

Introduction

The literature of the Victorian age (1837-1901) entered a new period after the romantic revival. The literature of this era was preceded by romanticism and was followed by modernism or realism. Hence, it can also be called a fusion of romantic and realist style of writing. Though the Victorian Age produced two great poets Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, the age is also remarkable for the excellence of its prose.

Victorian novels tend to be idealized portraits of difficult lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck win out in the end. Victorian Poetry was also indifferent from the already stated style. Much of the work of the time is seen as a bridge between the romantic era and the modernist poetry of the next century.

Alfred Lord Tennyson held the poet laureateship for over forty years. The reclaiming of the past was a major part of Victorian literature and was to be found in both classical literature and also the medieval literature of England. The Victorians loved the heroic, chivalrous stories of knights of old and they hoped to regain some of that noble, courtly behavior and impress it upon the people both at home and in the wider empire. In dramatic, farces, musical burlesques, extravaganzas, and comic operas competed with Shakespeare productions and serious drama by the likes of James Planche' and Thomas William Robertson. The old Gothic tales that came out of the late 19th century are the first examples of the genre of fantastic fiction. These tales often centered on larger-than-life characters such as Sherlock Holmes, the famous detective of the times, Barry Lee, big time gang leader etc.

Although characterized as practical and materialistic, the literature of the Victorian age portrays a completely ideal life. It was an idealistic age where the great ideals like truth, justice, love, brotherhood were emphasized by poets, essayists and novelists of the age.

Dover Beach

Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! You hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

About the author:

Matthew Arnold (b. 1822–d. 1888) is one of the most influential writers of the Victorian age. After receiving a Classics degree from Oxford and spending a brief spell in Paris, Arnold spent most of his life working as a schools inspector. He was elected to the Oxford Professorship of Poetry in 1857. Arnold was an author of both poetry and criticism. His verse includes: The

Strayed Reveller and Other Poems (1847), Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems (1852), and New Poems (1867), as well as the classical verse tragedy Merope (1858). His prolific prose canon includes cornerstones of 19th-century intellectual and critical history such as *On Translating Homer* (1861), *Essays in Criticism* (1865) and *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). The influence of Arnold's literary, social, and religious criticism has been immense. His work appears so representative of the Victorian age because of its constant effort to understand and scrutinize modernity.

Summary of the poem Dover Beach:

The poem begins with the romantic tradition style i.e. using simple language. The poet says "the sea is calm tonight". The line is complete in itself and simply means that everything is fine and calm.

In the next line, he vividly describes the vista around him. According to the poet, as usual, the tide is full and the moon is lightening the straits i.e. the shores.

On the other side, i.e. the France coast, the light glimmers and then vanishes (like the twinkling of stars). When the light vanishes, the poet sees the White Cliffs which are shining in the moonlight on the Shore of England. Probably the light on the French side vanishes because White Cliffs block the rays of moonlight.

Now for the first time (in the poem), the poet interacts with his wife. He requests her to come to the window side and enjoy the pleasant air of the night. He then asks her (using the word 'Only') to focus on the edge where the sea meets the land (long line of spray). The land is Moon blanch'd i.e. looking white and shiny due to the moonlight.

In the next line, the mood suddenly changes. There is a shift from ecstasy to sorrow. The poet says 'listen!' to the unpleasant and harsh sound of pebbles that are pulled out by the strong tides and turned back on the shore when the tide return. The process is continuous and the poet focuses on their rhythmic movement.

The movement of pebbles is 'tremulous cadence slow' i.e. they are trembling in a slow rhythmic movement. The rhythmic sound of pebbles mingles with that of the poem. This movement of the pebbles with terrible sound is of course not pleasant and brings out the note or music that is sad and never-ending.

The stanza 2 begins with reference to Sophocles. It was the tradition of Victorians to refer to the classical poets and writers in their works. The poet says that Sophocles had already heard this eternal note of sadness while sitting on the shores of Aegean.

'The turbid ebb and flow' means the movement of water in and out. It also refers to the loss of Faith. Sophocles compared eternal movement with the miseries of humans which like them are also never-ending. This is how he succeeded in composing painful tragedies.

According to the poet, he can hear the same sound of sea sand and retreating tide by sitting, like Sophocles, on the Shore of the Northern Sea (English Channel). Distant means far from Sophocles. The term 'We' in a context refers to the poet and his bride but in a broader sense, it refers to every human. In this sense, the poet draws out attention to the universality and eternity of sadness.

The term Sea of Faith as usually understood doesn't simply mean religion. According to the poet, the Sea of Faith once had united the whole of mankind but now it has declined.

He hears its sadness, longings and roars of pulling away of faith as night wind is hovering over the sky. What remains there are the naked stones which have been pulled out of the earth by the tides.

The poet is mixing the natural happening with the human faith. As we know the poem was written during the Victorian age. At that time there was a development of industrialisation that led to capitalism which further led to individualism and greed.

The Sea of Faith that once existed among mankind gradually vanished. The Faith can refer to trust humanity religion, kindness, sympathy spiritualism and so on. Thus the greed gave a death blow to this faith.

In this sense, the whole scene which was calm and pleasant (from stanza one) can be considered as the Sea of Faith. But suddenly the night wind or industrialisation or Science and Technology came that murdered that peace and spirituality.

Instead, it made the greed (that was hidden because of spirituality) Naked shingles or bare. The whole poem including the scene, symbols, loves etc become a metaphor and make the poem quite symbolic.

Stanza 4 is characterized by a feeling of escapism. The poet asks his beloved to be true to him. Note that these lines relate to the Sea of Faith (He wants to bring that faith back).

The poet believes that the world which was like the Land of Dreams or how he described it, in the beginning, is, in reality, hollow from inside. There is no joy, love, light, certainty, peace, sympathy in it. The metaphor with which the poem ends is most likely an allusion to a passage in Thucydides's account of the Peloponnesian War (Book 7, 44). He describes an ancient battle that occurred on a similar beach during the Athenian invasion of Sicily. The battle took place at night; the attacking army became disoriented while fighting in the darkness and many of their soldiers inadvertently killed each other.

Both the poet and his beloved are on a 'darkling plain' i.e. a dark and ugly world. They hear the sound of struggle and fights of the people who are fighting without seeing each other.

This fight can be regarded as the fight of opposing ideologies in the mind of man or that of forces of materialism or trivial battles of age and youth or also selfish and political forces. The poem thus ends with the terrible picture of society during the Victorian age.

Mathew Arnold has used some **literary devices** to bring depth in this poem. Some of them are;

Assonance: Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as the sound of /e/ and /o/ in “Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light”.

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /l/ in “To lie before us like a land of dreams”.

Enjambment: It is defined as a thought or verse that does not come to an end at a line break instead moves over the next line. For example,

“And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight.”

Allusion: Allusion is a belief and an indirect reference of a person, place, thing or idea of a historical, cultural, political or literary significance. This poem contains allusions as in the second stanza. For example, ‘Sophocles’ refers to the great Greek play writer and in the third stanza “sea of faith” refers to the world of religions.

Pathetic Fallacy: It is a figure of speech in which objects are attributed to human emotions. For example, “Listen! you hear the grating roar, Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling” and “eternal note of sadness.” Human beings experience these feelings attributed to pebbles.

Symbolism: Symbolism is using symbols to signify ideas and qualities, giving them symbolic meanings different from literal meanings. Similarly, “sea of faith” symbolizes faith in god and Tide leaving the shore” is the symbol of lost faith.

Simile: It is a figure of speech used to compare something with something else to make the readers understand what it is. For example, the world is compared to the land of dreams in the below lines.

“To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams.”

Imagery: Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses. Such as, “The tide is full, the moon lies fair”; “Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling” and “Where the sea meets the moon-blanching land.”

The analysis shows that this poem, though seems a simple description of the natural beauty, has a deceptive pull to spellbound the reader.

Themes

Love

Although the word love does not appear until the final stanza, its use reveals the poem has all along been addressed to the speaker's love: "Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!" It is the speaker's love whom he calls to the window to hear and see the waves crash upon the shore. And it is fidelity between the two lovers that will provide the only possible respite from the chaos and misery of the world. The final image—of two people standing together on a "darkling plain" surrounded by "struggle and flight"—shows love's persistence despite its embattled state.

In contrast to the image of the two lovers, united by their bond and standing against the suffering of the world, is the statement in the final stanza that the world "hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light." This statement suggests the world may appear beautiful, but its beauty is an illusion: it only "seems" to be a "land of dreams." For the speaker, the significance of love is not only where it can be found but also that it can be found at all.

Loss of Faith

After describing in Stanza 2 how the sound of waves advancing and retreating on the seashore reminded Sophocles of the "ebb and flow / Of human misery," the speaker follows Sophocles's example. He too is reminded of some human truth by the ebb and flow of the sea, likening the sea to humankind's ebbing religious faith. The "Sea of Faith" was once full, he says, covering the shore like bright clothing. Now it retreats with the loud, grating sound water makes as it flows away from the shore.

According to the poem, the decline of faith has a number of negative effects. The direct consequence is an image: the edges of the world—its "naked shingles"—are left bare of the beautiful, bright clothing the sea once provided. The world is exposed, no longer protected and enveloped in beauty, as it once was. Indirectly, the poem implies the desperate state of the world in the final stanza is a result of the retreating "Sea of Faith." Because faith has been lost, the world has lost joy, love, light, certitude, peace, and healing. Instead it suffers struggle, confusion, and the clashing of violent armies.

Human Suffering

Despite its graceful beginning, the poem turns quickly to thoughts of misery and violence, triggered by the sound of the waves on the shore. By the end of the poem, readers are presented with an image of complete despair. Links between the stanzas provide a road map of the speaker's train of thought, shedding light on this progression. The common thread is human suffering.

According to the speaker, the slow, rhythmic sound of the waves breaking on the shore brings in the "eternal note of sadness." This "eternal note of sadness" introduced in Stanza 1 provides the link to Stanza 2, as the speaker explains more about what the sadness is. Long ago, he says, this same sound reminded Sophocles of the way human misery comes and goes in a never-ending cycle. At the end of Stanza 2, the speaker decides, like Sophocles, he will find "in the sound a thought." His thought is presented in the following stanzas. Stanza 3 gives the substance of the thought, a metaphor: Humanity's religious faith is retreating, and its withdrawal leaves the world a less beautiful, harsher place. Stanza 4 follows up with an image of what the world looks like as this faith is lost: a place with "neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain"—a place, instead, of suffering.

Tithonus

Alfred Lord Tennyson

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love

Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From any pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch (if I be he that watch'd)
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,

Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

About the author:

Born on August 6, 1809, in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England, Alfred Lord Tennyson is one of the most well-loved Victorian poets. This poem was one of a set of four works (also including “Morte d’Arthur,” “Ulysses,” and “Tiresias”) that Tennyson wrote shortly after Arthur Henry Hallam’s death in 1833. The best-known poems by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, included “The Charge of the Light Brigade” and “Crossing the Bar.” His longer works included *In Memoriam*, inspired by his grief over the untimely death of a friend, and *Idylls of the King*, based on Arthurian legend.

Myth of Tithonus and Aurora:

Like Ulysses, Tithonus is a figure from Greek mythology whom Tennyson takes as a speaker in one of his dramatic monologues (see the section on “Ulysses”). According to myth, Tithonus is the brother of Priam, King of Troy, and was loved by Aurora, the immortal goddess of the dawn, who had a habit of carrying off the beautiful young men whom she fancied. Aurora abducted Tithonus and asked Zeus to grant him immortality, which Zeus did. However, she forgot to ask that he also grant eternal youth, so Tithonus soon became a decrepit old man who could not die. Aurora finally transformed him into a grasshopper to relieve him of his sad existence. In this poem, Tennyson slightly alters the mythological story: here, it is Tithonus, not Aurora, who asks for immortality, and it is Aurora, not Zeus, who confers this gift upon him. The source of suffering in the poem is not Aurora’s forgetfulness in formulating her request to Zeus, but rather the goddesses referred to as “strong Hours” who resent Tithonus’s immortality and subject him to the ravages of time.

Summary

'Tithonus' by Lord Alfred Tennyson is written in the form of a dramatic monologue in which only one speaker is used to tell an entire story. There is no consistent rhyme scheme or pattern of meter in the piece, meaning that it is written in blank or free verse. "Tithonus" was first written under the title "Tithon" in 1833. It did not appear to a wide readership until 1859 when it was published under its full name. While not one of Tennyson's most popular or well known pieces, "Tithonus" is characteristic of the poet's style and a wonderful example of his ability to expand on already existing myths and legends. Death, Desire, Nature, Grief, and Courage are some of its themes.

The woods in the forests grow old and their leaves fall to the ground. Man is born, works the earth, and then dies and is buried underground. Yet the speaker, Tithonus, is cursed to live forever. Tithonus tells Aurora, goddess of the dawn, that he grows old slowly in her arms like a "white-hair'd shadow" roaming in the east.

Tithonus laments that while he is now a "gray shadow" he was once a beautiful man chosen as Aurora's lover. He remembers that he long ago asked Aurora to grant him eternal life: "Give me immortality!" Aurora granted his wish generously, like a rich philanthropist who has so much money that he gives charity without thinking twice. However, the Hours, the goddesses who accompany Aurora, were angry that Tithonus was able to resist death, so they took their revenge by battering him until he grew old and withered. Now, though he cannot die, he remains forever old; and he must dwell in the presence of Aurora, who renews herself each morning and is thus forever young. Tithonus appeals to Aurora to take back the gift of immortality while the "silver star" of Venus rises in the morning. He now realizes the ruin in desiring to be different from all the rest of mankind and in living beyond the "goal of ordinance," the normal human lifespan.

Just before the sun rises, Tithonus catches sight of the "dark world" where he was born a mortal. He witnesses the coming of Aurora, the dawn: her cheek begins to turn red and her eyes grow so bright that they overpower the light of the stars. Aurora's team of horses awakes and converts the twilight into fire. The poet now addresses Aurora, telling her that she always grows beautiful and then leaves before she can answer his request. He questions why she must "scare" him with her tearful look of silent regret; her look makes him fear that an old saying might be true—that "The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Tithonus sighs and remembers his youth long ago, when he would watch the arrival of the dawn and feel his whole body come alive as he lay down and enjoyed the kisses of another. This lover from his youth used to whisper to him "wild and sweet" melodies, like the music of Apollo's lyre, which accompanied the construction of Ilion (Troy).

Tithonus asks Aurora not to keep him imprisoned in the east where she rises anew each morning, because his eternal old age contrasts so painfully with her eternal renewal. He cringes

cold and wrinkled, whereas she rises each morning to warm “happy men that have the power to die” and men who are already dead in their burial mounds (“grassy barrows”). Tithonus asks Aurora to release him and let him die. This way, she can see his grave when she rises and he, buried in the earth, will be able to forget the emptiness of his present state, and her return “on silver wheels” that stings him each morning.

Form

This poem is a dramatic monologue: the entire text is spoken by a single character whose words reveal his identity. The lines take the form of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter). The poem as a whole falls into seven paragraph-like sections of varying length, each of which forms a thematic unit unto itself.

Themes

Grief

Grief permeates Tennyson’s poetry and was a major feature of Tennyson’s emotional life. He endured the deaths of his parents, the ensuing mental illness and addictions of many of his family members and, as a kind of muse, the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam. His poems are frank discussions of despair and the trouble of using words sufficient to express it, and he demonstrates the significance of writing poetry in the face of sorrow and loss. In some of the poems his grief is overwhelming, and he does not know if he wants to continue living. In others he finds ways to manage his grief, coming to accept that sorrow may always be a part of one’s life, while acknowledging other things in life inspire happiness and hope.

Time

Many of Tennyson’s works reflect his working through the implications of time. Growing old and lingering on are laborious and enervating in poems. Life on earth can be very sad because one is separated from loved ones who have died and because knowledge is limited. Time is also complicated by the tensions between science and religion; science reveals that time stretches on for a very long time, and religion asserts but does not prove what happens after death. Generally the poet’s reflection is that life is fleeting and short, wasted if one dwells merely in sadness or in hope, and worth savoring while it lasts.

Nature

Nature plays many roles in Tennyson’s poetry. Occasionally she is beguiling and sensuous. Nature is also an ever-present reminder of the cycle of life from birth to death; existing outside of that cycle can bring grief and separation from one’s mortal humanity, for better or for worse. Occasionally Nature is a reminder of the vitality of life and existence; other times Nature is used as a metaphor for death. Finally, Nature can also be chaotic, hostile, and indifferent to

Man. The casual way she discards species and wreaks havoc leads the poet to conclude that life might be meaningless.

Death

The great poets commonly take up the subject of death in their works, but it is rare to see a great poet treat death in such a sustained and deeply personal way as Tennyson does. Many of his greatest works were written in the aftermath of the death of his closest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. “Ulysses” is about the great hero searching for life in spite of old age and coming death, and “Tithonus” concerns the weariness of life on earth when all one wants to do is fade into the earth and no longer linger on.

My Last Duchess

Robert Browning

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
“Fra Pandolf” by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, “Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,” or “Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat.” Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had

A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — which I have not — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse —
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

About the author:

Robert Browning, (born May 7, 1812, London—died Dec. 12, 1889, Venice), major English poet of the Victorian age, noted for his mastery of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. His most noted work was *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69), the story

of a Roman murder trial in 12 books. Browning is not always difficult. In many poems, especially short lyrics, he achieves effects of obvious felicity. Nevertheless, his superficial difficulties, which prevent an easy understanding of the sense of a passage, are evident enough: his attempts to convey the broken and irregular rhythms of speech make it almost impossible to read the verse quickly; his elliptical syntax sometimes disconcerts and confuses the reader but can be mastered with little effort.

Summary

The Duke (Duke Alfonso of Ferrara) is the speaker in the poem. As the poem progresses he seems to be upset by his wife's death and is trying to commemorate her; by the end we realise he is not a nice person and that he killed her we switch from sympathy to shock and disgust. His words are cold, practical and superior.

His cool manner when speaking about his last wife suggests that he is comfortable with death and murder, and as he is speaking to the envoy of his new wife it presents a threat to her that she will also be killed if she doesn't behave as he wishes. The other voices in the poem are silent — the envoy listens and sometimes asks short questions, but we don't know exactly what he asks — we assume he speaks and responds, but the Duke clearly dominates the conversation — he uses his power and status to gain control.

The portrait of the last duchess, painted and hanging on the wall — the Duke of Ferrara says she looks like she's alive, so we know she died. The Duke is talking to an envoy — a messenger / servant of a low class position; he has decided to show him around his private art gallery. He says it's an amazing painting, a 'wonder'. The painter — Fra Pandolf — worked hard on it for a day and now it's complete. The Duke is speaking to an envoy of his new wife-to-be's family, and he asks if he wants to sit and look at the painting. The Duke says he called it a 'Fra Pandolf' painting because some strangers look at it and start to question how lifelike the woman seems, 'the depth and passion' of her expression look so intense and realistic (a suggestion that she had perhaps flirted with the painter).

The Duke says these strangers ask about the painting because he is the only one who can show it to them. We realise that the envoy has also asked about her expression. The Duke says it wasn't only her husband that made her look so attractive — he lists the attractive parts of her: the blush in her cheeks, her wrists, her throat. He says that she was too easily pleased by the attention of others, and she liked everything, and she was interested in everything and everyone (not only the Duke, as he seems to have wanted). He says it was all the same to her — she loved his attention, the daylight fading, a gift of cherries from a man, riding her white horse around the castle grounds — all these things brought the same look of pleasure to her face. It was fine for her to be grateful to other men, he says, but he was annoyed that she treated them in the same way she treated him — as if his 'gift' of an ancient aristocratic name was only as good as their gifts.

The Duke says even if he was skilled at talking, it wouldn't have been worth speaking his mind to her and letting her know that 'this disgusts me' or 'you went too far'. Even if he had done this and she had listened, it would have still been 'stooping' on his part — i.e. lowering himself to her level. She smiled when he passed her, but she also smiled at everyone else. He gave orders and the smiles stopped — this suggests that he ordered her to be killed.

The poem switches back to focusing on the painting, where the Duchess looks like she's still alive. There's a shift in tone as the Duke asks the envoy to leave. We realise that the Count is downstairs, and the envoy works for him. They are arranging a payment (dowry) for the Count's daughter, who will soon be married to the Duke and become the new Duchess. On the way out the Duke asks the envoy to look at a bronze sculpture of Neptune taming a seahorse.

Literary Devices:

Symbolism: Symbolism is using symbols to signify ideas and qualities, giving them symbolic meanings different from literal meanings. The painting of the Duke's last Duchess symbolizes how he objectifies women as property or possessions. "White mule" symbolizes her innocence and purity. "Taming a sea-horse" is a symbol of Duke taming his wife.

Enjambment: Enjambment refers to the continuation of a sentence without the pause beyond the end of a line, couplet or stanza such as:

"The Count your master's known munificence

Is ample warrant that no just pretense

Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;"

Consonance: Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /t/ in "Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though" and the sound of /n/ in "The Count your master's known munificence."

Irony: Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. The title is ironic because the dead mistress is not his last lady, as he is going to marry again.

Simile: Simile is a device used to compare something with something else to make the meanings clear. There is only one simile used in this poem. For example,

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,

Looking as if she were alive."

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is a device used to exaggerate a statement for the sake of emphasis. The poet has used hyperbole in the line twenty-four, “She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.”

Euphemism: A euphemism is a polite expression used in place of words or phrases that might otherwise be considered harsh or unpleasant. For example,

“Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands.”

Themes

Power:

"My Last Duchess" is all about power: the political and social power wielded by the speaker (the Duke) and his attempt to control the domestic sphere (his marriage) in the same way that he rules his lands. He rules with an iron fist. The Duke views everything that he possesses and everyone with whom he interacts as an opportunity to expand his power base. Wives need to be dominated; servants need to understand his authority; and fancy objects in his art gallery display his influence to the world – if he decides to show them. Kindness, joy, and emotion are all threats to his tyrannical power.

Language and Communication:

In "My Last Duchess," choices about what to communicate and what to withhold are the means by which power is wielded. The Duke sees communicating openly and honestly with someone about the problems you have with their behavior as impossible because it would compromise his authority. It's also possible to hint at his power by intentionally letting stories of the past exploits slip to a new listener. However, because language is full of subtlety, the Duke might accidentally communicate more than he meant to about his own psychosis.

Art and Culture:

"My Last Duchess" is a piece of art about a piece of (fictional) art – a poem about a pretend painting. The speaker of the poem, the Duke of Ferrara, is a connoisseur and collector of objets d'art, or art objects, which he displays privately in order to impress people. In this poem, art and culture become tools for demonstrating social status – and ways to reduce unstable elements, like the Duchess herself, to things that can be physically controlled.

Madness:

In "My Last Duchess," a husband murders his wife because she blushes and smiles at other people – even though these blushes are out of her control and probably entirely innocent. This is pretty much the textbook definition of an abusive, controlling husband. The Duke doesn't

even want his wife to thank people for gifts, because it makes him jealous. But this goes beyond abuse into the realm of madness: after all, trying to control someone is abuse thinking that because someone blushes she must be having an affair, and that the only remedy is murder is just insane.

Jealousy:

The Duke in "My Last Duchess" is pretty much the green-eyed monster incarnate. He's almost an allegorical figure for jealousy. He's jealous of the attention his wife shows to other people—even if all she does is thank them for bringing her some cherries. He's jealous of every smile and every blush that she bestows, intentionally or unintentionally, on someone else. He's so jealous that he can't even bring himself to talk to her about her behavior – murder is the only solution he can come up with. His jealousy isn't just about romantic attention; it's about any kind of attention.

The Windhover

Manley Hopkins

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

About the author:

Gerard Manley Hopkins, (born July 28, 1844, Stratford, Essex, Eng.—died June 8, 1889, Dublin), English poet and Jesuit priest, one of the most individual of Victorian writers. His work was not published in collected form until 1918, but it influenced many leading 20th-century poets. Hopkins was also very interested in ways of rejuvenating poetic language. He regularly placed familiar words into new and surprising contexts. He also often employed compound and unusual word combinations. As he wrote to in a letter to Bridges, "No doubt, my poetry errs on the side of oddness..."

Summary:

The poem, *The Windhover*, by Gerard Manley Hopkins is a sonnet in sprung rhythm. It was Hopkins's favourite poem and he called it "the best thing I ever wrote". The sub-title of the poem, "To Christ Our Lord" is significant, because it provides a clue to the phrase "my chevalier" which applies as much to Christ as to the windhover. Basically the poem is a Petrarchan sonnet, rhyming abbaabbacddcd, a very traditional rhyme scheme. The sestet is divided into two tercets - again this is not unusual in Petrarchan sonnets. The octave is not quite evenly divided: the first quatrain runs over into the fifth line with 'In his ecstasy!', but that in itself is not remarkable. The windhover is a kind of hawk or falcon. The bird is so called because he has a tendency to hover in the wind. *The Windhover* is one of the best known sonnets by Gerard Manley Hopkins and was inspired by the sight of a small falcon, a kestrel, which often faces against the wind to hover above its prey. Hence the alternative name of windhover.

More significant however is the transformation of the bird into a spiritual symbol of Christ. As a Jesuit priest Hopkins was clear in his belief that the beauty in Nature mirrored the beauty of God. Much of his poetry was created in order to find a way to God, through the Christ figure.

Though another sonnet, titled *The Caged Skylark*, which was written during the same year, centres around the bird already made famous by the odes of Wordsworth and Shelley, the poem, *The Windhover* has, in fact, raised to a position of rival prominence a bird scarcely mentioned by previous poets. The volume of commentary which this sonnet has produced is evidence of its continuing fascination.

In the poem, *The Windhover*, the poet has caught sight of the falcon who is described as morning's favourite bird, and as the dauphin or crown prince of the kingdom of daylight. The falcon is drawn from his resting place or abode by the dapple-coloured dawn. The poet sees the bird as best-riding the air beneath him like a skilful horseman controlling his horse. The air is at once rolling and yet level and steady beneath the bird, as he rides high and erect like a horseman in the saddle.

The bird circles in the air, as though controlling his movement in the wind after the manner of a trainer “ringing on the rein” of a wild horse. The bird pivots round on the tip of his extended wing, which is described as “wimpling”, that is, rippling like a nun’s wimple in movement. At this moment of conflict with the pressure of the wind, the bird feels an ecstasy, and sweeps off in the direction of the wind as though on a swing. This movement of the bird also reminds the poet of a skilful skater, sweeping round smoothly “on a bow-bend”, that is, while cutting a figure of eight on the ice.

The movement combines “hurl” or strong self-propulsion, with “gliding” or full utilization of the wind’s force. The skill of the bird thus seems to rebuff the wind, that is, to win a triumph over the wind. This triumph of the mind over matter inwardly stirs the heart of the poet “in hiding”.

The words “In hiding” may refer to the poet’s timidity or it may refer to the heart’s being hidden with Christ in God and thus leading a hidden religious life. The poet’s heart is thrilled with admiration for the bird—for the bird’s achievement in triumphing over the inanimate forces of Nature. The “heart in hiding” may also refer to the fact that the poet watches the bird from some hidden place, or to the fact that the heart is hidden within the body. Moreover the words “here buckle” mean that the various qualities mentioned by the poet combine or fuse together in the falcon. “Here” = in the bird. “Buckle” = combine together. But there is another meaning also of “Here buckle”. The “heart in hiding” is being urged to make a complete surrender of itself to Christ.

Poet sums up the qualities of the falcon as-brute, beauty, valour, “act”, pride, plume. All these qualities combine together in the falcon. The poet tells his heart to surrender itself completely to Christ. Through such a self-surrender the poet would see splendour in the falcon which is a billion times lovelier than is visible at a superficial view. The spiritual fire which the poet would behold is a billion times lovelier than the “brute beauty” of the falcon, and yet “more dangerous” also as it would make the poet a more devoted servant of Christ—because service has its hazards as well as rewards. There is nothing surprising in all this, the poet says and goes on to give us two examples from common experience:

There mere plodding of ploughman as he pushes his plough down the “sillion” or furrow produces a brightness on his ploughshare. In the same way, fidelity in religious life (just as Christ compared the religious life to taking up the plough) produces brightness in the soul.\

The embers of a fire may appear to be dying; they may look bleak in their faded blue colour; but it is precisely then that these embers fall and bruise themselves, so that they break open and reveal a hidden fire of “gold vermilion”. The poet’s soul, too, is “blue-bleak” or seemingly lifeless. But through suffering and mortification for the sake of Christ, the poet would experience a spiritual glory.

Themes

Awe and Amazement:

The inspiration for "The Windhover" is the speaker's awe and amazement at the windhover's awesome and amazing skill at hovering on the wind. One of Hopkins's goals in writing poetry was to inspire his readers with the same kind of awe and amazement that he felt when looking at simple, everyday objects—like a bird in flight. And we'd say this poem succeeds.

Appearances:

"The Windhover" is about the speaker's admiration for a beautiful bird, true. But it also touches on some bigger philosophical questions—like how even boring, everyday objects can appear beautiful and amazing if only people know how to look at them in the right way. This poem is partly meant to show us how to open everyone's eyes to see the beauty hidden in everyday things.

Strength and Skill:

One can't discuss "The Windhover" without talking about the poet's inspiration for writing: the awe-inspiring strength and skill of the bird itself. This bird, commonly called a windhover because of its ability to hover on the wind, can actually fly in place in the air, even with high winds buffeting it around.

Goblin Market

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpeck'd cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheek'd peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,

Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy.”

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bow'd her head to hear,
Lizzie veil'd her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?”
“Come buy,” call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.

“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie cover'd up her eyes,

Cover'd close lest they should look;
Laura rear'd her glossy head,
And whisper'd like the restless brook:
"Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes."
"No," said Lizzie, "No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us."
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisk'd a tail,
One tramp'd at a rat's pace,
One crawl'd like a snail,
One like a wombat prowl'd obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretch'd her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turn'd and troop'd the goblin men,

With their shrill repeated cry,
“Come buy, come buy.”
When they reach’d where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One rear’d his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heav’d the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
“Come buy, come buy,” was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Long’d but had no money:
The whisk-tail’d merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr’d,
The rat-faced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried “Pretty Goblin” still for “Pretty Polly;”—
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
“Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather.”
“You have much gold upon your head,”
They answer’d all together:
“Buy from us with a golden curl.”
She clipp’d a precious golden lock,
She dropp’d a tear more rare than pearl,

Then suck'd their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flow'd that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She suck'd and suck'd and suck'd the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She suck'd until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gather'd up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turn'd home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Pluck'd from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so.”
“Nay, hush,” said Laura:
“Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;

To-morrow night I will
Buy more;" and kiss'd her:
"Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtain'd bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipp'd with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gaz'd in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapp'd to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Lock'd together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crow'd his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetch'd in honey, milk'd the cows,
Air'd and set to rights the house,

Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churn'd butter, whipp'd up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sew'd;
Talk'd as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie pluck'd purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homeward said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags.
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."
But Laura loiter'd still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill;
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark:
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turn'd cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
"Come buy our fruits, come buy."
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life droop'd from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudg'd home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnash'd her teeth for baulk'd desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
"Come buy, come buy;"—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen:
But when the noon wax'd bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn

Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dew'd it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watch'd for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dream'd of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crown'd trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetch'd honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy;"—
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The yoke and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Long'd to buy fruit to comfort her,
But fear'd to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,

In earliest winter time
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seem'd knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weigh'd no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kiss'd Laura, cross'd the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laugh'd every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugg'd her and kiss'd her:
Squeez'd and caress'd her:
Stretch'd up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
“Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,

Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs.”—

“Good folk,” said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
“Give me much and many: —
Held out her apron,
Toss’d them her penny.
“Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,”
They answer’d grinning:
“Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry:
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us.”—
“Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I toss’d you for a fee.”—
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.

One call'd her proud,
Cross-grain'd, uncivil;
Their tones wax'd loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbow'd and jostled her,
Claw'd with their nails,
Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soil'd her stocking,
Twitch'd her hair out by the roots,
Stamp'd upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeez'd their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-vein'd stone
Lash'd by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crown'd orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topp'd with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguerr'd by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuff'd and caught her,
Coax'd and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratch'd her, pinch'd her black as ink,
Kick'd and knock'd her,
Maul'd and mock'd her,
Lizzie utter'd not a word;
Would not open lip from lip

Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laugh'd in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrapp'd all her face,
And lodg'd in dimples of her chin,
And streak'd her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kick'd their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writh'd into the ground,
Some div'd into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanish'd in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she fear'd some goblin man
Dogg'd her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin scurried after,
Nor was she prick'd by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried, "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeez'd from goblin fruits for you,

Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men.”
Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutch’d her hair:
“Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruin’d in my ruin,
Thirsty, canker’d, goblin-ridden?”—
She clung about her sister,
Kiss’d and kiss’d and kiss’d her:
Tears once again
Refresh’d her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,
She kiss’d and kiss’d her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loath’d the feast:
Writhing as one possess’d she leap’d and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks stream’d like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knock’d at her heart,

Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name:
Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense fail'd in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topp'd waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watch'd by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cool'd her face
With tears and fanning leaves:
But when the first birds chirp'd about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bow'd in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Open'd of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laugh'd in the innocent old way,
Hugg'd Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks show'd not one thread of grey,
Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;

Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town):
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
“For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.”

About the author:

December 5, 1830, Christina Rossetti was born in London, England, her father was the poet Gabriele Rossetti; her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti also became a poet and a painter. Rossetti’s first poems were written in 1842 and printed in the private press of her grandfather. In 1850, under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyne, she contributed seven poems to the Pre-Raphaelite journal *The Germ*, which had been founded by her brother William Michael and his friends.

Rossetti is best known for her ballads and her mystic religious lyrics. Her poetry is marked by symbolism and intense feeling. Rossetti’s best-known work, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, was published in 1862. The collection established Rossetti as a significant voice in Victorian poetry.

Summary:

Two sisters, Lizzie and Laura, go to collect water at dusk, when they hear the enticing cries of goblin traders selling luscious fruit. Lizzie is alert to the danger of engaging with the goblins and runs home, but Laura is entranced. The goblins notice this and although she has no

money, sell her all sorts of delicious fruit, for the price of a curl of her hair. Laura devours the fruit until she is intoxicated, then returns home, with one fruit stone in her possession.

Lizzie is concerned for her sister, knowing that a friend of theirs, Jeanie, pined away and died after eating the goblins' fruit, but at first all seems well. The sisters sleep calmly together and next day do their chores. That evening, after collecting the water, Laura waits to hear the goblins come again, despite Lizzie's warnings. However, whilst Lizzie is still able to see and hear the goblins, Laura can now no longer do so. Yearning for the fruit she cannot get, Laura loses her health and youthful beauty. She tries to plant the fruit stone but it does not grow. In despair, Laura stops eating or doing any chores.

To alleviate her sister's sufferings, though aware of Jeanie's fate, Lizzie decides to buy some goblin fruit with a silver penny. This delights the goblins until Lizzie asks that they put the fruit in her apron and refuses to eat it. The goblins try to persuade her otherwise, then attack her, trying to force the fruit into her mouth. Lizzie resists and although her face is smeared with juice, refuses to open her mouth. At last, the goblins toss back the penny and disappear with their fruit. Although battered and bruised, Lizzie races home to her sister.

Lizzie invites Laura to kiss the juice left on her face, hoping it will be an antidote to her decline. Laura does so, ravenously, although she is concerned for the danger her sister has put herself in. The juice acts likepoison, but Laura is unable to stop herself, until finally she collapses, close to death. Through the night Lizzie nurses her sister and in the morning Laura wakes up restored to health and beauty. The poem ends with a jump into the future when "both were wives / With children of their own." Laura would tell the children how she was in a dire state because of the goblin men and how Lizzie placed herself in "deadly peril" to save Laura and acquire the "fiery antidote." The poem closes with the note that there "is no friend like a sister."

Themes:

Redemptive Power of Love: The main theme in the text focuses on how Laura's redemption is facilitated through Lizzie's sacrifice. Despite the dangers of the goblin market, Lizzie risks everything in order to save Laura from a life of suffering because of the love she has for her sister.

Spiritual Love as Nourishment: Similar to the theme of the redemptive power of love, this theme reveals the parallel between Lizzie and the biblical Jesus Christ. When Lizzie returns and invites Laura to taste the fruit on her body, this alludes to the same communion ritual that Jesus takes part in with his disciples. As a result, Laura is nourished and given new life.

Dangers of Sacrificing Chastity: Another theme is the relationship between sacrificing a part of the self to indulge in pleasure. Laura trades a part of her body to indulge in forbidden fruit, and after doing so, she suffers as a direct result of her actions. This suggests that giving up one's purity for the sake of temptation or pleasure is not worth the risk.

Female Solidarity and Sisterhood

Female solidarity and sisterhood is a primary theme of "Goblin Market." Laura and Lizzie are sisters who live together, and the importance and strength of their relationship is one of the focal points of the poem.

When Laura returns home after being out all night with the goblin men, Lizzie greets her in worry and warns, "Twilight is not good for maidens." Though Laura dismisses her concerns with "Nay, hush, my sister," trying to help Laura not to falter or fall prey to temptation is clearly fundamental to Lizzie's sense of sisterhood.

Lizzie's response to Laura's withering decline highlights her identification with her sister: "Tender Lizzie could not bear / To watch her sister's cankerous care." She makes what in the context of the poem is the ultimate sacrifice: putting herself in danger by facing the goblins in an attempt to save her sister.

When Lizzie returns home with the cure for Laura, Laura is overcome: "She clung about her sister." The salvation for her fallen state comes from the risk undertaken by a sister. This story is the tale that Laura will pass on to her children: she "would tell them how her sister stood / In deadly peril to do her good." "Goblin Market" ends with a very pointed summation of the theme: "For there is no friend like a sister / In calm or stormy weather; / To cheer one on the tedious way, / To fetch one if one goes astray." The story of the goblin men demonstrates how female solidarity overcomes the "deadly peril" of (goblin) men.

Christina Rossetti was influenced by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* not only in her life but in her writing. The devotion to lifting up fallen women caused Rossetti to volunteer at the Highgate House and also to write this poem.

Symbols:

Lily

Numerous symbols of purity arise in the poem. Chief among them is the lily, commonly a symbol of purity, innocence, and virginity. When the reader sees that Laura is experiencing temptation, she's compared to "a lily from the beck [mountain stream]." Other symbols of purity in this passage include the swan, the moonlit branch, and a boat ready to launch. Laura is still pure but at the edge of restraint; the lily is one among several delicate and vulnerable images.

In contrast, when Lizzie faces the goblins, she's likened to things that withstand force. She, too, is compared to a lily, but she is "like a lily in a flood," as opposed to a mountain stream. No swan or moonlit branch is here; rather, Lizzie is "Like a rock of blue-vein'd stone / Lash'd by tides obstreperously,— / Like a beacon left alone / In a hoary roaring sea." So while both Laura

and Lizzie are associated with the lily, one represents a fragile purity while the other represents a purity that stands strong despite being besieged.

Golden Curl

Loose hair was a symbol of so-called "fallen women" in the Victorian era, and hair in "Goblin Market" connects with sexuality. When Laura realizes that she cannot afford the forbidden fruit, the goblins tell her, "You have much gold upon your head." They go on to suggest that she "buy from us with a golden curl." Laura agrees and cuts a "precious golden lock." In doing so, she weeps. The curl—her innocence and purity—is payment to the animalistic goblins in exchange for the fruit that represents worldly, sensual pleasure. After she succumbs to the goblins, her hair grows "thin and grey." She is aging and dying. Her strength and innocence go away.

The symbolic tie between hair and sexuality deepens when Lizzie goes to the goblins for a cure for the dying Laura. The goblins "Twitch'd her hair out by the roots." Lizzie, however, withstands their attacks and runs home to Laura with the cure.

Literary Devices:

Pervasive Symbolism

Symbolism is used throughout the poem to underscore the moral message. For example, color is used to represent purity and sin. Lizzie's appearance is described as white and golden to signify her purity. For example, she is described as "sending up a golden fire," which acts as a guide for those who are not as virtuous as she. Laura once had golden hair, but after she eats the fruit -- succumbs to temptation -- her hair turns dark and gray, symbolizing her fall from virtue.

Light is also used to symbolize virtue and sin. Lizzie regularly yearns for the light of day and warns her sister of the twilight, but Laura longs for the night time, when she can eat the fruit again. The light of day reveals all sin, while the night allows sinners to indulge.

Metaphor and Extended Simile

Metaphor and extended simile are used in the same way symbolism is used to underscore the meaning in the verse. Throughout the poem, the sisters are compared to flowers, which represent purity and delicacy. Flowers can also be plucked, or lose their purity, which happens to Laura after she gives in to temptation and eats the fruit. Metaphor is also used to compare Laura's hair to gold and her tears to pearls (used to barter for fruit), creating a sexual suggestion that Laura "pays" for her fruit, or pleasure, with her body. Of course, after losing her virtue, she almost pays the price of her life.

Meaningful Allusion

Many scholars believe the poem to be an allegory of redemption similar to the story of Christ, though Rossetti's brother said she never intended the poem to be perceived as such. However, allusions used throughout the poem support this interpretation. Lizzie is seen as a savior figure to Laura, taking the abuse of the goblins in penance for Laura's sin. Because Lizzie resists temptation, Laura is able to heal and has a second chance at life. Lizzie even tells Laura, "Eat me, drink me, love me," alluding to how Christ told his disciples to eat bread representing his body to gain salvation.

Free Verse

The poem does not follow a strict rhythm or meter. Though many of the lines rhyme, they do not adhere to a strict pattern. The structure deviates as necessary to match the tone and mood of each section of the poem. When intense emotion is present, the verse becomes more erratic, such as when all of the goblins' fruits are listed. Laura is heady with temptation, and the verse matches her excited state of mind.

*Sonnets from the Portuguese 14:
If thou must love me, let it be for nought*

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
I love her for her smile ... her look ... her way
Of speaking gently, ... for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'—
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

About the author:

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born on March 6, 1806, at Coxhoe Hall, Durham, England. She published her first major collection, *The Seraphim and Other Poems*, in 1838. She

is perhaps best known for her '*Sonnets From the Portuguese*' and '*Aurora Leigh*' as well as the love story between her and fellow poet Robert Browning.

Summary:

In the very first line of the poem, the poet reveals her expectations from her lover. If the lover really wants to love her, he should love her for nothing but only for love's sake. To make it easy: Love me because of love and because of the essential eternal quality of love on earth. Love me for love's sake, not for any other reason.

The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning does not want to be loved for her physical beauty, gentle manner of speaking or her way of thinking. She asks her lover not to love her for her smile, her look or her gentle speaking. She also tells him that he may find some of her qualities compatible with him. The lover may discover that his thought process certainly matches with hers in a particular day. But the poet forbids him to show those as reasons for his love.

The poet in *If Thou Must Love Me* now explains why she disapproves of her physical charm or her nature as the reasons for his love. Those are transitory or short-lived. The poet's good looks can fade away with time. She can forget to smile. She may be rude in her speech in future. And the lover's thoughts may contradict with that of hers. Moreover, those things may change for the lover himself. He may not find the same thing beautiful enough with the passing of time.

If the love is shaped (wrought) with such transitory materials that will be destroyed (unwrought) in the same way. So that love cannot be permanent. The lover (Robert Brown) should love Elizabeth sincerely and genuinely to make it last long.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her Sonnet *If Thou Must Love Me* doesn't want her lover to love her out of pity. He may be loving her to sympathize with her by wiping her tears from her cheeks and being there for her emotionally. But the poet argues that she (compares herself to a creature) would not have a reason to cry anymore as she has "bored" her lover's "comfort" for long and is now happy in his company. In that way the lover will have no reason to love her anymore. Thus, she may lose his love. In the last two lines of the sonnet *If Thou Must Love Me* the poet conveys her concept of ideal love. She explains how a man should love a woman. That is, unconditional love – genuine and sincere love – love for love's sake only. Only then, the lover may be able to love her forever, denying the grasp of Time, through love's eternity.

Themes:

Temporary love VS permanent love:

For Barrett Browning, love can be of two types – one that lasts a little time, and one that lasts for all eternity. The love that is temporary is based on the particular – the particular way in which a person smiles, the particular look of a person, the particular way in which he or she

thinks, et cetera. This kind of love is trivial in comparison to the other kind. The other kind is based on the universal – the universal emotion that we call love itself. This is an emotion that anyone is capable of experiencing, and hence, it is this which should give birth to the relationship between two people, and nurture that relationship as well. These ideas of Barrett Browning's may have been derived from Plato, for Plato also speaks of moving from the particular to the general (by way of what is known as the Platonic Ladder) in matters of love in his work entitled Symposium.

Autobiographical element: In the Victorian age, we do not find confessional poetry per se, since that genre was strictly discovered in the Modernist period. However, we do notice some autobiographical elements in Victorian poetry nonetheless. Perhaps this is a legacy of the Romantic movement, that focused on the poet's individualism and interiority. Barrett Browning, too, includes a part of her own story in each sonnet of the collection entitled *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, from which "If Thou Must Love Me" is taken. This sonnet is no exception. As we have mentioned before, she suffered from multiple severe physical ailments throughout her lifetime. As a result, she felt it was unnatural for any man to love such a physically ill woman like herself. That is why she expected that all men loved her simply out of pity. When she first met and began to be courted by Robert Browning, she suspected that his love was also born out of his pity for her. That is why, in this sonnet, she tells her beloved not to love her because he has devoted much time to wipe the tears from her cheeks. His love has made her happy, and she may forget to weep, and if that happens, he will neither pity her nor love her any longer. Of this, she is afraid. Instead, she suggests that he should love her only for the sake of love.

The tone of If Thou Must Love Me:

The tone of this poem is rather ambiguous. In the beginning, she seems to be spurning any praise that might be directed towards her by her beloved, and we are left wondering why she would want to do so. Next, she tells him that she might change, and this sounds like an ominous warning. However, in the end, when she affirms the primacy of love as the reason their relationship will last a lifetime, the sincerity of her emotions shines through and dispels all our doubts about her intention in writing this sonnet. We are assured that she means to strengthen her relationship with her husband, and that is a satisfying feeling indeed.

Poetic Devices in If Thou Must Love Me:

Rhyme scheme:

Sonnets typically occur in two types of rhyme schemes – in the pattern ABBA ABBA CDE CDE, known as the Petrarchan sonnet, or in the pattern ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, known as the Shakespearian sonnet. In this poem, neither of these patterns is followed in its entirety. Its rhyme scheme is as follows: ABBA ABBA CDCDCD. Thus it is an atypical sonnet.

Apostrophe:

This rhetorical device is used when a poet addresses his or her poem to an absent audience. In this poem, the poet uses the device of apostrophe throughout the poem as she addresses all her words to the man she loves (her husband, Robert Browning), but whom we readers never see at any point in the poem.

Transferred epithet:

This rhetorical device is used when an emotion is attributed to a non-living thing after being displaced from a person, most often the poet himself or herself. In this poem, the poet uses the device of transferred epithet in line 10 when she writes the phrase “dear pity”. It is not that pity is equivalent to sweetness, but that his pity brings sweetness to the character of the man the poet loves.