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**ENGLISH COMMMON**  
**WAYS WITH WORDS**

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## Sonnet 29

William Shakespeare's Sonnet 29 focuses on the speaker's initial state of depression, hopelessness and unhappiness in life and the subsequent recovery through happier thoughts of love.

The emotional state of the speaker in Sonnet 29 is one of depression: in the first line, he assumes himself to be "in disgrace with fortune," meaning he has been having bad luck. He also feels in disgrace with "men's eyes," implying that the general public looks on him unfavorably. This could be real or imagined, but it is enforced in line 2, when he bemoans his "outcast state." Here, "state" refers to a state of being, and in this case, he is cast out from society.

Lines 3-4 make allusion to Job of the Old Testament in the Bible, who was cast out onto a dung heap and called to a God who didn't listen. The poet finds himself in the same situation: Heaven personified is God, and in this case he is "deaf," making the poet's cries "bootless," or useless. The idea of cursing one's fate also harkens to Job, who cursed himself after falling out of God's favor.

The speaker finds himself envying what others have, and in lines 5-9 he sees almost everyone as having something he lacks. He wishes to be like "one more rich in hope," perhaps meaning hopeful or literally wealthy; "featured like him," refers to someone who is handsome, with beautiful features; and another is "with friends possessed," or popular, unlike the poet (as has been established in the first two lines). In line 7, he envies the artistic talent of one man, and the opportunities afforded someone else.

The simile of a lark is developed in lines 10-12, when the speaker describes the effect that a thought of his love has on his "state," or emotional well-being. The fact that the lark rises from the "sullen earth" at "break of day" implies that the day is much happier than the night; day break is compared to the dawning of a thought of the beloved. As the lark "sings hymns at heaven's gate," so the poet's soul is invigorated with the thought of the fair lord, and seems to sing to the sky with rejuvenated hope.

The final couplet of Sonnet 29 declares that this joyfulness brought about by a thought of the fair lord is enough to convince the speaker that he is better off than royalty. Here, "state" is a pun: it carries the meaning of emotional well-being, as it did earlier in the poem, and suggests that the love of the fair lord makes the speaker so happy that all the wealth of a king would not be better. But it also refers to a nation, or a kingdom

## Ode to Autumn

In this poem John Keats describes the season of Autumn. The ode is an address to the season. It is the season of the mist and in this season fruits is ripened on the collaboration with the Sun. Autumn loads the vines with grapes. There are apple trees near the moss growth cottage. The season fills the apples with juice. The hazel-shells also grow plumb. These are mellowed. The Sun and the autumn help the flowers of the summer to continue. The bees are humming on these flowers.

They collect honey from them. The beehives are filled with honey. The clammy cells are overflowing with sweet honey. The bees think as if the summer would never end and warm

days would continue for a long time. Autumn has been personified and compared to women farmer sitting carefree on the granary floor; there blows a gentle breeze and the hairs of the farmer are fluttering. Again Autumn is a reaper. It feels drowsy and sleeps on the half reaped corn. The poppy flowers have made her drowsy. The Autumn holds a sickle in its hand. It has spared the margin of the stalks intertwined with flowers. Lastly, Autumn is seen as a worker carrying a burden of corn on its head.

The worker balances his body while crossing a stream with a bundle on his head. The Autumn is like an onlooker sitting the juicy oozing for hours. The songs and joys of spring are not found in Autumn seasons. But Keats says that Autumn has its own music and charm. In an autumn evening mournful songs of the gnats are heard in the willows by the river banks. Besides the bleat of the lambs returning from the grassy hills is heard. The whistle of the red breast is heard from the garden. The grasshoppers chirp and swallow twitters in the sky. This indicates that the winter is coming.

Ode to Autumn is an unconventional appreciation of the autumn season. It surprises the reader with the unusual idea that autumn is a season to rejoice. We are familiar with Thomas Hardy's like treatment of autumn as a season of gloom, chill and loneliness and the tragic sense of old age and approaching death. Keats sees the other side of the coin. He describes autumn as: "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness! / Close bosom friend of the maturing sun". He understands maturity and ripeness as one with old age and decay. Obviously thin, old age is a complement to youth, as death is to life. Keats here appears as a melodist; he seems to have accepted the fundamental paradoxes of life as giving meaning to it. The very beginning of the poem is suggestive of acceptance and insight after a conflict.

The subject matter of this ode is reality itself at one level: Keats depicts the autumn season and claims that its unique music and its role of completing the round of seasons make it a part of the whole. Although autumn will be followed by the cold and barren winter, winter itself will in turn give way to fresh spring. Life must go on but it cannot continue in turn give way to fresh spring. Life must go on but it cannot continue without death that completes one individual life and begins another. This is indirectly conveyed with the concluding line of the ode: "And gathering swallows twitter in the skies". In one way, this gives a hint of the coming winter when shallows will fly to the warm south.

The theme of ripeness is complemented by the theme of death and that of death by rebirth. So, in the final stanza, the personified figure of autumn of the second stanza is replaced by concrete images of life. Autumn is a part of the year as old age is of life. Keats has accepted autumn, and connotatively, old age as natural parts and processes them.

Among the six wonderful Odes of Keats To Autumn occupies a distinct place of its own, for it is, in execution, the most perfect of his Odes. Many critics agree in ranking To Autumn first among Keats' Odes. Its three eleven-line stanza ostensibly do nothing more than a season; no philosophical reflections intrude. His simple love of Nature without any tinge of reflectiveness and ethical meaning finds expression in To Autumn. The scented landscape in the first stanza, and the music of natural sounds in the last stanza would have been enough for most poets, but the effect would have been incomplete without the figures of the winnower, the reaper, the gleaner and the cider-presser which give a human touch to Autumn. Although the poem contains only three stanzas, Keats has been successful in expressing the beauty, the charm, the symphony of Autumn, and the ageless human activities in the lap of Nature.

To Autumn is, in a sense, a return to the mood of the Ode on Indolence—making the moment sufficient to itself. It is, apparently, the most objective and descriptive poem, yet the emotion has become so completely through it. There is no looking before and after in this poem as Keats surrenders himself fully to the rich beauty of the season. He is not troubled by the thought of the approaching winter nor by that of the vanished spring. In this approach to Nature he remains the great artist that he was. Neither philosophy taints his thoughts, nor does sorrow cloud his vision. Other poets have thought of Autumn as the season of decay. But to Keats, Autumn was the season of mellow fruitfulness and happy content. He is content with the autumn music, however pensive it may be.

There are no echoes in it, no literary images; all is clear, single, perfectly attuned. Our enjoyment of the beauty and peace of the season is disturbed by no romantic longing, no classic aspiration, no looking before and after, no pining, for what is not, no foreboding of winter, no regret for the spring that is gone, and no prophetic thought of other springs to follow. To Autumn expresses the essence of the season, but it draws no lesson, no overt comparison with human life. Keats was being neither allegorical, nor Wordsworthian. Keats in this poem is almost content with the pure phenomenon. He describes Nature as she is.

This is the secret of Keats's strength, his ability to take the beauty of the present moment, so completely into his heart that it becomes an eternal possession. For him the poetry of the earth is never dead. It is noteworthy that To Autumn is the only major poem of Keats that is completely unsexual. Woman as erotic object has been banished from this placid landscape. Keats' sense of the wholeness of life is nowhere communicated so richly or with such concentration as in this Ode. The characteristic tension of the other Odes makes them more passionate, perhaps, but leaves them with a sense of strain. Here all is relaxed and calm, life-accepting.

### **A Roadside Stand**

Robert Frost contrasts the lives of the poor with that of the rich in this poem, "A Roadside Stand." The poor people had constructed a roadside stand to sell their goodies and earn a living but the rich do not even bother to take a look at it.

The poem starts with the description of the stand. A small time farmer has put up the stand outside his house along a highway hoping that the passing cars would buy his goodies. He is trying to earn some money not by begging and supporting cities from going into ruins.

Unfortunately, no passer-by stop their cars and buys his goodies. Moreover, even if someone stares at the direction of the stand only criticize the badly painted North-South signs without even once noticing the wild berries and squash for sale.

The farmer tells the rich to keep their money if they are meant to be so cruel and mean. He is not hurt that they do not notice the stand but he is hurt at the way he is treated and ignored. He wishes for some city life and money which he has seen in movies and other media but the political parties are denying him all these plush life.

The poet here says that there are some benefactors(good doers) of these poor people too. They relocate them to such places where they can experience the cinema and the store. However, Frost says that these benefactors are selfish as they help these pitiful kin for their own advantage. These benefactors make the villagers completely dependent on them thus

robbing them of their ability to think for themselves or be independent. During the ancient times, these villagers used to work day and night. This process has been changed by these greedy good doers who manipulate these innocent villagers and ask them not to use their own ideas. These villagers are now troubled and unable to sleep at night because they haven't worked in the morning.

In the following lines, Frost talks about his own personal feelings. He is intolerable towards the farmer's battered hopes. The windows of the farmer's house just ache to hear the sound of a car stopping to make some purchase. However, they are always disappointed as the cars stop either to enquire about the police or about the gas stations.

Robert Frost feels that these villagers should be put out of pain and hardships of existence. According to the poet, these country people have not yet found progress which is evidently visible through their lifestyle. He wonders for some solution by which the farmers can be freed from such painful existence.

### **Figures of Speech Used in the Poem**

Transferred Epithet:

There are two examples of transferred epithet in "A Roadside Stand."

1. 'polished traffic' referring to the city dwellers who pass by the countryside and sometimes they take out a moment to scrutinize the surroundings around them.
2. 'Selfish cars' is yet another use of a transferred epithet. This refers to the car owners who do stop at the roadside stand but to ask about the police or the gas stations.

Personification:

"the sadness that lurks behind the open window there..." where sadness is an example of personification. Sadness dwells in the windows of the farmers because they wait for cars to stop and make a purchase.

Alliteration and Oxymoron: 'Greedy good doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey' are examples of both alliteration and oxymoron

### **The House of My Childhood**

In the poem The House of My Childhood, the poet Dilip Chitre narrates how the house on the hilltop where he lived during his childhood changed following the demise of his grandmother.

The house remained empty and forsaken with all the furniture removed. The only things of the past that continued to remain there were the brass statues of her deities and a grinding stone. The poet quotes

"The house of my childhood stood empty  
On a grey hill  
All its furniture gone"

All that remained were a grinding stone and the brass statues of Gods that she worshipped. He could not but wonder how the bird cries had stopped. The poet recalled how he used to listen to their chirping as a child when the house was full of life.

As he continued to look at the house, the poet felt his grandmother's voice coming from the branch of a tree. Although the house was now deserted, the poet could not resist the urge to go around it and explore all the rooms. His attachment for the house can be seen by the way he says

“I toddle around the empty house  
Spring and summer are both gone  
Leaving an elderly infant  
To explore the rooms of age”

This poem describes the emotion and feeling towards the house of the poet where he used to live in his childhood. This poem depicts beautifully who awesome was the house of the poet which was in the hill top , and where poet lives with his grandmother . He still reminds the voice his grandmother as well as the voices of birds. But at the end the poet is sorrowfully explains how this house is getting destroyed now , where event the furniture are disappeared now. This poem tells it's readers that no matter how old you become you always remembers the things of you childhood.

### **Once Upon A Time**

Gabriel Okara's poem Once Upon A Time is about a father teaching his son regarding the dangers of fake friends and how times have changed. This infers that it used to happen by the use of the word, 'now' because it shows that in the present tense it doesn't happen anymore because they've grown up. The poet also signifies an emotion of disappointment and that he wished he had learned earlier on how to put on a fake smile and deal with people that don't want to be his friend. The main speaker in the poem regrets about a time in the speakers' life when people were sincere and caring in their dealings. He speaks regretfully about the present time when people are not like before. He seems to feel that people have lost the innocence and openness which he now sees in his young son. He wants to regain that innocence.

The poet displays how they used to be his friends and something must have transformed for them friends to keep running back to him even though they aren't true friends.

#### **The Setting of Once Upon A Time**

The mood of the poem is nostalgic. The personality is remembering how things used to be when he was young and innocent, like his son. The poem highlights the guilt and resentment an African man feels for himself to accept the culture of the westerners. He notices a marked change in the attitudes of his people-those who were once so genuine, warm and sincere have now suddenly turned cold and hostile towards him.

The poets' use of a child like lexical field contradicts the poems morals about growing up. “Once upon a time” leads the readers to believe it to be like a story and the poet does present it in a narrative way, but once we realize he is talking to her son it could suggest the fairy tale feel is on his behalf. The poem is also structured like a mirror as the first 3 stanzas talk about innocence whereas the next 3 portray experience, furthermore, the poet is constantly reflecting on the two times of their life.

## The Times They Are A-Changin

"The Times They Are A-Changin" written by Bob Dylan was constructed in the early 60's during the hippie movement/civil rights movement. I enjoy Bob Dylan and have heard this song before, but I have never stopped to analyze the lyrics. The only line I ever really heard was "For the times they are a-changin.'" What exactly is Bob Dylan talking about?

In the first stanza of this song, Dylan is calling people to gather together. He is asking for unity to take place and for others to "admit that the waters around you have grown." This is pointing to the flaws of the government and that if people do not see what is happening with racism and poverty and realize that something needs to change, than nothing will. "Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone," represents the call for people to stand up against what is going on in the United States so things don't end up worse.

In the second stanza, Dylan is speaking directly to those I am assuming who write for the media/newspaper. The news has been talking badly about the times they are in and about the crisis of poverty and discrimination. But, Dylan makes sure to tell them to not be to quick to speak, for times are changing and the good is arising.

In the third stanza, Dylan addresses the senators and congressmen and those involved in government affairs. Bob Dylan is telling them to hear the call from those who want change and don't block those fighting for freedom. "Don't block up the hall for he that gets hurt will be he who has stalled." If senators and congressmen don't do anything to improve the country, then they will be hurt. "There's a battle outside and it is ragin," could mean that there is about to be a battle for civil rights. When I first read this, I thought it meant that there is a battle of government trying to keep control, but I believe Bob Dylan is talking about the good that is rising in the country.

In the fourth stanza, Bob Dylan addresses mothers and fathers and tells them not to criticize what they don't understand. I believe this means that the youth are probably fighting for freedom and mothers and fathers look down on their kids for "rebellin'," but Bob Dylan is saying that there is a need to fight for this freedom. "And don't criticize what you can't understand your sons and your daughters are beyond your command your old road is rapidly agin' please get out of the new one."

In the last stanza, Bob Dylan is now speaking of the change that is taking place directly. Those who are standing up for their freedom and for civil rights are now the minority, but soon they will be the ones ruling and making change. "As the present now will later be past the order is rapidly fadin,' shows that there is change taking place. "For the times they are a-changin,'" is echoed throughout this whole song.

Even though Bob Dylan wrote this song in the 1960's, this song can be pretty applicable for today. We are currently going through a political revolution. We are about to get a new president and many people are getting serious about what they want in their country. People are starting to see what the country needs and the reasons why there needs to be dramatic change. If we stand up and fight for what we believe in, we can change the course of history and bring positive change. This year is very important for those to get educated in politics and realize that if you do stand up against what is wrong, change will eventually take place.

## **Old Folks Laugh**

In the first stanza of the poem, *Old Folks Laugh*, Maya Angelou establishes the idea that old folks really know how to laugh. The poet suggests that having reached old age, people are not pressured by the need or feel the desire to pretend. Hence, they no longer “hold their lips this or that way”, or simpler; they just laugh. Their laughter rises unperturbed, right from their bellies, and like the sounds of the tambourine, it augments with force. As such, upon entering old age, inhibitions are reduced; and moreover, fewer societal restrictions pertaining to conduct are imposed upon the old, which is probably what allows the old folks the freedom to laugh as they please. However, Angelou’s poem presents another reason/angle to why the old folks laugh.

The old folks’ laughter is genuine as well as uncontrolled – so much so that it rushes forth and spills like an overflowing liquid. The poet further suggests that the laughter of the old folks is liberating. It is liberating not only for the old folks but also for others, as it teaches them to be genuine rather than pretentious. It teaches others to laugh without worrying about what the ones around would think, which is why the poet says, “When old folks laugh, they free the world”. In other words, this hyperbolic line helps one understand that the laughter of the old folks is powerful enough to free the world. This could also suggest that their laughter is infectious.

The next stanza talks about how with age, the infirmities of the body become apparent while laughing; for instance, the saliva at the corner of the mouth, the wobbly head on the “brittle neck”. However, the aged mind remembers to laugh because experience has shown them the power of laughter. Moreover, their physical infirmities are balanced by the memories/experiences they have gained. Memories that they hold close like one would hold a grandchild in one’s lap.

The final stanza of the poem offers an explanation as to why old people laugh. The poem suggests that they laugh because laughing makes the difficult things in life bearable, such as the idea of death, and the unnerving proximity to the same. Man’s life is a fight to escape the clutches of death. In order to survive, life itself becomes a struggle. In this struggle, a man neither gets to enjoy all that life has to offer nor accept the pain of the inevitable death. However, according to the poet, laughter is what enables the old folks to accept death, which she refers to as “dear painless death” as well as to forgive life for the hardships it has caused.

## **Lamb to the Slaughter**

Roald Dahl’s story *Lamb to the Slaughter* begins with the most innocent of domestic scenes. Mary Maloney, a housewife in her sixth month of pregnancy, is waiting for her husband to return home. It is a Thursday night, and they usually eat out. When Patrick Maloney does come home, he is strangely moody and takes a stronger drink than usual. Mary tries to divert him with the usual domestic comforts but to no avail. Patrick asks her to sit down, announcing that he has an important matter to discuss with her. Though the reader is never told, it is clear that Patrick is going to divorce Mary. He ends his speech by saying that he will see that she is provided for and that he hopes that there will be no fuss because it might reflect badly on his position in the police department.

The announcement that she will lose the man around whom her world revolves puts Mary into a daze of disbelief. Instead of arguing with Patrick, she goes on as if nothing has happened, hoping that this will somehow cause her problem to go away. She prepares to

make supper and goes down to the deep freezer. She chooses a frozen leg of lamb for the meal. Moving like a somnambulist, she walks into the living room. When Patrick tells her that he does not want dinner, Mary moves behind him and hits him over the head with the leg of lamb.

Patrick falls to the floor with a crash, and this brings Mary to her senses. Mary realizes that she has killed Patrick, and though she is willing to take the legal consequences, she fears for her unborn child, who might die if she is executed. Her mind is now working clearly, and she devises an elaborate deception for the police. She prepares the leg of lamb and puts it in the oven. She then goes to her room and gets ready to go out. As she does so, she rehearses the conversation that she will have with the grocer, trying to get the voice tones and facial expressions as close to normal as possible. This deception is put into operation. She goes to the grocery and uses the exact words that she has rehearsed, so that the whole scene at the grocery appears to be the everyday act of a wife picking up food for her husband's dinner and chatting with the grocer. She then returns home, telling herself that she must remain natural and to expect nothing out of the ordinary when she enters the house. Thus, when Mary does arrive, she calls out to Patrick as if he were still alive. Her shock at actually finding Patrick's body is almost completely unfeigned, as if she really did not know that she has already killed him.

Mary then calls the police and reports that Patrick Maloney has been killed. Two police officers, one of whom is Jack Noonan, arrive at the house. Both men are familiar to Mary, who knows most of Patrick's friends on the police force. They begin the investigation into Patrick's murder by recording Mrs. Maloney's story about going out to get food for supper and coming back to find Patrick's body. Noonan, completely taken in, comforts Mary, asking if she would rather go to her sister's house or stay with his wife. Mary, however, stays throughout the investigation. When a doctor and other specialists arrive to examine the body, the police conclude that Patrick was killed by a blow to the head with a blunt instrument, probably made of steel.

The police begin searching the house for the murder weapon but with no success. Mary asks Noonan for a drink, then invites him to have one himself. Soon all the police are having a drink, and the investigation has become a consolation scene. Finding that the lamb is now cooked, Mary asks the police officers to eat it because she owes it to Patrick to extend the hospitality of his home to his friends. She finally persuades them to eat the meal as a favor to her. As they do so, they remark that the murder weapon would be very difficult to conceal. One man says to Noonan that the weapon is "probably right under our very noses," which causes Mary to giggle.

The ending is particularly striking because it so blatantly violates the expectation of the murder mystery, namely, that the culprit should be caught at the end. Yet at the same time there seems to be a certain justice in Mary's not being caught, that she was in fact justified in taking the life of a man so loutish as to not only betray his wife by dallying with another woman but also to abandon his wife when in the vulnerable state of pregnancy, thus also abandoning his unborn child.

## A Shocking Accident

In "A Shocking Accident", Graham Greene writes about a character named Jerome and the change he goes through as he becomes a different person in the end of the story. We see him as a whole new changed person, way different from the Jerome we knew from the beginning of the book.

Jerome is quite young in the beginning, for he attends school where he is told the news of his father's death. He had always thought his dad was some Secret Service Agent for Britain, and assumed that his father was killed in a gunfight when the headmaster told him about the death of his father. The headmaster tells him the incident of his father with the pig falling on him. Jerome wasn't so sure what to feel then, and he asks what happens. Soon, Jerome realized that this incident was a comedy to other people, and people started calling him "Pig" as a fun joke.

As Jerome gets older, he realizes how hard it is to tell people of how his father died. He always feels a pain whenever his aunt tells strangers about the death of his father. Whenever Jerome tries to tell someone about his father's death, he doesn't get the response he wants from the person. He thinks of many ways to explain the death of his father without having the other person be baffled at him or thinking that his story was a joke. As time passes, Jerome finds a girl he loves dearly even though he went through all those hard times, and decides to marry her. However, Jerome was worried about the situation of telling his future wife Sally about the incident of his father. He was afraid that she would see it as humorous and laugh at the story just like every other person did.

Jerome never gets around telling Sally about the shocking incident with his father. She would ask him about it, but he would pretend that he couldn't remember because he was so young. Finally, the two of them were about to get married and Jerome tries to avoid contact with his aunt, but that unfortunately doesn't happen. When Sally asks about the death of Jerome's father, Jerome's aunt tells her about it and Sally didn't laugh, but she became saddened at what happened. This made Jerome so happy and filled his body with joy. He goes about with Sally making love to her more than ever, and he suddenly has a bright positive attitude in him now.

We see that Jerome becomes more of a happy person in the end of the story, and he's relieved at the end because Sally accepts the death of his father as a mourning event, instead of a humorous joke. Jerome wasn't like this in the beginning of the story, for he was embarrassed of sharing the story of the death of his father because no one ever took the story seriously. Now that Henry knows that Sally doesn't see the shocking incident as a joke, he isn't embarrassed about it anymore.

The change in Jerome shows that one character in the story like Sally can make a huge impact on any character. This change may have taken a while for Jerome, but his understanding of Sally and Sally's great personality changes his life, basically. One little thing can change something big, like Sally changing Jerome's world.