

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
I SEMESTER B.A. ENGLISH CORE

READING POETRY

NOTES PREPARED BY
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1 A

SONNET 116 William Shakespeare

Answer the following questions

1. A sonnet is a short poem oflines

14

2. The rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan sonnet is.....

abba, abba, cde, cde

3. The sonnet had its origin in.....

Italy

4. The rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet is.....

abab, cdcd, efef, gg

5. Shakespeare has written.....sonnets.

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Discuss

1. What are the different aspects of love that the poet discusses in the sonnet?

The poet distinguishes between true love and unfaithful love. Love is not love which alters under changed circumstances. True love is constant and permanent which never alters with the passage of time. Nothing can destroy it.

2. How will the mutual transfer of the lines 5 and 7 affect the appreciation of the poem?

The mutual transfer of the lines 5 and 7 does not make any difference in the appreciation of the poem. The lighthouse, an ever fixed mark is replaced by the pole star which guides every passing ship in the ocean. Both the light house and the pole star refer to the permanence of true love.

3. How many syllables are there in each line? How many words contain more than two syllables?

There are ten syllables in each line. Words like 'impediments', 'alteration', 'remover', and 'wandering' contain more than two syllables.

4. Majority of the words (more than 75 per cent) in the sonnet are monosyllabic. Do they produce any special effect?

The use of monosyllabic words in each line gives a special tone and rhythm to the poem.

5. Did you closely examine the content words? Are they simple and familiar?

The content words like love, time, ever-fixed mark, star are simple and familiar.

6. Spot instances of alliteration, personification, internal rhyme.

Alliteration :- 1) Love is not Love 2) alters when it alteration finds 3) remover to remove
Personification:- Time is personified as a man carrying a sickle with which he cuts man's life, looks and possessions. **Internal rhyme**:- Which alters when it alteration finds. Bends with the remover to remove.

ESSAY

Along with Sonnets 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”) and 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”), Sonnet 116 is one of the most famous poems in the entire sequence. The definition of love that it provides is among the most often quoted and anthologized in the poetic canon. Essentially, this sonnet presents the extreme ideal of romantic love: it never changes, it never fades, it outlasts death and admits no flaw. What is more, it insists that this ideal is the only love that can be called “true”—if love is mortal, changing, or impermanent, the speaker writes, then no man *ever* loved. The basic division of this poem’s argument into the various parts of the sonnet form is extremely simple: the first quatrain says what love is not (changeable), the second quatrain says what it is (a fixed guiding star unshaken by tempests), the third quatrain says more specifically what it is not (“time’s fool”—that is, subject to change in the passage of time), and the couplet announces the speaker’s certainty. What gives this poem its rhetorical and emotional power is not its complexity; rather, it is the force of its linguistic and emotional conviction.

The language of Sonnet 116 is not remarkable for its imagery or metaphoric range. In fact, its imagery, particularly in the third quatrain (time wielding a sickle that ravages beauty’s rosy lips and cheeks), is rather standard within the sonnets, and its major metaphor (love as a guiding star) is hardly startling in its originality. But the language *is* extraordinary in that it frames its discussion of the passion of love within a very restrained, very intensely disciplined rhetorical structure. With a masterful control of rhythm and variation of tone—the heavy balance of “Love’s not time’s fool” to open the third quatrain; the declamatory “O no” to begin the second—the speaker makes an almost legalistic argument for the eternal passion of love, and the result is that the passion seems stronger and more urgent for the restraint in the speaker’s tone.

This sonnet attempts to define love, by telling both what it is and is not. In the first quatrain, the speaker says that love—"the marriage of true minds"—is perfect and unchanging; it does not "admit impediments," and it does not change when it find changes in the loved one. In the second quatrain, the speaker tells what love is through a metaphor: a guiding star to lost ships ("wand'ring barks") that is not susceptible to storms (it "looks on tempests and is never shaken"). In the third quatrain, the speaker again describes what love is not: it is not susceptible to time. Though beauty fades in time as rosy lips and cheeks come within "his bending sickle's compass," love does not change with hours and weeks: instead, it "bears it out ev'n to the edge of doom." In the couplet, the speaker attests to his certainty that love is as he says: if his statements can be proved to be error, he declares, he must never have written a word, and no man can ever have been in love.

1 B

HOW DO I LOVE THEE BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Introduction to the poem

Elizabeth Barret Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese is a collection of 44 Petrarchan sonnets. This sonnet How do I Love Thee, being the 43rd sonnet, expresses the courtship between Robert Browning and Elizabeth. The theme of this sonnet is that love is not an earthly concept but an eternal, everlasting thing that lasts well beyond the cold grave. Though it is a Petrarchan sonnet, it violates many of the characteristics of the traditional form.

Petrarchan Sonnet

Petrarch, the Italian humanist and writer developed the Italian sonnet pattern, which is known as the petrarchan sonnet or the Italian sonnet. The original Italian Sonnet divides the poem's 14 lines into two parts octave and a sestet. The octave (first eight lines) typically introduces the theme or problem using a rhyme scheme of abba, abba. The sestet (last six lines) provides resolution for the poem and rhymes variously, sometimes cde cde or cdc cdc.

Discuss

1. "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height/my soul can reach", says the poet. Do you find anything illogical to think of logic in poetry? Comment on her attempt to describe the immeasurable nature of her love, by measuring the immeasurable?

Ans. The poet loves her husband so intensely that she tries to measure the depth, breadth and height of her love with her soul. Love is an abstract feeling and not a concrete object and therefore it is illogical to think that it can be measured. But, in poetry, imagination is more important than logic. A poet's imagination cannot be bound by logic. So it can be said that it

is illogical to think of logic in poetry. The poet only wants to show the immeasurable nature of love, by measuring the immeasurable.

2. The poet speaks of “everyday’s most quiet need”. Discuss the various possible interpretations.

By “everyday’s most quiet need”, the poet means the simple needs in a person’s daily life. The poet wants the presence of her husband in everything that she does. She wants to take care of him and assist him in his every needs.

3. Treat the poem as a prayer of a devotee before his/her deity. How will your reading of the poem alter?

If the poem is considered as a prayer, then the poet’s love for her husband can be taken as her devotion to her deity. Her devotion is three dimensional which is deep, noble and transcends space.

Compare the sonnet with Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116 in style and treatment.

Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116 glorifies ideal and eternal love which withstand the ravages of time. This sonnet is addressed to a young man whom the poet is emotionally bound to. True love is constant and permanent which never alters with the passage of time. Shakespeare uses two metaphors to bring out the nature of true love. First he says that love is an ever-fixed mark, a light house that looks on tempests but is never shaken. Then he says that love is like the pole star that guides the wandering ships in the ocean. Time is personified as a reaper carrying a sickle with which he cuts man’s life, looks and possessions. The rhyme scheme used in this sonnet is abab, cdcd, efef, gg. Elizabeth Barret Browning’s sonnet How do I love Thee is a Petrarchan sonnet and it is addressed to her husband. Its theme is that love is not an earthly concept but an eternal, everlasting thing that lasts well beyond the cold grave. She expresses her intense love for her husband. She tries to measure the depth, breadth and height of her love with her soul. Her love is three dimensional, i.e, deep, noble and transcending space. She loves him as genuinely as men who struggle for freedom without expecting any personal gains. She loves him both in happiness and sorrow. She also says that her love will continue even after death.

ESSAY

How do I love thee by Elizabeth Barrett Browning is a poem from the **Sonnet from the Portuguese** sequence which the poet had written during her days of courtship by Robert Browning. This poem is a true reflection of the intense love which the poet felt for her beloved.

The poet while trying to express her undying love for her beloved begins to count the some ways in which she loves him. By counting the number of ways, the poet is trying to show that the love in her heart for her soul mate is present in all her walks of life. It is a way of expressing the beautiful fact that everything in and around her leads her to that love

The poet says that the love which she feels for her beauty is so strong that it fills every pore of her soul. The adoration which Elizabeth carries in her heart is a part of her existence which

is why when she tries to map the out of sight boundaries of her soul and the world around her, she realizes that her love for her beloved extends just as far.

This means that her affection defines her existence and the world around in ways which is not apparent to the mortal sight. Only the poet feels the power of that true love which envelops her. After adding this hint of divinity to her poem the poet transcends to a more down to earth description of her love. She says that her lover is her everyday need. She is so deeply in love with her soul mate that he is as important as the basic necessities of life. She wants to see her love in the light of the sun and by the candle-light. This means that she wants to be with her love at all hours of the day such that every minute of her existence is filled by him.

The poet believes that every man has basic ethical goodness in him which helps him choose the right path. Her affection for her beloved is as effortless as a man's abstention from what is wrong. This means that the love in her heart comes to her as naturally as the intrinsic goodwill present in mankind. She further adds that she does not love or write about it with expectations of praise in return. She writes about it to show to the world and her beloved the love which grips her heart through her true words.

The poet while shedding further light upon her love tells us that the passion which she feels for her better half is like the one which she felt when she was deeply grieved. Passion arising out of a grieved heart is of the deepest kind. She says that after falling in love with her beloved those old grievances seem insignificant now as all that passion which they infused in her then gets used up in loving her beau now. Her love is of the kind which pulls the poet out of faithlessness.

When she is with her love she feels the same sense of security which she felt when she was a kid. When we are kids we are unaware of the unfairness of the world and believe in goodness but as we grow up that belief dwindles. The poet is taken back to that childhood faith of hers after falling in love with her soul-mate.

Next the poet talks about the intensity of her affection. She says that her love is present in every breath that she takes. This means she lives to love. Her love emanates from all her smiles and tears which tell the readers that she loves her soul mate through both good and trying times. He is there with her in all the good and bad phases of her life.

Elizabeth Barrett finishes this poem on a very philosophical note. She says that the love which she feels is immortal and if she is allowed by God she would continue loving her beloved even after death and in her afterlife. This startling ending provides a unique beauty to the poem which mesmerize the readers and provokes them to think about love.

1 C

LONGING Matthew Arnold

Discuss

1. Who is the “thou” in the poem? A dream girl? A dear departed? A dame sans Mercy” Discuss.

The “thou” in the poem is the poet’s beloved. She may be a dream girl for she visits the poet only in his dreams. She may also be a dear departed for the poet is much worried during the day because of her absence. She can’t be a dame sans mercy because she brings happiness and relief to the poet in his dreams at night.

2. “...and be/As kind to others as to me!” Lovers are often jealous by nature. How do you explain the poet’s stance?

The poet’s love for his beloved is sincere and genuine that there can be no place for jealousy. That is why he wants her to be so kind to everybody as she is to him.

3. “As thou never cam’st in sooth”. Was she a deceitful woman?

The beloved may be a dear departed and that is why she couldn’t come to him in reality any more. She was not a deceitful woman.

4. “And let me dream it truth”. How does it help to reflect the intensity of his longing? The poet longs for the presence of his beloved but she never comes to him in reality. So he wants her to come to him in his dreams and caress him. His love is so intense that he wants to believe his dreams to be true.

ESSAY

The poem Longing by the famous Victorian poet Matthew Arnold is a typical love poem. This poem is an expression of the poet’s longing for the presence of his beloved. The poet’s love is very intense and sincere. The poet seems to be much worried about the absence of his beloved during the day. So the poet wants his beloved to come to him in his dreams and he hopes that it will make him happy throughout the day. He really wants to have a great time with his beloved during day time, but she doesn’t come to him. He pleads his beloved to visit him in his dreams so that he can compensate his hopeless longing of the day through his dreams at night. The poet wants her to come as she has visited him a thousand times. He considers her as one who comes from a new world which is bright and shining. She brings happiness and relief to the poet’s life. He does not want his beloved to show any hostility as she is new to this world but to smile on her new world. His love is so sincere that he tells her to be as kind to others as to himself. The poet sadly admits the fact that his beloved has never come to him in reality. Even then he does not reject her love. He believes that what he sees in his dreams are real. He pleads his beloved to come to him in his dreams and delight him by parting his

hair and kissing his brow and wants her to say there is no need to suffer any more as she is with him always. The poet once again asks his beloved to visit him in his dreams and to make his day happy. This poem is a true expression of the poet's love and longing for his beloved.

Matthew Arnold is a great poet and critic in English literature. His poem "Longing" is a typical love poem expressing the lover's intense longing for the presence of his beloved. With the fire of love burning in his heart, the lover asks her to come to him in his dreams at night so that he can wipe out all his worries and miseries of day time.

"Longing" is one of the best lyric poems written by Matthew Arnold and the theme revolves round an ardent lover's dream about his beloved. The true note of the poem is sadness. It is pensive melancholy essentially romantic in origin. In this short poem, the speaker gives expression to the passionate longing of his heart. The poet calls his lady love to come to him in his dream at night so that all his sufferings and sorrow and pain will be vanished and he will be refreshed again. He considers her as an angel from a heavenly place and her charming smile relaxes him and relieved him from all miseries of day time. Throughout the day he has been waiting with a burning desire for her presence in his dream at night. Now he wants his dream to be converted to reality. He wants her real presence and combs his hair and to kiss him passionately and asks him "My love, why are you suffering?" The poem ends with the ardent longing of the speaker that his dream girl must be real to him and gives him spiritual comfort.

The narrator in this poem is longing for his love to return once again in his dreams, and if she does, he will be cheered up again in the morning. This is stated in stanzas one and seven. In doing this she would fulfill his longing that he experiences during the day. He wants her to be as sweet and kind as she has been to him – as she has done thousands of times – with the people she is with now. That may be in simply a new country, or perhaps his love has died. Either way, he longs for her to "smile on thy new world". He needs comforting from her, and yearns for her to "part my hair, and kiss my brow" in his dreams. The narrator is longing for his love once again.

The title of this poem is directly related to the theme: longing. The narrator longs to be well during the day when he is without his love, he longs to be comforted by her, he longs for her to show love to those she is with now, and he longs to see her once again.

The only obvious literary device used in Matthew Arnold's poems is rhythm and rhyme. Each stanza consists of two lines, which rhyme with each other: this is part of the rhythm and structure. The rhythm has an emphasis on the end word of each line because it's the one that rhymes. I am assuming that the narrator or voice of this poem is Matthew Arnold himself. He lost three of his children and possibly other people he loved in his life, which this poem could be addressing. It is unclear, as it is never stated however.

The tone of this poem is hopeful. It displays his emotions in a way that brings hope to his depressed condition. He believes that she will be able to rid him of his sorrow, if only he could be with her again. The mood is slightly pitiful. The reader feels pity for the narrator and also wishes he could be with her to please him and ease the pain that he is clearly suffering without her. The poem almost gives the reader a longing for her as well.

It is a well-written poem that brings various emotions to the reader and portrays Matthew Arnold's image of longing very successfully.

1 D

When We Two Parted LORD BYRON

Discuss

1. How does the structure of the poem reflect the subject treated?

The poem tells about the parting of two lovers. The lover feels very sad that his beloved had left him by denying his love and trust. The poem consists of four 8 line stanzas with the rhyme scheme abab cdcd. The structure of the poem is in keeping with this subject matter.

2. What is the tone of the poem? Is the poet divided between love and hate for the lady who has betrayed him?

The tone of the poem is melancholic. The poet's love is so deep and sincere that he felt extremely sad at the time of parting. At the same time, he blames his beloved for betraying his trust.

3. What evidence do you find in the poem to support the idea that the relationship the poet had with the lady was platonic?

Platonic love means an emotional and spiritual relationship between two lovers that does not involve sexual desire. We can find no evidence in the poem to support the idea that the relationship between the poet and his beloved was platonic.

4. Find out the different meanings that "half broken hearted" conveys. Does it, in anyway, tell you that the lady had no regrets?

The poet says that he and his beloved were half broken-hearted at the time of parting. 'Broken- hearted' means stricken with grief and sorrow. Here the lovers are only 'half broken-hearted'. That means their grief is not uncontrollable. We can't say that the lady had no regrets for she too felt sad at the time of parting.

5. How will the poet greet her if he happens to meet her after long years? Again "in silence and tears"? The poet wonders how he should greet his beloved if he happens to meet her after long years. The poet himself is doubtful about it. May be he will greet her in silence and tears as he did at the time of their parting.

6. Do you think a detailed biography of Byron is necessary for a better understanding of the poem?

A detailed biography of Byron will help us to get a better understanding of the poem for the poem contains some personal elements of the poet.

ESSAY

"When We Two Parted" is a lyric poem made up of four octets, each with a rhyme scheme ABABCDCD. The concept at the end of each of the first three stanzas is carried over into the first two lines of the following stanza, linking the poem's content together across the stanza breaks to unify the author's sense of sorrow at the loss of his beloved.

The poem was first published in 1816, but Byron falsely attributed its writing to 1808 in order to protect the identity of its subject, Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster. Many scholars believe the poem to have actually been written in 1816, when Lady Frances was linked to the Duke of Wellington in a scandalous relationship. The poem is highly autobiographical in that it recounts Byron's emotional state following the end of his secret affair with Lady Frances and his frustration at her unfaithfulness to him with the Duke. If we did not know this, however, the poem would be mysteriously vague, since the sex of neither the lover nor the beloved is revealed, and the poem provides virtually no clue regarding the time, place, or other setting of the poem beyond its being a place with morning dew (and the fact that the poem is written in an older English with the use of "thy").

The poem begins with the bleak tone of despair which will characterize the entire work. Immediately the reader is introduced to the speaker's "silence and tears" (line 2) upon the breakup. Her own reaction is to grow cold—the physical description of her cheek as "cold" and "pale" hints at sickness, but her "colder" kiss (line 6) implies an emotional detachment growing from the very moment of their parting, which Byron finds unbearable. He sees her immediate response and his own emotional reaction at the time as a portent of the future (the present of the poem) as "that hour foretold / Sorrow," which would reach from the past to today.

The imagery of coldness carries over from the end of the first stanza into the beginning of the second stanza with the chilly dew upon Byron's brow, suggesting his own emotional detachment, but also calling to mind the cold sweat from which one might wake after a particularly harrowing nightmare. He awakens into a world still as desolate as the one he ended the previous night. He thus turns his attention to his beloved's apparent infidelity to him. Her "vows are all broken" (line 13), implying she had made some promises to Byron despite the clandestine and illicit nature of their affair, and further suggesting Lady Frances' scandalous relationship. The speaker notes that her fame is now "light"—without weight or guilt and easily blown about—yet there should be shame in the speaking of her name because of him, which he at least will feel for them both (lines 14-16).

The beloved's tarnished name carries over into the third stanza, as Byron compares hearing her name spoken by outsiders to the "knell" of a heavy bell—like a church bell tolling a funeral. He shudders when he hears her name, indicating that he cannot shake the power of their relationship. Now that she is publicly scandalized, those who gossip about Lady Frances do not know her the way Byron knows her—all "too well" (line 22). Now his pain turns to "rue" or even bitterness as he regrets his relationship, especially because of the pain it brings him. Although he is writing a poem about his suffering, he claims the hurt is still too deep to speak of (line 24)—using the poetic convention of having emotions too deep for words even while he tries to write.

The unspeakable nature of Byron's pain recurs in the beginning of the final stanza, as he reflects that the secret nature of their affair leaves him unable to tell of their affair for a second reason: he is unable to mourn publicly for her or her unfaithfulness to him since their romantic relationship had been a secret. He grieves silently over her neglectful heart and deceitful spirit (lines 26-28).

He ends the poem predicting his reaction at some future meeting years later: how would he greet her? Again there would be silence, but also sadness: "silence and tears" (line 32). His pain will not diminish, nor his sense of being wronged by her actions, even after many years. Nonetheless, he will maintain silence forever to prevent further scandal being attached to her

name. After all, he does an excellent job of hiding her identity in this poem. (Byron's contemporaries might have been able to make a guess, but Byron had so many liaisons, who could know?)

The repetition of "silence and tears" at the beginning and end of the poem denotes the poet's inability to leave his moment of pain behind. He is trapped in a state of grieving a lost love. It is all the more hurtful that he lost her to another man, and all he can offer her is that he will protect her identity by grieving alone.

The poet's love to his beloved is deep and sincere. That is why he felt very disappointed at the time of their parting. The poet says that his beloved had broken all her promises. His beloved had lost her fame and become a subject of gossip. The poet too felt very guilty because he knew very well that he was also responsible for it. People talked badly about his beloved in his presence and he felt their words like a church bell tolling a funeral. Only a man who loved his beloved sincerely could have such a feeling. He says that those who spread stories about her do not know how deeply he loved her. He even wonders how she can so soon forget everything and throw away his trust and love. He still longs to meet his beloved and wonders how he should greet her if he happens to meet her after many years.

2 A

JOHN DONNE: A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

THE METAPHYSICAL SCHOOL OF POETS

The term metaphysical' was first used by Dryden and further extended by Dr. Johnson. It refers to a group of British lyric poets of the 17 th century who employed far-fetched imagery, abstruse arguments, scholastic philosophical terms, and subtle logic. John Donne was the leading figure of the metaphysical school of poets. The other poets who belonged to this group were George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Carew and Abraham Cowley. In the chapter on Abraham Cowley in his Lives of the Poets, Dr. Johnson has given an analysis of the characterisation of metaphysical poetry. According to him, the metaphysical poets were men of great learning and to show their learning was their whole endeavour. They were metaphysical in the sense that they were deeply learned. Donne had an intimate knowledge of medieval scholasticism. Cowley was well- versed in the achievements of science. Besides they were metaphysical not only by virtue of their learning but also by their deep reflective interest in the experiences of life namely, love, religion, death etc. Their peculiar quality is the fantastic imagery, for example, the comparison of parted lovers to the legs of a pair of compasses (A valediction Forbidding Mourning). There is again the intellectual character of their wit, that is use of conceits and hyperboles. The evolution of their lyrics is more argumentative than emotional. In them we find a peculiar blend of passion and thought.

Answer the following questions

1. Who is the leading figure of the metaphysical school of poets?

John Donne

2. Of the Progress of the Soul is written by.....

John Donne

3. The term 'metaphysical' was first used by.....

John Dryden

4. The famous conceit of the compass occurs in

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

Answer the following questions in two or three sentences:-

1. "So let us melt...sigh-tempests move," What is special about the figure of speech?

The poet tells his wife not to mourn at the time of his parting. He does not want to raise floods by their tears nor tempests by their sighs. The poet is actually making fun of the ordinary lovers through the two powerful metaphors- "tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests". These two metaphors are drawn from nature.

2. "Twere profanation...laity our love." Comment on the poetic devices used in this line.

The poet says that their love is something sacred that they must not desecrate it by making a show of their sorrow at the time of his departure. It would be a vulgarisation of their love, to mourn and weep and in this way tell the world of it.

3. "Dull sublunary Lovers' love." Comment on the poetic devices used in this line.

By "Dull sublunary lovers' love", the poet means that their love is not like that of the earthly lovers, which depends on the senses, but it is something sacred. The assonance of shot 'u' sounds in each word reinforces the concept of stupidity of earthly lovers, whose amorous attachments depend on physical sensation. The alliteration of 'l' in the line adds to the beauty of the poem.

4. "Dull sublunary lovers'...of absence..." Explain the brilliant pun on the word "absence".

The word 'absence' gives two meanings. It could either mean the departure of the poet which causes his absence or the absence of sensual pleasures.

5. "Our two souls...thinness beat." Briefly explain the poetic device used. Do you agree with Dr. Johnson's observation that the resemblance is the result of "discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike"?

The departure of the poet is not a breach but an expansion, like gold, which when beaten becomes enlarged. Her love is likened to gold. The poet makes a comparison between two apparently unlike things. So Dr. Johnson's observation is correct.

6. "So let us melt...sigh-tempests move,' Find the metre. The metre used in these lines is iambic tetrameter with the rhyme scheme abab.

7. "As virtuous...some say, No." What is the rhyme scheme?

The rhyme scheme is abab.

8. How can you identify a metaphysical poem?

Metaphysical poetry is characterised by the use of far-fetched imagery, abstrusive arguments, scholastic philosophical terms and suitable logic.

Theme of John Donne's A Valediction Forbidding Mourning.

The basic theme of the poem A valediction Forbidding Mourning is the union of true lovers even when they are physically separated. The poet piles up a number of arguments to prove the point, and thus to persuade his beloved not to grieve at the time of his departure for France. Theirs is a spiritual love, something divine and holy, and to mourn and weep, would be a vulgarisation of it. Spiritual love is not affected by separation for it is not confined to the senses. It is only earthly love which breaks and cracks when there is separation. The poet says that their love will expand like gold beaten to thinness.

What features of Donne's A Valediction Forbidding Mourning make it a metaphysical poem?

A metaphysical poem is characterised by the use of far-fetched imagery, abstrusive arguments, scholastic philosophical terms and subtle logic. This poem A valediction Forbidding Mourning is a typical metaphysical poem, remarkable for its ingenious comparisons, mockery of the sentiments, display of logical arguments and use of hyperbole. This poem brings out Donne's use of hyperbole, his use of compound words ("tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests"), his scholastic learning and his use of fantastic far-fetched conceits. The conceit of the compass is very significant. Donne says that if their souls are separate, they are like the feet of a compass. His wife's soul is the fixed foot in the centre and his is the foot that moves around it. It is the firmness of the fixed foot that helps the other foot to complete the circle. Similarly, it is the firmness of her love that enables him to complete his journey successfully and then return home.

ESSAY

The poet begins by comparing the love between his beloved and himself with the passing away of virtuous men. Such men expire so peacefully that their friends cannot determine when they are truly dead. Likewise, his beloved should let the two of them depart in peace, not revealing their love to "the laity."

Earthquakes bring harm and fear about the meaning of the rupture, but such fears should not affect his beloved because of the firm nature of their love. Other lovers become fearful when distance separates them—a much greater distance than the cracks in the earth after a quake—since for them, love is based on the physical presence or attractiveness of each other. Yet for the poet and his beloved, such a split is "innocent," like the movements of the heavenly spheres, because their love transcends mere physicality.

Indeed, the separation merely adds to the distance covered by their love, like a sheet of gold, hammered so thin that it covers a huge area and gilds so much more than a love concentrated in one place ever could.

He finishes the poem with a longer comparison of himself and his wife to the two legs of a compass. They are joined at the top, and she is perfectly grounded at the center point. As he

travels farther from the center, she leans toward him, and as he travels in his circles, she remains firm in the center, making his circles perfect.

The first two of the nine *abab* stanzas of “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” make up a single sentence, developing the simile of the passing of a virtuous man as compared to the love between the poet and his beloved. It is thought that Donne was in fact leaving for a long journey and wished to console and encourage his beloved wife by identifying the true strength of their bond. The point is that they are spiritually bound together regardless of the earthly distance between them.

He begins by stating that the virtuous man leaves life behind so delicately that even his friends cannot clearly tell the difference. Likewise, Donne forbids his wife from openly mourning the separation. For one thing, it is no real separation, like the difference between a breath and the absence of a breath. For another thing, mourning openly would be a profanation of their love, as the spiritual mystery of a sacrament can be diminished by revealing the details to “the laity” (line 8). Their love is sacred, so the depth of meaning in his wife’s tears would not be understood by those outside their marriage bond, who do not love so deeply. When Donne departs, observers should see no sign from Donne’s wife to suggest whether Donne is near or far because she will be so steadfast in her love for him and will go about her business all the same.

The third stanza suggests that the separation is like the innocent movement of the heavenly spheres, many of which revolve around the center. These huge movements, as the planets come nearer to and go farther from one another, are innocent and do not portend evil. How much less, then, would Donne’s absence portend. All of this is unlike the worldly fear that people have after an earthquake, trying to determine what the motions and cleavages mean.

In the fourth and fifth stanzas, Donne also compares their love to that of “sublunary” (earth-bound) lovers and finds the latter wanting. The love of others originates from physical proximity, where they can see each other’s attractiveness. When distance intervenes, their love wanes, but this is not so for Donne and his beloved, whose spiritual love, assured in each one’s “mind,” cannot be reduced by physical distance like the love of those who focus on “lips, and hands.”

The use of “refined” in the fifth stanza gives Donne a chance to use a metaphor involving gold, a precious metal that is refined through fire. In the sixth stanza, the separation is portrayed as actually a bonus because it extends the territory of their love, like gold being hammered into “aery thinness” without breaking (line 24). It thus can gild that much more territory.

The final three stanzas use an extended metaphor in which Donne compares the two individuals in the marriage to the two legs of a compass: though they each have their own purpose, they are inextricably linked at the joint or pivot at the top—that is, in their spiritual unity in God. Down on the paper—the earthly realm—one leg stays firm, just as Donne’s wife will remain steadfast in her love at home. Meanwhile the other leg describes a perfect circle around this unmoving center, so long as the center leg stays firmly grounded and does not stray. She will always lean in his direction, just like the center leg of the compass. So long as she does not stray, “Thy firmness makes my circle just, / And makes me end where I begun,” back at home (lines 35-36). They are a team, and so long as she is true to him, he will be able to return to exactly the point where they left off before his journey.

3 THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Discuss

Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. "Where art thou...me than dead?" What effect is produced by the repetition of questions at the opening of the poem?

Margaret describes the desperation and pain of not knowing the whereabouts of her son. Seven years have passed since he left home and it seems like eternity to her. The repeated questions at the opening brings out the intensity and depth of her affliction.

2. "Seven years, alas...an only child." Why does "seven years" seem like eternity?

He is the only son of Margaret and she says that she has no other companion on this earth except her son. She feels so depressed as there is no news about her son since he left home. That is why seven years seem like an eternity to her.

3. "I've wet my path with tears like dew". Comment on the use of figure of speech.

The figure of speech used is simile. She says that she is worrying over her son's loss and no one knows about it. Her tears are like dew and it is suggestive of the daily occurrence of her emotions or feelings for her only son.

4. "And worldly grandeur...gifts and lies". Explain the figure of speech.

The figure of speech used is personification. Fortune is personified as a woman "with her gifts and lies". It is also presented as fickle.

5. What are Margaret's fears for her son?

Margaret fears that her son may be in some dungeon tortured by ruthless men or attached by wild animals or savaged to death in the wilderness or killed in a shipwreck.

6. Why doesn't Margaret believe in ghosts?

Margaret says that she does not believe in ghosts because she has sighted none. She seems certain he is dead and if ghosts exist she is very sure that her son would have come to her. But she has not seen his ghost.

7. "I have no other earthly friend!" What is suggested by this last line of the poem?

This last line of the poem emphasizes her loneliness. It also suggests that her husband is no longer with her and her son is her only companion in this world.

8. What is the theme of the poem?

The theme of the poem is the painful experience of a rustic widow on the loss of her only son

ESSAY

The poem *The Affliction of Margaret* is written in the form of monologue in which a rustic widow expresses the desperation and pain of not knowing the whereabouts of her son. Her son left home seven years ago and has not heard about him since then. Seven years seem like eternity to her. The mother does not even know he is alive as there is no news from her son. She says that her son was the gem of a child. He was well born and well bred. He was honest, innocent and bold and so she was always proud of him. She recollects those happy days with her son but now she misses those happy moments. She says that children are not aware of a mother's pain. As the child grows older, the mother's anxiety and fear grows too, but her love does not diminish. Margaret gives vent to her pent up feelings of loneliness and anger. She claims that she had been a kind mother to him and she felt proud of it. But now she mourns in private over her son's disappearance.

The loss of her son has changed her views and values. She has learned to dismiss and think nothing of what this world has to offer. Now all that matters to her is her son. She pleads with her son to return home even if he is in a bad situation. The mother wishes her son had wings, so that he could fly home like the fowls of heaven. But she knows that her wishes will remain unfulfilled. She is full of apprehensions about her son that she imagines all the worst possible things that might have happened to him. She fears that her son may be in some dungeon or attacked by wild animals or killed in a shipwreck.

Margaret is almost sure that her son is dead. She does not believe in ghosts because she has never seen any ghost. If ghosts exist, she is very sure that her son would certainly come to her for her love for her son is deep and sincere. Her tears and worries are overwhelming and she trembles at every shadow or slightest sound. She asks herself so many questions but finds no answer. Her grief makes her feel that the whole world is unkind to her. She says that no one can share her grief and her miseries are beyond relief. She laments that she has no companion in this world except his son. And so she again pleads with her son to return home or at least send some news about him so that her miseries will have an end.

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4. ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

JOHN KEATS

POEM SUMMARY

Keats' imagined urn is addressed as if he were contemplating a real urn. It has survived intact from antiquity. It is a "sylvan historian" telling us a story, which the poet suggests by a series of questions. Who are these gods or men carved or painted on the urn? Who are these reluctant maidens? What is this mad pursuit? Why the struggle to escape? What is the explanation for the presence of musical instruments? Why this mad ecstasy?

Imagined melodies are lovelier than those heard by human ears. Therefore the poet urges the musician pictured on the urn to play on. His song can never end nor the trees ever shed their leaves. The lover on the urn can never win a kiss from his beloved, but his beloved can never lose her beauty. Happy are the trees on the urn, for they can never lose their leaves. Happy is the musician forever playing songs forever new. The lovers on the urn enjoy a love forever warm, forever panting, and forever young, far better than actual love, which eventually brings frustration and dissatisfaction.

Who are the people coming to perform a sacrifice? To what altar does the priest lead a garlanded heifer? What town do they come from? That town will forever remain silent and deserted.

Fair urn, Keats says, adorned with figures of men and maidens, trees and grass, you bring our speculations to a point at which thought leads nowhere, like meditation on eternity. After our generation is gone, you will still be here, a friend to man, telling him that beauty is truth and truth is beauty — that is all he knows on earth and all he needs to know.

ESSAY

Keats has created a Greek urn in his mind and has decorated it with three scenes. The first is full of frenzied action and the actors are men, or gods, and maidens. Other figures, or

possibly the male figures, are playing musical instruments. The maidens are probably the nymphs of classical mythology. The men or gods are smitten with love and are pursuing them. Keats, who loved classical mythology, had probably read stories of such love games. In Book II of his *Endymion*, he recounts Alpheus' pursuit of Arethusa, and in Book III he tells of Glaucus' pursuit of Scylla.

The second scene is developed in stanzas II and III. Under the trees a lover is serenading his beloved. In stanza I, Keats confined himself to suggesting a scene by questions. The second scene is not presented by means of questions but by means of description. We see a youth in a grove playing a musical instrument and hoping, it seems, for a kiss from his beloved. The scene elicits some thoughts on the function of art from Keats. Art gives a kind of permanence to reality. The youth, the maiden, and the musical instrument are, as it were, caught and held permanently by being pictured on the urn. And so Keats can take pleasure in the thought that the music will play on forever, and although the lover can never receive the desired kiss, the maiden can never grow older nor lose any of her beauty. The love that they enjoy is superior to human love which leaves behind "a heart highsorrowful and cloy'd, / A burning forehead, and a parching tongue." The aftermath of human love is satiety and dissatisfaction. In these two stanzas Keats imagines a state of perfect existence which is represented by the lovers pictured on the urn. Art arrests desirable experience at a point before it can become undesirable. This, Keats seems to be telling us, is one of the pleasurable contributions of art to man.

The third scene on Keats' urn is a group of people on their way to perform a sacrifice to some god. The sacrificial victim, a lowing heifer, is held by a priest. Instead of limiting himself to the sacrificial procession as another scene on his urn, Keats goes on to mention the town emptied of its inhabitants by the procession. The town is desolate and will forever be silent.

The final stanza contains the beauty-truth equation, the most controversial line in all the criticism of Keats' poetry. No critic's interpretation of the line satisfies any other critic, however, and no doubt they will continue to wrestle with the equation as long as the poem is read. In the stanza, Keats also makes two main comments on his urn. The urn teases him out of thought, as does eternity; that is, the problem of the effect of a work of art on time and life, or simply of what art does, is a perplexing one, as is the effort to grapple with the concept of eternity. Art's (imagined) arrest of time is a form of eternity and, probably, is what brought the word *eternity* into the poem.

The second thought is the truth-beauty equation. Through the poet's imagination, the urn has been able to preserve a temporary and happy condition in permanence, but it cannot do the same for Keats or his generation; old age will waste them and bring them woe. Yet the pictured urn can do something for them and for succeeding generations as long as it will last. It will bring them through its pictured beauty a vision of happiness (truth) of a kind available in eternity, in the hereafter, just as it has brought Keats a vision of happiness by means of sharing its existence empathically and bringing its scenes to emotional life through his imagination. All you know on earth and all you need to know in regard to beautiful works of art, whether urns or poems about urns, is that they give an inkling of the unchanging happiness to be realized in the hereafter. When Keats says "that is all ye know on earth," he is postulating an existence beyond earth.

Although Keats was not a particularly religious man, his meditation on the problem of happiness and its brief duration in the course of writing "Ode on a Grecian Urn" brought him a glimpse of heaven, a state of existence which his letters show he did think about.

5. Robert Browning

The Laboratory: Ancien Regime

Summary

The poem is narrated by a young woman to an apothecary, who is preparing her a poison with which to kill her rivals at a nearby royal court. She pushes him to complete the potion while she laments how her beloved is not only being unfaithful, but that he is fully aware that she knows of it. While her betrayers think she must be somewhere in grief, she is proud to be instead plotting their murder.

She notes the ingredients he uses, paying particular attention to their texture and color. She hopes the poison will "taste sweetly" so she can poison the two ladies she has in her sights. Though she is a "minion" unlike her competitors, she will have the last laugh by having them killed in a painful way that will also torment her beloved.

When the poison is complete, she promises the apothecary both her fortune (her "jewels" and "gold") but also lets him kiss her. Finally, she is ready to go dancing at the king's and end her torment.

ESSAY

This wicked little poem, first published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* in 1845, is most notable for the exhilaration of the writing. The rhyme scheme is regular, with an ABAC structure that makes each short stanza playful until the dramatic break of its last line. The voice is wonderfully captured, and we see that this woman is enlivened by more than just revenge; she is invigorated by the power that murder allows her to have. When she first mentions her untrue beloved, she only mentions one woman, but a few stanzas later, she mentions both "Pauline" and "Elise" as targets. She is already being taken away with the potential to kill. While the rhyme scheme is regular, the enjambments stress that she is willing to lose a bit of control, letting this impulse take her.

Further, if winning her husband or lover back were the only goal, she would not take so much glee in the prospect of causing painful death to the ladies and moral torment to him. Her intense focus on the ingredients further confirms the ecstasy she feels at suddenly giving herself over to this wickedness. That this scheme will cost her her "whole fortune" only validates the choice – we get the sense that she will be forever defined by this act. In closing with "next moment I dance at the King's," the poem implies her intent to carry herself as a woman who has accomplished a great deed.

Psychologically, her resentment could be motivated by class expectations. She considers herself a "minion," which probably means a lady-in-waiting or some low-level servant, whereas her competitors are not so lowly. That her beloved is involved with them and that both expect that the speaker is grieving away in an "empty church" is the worst offense. She is considered less worthy than them, which only strengthens her resolve to demonstrate her superiority through the murder.

One could argue that the speaker has never actually been involved with her beloved, since she gives no direct proof of a relationship. Further, as her lover and competitors all know that she is aware of the dalliance, it is possible that they do not even know they are offending her in any way. She could be like the monk of "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," whose hatred and resentment is known only to him. There is also, in the "empty church" line, the slightest indication that perhaps she is a nun, and so her grief would be due to their sexuality out of marriage. Much can be conjectured from Browning's masterful subtlety.

Finally, sexuality is presented in this poem as something capable of great grotesqueness. In the same way that the bright, pretty poison will ultimately cause painful death, so does the allure of sexuality have a dark side. Sexuality is certainly behind whatever actions have led this woman to the apothecary, but note her willingness to use it on the apothecary in the final stanza, when she tells him, "You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!" Certainly, Browning is no prude and we should not read a moral message in this, but rather read it as one of his many uses of objects or values which also contain their opposite. What drives men and women to celebrate life can also cause that life to end.

6. THOMAS GRAY

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

Answer the following in two or three sentences

1. How does the opening line of the 'Elegy...' predict the theme of the poem?

The opening line tells the death of the day which is indicated by the tolling of knell. It seems to echo the theme of the poem as it is about the poor and simple forefather's of the villager's.

2. "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way". Explain.

This is an instance of transferred epithet. It is not the way that is weary, but it is the ploughman who is walking with tired steps towards his home.

3. How does the mood of the poem shift from movement to stillness and silence? Pick out the words that suggest this shift.

The poem begins with the images of the cattle returning home and of the weary ploughman going home with heavy and tired steps. Then it becomes dark. The air is silent and full of solemnity except the humming of the beetle, hooting of the owl and the tinkling of the bells tied to the necks of sheep from the distant folds. The words suggesting this shift from movement to stillness are "leaves the world to darkness and to me" and "solemn stillness".

4. What is the speaker's warning to the ambitious and the pompous? Why?

The speaker warns the ambitious and the pompous not to despise the simple lives of the poor villagers. He also reminds them of the inevitability of death, the vanity of pride and riches and the equality of the rich and the poor brought about by death.

5. "Can storied urn or animated bust/Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath." Explain.

The poet means to say that neither monuments with biographical inscriptions on it nor life like statues can bring the dead back to life. Death is inevitable.

6. What does the speaker blame for the obscure destinies of the poor rustics? The speaker blames their lack of education and poverty for the obscure destinies of the poor rustics.

7. What is the context of reference to Hampden, Milton and Cromwell?

The poet feels sorry that the villagers could not become great and famous person due to lack of opportunities. He says that they would have become great persons like Hampden, Milton or Cromwell, if they had got the right opportunities.

8. How did the peasant's wretched lot become a blessing in disguise for them?

The humble situation of the rustics saved them from many a wicked deed, of which they otherwise would have been guilty. It prevented them from committing bloodshed in their pursuit of ambition and also saved them from becoming merciless tyrants.

9. "This pleasing anxious being". Explain.

The poet refers to life as a mixture of joys and sorrows. He says that no one can reconcile to total oblivion after death and no soul can leave its abode without casting a desirous glance back on life. 10. What does the speaker hope for in return to singing about "the short and simple annals of the poor?"

The speaker hopes that somebody with a temperament like his own may enquire about him and tell the story of the poet to others so that people may remember him.

Answer in a Paragraph of not more than 100 words

1. Comment on the use of transferred epithets and personifications in the Elegy...?

In his poem Elegy, Thomas Gray has given an instance of a transferred epithet which occurs in the first stanza itself. It occurs in the line, "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way". 'Weary way' is the transferred epithet used. The ploughman who has been hard at work during the day walks with heavy and tired steps towards his home. The cattle also return home from the meadows and they move slowly in a zigzag line. Here the poet transfers the weariness of the poet to the way. It is not the way that is weary, but it is the ploughman who laboriously walks back home. Gray has used many personifications in this poem. They are:- Ambition, Grandeur, Proud, Memory, Honour, Flattery, Death, Knowledge, Nature, Fortune, Fame, Science, Melancholy and Misery.

2. "The paths of glory lead but to the grave". Comment.

This line in Gray's Elegy is one of the most often quoted line in English poetry. Gray points out the inevitability of death through this line. The poet tells the rich and ambitious people not to despise the simple and innocent pleasures enjoyed by the poor villagers in the midst of their family. Their life has been so uneventful and bare and they could not become great

famous persons. It is only the want of opportunity and the poverty of the poor man that stifles his genius and makes him remain obscure. As victims of death, all are equal. Death puts an end to the pride of noble descent, the splendour and magnificance of power, beauty and wealth. Everyone must die one day, however noble one's lineage may be, however splendidly one may live, however influential one may be and however glorious one's career may have been. Death awaits everybody alike and there is no escape from it. The ultimate equality of the rich and the poor, the inevitability of death and the futility of greatness and littleness of human life are all revealed through this great line.

ESSAY

Thomas Gray probably began "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" about 1746. It was originally a somewhat shorter poem than the version he published in 1751, and some have speculated that the poem may have been occasioned by an actual death, perhaps that of Gray's friend Richard West in 1742. When Gray designated his work as an elegy, he placed it in a long tradition of meditative poems that focus on human mortality and sometimes reflect specifically on the death of a single person. By setting his meditation in a typical English churchyard with mounds, gravestones, and yew trees, Gray was also following a tradition. Some of the most popular poems in the middle of Gray's century were set in graveyards and meditated on death.

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is cast in four-line stanzas, or quatrains, in which the first line rhymes with the third, the second with the fourth. This *abab* pattern, at this time associated with elegiac poetry, gives the poem an appropriately stately pace. The last three stanzas are printed in italic type and given the title "The Epitaph."

In the first three stanzas (lines 1 to 12), Gray sets the scene for his private and quiet meditations. He is far from the city and looking out from a country churchyard at a rural scene, but the sights and sounds of this rural world of men and beasts fade away. Although the scene is beautiful, life is not joyous, and Gray reflects that this day dies just like the one before it, as the plowman plods wearily home. The poet is alone, but he is not tired. The text gives a sense of the vitality of his solitude and of the stillness of the scene by describing the few things that remain to disturb it: the tinkling of the cattle who have returned home, the drone of the beetle, and the sound of an owl from the church tower. This owl—a "moping," secret, solitary ruler over the churchyard since ancient times—strikes an ominous note and protests that the poet is challenging its reign. With these descriptions, Gray creates the backdrop for his melancholy reflections about eternal truths.

In the next four stanzas (lines 13 to 28), Gray uses the churchyard scene to invoke important images: the strength of the elms, death as symbolized by the graves, and the comfort provided by the yews shading bodies that sleep. The poet begins by reflecting that death for the humble and lower class means a cessation of life's simple pleasures: waking up to the songs of birds, sharing life with a wife and children, and enjoying hard and productive work. Gray reflects not on the untimely death of young people but on the death that comes after a normal life span.

In the next four stanzas (lines 29 to 44), the poet addresses the upper classes—those with ambition, grandeur, power, nobility, and pride—and exhorts them not to mock the poor for

their simplicity or for not having elaborate statues on their graveyard memorials. He tells the living upper classes (perhaps the people Gray envisions as his readers) that ultimately it does not matter what glory they achieve or how elaborate a tombstone they will have. They will die just like the poor.

The eight stanzas (lines 45 to 76) that follow provide the central message of the poem: The poor are born with the same natural abilities as members of the upper classes. Who can say what humble people might have accomplished in the great world had they not been constrained by their condition and their innate powers not been frozen by "Chill Penury." Gray implies that the innocence and beauty of these souls, wasted in their isolated rural environment, and resembling hidden deserts and ocean caves, could have flourished in better circumstances:

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

The churchyard graves may also contain the remains of a person who had the ability to become a great scholar, a generous national leader, or a man who could have been a great poet but is in the end no more than a "mute inglorious Milton." Gray goes on to speculate, however, that poverty may have prevented some dead men from doing not good but evil; now death has made them (unlike Oliver Cromwell) "guiltless" of shedding blood; they have not been able to slaughter, to refuse mercy, to lie, or to wallow in luxury and pride. Far from the "ignoble strife" of the great world, the village people have led "sober" and "noiseless" lives. Gray implies that, even though the village dead have accomplished nothing in the world, on balance they may be morally superior to their social betters.

Gray returns to the churchyard in the next section (lines 77 to 92), remarking on the graves' simple markers with their badly spelled inscriptions, names, and dates. Some bear unpolished verses or consoling biblical texts; some are decorated with "shapeless sculpture." Gray is touched that such grave markers show the humanity these dead people share with all men and women (including, by implication, the famous who took paths of glory). Those who remain can sense that the dead "cast one long lingering look" back on what they were leaving and were comforted by at least one loved one. Gray reflects that the voice of general human nature can be heard crying from these graves. In the last line of this section, Gray reflects that what he has learned will apply to himself and his readers: The "wonted fires" of his life and those of his readers will continue to burn in the ashes of all graves.

This more personal line provides a transition to the next six stanzas (lines 93-116), where it seems (the grammar is confusing) that Gray is addressing himself when he writes:

For thee, who mindful of the unhonoured dead
Dost in these lines their artless
tale relate, If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall
inquire thy fate

Gray imagines an old farmer, who is described as a "hoary-headed swain," replying to this question in lines 98 to 116. The farmer's story describes Gray as a man who does not fit into either of the classes described earlier; he is neither a poor man nor a man of noble achievement. He is a wanderer, a man who vigorously meets the sun at dawn, yet later lies by

a favorite tree and gazes listlessly at a brook. He mutters his fancies, resembling a madman or a hopeless lover. He is everything that Gray's contemporaries thought a poet should be—a man of exquisite sensibility, unfit for the world's work, meditative, and sad.

The farmer recounts that he saw the poet's funeral procession to a church, presumably the one where the poem is set. He does not seem to have helped arrange the funeral nor, unlike the reader, can he read the epitaph that concludes the poem (Gray may be indicating that the farmer's social class is not that of the poet and the reader). Perhaps Gray, in indicating that the poet chose to be buried where people of his class are not usually buried, intended to reinforce that the poem's theme applies to all humankind.

In the three stanzas of the epitaph (lines 117 to 128), Gray speaks of his grave being “upon the lap of Earth” and not inside the church. He accords himself modest praise and justifies his life as worthwhile. Despite his “humble birth,” he was well educated. Although some may consider the poet's natural melancholy a disadvantage, he himself probably thought it the source of his poetic temperament. Gray describes himself as generous and sincere, for which his reward was not worldly fame or fortune (the “paths of glory”) but heavenly “recompense,” undoubtedly the “friend” mentioned in line 124. The epitaph concludes by telling the reader not to ask more about the poet's virtues and frailties but to leave him to God.

“Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” moves from a meditation in a particular place upon the graves of the poor to a reflection on the mortality of all humankind and on some of the benefits of being constrained by poverty. The poem alludes to the wish of all people not to die and to the ways in which each is remembered after death. Gray concludes by imagining his own death and how he hopes to be remembered. If this progression of thought is not entirely logical, it is all the more understandable. One reason for the long popularity of Gray's elegy lies in the universal chord he managed to strike not only with the thoughts he expressed but, perhaps even more important, with the progression he gave those thoughts. Beyond that, the poem contains some of the most striking lines of English poetry.

7. D.H Lawrence The Mosquito

‘The Mosquito’, which is taken from the collection *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, exemplifies Lawrence's visualization of the animal world. The prescribed poetry exemplifies that the mosquito is not as insignificant as people actualise it out to be. The poet bestows upon it the honorific titles Monsieur, you vehemence. etc. Far from ignoring it, the poet poses a series of interrogatives before the insect. has its head intact, to smile and get a line endure at its tail.

This poem displays what John Ruskin termed the “**pathetic fallacy**” which ascribes human emotions to animals and inanimate objects. The poet begins the poem by addressing the mosquito as Monsieur, closely observing the mosquito and its movements, he describes the way it stands on its high, thin, shredded legs. It is almost weightless and so the poet hardly knows its presence when it alights on him. It comes and goes unnoticed. Being translucent, it appears phantom-like. The poet finds it weird and wonderful that it seems to be as harmless as a heron sailing in water, or a lifeless clot of air. Though it seems to be a ‘nothingness’ a certain aura appears to surround it.

The aura is an evil one and it paralyses the poet's mind beyond thought. Its smallness causes it to be invisible and its swift movements tease the eye with its antics. The mosquito prowls and circles and envelops the poet with its sealing flights. It is a ghoul on wings as it devours human blood. The mosquito eyes the poet sideways and realises that the poet is watching it. Having read the poet's intentions, it suddenly flies off. This sly game of bluff continues. It saps the poet's blood and blows its high-pitched hateful bugle in the poet's ear.

The sound of the mosquito is like a slogan, a yell of triumph. It sucks the poet's blood and falls into a trance. It is an obscene ecstasy. The mosquito staggers as it sucks the blood. Its imponderable weightlessness saves it from the poet. But soon afterwards the poet beats the mosquito to death and it ends up as a dark smudge. Though the poet reduces the mosquito to 'an infinitesimal faint smear', it remains invincible in spirit.