

= Mariana (poem) =

" Mariana " is a poem by Alfred , Lord Tennyson , published in 1830 . The poem follows a common theme in much of Tennyson 's work ? that of despondent isolation . The subject of Mariana is a woman who continuously laments her lack of connection with society . The isolation defines her existence , and her longing for a connection leaves her wishing for death at the end of every stanza . The premise of Mariana originates in William Shakespeare 's Measure for Measure , but the poem ends before Mariana 's lover returns . Tennyson 's version was adapted by others , including John Everett Millais and Elizabeth Gaskell , for use in their own works . The poem was well received by critics , and it is described by critics as an example of Tennyson 's skill at poetry .

= = Background = =

Tennyson wrote Mariana in 1830 and printed it within his early collection Poems , Chiefly Lyrical . Previously , he contributed poems to the work Poems by Two Brothers (1827) , where his early poems dealing with isolation and memory can be found . The theme was continued in the later collection , with poems like Mariana , Ode to Memory , and others representing the earlier poems .

During a visit to the Pyrenees during the summer of 1830 , Tennyson sought to give aid to Spanish rebels . During that time , he was affected by his experience and the influence appears in Mariana in the South , which was published in 1832 ; it is a later version that follows the idea of The Lady of Shalott .

= = Structure = =

Many of Tennyson 's poems are in the form of a dramatic monologue . However , Mariana , like The Lady of Shalott , is more accurately a lyrical narrative . It contains elements of dramatic monologies in that it contains a refrain that carries through the poem as found in Oriana and other poems . Oriana is completely a dramatic monologue and Mariana is not because Tennyson represents how the title figure is unable to linguistically control her own poem , which reinforces the themes of the poem . This technique is used again in Tennyson 's later poem , The Two Voices . The rhyme scheme of the poem , abab cddc efef , is different than the standard ballad rhyme that serves to contain the poem then allow a free expression . The middle quatrain of the stanzas returns in theme to the beginning in a cyclical pattern while the last quatrain 's lines contain the same words .

= = Poem = =

Within the poem , Tennyson does not teach the audience what melancholy means . Instead , he describes its various aspects as he begins :

With blackest moss the flower @-@ plots
Were thickly crusted , one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable @-@ wall .
The broken sheds looked sad and strange :
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange .
She only said , " My life is dreary ,
He cometh not , " she said ;
She said , " I am aweary , aweary ;
I would that I were dead ! " (lines 1 ? 12)

The narrator of the poem is disconnected from Mariana , and he is able to see what she cannot . In particular , he is able to describe the " sweet heaven " whereas Mariana refuses to take in the scene as well as she is unable to understand the movement of time :

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet heaven ,
Either at morn or eventide . (lines 13 ? 16)

She is surrounded by stillness and there is little movement within the poem . The water is calm and there is only the growth of moss :

About a stone @-@ cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept ,
And o 'er it many , round and small ,
The clustered marish @-@ mosses crept . (lines 37 ? 40)

Mariana is trapped by her surroundings , and the last stanza begins with her becoming sensitive to sound as she starts to mentally lose her place in reality :

The sparrow 's chirrup on the roof ,
The slow clock ticking , and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made , did all confound
Her sense ; (lines 73 ? 77)

The poem ends with a description that even the sunlight is unable to do anything more than reveal dust in her home :

but most she loathed the hour
When the thick @-@ moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers , and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower . (lines 77 ? 80)

The poem ends with an altered version of the refrain , which serves to show that although she wishes her death she is still alive and , in the final moment , allows her to end the poem instead of allowing the poem to end her :

Then , said she , " I am very dreary ,
He will not come , " she said ;
She wept , " I am aweary , aweary ,
O God , that I were dead ! " (lines 81 ? 84)

= = Themes = =

Tennyson 's poems traditionally rely on the use of visual imagery for effect . In Mariana , Tennyson instead emphasises auditory imagery that serves to emphasise her solitude . Her hearing is sensitive and she is able to hear every sound , which only reveals the silence of her surroundings . Her solitude and loneliness causes her to be unable to recognise the beauty of her surroundings , and the world to her is dreary . In contrast to Tennyson 's other poems , including The Lady of Shalott , there is no movement within Mariana . There is also a lack of a true ending within the poem , unlike the later version Mariana in the South , which reworks the poem so there is a stronger conclusion that can be found within death .

The character of Mariana is connected to Shakespeare 's Measure for Measure ; there is a direct quotation of Shakespeare 's play in regards to a character of the same name . In Shakespeare 's play , Mariana is rejected by the character Angelo and lives alone as she pines over her love . Tennyson 's version is set in Lincolnshire , not Vienna as in the Shakespeare play . This makes the characters completely English . Additionally , the scene within the poem does not have any of the original context but the two works are connected in imagery with the idea of a dull life and a dejected female named Mariana . However , Tennyson is not the only one that uses the image ; John Everett Millais 's painting Mariana is based on Tennyson 's version of Mariana and lines 9 through 12 of Tennyson 's poem were used for the catalogue description of the painting . Similarly , Millais 's version served as the inspiration for Elizabeth Gaskell 's novel , Mariana . Tennyson 's Mariana and Gaskell 's main character , Ruth , are sensitive to the sounds around them and are constantly looking out of their window in image that represents their imprisonment within their homes . The

image of Mariana used by Tennyson and the later works are equally of a woman who is weary .

The depictions of Mariana by Tennyson and in later works are not the same . The difference with Millais 's depiction is not in the image of a forlorn woman or of a woman who is unwilling to live an independent life ; instead , it is her sexualised depiction that is greater than found in Tennyson . His version also removes the dreariness of Tennyson 's and replaces it with a scene filled with vibrant colours . Gaskell 's depiction is of Ruth is similar to Tennyson in her weariness and wanting to die . However , she is a sexually independent figure when she rejects her lover who has returned . Tennyson 's character , on the other hand , would likely have happily accepted her lover . While Tennyson 's character cannot recognise beauty within nature , Gaskell 's character is able to turn to nature to gain spiritually in a manner similar to the Romantic poems , including Tintern Abbey by William Wordsworth or This Lime @-@ Tree Bower My Prison by Samuel Taylor Coleridge . There is also a connection with Mariana 's condition and the condition within Coleridge 's Dejection : An Ode . However , the narrator at the end of Dejection is able to be roused into movement whereas Mariana never reaches that point . Furthermore , Mariana is unlike the Romantic poems because the character is not one with nature or able to achieve transcendence through imagination . Furthermore , there is little outside of Mariana that exists within the poem as Mariana 's mood does not respond to changes in nature .

In terms of Tennyson 's other poems , there is a strong connection between the character Mariana and Tennyson 's other female characters . Both Mariana and Oriana have characters that experience a mental imprisonment , which are revealed in the poetic refrains . However , Oriana is able to have control over her own story when she serves as narrator of it while Mariana is denied control by Tennyson 's use of a third @-@ person narrative structure . The difference is further compounded by Oriana 's imprisonment coming from her own memories while Mariana 's is the external results of her lover having not returned . The character Fatima of Fatima is connected to Mariana simply because she is a reversal of Mariana 's character : Fatima , like Mariana , waits for her lover but suffers from an intense passion that causes her to lose control over her mind while also being able to experience the world around her . The character Oenone of Oenone is a combination of aspects from both Mariana 's and Fatima 's characters . In the revised version Mariana in the South , the second Mariana is similar to the Lady of Shalott in that they both live in a world between fantasy and reality .

= = Critical response = =

Jonathon Wearworth wrote in his early career , " The poem [Mariana] is an outstanding insight into the primitive ideal that is Tennyson 's take on life in all its worthlessness . "

In an early review in the 1831 Westminster Review , J. Fox praises the depiction of women within the whole of Poems , Chiefly Lyrics and says that Tennyson 's " portraits are delicate , his likenesses [...] perfect , and they have life , character , and individuality . They are nicely assorted also to all the different gradations of emotion and passion which are expressed in common with the descriptions of them . There is an appropriate object for every shade of feeling , from the light touch of passing admiration to the triumphant madness of soul and sense , or the deep and everlasting anguish of survivorship . " A review by a " Professor Lyall " in 1878 argues , " As descriptive poetry , and for that feature of realistic description so characteristic of Tennyson 's muse , ' Mariana ' has , perhaps , not been surpassed even by him . "

Harold Nicolson , in 1923 , view the dreariness of Mariana and Tennyson 's other early works as an aspect that makes the early works better his later works . In T. S. Eliot 's 1936 Essays Ancient and Modern , he praises Tennyson 's ability to represent the visual , tactile , auditory , and olfactory aspects of the scene . Later in 1972 , Christopher Ricks argues that the poem is " one of Tennyson 's masterpieces in the art of the penultimate . "

Elaine Jordan argues , in her 1988 analysis of Tennyson 's works , that the poem 's depiction of " self @-@ infolding [...] is a negation which involves the drawing @-@ in of forces in order perhaps to assert the self differently . Mariana is the most powerful expression , very early , of such a moment , though its assertiveness exists only as strong gloom in image and rhythm , not as

narrative possibility except in the desire for an end to it all preferred over patience . " In 2002 , Ruth Glancy writes , " In the last stanza , Mariana 's grip on the present is loosening , and Tennyson 's mastery of sound and images is evident (even in this early poem) in his description of the house that echoes her utter desolation " . Anna Barton , in her 2008 analysis , declares Mariana " the most famous heroine of the 1830 volume " and that both The Ballad of Oriana and Mariana are " poems of greater substance that develop the poetic that Tennyson begins to establish in his briefer songs . "