with their own mortality. In the final stanza, the poem becomes more personal as the speaker addresses their father, who is approaching death as if on the precipice of a mountain, with the same request: to approach death with defiance and a passion for living.

Themes:

Family and Grief:

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is largely impersonal until the poem’s final stanza. The speaker suddenly switches gears, addressing a father approaching death. When the speaker addresses the father, the poem feels not universal, but more personal and emotional.

In the final stanza, the poem becomes not only about death but about family and grief. The poem has switched from a universal message about facing death to an emotionally-charged message that is just as much about the speaker and his own grief as it is about those he addresses.

Life & Death:

The primary sentiment of “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is that life is precious and should be fought for at every turn. The poem’s speaker offers insight into how to face death with dignity and ferocity rather than resignation, believing that people should “burn and rave” as they approach death. Throughout the poem, the speaker describes a series of people who only realize when confronted with death that they have not accomplished all they wanted to throughout their life. For example, the men who “caught and sang the sun in flight” lived their lives joyously but recklessly. When faced with death, they are overcome with regrets about their frivolous behavior and squandered opportunities to appreciate life as it was happening.

Conclusion:

Through these examples, the speaker earnestly urges people to live life to its fullest before it is too late, believing that only on their deathbed do many people realize just how precious life is. While death is inevitable, it must be fought bravely against as a token of respect to the sanctity of life. The White Horse Tavern has a rich history as a regular haunt for writers dating back to the 1950s when Dylan Thomas became arguably the tavern’s most famous regular patron.

DYLAN THOMAS - POEM IN OCTOBER

Text:

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
 And the mussel pooled and the heron
 Priested shore
 The morning beckon
With water praying and call of seagull and rook

And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall
Myself to set foot
That second
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

My birthday began with the water-
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name
Above the farms and the white horses
And I rose
In rainy autumn
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road
Over the border
And the gates
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling
Blackbirds and the sun of October
Summery
On the hill's shoulder,
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened
To the rain wringing
Wind blow cold
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail
With its horns through mist and the castle
Brown as owls
But all the gardens
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud.
There could I marvel
My birthday
Away but the weather turned around.

It turned away from the blithe country
And down the other air and the blue altered sky
Streamed again a wonder of summer
With apples
Pears and red currants
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's

Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
Through the parables
Of sun light
And the legends of the green chapels

And the twice told fields of infancy
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.
These were the woods the river and sea
Where a boy
In the listening
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.
And the mystery
Sang alive
Still in the water and singing birds.

And there could I marvel my birthday
Away but the weather turned around. And the true
Joy of the long dead child sang burning
In the sun.
It was my thirtieth
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.
O may my heart's truth
Still be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning.

Introduction:

Dylan Thomas's '**Poem in October**' is derived from the volume, **Death and Entrance** where he presents a vision of his childhood in contradiction to the monotonous, frustrated urban life after world wars. The poem describes comparing and contrasting picture of village's life and town life which show us the backward and forward movement of Time.

Reminiscence of the Poet:

The title '**Poem in October**' is an apt and suggestive reveals the theme of poem. Poet has presented his sweet past memories of the village where he passed his childhood. Indirectly poet compared his present city full of frustration, weariness, boredom with peaceful village life. The poem is a symbol of his thoughts and feelings towards his present life which is quite opposite to the picture of his small town. The poet becomes emotional and tries to be in those days of his village in October.

Glorification of Nature:

In this poem, Thomas describes the glory of nature. In the first part of the poem, poet describes beautiful and peaceful like of village, while in the second part poet describes mechanism of urban society. The poet describes leaving his house in early morning when he was thirty years old. In the morning on the shore the scene is so holy that the water seems to

be praying and the herons seem to be priest. The River with mussels beautified the neighboring wood. Seagull and rooks (a crow – like bird) enjoy the water. Still poet remembers the sound of boats. Here, the poet shows that each and every object of nature welcome him with great love and care. In second stanza, he walks through a scene which is a beautiful mingling of actuality and memory of country and sea, of sun and rain. When the birds fly over the water in a large number singing, the poet feels as if they all are flying his name in the air.

The Seasonal Pleasure:

The little town where the poet was born still has the beauty of birds and the sound of high tide and also the birds diving in the water. It means the town has still such a glorious beauty, but his present city life has no such natural and pleasing atmosphere. In the third stanza poet remembers that the larks sing as they sing in the spring but it October in which the sun shines like hot summer, whereas up till now he has ‘wandered and listened to the rain’. Thus in this stanza, there is a superb mingling of three seasons- summer, winter and rain. This is a rare combination found in poetry which shows the poet’s aesthetic sense. The poet also shows how powerful influence nature has made upon his mind.

The Hollow Urban Life:

Now poet turned into city. He believes that urban society is like outwardly solid but internally hollow. He compares garden and wood with each other. Here garden means scientific or artificial place while wood means village of forest. He would like to keep away from the city life.

In this things are gone and sweet memories burn the poet. He has whispered truth of joy to tear, stones, and the fish. The sweet song is still alive in the water and birds but he is not there. The song he used to sing is dead. The boy who had seen all this is dead. He believes that he had died when he came in city. The poet becomes emotional and tries to be in those days of his village in October.

PHILIP LARKIN - WHITSUN WEDDINGS

Text:

That Whitsun, I was late getting away:

Not till about

One-twenty on the sunlit Saturday

Did my three-quarters-empty train pull out,

All windows down, all cushions hot, all sense

Of being in a hurry gone. We ran

Behind the backs of houses, crossed a street

Of blinding windscreens, smelt the fish-dock; thence

The river’s level drifting breadth began,

Where sky and Lincolnshire and water meet.

All afternoon, through the tall heat that slept

For miles inland,

A slow and stopping curve southwards we kept.

Wide farms went by, short-shadowed cattle, and

Canals with floatings of industrial froth;

A hothouse flashed uniquely: hedges dipped
And rose: and now and then a smell of grass
Displaced the reek of buttoned carriage-cloth
Until the next town, new and nondescript,
Approached with acres of dismantled cars.

At first, I didn't notice what a noise
The weddings made
Each station that we stopped at: sun destroys
The interest of what's happening in the shade,
And down the long cool platforms whoops and skirls
I took for porters larking with the mails,
And went on reading. Once we started, though,
We passed them, grinning and pomaded, girls
In parodies of fashion, heels and veils,
All posed irresolutely, watching us go,

As if out on the end of an event
Waving goodbye
To something that survived it. Struck, I leant
More promptly out next time, more curiously,
And saw it all again in different terms:
The fathers with broad belts under their suits
And seamy foreheads; mothers loud and fat;
An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,
The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,
The lemons, mauves, and olive-ochres that

Marked off the girls unreally from the rest.
Yes, from cafés
And banquet-halls up yards, and bunting-dressed
Coach-party annexes, the wedding-days
Were coming to an end. All down the line
Fresh couples climbed aboard: the rest stood round;
The last confetti and advice were thrown,
And, as we moved, each face seemed to define
Just what it saw departing: children frowned
At something dull; fathers had never known

Success so huge and wholly farcical;
The women shared
The secret like a happy funeral;
While girls, gripping their handbags tighter, stared
At a religious wounding. Free at last,

And loaded with the sum of all they saw,
We hurried towards London, shuffling gout of steam.
Now fields were building-plots, and poplars cast
Long shadows over major roads, and for
Some fifty minutes, that in time would seem

Just long enough to settle hats and say

I nearly died,

A dozen marriages got under way.
They watched the landscape, sitting side by side
—An Odeon went past, a cooling tower,
And someone running up to bowl—and none
Thought of the others they would never meet
Or how their lives would all contain this hour.
I thought of London spread out in the sun,
Its postal districts packed like squares of wheat:

There we were aimed. And as we raced across

Bright knots of rail

Past standing Pullmans, walls of blackened moss
Came close, and it was nearly done, this frail
Travelling coincidence; and what it held
Stood ready to be loosed with all the power
That being changed can give. We slowed again,
And as the tightened brakes took hold, there swelled
A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower
Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain.

Introduction:

Philip Larkin was what was known as a poet of the Movement. His poetry and poems, such as *'The Whitsun Weddings,'* were written in such a way that they reflected the lack of importance of Britain in a post-war world, and also echoed the changes that Britain was going through. The shift from a mostly rural to a mostly-urban economy was also something that Larkin touched upon, as well as the idea of Britain being a little bit outdated in terms of technology and innovation. Larkinian poems are never about a bright future but always hint at unhappiness that is just below the surface.

Britain was an economic mess – suffering from the loss of their colonies, austerity measures, and a staggering debt that the war had pressed it under. This was echoed, partly, in the poetry of the time. Poetry written then was all about looking back to better days, getting back to the idea of the brave and noble Great Britain of kingdoms and Queen Victoria. It was all about nostalgia, a sense of belonging that had been stamped out of England by this point.

Journey of the Poet:

Larkin's *'The Whitsun Weddings'* was the title of one of his books of poetry, published in 1964. It is one of his longest poems, at eight stanzas of ten lines each, and it describes a

train journey from Kingston upon Hull through the countryside. As the train churns through the heatwave that the narrator describes, he gradually expands his view to take in the people that are around him, including a wedding party that sees couples boarding the train. The Narrator thinks, for a little bit, about the people and their response to the wedding, cynically breaking them down into their appearances. As the train moves southward, he turns instead to the newlywed and considers the hugeness of what they have done, and how ultimately, it is only a big deal to the couple getting married.

The Wedding Celebration:

Larkin's description of the wedding and the chaos surrounding the event is as minimal as his description of people. By painting the wedding party with a broad brush, he makes the event itself seem ordinary. Larkin's writing makes it seem as though it is playing in stop-motion, moving so slowly and so painfully that it has no hope of changing.

The wedding is placed as something ordinary. Colin Falck, a Larkinian critic, called this the "ever-deepening acceptance of the ordinariness of things as they are", and it is the aptest description for the way that Larkin writes. His poetry takes things and makes them ordinary and commonplace, and it is partially due to the fact that Larkin strove to write simple poetry. By writing his simple poetry, he makes everything as ordinary as possible.

The Bliss of Larkin's Journey:

It was Whitsun Saturday and the poet left late. It was a sunny day and my train departed around 1:20, almost completely empty. The windows were open due to the stifling heat, even the seat cushions were hot, and everything felt very slow. Out of the window he saw the backs of houses, the glare of windshields, and he could smell the fish-dock. The journey rode beside the wide, flat, slow river, zooming through the Lincolnshire countryside.

The train kept its steady course all through the hot afternoon, as the travellers traveled south and inland. They passed big farms with cows whose shadows were small under the high sun, and canals full of industrial waste. The poet saw a greenhouse, and hedges rising and falling. The carriage had a pretty bad smell from the cloth, but sometimes the smell of grass overpowered it. Towns seemed to repeat themselves as they went past, each one signaled by a scrapyard.

Description of the wedding couples:

At the beginning of the journey, he didn't notice the weddings whose noise could be heard from each station. The sun was too bright for me to see what was happening in the shade of the platform, and though he could hear a commotion he thought it was porters mucking around with the mail. He kept reading, but as the train pulled away he noticed a large group of young female wedding guests. They were smiling, had elaborate hair, and were dressed as if in a caricature of contemporary styles, with heels and veils. They were poised uncertainly on the platform watching us leave.

It was as though they were witnessing the end of something that the poet on the train had survived. Now he was intrigued, so he took greater notice at the next station and comprehended the scene more clearly. The poet saw fat fathers with sweaty heads, loud overweight mothers, and uncles being rude. Then he noticed the girls again, with their perms, nylon gloves, and fake jewelry, and the yellows, pinks, and brown-greens.

These fashion elements separated the girls visually from the other guests, almost as if they were an illusion. These numerous weddings—which took place in small halls and cafes

near the train yards, with rooms covered in streamers and full of coach-loads of guests—were nearly over. At every station, newlyweds boarded the train while the guests gave last bits of advice and threw confetti. When we left each station, the poet read the faces of those still on the platform, each of which seemed to say something about the wedding. The children seemed bored.

Desperateness of the Poet:

For the fathers, this was the biggest success of their lives, though something about it felt like a joke. The older women looked like they knew a terrible secret, while the girls seemed perplexed, holding their purses tighter—perhaps even intimidated by what they saw, as though they'd witnessed something of fearful religious importance. Pretty soon we left the guests behind—though we had internalized all their perspectives—and raced towards London, the train blowing fits of steam. The environment grew more urbanized, fields giving way to plots of land being developed, and the poet noticed poplar trees casting shadows over the roads.

End of the Journey:

In that fifty minutes or so, which was just long enough to get comfortable and reflect on the wedding, all of these new marriages got started. The newlyweds gazed out of the window, crammed into the carriage. A cinema, a cooling tower, and a cricket game were all visible from the window. They were headed straight for the capital, racing past glinting rail and stationary train carriages. The sooty, mossy walls of the city started to surround us and the shared experience was nearly over. The collective power of these newly-weds was ready to be unleashed. The travellers slowed and braked, feeling the gravity as though we were falling like a shower of arrows sent beyond view, raining down somewhere else.

TED HUGHES - HAWK ROOSTING

Text:

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
Inaction, no falsifying dream
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat.

The convenience of the high trees!
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray
Are of advantage to me;
And the earth's face upward for my inspection.

My feet are locked upon the rough bark.
It took the whole of Creation
To produce my foot, my each feather:
Now I hold Creation in my foot

Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly -
I kill where I please because it is all mine.
There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads -

The allotment of death.
For the one path of my flight is direct
Through the bones of the living.
No arguments assert my right:

The sun is behind me.
Nothing has changed since I began.
My eye has permitted no change.
I am going to keep things like this.

Introduction:

"Hawk Roosting" is a poem by Ted Hughes, one of the 20th century's most prominent poets. In the poem, taken from Hughes's second collection, *Lupercal*, a hawk is given the power of speech and thought, allowing the reader to imagine what it's like to inhabit the instincts, attitudes, and behaviors of such a creature. The hawk has an air of authority, looking down on the world from its high vantage point in the trees and feeling like everything belongs to it. The poem is particularly keen to stress the way that violence, in the hawk's world at least, is not some kind of moral wrong—but a part of nature. "Hawk Roosting" is one of a large number of poems in which Hughes explores the animal world.

Nature and Violence:

In "Hawk Roosting," Ted Hughes imagines the interior thoughts of one of the great birds of prey: the hawk. The poem is told entirely from the perspective of the hawk, which is personified as having the powers of conscious thought and a command of English. What the hawk lacks, however, are human qualities like mercy and remorse: it is ruthless and direct in its thoughts about hunting prey, though this violence is presented matter-of-factly, as simply part of who the hawk is. Imagining what goes on in the mind of the hawk facilitates a deeper meditation about nature, which the poem presents as both majestic and fearsome. Violence, the poem suggests, is just as much a part of nature as is beauty, and the natural world isn't subject to human notions of morality.

The hawk is a killer, and part of the poem's aim is to make clear just how natural this violence is. To that end, the opening line depicts the hawk sitting at the "top of the wood," symbolizing its place at the top of its ecosystem. And the poem is graphic in its depiction of the bird's violence throughout—the hawk refers to its "Manners" as "tearing off heads" and its flight path as "direct / Through the bones of the living." The hawk's life is literally governed the "allotment of death." In other words, it is *meant* to kill.

Hawk – A Wholesome Creation:

The hawk knows this, and comments on the way that nature seems to be perfectly designed to facilitate the hawk's hunting. Nature is "of advantage to me," it says, and describes itself as the product of "the whole of Creation." "Creation" here refers to both nature and the entirety of existence, while also alluding to a religious worldview. This religious element is relevant to the poem because much of human morality is based on or informed by religion and vice versa. The mention of Creation speaks to the hawk's prowess,

but also to the incredible way that nature evolves to create the conditions for its creatures to flourish—even if those same creatures are essentially killing machines.

The hawk insists upon its rightful place within the natural order by describing the prey that it holds “in my foot” as part of “Creation” too. The hawk understands that both it and its prey have their roles to play, even if one seems easier to stomach than the other. In other words, the hawk’s capacity for violence is as natural as things that seem more innocent: flowers or puppies, for example!

Sophistry of Human beings:

This understanding that killing and violence are an integral part of nature informs the hawks’ attitude and personality. It rejects human understanding and morality, claiming that it has no need for “falsifying dream[s]” or “sophistry.” Sophistry is the use of clever but false arguments, which the hawk, acting in accordance with its true nature, has no need for. As such, humans are wrong to project their moral frameworks—especially the equation of violence with evil—onto the natural world. Nature, insists the hawk, is governed by its own laws.

That’s why the hawk has only “one path”; it’s one true way is that of a killer—killing *is* its nature. And that’s why the hawk states that “Nothing has changed since I began [...] I am going to keep things like this.” Its way of being is innate and natural, and it will continue to be this way, stoking fear in the hearts of its prey. The poem, then, explores nature by focusing on one small part of it, the hawk. Through giving voice to the hawk, the poem insists on the way in which nature is both miraculous *and* violent. It argues that violence and innocence, in the natural world at least, coexist in balance—and that human moral frameworks don’t really apply accurately to creatures like the hawk.

TED HUGHES - LIFE AFTER DEATH

Text:

What can I tell you that you do not know
Of the life after death?

Your son's eyes, which had unsettled us
With your Slavic Asiatic
Epicanthic fold, but would become
So perfectly your eyes,
Became wet jewels,
The hardest substance of the purest pain
As I fed him in his high white chair.
Great hands of grief were wringing and wringing
His wet cloth of face. They wrung out his tears.
But his mouth betrayed you - it accepted
The spoon in my disembodied hand
That reached through from the life that had survived you.

Day by day his sister grew
Paler with the wound

She could not see or touch or feel, as I dressed it
Each day with her blue Breton jacket.

By night I lay awake in my body
The Hanged Man
My neck-nerve uprooted and the tendon
Which fastened the base of my skull
To my left shoulder
Torn from its shoulder-root and cramped into knots -
I fancied the pain could be explained
If I were hanging in the spirit
From a hook under my neck-muscle.

Dropped from life
We three made a deep silence
In our separate cots.

We were comforted by wolves.
Under that February moon and the moon of March
The Zoo had come close.
And in spite of the city
Wolves consoled us. Two or three times each night
For minutes on end
They sang. They had found where we lay.
And the dingos, and the Brazilian-maned wolves -
All lifted their voices together
With the grey Northern pack.

The wolves lifted us in their long voices.
They wound us and enmeshed us
In their wailing for you, their mourning for us,
They wove us into their voices. We lay in your death,
In the fallen snow, under falling snow,

As my body sank into the folk-tale
Where the wolves are singing in the forest
For two babes, who have turned, in their sleep
Into orphans
Beside the corpse of their mother.

The poem "Life After Death" by Ted Hughes is a hymn of the sharpest grief and devastation that can only appear after losing the dearest and beloved person. When people continue living after their closest friend and the meaning of their existence dies, it is not a

true life anymore. It is an unbearable survival when pointless days come and go, and everything loses sense. Children who lose their mother turn into the hardest substance of the purest pain with wet jewels instead of eyes and a pale shadow with the wound. When a husband loses his wife, he becomes the Hanged Man, dropped from life, and without any senses left. The only creatures capable of understanding and comforting them are wolves, which can wound the walking dead, entangle them, mourn for them, weave into their voices.

SEAMUS HEANEY - DIGGING

Text:

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

"Digging" is one of the most widely known poems by the Irish poet Seamus Heaney and serves as the opening poem of Heaney's debut 1966 poetry collection, *Death of a Naturalist*. It begins with the speaker hovering over a blank page with a pen, preparing to write. The speaker then reflects on the work ethic and skill of his father and grandfather, both of whom worked the land as farmers. Though the speaker is breaking with that *specific* familial tradition, the speaker presents writing as its own kind of labor, with speaker vowing to "dig" with the pen.

Labour and Craft:

"Digging" is a poem about work. As the speaker, a writer, holds a pen in one hand, he hears his father, a former farmer, working the ground outside. The speaker admires his father for his determination to work tirelessly and the skill with which he uses a spade. The poet draws inspiration from the work ethic and expertise of his father (and grandfather). The poem, then, elevates manual labor by imbuing it with a sense of craft and artistry, while also insisting on the act of writing itself as a kind of work.

In the opening of "Digging," the speaker is poised to start writing, his pen hovering above the page. But when he hears the sound of his father digging in the flowerbeds beneath the speaker's window, it brings back memories of his father digging potatoes many years before. Though to some people digging might seem like a pretty dull and repetitive task, the speaker presents it as a kind of artistry. He focuses admiringly in minute detail on his father's technique, while also acknowledging the physical difficulty of the work.

Digging is presented as a complex and technical process, one involving neat "potato drills" (the rows of potatoes in the ground), the strength to send a shovel deep into the earth again and again, and the knowledge of how and when to scatter crops. "By God, the old man could handle a spade," the speaker says, emphasizing the expertise required of his father's labor.

Thinking about all this prompts the speaker to reflect on his grandfather too. Like the speaker's father, the older man provides an example of how best to approach work: through determination and skill. The speaker recounts how he once took some milk to his grandfather while he was digging—the grandfather drank the milk and got straight back to work, demonstrating his total commitment to the job at hand. Through the memory of these two men, then, the poem shows appreciation for dedication and effort—seeing the physical act of digging as an inspiration for writing poetry.

Family and Tradition:

"Digging" explores the relationship between three generations: the speaker, his father, and the speaker's grandfather. The speaker lives a very different life to his forebears—he's a writer, whereas his father and grandfather were farmers. But even though he isn't a digger of the earth, the speaker realizes that he can still honor his heritage by embracing

the *values* of his elders. The speaker's life and art are shaped by his history, and in that history he sees a model for how to approach his own craft. In doing so, the poem argues, the speaker is in fact paying tribute to his father and grandfather. One doesn't have to follow in their ancestors' footsteps exactly to honor and preserve their heritage.

The speaker's father worked the earth, just like his father before him. Both men used a spade skillfully and were engaged in tough manual labor. Between *those* two men, then, there's an obvious sense of continuity, of skills and heritage being passed down from one generation to the next. The speaker, however, represents a break with this tradition. Though he remembers the "squelch and slap" of "soggy earth" and the "cold smell of potato mould," he either can't or doesn't want to follow his elders into the same kind of work. Instead, he is a writer—something that, on the surface at least, is about as far removed from physical labor as is possible.

The speaker acknowledges this—he knows he has "no spade to follow men like them." But just because he is breaking with tradition in a literal sense, in another way he resolves to embody the *values* of that tradition. Hard work, grit, concentration, persistence—all of these are traits that the father and grandfather figures have taught to the speaker, who can now use them in his own way. This shows that the speaker *is* a part of his family tradition, just in a different way, and also demonstrates that the people someone grows up with can have a huge impact on how they see the world in later life.

CAROL ANN DUFFY - STANDING FEMALE NUDE

Text:

Six hours like this for a few francs.
Belly nipple arse in the window light,
he drains the colour from me. Further to the right,
Madame. And do try to be still.
I shall be represented analytically and hung
in great museums. The bourgeoisie will coo
at such an image of a river-whore. They call it Art.

Maybe. He is concerned with volume, space.
I with the next meal. You're getting thin,
Madame, this is not good. My breasts hang
slightly low, the studio is cold. In the tea-leaves
I can see the Queen of England gazing
on my shape. Magnificent, she murmurs,
moving on. It makes me laugh. His name

is Georges. They tell me he's a genius.
There are times he does not concentrate
and stiffens for my warmth.
He possesses me on canvas as he dips the brush
repeatedly into the paint. Little man,
you've not the money for the arts I sell.

Both poor, we make our living how we can.
I ask him Why do you do this? Because
I have to. There's no choice. Don't talk.
My smile confuses him. These artists
take themselves too seriously. At night I fill myself
with wine and dance around the bars. When it's finished
he shows me proudly, lights a cigarette. I say
Twelve francs and get my shawl. It does not look like me.

Introduction:

"Standing Female Nude" is the title poem of Carol Ann Duffy's first collection, published in 1985. A monologue told from the perspective of a sex worker modeling for a celebrated male painter, the poem explores women's objectification, gendered double standards, class, and art. The speaker, who earns very little for her time, snarkily imagines the painting being ogled by "the bourgeoisie" in museums as evidence of the artist's so-called genius. In this way, the poem illustrates how men's and women's work is often unequally valued and received, and how the male gaze can obscure women's humanity. "Standing Female Nude" was inspired by a real painting: "Le Grand Nu," or "Large Nude," by French Cubist artist Georges Braque.

The Nude Model:

The speaker, the nude model of the title, poses for six hours just to earn a little cash. As she positions her body so that her breasts, stomach, and butt catch the light coming through the window, a man paints a dull image of her. He tells her to twist more to the right and not to squirm. She knows she'll be depicted in a cold, precise manner and put on display in some prestigious gallery. The middle class will murmur admiringly at this picture of an impoverished sex worker who works by the river, deeming it capital-A Art.

The Modest Painter:

The painter fusses over the structure of the piece while she wonders when she'll be able to eat again. He tells her she's getting too skinny, which is a bad thing. Her breasts have started to sag and it's chilly in the painter's studio. She foresees the Queen of England staring at her body, muttering her approval and then carrying on as usual. The thought of the Queen looking at the painting makes the speaker laugh.

The painter is named Georges and he claims to be a genius. Yet he doesn't always pay close attention to what he's doing, and sometimes he gets an erection while staring at the speaker's body. Men think about their mothers in order to stop such things. The painter controls the speaker's body on the canvas, suggestively dabbing his paintbrush into the paint again and again. The speaker pities small men like him, who have no money for her services. He's as poor as she is; they are both just trying to get by.

The Unrequited Model:

She asks him why he paints her, and he replies that there are no other options. He tells her not to speak. Her happiness is strange to him; artists like him are much too serious. In the evenings, the speaker goes to the bars to drink wine and dance. He finishes the painting and, quite satisfied with it, shows it to her before lighting a cigarette. She simply asks for her payment and gathers up her clothes. She doesn't see herself in the painting at all.

Gender and Double Standards:

"Standing Female Nude" depicts the double standards in the way society values men's and women's work. The poem's speaker is a poor sex worker posing nude for a respected male artist (loosely based on the French Cubist painter Georges Braque), who is implied to be just as poor as his model. Both are, in essence, profiting off a naked female form, but the male artist is deemed a "genius" while the model is written off as nothing but a "river-whore." The speaker even imagines the "Queen of England" gazing at the shape of the lady. The speaker earns pittance for her time and can barely afford to eat. The male artist's brushstrokes will make her naked body acceptable to society's upper crust, while that body itself must slink off into the darkness and "dance around bars" to earn a living. Artists like him may take their ideas themselves too seriously, but it seems that no one takes the female speaker seriously at all.

This hypocrisy is perhaps meant to evoke life as a female writer in a male-dominated literary scene. That is, the model might symbolize the poet herself: a woman who bares her soul in her writing, yet whose work and experiences may be commandeered or dismissed by self-serious male writers and critics.

Objectification and Male Gaze:

The story presented in "Standing Female Nude" illustrates the way that women have been historically objectified, misrepresented, and erased by the male gaze. Even as the male artist here aims to possess his female model. The woman herself is rendered invisible by this portrait, which obscures her reality and even her humanity itself. The speaker makes it clear that the man painting her, despite being a so-called "genius," sees her as an object rather than an actual person standing in front of him.

He isn't thinking about her comfort or dignity, only what looks best to him—and, perhaps, what will attract viewers. As such, he's disappointed that she's thin and that her breasts are sagging not because she's starving, but because it doesn't look good in the painting. To him, she's a mere surface, something beautiful to be rendered on canvas for others to consume. When she tries to engage with him, he tells her not to talk. The model is the speaker in the poem, of course, which grants her the voice that the male artist would silence. The male gaze ignores the reality of women's lives, making them mere shapes and not creatures.

EAVAN BOLAND – THE ACHILL WOMAN

Text:

The Achill Woman by Eavan Boland
She came up the hill carrying water.
She wore a half-buttoned, wool cardigan,
a tea-towel round her waist.
She pushed the hair out of her eyes with
her free hand and put the bucket down.
The zinc-music of the handle on the rim
tuned the evening. An Easter moon rose.
In the next-door field a stream was
a fluid sunset; and then, stars.
I remember the cold rosiness of her hands.

She bent down and blew on them like broth.
And round her waist, on a white background,
in coarse, woven letters, the words “glass cloth.”
And she was nearly finished for the day.
And I was all talk, raw from college—
week-ending at a friend’s cottage
with one suitcase and the set text
of the Court poets of the Silver Age.
We stayed putting down time until
the evening turned cold without warning.
She said goodnight and started down the hill.
The grass changed from lavender to black.
The trees turned back to cold outlines.
You could taste frost
but nothing now can change the way I went
indoors, chilled by the wind
and made a fire
and took down my book
and opened it and failed to comprehend
the harmonies of servitude,
the grace music gives to flattery
and language borrows from ambition—
and how I fell asleep
oblivious to
the planets clouding over in the skies,
the slow decline of the Spring moon,
the songs crying out their ironies.

Introduction:

Eavan Boland is an Irish poet and author born in Dublin, Ireland in 1944 who focuses much of her work on the national identity of Irish people, the role of Irish women throughout its history, as well as Ireland’s rich and, at times tragic, history and culture as a country itself—especially pertaining to the impact that the Irish potato famine, or “The Great Famine” between 1845 and 1852, had on Irish society. Currently, Eavan Boland is a professor at Stanford University.

In the poem "The Achill Woman" written by Eavan Boland, the speaker (heavily indicated to be Eavan Boland herself, therefore making the poem rather autobiographical) recounts her experiences on Achill Island off of the coast of Ireland and more specifically her encounter with a woman who lives there. Throughout the course of the poem, the narrator describes the woman’s simple way of life in juxtaposition to her own lifestyle, being an educated college student. Upon this reflection, the slight culture clash between the two Irish generations are highlighted through the different interests they spend their time pursuing during the day as well as their general mindsets towards life.

Stereotypes of Women:

First, their interests in daily pastimes differ completely in origin and purpose. For

instance, the Achill woman spends her time climbing up the hill carrying water in her wool clothing, or being productive with the harmonies of servitude. These daily rituals and chores consist of the basic necessities for her, and by keeping herself occupied she remains content with this daily routine as well; especially considering the fact that she actually lived through the famine that caused many casualties in Ireland during her youth. Overall, the Achill woman is content and more than satisfied with her simplistic lifestyle. Alternatively, the narrator spends her time as a normal college student would, week-ending at a friend's cottage and reading her books by the side of a fire throughout the cold night. Preferring to stay inside with a good book, the narrator initially does not understand and takes for granted the hard work of the Achill woman in this way. This typical young adult, college student schedule also causes a cultural clash between the two women purely because of the fact that they share different lifestyles, interests, and pastimes that are stereotypical for their ages and generations.

The Versatile faceted Women:

Next, both women retain their own sets of values, opinions, and perspectives that stem from their own personal experiences and lifestyles, also causing a slight disconnect between the two of them. For example, when the Achill woman converses with the narrator, it usually seems after a person reveals tragic or dismal news. The woman of Achill has endured many hardships throughout her life—tragedies that the narrator will most likely never experience due to her youth. The Achill woman represents a generation that survived harsh times, a stark contrast from that of the youthful narrator. She must sometimes pose educated as a young woman with no real negative experiences or traumatic events to speak of in her adult life. A woman is often left alone reflecting about her own life experiences.

Internal Struggle of a Woman:

Eavan Boland's "The Achill Woman" captures the realistic essence of the subtle internal struggle between impoverished older generations that endured hardships such as the Irish potato famine as well as their newer counterpart generations. Towards the end of the story, however, Boland incorporates a structural literary device called enjambment in order to convey to the audience that the narrator's stream of conscience is beginning to drift off, ultimately ending the poem afterwards. Once the speaker starts to enjamb the poem in this manner, the narrator begins to understand the virtues and hardships of those who came before her as she reflects on her life years later while on the verge of falling asleep. By emphasizing this slight transition, the culture clash of different activities and outlooks on life between the two generations is seen through another, more understanding and empathetic perspective.
