

ELEGY

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- 1) A sad poem or song, especially remembering someone who has died or something in the past.
- 2) An elegy is a poem of lament, written to mourn the death of an individual or to express grief at a tragic event.
In ancient Greece, the place of its origin, the term elegy covered themes such as love, was politics, lamentations for the dead and other subjects both sad and happy.
It is a mourning song or poem. Popular examples of elegy-
 - 1) Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a country churchyard (1751)."
 - 2) Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village (1770)."
 - 3) Elegy on the death of a Mad dog – by Oliver Goldsmith.

Features of an elegy-

- 1) It is a poem of Lament mourning the death of a person or the end of an era or way of life.
- 2) An elegy is a poem of mourning that describes three stages of grief:-
 - a) Sorrow
 - b) Admiration
 - c) Acceptance
- 3) The elegy is suitable for serious reflections on heavy topics such as life and death. Some poets use this form to digress and express their views on other subjects. In 'Lycidas' (1638) for example, Milton digresses to talk about the degradation of poetry and religion.
- 4) Although the elegy is a poem of grief, it changes by the end to one of resignation, peace, or even joy as the poet comes to terms with his loss.
- 5) The tone adopted by the poet is dignified and solemn.

Pastoral Elegy

- 1) It is a form of the elegy in which the mourner and the one whose death is being mourned are represented as shepherds.
In other words, we can say A shepherd mourns the death of a fellow shepherd. (The Latin word for shepherd is Pastor).
The pastoral elegy originated in the work of Sicilian Greek poet Theocritus (3rd Century).
His Idylls and his epigrams are the earliest known pastoral elegies. His "Lament of Daphnis"

is a well-known classical pastoral elegy. In which he mourns the death of the shepherd Daphnis. Later the Latin poet Virgil wrote his "Eclogues" and "Georgics" in this form.

It was forgotten for several years until it was revived in Italy during the Renaissance. From there it spread to Europe and England.

Edmund Spenser's "The Shepherd's Calendar (1579) is the first English pastoral elegy.

Popular Pastoral Elegies

- 1) "Lycidas" – By John Milton (on the death of Edward king). (1638)
- 2) Break, Break, Break – By Alfred Lord Tennyson
- 3) Mathew Arnold's Thyrsis (1865)

Features of Pastoral elegy-

- 1) All nature is shown as mourning the dead Shepherd.
- 2) There is a procession of mourners.
- 3) The poet ponders on divine justice and reflects upon the evil of his own times.
- 4) There is an elaborately descriptive passage that describes the flowers that are used to deck the hearse.
- 5) The elegy concludes with a philosophic acceptance of death and the hope of meeting the departed again in heaven.

Other names of Elegy-

- 1) A pensive poem that is usually nostalgic and melancholy.
- 2) A song or poem expressing sorrow or Lamentation, especially for one who is dead.
- 3) A short pensive musical composition.