

# Augustan Age

## Alexander Pope

- Founded The Scriblerus Club along with Jonathan Swift, John Gay, John Arbuthnot and Thomas Parnell in 1713.
- It aimed to satirize “All the false tastes in learning”.
- The mouth-piece of the satire was Martinus Scriblerus, a character borrowed from John Dryden’s creation Martin Mar-all.
- “*Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus*” was the club’s major production.

### Poems-

- ***Pastorals* (1709)**
- ***An Essay on Criticism* (1711)**- Heroic Couplets; Didactic; Horatian satire (witty and tolerant voice); History of Criticism from Aristotle to William Walsh; Mention of Virgil, Homer, Aristotle, Horace, Longinus; Divided in 3 parts-
  1. Studying and holding the ancients in high esteem
  2. Causes that hinder correct judgment
  3. Functions of a critic (taste, judgment, learning) (awareness of his own limitations, knowledge of nature, imitation of the ancients).
- ***Messiah* (1712)**- Based on fourth eclogue of Virgil; a sacred eclogue.

- **Windsor Forest (1713)**- A political poem dedicated to the rule of Queen Anne and the Peace Treaty of Utrecht.
- ***The Rape of the Lock (1712, 1714)***
- ***The Temple of Fame (1715)***- a dream vision poem inspired by Chaucer's *The House of Fame*.
- ***Eloisa to Abelard (1717)***- a verse epistle (poem written in form of a letter or a series of letters); famous for the quote "How happy are the blameless vestal's lot").
- ***Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady (1717)***- 82 lines in heroic couplets; about an unnamed woman who committed suicide for her love; he eulogizes her sacrifice and curses her uncle.
- ***The Dunciad and Moral Essays***- a mock-heroic narrative poem; celebrates goddess Dullness and decay of the Great Britain:-
  - 1728- 3 book version, anonymous, Lewis Theobald.
  - 1729- *Dunciad Variorum*, anonymous
  - 1742- *The New Dunciad*
  - 1743- *The Dunciad* in Four Books; Colley Cibber; attached "Advertisement to the Reader" by Bishop Warburton
- ***The Moral Essays (1731-35)*** included-
  - Epistle to Burlington (1731)- to Richard Boyle on "Use of Riches".
  - *Epistle to Bathurst* (1733)- to Allen on "Use of Riches".
  - *Epistle to Cobham* (1734)- to Sir Richard Temple on "Knowledge and Characters of Men".
  - *Epistle to Lady* (1735)- to Martha Blount on "Characters of Women"; Heroic couplets; Horatian epistle (moral and philosophical).

- ***An Essay on Man (1732-34)***- Philosophical essays in heroic couplet; concerned with vindicating ways of god to men; popularized Optimism as “What IS, is RIGHT”; Respect for “Great Chain of Being”; 4 epistles addressed to Lord Bolingbroke:-
  - Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to the Universe.
  - Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to Himself as an Individual.
  - Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to Society.
  - On the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to Happiness.
- *The Imitations of Horace (1733-38)*
- ***“Epistle to Doctor Arthbutnot”*** as an introduction to the “Imitations”- defines nature of right action opposed to wrong; satirical portraits of Joseph Addison as Atticus and Lord Hervey as Sporus.
- Translations of Iliad between 1715 and 1720.
- Translation of Odyssey in 1726.

### ***The Rape of the Lock***

- Mock Heroic poem
- 2 cantos in 1712, 5 cantos in 1714, Clarissa’s Speech on Good Humor added in 1717 edition.
- Dedicated to John Caryl.
- Lord Petre’s (Baron) cutting of lock off Arabella Fermor’s (Belinda) head.
- Belinda’s guardian sylph is Ariel.
- Her lapdog is Shock.

- Clarissa urges Belinda to calm down.
- The lock flies up in heaven and immortalizes as a star.
- Pope added a dedicatory letter to Arabella in 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Some major characteristics of Augustan literature include:
  - 1. the use of classical Greek and Roman models of poetry.
  - 2. the purpose of poetry was thought to be to instruct and delight the population.
  - 3. the idea that human society should be ordered, balanced, and rational, just as the universe was thought to be; any upset of this careful balance of nature could have catastrophic consequences.
  - 4. the use of satire in order to point out flaws in human behavior/society. (satire was used to mock certain behaviors; by pointing them out and mocking them, authors hoped to get people to correct them)
- Pope significantly employs two of these writing styles in *Rape of the Lock*; the use of classical models and the use of satire in order to correct human flaws.
- Classical Models- Pope's piece is in the style of classical Greek and Roman epics, and more specifically it is a parody of the abduction of Helen of Troy in the classic Greek epic *The Iliad*, as the theft of Belinda's lock is compared to the abduction of Helen. Other characteristics of classical epics include:
  - Division of the poem into Cantos or books- Pope divides his poem into 5 Cantos
  - Presence of spirits or supernatural beings- Sylphs are present in this poem; they are like miniature gods and goddesses that are present in Greek epics

- Underworld- Epics often have scenes taking place in the underworld; in Pope's poem, we see Umbriel visiting the underworld.
- Soldiers preparing for battle- Epics often describe in-depth the armor and weapons that soldiers use for battle, and in *Rape of the Lock*, Pope uses this method to describe Belinda preparing herself with things such as combs and pins. He writes, "Here files of pins extend their shining rows / puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux / now awful Beauty puts on all its arms" (lines 137-139). He is clearly mocking Belinda's preparation by describing her pins, etc. as though they were arms she would be doing battle with.
- Satire- Pope uses satire in this poem to paint a portrait of England at this time and to point out its moral flaws. The main apparent satire is of course the comparison of Belinda's stolen lock to the abduction of Helen of Troy. By making a huge deal out of such a trivial thing, Pope is mocking his society. He believes that many of England's faults comes from the fact that British society is too concerned with frivolities and trivialities and is very self-absorbed. If the biggest problem these people have is that a lock of hair is stolen from a girl, then they have it pretty good, and Pope uses this poem in an attempt to hold a mirror up to his own society. He wants them to see that their "woes" are not woes at all, and that they need to start worrying about more important things in life because the life that they currently lead is devoid of any meaning; the people in it exist solely to dress up and engage in petty fights.

## Summary

### Canto I

The first canto of the poem introduces us to **Belinda** as she wakes up and prepares herself to go to a party. As Belinda is getting ready, Pope employs a common aspect of epic poetry - the supernatural. In Greek or Roman epics we would see the gods - such as Zeus, Athena, or Hades - interfering with the mortals. For Belinda, though, her supernatural help comes in the form of **Ariel**, her guardian sylph, who helps prepare her make-up and attire. He also gives her a warning, saying *'I saw, alas! some dread event impend, / Ere to the main this morning sun descend, / But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where: / Warn'd by the Sylph, oh pious maid, beware!'*

### Canto II

In Canto II we are introduced to the **Baron**, who is fascinated by Belinda's two locks of hair. Seeing how beautiful they are, he plans a way to steal them from her. He prays to Love, displayed as a supernatural being in the poem, so that he might obtain the locks. This is another epic trope where a character would pray to a god for assistance in what they desire to do.

The Baron and Belinda travel with a group of people by boat to the palace. While everyone seems happy and excited, Ariel, Belinda's guardian, is still concerned about the misfortune to come. He gathers more "denizens of air" to defend Belinda from whatever the misfortune may be. Continuing to imitate epic poetry, Pope has Ariel give a speech to these other sylphs as if he is a captain inspiring his troops before they head into battle. Once his speech is done, the sylphs, invisible to the eye, surround Belinda in order to protect her.

### Canto III

Following his imitation of an inspiring battle speech, Pope begins Canto III with an imitation of a battle. However, instead of there being actual fighting, he just describes a game of cards played between Belinda and the Baron. Pope uses elevated diction and description in order to make this simple card game sound like the most important competition in Belinda's life. The game goes back and forth but Belinda ends up winning in the end.

Coffee is served at the palace, and the Baron is reminded once again of his desire to seize the locks of Belinda. **Clarissa**, a young lady at the party who wishes to aid the Baron no matter what, draws a pair of scissors from her bag and offers them to the Baron as if they are a sword. He tries three times to cut off her locks, but Ariel and his army of sylphs move the hair causing Belinda to turn around and interrupt the Baron's attempts. Finally, however, the Baron cuts off the lock and holds it triumphantly while Belinda screams in woe.

### Canto IV

Belinda is miserable after her hair is stolen. Ariel flees the scene, weeping, and is replaced by another supernatural being named **Umbriel**. While Belinda lies in bed with a headache and feeling ill, Umbriel descends into the Cave of Spleen.

This area has two meanings: firstly, the spleen represented melancholy and negative emotions for women, and secondly, Pope describes Umbriel's descent as if he is descending into the Underworld - another trope seen in Greek and Roman epics. From the Cave of Spleen, Umbriel brings back a bag of *sighs, sobs, and passions*, and a vial filled *with fainting fears, / Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears*.

Thalestris, an Amazon warrior queen from Greek mythology, urges Belinda to avenge herself for her stolen lock. Belinda asks Sir Plume to demand the hair back from the Baron. The Baron, however,

refuses, saying he will wear the lock on his hand forever. Umbriel breaks the vial over Belinda, who gives an emotional speech about how angered and upset she is that the Baron had to steal her beautiful lock from her.

## Canto V

The Baron remains impassive against all the ladies' tears and reproaches. Clarissa delivers a speech in which she questions why a society that so adores beauty in women does not also place a value on "good sense" and "good humour." Women are frequently called angels, she argues, but without reference to the moral qualities of these creatures. Especially since beauty is necessarily so short-lived, we must have something more substantial and permanent to fall back on. This sensible, moralizing speech falls on deaf ears, however, and Belinda, Thalestris and the rest ignore her and proceed to launch an all-out attack on the offending Baron. A chaotic tussle ensues, with the gnome Umbriel presiding in a posture of self-congratulation. The gentlemen are slain or revived according to the smiles and frowns of the fair ladies. Belinda and the Baron meet in combat and she emerges victorious by peppering him with snuff and drawing her bodkin. Having achieved a position of advantage, she again demands that he return the lock. But the ringlet has been lost in the chaos, and cannot be found. The poet avers that the lock has risen to the heavenly spheres to become a star; stargazers may admire it now for all eternity. In this way, the poet reasons, it will attract more envy than it ever could on earth.

## **Age of Johnson**

### **Dr. Samuel Johnson**



- ***Messiah*, a translation into Latin of Alexander Pope's *Messiah* (1728)**
- ***London: A Poem in Imitation of The Third Satire of Juvenal* (1738)-**
  1. Heroic couplets
  2. On the corruption of court of King George II
  3. Thales, the protagonist, leaves London to retire into the countryside due to its various vices and corruptions.
- ***Prologue at the Opening of the Theatre in Drury Lane* (1747)**
- ***The Vanity of Human Wishes: The Tenth Satire of Juvenal Imitated* (1749)-**
  - First published work of Johnson's to have his name on the title page.
  - Heroic couplets
  - Futility of human life to seek greatness as worldly life can never give "genuine or permanent satisfaction".
  - Emphasizes on Christian values to lead a valuable life.
  - Howard D. Weinbrot called it "one of the great poems in English Language".

### Thomas Gray

- ***Ode on the Spring* (1742)**
- ***On the Death of Richard West* (1742)-** Thomas Gray + Richard West + Horace Walpole + Thomas Ashton = "The Quadruple Alliance"
- ***Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes* (1747)-** Selima and Zara; mock-elegy

- ***Ode to a Distant Prospect of Eton College (1747, published anonymously)***- "*where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.*"
- ***Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (1745–1750)***-
  - Published in 1751
  - Inspired by the death of Richard West in 1742.
  - 128 lines in 32 quatrains
  - 3 stanzas of epitaph
  - "*Memento Mori*"- "Remember that you must die"
  - Speaker meditates on the inevitability of death at sunset.
  - "paths of glory lead to grave"- futility of human ambitions.
  - Both rich and poor die alike; wish to be remembered.
- **Important quotes from the poem-**
  - "Some mute inglorious Milton"
  - "Far from the Madding Crowd"- title of a Thomas Hardy novel
  - "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air"
- ***The Progress of Poesy: A Pindaric Ode (1751-1754)***
- ***The Bard: A Pindaric Ode (1755-1757)***- Edward I after his conquest of Wales. On way he encounters a Welsh Bard who curses him and prophesizes return of Welsh rulers on the throne of Britain (Tudors). He also prophesizes glorification of English poetry by virtue of such poets as Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton.
- ***The Fatal Sisters: An Ode (1761)***

## Oliver Goldsmith

- Irish poet.
- Goldsmith was asked by Johnson to join his exclusive club Turk's Head Club.
- ***The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society (1764)-***
  1. Heroic couplets
  2. Philosophical meditation on the reasons behind countries' happiness or unhappiness.
  3. "that every state has a particular principle of happiness"
  4. Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland, Britain.
- ***An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog (1766)***
- ***The Deserted Village (1770)-***
  1. 430 lines in Heroic couplet.
  2. Background: Enclosure Movement- Wealthy landowners sealed public lands to improve their farm management. However, it forced many poor farmers who shared these lands to relocate to cities for employment.
  3. The poem describes the deserted villages in haunting imagery of emptiness and bareness.
  4. The topography of "Sweet Auburn" is ripped off its innocence as its natural harmony is broken by industrialization.
  5. He laments the loss of the simple, idyllic life of Auburn which is undergoing a monumental change.
  6. A reactionary poem against "*The Deserted Village*" is "*The Village*" by George Crabbe. This poem draws attention to the poverty stricken village of Suffolk.

## William Cowper

- Wrote poems and hymns.
- S. T. Coleridge called him “the best modern poet”.
- Also wrote anti-slavery poems.
- “*The Negro’s Complaint*” (1788) was often quoted by Martin Luther King Jr. during the anti-slavery movement.

### Poems-

- *The Snail*, 1730
- *The Winter Nosegay*, 1777
- *Olney Hymns*, 1778-1779, (in collaboration with John Newton)
- *John Gilpin*, 1782
- *Epitaph on a Hare*, 1782
- Poems by William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq., 1782
- *The Rose*, 1783
- *The Task*, 1785
- *The Morning Dream*, 1788
- *Iliad and Odyssey*, 1791 (translations)
- *The Retired Cat*, 1791
- *To Mary*, 1793
- *On the Ice Islands Seen Floating in the German Ocean*, 1803
- *The Castaway*, 1803
- *Hatred and vengeance, my eternal portion*, 1815
- *Lines Written During a Period of Insanity*, 1816

## Hymns-

- 127 *Jesus! where'er thy people meet*
- 357 *The Spirit breathes upon the word*
- 450 *There is a fountain, filled with blood*
- 790 *Hark! my soul! it is the Lord*
- 856 *To Jesus, the Crown of my hope*
- 871 *Far from the world, O Lord! I flee*
- 885 *My Lord! how full of sweet content*
- 932 *What various hindrances we meet*
- 945 *Oh! for a closer walk with God*
- 965 *When darkness long has veiled my mind*
- 1002 *'Tis my happiness below*
- 1009 *O Lord! in sorrow I resign*
- 1029 *O Lord! my best desire fulfill*
- 1043 *There is a safe and secret place*
- 1060 *God of my life! to thee I call*

## Robert Burns

- Scottish poet
- “Bard of Ayrshire”/ “Rabbie Burns”/ “The Ploughman Poet”
- He mostly wrote songs to music tunes in Scottish dialect.
- His first poem was “*Handsome Nell*” (1773-1779) was a tribute to his first love and his muse Nelly Kirkpatrick.
- First published collection of poems- “*Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*” (1786) or *Kilmarnock* (a town in Ayrshire) volume. It includes-

- “*Scotch Drink*”
- “*To a Mouse*”
- “*To a Louse*”
- “*The Two Dogs*”
- “*An Address to the Devil*”
- “*The Holy Fair*”
- “*The Death and Dying Words of Poor Maillie*”
- ***Tam O’ Shanter (1791)***-
  - Written in Octosyllabic couplets
  - A narrative poem on a folk legend
  - About Tam of Ayr and escape from dancing witches and the Devil playing bagpipes in a haunted church.
  - Horse- Meg
  - The poem was first published in *The Edinburgh Herald* and the *Edinburgh Magazine* in March 1791.
- Contributed Scottish folk songs to “*The Melodies of Scotland*”, “*A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice*” and “*Scots Musical Museum*”.

### **William Collins**

- *The Royal Nuptials*- first publication; published in six penny pamphlet; lost today.
- *Persian Eclogues* (1742)
- *Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of Shakespeare's Works* (1743)
- *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* (1747)

- *Ode Occasion'd by the Death of Mr. Thomson* (1749)
- *An Ode of the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland* (1788)

### **George Crabbe**

- *Inebriety* (1775)
- *The Candidate* (1780)
- *The Library* (1781)
- *The Village* (1783)- a narrative poem; depiction of the realities of rural life juxtaposed against the depiction of the pastoral idylls in neoclassical poetry; particularly as a reaction against Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"
- *The Newspaper* (1785)
- *Poems* (1807)- a collection
- *The Borough* (1810)- a collection of poems written in a series of 24 letters; deals with the life and inhabitants of Borough.
- *Tales in Verse* (1812)

## **The Romantic Age: Introduction**

- The Romantic Period has its roots in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, although its official beginning in English literature is believed to be in 1798 and it spans to 1837 (the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign).
- The political and economic atmosphere at the time profoundly influenced this period and its ideologies, with many writers finding inspiration from the French Revolution- Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

- There were a lot of social upheavals during this period calls for the abolition of slavery with more and more writers writing openly about their objections; people moving away from the countryside and farmland and into the cities, where the Industrial Revolution provided jobs and technological innovations (after the Agricultural Revolution); Reign of Terror led by Napoleon Bonaparte, etc.
- Romanticism was a reaction against this spread of industrialism and fascism, as well as a criticism of the aristocratic norms in social and political spheres. It called for more attention to nature, feelings and freedom.
- In literary sphere, it was a reaction against the strict norms of the Neo-classical Age. The key difference has been listed below-

Neoclassicism	Romanticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and imitation of literary traditions from ancient Greece and Rome- <b>Classicism</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use and imitation of literary traditions from the Middle Ages- <b>Medievalism</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Found beauty in structure and order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Found beauty in organic, natural forms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art was created from <b>order</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art was created from <b>inspiration</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of heroic couplets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of lyric poetry</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on external people and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on self-expression and individualism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aristocracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democracy</li> </ul>



Neoclassicism	Romanticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mysticism-Romanticism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glorification of the urban and civilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glorification of the rural and seeing the evils of civilization</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values wit and sophistication in people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values simplicity and primitiveness in people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the head</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the heart</li> </ul>

## Essential elements-

- **Freedom and Liberty-** Probably the most important aspects of Romanticism are grounded in the ideals of Freedom and Liberty. Romantic writers shunned the facades of rules and regulations- social, political, economic and artistic. They sought for freedom in the little and big things of life. Their “poetics” is greatly connected with their “politics”. Hence, they are better seen as poets of politics rather than poets of nature. Because, nature for them was a means to freedom, not an end in itself.
- **Primitivism and Individualism**—Romantic Movement finds its sources in nature and in the ideals of democracy (French Revolution). Romanticism values the primitive individual, the person who does not have the artificial manners of high society and the cultivated disguise of the aristocracy. Individuals who are closer to nature are better able to recognize and epitomize goodness and spiritual sensitivity. Wordsworth espouses the common man and incidents from ordinary life as the

appropriate subject for poetry. Romanticism places the individual in the center of life and experience, rather than the grandeur of the preceding literary movement.

- **Sensibility**— The overwhelming emotional reaction to nature seen in Romantic poetry, the emotional sensitivity to other individuals and their circumstances, particularly those from the lower socio-economic classes, and the sensibility towards the wonders of the spiritual world (through nature) are all are expressions of sensibility. No doubt, In his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth defined poetry as the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”
- **Medievalism**—Rather than looking for forms and subject from classical literature, Romantic writers looked at the Middle Ages because it signified simpler times with no superficiality or burdens of a modern civilization. In prose, the castles and mysterious aura of the Dark Ages provided an ideal setting for Gothic literature, especially the novels. Of course this inspiration overlooked the violence and harshness of the Middle Ages.
- **Mysticism**—Romantic poets believed that the physical world of nature is a revelation of a spiritual or transcendental world. **Hence, it can be said that the Romantic poets did not worship the tree per se, but the spiritual, sublime element manifested by the tree.** Although Romantic literature, particularly poetry, is often characterized as nature poetry, its end goal was to find a reflection of the transcendental world in it. Romantic poets loved nature not only for its beauty but mainly because it is an expression of spirituality and the Imagination.

## Keywords

- Glorification of Nature
- Awareness and Acceptance of Feelings & Emotions
- Focus on Self
- Celebration of Artistic Creativity and Imagination
- Emphasis on Aesthetic Beauty
- Vivid Sensory Descriptions
- Themes of Solitude
- Focus on Exoticism and History (medieval)
- Spiritual and Supernatural Elements
- Use of Personification

## Pioneers of the Romantic Age

- **Robert Burns** is considered to be the pioneer of the Romantic Age because of his lyricism and poetic philosophy. He was a Scottish poet whose ideals of Freedom and Liberty make him a prototype Romantic poet. His writing style and ethos inspired many writers of his age. He is considered as the National Poet of Scotland.
- **William Blake** was one of the earliest English Romantic Period writers. Blake believed in spiritual and political freedom and often wrote about these themes in his works. He can be

considered as a prototype of the Romantics because his poetry embodied mysticism and spirituality. His *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* pits a romantic view of life with the harsh reality of life in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## Official Beginning

- Most scholars would agree that the Romantic Period began with the publishing of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by **William Wordsworth** and **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**. This was one of the first collections of poems that strayed from the formal poetic diction and strict literary styles of the Neoclassical Period.
- In these poems, the poets emphasized on using everyday words that the average person could understand.
- These poets also emphasized on using such themes and styles that aided in expressing human emotions and spontaneous feelings.
- Wordsworth primarily wrote about nature because he felt it could provide a source of mental solace and spiritual awakening.

## Second Generation of Romantic Poets

- **John Keats**- He is well known for his odes and lyrical stanzas. These odes are typically written in praise of, or in dedication to, something or someone that the writer admires. He aimed to express intense and extreme emotion using personal narrative in his poetry. Keats was preoccupied with death and aging and

the temporary status of life. He found Beauty the only solace from it.

- **P.B. Shelley** was a radical thinker and political revolutionary. His poetic ethos was anti-monarchical and he found nature as a medium through which he could spread his ideas far and wide. He believed in the over-arching power of nature and natural phenomenon. He was an atheist.
- **Lord Byron** differed from the writing styles of Keats and Shelley. He was heavily influenced by the satire and wit from the previous period and infused this in his poetry. But he was Romantic in the way that he used models from the past to express his own life experiences. Also, he introduced the persona of Byronic Hero- a handsome and intelligent man with a tendency to be over cynical and moody. He is a rebel of the normative social order and doesn't believe in following rules.

## Lyrical Ballads

*Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* got published in 4 editions- 1798, 1800, 1802, 1805. The first edition was published anonymously, while the second had only Wordsworth's name on the title page.

The first edition- It contained total 23 poems- 19 by Wordsworth and 4 by Coleridge. The poem begins with Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner and ends with Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey". Conveyed through the poems are emotional responses to the natural and supernatural in conversational verse.

A few years after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge described the creative decisions that he and Wordsworth made while compiling their project in his critical autobiography *Biographia*

*Literaria* (1817): that his, “endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural” and Wordsworth would give the charm of novelty to things of every day”.

Ironically, *Lyrical Ballads* marked both the beginning and the end of the poets’ literary partnership. Some important poems in the first edition are as follows-

- The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere (Coleridge)
- The Foster-Mother’s Tale (Coleridge)
- The Nightingale, a Conversational Poem (Coleridge)
- Lines written at a small distance from my House, and sent by my little Boy to the Person to whom they are addressed
- Simon Lee, the old Huntsman
- We are seven
- The Thorn
- The Dungeon (Coleridge)
- Lines written near Richmond, upon the Thames, at Evening
- Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey

An expanded edition, *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems*, was published in two volumes in 1800 under Wordsworth's name. The second volume was published in 2 volumes. It was an expansion on the 1<sup>st</sup> volume, including four out of the five famous "Lucy poems." He gives Coleridge credit for some of the poems, however, not by name. “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” engulfed the first 53 pages of the first edition. In the second edition the poem is buried in the end of the first volume and only retains 46 pages. The second edition also added a Preface in which Wordsworth introduced his poetic theories. The third edition, *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems*, was published in 1802 followed by the last authorized edition in 1805.

## The Preface

It was published as an essay in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (published in January 1801); was expanded for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (1802). In the Preface, Wordsworth will set out rules for a new kind of poetry; he will declare breaking-away from the Neo-Classical poetry. The central idea of the text is to use “Incidents and situations from common life” described in language “really used by men”. He will move back to the countryside for his content because life away from the city is free of “all real defects” and is “pure”.

### **Keywords-**

- Feeling
- Imagination
- Liberty
- Freedom
- Spontaneity
- Innovation

### **Main points-**

- **Poetic Inspiration-** the ordinary world and people; everyday instances and scenes.
- **Poetic purpose-** “to make the ordinary extraordinary”; It seeks to produce “excitement” and “an overbalance of pleasure”.
- **Definition of a poet-** “A man speaking to men”. He is from amongst the people; but he’s different from them in the sense that a poet is better connected to his own emotions and feelings and has higher sensitivity to the happenings around him- “Has a comprehensive, sensible soul”. He is gifted with “more lively sensibility”. A poet is a “rock of defense for human nature; an upholder and a preserver, carrying everywhere with

him relations and love." He "binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society".

- **Definition of a poem-** "a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions". Sensitivity to the outer world and one's own emotions would lead the poet to feel things deeply. These deep emotions would be recollected in moments of solitude ("recollected in tranquillity") and penned down, creating a poem.
- **Language of these poems-** "real language of men"- the "ordinary" "daily" language. Because poetry speaks of universal human emotions, it should use diction that is natural rather than artificial and self-consciously literary. Wordsworth also argues that poetry and prose should be close in style.

## **William Wordsworth**

- ***The Borderers-***
  - Completed by 1797 but not published until 1842.
  - It is a verse tragedy based during the times of Henry III in England. It is based on the conflict between Englishmen and Scottish Reivers- a kind of Anglo-Scottish looters.
  - Was rejected to be performed on the stage by Thomas Harris, the manager of the famous theatre, the Covent Garden.
- ***Lines Written (or Composed) a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798-***
  - Abbreviated to *Tintern Abbey*, although the word is not used anywhere in the poem's text.
  - His trip and interactions on the banks of River Wye offered him great inspiration.
  - Written in blank verse- though not strictly



- Appeared in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*
- Wordsworth wrote the poem after visiting the ruins of the medieval abbey on the England-Wales border.
- The poem sees Wordsworth revisiting the 'banks of the Wye', the river that flows through England and Wales, five years after he was last there.
- The poem begins on the note that five summers and five winters have been passed since the speaker last visited the place- 1<sup>st</sup> visit was in 1793 and 2<sup>nd</sup> visit was in 1798 (when the poem was created). A 3<sup>rd</sup> visit was made in 1841.
- In the poem's final verse paragraph, Wordsworth addresses his companion with him by the banks of the river Wye: his sister, Dorothy.
- Important quotes-
  - Five years have past; five summers, with the length  
Of five long winters!
  - Once again Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,  
That on a wild secluded scene impress Thoughts of  
more deep seclusion
  - Hermit's cave...The Hermit sits alone
  - These beauteous forms, Through a long absence,  
have not been to me...But oft, in lonely rooms, and  
'mid the din Of towns and cities, I have owed to  
them, In hours of weariness, sensations sweet...
  - The best portion of a good man's life: his little,  
nameless unremembered acts of kindness and love.
  - Almost suspended, we are laid asleep, In body, and  
become a living soul: While with an eye made quiet  
by the power, Of harmony, and the deep power of  
joy, We see into the life of things.
  - How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, O sylvan  
Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods, How often  
has my spirit turned to thee!

- While here I stand, not only with the sense, Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts, That in this moment there is life and food, For future years.
- The still sad music of humanity
- The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul, Of all my moral being.
- My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch, The language of my former heart, and read, My former pleasures in the shooting lights, Of thy wild eyes.
- With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all, The dreary intercourse of daily life, Shall e'er prevail against us
- Thy memory be as a dwelling-place, For all sweet sounds and harmonies
- A worshipper of Nature

- **She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways-**

- It was published in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Lyrical ballads*.
- Most famous among the 5 Lucy Poems- "Strange fits of passion have I known", "She dwelt among the untrodden ways", "I travelled among unknown men" (published in *Poems, in Two Volumes* in 1807), "Three years she grew in sun and shower", and "A slumber did my spirit seal".
- The Lucy Poems reveal his meditations on life, death, beauty and solitude.
- These poems were composed between 1798 and 1801. Although Wordsworth did not intend to put the poems in a series, it was literary critic Thomas Powell who recognized the works as a collection unified by a common theme in 1831.
- With the exception of "A slumber did my spirit seal," all the poems in the series mention Lucy by name.

- Another poem written around the same period has been excluded from the grouping, despite being titled “Lucy Gray” (first published in Volume 2 of the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*).
- “She Dwelt” is composed in 12 lines- three-stanzas in a variant of Ballad stanza (ABAB) with alternating 4 and 3 stress lines.
- In the poem, an unidentified speaker mourns the loss of Lucy, a young woman who died young in the English countryside. She lived in isolation, but in her glory, near river Dove, and whose beauty and virtue were overlooked in life.
- Some famous quotes-
  - Three years she grew in sun and shower, Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower, On earth was never sown; This Child I to myself will take; She shall be mine, and I will make, A Lady of my own. (“Three years she grew in sun and shower”)
  - I travelled among unknown men, In lands beyond the sea; Nor, England! did I know till then, What love I bore to thee. (“I travelled among unknown men”)
  - She dwelt among the untrodden ways, Beside the springs of Dove, A maid whom there were none to praise, And very few to love. (“She dwelt among the untrodden ways”)

- **Michael-**

- A pastoral poem published in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. It is a long narrative poem that consists of 483 lines.
- It is about an ageing shepherd, Michael, his wife Isabel, and his only son Luke.
- Setting of the poem- “Greenhead Ghyll”

- Written in irregular iambic pentameter
- About the lost joys of a simple farmer in the countryside due to the Law of Enclosure- a regime that blocked the access of open farmlands to the agrarian workers for open cultivation.
- “Wordsworth’s picture of rural life in Michael is less idyllic and nearer to historical truth than some readers may suppose.”- Bernard Groom
- **I wandered lonely as a Cloud or Daffodils-**
  - Published in 1807 in *Poems, in Two Volumes*, and a revised version was published in 1815
  - On 15 April 1802, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came across a host of daffodils around Glencoyne Bay in the Lake District. This event was the inspiration behind the composition of Wordsworth’s lyric poem.
  - The poem describes how a host of dancing golden daffodils mesmerized his heart.
  - The poem is composed of four stanzas of six lines each (24 lines) with rhyme scheme ABABCC and iambic tetrameter. Meter in this poem is quite regular.
  - Important quotes-
    - I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;
    - Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance

- I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:  
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

- ***Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood-***

- Published in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807)
- A 206 line-poem written in 11 variable ode stanzas
- There is no single rhyme scheme, each stanza has individual patterns of rhyme.
- In the poem, the speaker mourns the loss of his youth and the deeper connection he used to have to the natural world. In the fifth stanza, the speaker declares that we come from a world that is more heavenly than earth and it is with the memory of that place that we see the earth as a child; eventually, as we grow older, we forget those experiences because we are tainted by the corruptions of the mortal world. The speaker concludes the poem by declaring that he can always look to his memories to remember what it was like to live as a child and to regain the joy of the past life.
- The epigraph of this poem is a three-lined tercet, that forms the last three lines of '*My Heart Leaps Up*'.-
  - *The child is father of the man;*

*And I could wish my days to be*

*Bound each to each by natural piety.*

○ Important quotes-

- There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The Earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
- What though the radiance which was once so bright  
Be now forever taken from my sight
- Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?
- Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
- Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing boy.
- Thou best Philosopher.... Mighty Prophet!

● **The Solitary Reaper-**

- A lyrical poem published in *Poems, in Two Volumes*, 1907, though originally written on November 5, 1805.
- The poem is composed in 32 lines- 4 stanzas of 8 lines each. Each stanza follows the rhyme scheme- ABABCCDD.

- “The Solitary Reaper” was singing and doing her work in solitude only to be noticed by the poet, who is mesmerized by her singing. He compares her song to that of “Nightingale” and the “Cuckoo-bird”, yet he states that her song is the best. Despite the poet’s inability to decipher the song’s meaning, he understands that it is a song of melancholy. Even after a long time had passed, the song continued to echo in his heart. The beautiful experience left a deep impact and gave him a long-lasting pleasure.
- The poem “The Solitary Reaper” begins with an Apostrophe “Behold” where the poet addresses the unknown passer-by.
- Important quotes-
  - No Nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands
  - A voice so thrilling ne’er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
  - Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,  
That has been, and may be again?
  - The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.

- **The World Is Too Much with Us-**

- The poem was composed in 1802, though published in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807).
  - A sonnet written in Italian form- iambic pentameter lines with rhyme scheme ABBAABBACDCDCD.
  - The speaker talks about how man has become more concerned about such worldly materials as money, possessions, and power. And he concludes that it is “too much with us” meaning that we care far too much about these worldly things. He laments that “We have given our hearts away” and have forgotten to enjoy Nature.
  - In the final two lines, he refers to two pagan gods- Proteus was thought to be able to tell the future; Triton was the pagan god that was said to be able to calm the waves of the sea. The speaker refers to these two pagan gods after he first appeals to God and swears that he would rather be a pagan than be alienated from nature.
- **The Prelude or, Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem-**
    - Intended to be the introductory poem or preface to his much bigger-ambitious poem, *The Recluse*.
    - Originally meant to be written with Coleridge and supposed to be 3 times the length of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton.
    - Initial intent- "to compose a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society, and to be entitled *The Recluse*; as having for its principal subject,



the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement".

- The poem came out in various versions-
  - 1799- called the *Two-Part Prelude*, containing the first two parts of the poem
  - 1805- found and printed by Ernest de Sélincourt in 1926, in 13 books.
  - 1850- published shortly after Wordsworth's death, in 14 books.
- Books 1-7 offer a half-literal, half-fanciful description of his boyhood and youthful environment; these describe the time of his intuitive reliance on nature, when he wrote simple and graceful lyrics.
- Book 8 represents his days of hope for, and then disappointment with, the Revolution, and his adoption of Godwinian rationalism, during which he wrote the strong and inspiring sonnets and odes.
- Books 9-11, in a more fluid and narrative style, depict his exciting adventures in France and London.
- Books 12-14 are mostly metaphysical and are devoted to an attempt at a philosophy of art, with the end of the last book giving a little summary.

### ***We Are Seven***

- Included in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)
- It is narrated in a ballad format
- 16 four-line stanzas
- ABAB rhyme scheme and a final stanza of five lines in ABCCB pattern.

- The poem relates a simple conversation between an adult and a small girl of eight with whom he speaks in a countryside. The speaker asks the little girl about her family and learns she is one of seven children. She explains that two are at sea and two others are living far away. Further she says that two of her siblings have died and are buried in the nearby churchyard.
- The speaker tries to convince her that in reality she has only five siblings; however, she doesn't agree and insists, "We are seven,".
- The speaker asks, "What should it know of death?" but his mature wisdom is contrasted with the girl's naiveté.
- But she has adjusted to the death of her siblings and still expresses love and devotion to their graves- her closeness to them means that in her mind they remain part of the family.

### ***Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known***

- Published in the second edition of Lyrical Ballads.
- Has seven stanzas of four lines each (28 lines)
- Tight rhyming in ABAB CDCD pattern.
- The speaker discloses that his love for a girl named Lucy had been so strong that he even imagined her death.
- Once, while traveling her cottage, the moon induced such a spell on him that in a kind of trance by the emotions of the moment, he feared that she would die.
- In the end, it is left ambiguous if the girl is alive or actually dead.
- The poem runs on the dual emotion of devotion and dread.

### ***Ode to Duty***

- Published in the second edition of Lyrical Ballads.
- Constituted of seven stanzas of eight lines each (56 lines).
- Rhyme scheme- ABABCCDD.
- Central theme- oscillation of an individual caught between his desires to live according to his own will and the realization that there are higher principles that ought to be followed.
- Preface of the poem- "I am no longer good through deliberate intent, but by long habit have reached a point where I am not only able to do right, but am unable to do anything but what is right." – (Roman philosopher Seneca).
- The poem initially recognizes the existence of Duty as coming from "the voice of God" and requiring obedience to avoid "vain temptations" in life.
- Some people are able to find the proper balance and not be troubled in their self-judgment, but the poet sees in himself someone who earlier on did neglect higher duty in favor of his own wishes. He paid no attention to the tasks and duties that he should have completed but did not.
- However, at this point in his life he has made the choice to follow a path of right action and obedience to higher duties.

### ***My Heart Leaps Up***

- Also called The Rainbow
- Published in Poems, in Two Volumes (1807).
- Composed in a single stanza of nine lines with the unusual rhyme pattern ABC CAB CDD.
- In the poem, a rainbow in the sky causes the speakers heart to "leap up" Hence, he shows the importance of having a strong

sensitivity and reaction to nature. The poet hopes he may always have that receptivity to make life worth living.

- Childhood is glorified in this poem. The poem's line "The Child is father of the Man" suggests that the response that a child has to natural beauty brings him the power of imagination that can be utilized by an adult in future days.

### ***A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal***

- One of the 5 Lucy poems published in Lyrical Ballads (1798).
- It is a short two stanzas poem, made up of two quatrains (8 lines).
- Follows the rhyme scheme- ABAB CDCD.
- The second and fourth line of each stanza contains six syllables, while the first and third contain eight.
- In this poem, she is not named, and the speaker is faced with her premature death for which he was unprepared.
- Because he never actively acknowledged that his love, Lucy, was going to be subject to aging, just like everyone else, he lived without "human fears.". But with her sudden death, this illusion was shattered. The second stanza of the poem speaks of the realization that just as the "rocks, and stones, and trees" change with time, so now, the speaker sees, does Lucy.

### **London, 1802**

- Composed in 1802, as the title suggests, but published in his collection Poems, in Two Volumes, in 1807.

- A Petrarchan sonnet, primarily in iambic pentameter, with few exceptions of trochee (a foot consisting of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable).
- Rhyme scheme- ABBAABBA CDDECE.
- In the poem he critiques and mourns what London has come to. He's determined that in an ideal world, the long-dead John Milton would return from the grave, shake some sense back into the English people and industrialization would come to a halt- He looks back at the seventeenth century as a happier time.
- According to him, London was once an epicentre of religion, chivalry, art, and literature. But now everything is changed, and it has lost those virtues to modernization and industrialization.
- He calls upon Milton to teach this generation "manners, virtue, freedom, power." - "Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:"
- Furthermore, Wordsworth tributes Milton by comparing him to such celestial bodies as the stars, the sea, and the heavens. Milton was different even from his contemporaries in terms of his virtues; he had the ability to embody "cheerful godliness" even while doing the "lowliest duties."

***Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802***

- This poem is a celebration of London city- the "sleeping" city- describing London and the River Thames, viewed from Westminster Bridge in the early morning. Westminster Bridge is a bridge stretching over the River Thames, linking Westminster and Lambeth.
- Written in the form of Petrarchan sonnet- ABBAABBA CDCDCD.

- Inspiration for the poem was provided by a journey made by Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy through London. The pair were en route to Calais where they were to meet William's illegitimate daughter, Caroline.
- 'there was even something like the purity of one of nature's own grand spectacles'.

### ***Laodamia***

- First published in 1815 and then in 1845.
- It is a long narrative poem of 174 lines. It has twenty-six stanzas of six lines each.
- It is written in iambic pentameter.
- A narrative poem based on a story from the Trojan War.
- The poem follows the legend of Protesilaus, a Greek hero - Laodamia, the queen of Thessaly and his wife, prays to Jove (the chief of the Greek Gods) that her husband may return to her from Hades. Protesilaus was killed by Hector, a Trojan hero because according to the prophecy of the Oracle at Delphi.
- His ghost returns to her and recounts the tale of his fall at the hands of Hector. He also reproaches her for her excessive passion and unacceptability of his fate, after which he is summoned by Hermes back to Hades, leaving Laodamia a lifeless corpse on the floor.
- After the death of Laodamia, a group of trees grew on the tomb of Protesilaus. There is a tradition that the trees on the tomb grow high but as soon as they reach the height of walls of Troy they fade.

### ***The White Doe of Rylstone; or The Fate of the Nortons***

- Wordsworth wrote this long narrative poem during the winter of 1807-1808, inspired by a visit to Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire which he and his sister made the previous summer. He ultimately published it in 1815.
- The poem is a mix of tragic legend and history set in the time of a Catholic uprising during the reign of Elizabeth I.
- It tells the story of the Norton family during the Rising of the North, a Roman Catholic rebellion aimed at dethroning Elizabeth I.
- Central to the poem is Emily, Norton's Protestant daughter, who waits in the medieval garden at Rylstone Hall to hear news that her father and brothers have been killed.
- In her grief, Emily is comforted by the companionship of a milk-white doe, which continues to visit her grave in the churchyard at Bolton Abbey for many years afterwards.
- This poem explores the themes of consolation that can be gained from quietude, openness to lessons of sympathy from the animal world, and deep connections between people and the places in which they suffer and overcome that suffering.

## Criticism

- "Wordsworth was hardly a man, but a wandering spirit with strange adventures and no end to them" – P.B. Shelley
- "a moral eunuch" – P.B. Shelley
- "Simple and dull" – P.B. Shelley
- "Just for a handful of silver he left us" – Robert Browning in "The Lost Leader"
- "The high watermark of poetry" – Ralph Waldo Emerson about "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"
- "Wordsworth uttered nothing base" – Lord Alfred Tennyson

- “Egoistical sublime” – John Keats
- “One of the giants of English poetry” – John Crow Ransom
- “Wordsworth is ever spiritualizing the moods of Nature and winning from the moral consolation” – Compton Rickett
- “the historian of Wordsworthshire” – James Russel Lowell
- “William Wordsworth was an egoist” – John Keats
- “Wordsworth was an ever enduring man” – S.T. Coleridge
- “Wordsworth is the best poet of the age... I feel myself a little man by his side” – S.T. Coleridge
- “one of the chief glories of English poetry” – Matthew Arnold
- “William Wordsworth had no marked style of his own” – Matthew Arnold
- “The Magna Carta of English literature” – Matthew Arnold for his *The Prelude*
- “He laid us as we lay at birth  
On the cool flowery lap of earth” – Matthew Arnold in his *Memorial Verses*
- “Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power” – Matthew Arnold
- “I firmly believe that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is after Shakespeare and Milton, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan Age to the present time”. – Matthew Arnold
- “not practicing his own theory to his own poems” – T.S. Eliot
- “Wordsworth was not a truly great poet but the spoiled child of disappointment” – William Hazlitt
- “The very culture of feeling” – J.S. Mill
- “I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence” – J.S. Mill about Wordsworth’s poems



- “Wordsworth had not stayed out of the Lake district and so never had the chance coming across nature red in tooth and claw” – Aldous Huxley
- “It is a pity he never travelled beyond the boundaries of Europe” - Aldous Huxley
- “a mountain, the most massive in that lofty range which is called the Romantic Revival” – J.C. Smith
- “His poetry is the reality, his philosophy is the illusion” – Matthew Arnold
- “A high priest of Nature” – De Quincey
- “William Wordsworth had his passion of nature fixed in his blood” – De Quincey
- “Poet of Humanity” – John Keble
- “*The Leech Gatherer* by Wordsworth was his best cure for despair” – Thomas Hardy
- “William Wordsworth was a real mystic of nature” – H.W. Garrod
- “Wordsworth was as much, if not more, the poet of Man as of Nature, and the poetry of Man took in his hands a great development as the poetry of Nature” – S.A. Brooke
- “William Wordsworth was a poet of man and nature” - S.A. Brooke
- “Wordsworth wrote his poetry with a view to showing that men who do not wear fine clothes may feel happy” - S.A. Brooke
- “William Wordsworth learned that verse may build a princely throne or humble truth” – Robert Burns
- “William Wordsworth is the greatest poet of nature that our literature has produced” – W.J. Long
- Wordsworth is not always melodious; that he is seldom graceful, and only occasionally inspired” - W.J. Long

- “Every great poet is a teacher, I wish either to be considered as a teacher or as nothing” – Wordsworth in one of his letters
- “He had no humour, no dramatic power, and his temperament was of that dry juiceless quality, that in all his published correspondence you shall not find a letter, but only essays” – James Russel Lowell
- “I see in Wordsworth the Natural Man rising up against the spiritual man continually and then he is no poet but a philosopher at Enmity against all true Poetry or Inspiration” – William Blake
- “Wordsworth must know that what he writes valuable is not to be found in Nature” - William Blake
- “In his adoration of Nature Wordsworth’s Creed is a mystical Pantheism” – Louis Cazamian
- “Wordsworth remained nonetheless the apostle that the Revolution had made him” - Louis Cazamian
- “Wordsworth is the only poet who will bear reading in times of distress” – Leslie Stephen
- “Truth that wake to perish never” – Thomas Carlyle
- “a son of Rousseau” – Emile Legouis
- “Wordsworth must be placed by the historians among the numerous “Sons of Rousseau” who form the main battalion of romanticism” - Emile Legouis
- “There have been greater poets than Wordsworth but none more original” – A.C. Bradley

## **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**

### **The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

- The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a lyrical ballad published in the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). It was revised and republished in 1817 and 1834.
- It was the first poem of the collection.
- Wordsworth claimed that the poem was inspired by a conversation between himself and the poet regarding George Shelvocke's *A Voyage Round the World by Way of the Great South Sea*, a 1726 book that Wordsworth was reading that included an account of a sailor shooting an albatross by Simon Hatley.
- 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' deals with the experience of an individual who has called upon himself some supernatural vengeance by violating one of the simple human pieties—the bond of hospitality and companionship. The poem is, thus, essentially a poem of humanism, using the supernatural only as machinery.
- The poem begins by introducing the **Ancient Mariner**, who, with his “glittering **eye**,” stops a Wedding Guest from attending a nearby wedding celebration. The Mariner stops the young man to tell him the story of a ship, providing no introduction but simply beginning his tale. Despite the Wedding Guest's efforts to leave, the Mariner continues to speak.
- The Mariner's story begins with the ship leaving harbor and sailing southward. A tremendous storm then blows the ship even further to the South Pole, where the crew are awed as they encounter mist, snow, cold, and giant glaciers. An **Albatross** breaks the pristine lifelessness of the Antarctic. The sailors greet it as a good omen, and a new wind rises up, propelling the ship. Day after day the albatross appears, appearing in the morning when the sailors call for it, and soaring behind the ship. But then as the other sailor's cry out in

dismay, the Mariner, for reasons unexplained, shoots and kills the albatross with his crossbow.

- At first, the other **Sailors** are furious with the Mariner for killing the bird which they believed a god omen and responsible for making the breezes blow. But after the bird has been killed the fog clears and the fair breeze continues, blowing the ship north into the Pacific, and the crew comes to believe the bird was the source of the fog and mist and that the killing is justified. It is then that the wind ceases, and the ship becomes trapped on a vast, calm sea. The Sailors and the Mariner become increasingly thirsty, and some sailors dream that an angered **Spirit** has followed them from the pole. The crew then hangs the albatross around the Mariner's neck.
- In this terrible calm, trapped completely by the watery ocean that they cannot drink, the men on the ship grow so thirsty that they cannot even speak. When the Mariner sees what he believes is a ship approaching, he must bite his arm and drink his own blood so that he is able to alert the crew, who all grin out of joy. But the joy fades as the ghostly ship, which sails without wind, approaches. On its deck, **Death** and **Life-in-Death** gamble with dice for the lives of the Sailors and the Mariner. After Life-in-Death wins the soul of the Mariner, the Sailors begin to die of thirst, falling to the deck one by one, each staring at the Mariner in reproach.
- Surrounded by the dead Sailors and cursed continuously by their gaze, the Mariner tries to turn his eyes to heaven to pray, but fails. It is only in the **Moonlight**, after enduring the horror of being the only one alive among the dead crew that the Mariner notices beautiful Water Snakes swimming beside the ship. At this moment he becomes inspired, and has a spiritual

realization that all of God's creatures are beautiful and must be treated with respect and reverence. With this realization, he is finally able to pray, and the albatross fell from his neck and sunk into the sea.

- The Mariner falls into a kind of stupor, and then wakes to find the dead Sailors' bodies reanimated by angels and at work on the ship. Powered by the Spirit from the South Pole, the ship races homeward, where the Mariner sees a choir of angels leave the bodies of the deceased Sailors. After this angels' chorus, the Mariner perceives a small boat on which a **Pilot**, the **Pilot's Boy**, and a **Hermit** approach. As they get closer, the Mariner's ship suddenly sinks, but he wakes to find himself in the Pilot's boat. When the Mariner speaks, the Pilot and Hermit are stunned, by fear. The Hermit prays. The Mariner, in turn, saves his own saviors, and rows them to land, where he begs the Hermit to grant him absolution for his sins. The Hermit crosses himself, and asks the Mariner "what manner of man art thou?" The Mariner then feels compelled to tell his story.
- The Mariner concludes his tale by explaining that as he travels from land to land he is always plagued by that same compulsion to tell his tale, that he experiences a peculiar agony if he doesn't give in to his urge to share the story, and that he can tell just from looking at their faces which men must hear his tale. He ends with the explicit lesson that prayer is the greatest joy in life, and the best prayers come from love and reverence of all of God's creation. Thus he moves onward to find the next person who must hear his story, leaving the Wedding Guest "a sadder and a wiser man."
- Important quotes-
  - "Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony.”

- “Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.”
- “As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.”
- “He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.”
- “The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie:  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I.”
- A sadder and a wiser man  
He rose the morrow morn.”
- “I look'd to Heav'n, and try'd to pray; But or ever a prayer  
had gusht, A wicked whisper came and made My heart as  
dry as dust.”
- “Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
Upon the slimy sea.”

### **Kubla Khan, Or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment**

- Completed in 1797 and published in 1816, at Lord Byron's request.
- Written under the influence of laudanum, a form of opium, after having read a work about, Shangdu, the summer

capital of the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty of China founded by Kublai Khan.

- The book Coleridge was reading before he fell asleep was *Purchas, his Pilgrimes* by Samuel Purchas.
- The poem is an incomplete fragment; the original idea was to compose over 200 lines but he ended up writing only 54 and got interrupted.
- Themes: The power of imagination & the relationship of a poet with the society.
- The poem's emphasis on imagination as subject of a poem, on the contrasts within the paradisaal setting, and its discussion of the role of poet as either being blessed or cursed by imagination, has influenced many works, including Alfred Tennyson's "Palace of Art" and William Butler Yeats's Byzantium based poems. There is also a strong connection between the idea of retreating into the imagination found within Keats's *Lamia*.
- The first stanza focuses on the beauty of **Xanadu**, Kubla Khan's summer palace. Xanadu was a real place, however, Coleridge punctuates the historical setting with an imagined river called the Alph. Right away, the reader is alerted to the theme of imagination-- a common theme in Romanticism.
- Coleridge took the real palace of Xanadu, and with his imagination, made it into something else entirely. The walled palace of Xanadu "where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree", stands in stark contrast with the outside world that is marked with "caverns measureless to man, Down to a sunless sea". The palace is walled as a form of protection from this dark and vast world that surrounds it.
- The second stanza is more intense and wild than the first stanza. Coleridge focuses much of the stanza on nature. The

stanza traces the journey of water in the landscape of Xanadu. It begins by describing the source of the Alph River that erupts out of the earth with a violent force: "And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething, As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing, A mighty fountain momentarily was forced."

- This ferocious scene of the earth birthing the river quickly changes tone as the river lazily sprawls, "Five miles mean dering with a mazy motion". The now languid river finds its end as it sinks "in tumult to a lifeless ocean". Water is both life-giving and life-threatening. It can be forceful and dangerous or placid and sustaining. Imagination is like the water. It ebbs and flows, it sustains and it threatens.
- The stanza ends with Kubla Khan receiving a prophecy of war. This abrupt departure from the natural imagery that dominated the stanza is meant to feel jarring. It is a reminder that the fraught human world is never far from the peace of nature.
- The 3rd stanza revisits the images from the first stanza of the warmth of Xanadu ("sunny pleasure dome") and the coldness of the outside world ("caves of ice"). The stanza feels rushed and chaotic. The natural order has been disrupted by the prophecy of war.
- The fourth and final stanza begins with a new character, a "damsel with a dulcimer" who appears as a muse-like figure to the speaker. She sings of the fictional Mount Abora which the speaker hopes will give him the strength to finish what he has begun. He wishes to "build that dome in air".
- The dome is not the pleasure dome of Kubla Khan, but rather the speaker's own masterpiece; a masterpiece that will serve as a reminder that art stands apart from the tumult of humanity just as Xanadu stands apart from the frigidity of the outside world.



- The reader can see a parallel between the poem's speaker and Coleridge, the poet. Like the speaker, Coleridge hoped to find a way to finish his poem "Kubla Khan". He wanted to recapture the verses that he lost when he was interrupted by a person from Porlock.
- The poem ends with the speaker imagining what it would be like if he were able to finish his masterpiece. The speaker feels that they are so close to being able to accomplish it and they even imagine what they would do if they could capture their creative vision:

"Weave a circle round him thrice, And close your eyes with holy dread."

- Coleridge too felt so close to being able to remember his dream, yet in the end, he could not. The poem ends with the image of the speaker having had a taste of what it is like to create, to be god-like in the act of creating, but not being able to bring his creation to fruition.
- Important quotes-
  - "Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man"
  - "A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!"
  - "And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momentarily the sacred river."
  - "The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves."
  - "It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!”

- “And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice”
- “For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.”

### **Dejection: An Ode**

- The poem was originally written to Sara Hutchinson, his love interest. The original draft was titled "Letter to Sara Hutchinson", and it became *Dejection* when he sought to publish it.
- It was published in 1802 in the *Morning Post*.
- The poem was grouped with the Asra poems, a series of poems discussing love that were dedicated to Hutchinson.
- The poem was a reply to William Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence". It also mimics Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode* in theme and structure.
- The poem is divided in 8 irregular stanzas of Ode.
- The poem is mostly iambic with no specific rhyme or meter.
- The poem expresses feelings of dejection and the inability to write poetry or to enjoy nature. Coleridge gives expression to an experience of double consciousness. His sense perceptions are vivid and in part agreeable; his inner state is faint, blurred, and unhappy. He sees but cannot feel.
- The power of feeling has been paralyzed by chemically-induced excitement in his brain. The seeing power, less dependent upon bodily health, stands aloof, individual, critical, and very mournful. By 'seeing' he means

perceiving and judging; by 'feeling' he means that which impels action.

- He suffers, but the pain is dull, and he wishes it were keen, for so he should awake from lethargy and recover unity at least. But nothing from outside can restore him, as the sources of the soul's life are within.
- Part I- The preface to the poem is an excerpt concerning the Moon's ominous foreshadowing of a deadly storm in the "Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence." Coleridge remarks that if the Bard is accurate about the weather, then this currently tranquil night will soon turn into a storm; Coleridge sees the new moon holding the old moon in her lap, an identical scene to the moon image in the prologue. He wishes for a storm to occur, because he needs something to stir his emotions and "startle this dull pain."
- Part II- Coleridge's invocation of "Lady" suggests that his pain is the result of a broken heart and signals that this poem is a conversation with this Lady (who represents Sara Hutchinson). In his grief, Coleridge says that he has been endlessly gazing at the skies and the stars. He claims that he is so overwhelmed with sadness that he can only see and can no longer feel or internalize the beauty of nature.
- Part III- Coleridge doubts that anything can "lift the smothering weight from off my breast." He admits that gazing at the beauty of the skies is a vain and futile effort to ease his pain. He realizes that "outward forms" will not relieve him of his inner pain and that only he has the power to change his emotional state.
- Part IV- Coleridge once again addresses his Lady, telling her that although some things are inevitable in life and

controlled by nature, a person must still be an active agent in creating his or her own happiness.

- Part V- Coleridge describes the characteristics of the feeling of Joy to his Lady. He extols the powers of Joy, which can create beauty as well as create a “new Earth and new Heaven.”
- Part VI- Coleridge reflects on a time when joy was able to surmount his distress. During that time, he was able to take advantage of the hope (that was not his own internal hope) that surrounded him in nature. However, the distress he feels now is much more dominating. He no longer even cares that all his happiness is gone. However, he does lament how each small “visitation” of sadness robs him of his power of Imagination. Since Coleridge cannot feel any emotion other than sadness, his imagination would have at least allowed him to “steal” the happiness that surrounded him in nature and thus pretend that he possesses joy.
- Part VII- Coleridge now turns his attention to the tumultuous weather. Within this raging storm, he is able to hear the less frightful sounds of a child looking for her mother.
- Part VIII- Although it is now midnight, Coleridge has no intention of going to sleep. However, he wishes for “Sleep” to visit his Lady and to use its healing powers to lift the Lady’s spirits and bring her joy. Coleridge concludes the poem by wishing the Lady eternal joy.
- Important quotes-
- *Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,  
With the old Moon in her arms;  
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!*

*We shall have a deadly storm.*

*(Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence)*

- Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes  
Upon the strings of this Æolian lute,
- I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling  
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
- A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,  
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief
- Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,  
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd
- I see them all so excellently fair,  
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!
- My genial spirits fail;  
And what can these avail  
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
- Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
- O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be!
- Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,  
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
- Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—  
We in ourselves rejoice!
- But oh! each visitation  
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,  
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
- O simple spirit, guided from above,  
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,  
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

### ***Frost at Midnight***

- Part of the conversation poems- 8 poems composed between 1772 to 1834, each describing a unique experience in the life of the poet that led to the development of his poetical sensibilities. In these poems, the speaker ponders over different topics as if in conversation with the reader.
- Published in 1798
- Written in Blank Verse
- Themes: The poem speaks about the speaker's hopes and plans for his little son, Hartley Coleridge. It also reflects the beauty of nature and its importance in man's life.
- Throughout the poem, the speaker tries to reflect that nature and faith play a crucial part in man's lives. The poet recalls the things which hindered the way to happiness. He reflects how he could not enjoy the beauty of nature when he was in his school as a child.
- However, when he looks at his son sleeping peacefully, he is excited for him that he will have every chance to enjoy life to its fullest. He believes if his son submits his will to nature, it will automatically connect him to God.
- He addresses his sleeping son to reveal the secret that if he will keep nature his companion, he will never experience any pain.
- Coleridge has written *Frost at Midnight* in a very contemplative mood. The atmosphere of the poem is perfectly peaceful and calm and there is nothing to disturb it. This quietness is maintained throughout the poem. And it is further enhanced by the poet's thoughts that are also mild and gentle.
- Coleridge describes to his son how his love of nature dates back to his boyhood. During school, Coleridge would gaze out the schoolhouse windows and admire the frost falling outside and would daydream about leaving the city and returning to his rural birthplace.

- Coleridge tells his son that he is delighted that his son will have more opportunities to observe the beauty of nature and will not be “reared/ In the great city, pent ‘mid cloisters dim” as Coleridge himself was. Coleridge then wishes that “all seasons shall be sweet” to his son and that his son will learn to appreciate all aspects of nature.
- Important quotes-
  - “Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,  
Whether the summer clothe the general earth  
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing  
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch  
Of mossy apple-tree
  - “Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang  
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,  
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me  
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear  
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
  - So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,  
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
  - The Frost performs its secret ministry,  
Unhelped by any wind.
  - Sea, hill, and wood,  
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings-on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams!
  - My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart  
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,  
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,  
And in far other scenes!
  - But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores  
And mountain crags

- Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

### ***The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem***

- Included in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.
- The poem disputes the traditional idea that nightingales are connected to the idea of melancholy. Instead, the nightingale represents to Coleridge the experience of nature.
- The poem begins with Milton's line in *Il Penseroso* about nightingales and then corrects it:  

“Most musical, most melancholy' bird!”
- Introduces various mythological characters like Philomela, a Gothic Maid character, and even introduces his own baby boy, Hartley.
- In this conversation poem, Coleridge is the speaker and the two people he addresses, and who are the silent listeners of the poem, are William Wordsworth and Dorothy Wordsworth.
- The three are simply observing the beauty of nature at night and Coleridge brings their attention to the singing of a nightingale. Coleridge explains to his two companions how the nightingale came to be known as a melancholy bird. He supposes that a broken-hearted man wandered through the woods one night and upon hearing the bird's song, the man projected his own emotions upon Nature and the nightingale and “made all gentle sounds tell back the tale/ Of his own sorrow.”
- Coleridge claims that if such poets took the time to observe and absorb the beauty of their natural surroundings, then they would create poems that reflect nature's loveliness. However, Coleridge doubts that most poets will ever have such an



experience, since most young men and women entertain themselves indoors on the most beautiful nights.

- In contrast to the majority of young people, Coleridge tells William and Dorothy that they three have a true appreciation for nature and they “may not thus profane/ Nature’s sweet voices, always full of love/ And joyance!”.
- Coleridge then describes to his two companions a grove by an abandoned castle in which a large number of nightingales flock at night. He vividly describes the joyous sounds of the birds’ songs, such as “murmurs musical” and an onomatopoeic “swift jug jug” that resembles the actual sounds the birds make.
- According to Coleridge, the sounds of the nightingales in this grove are so beautiful that if a person were to close his eyes, he would feel that he is dreaming. He has seen a young woman who lives near the castle come to the grove to watch and listen to the birds as well.
- Finally, Coleridge tells his friends that they “have been loitering long and pleasantly” and that it is time to head home and to say farewell to each other and the nightingale. Before the companions part, Coleridge remarks how much his infant son would love the nightingale’s song. Coleridge explains how he has instilled a love for nature in his son and that he “[deems] it wise/ To make him Nature’s play-mate.”
- Important quotes-
  - Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge! You see the glimmer of the stream beneath, But hear no murmuring: it flows silently.
  - A balmy night! and though the stars be dim, Yet let us think upon the vernal showers That gladden the green earth

- And hark! the Nightingale begins its song, 'Most musical, most melancholy' bird! A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought! In Nature there is nothing melancholy
- And of his fame forgetful! so his fame Should share in Nature's immortality, A venerable thing!
- : we may not thus profane Nature's sweet voices, always full of love And joyance!
- Many a nightingale perch giddily On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze, And to that motion tune his wanton song Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.
- It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up Familiar with these songs, that with the night He may associate joy

### ***The Eolian Harp***

- Published in his 1796
- A Lyrical poem written in Blank verse; divided into 5 stanzas with no specific number of lines
- It is one of the early conversation poems and discusses Coleridge's anticipation of a marriage with Sara Fricker.
- Major theme: The bliss of marital love and the importance of nature
- The poem discusses love, sex, and marriage, but it is not done in the form of a love poem. Instead, it compares love with an Aeolian harp, which is a symbol of poetry.
- The eolian harp itself acts to symbolize **the bridge between nature and humanity**, as it requires the role of nature to play music.
- Coleridge opens the poem with an address to his fiancée Sara. He muses about their present situation, perched cozily next to

one another. Longing for their future life together as man and wife, Coleridge imagines how ideal their new home will be. The image he paints is of nothing but peace and tranquility.

- Then, Coleridge introduces the lute or harp. This lute is resting in its case as if tempting someone to play it. This lute is the representation of illusion. While he can imagine what his marriage will be like, Coleridge is limited to his own experience. He won't truly know what the experience will be like until it happens. Thus, the lute is tempting him as if it knew the answers he seeks. Since his mind is upon his wedding to Sara, Coleridge uses an abundance of sensual imagery in describing this lute.
- He runs quickly through a lot of nature, thanking God for creating such beauty. He's praising the Creator for giving man such divinely inspired plants and sights and animals to experience and steward. Allowing these ideas to drift along, he concludes that life is contained within all matter, and it is the same life; all things are unified. Life flows through all matter so that all is the same force, which is in fact divine.
- Here Sara corrects Coleridge. Quickly he repents from his digression. He apologizes for presuming to place God within all living things. Considering the time period in which this poem was written, these theories are heretical at best. Coleridge, realizing his mistake, gives once more credit to the divine Creator.
- Important quotes-
  - "The Stilly murmur of the distant sea tells us silence"
  - "Our cot overgrown with white-flow'ed Jasmine"
  - "And now, its strings  
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes  
Over delicious surges sink and rise,  
Such a soft floating witchery of sound  
As twilight Elfins make"

- “Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air  
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.”
- And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;  
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
- But thy more serious eye a mild reproof  
Darts, O belovéd Woman! nor such thoughts  
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,  
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
- Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess  
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid!

### ***Christabel***

- A long narrative ballad in two parts- an unfinished Gothic ballad.
- “Christabel” is Coleridge’s longest poem, at almost 700 lines. It is also the least edited of Coleridge’s work.
- It was published in a pamphlet in 1816, along with *Kubla Khan* and *The Pains of Sleep*. The first part was written in 1797; the second part was written in 1800.
- Coleridge planned had 3 more Parts, but they were never completed.
- Almost all lines have 4 accents, though the number of syllables in each line would vary.
- The plot of Christabel revolves around the relationship, implicitly sexual, of Geraldine and Christabel. Christabel, with its female-centric inclination, became a symbol of female emancipation.
- The theme of good versus evil dominates the text of the poem. Christabel presents as a figure of innocence who trusts Geraldine and foolishly brings her into the castle.
- Christabel is a lovely, innocent, young, and virtuous daughter of Sir Leoline. One night while praying in the woods for her fiancé, she was startled by another distress lady who called herself Geraldine. She further states that she was kidnapped by a gang

and left to the jungle for an unknown reason. Geraldine says that she is the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux, once a friend of Sir Leoline.

- The two men quarreled, had not spoken for years. She brings Geraldine to share her bed. Once in the bedroom, she puts a spell on poor, innocent Christabel that makes it impossible for Christabel to tell anyone about what had happened that night in the bed.
- In reality, however, she is a wicked paranormal woman disguised as Geraldine. Christabel later on finds about her deception, but is forced into silence by that black magic.
- When she finally breaks the spell and speaks about Geraldine's deception, Sir Leoline rejects her entreaty, and the long narrative poem ends with Sir Leoline sending a message telling Lord Roland that his daughter is safe and offering reunion. Awkwardly, before any confirmation on Geraldine's identity can be established or denied, the poem ends abruptly.
- "Christabel" juxtaposes the theme of sin versus religiosity, evil versus devoutness, and sexuality versus purity. In this poem, the central character Christabel represents purity, religiosity and devoutness whereas Geraldine symbolizes evil, sin and sexuality. Christabel is often found praying throughout the poem and one of the most noticeable stuffs in her bedroom is the carving of an angel. In opposite to this, Geraldine says that she does not have the power to praise the Virgin Mary for being rescued by Christabel.
- The theme of mysticism is also dominant in Christabel which is Coleridge's most prominent features. Geraldine is controlled by a mysterious spell in the poem. She puts same spell on Christabel. Once Christabel tangibly recovers from the spell, she seems to change. Christabel's compassion for Geraldine have vanished and she begs her father to cast Geraldine out of their home. Christabel goes from generous to selfish. The taint of spells upon Geraldine and Christabel suggests the destructive powers of mysticism.

### ***This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison***

- Written in Blank verse
- 76 lines divided into three verse paragraphs
- Addressed to Charles Lamb (one of Coleridge's friends), the poem first shows the poet's happiness and excitement at the arrival of his friends, but as it progresses, we find his happiness turning into resentment and helplessness for not accompanying his friend, due to an accident that he met within the evening of the same day when his friends were planning to go for a walk outside for a few hours.
- It is an extended meditation on immobility. Lamed for a few days in a household accident, Coleridge took the opportunity to write about what it is like to stay in one place and to think about your friends traveling through the world.
- The poem begins with its speaker lamenting the fact that, while his friends have gone on a walk through the country, he has been left sitting in a bower. He compares the bower to a prison because of his confinement there, and bitterly imagines what his friends are seeing on their walk, speculating that he is missing out on memories that he might later have cherished in old age.
- He describes the various scenes they are visiting without him, dwelling at length on their (imagined) experience at a waterfall. He describes the liveliness and motion of the plants and water there, and then imagines the beauty his friends will see as they emerge from the forest and survey the surrounding landscape.
- Religious imagery comes to the fore: the speaker compares the hills his friends are seeing to steeples. As his imaginative trek through nature continues, the speaker's resentment gives way to vicarious passion and excitement.

- The speaker soon hones in on a single friend, Charles—evidently the poet Charles Lamb, to whom the poem is dedicated. He imagines that Charles is taking an acute joy in the beauty of nature, since he has been living unhappily but uncomplainingly in a city, without access to the wonders described in the poem.
- After addressing Charles, the speaker addresses the sun, commanding it to set, and then, in a series of commands, tells various other objects in nature (such as flowers and the ocean) to shine in the light of the setting sun.
- He pictures Charles looking joyfully at the sunset. The speaker is overcome by such intense emotion that he compares the sunset's colors to those that "veil the Almighty Spirit."
- Soon, the speaker isn't only happy for his friend. He actually feels happy in his own right, and, having exercised his sensory imagination so much, starts to notice and appreciate his own surroundings in the bower.
- He describes the leaves, the setting sun, and the animals surrounding him, using language as lively and evocative as that he used earlier to convey his friends' experiences. He notes that natural beauty can be found anywhere, provided that the viewer is open-minded and able to appreciate it.
- He also argues that occasional exclusion from pleasant experiences is a good thing, since it prompts the development of imaginative and contemplative sensibilities. Finally, the speaker turns his attention back to Charles, addressing his friend.
- He notes that a rook flying through the sky will soon fly over Charles too, connecting the two of them over a long distance. He expects that Charles will notice and appreciate the rook, because he has a deep love of the natural world and all living things

## ***Biographia Literaria***

- “*Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*” (1817)
- An autobiographical prose work written in the form of a meditative narrative- 2 volumes divided in 23 chapters.
- A seminal work of critical theory.
- Was originally intended to expound Coleridge’s self-conception of poetry and the Poet , creativity etc.
- It was supposed to be a preface to his poetry collection *Sibylline Leaves* (1817).
- But it eventually expanded into a mixture of opinions, philosophy, criticism and religion.
- He himself calls it “immethodical miscellany”.
- Can be read as a criticism of Wordsworth’s conception of poetry and poetic creation.
- He argues that poetry is, nonetheless, ever a product of creative artifice.
- It is never natural- it is always artificial as its creation is a voluntary act carried out by the poet.
- Shifts away from Wordsworth’s pronouncement that poetic language should mimic the language of the common man.
- Coleridge holds that poetic language is a work of artifice which is specifically crafted. Hence, it should not lose its poetic quality.
- He distinguishes between his poems and Wordsworth’s as published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).
- He says that Wordsworth’s poems were supposed to make the ordinary extraordinary by means of his craft.
- While, his own poems were supposed to render the supernatural rather credibly.
- He says his characters are “supernatural” and “romantic”.



- But he tries to give them “human interest” and “semblance of disbelief”.
- This would prompt among the readers a “willing suspension of disbelief” which constitutes “poetic faith”.
- **Fancy**
  - Not a creative ability
  - Only combines what is perceived unlike imagination which fuses transforms.
- **Primary Imagination**
  - “divine ability to create”
  - “source of all animate power”
  - “involuntary perception” of the outer world followed by the “spontaneous act of mind”
  - It is universal and is possessed by all.
- **Secondary Imagination**
  - The power of the mind of the artist
  - The power of human mind to create by virtue of perception and recollection
  - It is more active and conscious
  - It requires will to work upon the raw material
  - It is at the root of all poetic activity.

# John Keats

## “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

- ‘*Ode on a Grecian Urn*’ is an attempt to explore the themes of beauty of art and nature, mortality and eternity, by addressing a piece of pottery from ancient Greece. Through this piece, John Keats depicts the idealism in classical works, the

Grecian virtues, eternity, nature, and last but not least the true value of art.

- It was penned in May 1819 and first published in *Annals of the Fine Arts of 1819* anonymously. The inspiration behind writing this poem came from two articles published in the Examiner on 2 May and 9 May 1819 by artist Benjamin Haydon. Keats' familiarity with the Elgin Marbles also inspired him.
- It is written in five verses of ten lines each, of rigid iambic pentameter.
- For the first seven lines, a rhyme scheme of ABABCDE is used. In verse one, the final three lines are DCE; in the second verse, they're CED; stanzas three and four both use CDE, while the fifth and final stanza uses DCE.
- During this first verse, we see the narrator showing images of people who have been frozen in place for all of the time, as the "foster-child of silence and slow time."
- One such picture, seemingly showing a gang of men as they chase some women, is described as a "mad pursuit" but the narrator wants to know more about the "struggle to escape" or the "wild ecstasy."
- In the second verse, the reader is introduced to the image of a young man sitting with a lover, seemingly playing a song on a pipe as they are surrounded by trees - "melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter."
- The narrator acknowledges that the lover will never be able to kiss his companion, with the fact that she will never lose her beauty as she is frozen in time. While the figures will never

grow old, the music also contains an immortal quality, one much “sweeter” than regular music

- The third stanza again focuses on the rest of the scene- the trees behind the pipe player will never grow old and their leaves will never fall.
- In the fourth stanza, a group of people bring a cow to be sacrificed. He talks about the “little town” and the “green altar.” He also imagines the “little town” they come from, now deserted because its inhabitants are frozen in the image on the side of the urn “for evermore.”
- In the final stanza, he is talking directly to the urn itself, which he believes “doth tease us out of thought.” Even after everyone has died, the urn will remain. The last lines in the piece have become incredibly well known-“Beauty is truth, truth beauty”. The narrator says that the urn will continue to tell the world the truth of the world as a “Sylvan Historian”.

### **“Ode to a Nightingale”**

- It is the longest ode of the 1819 odes- with 8 stanzas of 10 lines each.
- The first seven and last two lines of each stanza are written in iambic pentameter; the eighth line of each stanza is written in trimeter. Its rhyme scheme is the same in every stanza. Each stanza in “Nightingale” is rhymed ABABCDECDE.
- The speaker opens the ode with a declaration that he is going through a kind of heartache and he feels numb, as though he had taken a drug only a moment ago. He addresses a nightingale saying that his “drowsy numbness” is not from envy

of the nightingale's happiness, but rather because he is "too happy" by her song.

- In the second stanza, the speaker craves for a way to forget his pain- "a draught of vintage," that would taste like the country and like peasant dances, and let him "leave the world unseen".
- In the third stanza, he continues with his desire to fade away into the oblivion- "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" of the mortal life.
- In the fourth stanza, the speaker tells the nightingale to fly away, and he will follow her- "Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards", but through poetry, which will give him "viewless wings."
- In the fifth stanza, the speaker says that he cannot see the flowers in the glade, but can guess them "in embalmed darkness"- white hawthorne, eglantine, violets, and the musk-rose.
- In the sixth stanza, the speaker confesses that he has often been "half in love". Surrounded by the nightingale's song, the speaker thinks that the idea of death seems richer than ever, and he longs to "cease upon the midnight with no pain".
- In the seventh stanza, the speaker tells the nightingale that it was not "born for death." He says that the voice he hears singing has always been heard, by ancient emperors and clowns, by homesick Ruth; he even says the song has often charmed open magic windows looking out over "the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

- In the eighth stanza, the word “forlorn” tolls like a bell to restore the speaker from his trance, back to himself. As the nightingale flies farther away from him, he laments its loss. Now that the music is gone, the speaker cannot recall whether he himself is awake or asleep- “a vision, or a waking dream

### **“To Autumn”**

- Composed after an evening walk near Winchester, it is the last great Ode by Keats. It is one of Keats’ most sensual and image-heavy poems. Throughout the poem, Keats alludes to the pastoral tradition of poetic writing.
- It is an opulent portrayal of the season of autumn in a three-stanza structure, each of eleven lines. The rhyme scheme ABAB.
- Keats’s speaker opens his first stanza by addressing Autumn, describing its abundance and its intimacy with the sun, with whom Autumn ripens fruits and causes the late flowers to bloom – “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun”.
- In the second stanza, the speaker describes the figure of Autumn as a female goddess, often seen sitting on the granary floor, her hair “soft-lifted” by the wind, and often seen sleeping in the fields or watching a cider-press squeezing the juice from apples.
- In the third stanza, the speaker tells Autumn not to wonder where the songs of spring have gone, but instead to listen to her own music- “Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?”. At twilight, the “small gnats” hum among the "the river salallows," or willow trees, lifted and dropped by the wind, and

“full-grown lambs” bleat from the hills, crickets sing, robins whistle from the garden, and swallows, gathering for their coming migration, sing from the skies.

### ***“Ode on Melancholy”***

- “*Ode on Melancholy*” addresses the Reader and tells him not to worry about the miseries and sufferings of life– that beauty and pain are intertwined in the world, and that both offer a wholesome view of life when occurring in a cycle. Melancholy is turned beautiful by Keats- something to flow with and embrace.
- The first stanza of the *Ode* was removed just before it was published in 1820.
- It is the shortest of Keats’s ode.
- It is written in a regular Ode form with 3 stanzas that match its thematic structure.
- Each stanza has 10 lines of relatively precise iambic pentameter.
- The first two stanzas follow the same rhyme scheme- ABABCDECDE; the third stanza’s differs slightly- ABABCDEDCE.
- The first stanza tells the reader what not to do while going through a bout of Melancholy- The sufferer should not “go to Lethe,” (the river of amnesia in Greek mythology); should not turn suicidal (“Wolf’s-bane” is a poison and “Proserpine” is the mythological queen of the underworld); should not entertain suicidal thoughts-

“Make not your rosary of yew-berries,

Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be

Your mournful Psyche...”

- In the second stanza, the speaker tells the sufferer what to do while going through Melancholy- the sufferer should try to

overthrow his sorrow with natural beauty- “glut thy sorrow on a morning rose” or “on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,” or in the eyes of his beloved.

- In the third stanza, the narrator navigates Melancholy more philosophically & elaborates further on his personal theory on it- that pleasure and pain are inextricably linked and must be looked at as the 2 sides of the same coin, that is life.
- The speaker says that the shrine of melancholy is inside the “temple of Delight,” but that it is only visible if one can truly immerse oneself in the joys of life. These joys can be relished, only to find in the end sadness that sits at its centre –

“Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue  
Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine...”

- “Beauty that must die” and Joy, “whose hand is ever at his lips / Bidding adieu” are some other phrases from the poem that describe the speaker’s point of view about Melancholy and its place in life.

### ***“Ode to Psyche”***

- It is based on the myth of Cupid and Psyche- the Greek mythological characters. The poem concerns itself with the neglected goddess Psyche, who is new, but mostly ignored while other goddesses are worshipped ahead of her.
- It was the first of his 1819 odes and can be considered as one of his experimental poems as it was written during Keats’ attempts to play about with the tried and tested method of writing generic Odes.

- Throughout the poem, the staple Keatsian motifs of imagination, mythology, and sensuality reign supreme.
- The poem is written in four stanzas, but, in the loosest form of any of Keats's odes. The stanzas vary in number of lines, rhyme scheme, and metrical scheme- conveying spontaneity of thought and expression.
- "*Ode to Psyche*" starts similarly to Keats' "*La Belle Dame sans Merci*": a narrator, wandering alone in a haze of beauty, comes across 'two fair creatures'. There is an almost seamless shift from reality to fantasy- a similar shift took place in "*Ode to a Nightingale*".
- The "two fair creatures" were lying side by side in the grass, beneath a "whisp'ring roof" of leaves, surrounded by flowers. They embraced one another with both their arms and wings. The speaker says he knew the winged boy- Cupid- but asks who the girl was. The rhetorical question is answered by himself- she was Psyche.
- In the third stanza, the speaker narrates her place among the Olympian gods and goddesses- as the youngest but most beautiful. Psyche has been described as a goddess without any traditions or cults-

"though temple thou hast none,  
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers;  
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan  
 Upon the midnight hours;  
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet  
 From chain-swung censer teeming;  
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat  
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming."



- In the fourth stanza, he says that she has come into the world too late for “antique vows” and the “fond believing lyre.” But the speaker expresses his wish to be her worshipper and priest- he would like to pay homage to Psyche and become her choir, her music, and her oracle.

“Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet... Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat”

- In the final stanza, the speaker says, “Yes, I will be thy priest” so that he could gain poetical inspiration from her, broaden his mental horizons and write beautiful poetry. He then goes on to allude to other mythological characters like “zephyrs” and “Dyrads” and natural elements like “dark-cluster’d trees”, “wild-ridged mountains”, “rosy sanctuary”, “breeding flowers”, etc.- almost bordering pastoral – “With buds, and bells, and stars”. He uses these vivid imageries to describe how his poetry will affect the world.
- “A bright torch, and a casement ope at night, To let the warm Love in” summarises the poem and his poetical philosophy, which is dominated by Aestheticism and beauty.

### ***“Ode on Indolence”***

- This poem borrows a lot from Keats’ readings and viewings of ancient Greek sculptures, particularly the Elgin Marbles. Hence, it can be connected with *“Ode on a Grecian Urn”*- “masque-like figures on the dreamy urn”
- In the poem Keats talks about three mysterious figures that appear in his dreams- love, ambition, and poesy. He might have seen them engraved on an ancient urn. The first two figures are controllable figures but the poetic persona is a dominant force

in his life. At the end of this poem, he requests these figures to fade away and leave him alone with his other dreams.

- “Indolence” stands for “Lethargy” or “Laziness”.
- The poem consists of six stanzas of 10 lines each. The first four lines of each stanza follow the rhyme scheme- ABAB, forming a Shakespearean quatrain. The last six lines follow the rhyme scheme of CDECDE, forming a Miltonic sestet.
- The poem is written in majority iambic pentameter lines.
- In the first stanza, the speaker visualizes a vision with three strange figures wearing white robes and “placid sandals.” They rotate before his eyes just as a vase has been turned round.
- In the second stanza, the speaker addresses the figures directly. He asks them how it was that he did not recognize them, given his vast knowledge in Grecian sculptures. He goes on to describe how he lazily enjoyed the summer day in a sort of sublime numbness.
- In the third stanza, the figures pass by for a third time. This time the speaker comes eye-to-eye with them momentarily and recognises them- the first is a “fair maid,” Love; the second is pale-cheeked Ambition; and the third, is the “unmeek” maiden, the “demon Poesy”, or poetry. It is clear that it is the last one that has the greatest hold on the speaker.
- In the fourth stanza, the speaker aches to follow the fleeting figures, but he says that the urge is utter folly because- Love is fleeting, Ambition is mortal, and Poesy has nothing to offer that compares with an indolent summer day untroubled by “busy common-sense.”

- In the fifth stanza, the speaker compares his heart in a state of indolence with “a lawn besprinkled o’er With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams”. He laments their arrival in his dream and tells them to leave since they have had no real impact on him- “Upon your skirts had fallen no tears of mine”.
- In the sixth stanza, he bids them farewell so that he could welcome the other visions in store in his dreams. He reiterates that Love, Ambition, and Poesy are not enough to waken him up and that he would rather have other visions – “For I would not be dieted with praise, A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!”.

### ***Endymion: A Poetic Novel***

- Published in 1818 by Taylor and Hessey
- It is a narrative poem written in 4 Books in about 4000 words (1000 each)
- Dedicated to the late poet Thomas Chatterton
- It’s a hymn to the Beauty, Love, Moon, Muse.
- Written in Heroic Couplets
- Based on the Greek myth of Endymion and Selene (goddess Cynthia)
- Endymion had epigraph – a line of 17th sonnet by Shakespeare:

*“And stretched metre of an antique song”*

- Famous opening lines- "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever".
- Book I-
  - The speaker of the poem remains unnamed, yet is ready to tell this tale.
  - The setting of the poem is in ancient Greece on the isle of Latmos, where the island is celebrating God Pan and Endymion is the king of shepherds.

- At the feast, Endymion looks troubled, leading his sister, Peona, to take him aside by a quiet stream where he falls asleep. When he awakens, Peona asks Endymion to tell her why he is so troubled. He begins to open up about his dream of the moon goddess, Cynthia.
- According to Endymion, she visits him and they fall deeply in love, yet only for him to awaken and see no one there. He is so overcome by love and her beauty that Peona pleads with him to not throw his life away for a mere dream.
- However, he does not listen and leaves Latmos to find his beloved, beginning his journey under the guidance of a golden butterfly.
- Book II-
  - Endymion continues his quest to find the goddess in his dreams. When he reaches the spring, the golden butterfly transforms into a water nymph, a young maiden and nature spirit, who has reached the limits of how far she can help him.
  - Endymion encounters two classic Greek and Roman myth tropes- the joy of passionate love and the pain of unrequited love.
  - On his journey, he meets Venus and Adonis, a goddess and mortal respectively, who are reunited. Before they depart, she tells him that he will be blessed.
  - The second encounter involves a nymph named Arethusa and the river god Alpheus, who pursues Arethusa. However, since she is a follower of the goddess Diana, she runs away from him.
- Book III-
  - Major theme- redemption and adventure. It opens with the celestial landscape where the speaker notes that true

power is felt by the moon's presence and is one humans cannot comprehend.

- Immediately after, the reader is taken to the bottom of the ocean where Endymion finds himself face to face with an old man named Glaucus.
- He had been waiting for Endymion after being cursed for 1,000 years by the sorceress Circe. Glaucus retells his ill fate of falling in love with the sea nymph Scylla, how he sought the help of the witch, and his attempt to flee Circe, which led to his 1,000-year curse.
- The only way to break the curse is if he and Endymion work to reunite all the dead lovers. Once they accomplish their goal, a huge celebration takes place in Neptune's palace, and later, Endymion wakes up near a lake.
- Book IV-
  - In this final book, Endymion decides to give up his quest for immortality and decides he wants to start a life with the Indian Maiden. Suddenly, Mercury shows up and they both are taken to the heavens.
  - There, Endymion sees glimmers of the moon goddess slowly fade, but he still turns his head toward the Indian Maiden and professes his love before she vanishes.
  - Once he returns to earth, she's also there but says she cannot be with him. Eventually, they run into Peona, who tells Endymion the Indian Maiden can be his queen.
  - Suddenly, it is revealed that Cynthia and the Indian Maiden are the same people.
- Various synonyms for Selene- Diana, Cynthia, and Artemis.

## ***Hyperion, a Fragment***

- An incomplete epic poem in blank verse.
- It was published in *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (1820).
- It is based on the Titanomachia- a ten-year series of war fought between the Titans (an older generation of gods, based on Mount Othrys) and the Olympians (the younger generations, who would come to reign on Mount Olympus). The war ended in victory for the Olympian gods.
- Keats' poem recounts the misery of the Titans after their fall to the Olympians.
- Keats wrote the poem from late 1818 until the spring of 1819. He ends the poem abruptly in the middle of the third book, with only 900 lines completed.
- Today we find it in 2 complete and a third incomplete books. Book 1 contains 357 lines; Book 2 contains 391 lines; Book 3 leaves in the mid of 136<sup>th</sup> line.
- Important characters-
  - Hyperion (the god of the sun)
  - Saturn (king of the gods)
  - Ops (his wife)
  - Thea (Hyperion's sister)
  - Enceladus (god of war)
  - Oceanus (god of the sea)
  - Clymene (a young goddess).
- In the beginning, Saturn laments the loss of his powers, which are being surpassed by Jupiter. Thea leads him to a cave where the other fallen Titans lament their loss as well, discussing a potential fight-back.
- Oceanus announces that he is willing to surrender his power to Neptune (the new god of the sea) because Neptune is more beautiful (in the Romantic sense).

- Clymene describes the music of Apollo, which she found beautiful to the point of pain. Lastly, Enceladus makes a speech encouraging the Titans to fight.
- In the meantime, Hyperion's palace is shown; he is the only powerful-remaining Titan. He is addressed by Uranus (old god of the sky, father of Saturn), who encourages him to go to where Saturn and the other Titans are.
- Hyperion arrives, and the scene changes to Apollo (the new sun god, also god of culture, civilization and music, weeping on the beach.
- Mnemosyne (goddess of memory) encounters him and he explains to her the cause of his tears- he is aware of his divine potential, but is unable to comprehend it. By looking into Mnemosyne's eyes he receives celestial knowledge which transforms him into a God.
- The poem breaks off in mid-line with the word "celestial".

### ***The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream***

- Alternative subtitle- A vision
- Meant to be a re-working of the incomplete *Hyperion*; even this work was left incomplete.
- Published posthumously in 1856
- Contains a long prologue
- Also contains mythological characters.
- The plot runs as such-
  - The speaker contemplates the poet and the dreamer- The first canto of *The Fall of Hyperion* opens with a general contemplation about the nature of dreams: all are capable of dreaming.
  - The speaker consumes a drink, making them fall asleep- The speaker feels a yearning for the food and eats it

before becoming thirsty and finding "a cool vessel of transparent juice" of which they drink. The speaker falls into a deep sleep despite struggling "hard against / The domineering potion."

- The speaker is guided on a journey to an altar by a voice- The speaker wakes to find an old sanctuary with an extremely tall and majestic roof. The speaker then looks around to find columns to the north and south and black gates to the east and to the west. The speaker then describes an altar with "steps, / And marble balustrade" approaching either side of it. From the curtains comes a voice warning the speaker that they will die on the marble where they stand if they cannot ascend the steps.
- The guide explains the nature of the true poet- The veiled shadow asserts that a dreamer poisons his days by bearing more sadness than is deserved by their sins; "sure a poet is a sage; A humanist, physician to all men."
- Moneta shows the speaker a vision of the fallen Titans- The speaker reveals herself to be Moneta, the "Sole priestess of this desolation." Moneta explains that she wishes for the speaker to behold the scenes still swirling in her brain.
- The speaker mourns for the fate of the fallen Titans.
- Hyperion blazes on as the Titans' last hope- The speaker now stands in clear light and witnesses Hyperion as "His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels." They roar "as if of earthly fire, / That scared away the meek ethereal hours." "On he flared," concludes the poem.

### ***Lamia***

- A narrative poem; first appeared in *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St Agnes and Other Poems* (1820), although it was written in 1819.



- It was composed after his "*La belle dame sans merci*" and the 4 Great Odes and just before "To Autumn".
- Written in rhyming couplets.
- Keats was inspired by the story from *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) by Robert Burton, who had discovered it in a work by Flavius Philostratus.
- The poem is based on the Greek god Hermes, the god of Trade and Commerce. He hears of a beautiful nymph and searching for her he comes across Lamia, trapped in the form of a serpent.
- She reveals the nymph he had heard, in turn asking for her human form, which he restores.
- She then goes out to seek for Lycius of Corinth. Their lover however cannot culminate because at their wedding feast the sage/philosopher Apollonius reveals Lamia's true identity.
- Thereafter, she runs off leaving Lycius in utter grief and dead.
- This poem influenced Edgar Allan Poe's sonnet "To Science" (1829).
- Famous lines- "Do not all charms fly/ At the mere touch of cold philosophy."

### ***The Eve of St. Agnes***

- It was written by John Keats in 1819 and published in 1820.
- A narrative poem of passion, legends, danger, and dreams.
- Written in 42 Spenserian stanzas- ABABBCBCC (8 lines in iambic pentameter followed by an 'alexandrine' line in iambic hexameter). Total 378 lines.
- Setting- the Middle Ages.
- St. Agnes was the patron saint of virgins; she died a martyr in 4th century Rome.
- Other characters- Madeline, Angela, Porphyra.

- Porphyro, a young nobleman, creeps into the castle of his enemies to catch a glimpse of his love, the beautiful Madeline.
- Madeline was busy performing a magical custom calling on St. Agnes to send her a dream of her future husband.
- Porphyro decides to make her dream a reality by creeping into her room.
- She is ripped from a dream in which she was with a heavenly, more beautiful version of Porphyro and is aghast when she sees the real one.
- After much convincing, they decide to elope off.
- *The Eve of St. Agnes'* concludes with two characters dying- their death acting as a symbol of a new generation that is now the focus of the world.
- This poem explores both the power of sexual passion and the dangerous allure of fantasy.

### ***“La Belle Dame Sans Merci”***

- A folk ballad- ABCB Rhyme scheme- three tetrameter lines followed by a concluding line of dimeter
- “The Beautiful Lady without Pity”- inspired by a 5th-century poem by Alain Chartier
- Written in 1819
- It was first published in Leigh Hunt’s *The Indicator* in May 1820 (used the pseudonym “Caviare”). But the more known version is the one that was published in 1848 in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains* of John Keats by R.M. Milnes.
- Written in 12 quatrains for 4 lines each- 48 lines (with the first three stanzas a query to the knight and the remaining nine stanzas the knight’s reply)
- Theme of loss, mystery and terror.

- Keats had already used the title in his poem “The Eve of St. Agnes” when Porphyro sings for Madeline – “an ancient ditty, long since mute/ in Province call’d, “La belle dame sans merci”.
- An unidentified speaker asks a knight what troubles him. The knight is gone pale, worn-down, and dying- "And on thy cheeks a fading rose / Fast withereth too — ."
- The knight answers that he met a beautiful lady, "a faery's child" who looked at him with the look of love. Enchanted, he pulled her on his horse and she led him to her cave. There she sung him to sleep.
- In his sleep he had nightmares. Pale kings, princes, and warriors told him that he had been enslaved by a beautiful but cruel lady. When he woke up, the lady was gone and he was lying on a cold hillside.

### ***“Isabella, or The Pot of Basil”***

- Published in 1820
- A narrative poem
- Written in 63 stanzas of Ottava Rima (11 syllable lines; ABABABCC)- 504 lines
- Based on a story from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*
- Setting- Florence; Isabella and Lorenzo, an employee of her 2 brothers’, love each other. On finding out, the brothers kill him and bury his body.
- The happenings are revealed to Isabella by Lorenzo’s ghost. She seeks for his cut-head, brings it home and puts it in a pot of basil leaves.
- The brothers notice her eerie commitment to the pot; on inspection, they find the severed head and are horrified. They run off without looking back and the poem ends with Isabella dying.

### ***"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"***

- A Petrarchan sonnet- ABBAABBACDCDCD
- Written and published in October 1816 in *The Examiner*- at the age of 20
- It expresses the poet's amazement and astonishment on reading Homer, as translated by playwright George Chapman.
- Theme- the moving impact of literature
- "Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold . . ."
- The speaker admits that he has travelled far and wide; he has sailed to East where poets worship Apollo. He had heard about the beautiful landscape of imagination crafted by the Great Homer, but he never truly knew their power until he read Chapman's translations.
- On reading these works, he felt the same ecstasy that an astronomer feels on viewing a new planet for the first time or the awe that Cortez and his sailors must
- have felt on looking at the vastness of the Pacific Ocean, standing on a mountain peak in the Darien region of Panama.

### ***"Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art"***

- It was published in 1838 in *The Plymouth and Devonport Weekly Journal*
- The poem is punctuated as a single sentence
- Written in the English sonnet (ABABCDCDEFEFGG)
- The sonnet is addressed to a star
- It expresses the poet's wish to be as constant as the star while he presses against his sleeping love.
- Written as a declaration of love for Fanny Brawne

## Critical Comments

- “Keats as a poet is abundantly and enchantingly sensuous” - Matthew Arnold
- “An ineffectual angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain” - Matthew Arnold
- “Keats had flint and iron in him” - Matthew Arnold
- “He is one of the greatest English poets not because of sensuousness but because his poetry interprets life” - Matthew Arnold
- “He is with Shakespeare” - Matthew Arnold
- “Keats’s poetry is Shakespearean” - Matthew Arnold
- “Keats was not the last but the most perfect of all the Romantics” – William J. Long
- “Keats might have become a critic, as he might have become almost anything good; but I donot think he was one” - Prof. Saintsbury
- “Who killed John Keats?  
I say The Quarterly  
So cruel and tartly” - Lord Byron
- “Snuffed out by an article” - Lord Byron
- “Keats has no religion save the religion of beauty” - Compton Rickett
- “He romped like a young horse turned into a spring meadow” - Compton Rickett
- “Where Wordsworth spiritualizes and Shelley intellectualizes Nature, Keats is content to express her through the senses” - Compton Rickett
- “Perhaps the nearest to absolute perfection” - A.C. Swinburne about Ode to Autumn

- “The surest promise of absolute excellence” - P.B. Shelley about Endymion
- “Keats was a Greek” - P.B. Shelley
- “I have dipped my pen consuming fire for his destroyers” - P.B. Shelley in Adonais
- “Keats was one of the inheritors of the unfulfilled renown” - P.B. Shelley
- “Here lies one whose name was writ in water” – quote on Keats’s epitaph
- “Tender is the night” - Keats’s quote used by F. Scot. Fitzgerald to name his novel.
- “While his mind had much genral power, he has, more than Wordsworth or Coleridge or Shelley, a poet pure mind and simple” – A. C. Bradley
- “Keats saw beauty in all things” – John Middleton Murry
- “He was in my opinion, made to be a thinker, a critic, as much a singer or artist of words” – G.M. Hopkins
- “Keats was nothing if not a man of ideas” – Lionel Trilling

### **Keats in his Letters (1848)**

- “Love is my religion- I could die for that”
- “If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a trees, it had better not come at all”
- “We hate poetry that has a palpable design on us
- A poet is the most unpoetical of all God’s creatures
- “I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart’s affection and truth of imagination”
- “What imagination seizes as beauty must be truth”

# P.B. Shelley

## ***“Ode to the West Wind”***

- Written in 1819 but published in 1820 as a part of the collection *Prometheus Unbound*
- The poem allegorizes the role of the poet as the voice of change and revolution.
- The west wind has been called- “destroyer and preserver”.
- A combination of Pindaric ode- because the subject matter is exalted and a tribute is paid to it- and Horatian ode- because the subject matter is treated from a very personal level also.
- Written in 5 cantos. Each canto follows the rhyme scheme of- ABABCBCDCDEDEE
- Written in lines of Iambic Pentameter
- *Inspired from the events of the Peterloo Massacre of August 1819*
- The first 3 stanzas describe the wind's effects upon earth, air, and ocean. In the last two sections, the poet speaks directly to the wind, asking for its power, to uplift him and make him its companion in its wanderings.
- Important quotations-
  - thou breath of Autumn’s being
  - Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;  
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear
  - Angels of rain and lightning
  - Thou dirge/Of the dying year
  - The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
  - Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
  - Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!

- Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
- Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
- 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"
- The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

### ***"Adonais"***

- It was written & published in 1821
- It is an Elegy on the death of John Keats. Adonis was the handsome young man of Greek mythology who was killed by a wild boar. The title was probably taken from Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, which Shelley had translated into English.
- Written in 55 Spenserian Stanzas (ABABBCBCC)- 495 lines
- In Spenserian Stanzas, the first 8 lines are written in iambic pentameter and the last line in iambic hexameter or Alexandrine
- The poem is written in the tradition of a Pastoral Elegy
- Shelley provided the poem with a preface in which he called the reviewers of the *Quarterly Review* "wretched men" and "literary prostitutes." The reviewer of Keats' *Endymion* in the *Quarterly* was accused of murder.
- *Adonais* and its preface brought down on Shelley the wrath of the conservative reviewers. *Blackwood's Magazine* attacked him with special savagery. The reception of *Adonais* deepened Shelley's despairing conviction that he had failed as a poet. He



wrote on January 25, 1822, to Leigh Hunt: "My faculties are shaken to atoms . . . I can write nothing; and if *Adonais* had no success, and excited no interest what incentive can I have to write?"

- In the poem, Shelley weeps for John Keats who is dead and who will be long mourned. He calls on *Urania* (the Greek muse) to mourn for Keats who died in Rome.
- Further he appeals his reader not to mourn for Keats' demise as he has become a portion of the eternal and is free from the attacks of reviewers. He has gone where "envy and calumny and hate and pain" cannot affect him.
- Important quotations-
  - Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
  - The One remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly
  - I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar
  - Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity
  - Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.
  - All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
Lamented Adonais.
  - Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race.
  - Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be/ An echo and a light unto eternity!"

- He is a portion of the loveliness Which once he made more lovely.
- He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he; Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn, Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee The spirit thou lamentest is not gone.
- Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow Back to the burning fountain whence it came, A portion of the Eternal.
- No more let life divide what death can join together.
- The quick Dreams, The passion-winged Ministers of thought.“

### ***“To a Skylark”***

- Completed and published in 1820 along with *Prometheus Unbound*
- It was inspired by an evening walk in Italy in the port city of Livorno with his wife Mary Shelley
- Written in 21 stanzas of five lines each- 105 lines
- The rhyme scheme of each stanza is ABABB. The poem's unconventional song-like rhyme scheme and bouncy rhythm subtly mimics the skylark's calls.
- The first four lines are metered in trochaic trimeter (a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable) and the fifth in iambic hexameter.
- "To a Skylark" describes the powerful grace and beauty of the skylark's song. The speaker addresses the bird directly and praises the purity of its music, later contrasting it with sad,

hollow human communication. The poem can be read as an ode to the unrivalled wonders of the natural world, and especially its spiritual power.

- Throughout the poem, the speaker is awestruck by the skylark, and especially by the purity of its song. The speaker contrasts this purity with the emptiness and insufficiency of human forms of expression. As a poet, the speaker seeks to learn from the joyful skylark, suggesting that the natural world contains truths that conventional forms of human communication—burdened in the poem by sadness and disillusionment—are unable to express.
- Famous opening lines- “Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!”
- This poem later inspired Thomas Hardy’s poem "Shelley's Skylark"(1887)
- Important quotes-
  - Teach me half the gladness That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness From my lips would flow The  
world should listen then — as I am listening now.
  - That from Heaven, or near it, Pourest thy full heart In  
profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
  - Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight.

All that ever was  
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass”

- Our sweetest songs are those that tell  
Of saddest thought.
- What objects are the fountains  
Of thy happy strain?

### ***"Queen Mab; A Philosophical Poem; With Notes***

- Shelley's first major poem published in 1813. Shelley was himself involved in the printing process of this first edition of only 250 copies. A revised edition was published in 1816 as *The Daemon of the World*. Today what we read is an unauthorized publication of 1832.
- Written in nine cantos with seventeen notes in Blank verse
- The poem, though written in the form of a fairy tale, serves as a foundation to his theory of revolution. It is a utopian political epic that exposes the evils and corruptions that have affected the institutions of monarchy, religion and commerce. The poem describes a visionary future in which humanity is liberated from all such vices.
- In William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* "she is the fairies' midwife"
- In this poem, Queen Mab, the ruler of the fairies, takes the spirit of Ianthe (the name of Shelley's first child) on a journey through time and space to reveal various human follies and errors. The past and the present are characterized by tyranny & oppression. The future holds a promise for Utopia.
- The theme of the work is the perfectibility of man by moral means- atheism, vegetarianism, free love, the precepts of Christianity, etc.
- Important quotes-
  - when the power of imparting joy Is equal to the will, the human soul Requires no other heaven.
  - All but the outcast, Man.
  - Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise

- War is the statesman's game
- Nature rejects the monarch, not the man; The subject, not the citizen; for kings And subjects, mutual foes, forever play A losing game into each other's hands, Whose stakes are vice and misery.
- Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride

### ***"Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude"***

- The work was first published in 1816 under the title *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude: And Other Poems*
- 720 lines long poem in blank verse
- Title- Thomas Love Peacock Peacock (from Roman mythology)
- Peacock has defined Alastor as "evil genius (avenger)"- the spirit who divinely animates the Poet's imagination
- The epigraph to the poem is from St. Augustine's *Confessions*-  
*"Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare."*  
*Or, "I was not yet in love, and I loved to be in love, I sought what I might love, in love with loving."*
- Quotation from Wordsworth-
  - *The Excursion*- "The good die first,/ And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust / Burn to the socket!"
  - "It is a woe 'too deep for tears' - "Ode: Intimations of Immortality".
- 'Alastor' begins as an exploration of the ideal in landscape (Kashmir) and womanhood (a veiled maiden), but soon becomes a quest for the supernatural spirit that transcends earthly ideals.
- The main character of the poem, a solitary poet, pursues 'the winding of the cavern' downstream to the sea, where his life ends.

- His quest apparently fails in its desire to find some corporeal manifestation of his ideals, but not without a realisation that such ideals do exist abstractly in the intellect- central allegory
- John Gibson Lockhart wrote in *Edinburgh Magazine* that Shelley is "a man of genius... Mr. Shelley is a poet, almost in the very highest sense of that mysterious word."
- In *The British Critic* the reviewer dismissed the work as "the madness of a poetic mind."
- Mary Shelley gave an introductory note for the 1839 edition- "None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this...The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive"
- Important quotes-
  - Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.
  - Virtue owns a more eternal foe Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime, And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

### ***"Prometheus Unbound"***

- Published in 1820
- A four-act lyrical drama- Closet Drama
- Portrayed the torments of the Greek mythological figure Prometheus and his suffering at the hands of Zeus, for stealing the gift of fire from the gods and giving it to mankind.
- The play was inspired by the classical Prometheia, a trilogy of plays attributed to the classical Dramatist Aeschylus.
- **Important characters-**
  - Prometheus: Prometheus is a Titan, one of the oldest beings and a child of the Earth. Sometime before the play, Prometheus stole fire from the gods and gifted it to

humanity. For his crime, Jupiter binds him to a mountain where the hawks of Jupiter will eat away at his flesh every day. Despite the horrific punishment, Prometheus is steadfast in his resolve that giving humanity the knowledge of fire was morally correct. In Greek, Prometheus' name originally means "forethought," which is ironic considering his theft would lead to an eternity of pain.

- Jupiter: The ruler of the gods, Jupiter is a tyrant who rules through fear. He denied humanity knowledge of even fire for fear they might one day question him or rise against him.
  - Asia: Prometheus's wife, Asia is sister to Panthea and Ione. She is connected to the world and becomes a symbol of hope following Jupiter's fall.
  - Demogorgon: Demogorgon is a spirit associated with the underworld. His parents are Jupiter and Thetis. Demogorgon, however, is more powerful and throws Jupiter into the abyss to end his rule.
  - Panthea: Asia's sister, Panthea stays by Prometheus' side while he is tortured to offer some measure of comfort.
- 
- **Act 1**-The play begins with Prometheus still bound to the rock where Jupiter left him after stealing fire from the gods to give to humanity. As he laments his pain while hawks eat him again, he claims he is greater than Jupiter himself. Prometheus recalls his love for Asia, one of the daughters of the Titans. The Earth, moved, joins him in speaking against the tyranny of Jupiter. She mentions Demogorgon, a tyrant who is far greater than Jupiter and lives in a shadow realm that is parallel to the world. Mercury arrives and beseeches Prometheus to save himself by revealing a secret only he knows: the fate of Jupiter. Prometheus refuses and a group of furies taunts

him by exclaiming that they've attacked humanity. Prometheus, tortured for his love of humanity, is powerless to do anything.

- **Act 2-** In an Indian Caucasus valley, Asia speaks with her sister Panthea about the state of things since Prometheus's punishment. Soon, the Echoes arrive and beckon the sisters to follow them. They take Asia and Panthea to a forest where they eventually meet Demogorgon. Asia asks Demogorgon who created the world, and Demogorgon responds that God created everything in creation both good and evil. She and Demogorgon talk about Prometheus' contributions to humanity, including fire and science, while lamenting that Jupiter rules all.
- **Act 3-** In heaven, Jupiter has the other gods present and boasts that he ruled everything except the soul of humans. When he discusses Demogorgon, Demogorgon himself appears and claims to be Jupiter's offspring: Eternity. Boasting he is more powerful than Jupiter himself, Demogorgon makes Jupiter afraid and the god of all says that even Prometheus would not make him suffer needlessly. Jupiter then attacks Demogorgon but fails and falls from power. Meanwhile, Hercules frees Prometheus. He reunites with Asia and tells her of a cave where they can live in peace.



- **Act 4-** Spirits rejoice at Jupiter's end. Panthea and Ione see the Spirit of Earth in a winged chariot. Earth and Moon sing about the new coming age free from Jupiter's tyranny now that humanity knows all things, including the secret of Jupiter's lightning. Demogorgon speaks the final lines of the play and congratulates Prometheus for his ultimate victory. Unlike Aeschylus's version of the story, Prometheus and Jupiter never reconcile.
- **Important quotes-**
  - “Death is the veil which those who live call life; They sleep, and it is lifted.”
  - “To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy power which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates  
  
Life may change, but it may fly not;  
Hope may vanish, but can die not;  
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;  
Love repulsed -but it returneth.”
  - “All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil.”
  - “Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,  
These are the seals of that most firm assurance”
  - “No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.”
  - “He gave man speech, and speech created thought, which is the measure of the universe.”

- “Hate, disdain, or fear, self-love or self-contempt, on human brows no more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell, 'All hope abandon ye who enter here.”

## Critical Comments

- “Shelley was alone the perfect singing god; his thoughts, words and deeds, all sang together” – A.C. Swinburne
- “Shelley is a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain”. – Matthew Arnold
- Shelley was called “Melopoeic” by Matthew Arnold
- “The most gentle, the most amiable, and the least worldly-minded person I ever met” – Lord Byron
- “Shelley’s life and his poetry are dissolubly corrected. He acted what he thought and felt”. – J.A. Symonds
- “New and Terrific dance of death”- William Hazlitt about Shelley’s “The Triumph of Life”
- “The most despairing poem he wrote” – Harold Bloom on Shelley’s “The Triumph of Life”
- “Perhaps the first modern statement of the principle of non-violent resistance”- On Shelley’s “The Mask of Anarchy”
- “Shelley, the writer of some infidel poetry, has been drowned, now he knows whether there is God or no”. – *The Courier* (London newspaper) on his death
- “He is the poet of adolescence and bulk of his poetry is immature”- T.S. Eliot
- “The son and singer of revolution”- anonymous
- The poet of hope and regeneration”- anonymous
- “He intellectualized nature”- Compton Rickett
- “Poets are the hierophants of an apprehended inspiration”- Shelley

- “Poets are the unacknowledged *legislators of the world*”. – Shelley
- “the least imperfect poem”- Shelley on “Adonais”

## Lord Byron

### Chronology of his works-

- *Hours of Idleness* (1807)- severely criticized by Henry Brougham in the Edinburgh Review. Byron replied to him in his satirical work- *English Bards and Scot Reviewers* (1809)
- *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809)
- *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Cantos I & II* (1812)
- *The Giaour* (1813)
- *The Bride of Abydos* (1813)
- *The Corsair* (1814)
- *Lara, A Tale* (1814)
- *Hebrew Melodies* (1815)- 30 poems
- *The Siege of Corinth* (1816)
- *Parisina* (1816)
- *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816)
- *The Dream* (1816)
- *Prometheus* (1816)
- *Darkness* (1816)
- *Manfred* (1817)- dramatic verse; closet drama
- *The Lament of Tasso* (1817)

- *Beppo* (1818)
- *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1818)
- *Don Juan* (1819–1824; incomplete on Byron's death in 1824)
- *Mazeppa* (1819)
- *The Prophecy of Dante* (1819)
- *The Two Foscari* (1821)- verse play in 5 acts
- *The Vision of Judgment* (1821)-satirical poem
- *Heaven and Earth* (1821)
- *Werner* (1822)
- *The Age of Bronze* (1823)
- *The Island* (1823)
- *The Deformed Transformed* (1824)

### **Byronic Hero**

- Byron himself is considered to be the model for the Byronic Hero.
- He is a man who is greatly idealized, however simultaneously flawed.
- He is a great man with taste, passion, talent and a charming aura- bordering to arrogance and overconfidence.
- He has disillusionment with society and social institutions and social norms.
- Although he himself belongs to the upper section of the society, he rather finds it detestable and abominable.

- He carries a secret hidden past with unsavory incidents and an unfulfilled love story.
- His lack of respect for rules and order often leads to a rather self-destructive future or ending.

## **Most Important works**

### ***Childe Harold's Pilgrimage***

- Published between 1812-1818.
- Semi-Autobiographical; about a gentleman disillusioned with the material pursuits and sensory pleasures of the world.
- He embarks upon a journey of truth and revelation- Pilgrimage
- Written in 4 cantos.
- Written in Spenserian Stanza.
- (Note: The “Childe” in the title is a medieval term for a young lad eligible for knighthood)
- Childe Harold is a young, Byronic man- the concept of Byronic hero began from him.
- He is dark, quiet, brooding and often mysterious in disposition.
- He is an outcast- been ostracized from the society for his waywardly ways.
- The poem has direct imagery from Byron's own trip to such countries as Greece, Portugal, Spain, Albania and Malta in 1809.
- When he returned to England in 1811, the opening cantos of the poem were already complete.
- He took this trip with his friend John Cam Hobhouse.

- In the poem, Childe Harold makes certain observations regarding the national and geo-political issues of his contemporary times.
- E.g. he expresses his take on Greece's independence from the Turk and his disapproval of the Convention of Cintra in which English leaders let the French soldiers return back to France with all their loots.

### ***Don Juan***

- Written between 1819 and 1824.
- Unfinished poem- Written in 16 cantos.
- A satirical, mock-epic poem.
- Written in ottava rima.
- The work begins with a dedication to Robert Southey and William Wordsworth.
- Like *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, even this work is majorly believed to be a work of autobiographical significance.
- The protagonist is a young Spaniard- Don Juan.
- Originally, the character of Don Juan is taken from the European legend of a libertine who seduces young women and is promiscuous in his character.
- In this work, Byron reverses the legend and creates his protagonist as a man who is innocent and naïve and is himself seduced by women.
- Unlike mainstream representation of female characters as naïve and shy, women in Juan's encounters are women of strong and bold personality.

- It is believed that Byron tried to recreate experiences and incidents from his own life to create incidents in the life of Don Juan.
- In the dedication, Byron confesses that his muse is not as divine as Wordsworth's or Southey's.
- Hence his verse shall not be as great as theirs.
- The poem begins with the lines- "I want a hero: an uncommon want".

### ***English Bards and Scotch Reviewers***

- Published anonymously.
- Written in heroic couplets
- It's satirical form is greatly inspired by Alexander Pope's.
- Originally, Byron had written a poem called "*British Bards*" in 1807.
- However, after the raging review in the *Edinburgh Review*, he revised the original poem into English Bards and Scotch Reviewers- a direct attack on critics and contemporary criticism.
- Byron expresses his discontent with the contemporary attitudes in the intellectual circle which is undervaluing wit, reason and intellectual fervor.
- He believes that the habit of creating excesses in writing is rotting the fabric of contemporary art and literature.
- The heritage of such eminent literary figures as Shakespeare, Milton, Pope and Dryden is being undermined by such contemporary literary giants as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, etc.

### ***Beppo: A Venetian Story***

- Written in Venice in 1817. *Beppo* marks Byron's first attempt at writing using the Italian *ottava rima* metre, which emphasized satiric digression.
- It is the precursor to Byron's most famous and generally considered best poem, *Don Juan*.
- The poem contains 760 verses, divided into 95 stanzas.
- The poem tells the story of a Venetian lady, Laura, whose husband, Giuseppe (or "Beppo" for short), has been lost at sea for the past three years.
- According to Venetian customs she takes on a *Cavalier Servente*, simply called "the Count". When the two of them attend the Venetian Carnival, she is closely observed by a Turk who turns out to be her missing husband.
- Beppo explains that he has been captured and enslaved, and was freed by a band of pirates that he subsequently joined.
- Having accumulated enough money he left piracy and returned to reclaim his wife and be re-baptized.
- Laura rejoins Beppo and befriends the Count.
- The poem's main merit lies in its comparison of English and Italian morals, arguing that the English aversion to adultery is mere hypocrisy in light of the probably shocking, but more honest, custom of the *Cavalier Servente* in Italy.
- In comparison to Byron's *Oriental Tales* of 1813, it suggests that a looser attitude towards morals may be more pragmatic.



# Victorian Age

## Robert Browning

- Robert Browning, (born May 7, 1812, London—died Dec. 12, 1889, Venice), major English poet of the Victorian age, noted for his mastery of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture.
- His most noted work was *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69), the story of a Roman murder trial in 12 books.
- Browning's first published work, *Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession* (1833, anonymous), although formally a dramatic monologue, embodied many of his own adolescent passions and anxieties.
- Although it received some favourable comment, it was attacked by John Stuart Mill, who condemned the poet's exposure and exploitation of his own emotions and his "intense and morbid self-consciousness."
- It was perhaps Mill's critique that determined Browning never to confess his own emotions again in his poetry but to write objectively.
- In 1835 he published *Paracelsus* and in 1840 *Sordello*, both poems dealing with men of great ability striving to reconcile the demands of their own personalities with those of the world.
- *Paracelsus* was well received, but *Sordello*, which made exacting demands on its reader's knowledge, was almost universally declared incomprehensible.
- Encouraged by the actor Charles Macready, Browning devoted his main energies for some years to verse drama, a form that he had already adopted for *Strafford* (1837).
- Between 1841 and 1846, in a series of pamphlets under the general title of *Bells and Pomegranates*, he published seven more plays in verse, including *Pippa Passes* (1841), *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (produced in 1843), and *Luria* (1846).

- Although Browning enjoyed writing for the stage, he was not successful in the theatre, since his strength lay in depicting, as he had himself observed of *Strafford*, “Action in Character, rather than Character in Action.”
- By 1845 the first phase of Browning’s life was near its end. In that year he met Elizabeth Barrett.
- In her *Poems* (1844) Barrett had included lines praising Browning, who wrote to thank her (January 1845).
- In May they met and soon discovered their love for each other. They were married secretly in September 1846; a week later they left for Pisa.
- Browning produced comparatively little poetry during his married life. Apart from a collected edition in 1849 he published only *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* (1850), an examination of different attitudes toward Christianity, perhaps having its immediate origin in the death of his mother in 1849; an introductory essay (1852) to some false letters of Shelley, Browning’s only considerable work in prose and his only piece of critical writing; and *Men and Women* (1855).
- This was a collection of 51 poems—dramatic lyrics such as “Memorabilia,” “Love Among the Ruins,” and “A Toccata of Galuppi’s”; the great monologues such as “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “How It Strikes a Contemporary,” and “Bishop Blougram’s Apology”; and a very few poems in which implicitly (“By the Fireside”) or explicitly (“One Word More”) he broke his rule and spoke of himself and of his love for his wife.
- *Men and Women*, however, had no great sale, and many of the reviews were unfavourable and unhelpful.
- Disappointed for the first time by the reception of his work, Browning in the following years wrote little, sketching and modeling in clay by day and enjoying the society of his friends at night. At last Mrs. Browning’s health, which had been remarkably restored by her life in Italy, began to fail. On June 29, 1861, she died in her husband’s arms. In the autumn he returned slowly to London with his young son.

- His first task on his return was to prepare his wife's *Last Poems* for the press. At first he avoided company, but gradually he accepted invitations more freely and began to move in society.
- When his next book of poems, *Dramatis Personae* (1864)—including “Abt Vogler,” “Rabbi Ben Ezra,” “Caliban upon Setebos,” and “Mr. Sludge, ‘The Medium’ ”—reached two editions, it was clear that Browning had at last won a measure of popular recognition.
- In 1868–69 he published his greatest work, *The Ring and the Book*, based on the proceedings in a murder trial in Rome in 1698.
- Grand alike in plan and execution, it was at once received with enthusiasm, and Browning was established as one of the most important literary figures of the day. For the rest of his life he was much in demand in London society.
- The most important works of his last years, when he wrote with great fluency, were the long narrative or dramatic poems, often dealing with contemporary themes, such as *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* (1871), *Fifine at the Fair* (1872), *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* (1873), *The Inn Album* (1875), and the two series of *Dramatic Idyls* (1879 and 1880).
- He wrote a number of poems on classical subjects, including *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871) and *Aristophanes' Apology* (1875).
- In addition to many collections of shorter poems—*Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper* (1876), *Jocoseria* (1883), *Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884), and *Asolando: Fancies and Facts* (1889)—Browning published toward the end of his life two books of unusually personal origin—*La Saisiaz* (1878), at once an elegy for his friend Anne Egerton-Smith and a meditation on mortality, and *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in Their Day* (1887), in which he discussed books and ideas that had influenced him since his youth.

- While staying in Venice in 1889, Browning caught cold, became seriously ill, and died on December 12. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.
- His most popular poems include *Porphyria's Lover*, *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*, the diptych *Meeting at Night*, the patriotic *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, and the children's poem *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.
- Famous quotes- "Grow old along with me!" (*Rabbi Ben Ezra*), "A man's reach should exceed his grasp" and "Less is more" (*Andrea Del Sarto*), "It was roses, roses all the way" (*The Patriot*), and "God's in His heaven—All's right with the world!" (*Pippa Passes*).
- In Oscar Wilde's dialogue *The Critic as Artist*, Browning is given a famously ironical assessment: "He is the most Shakespearean creature since Shakespeare. If Shakespeare could sing with myriad lips, Browning could stammer through a thousand mouths.
- Probably the most adulatory judgment of Browning by a modern critic comes from Harold Bloom: "Browning is the most considerable poet in English since the major Romantics, surpassing his great contemporary rival Tennyson and the principal twentieth-century poets, including even Yeats, Hardy, and Wallace Stevens.

## Important Works

### ***The Ring and the Book***

- A long dramatic narrative poem (a verse novel) of 21,000 lines published in four volumes from 1868 to 1869.
- The book tells the story of a murder trial in Rome in 1698, whereby an impoverished nobleman, Count Guido Franceschini, is found guilty of the murders of his young wife Pompilia (Comparini) and her parents, having suspected his

wife was having an affair with a young cleric, Giuseppe Caponsacchi.

- The story is re-told in Derek Parker's 2001 true crime book *Roman Murder Mystery: The True Story of Pompilia*.
- Important characters-
  - Count Guido Franceschini
  - Pompilia Comparini, his wife
  - Pietro and Violante Comparini, her putative parents
  - Giuseppe Caponsacchi, a priest
  - Pope Innocent XII
- Book titles-
  - The Ring and the Book
  - Half-Rome
  - The Other Half-Rome
  - Tertium Quid
  - Count Guido Franceschini
  - Giuseppe Caponsacchi
  - Pompilia
  - Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis
  - Juris Doctor Johannes Baptista Bottinius
  - Pope Innocent XII
  - Guido
  - The Book and the Ring

### ***Men and Women***

- A collection of fifty-one poems in two volumes first published in 1855.
- Browning's *Men and Women* consists of fifty-one poems, all of which are monologues spoken by different narrators, some identified and some not; the first fifty take in a very diverse range of historical, religious or European situations, with the fifty-first – "One Word More" – featuring Browning himself as narrator and dedicated to his wife.

- The title of the collection came from a line in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.
- Important poems-
  - "A Lover's Quarrel"
  - "Evelyn Hope"
  - "Fra Lippo Lippi"
  - "Andrea del Sarto"
  - "The Last Ride Together"

### ***Bells and Pomegranates (1841–6)***

- *Bells and Pomegranates No. I: Pippa Passes* (play) (1841)
  - *The Year's at the Spring*
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. II: King Victor and King Charles* (play) (1842)
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. III: Dramatic Lyrics* (1842)
  - *Porphyria's Lover*
  - *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*
  - *My Last Duchess*
  - *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*
  - *Count Gismond*
  - *Johannes Agricola in Meditation*
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. IV: The Return of the Druses* (play) (1843)
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. V: A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (play) (1843)
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. VI: Colombe's Birthday* (play) (1844)
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. VII: Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845)
  - *The Laboratory*
  - *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*
  - *The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church*

- *The Lost Leader*
- *Home Thoughts from Abroad*
- *Meeting at Night*
- *Bells and Pomegranates No. VIII: Luria and A Soul's Tragedy* (plays) (1846)

## **Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

- **Elizabeth Barrett Browning** (born March 6, 1806, near Durham, Durham county, England—died June 29, 1861, Florence, Italy), English poet whose reputation rests chiefly upon her love poems, *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and *Aurora Leigh*, the latter now considered an early feminist text. Her husband was Robert Browning.
- In London she contributed to several periodicals, and her first collection, *The Seraphim and Other Poems*, appeared in 1838.
- Her name, however, was well known in literary circles, and in 1844 her second volume of poetry, *Poems, by Elizabeth Barrett Barrett*, was enthusiastically received.
- In January 1845 she received from the poet Robert Browning a letter that begins with “I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett,” and culminates with “I do, as I say, love these books with all my heart—and I love you too.”
- In early summer the two met. Their courtship (whose daily progress is recorded in their letters) was kept a close secret from Elizabeth’s despotic father, of whom she stood in some fear.
- *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) records her reluctance to marry, but their wedding had taken place on September 12, 1846. Her father knew nothing of it, and Elizabeth continued to live at home for a week.

- The Brownings then left for Pisa. (When Barrett died in 1857, Elizabeth was still unforgiven.) While in Pisa she wrote *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point* (Boston, 1848; London, 1849), a protest against slavery in the United States.
- The couple then settled in Florence, where their only child, Robert Wiedemann Barrett, was born in 1849.
- In 1851 and in 1855 the couple visited London. During the second visit, Elizabeth Barrett Browning completed her most ambitious work, *Aurora Leigh* (1857), a long blank-verse poem telling the complicated and melodramatic love story of a young girl and a misguided philanthropist. This work did not impress most critics, though it was a huge popular success.
- During the last years of her life, Browning developed an interest in spiritualism and the occult, but her energy and attention were chiefly taken up by an obsession with Italian politics, to a degree that alarmed her closest friends.
- *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851) had been a deliberate attempt to win sympathy for the Florentines, and she continued to believe in the integrity of Napoleon III.
- In *Poems Before Congress* (1860), the poem "A Curse for a Nation" was mistaken for a denunciation of England, whereas it was aimed at U.S. slavery. In the summer of 1861 Browning suffered a severe chill and died.

### ***Aurora Leigh***

- ***Aurora Leigh***, novel in blank verse by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, published in 1857.
- It is an epic poem/novel and encompasses nine books.
- The poem is set in Florence, Malvern, London and Paris. The work references Biblical and classical history and mythology, as



well as modern novels, such as *Corinne ou l'Italie* by Anne Louise Germaine de Staël and the novels of George Sand.

- The first-person narrative, which comprises some 11,000 lines, tells of the heroine's childhood and youth in Italy and England, her self-education in her father's hidden library, and her successful pursuit of a literary career.
- Initially resisting a marriage proposal by the philanthropist Romney Leigh, Aurora later surrenders her independence and weds her faithful suitor, whose own idealism has also since been tempered by experience.
- Aurora's career, Romney's social theories, and a melodramatic subplot concerning forced prostitution elicit the author's vivid observations on the importance of poetry, the individual's responsibility to society, and the victimization of women.

### ***Sonnets from the Portuguese***

- ***Sonnets from the Portuguese***, collection of love sonnets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, published in 1850.
- The poet's reputation rests largely upon these sonnets, which constitute one of the best-known series of English love poems. It is a collection of 44 love sonnets.
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning presented this volume of 44 sonnets to her husband, poet Robert Browning, in 1847, a year after they secretly eloped to Italy. T
- he poems record the early days of their courtship, when the invalid author was reluctant to marry, her yielding to his love despite her father's objections, and their final happiness together.
- The 43rd sonnet contains the famous line "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."
- The volume's title, a ruse to disguise the sonnets' personal nature, played on her husband's nickname for her, "the

Portuguese,” based on an earlier work of hers that he admired—“Catarina to Camoens,” which portrayed a Portuguese woman’s love for the great national poet of Portugal, Luís de Camões.

## **Lord Alfred Tennyson**

### ***“In Memoriam A.H.H.”***

- Written between 1833 and 1850; Published in 1851 anonymously
- Original title- *“The Way of the Soul”*
- In memory of A.H. Hallam- an elegy
- Written in iambic tetrameter- ABBA (In Memorium Stanzas)
- 133 Cantos (including the prologue & the epilogue)
- The poet expresses his anxiety towards change, death and mortality. He expresses his grief over his dearest friend’s death over these past 17 years. The tone of the poem keeps changing between personal and universal.
- The poem ends with a marriage song for his sister Cecilia’s wedding with Edward Lushington. Hence, the poem ends with a reaffirmation of Christian faith.
- T.S. Eliot called it “most unapproachable of all his poems”.
- Famous quotes-
  - “Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all”
  - “nature, red in tooth and claw”

### ***“The Lotos Eaters”***

- Published in his collection *Poems* (1832)
- Story is inspired from Homer’s *Odyssey*.
- Written as a dramatic monologue.
- Inspired from his trip to Spain with Arthur Hallam.
- “mild eyed melancholy” is used for Lotos-eaters who are put into a state of trance and isolation from the world.
- Odysseus is the speaker who is motivating his Mariners that they shall soon touch their native shore.
- The Mariners also decide to live their lives relaxing like the Lotos-eaters because “slumber is more sweet than toil”.
- The narrative is divided into 2 parts- 1<sup>st</sup> part is descriptive in nature and is composed in Spenserian stanza form; the 2<sup>nd</sup> part is a song of 8 stanzas of varying length.
- There’s also a short story called “The Lotus Eater” by W. Somerset Maugham written in 1945, based on the life of John Ellingham Brooks. It was published in a collection called *“The Mixture as Before”*.
- Important quotes-
  - “And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.”
  - “All things have rest: why should we toil alone”
  - “There is no joy but calm!” —  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?”
  - “Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?”

### ***“The Lady of Shalott”***

- A Lyrical ballad published in 1833 (20 stanzas) and 1842 (9 stanzas).
- She lives in Camelot- Myth of Elaine Astolat as recounted in a 13th-century Italian *novellina* titled *Donna di Scalotta*.
- Written in 19 stanzas divided in 4 parts- There are four stanzas in Parts I and II, five stanzas in Part III, and six in Part IV.
- The stanzas all contain the same basic structure: there are nine lines, with a rhyme scheme of *aaaabcccb*.
- She weaves images and looks through the mirror at the village below- a curse.
- She is enchanted by Sir Lancelot- an Arthurian knight.
- She dies in a boat before reaching his palace.
- Theme- the danger of isolation for an artist; the danger of art as something that is away put from the reality; female virtue as a subject of Victorian imagination.
- Famous lines-
  - “I am half-sick of shadows”
  - “She knows not what the curse may be,  
And so she weaveth steadily”
  - “All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.”
  - “Out flew the web and floated wide—  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;

"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott."

### ***"Mariana"***

- Published in 1830 in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*.
- A lyrical narrative poem.
- The rhyme scheme of the poem- ABAB CDDC EFEF.
- Inspired from Mariana in *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare.
- About a woman who wishes her death because of unrequited love (Angelo)- theme of isolation and its danger.
- The 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.
- Tennyson offers an insight into both Mariana's physical life in her secluded grange *and* her psychological inner life. Additionally, the poem is replete with auditory imagery, which ironically highlights the isolation of Mariana.

### ***"Enoch Arden"***

- Published in *Enoch Garden and Other Poems* (1864).
- A narrative poem- story given by Thomas Woolner.
- Fisherman turned merchant sailor (due to financial problems) Enoch Arden, leaves his wife Annie and three children to go to sea with his old captain, only to be stranded there for over 11 years.

- At the 10<sup>th</sup> year, Philip Ray proposes to Annie but she keeps on postponing the engagement. Every night she goes to bed reading Bible and praying for Enoch to return.
- With no sign of him, Annie marries Philip and has a child with him (one child with Enoch is dead) only to be found later by Enoch. He never really tells them of his return and dies with a broken heart.

### ***“Tears, Idle Tears”***

- A lyric poem
- Appeared in 1847 as a shorter lyric attached with the longer poem *The Princess: A Medley*.
- Written in irregular Blank verse- 4 stanzas of 5 lines each with no specific rhyme scheme
- Also inspired by the beauty of Tintern Abbey.
- Tennyson’s speaker is able to depict the sorrow of mourning and the devastation of lost youth. He brings attention to what it means to age and become aware of the darker side of life.
- He also feels sorrow for those who have lived and died before his time. By the time a reader gets to the end of the poem, it will be clear that the speaker is narrating the piece from beyond the grave. In conclusion, *Tears, Idle Tears* brings attention to feelings intimately associated with aging, such as regret, reminiscence, and despair.
- Each stanza ends with “the days that are no more”.
- The past is expressed as “sad”, “Strange”, “dear, deep and wild”.

### ***"Idylls of the King"***

- A series of 12 connected narrative poems.
- Written in blank verse.
- Influenced by Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.
- The whole work recounts Arthur's attempt and failure to lift up mankind and create a perfect kingdom, from his coming to power to his death at the hands of the traitor Mordred. Individual poems detail the deeds of various knights, including Lancelot, Geraint, Galahad, and Balin and Balan, and also Merlin and the Lady of the Lake.
- The poems were dedicated to the late Albert, Prince Consort.
- The poem can be read as an allegory of the societal conflicts in Britain during the mid-Victorian era.
- The first set of *Idylls*, "Enid", "Vivien", "Elaine", and "Guinevere", was published in 1859. "Enid" was later divided into "The Marriage of Geraint" and "Geraint and Enid", and "Guinevere" was expanded.
- *The Holy Grail and Other Poems* appeared in 1869.
- "The Last Tournament" was published in *Contemporary Review* in 1871.
- "Gareth and Lynette" was published in 1872.
- The final idyll, "Balin and Balan", was published in *Tiresias and Other Poems* in 1885.
- The Dedication was published in 1862, a year after the Prince Consort had died; the epilogue, "To the Queen," was published in 1873

## ***“Ulysses”***

- Written in 1833; Published in 1842 in *Poems (Second Volume)*.
- A dramatic monologue- In Blank verse
- Old Odysseus expresses his desire to explore again- Despite his reunion with his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus, Ulysses longs for further experience and knowledge.
- As the poem begins, Ulysses has returned to his kingdom, Ithaca, after the long journey post the Trojan War. Confronted again by domestic life, Ulysses expresses his lack of contentment, including his indifference toward the "savage race" whom he governs.
- Ulysses contrasts his present mundane life with his heroic past, and contemplates his old age and eventual death— "Life piled on life / Were all too little, and of one to me / Little remains".
- While Ulysses thinks that his son Telemachus will be a good king, he seems to have lost any connection to his son and the conventional methods of governing ("He works his work, I mine", "by slow prudence" and "through soft degrees").
- In the final section, Ulysses turns to his fellow mariners and calls on them to join him on another quest, making no guarantees as to their fate but attempting to conjure their heroic past: "Come, my friends,/ 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."
- "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."



### ***“Tithonus”***

- Published in 1860 in *Cornhill Magazine*, though written in 1833.
- A dramatic monologue spoken by Tithonus and addressed to Eos, begging for death.
- Based on Greek myth of Tithonos who is in love with Aurora, goddess of dawn.
- In the poem, Tithonus asks Eos for the gift of immortality, which she readily grants him, but forgets to ask for eternal youth along with it. As time wears on, age catches up with him. Wasted and withered, Tithonus is reduced to a mere shadow of himself. But since he is immortal, he cannot die and is destined to live forever, growing older and older with each passing day.
- She asked gods to make him immortal but forgot to ask for eternal youth.

### ***“Locksley Hall”***

- Written in 1835; Published in 1842 in *Poems*
- The poem represents "young life, its good side, its deficiencies, and its yearnings"
- A dramatic monologue written as a set of 97 rhyming couplets. Each line follows a modified version of trochaic octameter in which the last unstressed syllable has been eliminated
- The speaker of this dramatic monologue declaims against marriages made for material gain and worldly prestige.
- The speaker, a soldier, revisits Locksley Hall, his childhood home, where he and his cousin Amy had fallen in love. Amy, however, was a shallow young woman who acceded to her

parents' desires that she marry a wealthier suitor. The speaker begins the poem by protesting the modern mechanized world but ends by reluctantly accepting the inevitability of change.

- In the end, he bids farewell to Locksley Hall, hoping that that a thunderbolt will strike it down.
- Important quotes-
  - "Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West."
  - "Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade, Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid."
  - "Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung, Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!"
  - "Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn:  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn."
  - "Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands."
  - "What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?/Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys."

### **"Break, Break, Break"**

- Written in 1835 (2 years after the death of Arthur Hallam) and published in 1842.
- Though most readers read "Break, Break, Break" as an elegy to Hallam, though the poem stands on its own as a more general

meditation on mortality and loss. Tennyson laments the loss of his friend and expresses his sense of isolation.

- Rhyme scheme- ABCB
- The speaker watches the sea waves breaking on the rocks and wishes a better expression of grief on the loss of his dearest friend.
- Important quotes-
  - “And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!”
  - “But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.”

### **“The Charge of the Light Brigade”**

- Narrative poem; Written & published in 1854 in *The Examiner*
- The poem was later revised and expanded for inclusion in *Maud and Other Poems* (1855).
- The poem is comprised of six numbered stanzas varying in length from six to twelve lines. Each line is in dimeter, which means it has two stressed syllables; moreover, each stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed syllables, making the rhythm dactylic.
- The poem commemorates the doomed charge of 600 British soldiers in the Crimean War (1853-1856), who were led into the battlefield due to a wrong command; on account of a smaller number, the soldiers are bound to lose as they charge into the “mouth of Hell”.
- The poem was inspired by an article in *The Times* which recounted that “Some one had blunder'd.”

- The poem celebrates an act of bravery and sacrifice—a suicidal cavalry charge during the Crimean war. Written just six weeks later, Tennyson's poem argues that the willingness of the cavalry to sacrifice themselves—without calling their orders into question—makes them heroes.
- Tennyson recited this poem onto a wax cylinder, an earlier form of recording device, in 1890.
- Important quotes-
  - "Half a league, half a league, half a league onward,"
  - "Honour the charge they made! Honour the light brigade,"
  - "Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die."
  - "Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell."

### **"The Defence of Lucknow"**

- About the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in India
- A narrative poem divided into 7 stanzas of varied length and lines of free verse
- Spoken from the point of view of an English soldier who was a survivor in the siege of Lucknow, that lasted over 80 days.
- Dramatizes the traditional ballad theme of wartime bravery, while emphasizing the importance of national strength and unity, but it also highlights...the great risk associated with foreign campaigns. As is evident in the opening lines, "Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou / Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!"

- The poem rooted in Victorian imperial history is spoken by a survivor of the defence of Lucknow against Indian mutiny. The British unity, however is not strong enough to prevent the blood shed of the mutiny.
- 6 out of 7 stanzas end as such- “And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.”
- Important quotes-
  - “Every man die at his post!’ and there hailed on our houses and halls  
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,”
  - “Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do.”
  - “Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never could save us a life.”

### **“Crossing the Bar”**

- Tennyson wrote the poem in 1889, three years before he died. The poem describes his placid and accepting attitude toward death. Although he followed this work with subsequent poems, he requested that “Crossing the Bar” appear as the final poem in all collections of his work.
- Death is compared to crossing a sandbar on the seashore
- Written in 4 stanzas of varied length lines
- Rhyme scheme- ABAB
- Important quotes-
  - “Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!”
  - “When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.”
  - “And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;”

- "I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar"

### **"The Princess"**

- A narrative poem in humorous tone
- Published in 1847
- Written in Blank Verse
- The poem tells the story of a heroic princess who forswears the world of men and founds a women's university where men are forbidden to enter. The prince to whom she was betrothed in infancy enters the university with two friends, disguised as women students.
- They are discovered and flee, but eventually they fight a battle for the princess's hand. They lose and are wounded, but the women nurse the men back to health. Eventually the princess returns the prince's love.
- Speaker- The prince; Princess- Ida
- Princes' friends- Cyril & Florian
- Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche- Inspired princess Ida to remain unmarried
- Poem begins with a prologue/foil narrative- party of Sir Walter Vivian
- Important quotes-
  - "Life is brief but love is LONG ."
  - "The man may be more of woman, she of man".
  - "Too comic for the solemn things they are, / Too solemn for the comic touches in them."

### **"Claribel: A Melody"**

- First published in 1830

- Lyrical Poem
- Although, Tennyson tells a poem about a dead lover, he ultimately concludes that he can see Claribel in different beautiful things (Like bee hum or falling leaves) which suggests, love cannot be destroyed by death.
- The poem might also suggest the danger of isolation, as in *Mariana*.
- Title inspired from Book II of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, or, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (daughter of King Alonso of Naples in Southern Italy and the sister of Ferdinand.)

## Critical Comments

- "Next to the Bible, "In Memorium" is my comfort" – Queen Victoria I
- "Tennyson had the finest ear. Perhaps of only English poet, he was also undoubtedly the stupidest" – W.H. Auden
- "His genius was lyrical" - W.H. Auden
- "He was the saddest of all English poets" – T.S. Eliot
- "Tennyson lacked intellectual power" - T.S. Eliot
- "Tennyson knew his magician's business" – Aldous Huxley
- "The heir to the Romantic tradition" - Louis François *Cazamian*
- "*Tennyson's poetry is to be eternally young, like Adam in Paradise, to find every morning a new world*" – W. J. Long
- "We cannot speak with confidence of his rank in literature; but by his crystal-clear style, his scientific spirit of inquiry and comparison, illumined here and there by the play of humour, and especially by his broad sympathy and intellectual culture, he seems destined to occupy a very high place among the masters of literary criticism." - W. J. Long

- “A poem of despair, but of despair of a religious kind” – L.S. Flot on “In Memorium”
- “Tennyson is the most restful brother, solid-hearted man” – Thomas Carlyle
- “His age was vividly with him and he wrote of patriotism, of the proper conception of freedom, of the sad condition of the poor, of the woman’s position in the onward movement of the world, of the place of commerce and science in that movement, of war as the remedy of selfishness and evils of commerce and of future race” – Stopford A. Brooke
- “The gifts by which Tennyson has won and will keep his place among the great poets of England are pre-eminently of an artist” – R.C. Jebb
- “It is one of the most Virgilian of Tennyson’s poems and perhaps his most famous lyric” – about “Tears, Idle Tears”
- “There was a pond in the park on which in winter my father might be seen skating sailing about on the ice in his long blue cloak” – Tennyson’s son.

## **Christina Rossetti**

Christina became one of the Victorian age’s finest poets. She was the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Goblin Market and other Poems* (1862), *The Prince’s Progress* (1866), *A Pageant* (1881), and *The Face of the Deep* (1882).

By her sixteenth birthday Christina, who was regarded as the poet in the family, had written more than fifty poems that were transcribed into a notebook by her sister. In 1847 a collection of her poems, titled *Verses*, was privately printed by her grandfather Polidori.



It was circulated among family and friends and was well received. The thirty-nine poems are notably literary in their inspiration, which is traceable to the Gothic writers Radcliffe, Lewis, and Charles Maturin; the English poets George Herbert, George Crabbe, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson; and the Italian poets Dante, Torquato Tasso, and Pietro Metastasio.

The first and most striking poem in the collection is “The Dead City,” an ambitious 275-line dream vision of a magnificent city, succulent banquet, and voluptuous revelers all turned to stone, the evocative descriptions of which anticipate the Pre-Raphaelite style. Here, as in Rossetti’s most famous poem, “Goblin Market” (1862), lusciously described fruits represent the temptations of self-indulgence and pleasure.

This genre—a narrative that combines fantasy with moral allegory—was an important one for Rossetti, and she employed it in more-accomplished poems such as “Goblin Market,” “From House to Home,” “The Prince’s Progress,” and “A Ballad of Boding,” as well as in her tales “Nick,” “Hero,” and *Speaking Likenesses, with Pictures thereof by Arthur Hughes* (1874).

A morbid strain can be seen in many of the poems in the collection: themes of mortality, inconstancy, and corruptibility figure prominently. Although Rossetti’s mature style is not fully realized at this point, *Verses* is important as a tangible sign of her commitment to poetry and of her family’s recognition of her vocation.”

In 1848 she had her first taste of fame when, at Dante Gabriel’s instigation, she submitted two of her poems, “Death’s Chill Between” and “Heart’s Chill Between,” to the prestigious literary periodical *The Athenaeum*; their acceptance made her a nationally published poet at seventeen. During this period Dante Gabriel was gathering around him the circle of young men who named themselves the Pre-

Raphaelite Brotherhood. Later in her career a reviewer in the *Catholic World* (October 1876) called her the “queen of the Preraphaelite school”.

Late in 1849 the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood initiated a periodical, *The Germ*, as a vehicle for the members’ innovative views on art. Its four issues—dated January to April 1850—provided a venue for seven of Rossetti’s poems: “Dreamland,” “An End,” “Song” (“Oh roses for the flush of youth” ), “A Pause of Thought,” “A Testimony,” “Repining,” and “Sweet Death.” These publications, which were anonymous in the first issue and pseudonymous thereafter, found an appreciative, though small, audience.

In 1850 Rossetti wrote *Maude: A Story for Girls* (1897), a novella that was not published until after her death. The title character’s appearance and personality bear many similarities to accounts of the author, and this work, with its exploration of the tensions among the sometimes incompatible categories of female, poet, and Anglo-Catholic, is usually considered a semi-autobiographical portrait of the adolescent Rossetti. Fifteen-year-old Maude Foster is a poet whose “broken-hearted” verse dwells on themes of suffering, world-weariness, resignation, and religious devotion.

Some of Rossetti’s important early poems, later published under the titles “Song” (“She sat and sang alway”), “Three Nuns,” and “Symbols,” are included as Maude’s productions, and a *bouts rimés* contest also appears in the narrative. Rossetti returned to this mixing of genres—prose punctuated with poetry—in her devotional works *Called to Be Saints: The Minor Festivals Devotionally Studied* (1881), *Time Flies*, and *The Face of the Deep: A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse* (1892). Religious issues play a central role in the story when Maude suffers a spiritual crisis, and Anglo-Catholic practices are described as she discusses with her cousins the heavily symbolic lectern cover they are embroidering, the question of a vocation as a nun, and the Eucharist. The main conflict in the

narrative revolves around Maude's experience of the incompatibility of ladylike behavior and poetic achievement. Like the author, Maude is torn between pride in her work and moral qualms about that pride. The heroine's overactive conscience and endless self-recriminations provide considerable insight into Rossetti's own overscrupulous nature.

Throughout her twenties Rossetti continued to write poetry and prose. Her Italian heritage is apparent in the Italian poems "Versi" and "L'Incognita" and an unfinished epistolary novel, "Corrispondenza [*sic*] Familiare," which were published in a privately printed periodical, *The Bouquet from Marylebone Gardens* during 1851 and 1852. Attempts at publication in prestigious periodicals such as *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's* in 1854 failed.

By the summer of 1859 Rossetti was devoting a good deal of time to her work at Highgate, and its influence can be seen in her poems about illicit love, betrayal, and illegitimacy, such as "Cousin Kate," "The Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children," and "From Sunset to Star Rise," though poems composed before the period of her work at Highgate—"An Apple-Gathering," "The Convent Threshold," and "Maude Clare" for instance—demonstrate her prior interest in the fallen woman.

"Goblin Market," with its theme of a fallen woman being saved by a "sister," can also be seen as informed by Rossetti's experiences at the St. Mary Magdalene Penitentiary. Her interest in this topic reflects the Victorian concern about prostitution as a social evil; other Pre-Raphaelite treatments of the subject include Dante Gabriel's poem "Jenny," begun in 1847 and revised in 1858-1859 and again in 1870; his unfinished painting *Found* (1854-1881); and William Holman Hunt's *The Awakened Conscience* (1853)."

In the 1850s a few of Rossetti's poems were published in

anthologies; "Maude Clare" appeared in *Once a Week* (5 November 1859) and the short stories "The Lost Titian" (*The Crayon*, 1856) and "Nick" (*National Magazine*, October 1857). In 1861 she submitted poems to *Macmillan's Magazine*, and Dante Gabriel sent "Goblin Market" to the art critic John Ruskin in the hope that he would recommend it to William Makepeace Thackeray, editor of *The Cornhill*. Ruskin's criticism of Rossetti's masterpiece is infamous. In his letter of 24 January 1861 to Dante Gabriel, Ruskin singled out for criticism the original meter that is now so often praised: he acknowledged the poem's "beauty and power" but asserted that it was unpublishable because it was "so full of quaintnesses and offences," adding, "Irregular measure... is the chief calamity of modern poetry... your sister should exercise herself in the severest commonplace of metre until she can write as the public like."

Almost simultaneously, Rossetti's poem "Up-hill" was accepted enthusiastically for *Macmillan's* (February 1861), and Alexander Macmillan expressed an interest in seeing more of her work. During 1861 *Macmillan's* published two more of Rossetti's poems: "A Birthday" (April 1861) and "An Apple-Gathering" (August 1861). In June of that year Rossetti took a short vacation in France." In 1862 the Macmillan firm brought out Rossetti's first commercially published volume of poetry, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*. Although some of the poems had been published in *Macmillan's*, *Once a Week*, and *The Germ*, and others were included in the manuscript for *Maude*, most were taken from the notebooks in which Rossetti had been writing since the private printing of *Verses* in 1847.

Comparisons of the manuscript and printed versions of the poems show that most were not substantially revised. Usually the earliest extant version of a given poem is the fair copy transcribed into the notebook; if Rossetti reworked it in the act of composition, such drafts no longer exist. She often changed a word or two in preparation for publication; where major revisions occurred, they

took the form of the deletion of whole stanzas, sometimes reducing a poem by more than half its original length: such is the case with “Maude Clare,” “Echo,” and “Bitter for Sweet.”

*Goblin Market and Other Poems* was a critical success, with favorable notices in many periodicals, including *The London Review* (12 April 1862), *The Spectator* (12 April 1862), *The Athenaeum* (26 April 1862), *The Saturday Review* (24 May 1862), *The Eclectic Review* (June 1862), and *The British Quarterly Review* (July 1862).

Other poems in *Goblin Market and Other Poems* are- “Dream-land,” “At Home,” “Remember,” “After Death,” “An End,” “Song” (“Oh roses for the flush of youth”), “Echo,” “A Peal of Bells,” “May,” “A Pause of Thought,” “Shut Out,” “Song” (“When I am dead, my dearest”), “Dead Before Death,” “Bitter for Sweet,” and “Rest”, “Old and New Year Ditties” and “Amen”.

During the early 1860s Rossetti published poems in the feminist periodicals *The English Woman’s Journal* and *Victoria Magazine* and in various anthologies, in addition to making regular appearances in *Macmillan’s*.

Her work *The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems* was met with mild reviews. *he Prince’s Progress and Other Poems* lays great emphasis on the transitoriness of this life, a recurring theme in the Rossetti canon. The lesson to be learned from poems such as “On the Wing,” “Beauty is Vain,” “The Bourne,” “Vanity of Vanities,” “Grown and Flown,” “A Farm Walk,” and “Gone for Ever” is that all earthly things are unreliable, illusory, and passing. The failure of human love is a keynote in the volume, beginning with the title poem and appearing again in “Jessie Cameron,” “The Poor Ghost,” “Songs in a Cornfield,” “One Day,” “A Bird’s-Eye View,” “Light Love,” “On the Wing,” “Maggie a Lady,” “The Ghost’s Petition,” “Grown and Flown,” and “The Iniquity of the Fathers Upon the Children.”

In 1867 Rossetti published in *The Churchman's Shilling Magazine* three religious and moralistic stories: "The Waves of this Troublesome World: A Tale of Hastings Ten Years Ago" (April and May 1867), "Some Pros and Cons about Pews" (July 1867), and "A Safe Investment" (November 1867); all were republished in *Commonplace and Other Short Stories* (1870). For this volume Rossetti was persuaded by Dante Gabriel to defect from Macmillan to his publisher, F. S. Ellis. *Commonplace and Other Short Stories* was a commercial failure, though reviewers singled out "The Lost Titian" and the title story, with its Jane Austen-like social comment, for praise.

The reception of Rossetti's collection of stories left Ellis disinclined to publish her next work, a collection of poems for children. *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* was published by Routledge in 1872 and was favorably received; the public was particularly pleased by the illustrations by Arthur Hughes.

Rossetti published the first of her six volumes of devotional prose, *Annus Domini: A Prayer for Each Day of the Year, Founded on a Text of Holy Scripture* (1874). In these devotional writings readers can find explicit statements of themes treated in the poetry of previous decades, and in many instances Rossetti discusses natural and biblical images, virtually glossing favorite poetic symbols. *Annus Domini* consists of 366 meditations, each of which includes a passage from scripture followed by a collect beginning with an invocation to Christ. The texts are arranged in the order of their appearance in the Bible, and prayers throughout are intensely Christ-centered; even Old Testament passages prompt an address to Christ.

Rossetti returned to Macmillan for the publication of *Speaking Likenesses* in 1874. The book consists of three tales framed by the dialogue among a storytelling aunt and her nieces. Many readers have noted the sexual implications of the monstrous children in the

first tale—boys bristling with hooks, quills, and angles; girls exuding sticky and slimy fluids—and that the predatory games they play amount to a figurative rape. While terror predominates in the first tale, in the second a young child's desire to have a gypsy tea ends in frustration and despair as she fails to master the tasks of lighting a fire and boiling a kettle. The final tale, in which danger and temptation are overcome, rounds out the volume with a happy ending. The influence of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872) is evident.

Rossetti's next book, *Seek and Find: A Double Series of Short Studies on the Benedicite* (1879), was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), which published the rest of her devotional prose works as well as *Verses* (1893), her collection of devotional poems. *Seek and Find* consists of two series of studies on the Benedicite, a long poem praising a catalogue of God's works that is included in the Book of Common Prayer as an apocryphal addition to the Book of Daniel.

Rossetti's next work, *Called to Be Saints: The Minor Festivals Devotionally Studied*, published in 1881, had been completed by 1876; Macmillan had turned it down under its previous title, "Young Plants and Polished Corners." A devotional accompaniment for the red-letter saints' days, *Called to Be Saints* provides for each day an account of the saint's life, a prayer, an intricate "memorial" in two columns linking the saint's life with biblical texts, and descriptions of the emblem, precious stone, and flower associated with the saint and discussions of their appropriateness.

As her poetic creativity decreased, Rossetti cultivated a modest scholarly impulse. Earlier instances of her scholarly writing include her entries on Italian writers and other celebrities in the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography* (1857-1863); in her article on Petrarch she claims to be a descendant of Laura. In 1867 she had published the first of two articles on Dante, a commendatory piece

written in support of Cayley's terza rima translation of *The Divine Comedy* (1851-1855). After attending lectures on *The Divine Comedy* at University College, London, from 1878 to 1880 she wrote a more ambitious article, "Dante: The Poet Illustrated out of the Poem" (1884). In 1882 she considered undertaking literary biographies of Adelaide Proctor and Elizabeth Barrett Browning; and she took a commission and began to research a life of Ann Radcliffe, but a lack of materials prevented her from completing it. She agreed to trace allusions to Dante, Petrarch, and Giovanni Boccaccio for Alexander Balloch Grosart's scholarly edition of *The Faerie Queene* in *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* (1882-1884), a project from which she withdrew because of ill health. She spent many afternoons at the British Museum and was a tireless reader of periodicals, including *The Athenaeum*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, *The Saturday Review*, *Blackwood's*, and *The Edinburgh Review*.

Rossetti's research on Petrarch and Dante informs one of the most important poems of her maturity, "*Monna Innominata*," which appeared in her third commercially published poetry collection, *A Pageant and Other Poems* (1880). A sequence of fourteen sonnets—thus subtitled "A Sonnet of Sonnets"—"*Monna Innominata*" draws attention to its links to the medieval amatory tradition both in its prose preface and in the epigraphs from Dante and Petrarch that introduce each sonnet.

Rossetti's next book, *Time Flies: A Reading Diary*, published in 1885, is both the most readable and the most autobiographical of her devotional works. As the subtitle suggests, the book is diarylike in structure, with daily entries consisting of meditations on religious feast days and saints' days, poetic compositions, or personal reflections and reminiscences.



The last of Rossetti's six devotional studies, *The Face of the Deep: A Devotional Commentary on the Apocalypse*, published in 1892, bears the familiar dedication to her mother, but now "for the first time to her beloved, revered, cherished memory."

More important for today's reader, *The Face of the Deep* includes more than two hundred poems; Rossetti combined them with poems from *Called to Be Saints* and *Time Flies* into a volume of devotional poems titled simply *Verses*. Published in 1893 by the S.P.C.K., this collection of 331 religious lyrics was Rossetti's last volume to appear during her lifetime.

She died on 29 December 1894. Rossetti had attained fame as a poet and had earned high regard as a spiritual guide; some had even speculated, after Tennyson's death in 1892, that she would make a suitable successor to the laureateship. After her death many articles appeared with personal reminiscences, expressing admiration of her saintliness and assessing her poetry and prose. The sole surviving sibling, William made special efforts to document his sister's life and edit her work.

In *New Poems, Hitherto Unpublished or Uncollected* he made available carefully edited and annotated texts of poems from periodicals and anthologies and many unpublished ones, some written late in Rossetti's life and others that she had written earlier but had not published presumably because she deemed them either too personal or not up to the standard of her best work.

*Maude* appeared in 1897 and *The Poetical Works* in 1904; the latter remained, despite its awkward divisions and arrangement, the standard edition of her poetry until Rebecca W. Crump's *The Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti: A Variorum Edition* (1979-1990), which prompted a modern reassessment of Rossetti's poetry.

# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Poetic Movements

## Imagist Poets

Imagism was born in England and America in the early twentieth century. A reactionary movement against romanticism and Victorian poetry, imagism emphasized simplicity, clarity of expression, and precision through the use of exacting visual images.

Though Ezra Pound is noted as the founder of imagism, the movement was rooted in ideas first developed by English philosopher and poet T. E. Hulme, who, as early as 1908, spoke of poetry based on an absolutely accurate presentation of its subject, with no excess verbiage. In his essay “Romanticism and Classicism,” Hulme wrote that the language of poetry is a “visual concrete one....Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence.”

Pound adapted Hulme’s ideas on poetry for his imagist movement, which began in earnest in 1912, when he first introduced the term into the literary lexicon during a meeting with Hilda Doolittle. After reading her poem “Hermes of the Ways,” Pound suggested some revisions and signed the poem “H. D., Imagiste” before sending it to *Poetry* magazine in October of that year. That November, Pound himself used the term “Imagiste” in print for the first time when he published Hulme’s *Complete Poetical Works*.

A strand of modernism, imagism aimed to replace abstractions with concrete details that could be further expounded upon through the use of figuration. These typically short, free verse poems—which had clear precursors in the concise, image-focused poems of ancient Greek lyricists and Japanese haiku poets—moved away from fixed meters and moral reflections, subordinating everything to what Hulme once called the “hard, dry image.”

Pound's definition of the image was "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." He said, "It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives the sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art." In March 1913, *Poetry* published "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." In it, imagist poet F. S. Flint, quoting Pound, defined the tenets of imagist poetry:

- ❖ Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
- ❖ To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
- ❖ As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

In 1914, *Des Imagistes*, an anthology assembled and edited by Pound, was published; it collected work by William Carlos Williams, Richard Aldington, James Joyce, and H. D., among others. By the spring of that year, however, disputes had begun to brew among the movement regarding leadership and control of the group. Amy Lowell, who criticized Pound for what she thought was a too-myopic view of poetry, assumed leadership of the movement and from 1915 to 1917 published three anthologies, all called *Some Imagist Poets*, but by then Pound had dissociated himself from imagism, derisively calling it "Amygism"; Pound instead appropriated his imagism into a new philosophy, vorticism, claiming that "the image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; ... a VORTEX."

By 1917, even Lowell began to distance herself from the movement, the tenets of which eventually became absorbed into the broader modernist movement and continued to influence poets throughout the twentieth century.

- **Ezra Pound- Ezra Loomis Pound**, (born October 30, 1885, Hailey, Idaho, U.S.—died November 1, 1972, Venice, Italy),

American poet and critic, a supremely discerning and energetic entrepreneur of the arts who did more than any other single figure to advance a “modern” movement in English and American literature.

He had been to Europe three times before, the third time alone in the summer of 1906, when he had gathered the material for his first three published articles: “Raphaelite Latin,” concerning the Latin poets of the Renaissance, and “Interesting French Publications,” concerning the troubadours (both published in the *Book News Monthly*, Philadelphia, September 1906), and “Burgos, a Dream City of Old Castile” (October issue).

Now, with little money, he sailed to Gibraltar and southern Spain, then on to Venice, where in June 1908 he published, at his own expense, his first book of poems, *A lume spento* (“With Tapers Quenched”). About September 1908 he went to London, where he was befriended by the writer and editor Ford Madox Ford (who published Pound’s work in his *English Review*), entered William Butler Yeats’s circle, and joined the “school of images,” a modern group presided over by the philosopher T.E. Hulme.

In England, success came quickly to Pound. A book of poems, *Personae*, was published in April 1909; a second book, *Exultations*, followed in October; and a third book, *The Spirit of Romance*, based on lectures delivered in London (1909–10), was published in 1910.

Toward the end of 1911 he met an English journalist, Alfred R. Orage, editor of the socialist weekly *New Age*, who opened its pages to him and provided him with a small but regular income during the next nine years.

In 1912 Pound became London correspondent for the small magazine *Poetry* (Chicago); he did much to enhance the magazine's importance and was soon a dominant figure in Anglo-American verse. He was among the first to recognize and review the poetry of Robert Frost and D.H. Lawrence and to praise the sculpture of the modernists Jacob Epstein and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. As leader of the Imagist movement of 1912–14, successor of the “school of images,” he drew up the first Imagist manifesto, with its emphasis on direct and sparse language and precise images in poetry, and he edited the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes* (1914).

As unofficial editor of *The Egoist* (London) and later as London editor of *The Little Review* (New York City), he saw to the publication of Joyce's novels *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, thus spreading Joyce's name and securing financial assistance for him. In that same year he gave T.S. Eliot a similar start in his career as poet and critic.

Pound continued to publish his own poetry (*Ripostes*, 1912; *Lustra*, 1916) and prose criticism (*Pavannes and Divisions*, 1918). From the literary remains of the great Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, which had been presented to Pound in 1913, he succeeded in publishing highly acclaimed English versions of early Chinese poetry, *Cathay* (1915), and two volumes of Japanese Noh plays (1916–17) as well. Unsettled by the slaughter of World War I and the spirit of hopelessness he felt was pervading England after its conclusion, Pound decided to move to Paris, publishing before he left two of his most important poetical works, “Homage to Sextus Propertius,” in the book *Quia Pauper Amavi* (1919), and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (1920). “Propertius” is a comment on the British Empire in 1917, by way of Propertius and the Roman Empire. *Mauberley*, a finely chiseled “portrait” of

one aspect of British literary culture in 1919, was one of the most praised poems of the 20th century.

During his stay in Paris (1921–24) Pound met and helped the young American novelist Ernest Hemingway; wrote an opera, *Le Testament*, based on poems of François Villon; assisted T.S. Eliot with the editing of his long poem *The Waste Land*; and acted as correspondent for the New York literary journal *The Dial*.

In 1927–28 Pound edited his own magazine, *Exile*, and in 1930 he brought together, under the title *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, various segments of his ambitious long poem *The Cantos*, which he had begun in 1915. The 1930s saw the publication of further volumes of *The Cantos* (*Eleven New Cantos*, 1934; *The Fifth Decad of Cantos*, 1937; *Cantos LII–LXXI*, 1940) and a collection of some of his best prose (*Make It New*, 1934).

Between 1946–58, he continued to write *The Cantos* (*Section: Rock-Drill*, 1955; *Thrones*, 1959), translated ancient Chinese poetry (*The Classic Anthology*, 1954) and Sophocles' *Trachiniai* (*Women of Trachis*, 1956).

Pound lapsed into silence (insanity) in 1960, leaving *The Cantos* unfinished. More than 800 pages long, they are fragmentary and formless despite recurring themes and ideas. *The Cantos* are the logbook of Pound's own private voyage through Greek mythology, ancient China and Egypt, Byzantium, Renaissance Italy, the works of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and many other periods and subjects, including economics and banking and the nooks and crannies of his own memory and experience.

- **Amy Lowell**- (born Feb. 9, 1874, Brookline, Mass., U.S.—died May 12, 1925, Brookline), American critic, lecturer, and a leading poet of the Imagist school.

Her first volume of poetry was *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* (1912). In 1915 was published her second book, *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*, which includes her first experimentation with free verse and “polyphonic prose.” A *Critical Fable* (1922), an imitation of her kinsman James Russell Lowell’s *Fable for Critics*, was published anonymously and stirred widespread speculation until she revealed her authorship.

Lowell edited the three numbers of *Some Imagist Poets* (1915–17). Subsequent volumes of her own work include *Men, Women, and Ghosts* (1916), which contains her well-known poem “Patterns”; *Can Grande’s Castle* (1918); and *Legends* (1921). *What’s O’Clock* (1925), *East Wind* (1926), and *Ballads for Sale* (1927) were published posthumously. Her critical work includes *Six French Poets* (1915), *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), and the two-volume biography *John Keats* (1925).

- **H.D.- Hilda Doolittle**, (born September 10, 1886, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, U.S.—died September 27, 1961, Zürich, Switzerland), American poet, known initially as an Imagist. She was also a translator, novelist-playwright, and self-proclaimed “pagan mystic.”

Her first published poems, sent to *Poetry* magazine by Pound, appeared under the initials H.D., which remained thereafter her nom de plume. Other poems appeared in Pound’s anthology *Des Imagistes* (1914) and in the London journal *The Egoist*, edited by Richard Aldington, to whom she was married from 1913 to 1938. She was closely associated for much of her adult life with the British novelist Bryher.

H.D.’s first volume of verse, *Sea Garden* (1916), established her as an important voice among the radical young Imagist poets. Her subsequent volumes included *Hymen* (1921), *Heliodora and*

*Other Poems* (1924), *Red Roses for Bronze* (1931), and a trilogy comprising *The Walls Do Not Fall* (1944), *Tribute to the Angels* (1945), and *Flowering of the Rod* (1946).

The *Collected Poems of H.D.* (1925 and 1940), *Selected Poems of H.D.* (1957), and *Collected Poems 1912–1944* (1983) secured her position as a major 20th-century poet. She won additional acclaim for her translations (*Choruses from the Iphigeneia in Aulis and the Hippolytus of Euripides* [1919] and *Euripides' Ion* [1937]), for her verse drama (*Hippolytus Temporizes* [1927]), and for prose works such as *Palimpsest* (1926), *Hedylus* (1928), and, posthumously, *The Gift* (1982). Several of her books are autobiographical—including *Tribute to Freud* (1956); *Bid Me to Live* (1960); and the posthumously published *End to Torment* (1979), a memoir of Pound, and *Hermione* (1981), a semiautobiographical bildungsroman, or perhaps more accurately a *Künstlerroman* (portrait of the artist's development). *Helen in Egypt* (1961), a volume of verse, appeared shortly after her death.

## Georgian Poets

Georgian poetry was a poetic movement in England that lasted from 1910 to 1936 during the reign of George V. Georgian poetry, or Georgianism, is defined by a respect for formal qualities of poetry and romantic subject matter. The poems used clear and simple rhyme schemes and metrical patterns and often uses themes of nature and rural life. After the First World War, and the devastation that came along with it, the Georgian poetry movement receded into the background. It was replaced by various movements within the broader modernist genre. Today, the word “Georgian” can have a pejorative connotation when applied to poetry.



The movement is perfectly situated in-between the Victorian era and Modernism. The Former is known for its stoic adherence to traditional formal principles while the latter defined by the exact opposite. Most of the poems published in the anthologies were marked by their romanticism and hedonism. Many were also noted for their sentimentality.

The works of the participating poets were included in *Georgian Poetry*, a series of anthologies. Some of the poets who are included in this category are:

- Rupert Brooke
- Siegfried Sassoon
- Walter de la Mare
- Robert Graves
- A.E. Housman
- D.H. Lawrence

Scholars have noted that the original concept for the Georgian Poetry anthologies came about as a joke between Edward Marsh, Duncan Grant, and George Mallory. It was their intention to publish a party of the numerous small books of poetry appearing in the 1910s. While they took on the task lightheartedly at first, they soon decided to focus on the volumes more seriously. The *Georgian Poetry* anthologies, which included five separate collections, were published by Harold Monro and edited by Edward Marsh.

When Edward Marsh decided that it was time to include a female poet in the collections, he selected Fredegond Shove. Four of her poems from *Dreams and Journeys* appeared in the third volume of *Georgian Poets*. In the final collection, readers can find a few poems by Vita Sackville-West (Female poets were only included in the final two volumes.)

Some Forty writers are considered in the group. Unlike their contemporaries the imagists, the Georgians had no agreed programme and were in no sense a literary school. Indeed the only workable definition of a Georgian poet is that his or her work (there were briefly two women among the forty) appeared in Marsh's anthology. Arguably the first of the Georgians was Wilfrid Gibson, who decided in 1905 that a poet should write in simple language about the life of his own times. By 1910 he was well known. In 1911 John Masefield's notorious verse narrative *The Everlasting Mercy*, as well as work by Harold Monro, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Rupert Brooke, gave promise that a long period of stagnation in English poetry was coming to an end.

The most obvious feature of what Brooke in 1913 called 'the New Poetry' was that it was not Victorian. Gone at last were vague rhetoric and earnest moralizing, gone too the languors and introspection of the decadence: the work of the first Georgians was outward-looking, positive, full of energy and hope.

In a prefatory note 'E.M.' declared his belief that 'English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty'. He arranged his seventeen poets—eleven of whom had contributed to the *Review*—in alphabetical order, so the first poem was Abercrombie's '*The Sale of Saint Thomas*', which set the tone for the book with its dramatic form, evocations of exotic places, tough, sometimes brutal, realism, and precise, vivid imagery. The saint learns that 'prudence is the deadly sin'; certainly none of the 1912 Georgians seemed interested in prudence.

Yet nothing in any volume of the anthology could be described as revolutionary. Marsh maintained that poetry should be intelligible, musical, and 'racy' (he said raciness meant intensity of thought and feeling). These were qualities of Brooke's work in particular: he was 'the moving spirit' among the early Georgians,

as Monro remembered later, and the only significant influence on Marsh, who adored him. In 1914 Brooke collaborated with Gibson, Abercrombie, and Drinkwater in publishing their own verse in their own periodical, *New Numbers*.

Ezra Pound was invited to contribute, but he and Marsh could not agree on a suitable poem: Pound soon grew scornful of the Georgians, and his 1914 anthology, *Des imagistes*, also published by Monro, was intended as a counterblast to Marsh's.

Marsh had not intended to produce another volume, but the success of the first persuaded him that a second, covering the next two-year period, would be worth risking. War intervened, but *Georgian Poetry, 1913–1915* eventually came out in November 1915. The selection had mostly been made early in 1914, so not many war poems were included. Several poets were dropped, and there were only two newcomers, Ralph Hodgson and Francis Ledwidge. The book was dedicated to Brooke and James Elroy Flecker who had both died in 1915: Marsh chose poems by both of them, but ruled that any future volume would be limited to living writers.

Other writers whose work was published in one of the five volumes of *Georgian Poetry* included: Martin Armstrong; G. K. Chesterton; Richard Hughes; Peter Quennell; Victoria [Vita] Sackville-West; Francis Brett Young.

- **Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)**- known for his idealistic war sonnets written during the First World War, especially "The Soldier". Brooke enlisted at the outbreak of war in August 1914. He came to public attention as a war poet early the following year, when The Times Literary Supplement published two sonnets ("IV: The Dead" and "V: The Soldier").

- **William Henry Davies** (1873-1940)- a Welsh poet and writer, who spent much of his life as a tramp or hobo in the United Kingdom and the United States. The *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1908) covers his American life in 1893–1899, including adventures and characters from his travels as a drifter. In 1907, the manuscript of *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* drew the attention of George Bernard Shaw, who agreed to write a preface (largely through the efforts of his wife Charlotte). *Later Days*, a 1925 sequel to *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, describes the beginnings of Davies's writing career and his acquaintance with Belloc, Shaw, de la Mare and others.

Davies self-published his first slim book of poetry, *The Soul's Destroyer*, in 1905, again by means of his savings. In December 1908 his essay "How It Feels To Be Out of Work", described by Stonesifer as "a rather pedestrian performance", appeared in *The English Review*. In 1930 Davies edited the poetry anthology *Jewels of Song* for Cape, choosing works by over 120 poets, including William Blake, Thomas Campion, Shakespeare, Tennyson and W. B. Yeats. Of his own poems he added only "The Kingfisher" and "Leisure". The collection reappeared as *An Anthology of Short Poems* in 1938.

- **Wilfred Wilson Gibson** (1878-1962)- Gibson was one of the founders of the Dymock poets, a community of writers who settled briefly, before the outbreak of the Great War, in the village of Dymock, in north Gloucestershire. He wrote a piece of criticism on *Italian Nationalism and English Letters* by Harry W. Rudman regarding the contributions made by Italian exiles in England to English literature, which were in the form of poetry by and large. He also wrote criticism on *The Burning Oracle: Studies in the Poetry of Action* by G. Wilson Knight, wherein he commends the fact that Knight sees the creative energy of living writers not only in the creation of artworks, but also in the creation of life itself.

- **Walter de la Mare** (1873-1956)- an English poet, short story writer, and novelist. He is probably best remembered for his works for children, for his poem "The Listeners", and for a highly acclaimed selection of subtle psychological horror stories, amongst them "Seaton's Aunt" and "All Hallows". *Come Hither* was an anthology, edited by de la Mare, mostly of poetry with some prose. It has a frame story, and can be read on several levels. It was first published in 1923.

In 1921, his novel *Memoirs of a Midget* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction, and his post-war *Collected Stories for Children* won the 1947 Carnegie Medal for British children's books.

De la Mare was a notable writer of ghost stories. His collections *Eight Tales*, *The Riddle and Other Stories*, *The Connoisseur and Other Stories*, *On the Edge* and *The Wind Blows Over* contain several ghost stories each.

De la Mare wrote two supernatural novels, *Henry Brocken* (1904) and *The Return* (1910). His poem "The Ghost Chase" appeared in *Punch* for 26 March 1941 and was illustrated by Rowland Emmett.

De la Mare described two distinct "types" of imagination – although "aspects" might be a better term: the childlike and the boylike. It was at the border between the two that Shakespeare, Dante, and the rest of the great poets lay. De la Mare claimed that all children fall into the category of having a childlike imagination at first, which is usually replaced at some point in their lives.

By adulthood (de la Mare proposed), the childlike imagination has either retreated for ever or grown bold enough to face the real world. Thus emerge the two extremes of the spectrum of adult minds: the mind moulded by the boylike is "logical" and

"deductive". That shaped by the childlike becomes "intuitive, inductive".

- **Sir J. C. Squire** (1884-1958)- a British writer, most notable as editor of the *London Mercury*, a major literary magazine in the interwar period. He was also a poet and historian, who captained a famous literary cricket-team called the Invalids. In his book *If It Had Happened Otherwise* (1931) he collected a series of essays, many of which could be considered alternative histories, from some of the leading historians of the period (including Hilaire Belloc and Winston Churchill); in America it was published that same year in somewhat different form under the title *If: or, History Rewritten*.

Squire was knighted in 1933, and after leaving the *London Mercury* in 1934, he became a reader for Macmillans, the publishers; in 1937, he became a reviewer for the *Illustrated London News*. Squire is generally credited with the one-liner "I am not so think as you drunk I am", which appeared as the refrain of his Ballade *of Soporific Absorption*.

- **James Elroy Flecker** (1884-1915)- a British novelist and playwright. As a poet, he was most influenced by the Parnassian poets (a French literary style of "art for art's sake" that began during the positivist period of the 19th century, occurring after romanticism and prior to symbolism. The style was influenced by the author Théophile Gautier as well as by the philosophical ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Flecker's poem "The Bridge of Fire" features in Neil Gaiman's Sandman series, in the volume *The Wake*, and *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* is quoted in the volume *World's End*. His death at the age of thirty was described at the time as "unquestionably the greatest premature loss that English literature has suffered since the death of Keats".

In 1910 he published the collection *Thirty-Six Poems* and a year later followed it up with *Forty-Two Poems*. His seminal work *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* appeared two years later. In 1914, Flecker published his second novel *The King of Alsander*.

- **Laurence Binyon** (1869-1943)- an English poet, dramatist and art scholar. He won the Newdigate Prize for his poem *Persephone* in 1891 in Oxford University. Moved by the casualties of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, Binyon wrote his most famous work "For the Fallen", which is often recited at Remembrance Sunday services in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. His war poetry includes a poem about the London Blitz, "The Burning of the Leaves", regarded by many as his masterpiece.

His first book on Oriental art was *Painting in the Far East* (1908), which is still a classic. His later books on art included *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911) and *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935), as well as writings on English watercolours. He was also concerned with the revival of verse drama; his works in that form included *Attila* (1907), *Arthur* (1923), and *The Young King* (1934).

His verse translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* was published in three parts in 1933, 1938, and 1943.

- **Charles Hamilton Sorley** (1895-1915)- a British Army officer and Scottish war poet who fought in the First World War. He was killed in action during the Battle of Loos in October 1915. *Marlborough and Other Poems* was published posthumously in January 1916 and immediately became a critical success, with six editions printed that year. His *Collected Letters*, edited by his parents, were published in 1919.

## War Poets

According to Perkins, 'when the war came to England in 1914, poetry was among the first volunteers'. The poetry of the past was everywhere eagerly invoked reflecting the idealistic fervor of the England in the early years of the war. The war fostered an attitude of unquestioning enthusiasm for heroic pieties and nationalistic feelings. The poetry of the First World War is primarily a record of the experience of war in conventionally heroic terms till the event itself transformed this traditional response.

War poets like Robert Graves, Nichols, Edmund Blunden and Julian Grenfell retain a conventional peace time habit of sensibility. Although their first-hand experience of combat was traumatic that experience is not the focus of feeling. It was left for Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen to strip the false literary wrappings from the reality of the war. Like Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg delineates the physical and emotional realities of war without sentiment. The most valuable contribution to war poetry was made by Wilfred Owen, he is among the first to discard the soothing concept of an England of shining valleys and Arthurian chivalry.

His lingering Romanticism not only makes his poetry more accessible to the reader but also makes his realism more telling. A past master of verbal exactitude which he often achieved through the use of Keatsian intensifiers, Owen was a patient craftsman whose poetic maturity is proclaimed by his complex pattern of alliteration and controlled use of assonance. Had Owen and Rosenberg survived the war, the poetry of the ensuing period might have been different, the features of Modernism for the first time introduced by them. Thus, the war poets and poetry helped prepare the way for change, not least by preparing an audience for the Modernist movement.



- **Robert Graves** (1895-1985)- English poet, historical novelist and critic. His poems, his translations and innovative analysis of the Greek myths, his memoir of his early life—including his role in World War I—*Good-Bye to All That*, and his speculative study of poetic inspiration *The White Goddess* have never been out of print. He is also a renowned short story writer, with stories such as "The Tenement" still being popular today.

He earned his living from writing, particularly popular historical novels such as *I, Claudius*; *King Jesus*; *The Golden Fleece*; and *Count Belisarius*. He also was a prominent translator of Classical Latin and Ancient Greek texts; his versions of *The Twelve Caesars* and *The Golden Ass* remain popular for their clarity and entertaining style. Graves was awarded the 1934 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for both *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*.

- **Siegfried Sassoon** (1886-1967)- an English war poet, writer, and soldier. His poetry both described the horrors of the trenches and satirised the patriotic pretensions of political leaders. In 1919 took up a post as literary editor of the socialist Daily Herald. Sassoon had expressed his growing sense of identification with German soldiers in poems such as "Reconciliation" (1918). He also wrote one of his best-known peacetime poems, "At the Grave of Henry Vaughan". While in America, he had experimented with a novel. In 1928, he branched out into prose, with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, the anonymously-published first volume of a fictionalised autobiography.

The book won the 1928 James Tait Black Award for fiction. Sassoon followed it with *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) and *Sherston's Progress* (1936). In later years, he revisited his youth and early manhood with three volumes of genuine autobiography, which were also widely acclaimed. These

were *The Old Century*, *The Weald of Youth* and *Siegfried's Journey*.

- **Edmund Blunden** (1896-1974)- an English poet, author, and critic. Like his friend Siegfried Sassoon, he wrote of his experiences in World War I in both verse and prose. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature six times. Blunden published such collections of poems as *The Waggoner* (1920), *The Shepherd* (1922, won the Hawthornden Prize), *Choice or Chance* (1934) and *Shells by a Stream* (1944). He also published crucial prose works on Charles Lamb; Edward Gibbon; Leigh Hunt; Percy Bysshe Shelley (*Shelley: A Life Story*); John Taylor; and Thomas Hardy; and a book about a game he loved, *Cricket Country* (1944).
- **Wilfred Owen** (1893-1918)- an English poet and soldier. He was one of the leading poets of the First World War known for his verse about the horrors of trench and gas warfare. He is best known for his famous phrase "the pity of war".

Among his best-known works – most of which were published posthumously – are "Dulce et Decorum est", "Insensibility", "Anthem for Doomed Youth", "Futility", "Spring Offensive", "The Parable of the Old Men and the Young" and "Strange Meeting". He was greatly influenced by the Romantic poets- Blake, Keats and Shelley; Sassoon's emphasis on realism and "writing from experience" was contrary to Owen's hitherto romantic-influenced style, as seen in his earlier sonnets. Most of his collections were published posthumously: *Poems* (1920), *The Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1931), *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1963), *The Complete Poems and Fragments* (1983); fundamental in this last collection is the poem *Soldier's Dream*, that deals with Owen's conception of war.

Pat Barker's historical novel, *Regeneration* (1991), describes the meeting and relationship between Sassoon and Owen, acknowledging that, from Sassoon's perspective, the meeting had a profoundly significant effect on Owen.

- **Issac Rosenberg** (1890-1918)- an English poet and artist. His *Poems from the Trenches* are recognized as some of the most outstanding poetry written during the First World War. He is best known for his “trench poems,” written between 1916 and 1918. He published a pamphlet of ten poems, *Night and Day*, in 1912. He was very critical of the war from the onset, as described in his very initial phase poem, *On Receiving News of the War*. He published a second collection of poems, *Youth* in 1915.
- On 11 November 1985, Rosenberg was among 16 Great War poets who were commemorated on a slate stone unveiled in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. The inscription on the stone was written by a fellow Great War poet, Wilfred Owen. It reads: "My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity."

## The Movement Poets

In Literature, the term ‘movement’ denotes a new development or epoch in literary activity or interest of some specific period. The ‘Movement Poetry’ was also a new development in the arena of literature of the 1950s which showed its detestation for the established norms in literature of the period.

The term “Movement Poetry” was coined by J.D. Scott in 1954 who was then editor of the periodical, “Spectator” which heralded the birth of a new trend in poetry of the 1950s. The term 'Movement Poets' was not applied to any literary school as such, but to a group of poets of the 1950s.

The literature of the 1950s was a reflection of pain, sufferings, frustration, class struggle and anger of common man. It was not a literature of an élite class but of a lower-middle-class of society. The Movement poets depicted the life in provincial region of the period.

The group of the Movement poets comprised some famous poets and novelists such as Robert Conquest, Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Dennis Enright, Thomas Gunn, Elizabeth Jennings, John Wain, John Holloway, Anthony Thwaite, Vernon Scannell, and George MacBeth.

### **Characteristics of the Movement:**

- The Movement poetry stayed away from the charm and spell of Thomas Stearns Eliot and Ezra Pound and the high emotion and verbal effusion of Dylan Thomas.
- The Movement poets rejected not only the Romantic tradition but also reacted against the experimentation of the modernist poets. The movement poetry lacked spontaneous outburst of feelings and emotion. It appealed more to the head than to the heart of readers.
- It was a group of poets who were realist, robust and sceptical. They gave vent to their pent up feelings in ironic vein. Realism is the keynote of the Movement poetry which sometimes makes the works dull, boring, and dry.
- The Movement poets experienced the world as materialistic, banal and evil. They did not lament over the loss of glory and weep for the horror of the wars and boredom like Tiresias in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" but they believed in facing ugly reality with bravely. It is clear that the Movement poetry was less sentimental and more intellectual in nature. It was anti-Romantic, witty, laconic and ironic.
- The modernist poetry emphasized a new form, a new way of looking at life, and channel through which the sensibility of the

age was to be expressed whereas the Movement poetry rejected every principle of the Modernist poetry. They showed antipathy to the cultural pretensions of Bloomsbury and elitism of the modern age. They adhered to the traditional metrical forms and syntax.

- The poets of the 1950s abhorred over-experimentation in form and over-use of figurative language in poetry. They put stress on simplicity and clarity of expression in poetry.
- Philip Larkin remarked, "First of all you have to be terribly educated, you have to read everything to know these things, and secondly, you have got somehow to work them in to show you are working them in."
- The Movement poets disliked the allusive and mythical nature of T.S. Eliot's poetry which demands greater knowledge and understanding on the part of the reader. It was too complex and difficult to be understood by ordinary man.
- If Eliot's poetry was too complex and unsuitable for the common man, so was the poetry of a group of W.H. Auden. It is too intellectual and political in sense and gives reflection of the time between the two World Wars.

### **Movement Poets:**

- Robert Conquest, one of the renowned writers of the Movement of the 1950s edited an anthology, "New Lines" which was published in 1956. It contained the principles and ideology of the Movement.

It is important to note that Robert Conquest has criticized the obscurity and metaphorical nature of modern poetry in the preface of the anthology "New Lines". He considered Dylan Thomas's style as 'diffuse and sentimental verbiage and pirouettes'.

The second anthology of Movement poetry was titled as the same as, "New Lines"; it appeared on the literary scene in 1963. Robert Conquest produced several collections of poetry, they are "Poems" published in 1955, "Between Mars and Venus" in 1962, "Arias for a Love Opera" in 1969, and "New and Collected Poems" in 1988.

Robert Conquest poetry dealt with the pain, disillusion, frustration and suffering of man of the prevalent period. There is a fine blending of colloquial speech and irony in his poetry which vividly present hollowness and hypocrisy of modern age.

In his poetry, Robert Conquest has depicted man as an integral part of Nature. The tone of his poetry is intellectual rather than emotional and sentimental.

- Philip Larkin, one of the chief pillars of the Movement poetry, expressed his abhorrence and dislike for figurative language and experimentation in modern poetry. When a number of modern poets were under the spell of Thomas Sterns Eliot and Ezra Pound in the first half of the twentieth century, Philip Larkin was not much influenced by their spell.

He emphasized use of traditional metrical forms, precision and plain diction in poetry rather than experimentation in poetry. He expressed his detestation of Mozart; and he had little faith in myth-making tendency and allusive nature of the modern poetry.

Philip Larkin's first collection of poetry "The North Ship" appeared in 1945 which clearly indicates influence of William Butler Yeats. Another volume "XX Poems" appeared on the literary scene in 1951.

But the most famous collection of Poetry by Philip Larkin is “The Less Deceived” that established Larkin in the literary arena. “The Less Deceived” was published in 1955. It was filled with pessimism and grim humour which clearly indicates that the poet was highly influenced by Thomas Hardy.

Philip Larkin’s collection of poems “The Less Deceived” was followed by another two volumes named “The Whitsun Weddings” in 1964 and “High Windows” in 1974. The sharp and bitter tone of his poetry clearly indicates his alliance to the Movement poetry of the 1950s.

The titles of Elizabeth Jennings’s collection of poems “A Way of Looking” and “A Sense of the World” clearly reflected the principles of The Movement of 1950s; they vividly indicate a new and different way of The Movement of perceiving and experiencing the world. Though the two volumes “A Way of Looking” published in 1955 and “A Sense of the World” published in 1958 are tinged with the features of the Movement poetry, much of Elizabeth Jennings’s later works are highly personal and confessional in tone. The poems of the two collections appeared in Robert Conquest’s edition of the anthology “New Lines” in 1956.

- Kingsley Amis, a poet and famous novelist, was also associated with the group of 'angry young men' of the 1950s. In his famous Campus novel, “Lucky Jim”, Kingsley Amis has introduced a hero, Jim Dixon who is against the established values, pretensions, and élite art and craft art with rebellious attitude.

Jim Dixon expresses his anger, frustration, alienation and disillusionment in sardonic tone and grim humour in the novel.

Jim Dixon is a representative of the Angry Young Men and he belongs to the lower-middle-class of society.

Kingsley Amis's volumes of poetry, "Bright November" appeared in 1947 and "A Frame of Mind" in 1953 clearly indicate revolutionary ideas of the Movement poetry.

Kingsley Amis stated in "Poets of the 1950s" that nobody wants any more poems about philosophers or paintings or novelists or art galleries or mythology or foreign cities or other poems. He objected to Dylan Thomas style and asserted that Dylan Thomas should have "stuck to spewing beer, not ink".

As a member of The Movement, Kingsley Amis has expressed conservative taste and hostility to contemporary manners. His volume of poems "Collected Poems 1944-1979" appeared on the literary scene in 1979.

- Thomas Gunn's poetry can be deemed as the meeting point of the American Beat Movement and the English Movement Poetry. He was greatly influenced by a critic, Yvor Winters. Thomas Gunn's first volume of poetry "Fighting Terms" appeared in 1954 which established him in the literary arena of poetry. The second volume "The Sense of Movement" was published in 1957 that clearly displays Yvor Winter's influence.

Thomas Gunn has skillfully observed rationalistic precision and clarity while handling a subject matter of his poetry. His style resembles with that of John Donne because it demonstrates a fine blending of far-fetched imagery, economy of words, wit and laconic vein. Some other famous works of Thomas Gunn



are “My Sad Captain” published in 1961, “Touch” in 1967, and “Moly” published in 1971.

- Dennis Joseph Enright played vital role in the development of the Movement of 1950s. His first volume of poems “The Laughing Hyena and Other Poems” was published in 1953.

Dennis Enright has adroitly handled various themes through his poetry. it is important to note that he produced anthology of The Movement “Poets of the 1950s” in 1955 which became a primary source for the anthology “New Lines” by Robert Conquest in 1956. Several other collections of poems are “Bread rather than Blossom” published in 1956, “Addictions” in 1962, and “Sad Ires” appeared in 1975.

It is to be noted that Dennis Enright has also composed a series of poems “A Faust Book” in 1973 which is based on the theme of Faust legend. Some other volumes of poetry “Under the Circumstances” appeared in 1991 and “Old Man and Comets” in 1993.

Dennis Enright’s poems “Laughing Hyena”, “Some Men are Brothers” and “The Old Adam” present a precarious condition of common man. In these poems the poet has expressed his grief and pain along with disgust for man’s hardships and sufferings.

There is fine use of colloquial speech without pedantry. In the poems, Dennis Enright has given vent to his anger and indignation and criticized hypocrisy and cruelty.

- Donald Davie, one of the members of the Movement, expressed his anti-Romantic views and anti-bohemian principles in his famous work “Purity of Diction in English Verse”; it was published in 1952. He also produced some volumes of poetry “Brides of Reason” in 1955, “A Winter Talent” in 1957, “Events and Wisdom” in 1964 and “Essex Poems” in 1969.

His volume of poems “In the Stopping Train” appeared in 1972. The reader can find lucidity of expression and pictorial description of landscapes in Donald Davie’s poetry. His poems are tinged with speculation and philosophy. The poet is often charged with obscurity and complexity of his verse.

- John Wain, a famous novelist and critic, was associated with the group of Movement poets of the 1950s. Many of his works were published in “New Lines”. He has been charged with dull and prosaic style of his writing.

He produced a collection of poems “Mixed Feelings” in 1951 and “Weep before God” in 1961. Though John Wain’s name is linked to the group of “Angry Young Men”, he himself detested this term.

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