

POETRY

(B.A. English Sem. I)



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Sonnet

The word *sonnet* is derived from the Italian word “sonetto,” which means a “little song” or small lyric. In poetry, a sonnet has 14 lines, and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10 syllables. It has specific rhyme scheme, and a Volta, or a specific turn.

Generally, sonnets are divided into different groups based on the rhyme scheme they follow. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab–cdcd–efef–gg, and in Italian abba–abba–cde–cde.

Types of Sonnet

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

1. Italian Sonnet
2. Shakespearean Sonnet
3. Spenserian Sonnet
4. Miltonic Sonnet
5. Terza Rima Sonnet
6. Curtal Sonnet

Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet- Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was introduced by 14th century Italian poet Francesco Petrarch. The rhyme scheme of a Petrarchan sonnet features the first eight lines, called an octet, which rhymes as abba–abba–cdc–dcd. The remaining six lines are called a sestet, and might have a range of rhyme schemes.

Shakespearean Sonnet- A Shakespearean sonnet is generally written in iambic pentameter, in which there are 10 syllables in each line. The rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet is abab–cdcd–efef–gg, which is difficult to follow.

Spenserian Sonnet- Sir Edmund Spenser was the first poet who modified the Petrarch’s form, and introduced a new rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is abab–bcbc–cdcd–ee, which is specific to Spenser, and such types of sonnets are called Spenserian sonnets.

Function of Sonnet- The sonnet has become popular among different poets because it has a great adaptability to different purposes and requirements. Rhythms are strictly followed. It could be a perfect poetic style for elaboration or expression of a single feeling or thought, with its short length in iambic pentameter. In fact, it gives an ideal setting for a poet to explore strong emotions. Due to its short length, it is easy to manage for both the writer and the reader.

Elegy

Elegy is a form of literature that can be defined as a poem or song in the form of elegiac couplets, written in honor of someone deceased. It typically laments or mourns the death of the individual.

Elegy is derived from the Greek word *elegus*, which means a song of bereavement sung along with a flute. The forms of elegy we see today were introduced in the 16th century. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, by Thomas Gray, and *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*, by Walt Whitman are the two most popular examples of elegy.

Features of Elegy

Usually, elegies are identified by several characteristics of genre:

- Just like a classical epic, an elegy typically starts with the invocation of the muse, and then proceeds by referencing traditional mythology.
- It often involves a poet who knows how to phrase thoughts imaginatively in the first person.
- Questions are raised by the poet about destiny, justice, and fate.
- The poet associates the events of the deceased with events in his own life by drawing a subtle comparison.
- This kind of digression gives the poet space to go beyond the main or crude subject to a deeper level where the connotations might be metaphorical.
- Towards the end the poet generally tries to provide comfort to ease the pain of the situation. Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery, to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state.
- An elegy is not always based on a plot.

Function of Elegy

- Elegy is one of the richest literary forms because it has the capacity to express emotions that deeply influence people. The strongest of the tools elegy uses is its reliance on memories of those who are no more. Most of the poets who wrote elegies were evidently awed by the frailty of human beings, and how the world completely forgets about the deceased at some point.
- However, the function of elegy is not as limited as it is thought. Whenever we take a look at elegy examples, what comes to mind are feelings like sorrow, grief, and lamentation; but, a study of the Latin elegy tells us otherwise. A great deal of genre created in western literature was inspired by Latin elegy, which was not always so somber. The most famous elegiac poets in Latin literature, such as *Catullus*, *Ovid*, and *Propertius*, used humor, irony, even slotted narratives into a poem and still called them elegy.

Ode

An ode is a form of poetry such as sonnet or elegy. Ode is a literary technique that is lyrical in nature, but not very lengthy. You have often read odes in which poets praise people, natural scenes, and abstract ideas. Ode is derived from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. It is highly solemn and serious in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. However, the tone is often formal. A salient feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme.

Types of Ode

Odes are of three types, including (1) Pindar ode, (2) Horatian ode, and (3) irregular ode.

Pindar Ode- This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe, and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

Horatian Ode- The name of this ode was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal, meditative and intimate. These odes dwelled upon interesting subject matters that were simple and were pleasing to the senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules.

Irregular Ode- This type of ode is without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure such as the Pindaric ode. Hence, the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Function of Ode- Ode is a form of lyrical poetry, in which poets use a certain metrical pattern and rhyme scheme to express their noble and lofty sentiments in serious and sometimes satirical tone. Since the themes of odes are inspiring and lofty, they have universal appeal. Also, by using sublime and exceptional style, poets endeavor to compose grand and elevated types of odes. Sometimes odes may be humorous, but they are always thoughtful, intended to explore important themes and observations related to human relations, emotions and senses.

Epic:

The word epic is derived from the Ancient Greek adjective, “*epikos*”, which means a poetic story. In literature, an epic is a long narrative poem, which is usually related to heroic deeds of a person of an unusual courage and unparalleled bravery. In order to depict this bravery and courage, the epic uses grandiose style.

The hero is usually the representative of the values of a certain culture, race, nation or a religious group on whose victor or failure the destiny of the whole nation or group depends. Therefore, certain supernatural forces, deus ex machina, help the hero, who comes out victor at the end. An epic usually starts with an invocation to muse, but then picks up the threads of the story from the middle and moves on to the end.

Function of Epic- As the epic poem is the earliest form of poetry, it is the earliest form of entertainment as well. Epics were written to commemorate the struggles and adventures of kings and warriors. The main function of epic poetry was to elevate the status of the hero among the audiences to inspire them to be ready to perform heroic actions. Epic obtained most of its themes from the exploits performed by legendary characters and their illustrious ancestors. That is why these exploits became examples for others to follow, and still lived in books. It is through epics, models of ideal heroic behavior were supplied to the common people. Moreover, epics also were collections of historical events not recorded in common history books — the reason that they are read today to be enjoyed and be informed regarding the past.

BALLAD

A **ballad** is a type of poem that is sometimes set to music. Ballads have a long history and are found in many cultures. The ballad actually began as a folk song and continues today in popular music. Many love songs today can be considered ballads.

A typical ballad consists of stanzas that contain a **quatrain**, or four poetic lines. The **meter** or rhythm of each line is usually **iambic**, which means it has one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. In ballads, there are usually eight or six syllables in a line. Like any poem, some ballads follow this form and some don't, but almost all ballads are **narrative**, which means they tell a story.

Because the ballad was originally set to music, some ballads have a **refrain**, or a repeated chorus, just like a song does. Similarly, the rhyme scheme is often ABAB because of the musical quality of this rhyme pattern.

While ballads have always been popular, it was during the **Romantic movement** of poetry in the late 18th century that the ballad had a resurgence and became a popular form. Many famous romantic poets, like William Wordsworth, wrote in the ballad form.

One famous ballad is *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was written in 1797 and is the story of a sailor who has returned from a long voyage.

LYRICS

Lyric is a collection of verses and choruses, making up a complete song, or a short and non-narrative poem. A lyric uses a single speaker, who expresses personal emotions or thoughts. Lyrical poems, which are often popular for their musical quality and rhythm, are pleasing to the ear, and are easily put to music.

The term *lyric* originates from the Greek word “*lyre*,” which is an instrument used by the Grecians to play when reading a poem. Lyrical poets demonstrate specific moods and emotions through words. Such moods express a range of emotions, from extreme to nebulous, about life, love, death, or other experiences of life. S

Types of Lyric: -

There are several types of lyric used in poems such as given below:

Elegy- An elegy is a mournful, sad, or melancholic poem or a song that expresses sorrow for someone who has been lost, or died. Originally, it followed a structure using a meter alternating six foot and five foot lines. However, modern elegies do not follow such a pattern, though the mood of the poem remains the same.

Ode- An ode is a lyric poem that expresses intense feelings, such as love, respect, or praise for someone or something. Like an elegy, an ode does not follow any strict format or structure, though it uses refrains or repeated lines. It is usually longer than other lyrical forms, and focuses on positive moods of life.

Sonnet- A sonnet uses fourteen lines, and follows iambic pentameter with five pairs of accented and unaccented syllables. The structure of a sonnet, with predetermined syllables and rhyme scheme, makes it flow off the tongues of readers in way similar way to a on song on the radio.

Dramatic Monologue-A dramatic monologue has theatrical quality, which means that the poem portrays a solitary speaker communing with the audience, without any dialogue coming from other characters. Usually, the speaker talks to a specific person in the poem.

Occasional Poetry-Poets write *occasional* poetry for specific *occasions* such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, victories, and dedications, such as John Dryden’s “Annus Mirabilis,” and Edmund Spencer’s “Epithalamion.”

Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue means self-conversation, speech or talks which includes interlocutor presented dramatically. It means a person, who is speaking to himself or someone else speaks to reveal specific intentions of his actions. However, in literature, it is a poetic form or a poem that presents the speech or conversation of a person in a dramatic manner.

Features of a Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue has these common features in them.

1. A single person delivering a speech on one aspect of his life
2. The audience may or may not be present
3. Speaker reveals his temperament and character only through his speech

Types of Dramatic Monologue

There are three major types of dramatic monologues such as:

1. Romantic monologue
2. Philosophical and psychological monologue
3. Conversational monologue

Function-A monologue functions as a tool to give vent to one's thoughts. It provides an opportunity for the poets to use powerful words spoken through their characters. So, the characters can express themselves or their ideas without an obstacle or hindrance. A dramatic monologue is also a convenient device to present different characters and their inner thoughts through verses.

UNIT-2 Sonnet 1 - "From fairest creatures we desire increase"

What's he saying?

"From fairest creatures we desire increase / That thereby beauty's rose might never die,"

We want the best-looking people to have children so that their beauty can be appreciated by future generations,

"But as the riper should by time decease / His tender heir might bear his memory:"

For once the elder has passed away, his young will share the memory of his ancestor's beauty (and may look like the elder):

"But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes / Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,"

But you, obsessed with your own beauty, selfishly consume all of that beauty's light,
"Making a famine where abundance lies / Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:"

Depriving the world of that beauty when there is plenty to be had by all; you are your own enemy, you are cruel to your own sweet self, for not having a child to carry on your memory.

"Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament / And only herald to the gaudy spring,"

*You who are now a beautiful thing on earth, and the one who announces the coming of spring,
"Within thine own bud buriest thy content / And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:"*

*Are burying your self-satisfied beauty within yourself, and wasting it by being selfish.
"Pity the world, or else this glutton be / To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee."*

Have pity on the world and bear a child; otherwise you are a glutton, keeping your beauty to yourself by taking it with you to the grave.

Why is he saying it?

Sonnets 1-126 comprise the first unit of Shakespeare's sonnets, although the second unit is considerably smaller, comprising only 28 sonnets. We often call sonnets 1-126 the "fair lord sonnets" because they tell the story of the poet's growing affection for (and eventual rejection by) a young and beautiful man that some critics also describe as the poet's financial benefactor. Almost all of the fair lord sonnets are addressed directly to the fair lord himself, and those that are not are surely about either him or the effect he has on the poet's emotional state.

Sonnets 1-17 are sometimes referred to as the "procreation sonnets," for in these sonnets the poet pleads with the fair lord, begging him to have a child so that his beauty may be passed on for future generations. This mini-theme of procreation continues until sonnet 18, whereupon the poet seemingly abandons it in favour of a new course. From then on the poet seeks to eternalize the fair lord's beauty in the lines of his verse, a plan he foreshadows in some preceding sonnets, e.g., "But were some child of yours alive that time / You should live twice; in it and in my rhyme" (sonnet 17).

From the beginning the poet appears infatuated with the fair lord's beauty, as the fair lord is infatuated with it himself. Knowing that Shakespeare often drew on Greek and Latin myth and legend in his works, we see a possible allusion to the story of Narcissus in the fair lord's obsession with his own appearance. The fair lord seems not only obsessed with his own beauty but also immoderately selfish with it - at least in the eyes of the poet. The selfishness of the fair lord with respect to his beauty is alluded to elsewhere in the procreation sequence, e.g., "Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend / Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?" (sonnet 4).

This first sonnet introduces the reader to a number of the sonnets' recurring themes: a possible homoerotic undertone (a man's appreciation of another man's beauty), the imagery of financial bondage (as in "contracted"), and the theme of selfishness and greed embodied in the fair lord's unwillingness to eternalize his beauty himself, thereby "making a famine where abundance lies." In fact, the sonnet as a whole can be encapsulated under the theme of the ravages of time, as a one-line summary of its content might be made thus: "Have a child now, beautiful man, because the clock is ticking; don't be selfish."

In line 11, the word "content" could have two very different meanings depending on the position of the stress. If we follow the iambic rhythm, the stress falls on the second syllable, giving the word the meaning of "happiness" or "pleasure," i.e. "you are burying your happiness within yourself." However, some scholars have suggested that the poet is actually making a pun, with the alternate meaning of "content" (stress on the first syllable) a reference to the fair lord's content, his beauty (or even semen: the fair lord is keeping it all to himself, thereby wasting it). It is clear that the poet was very deliberate in his choice of words - his sonnets and plays show numerous other examples of similarly subtle and bawdy puns - so such speculation may seem more reasonable as one becomes more familiar with the sonnets and Shakespeare's work as a whole.

Sonnet 18 - "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

What's he saying?

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate:"

What if I were to compare you to a summer day? You are lovelier and more temperate (the perfect temperature):

"Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May / And summer's lease hath all too short a date:"

Summer's beauty is fragile and can be shaken, and summertime fades away all too quickly:

"Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines / And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;"

Sometimes the sun is far too hot, and often it is too cool, dimmed by clouds and shade;

"And every fair from fair sometime declines / By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;"

And everything that is beautiful eventually loses its beauty, whether by chance or by the uncontrollable course of nature;

"But thy eternal summer shall not fade / Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;"

But your eternal beauty (or youth) will not fade, nor will your beauty be lost;

"Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade / When in eternal lines to time thou growest:"

Nor will Death boast that you wander in his shadow, since you shall grow with time through these sonnets:

"So long as men can breathe or eyes can see / So long lives this and this gives life to thee."

For as long as people can breathe and see, this sonnet will live on, and you (and your beauty) with it.

Why is he saying it?

Sonnet 18 is arguably the most famous of the sonnets, its opening line competitive with "Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" in the long list of Shakespeare's quotable quotations. The gender of the addressee is not explicit, but this is the first sonnet after the so-called "procreation sonnets" (sonnets 1-17), i.e., it apparently marks the place where the poet has abandoned his earlier push to persuade the fair lord to have a child. The first two quatrains focus on the fair lord's beauty: the poet attempts to compare it to a summer's day, but shows that there can be no such comparison, since the fair lord's timeless beauty far surpasses that of the fleeting, inconstant season.

Here the theme of the ravages of time again predominates; we see it especially in line 7, where the poet speaks of the inevitable mortality of beauty: "And every fair from fair sometime declines." But the fair lord's is of another sort, for it "shall not fade" - the poet is eternalizing the fair lord's beauty in his verse, in these "eternal lines." Note the financial imagery ("summer's lease") and the use of anaphora (the repetition of opening words) in lines 6-7, 10-11, and 13-14. Also note that May (line 3) was an early summer month in Shakespeare's time, because England did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1752.

The poet describes summer as a season of extremes and disappointments. He begins in lines 3-4, where "rough winds" are an unwelcome extreme and the shortness of summer is its disappointment. He continues in lines 5-6, where he lingers on the imperfections of the summer sun. Here again we find an extreme and a disappointment: the sun is sometimes far too hot, while at other times its "gold complexion" is dimmed by passing clouds. These imperfections

contrast sharply with the poet's description of the fair lord, who is "more temperate" (not extreme) and whose "eternal summer shall not fade" (i.e., will not become a disappointment) thanks to what the poet proposes in line 12.

In line 12 we find the poet's solution - how he intends to eternalize the fair lord's beauty despite his refusal to have a child. The poet plans to capture the fair lord's beauty in his verse ("eternal lines"), which he believes will withstand the ravages of time. Thereby the fair lord's "eternal summer shall not fade," and the poet will have gotten his wish. Here we see the poet's use of "summer" as a metaphor for youth, or perhaps beauty, or perhaps the beauty of youth.

But has the poet really abandoned the idea of encouraging the fair lord to have a child? Some scholars suggest that the "eternal lines" in line 12 have a double meaning: the fair lord's beauty can live on not only in the written lines of the poet's verse but also in the family lines of the fair lord's progeny. Such an interpretation would echo the sentiment of the preceding sonnet's closing couplet: "But were some child of yours alive that time / You should live twice; in it and in my rhyme." The use of "growest" also implies an increasing or changing: we can envision the fair lord's family lines growing over time, yet this image is not as readily applicable to the lines of the poet's verse - unless it refers only to his intention to continue writing about the fair lord's beauty, his verse thereby "growing." On the other hand, line 14 seems to counter this interpretation, the singular "this" (as opposed to "these") having as its most likely antecedent the poet's verse, and nothing more.

UNIT-3 THE PORTRAIT OF SHADEWELL

Summary

The poem identifies itself as a satire of which the subject is "the True-blue Protestant Poet T.S." referring to the poet Thomas Shadwell.

The first line of the poem creates the illusion of its being an epic poem about a historical hero. The next lines talk about Mac Flecknoe, a monarch who instead of ruling an empire, rules over the realm of Nonsense. The king is old and thus must choose a successor to his throne. Dryden wonders whether the king will choose a poet who has talent and wit or if he will choose someone like him, a man with no literary talent.

Flecknoe decides upon his son Shadwell, a man with no talent and who is tedious, stupid, and always at war with wit. Shadwell is also described as a very corpulent man. Through Flecknoe's words, the poet continues to insult Shadwell in a mock-heroic tone, calling him a dunce, the "last great prophet of tautology," and "for anointed dullness he was made." Shadwell arrives in London, outfitted like a king and lauded by the people. Flecknoe chooses for his son's throne a neighborhood of brothels and theaters birthing bad actors. Inside those places, real drama does not exist; only simple plays are welcome. Dryden also alludes to some of the historical Shadwell's plays, like *Epsom Wells* and *Psyche*, and mocks another contemporary writer, Singleton, who is envious that he wasn't chosen as successor to the throne. It is clear that in this environment, Shadwell will rule over those who have no literary talent. The descriptions Dryden offers only serve the purpose of highlighting the incompetency of Shadwell and create the image of a fool ruling over peasants.

As the coronation begins, Dryden describes the streets as filled with the limbs of other poets, suggesting that Shadwell managed to get a hold on his position at the expense of talented writers. Once more, the poet mentions human waste and links it with Shadwell's writing and compares him with a historical figure, Hannibal, to suggest that Shadwell's purpose is to destroy wit and replace it with dullness.

During his coronation, the oil used to anoint a new king is replaced by ale, signifying the poet's dullness. After the crown is placed on his head, Shadwell sits on the throne and the former king prepares to give the cheering crowd a speech.

The former king begins by presenting the land over which the new king will rule, a territory where no one lives. Flecknoe urges his son to remain true to his writing and to not let anyone make any changes in his work. Flecknoe praises Shadwell's abilities and then ends his speech by telling Shadwell to continue to remain dull and to avoid trying to be like Jonson.

Flecknoe concludes by exhorting his son not to focus on real plays but rather to work on acrostics or anagrams. His last words are cut off and he sinks below the stage. His mantle falls on Shadwell, which is appropriate because he has twice as much "talent" as his father.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION- Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe" is a satire on Dryden's contemporary and rival, the poet Thomas Shadwell. It is subtitled "A satire upon the True-Blue Protestant Poet, T.S."

The poem is a prototype of the mock-heroic verse of the neoclassical age in English literature. Dryden imitates the stylistic tone and language of the epic poetry of antiquity, such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and Virgil's Aeneid, but applies it to subjects which are the opposite of the heroic characters and actions in those works. In "Mac Flecknoe," instead of writing about heroes such as Achilles or Odysseus, Dryden creates a scenario in which he describes bad poets—first, the king of bad poetry, Mac Flecknoe himself, and then the man Mac Flecknoe chooses to be, his successor, the equally incompetent Thomas Shadwell. Mock-heroic technique emphasizes the dullness, insignificance, or mediocrity of its subjects by ironically using language that's totally inappropriate to them. One would think, for instance, from the opening couplet that Dryden is writing about great people or events:

All human things are subject to decay,

And when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.

But instead of actual monarchs or heroes, Dryden goes on to describe incompetent writers. The poem is filled with topical allusions to the literary world of Restoration England, much of which the modern reader must research in order to fully appreciate Dryden's satire. The actual Shadwell had become Poet Laureate, succeeding Dryden, who had converted to Roman Catholicism and thus become an outsider in English society. Thus the subtext of his satire is a criticism not only of Shadwell himself but, by extension, the establishment, the English Restoration society of which Dryden had previously been an insider and a favorite.

In my view "Mac Flecknoe," and Dryden's poetry in general, is significant more because of how influential it was than because of its inherent greatness. Alexander Pope, usually considered the most important poet of the neoclassical (also called the Augustan) period, idolized Dryden and was enormously influenced by him, especially in his own satiric works such as the Dunciad. The heroic couplets (rhymed iambic pentameter) used by Dryden became the standard for English poetry over the following century, as did the imitation of the poetry of

ancient Greece and Rome and the mock-heroic style. "Mac Flecknoe" is one of the first poems exemplifying these elements that characterize the neoclassical age in English literature.

UNIT- 4 ELEGY WRITTEN IN COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is the British writer Thomas Gray's most famous poem, first published in 1751. The poem's speaker calmly mulls over death while standing in a rural graveyard in the evening. Taking stock of the graves, he reflects that death comes for everyone in the end, and notes that the elaborate tombs of the rich won't bring their occupants back from the dead. He also commemorates the common folk buried in the churchyard by imaging the lives they might have lived had they been born into better circumstances, and considers the benefits of anonymity. The poem ends with his own imagined epitaph.

Summary

The church's evening bell signals that the day is ending. The mooing cows travel slowly across the grass and a tired farmer trudges home, leaving the world and I are together in the darkness. Now the land around me is glowing in the sunset but also fading away as I look at it. There's a seriousness stillness hanging in the air, apart from the buzz of a flying beetle and the tinkling of the sheep's bells, which is like their bedtime music.

The air is still apart from that tower over there, covered with ivy, where a sad owl is complaining to the moon about anything that, wandering around her secret nest in the tower, disturbs her longstanding, lonely rule over the area. Underneath those burly elm trees and the shade of that yew tree, there are mounds of moldy dirt: each laying in a narrow room forever, the uneducated founders of this tiny village sleep.

The sound of the scented breezes of morning, the swallow singing in a shed made of straw, the rooster's sharp cry, or the echoes of a hunter's horn—these sounds will no longer wake the dead from their humble resting places.

The fireplace will no longer burn brightly for these dead people, nor will with their busy wives work in the evening to take care of them. Their children no longer will run over to celebrate when their father has come home from work for the evening, or climb on his lap to get to be the first to get a kiss.

When they were alive, these people often harvested crops with their farm implements. They often plowed up difficult ground. How cheerfully they drove their farm animals over the field as their plowed! How confidently they chopped down trees, which seems to bow as they fell beneath the strokes of the ax!

Don't let ideas about ambition push you to make fun of the useful work these country folk did. Don't make fun of their plain and simple joys, their unknown lives. Don't let feelings of superiority make you smile scornfully at the short and simple biographies of poor people.

The bragging implied by a rich family's coat of arms; the frills and traditions of the powerful; all the things that beauty and wealth can give someone—death waits for all these things. Even the most glorious lives still end in death.

And you, you proud people, don't blame the poor if no memorials are erected on their graves as ornaments that outline their achievements in life; or if they don't have a tomb with a long

hallway and a vaulted ceiling illustrated with all their accomplishments, echoing with the sounds of mourners singing the praises of the dead.

Can an urn decorated with events from the dead person's life, or a life-like sculpture of their head, call the dead person's breath back into their body? Can honor bring their decaying body back to life? Can flattery convince death not to come for someone?

Maybe in this unkempt patch of ground is buried someone who was once passionately filled with heavenly fire. Maybe someone is buried here who could have ruled an empire or brought music and poetry to new heights.

But they couldn't read or get an education, meaning they were never able to learn about history. Cold poverty held back their inspiration and froze the creative parts of their minds.

Many gems that give off the most beautiful light are buried in dark, unexplored caves in the ocean. Many flowers bloom unseen by anyone, wasting their beauty and scent on a deserted place.

Some villager here could have been like the politician John Hampden (who fought for the people's rights against an authoritarian king)—except on a much smaller scale, fearlessly standing up to the landlord who owned the fields he worked. Someone here might have been a silent, fame-less John Milton (the renowned Renaissance poet who wrote *Paradise Lost*) because he never learned to write. Someone could have been like the English dictator Oliver Cromwell, but because he was poor and powerless he never had the chance to ruthlessly kill all the English people that Cromwell did.

The ability to have the senate applaud you; the ability to scoff at the dangers of suffering and defeat; the chance to spread wealth throughout a happy country; the chance to live a life so influential that one's biography is reflected in an entire nation...

All these things were prevented by these people's poverty. Not only did poverty prevent them from developing their talents, but it also prevented them from committing any atrocities. It prevented them from killing countless people in order to gain power, and in the process giving up on any sense of human rights.

Poverty means that these people never had to hide their guilt after committing such acts, repressing their own shame. They never had to honor the rich and proud as if honoring gods with poetry.

Far away from the crazed, immoral conflicts of the rich and powerful, these poor people only had simple, serious desires. In this calm and isolated valley of life, they stuck to their own quiet ways.

Yet, to protect even these poor people's bones from total disrespect, a meager memorial has been built nearby. It has poorly written rhymes and a poorly made sculpture, but it still makes passing visitors sigh.

These people's names, the years they were alive—all carved by someone who was illiterate—stand in place of fame and a lengthy commemoration. Many quotes from the Bible are scattered around the graveyard, quotes that teach unrefined yet good-hearted people how to die.

After all, what kind of person, knowing full well they'd be forgotten after death, ever gave up this pleasant and troublesome life—ever left the warm areas of a happy day—without looking back and wanting to stay a little longer?

A dying person relies on the heart of some close friend, leaning against their chest—they need that person to shed some reverent tears as they die. Even from the tomb nature cries out, even in our dead bodies the habitual passions of the poor still burn.

You, who have been thinking about those who died anonymously, have been telling their unpretentious story in this poem. If by chance, and because of lonely thoughts, someone similar to you asks about what happened to you—maybe luckily enough some old country person will answer them: "We saw him at sunrise a lot, his quick footsteps sweeping the dew off the grass as he went to see the sun from the town's higher fields.

"Over there, at the base of that swaying beech tree with old, gnarled roots and high, tangled branches, he would lay down and noon and stretch out his tired body, gazing into the nearby brook.

"Close to that forest over there, smiling as if with disapproval, talking to himself about his own stubborn fantasies, he would explore—sometimes moping, sad and pale, like a miserable person; other times gone crazy with worry, disturbed by unrequited love.

"One morning I didn't see him on his usual hill, near the rough fields and his favorite tree. Another morning came, and I didn't see him by the stream or field or forest.

"The third morning, with funeral songs and a sad procession, we saw him carried slowly along the path to church. Go up and read (since you can read) the poem carved on the gravestone under that old, gnarled tree."

THE SPEAKER'S EPITAPH:

Here, resting his head in the dirt, lies a young man that had neither wealth nor fame. He had no education because he was born to common people. His life was defined by sadness.

Even so, he had great gifts and an earnest mind. Heaven repaid him in plenty for these gifts and his suffering. He gave all he had to his misery, which was a single tear. In return, Heaven gave him the only thing he'd ever wanted: a friend.

Don't try anymore to talk about his strengths and gifts, or to bring his weakness back from the dead. Both his strengths and weakness lie in the grave in a state of quivering hope. He is now with his Father, God.

UNIT-5 "Ode to a Nightingale"

Keats addresses a nightingale singing among beech trees. The poet feels as though he has taken poison or an opiate, because he is overwhelmed with happiness at the bird's song. He wishes that he could drink in the delights of living in Southern France (the Provençal region) by consuming a special draft of wine. Yet Keats points out that the nightingale cannot know the affairs and concerns of men, which include, sadly, mortality. Keats declares that he will not drink wine, but that he will instead achieve bliss by writing this poem. He contrasts the world

of the nightingale with his own, real world: one (the nightingale's) has a visible moon, and the other (his) does not, so that he remains in darkness.

Thus, Keats must rely on his other senses (smell, touch, etc.) to determine what kind of plants surround him. In the darkness, he thinks fondly of death. His ideal death would take place here in the forest, as he listens to the nightingale's song. He notes that the song of the nightingale is "immortal" and accessible to anyone -- heard by ancient emperors as well as by clowns. He says that even the Biblical figure, Ruth, may have heard it during her exile. The nightingale's song is also thought to open treasure chests on "faery" (70) seas. Keats is ultimately called back to his "sole self" (reality), and wonders whether he actually ever heard the nightingale's song or whether it had been a dream.

Analysis of "Ode to a Nightingale":

This poem carries on a number of common features in Keats' poetry: he addresses the nature of the ideal versus reality, speaks of "rich" death, and calls forth ancient Greek mythological figures in his descriptions of natural phenomena. Keats opens the poem with a description of a dreamy, Romantic state: he feels as though he must have drunk hemlock (an ancient poison used to kill, among others, Socrates) or have taken opium. He describes himself as sinking "Lethe-wards." (Lethe is one of the five rivers of Hades, whose power was to wash away memory.) But he is only in this state because of the delight he feels at the nightingale's song. He metaphorically describes the nightingale as a "Dryad of the trees:" Dryads were Greek mythological beings who embodied the spirits of trees.

Keats longs for the happy oblivion that would come after drinking an ideal wine, a wine that itself recalls the pleasures of life in southern France (Provençal). Or he could drink from the Hippocrene fountain, which was dear to the ancient Greek muses and was thought to give poetic inspiration. He wishes, above all, to forget mortal life, in which "youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies" (26). He writes that "but to think is to be full of sorrow/ And leaden-eyed despairs" (28-29), echoing a Biblical verse, "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (*Ecclesiastes 1:18*). These themes are in keeping with Keats' usual preoccupation with mortality, which also appears in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "When I have fears that I may cease to be".

Keats' narration goes on to express Keats' frequent wish to live in a realm of Platonic perfection -- this time, of Poesy (poetry). In this poetic world, which the nightingale occupies, the moon shines bright. There is no temporal reality for the nightingale, who "wast not born for death" (61). The nightingale's song, unchanged, was heard by the ancients as clearly as it is heard today. In Keats' world, however, there is only darkness, and here he contemplates a beautiful, "rich" death. He seems to be courting Death itself, calling Death "soft names in many a musèd rhyme" (53).

Ultimately, as in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and other poems, Keats cannot sustain his flight of fancy. He is called back to his "sole" (that is, physical) self (72). Fancy itself is called a "deceiving elf" (74); in Keats' time, elves were thought of as mischievous tricksters. Keats ends the entire poem by calling into question the fierce division between the world of dreams and the world of reality: "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/ Fled is that music: -- do I wake or sleep?" (79-80). In Keats' construction, these worlds are only tenuously divided and may in fact overlap.

Summary of "When I have fears that I may cease to be":

Keats expresses the fear of meeting his end without fulfilling his poetic potential, without "tracing" (7) (writing about or experiencing) a great romance, and without looking upon the face of a woman he loves. He compares the poetry that he will have written to harvested grain. He also states that when he has these fears, he retreats to "the shore/ Of the wide world" (12-13) and thinks, until his ideas of "love and fame to nothingness do sink" (14).

Analysis of "When I have fears that I may cease to be":

Keats' fear of death, here, is nuanced: it is not just mortality taken broadly, but specifically the chance that he will not have produced enough in his short span of life to be "satisfied," that he fears. However, the closing lines suggest that, while mortality is the enemy of artistic production, it also somehow frees the artist from worry. In the end, no matter what, "love and fame to nothingness do sink" (14). Perhaps such matters are not worth worrying about anyway.

Keats repeatedly uses imagery from the harvest -- "glean'd" (2), "garners" and "full-ripen'd grain" (4) -- to describe the thoughts emerging from his "teeming brain" (2). The phrases "high-piled" and "rich" (3-4) suggest abundance. Again, Keats sets forward a paradox: he is both the field of grain and the harvester of this grain. In the next lines (5-8), he describes the poet's work: to grasp "high cloudy symbols" (6) in natural phenomena, and use a "magic hand" (8) to transform them into poetry.

When it comes to love, Keats' beloved is the "fair creature of an hour" (9); such brevity evokes both mortal impermanence and the impermanence of love itself. And Keats notes that "unreflecting love" is only a "faery power" (11-12); faeries are capricious illusionists, so love itself is hardly a reliable and solid phenomenon. But Keats also uses the sonnet form of "When I have fears" to underscore these ideas. Most Shakespearean sonnets establish their themes, and, in the final lines, "turn" on such themes or comment on them. The final two lines of this sonnet describe Keats' response to these depressive realities: to stand alone "on the shore of the wide world... and think/ Till love and fame to nothingness do sink" (12-14). This is a rather nihilistic response, but it ultimately confers upon Keats a kind of negative freedom from worry, because death renders human activity meaningless. The poet is, in a typically Keatsian paradox, "ecstatically hopeless" about the nature of human and artistic striving.
