



POETRY
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Ode to the West Wind

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Key

- Figurative Language (ie. imagery, metaphor, etc.)
- Literary Aspects (ie. diction, form, rhythm)
- General Observations

Wow! This is Fabulous!

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver: hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine æry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

In the beginning he is immediately talking to something that is not human so it won't be able to respond.

He is giving Autumn life (personification)

This is a nice simile

My Partner article GOES CRAZY ABOUT This line
Def - Pestilence - something that is destructive or periculous

I specifically enjoy this ¶ because it uses great imagery & diction. Winged Seeds is a great picture in the mind. Also a good simile "Each like a corpse within its grave"

Def - Azure - a color of blue

Def - Clarion - narrow tubed war trumpet.

Dreaming earth - personification

He is still giving Autumn Human characteristics

This ¶ gives a nice use of Diction. Instead of say colors, he uses hues & odours instead of smells.

I assume this spirit is either Autumn or God. The spirit could be the Destroyer & preserver. This makes me initially think God, but it is actually more likely the Great West Wind

This is great imagery

He connects this ¶ w/ the previous by connecting Heaven & Angels. He also uses the word æry about the angels

Def - æry - ethereal

Maenads were female followers of Dionysus (God of Wine) in Greek myth

Zenith - Imaginary pt. above a particular location

using older language

Great use of words. Somewhat somber tone
sepulchre - place of burial

Vivid imagery.

who is he? The water?

crystalline streams - beautiful to imagine

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay, -
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

· Baiae was a coastal town not underwater-

· This stanza seems to mention the ocean or ocean-like stuff a lot.

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

· He is speaking to an unknown thing - It seemed to change seasons, but he is still talking to not real things.

· Every stanza so far has ended in "Oh hear!" why?

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

· The narrator is now talking about himself. He is using hypothetical situations

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven

· This comrade could be something taken w/ the wind

· He mentions heaven and then prayer

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

· This brings thoughts that he has been lifted up, but then he fell into a bad situation and is now reaping the consequences

A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

· "Heavy weight of hours" could mean time moving slowly but then it is contradicted with the mention of "tameless, and swift, & proud!"

· It doesn't end with "Oh hear!" Like the previous

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

· ~~Forest is saprophytic~~. Lyre: instrument

· He wants the wind to do this. Take him

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness, Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

· What is an autumnal tone?

· He is telling his spirit to be fierce?

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

· He wants his dead thoughts to leave so that new, better thoughts may grow back.
Incantation = Spell

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

· He is exclaiming to the universe! It is a good way to get a point across in literature.

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Let his voice be "the trumpet" to sound

This is a buzzing line, but quite interesting at the same time

It seems to be almost hopeful ~~that~~ at the end.

Whole Poem Observations

- There is an obvious rhyme-scheme of aba then ends with a couplet in stanzas 1-4. Throughout the poem, Shelley tries to stick to an ^{good rhyme} ~~aba~~ scheme. It is quite pleasing to the ear to be read aloud. His tone seems to start off as sort of somber using words like Pestilence (s), and corpse (s). But it gradually shifted to a neutral tone. (or at least the way I read it). The rhyme scheme is ABA BCB CDC DED EE. He seems to be talking about how the wind carries things and ~~re~~ changes life.
- Shelley uses nice similes, metaphors, and vivid imagery in the poem and it actually helps a lot in the reading department. He also tended to fall into using personification multiple times, but it only adds to the poem as a whole.

✓ Shelley writes with a wide variety of vocabulary. He knows when to use the big and fancy words, but he also knows how to keep it simple.

More Observations

yes It is as if his wind in the poem is itself a master of nature and life. It has power over the many aspects of life and the physical world.

You have so many great insights here that aren't in your paper. Why?