Adriana D'Angelo
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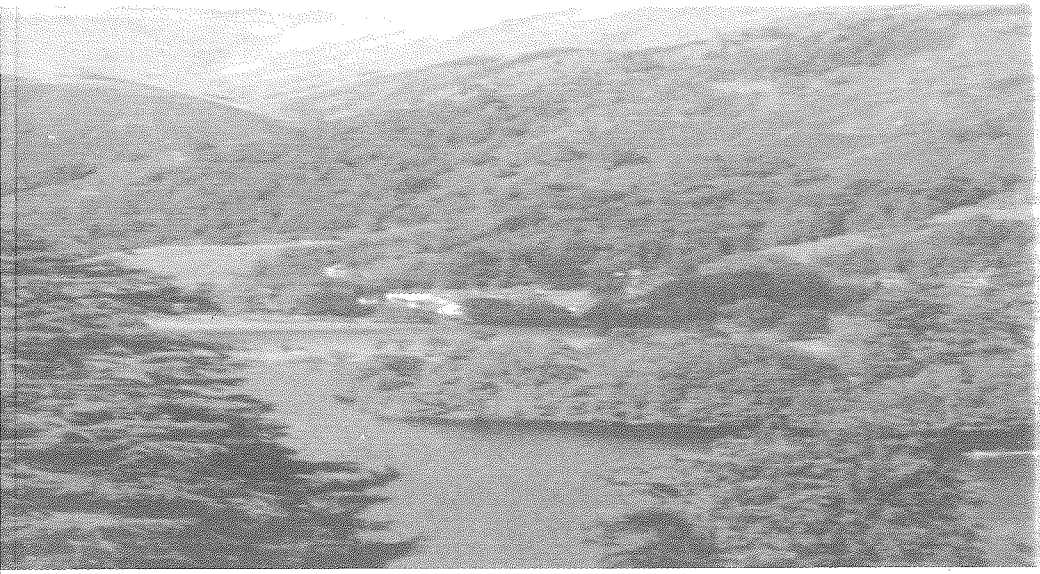
Six Romantic Poets

An anthology with exercises



Edizioni Tracce

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COLLANA DIRETTA DA FRANCESCO MARRONI

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Volume pubblicato con il contributo del Centro Linguistico d'Ateneo
dell'Università degli Studi "Gabriele d'Annunzio" di Chieti

ISBN 88-86676-36-0

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Impaginazione: *Graziella Santarelli*

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PREFACE

The aim of this anthology is to provide the student with an overview of the nature of English Romantic poetry. The introduction devotes particular attention to the social problems of the 18th and 19th centuries, since these exercised such an important influence on the intellectual and artistic development of each of the poets concerned.

The central core of the book is divided into six sections, one for each of the following poets: Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. These poets are universally regarded as the most important and influential figures of English Romanticism and the selections here anthologized represent their quintessential poetic uniqueness. In some cases, significant parts of longer works have also been included in order to give the student a broader idea of the poet's artistic vision.

Each section is followed by a series of exercises aimed at stimulating the students' understanding and appreciation of the linguistic and prosodical aspects of the poems as well as their thematic concerns.

In order to facilitate apprehension and enhance enjoyment of the poems, this anthology also includes a CD with selected readings. These readings are also designed to complement the exercises on "Rhythm" and "Sound".

This book is the result of a collaboration between Adriana D'Angelo and Renzo D'Agnillo during the 1997-98 academic year at the Language Centre of the "G. d'Annunzio" University. The project was supervised and coordinated by Prof. Francesco Marroni to whom the authors would like to express their deep gratitude

A. D. - R. D.

Introduction, anthology with notes and biographical notes by ***Adriana D'Angelo****. Exercises and recording by* ***Renzo D'Agnillo****.*

INTRODUCTION

The word "Romantic" is of English origin, its use dates from the period of the popularity of medieval and French heroic romances in the middle of the seventeenth century. It originally meant "like the old romances", but since these works had to do with improbable adventures remote from ordinary life, "Romantic" came to mean unreal or far-fetched as opposed to fact. During the eighteenth century the word "Romantic" gained increasing currency with the meaning "fictitious" or "extravagant". The term "Romanticism", a later semantic development, has come to refer generally to the resurgence of progressive thought and emotion which eighteenth-century rationalism never wholly repressed.

Romanticism began and prevailed in a spirit of revolt against the dogma of reason, or against the actual or supposed neo-classicist conception of it, which comprehended the reflection of a mechanized philosophy as well as the rejection of seventeenth and eighteenth century literary forms and themes.

The European Romantic movement, which lasted approximately a hundred years (from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century), affected every country in Europe and manifested itself in every branch of human knowledge. The effects of this revolution in taste and sensibility are still felt even today.

It is difficult to give a really complete definition of Romanticism. It could be defined as a re-spiritualization of thought and life. In fact Romanticism did not manifest itself in the same way in every country: it was essentially philosophical in Germany, revolutionary in France, patriotic in Italy and literary and religious in England.

The English Romantic revival is generally regarded as dating from the year 1798, which saw the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, the joint work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. This small volume was the expression of the great change in thought, produced at the close of the eighteenth century by political, industrial and philosophical revolutions. Hartman says:

> Wordsworth, together with Blake, is the last of a giant race of poets to whom the moderns are as indebted as the neoclassical poets to their Renaissance predecessors.[1]

The French Revolution

Historically speaking, the French Revolution was a result of the Enlightenment, but was also one of the starting points of Romanticism. It symbolised the great hopes and utopian ideals of the Romantics: their faith in man, in justice and in the future which was broken by historical events that took place in France and in the whole of Europe.

The perception which sparked off the activity of the new Romantic poet, consisted in the conviction that men create their own injustice and oppression by restricting themselves to limited concepts. Blake wrote in his poem *London*:

> In every voice, in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.[2]

However, it was always possible to escape, by breaking away from mental attitudes of submission and obedience to tyranny, dogma and ideology, turning to independence and liberty. The schematic and dogmatic vocation of enlightened thought inevitably appeared to the Romantic poet as an enemy to be overcome in a new impetus of free, individual creation.

At the beginning of the new century, the Revolution became the source of personal crises for the Romantics - a realisation of the limits and failures of mankind - but it was also an ideal, and in a certain sense a necessary goal of human development. There were varying degrees of reaction among English Romantic poets in response to the hopes and failures of the French Revolution. One conviction linked them all, however: any desire for freedom or revolution has to come first of all from the individual. They intended to speak not to an abstract humanity,

1 G.H. Hartman, Introduction to *William Wordsworth: Selected Poetry and Prose*, New York, 1970.

2 G. Keynes, *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, Oxford, 1966.

but to each single man, reawakening his awareness.

It must be remembered however that, right from the outbreak of the Revolution, England was a decidedly anti-French force in the European context. As far as culture was concerned, she offered her reformist tradition as a historical alternative to the revolutionary trauma, but also as a great power, she threw herself into the reactionary campaign which was to result in the restoration of the old monarchies at the Congress of Vienna.

Therefore, when the English Romantic poets acknowledged the French Revolution as being the expression of a great social idea, they found themselves, to some extent at least, opposed to England's attitude towards the significance of the Revolution. This opposition, with its consequent sense of suffering, can often be felt in their works; particularly because they were involved in a new Romantic culture which was drawing up a new concept of "nation", and at the same time they were seeking a national, historical dimension with which to identify and within which they would be able to express themselves.

The emphasis varied from one poet to another: whereas Blake, Byron and Shelley only despaired over the fate of England, Wordsworth, Coleridge and, to some extent, the young Keats wanted to change their country. However it can be said that these poets were united in wanting to use Romantic idealism as a creative force, not only of a new art, but also of a new history.

The birth of English historicism, a direct cultural reaction to the formulation in France of principles of liberty and social justice, was for the Romantic poets the moment of reconciliation with their national tradition, a way out of the deep crisis caused by the failure of the Revolution. If the Revolution had been childhood for the Romantic poet, with historicism he reached maturity. But while maturity means, on the one hand, gaining a sense of stability, on the other there is the risk of losing the certainty about the existence of a more perfect human justice which is attainable by man. Perhaps it is true, as Blake or Wordsworth thought, that to be a poet it is necessary to retain something of a child's nature; it is certain, however, that the English Romantic poets' vision of utopia is most vividly expressed in their poetry - revolutionary aspirations resound in many of their poems, transformed into a lyrical force, while historicism, on the other hand, was to be the subject of some of their greatest prose works.

The Industrial Revolution

The English Romantic poets lived in a period of great changes in which the Industrial Revolution had a fundamental role. They were aware that the society in which they lived was rapidly changing; production, profit and economic growth were the dominant themes. Thus they became the spokesmen for those social groups which, through a process of exploitation, were suffering the consequences of such a rapid industrial development.

The Romantic poets saw the towns of their age, London especially, expand very rapidly and, above all, they witnessed the daily worsening of living conditions in the already existing poor areas. They realized that community life was disappearing and this was causing a profound alienation of the individual surrounded by an indifferent mass.

The London of the *Songs of Experience* by Blake is the symbol of this type of city in which the streets and even the Thames are "chartered" and the poet saw "marks of weakness, marks of woe"[3] on the faces of the people he met. Wordsworth, for his part, hoped to re-evaluate through the *Lyrical Ballads* the kind of rural life which was being rejected in favour of the new urban one.

The Romantic poets tried to communicate with ordinary readers using simple metric forms and a more colloquial language, in this way renewing a poetic tradition which had become, at the end of the eighteenth century, very refined and classical and completely detached from everyday life.

These poets, however, did not want to write poetry just for an elite, but rather poetry which could be read and appreciated by everyone. Poetry became a search for and awareness of "self "; in the new industrial society, poetry became the means by which those spiritual and aesthetic values, which seemed ever more threatened and jeopardized, could be saved.

They did not condemn science and technology; their criticism was directed towards the way in which science was becoming remote from

[3] *Ibidem.*

man and poetry. In the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth writes:

> The knowledge both of the poet and the man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him.[4]

Shelley too, in *A Defence of Poetry*, wrote that the rapid acquisition of scientific and technical knowledge was not balanced by an understanding of man in this new society:

> Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be the "expression of the imagination": and poetry is connate with the origin of man [...] In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects.[5]

The Romantic poets denounced the new industrial era because man's feelings and intellectual life risked being overcome by the process of mechanization. Their awareness of the serious problems created by the process of industrialization made them reject not only the Industrial Revolution but also England itself. This explains the creation of a distance between the real world and the artistic one; this gap was sometimes physical - the search for a "rural England" or even an actual exile in other countries. So, behind Blake's London was hidden a new model city where there would be no oppression, exploitation or suffering; a city where everyone would be able to live a new life. While in

[4] *W. Wordsworth*, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, Oxford, 1973.

[5] P.B. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *op. cit.*

Wordsworth, a deep love of country life and nature and a close analysis of the contrast city-countryside can be found; he regretted the abandonment of those places where there had been a more complete and healthy social life. According to Hartman:

> [...] Wordsworth's poetry may seem too reflective or low-powered. Yet we rarely cease to feel the agony or urgency from which it sprang. It mediates between the modern world and a desperate imagination, one that sees itself deprived of genuine relations with that world. The tempo of industrialization seemed to Wordsworth to encourage a rootless and abstract kind of existence, a man-made nature alienating us from Nature.[6]

It can therefore be said that English Romantic poetry was characterized by a love of nature which was directly related to the negative vision of the new industrial town. The pursuit of nature became even more dramatic precisely because it was evident that urban man was abandoning and forgetting the countryside. The poets saw in this a danger that threatened the survival of humanity: enclosed in the town man would eventually forget his "natural" origins.

This rejection of a new industrial society was also highlighted by a great love of Italy. The second triad of Romantic poets - Byron, Shelley, Keats - considered Italy to be a land of refuge as yet untouched by industrialization. It was also seen as the cradle of that artistic tradition which was so highly praised and valued by the European Romantic movement.

Italy became the symbol of the beauty which was dying out in industrialized Britain. The best examples of towns still uncontaminated by factories were Venice, Florence and Rome; there was a sharp contrast between these places, characterized by a deep harmony of natural environment and architecture, and the industrial town. Italy thus became a myth, but this was not the only important factor. The English Romantic poets realized that the Italy which they so praised was also the Italy of the first movements for national liberation. Poets like Shelley

[6] G. H. Hartman, *op. cit.*

and Byron chose this country for their voluntary exile from an England in which they were no longer able to identify themselves. They became involved in the Italian Risorgimento because it represented for them the achievement of the goal of liberty and justice which was their utopia.

One of the differences between English and Italian Romanticism is precisely this: Italian Romanticism developed in a national historical context which was consistent with it, while English Romanticism grew rather as an attitude of protest about and criticism of the national context of that time. This is particularly evident in Wordsworth and Coleridge who tended to identify themselves more with England, while Byron and Shelley found themselves more at home in the Italian historical context. We must not forget that Byron reached his fullest maturity, both as a man and as an artist, as a result of his active involvement in the "carboneria", which took him to Greece where he finally died, fighting for liberty.

The "new man" of English Romanticism

One much discussed aspect of Romanticism is the so-called Romantic "nostalgia" for the past; a constant looking back to more pleasant times, in an effort to recreate the past. This theme of nostalgia was present above all, and often dominant, in that period of transition known as pre-Romanticism; the gothic romances, Ossian, the false Middle Ages of Percy and Chatterton should not be forgotten when speaking of pre-Romanticism itself. Taking into consideration the six poets who will be commented on in more detail below, the exultation of the past changed and deepened into a new vision of history. They took up the exotic and nostalgic hints in their predecessors' works and made them into the means of a new perception of all that had been lost, of a new awareness of the alienation of modern man. In their poetry, the vision of an ancient joy which had been lost, and could be suggested, but not fully expressed by the memory of some particular periods in man's history, became a lyrical force.

Thus the Middle Ages and classical Greece, the two great historical periods re-evoked by Romanticism, were transformed into a mythical vision of a lost paradise. The lost ancient splendour could be found there, as in the far-off past of the Universe, in the forms of nature, in the

infancy of man. In whatever way it was understood, it was only to take on its full significance in the contrast with the present, and in the desire to repropose it to man for his rebirth.

In *The Prelude,* Wordsworth examined his own childhood, on the one hand in the fear of forgetting it forever and on the other with the desire to measure himself against philosophical poetry. Keats' lament over the fall of the Titans in *Hyperion* serves to rediscover the reality of the "human face". Behind all this was hidden not only "nostalgia" but also the perception of a deep existential crisis, the sensation of finding oneself faced by a modern humanity which was at a loss, far from those certainties which had existed in man's infancy. There was a desire to link the search for a new man to the memory of a lost knowledge of life. In his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* Wordsworth wrote:

> It is not now as it hath been of yore;
> Turn wheresoe'er I may.
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.[7]

Beside the desire and regret, there was a deeply felt affirmation of the need to live life more fully and freely, to enjoy beauty, love, justice. A kind of life that in the modern world could only be sought for and reached in solitary meditation, but that the English Romantic poets reproposed as a foundation for new social relations. Coleridge's "mariner" was therefore significant, unable to content himself with living his moment of vision alone, but condemning himself to a pilgrimage among indifferent men, as the bearer of an unexpected message.

This new idea of individual life which Romanticism tried to promote, took root in the concept of an autonomous, free nation. English national Romanticism rejected the concept of a privileged and elect nation. Both on a territorial and a human level, the liberation of the individual was seen in relation to a community united in egalitarian, civil brotherhood. One consequence of this conviction was the Romantic stand against

[7] G. Keynes, *op. cit.*

imperialism. Blake and Shelley were aware of the decay of the Empire, while Wordsworth and Coleridge, who intentionally defined themselves as patriots, took up an anti-imperial stance.

It is interesting to note how a nationalism of European character developed in these poets. Thus we see them, Englishmen in Italy, attentively watching the fate of Spain, Greece and, of course, Italy itself. They therefore advocated the liberty, not just of this or that nation, but of all citizens, at least those in Europe. The anti-French or, more specifically, anti-Napoleonic feeling, which united Wordsworth and Coleridge once their first revolutionary sympathies had become exhausted, was mainly derived from the rejection of Napoleon's attempt to impose French hegemony throughout Europe. Unlike their contemporaries, however, they were not at all disposed to allow the signs of English arrogance to pass unobserved once the danger from France had been overcome.

The "new man" of English Romanticism was very deeply attached to his roots and traditions, but was not prepared to acknowledge either national or racial privileges. For this reason, his search for a new fuller freedom could only be in a vision of autonomy and harmony for all men.

English Romantic Poetry

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827). Blake's early poetry shows the influence of Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Thomas Chatterton. The contribution given to his poetry by the Bible and Ossian should not be forgotten either. His first collection of poems, *Poetical Sketches* (1783), shows evident signs of imitation; at times Shakespeare's influence is clearly recognizable.

By far the most original poems are the *Songs of Innocence* and the *Songs of Experience* composed between 1789 and 1794. The lyrics in the former collection speak of infancy as the symbol of innocence that should (but in modern civilization cannot) be man's attitude towards life itself. In the lyrics of the *Songs of Innocence* there is a childish spontaneity and a sense of joy in the presence of the world of nature and that of man; the characteristic signs of an adult who is writing for children, or who is playing at being a child do not appear. In *The Chimney Sweeper* he writes:

Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm,
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.[8]

There is a partly ironic, partly nostalgic vision of a world different from our own, in which men act according to Blake's desires, but there is also a Biblical view of the whole of creation. In the *Songs of Innocence* all human desires are innocent; however it is not just banality translated into verse, but deeply felt principles which come directly from the personal view that the poet had of the world.

The *Songs of Experience* are not limited to showing the corruption of innocence by the immoral forces in society; they show the distortions and sadness inflicted on life by experience. True vision cannot reach the innocent because innocence, through its very nature can easily be led astray. Nor can it reach those who accept the distortions of experience: these distortions should be recognized and transcended. There is no road which leads to innocence, there is only one which, through experience, leads to a complete vision. Nevertheless, the *Songs of Experience* are clearly the result of a disenchantment; although the form is still simple and the images are familiar ones, the symbolic and visionary elements became more frequent. Gleckner has written:

> Each of Blake's two song series (or states or major symbols) comprises a number of smaller units (or states or symbols), so that the relationship of each unit to the series as a whole might be started as a kind of progression: from the states of innocence and experience to the *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, to each individual song within the series, to the symbols within each song, to the words that give the symbols their existence. Conceivably ignorance of or indifference to one word prohibits the imaginative perception and understanding of the whole structure.[9]

There is the conviction that in the stage of adult experience, the spontaneity of the imagination and of the emotions has been destroyed

[8] *Ibidem.*

[9] R. F. Glekner, "Point of View and Context in Blake' Songs" in M. H. Abrams, *English Romantic Poets*, Oxford, 1975.

by submission to the law and cold selfishness in society. Cruelty, hypocrisy, poverty, a poor use of the intellect, mistrust of the imagination and the institutions only cause corruption and destruction, as can be seen in the lyric entitled *London*. The most impressive poems in this collection are those in which natural objects, flowers and animals, are used symbolically. One of the most evocative works and by far the most famous *is The Tyger* where there is such a power and intensity that the poetical meaning is communicated even to those who are not able to connect each image to its symbolic context and therefore to the ambivalent meaning of the "tyger".

With *Tiriel*, which dates back to about 1788, the poet began a series of works written in free verse, in which he made use of myths and symbols which he had created himself to embody his vision of the universe and human doctrine. This is also recognisable in *The Book of Thel* (1789), while *The French Revolution* (1791) is marked by Blake's reaction to contemporary events.

In *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *America* (1793), *Europe* (1794), *Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Ahamia* and *The Song and Book of Los* (1795), *The Four Zoas* (1795-97), *Milton* (1804-08) and *Jerusalem* (1804-20), Blake expressed his conception of man and of his destiny using all his mythology. Although it was an entirely personal kind of mythology, it was based, however, on elements of an ancient mythical and symbolic tradition. Blake, who was in complete opposition to the official dictates of his time, theological, moral, political and aesthetic, was not only a rebel but also a visionary. It is therefore possible to fully understand Blake's "Prophetic Books" only after having disentangled all the details of this complex system of myths and symbols; but even a less specialized reader can feel the evocative force of a vivid imagination and the unusual harmony of the everyday and the exotic.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850). Alongside his revolutionary works, a new type of poetry developed, where the conception of nature, simple events and humble figures were the main subjects. For Wordsworth, the poet was a man who had a different perception from the ordinary man, different more in depth than in nature. However, even though no other poet before Wordsworth had expressed this concept, this does not mean that he was not influenced by the philosophical, social and political forces of his time. On the contrary, his

ideas were shaped by the contemporary situation: the French Revolution and its consequences, the principles of Enlightenment, the simple education which he was given in his native Lake District.

His first compositions, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, both dating from 1793, do not express a particular originality of conception and expression; it was not yet possible to speak of what is best known as Wordsworthian poetry. To reach that stage it was necessary for him to pass through a series of spiritual crises. Only after his distress over the English declaration of war on France, and the acceptance of Godwin's rationalism followed by the subsequent discovery that it was a sterile, unacceptable kind of rationalism, was the poet led to a period of desperation and confusion, that forced him to take stock of his own ideas and ambitions in this way forming a concept of poetry which would allow him to develop his genius to the full.

This concept was based on the link between the poet and the external world, between man and nature; in a way it was based on perception. If this waned, so did the poetry, however well endowed the poet was with technical resources, as it was built on the memory of such moments. This explains the relatively early exhaustion of Wordsworth's poetic gift.

The *Lyrical Ballads* were conceived with Coleridge in 1797, when Wordsworth lived with his sister in Racedown. The volume, containing four poems by Coleridge (including *The Ancient Mariner*) and nineteen by Wordsworth, appeared the following year. The latter tried to explain in a brief Advertisement that the meaning of the word "poetry" could vary according to the individual, and that the works contained in the book were probably not poetry in the sense in which the word was usually used. The importance of poetry for Wordsworth lay entirely in the fusion of the external world with the spirit of the poet, and the object of his art was to illustrate this. His greatest poems are those where there is a complete fusion of autobiography, perception and narration. The *Lyrical Ballads* are generally considered to mark the true beginning of the Romantic movement; on the one hand, the presence of *The Ancient Mariner* makes them an important stage in the use of the supernatural in poetry, and on the other *Tintern Abbey* is a clear demonstration of the evolution of Wordsworth's attitude towards nature: he passed from the instinctive pleasure of infancy, through adolescence, to adult awareness of the link between our perception of the natural world and our

understanding of the moral, human world. Its poetic relevance in fact lies in the creation of a perfect balance between reminiscence and poetry.

In 1800 Wordsworth wrote the famous Preface in which he expressed his conception of the nature of the poetic process, of the origin and aim of poetry and of the language most suitable for it:

> The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.[10]

Wordsworth's great creative period lasted until about 1805. After that he dedicated himself to the composition of poetry which was more rhetorical and moralistic, leaving aside the poetry based on moments of inspired perception, and therefore more typical of him. In his best poems, *Michael, Resolution and Independence, The Lucy Poems* and others, he succeeded in expressing his own experiences in a language which was highly evocative. In poems such as *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* or *The Solitary Reaper* he perfectly expressed the memory of a splendid moment of perception, with a deep emotive force.

Ode on the Intimations of Immortality is the final result of his maturity; perception becomes reflection. There is the passage from the naive freshness of childish awareness to the more mature vision of man; Wordsworth had reached a crisis in his poetic life:

> The *Ode* marks a definite recognition that the period of careless joy in nature was drawing to a close; [...]
> The moments of visionary awareness (such as he describes in

[10] W. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *op. cit.*

Tintern Abbey and the last of the *Lucy Poems)* in which he seemed to lose himself completely, were becoming less frequent.[11]

The Prelude is a long autobiographical expression of his spiritual development. The first version, more spontaneous and sincere, was finished in 1805, but Wordsworth continued to work on it for the rest of his life, not only in order to improve some of the expressive forms, but also to eliminate the most questionable opinions in his previous way of thinking. His visual emotion, memories, moral ideas and his attitude towards his sister are all present in perfect harmony in *The Prelude.*

The White Doe of Rylstone, a narrative poem in seven cantos written in 1807, is characterized by a rhetorical, sentimental theme. Some critics consider this poem to be one of Wordsworth's greatest, even though there are features of his later production. Whereas the moment of real transition is perhaps more visible in *Ode to Duty,* where both the theme and the expression begin to become detached from the perception and its poetic results which were so dear to Wordsworth. The moralistic and rhetorical Wordsworth is also easily recognisable in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* and in *Mutability.* No other English poet was as bound to inspiration as he was; it is enough to think of poems like *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* or *The Solitary Reaper* where he recalled an emotion derived from a previous experience which had moved him deeply. However, when this inspiration began to leave him, he was not able to recreate his particular poetic style. He believed poetry was a mood, as he wrote in his famous Preface:

> [...] the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men.[12]

[11] R. Sharrock, Introduction to *William Wordsworth: Selected Poems,* London, 1968.
[12] W. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *op. cit.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834). Coleridge's literary works were often unfinished, varied, ambitious and astonishing. He was enthusiastic about the French Revolution, disgusted by the oppressive politics of the English government, utopian in his political views. Together with Robert Southey he planned a utopian colony in America, Pantisocracy, but the project failed and the emigration never took place. The poet's disappointment about the outcome of the French Revolution is reflected in his poem *France: An Ode*, but despite his perpetual interest in politics and in religion, none of his greatest poems is solely religious or political.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner which appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* does not deal with any of the themes which were most important to him at the time of its composition. Stimulated by his interest in the ballad, he created a narrative composition of symbolic adventures in which there is a complete fusion between the use of visual details, the choice and the arrangement of the events, the familiar and exotic tone linked to a realistic and magical one. The poem begins in the style of a ballad, introducing the figure of the mariner who begins his narration in a cheerful, friendly tone, but as the narration proceeds the events become stranger and the tone becomes loaded with tension. It is in this kind of atmosphere that the albatross, the bird which brings luck to the ship which it follows, appears. The Mariner's senseless killing of the bird represents the crisis; its death is only a gratuitous act of destruction. The rest of the poem narrates how the curse is gradually overcome, and how finally it weakens and disappears. No summary or partial quotation can give any idea of the richness of detail with which Coleridge was able to direct the action from this point onwards. The mariner's companions, who take no moral responsibility, first of all blame him for having killed the bird which "made the fair breeze blew" and then, when the mist disappears and the sun rises, they praise him for having killed the bird which had brought fog and mist. A sense of adventure and excitement arises when the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails towards the north; soon the wind falls and the first part of the curse comes true. The mariner's companions, dumb with thirst, curse him with their looks and:

Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.[13]

When a ship finally appears, it is a ghost ship, the crew consisting solely of the Spectre-Woman (Life-in-Death) and her death-mate. They play dice for the crew and Life-in-Death wins the mariner. The men in the crew die one by one, cursing the mariner with their last glance. Only the mariner survives; he remains in complete solitude for seven days on the deserted sea then:

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.[14]

By the light of the moon the mariner looks at the creatures of the deep and suddenly he finds himself blessing them: at that moment he realises he is capable of prayer and the albatross "falls off" his neck. When he recognises the beauty and happiness of the "water snakes" he has realised the unifying principle of creation and in some way has made up for the useless killing of the albatross. The crew come back to life as corpses animated by angelic spirits, and steer the ship. It is an entirely supernatural situation, in which the dead work side by side with the alive mariner. The ship enters the bay by the light of the moon, but before reaching the shore it sinks; the mariner survives but is doomed to travel forever from place to place telling his story and showing the moral of it:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.[15]

[13] W.G.T. Shedd, *S. T. Coleridge: Complete Works*, New York, 1974.
[14] *Ibidem.*
[15] *Ibidem.*

However this is not the real moral of the poem, it is something more complex. One cannot fail to see in the poem an evocative study of nature and of the demands of the imagination and the relationship between art and life; but the real meaning of the poem escapes any schematic formulation.

Kubla Khan has been said to be a beautiful but chaotic fragment in which there is a confused mixture of images taken from the many works read by Coleridge. It is the recollection of a dream caused by opium which is interrupted by a visitor from Porlock. *Kubla Khan is* the most perfect example of the purely magical theme of Coleridge's poetry.

Christabel is the third in the trilogy of compositions with which Coleridge's form of Romanticism is identified, but it is only a fragment and so there is no way of knowing how the story should have developed and in which way the various elements present could have been put together in a complete poem.

The text of *Dejection: An Ode,* in the usual edition has suffered a mutilation carried out by Coleridge in order to avoid making public the nature of the situation which had inspired it, which consisted of his unhappy marriage and his love for Wordsworth's sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson, for whom the work had been written.

Despite the section on joy, it is a very pessimistic composition; the poet recognizes the failure of his creative spirit and the loss of his capacity to feel the joy of nature. By using the ode form he was able to show perfectly the passage from the descriptions of the present to those of the past, from his preoccupation with his loss of imagination to the passionate prayer to the lady to whom the work is addressed.

Today, Coleridge is generally remembered as a critic; in fact he elaborated the theory of the imagination and its influences on the art of poetry, above all in the *Biographia Literaria*:

> The poet brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses,* each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power [...] reveals itself in the balance of reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the

> idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects [...]

and further on:

> Finally, good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere, and in each, and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.[16]

Even if illness, unhappiness and the periodic failure of his willpower served to make much of Coleridge's work incomplete, what he did manage to achieve was enough to make him a great poet, both for his own sake and for his influence on the English and American literary spirit of later generations.

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824). The first collection of poems published by Byron, *Hours of Idleness* (1807), contains numerous second-rate lyrics on the themes of love, regret, separation and memory, besides some pieces of translation from Greek and Latin poems. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a completely different work, is an attack on contemporary writers and critics who had annoyed the poet.

In 1809 he undertook a journey, which was to last for almost two years, taking him through Spain, Malta, Albania and Greece. From this he gathered copious new poetic material and also had occasion to shape that "wayfarer" personage of noble mind and strong sensibility, pushed aside by a society that he in turn despises, a personage that he was to develop and transform into the characteristic Byronic hero (obviously a self-portrait) after the break-up of his marriage (1816) and consequent scandal had forced him into a permanent exile abroad.

The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* are the result of the poet's travels from 1809 to 1811. The route followed by the protagonist is the same as that of Byron, and the young Harold represents an ideal image of the poet himself even though the latter denied this strongly:

[16] S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *op. cit.*

> I by no means intend to identify myself with Harold, but to deny all connection with him. If in parts I may be thought to have drawn from myself, believe me it is but in parts, and I shall not own even to that [...] I would not be such a fellow as I have made my hero for all the world.[17]

In canto IV of *Childe Harold* Byron identified himself completely and explicitly with the character of Harold. While he increasingly identified himself with his melodramatic fantasies, taking on more and more the role of the Byronic personage that he had created, the poet found himself ostracized by society or at least the English upper class, an outcast with justified reasons for remorse and dissatisfaction with himself. The real vitality of this work comes from the way in which the author poetically elaborated and exploited his moods. It is precisely in passages of this kind that it is possible to find analogies between Byron and the other Romantic poets; the last cantos of *Childe Harold* represent the moment of Byron's most extreme Romanticism. He also collected from his travels subjects for compositions of a more lyrical nature; in fact there are numerous poems in which he recalls in a musical, flowing style his experiences in Greece and elsewhere. However the most memorable of his lyrics is the short work *So We'll Go No More A-Roving*, written in Italy in 1817.

In 1813 Byron published *The Giaour* and in 1814 *The Corsair* and *Lara*. These are stories with exotic settings and a melodramatic tone, at the center of which there are solitary, melancholy heroes, involved in situations where love is always present and which lead them to a tragic end. Despite their absurdity and the by then too obvious autobiographical nature of the Byronic personage, they enjoyed a notable popularity among his contemporaries. *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) is a monologue in which the protagonist recounts his terrible experiences during a long, cruel imprisonment which he suffered for love of justice.

Byron attempted historical drama, but the four historical tragedies he composed are affected works. The dramatic poem *Manfred* (1817), and *Cain* (1821), are more interesting. It is a relief to pass from these works to *Beppo*, which was the result of reading the works of the Italian

[17] Byron, *A Self-Portrait. Letters and Diaries, 1798 to 1824*, London, 1960.

poets Luigi Pulci and Francesco Berni. It tells how a wife, whose husband has been lost at sea, in his absence takes a lover and how, when the husband in fact returns, all three characters behave with friendly courtesy.

Byron poured into *Don Juan*, a poem in six cantos which narrates the adventures of a young Spanish man, a complete mixture of his inner sentiments: irony, idealism, fun, criticism, observation of the world, and succeeded with remarkable dexterity in moving backwards and forwards from the lyrical to the ironic tone. At the beginning of the work there is the presentation of young Juan's first affair; in the second and third cantos Juan, after being shipwrecked in the Mediterranean, is saved by the beautiful Haidee, with whom he embarks on a love affair which ends suddenly with the return of her father who is a pirate. Juan is sold as a slave, and in the following cantos he turns up in Costantinople where he is bought by a sultan who tries to seduce him. Juan succeeds in extricating himself from these emotional entanglements and in the seventh and eighth cantos he takes part in the siege of Ismailia. Following this enterprise he meets the Empress Catherine, becomes her lover and is sent by her to England on a diplomatic mission. Don Juan thus finds himself in Byron's native land, and here Byron is able to give a brilliant satirical portrait of English society. The poet succeeds in creating a mock-heroic poem which is at the same time a criticism of life. Rutherford has written:

> He succeeds in transmuting the events of 1815-16 into an extremely entertaining narrative, which has all the piquancy of a "personal document", but which can and should be read for its own sake.[18]

As far as the character of Juan is concerned he remains a curiously passive figure throughout the whole work, despite his successes in love; unlike Harold, he does not identify with Byron.

Another brilliantly successful work, even if in a purely satirical style, is *The Vision of Judgement*, brought about by a ridiculous panegyric on George III written by Southey. Byron's satire is directed both against

[18] A. Rutherford, *Byron. A Critical Study*, London, 1962.

the dead king and his admirer and he has an ironic attitude towards them both. He uses in the work the "ottava rima", the same as in *Beppo* and *Don Juan,* and it was the discovery of the use of this form which made a poet of Byron.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822). Shelley belonged to the second generation of Romantic poets and from that point of view can be considered the Romantic poet "par excellence" because the brevity and exceptional nature of his life, his individualism, his imagination and his idealism contributed to make his the popular image of the romantic poet. Even though he was sent down from Oxford accused of atheism, Shelley was never really an atheist, and his spirit as an idealist and creator of myths soon led him to abandon his faith in a utopian revolution, and his poetry increasingly became simply a representation of his spiritual attitudes.

Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude (1816) is a long composition in *blank verse* about a young man driven by his imagination to contemplate the universe, but his isolation leads him to frustration.

Prometheus Unbound is a poetic drama in which Shelley recreates in his own particular way the Greek myth of Prometheus, representing in a symbolic fashion the final victory of love over hate and revenge. In the preface he states:

> My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealism of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness.[19]

The cosmic setting of the work gives space to the simple images, and it must be recognized that Shelley succeeded better in this kind of cosmic drama than he did with more limited themes.

[19] P. B. Shelley, Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* in E. Chinol, *Selected Poems,* Milano, 1968.

The Cenci is a work in *blank verse* which presents the story of two innocent women - mother and step-daughter - who, desperate with exasperation at the cruelty, violent, and incestuous lust of the father, devise a plot to kill him. The tragedy has, however, a melodramatic tone; Shelley explains in the preface:

> Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character.[20]

In *Epipsychidion* Shelley expresses the theme of platonic love, even if at times the poem is almost ridiculous. Whereas *Adonais* is a eulogy on the death of Keats, the figure who is always central in the work, even when the author speaks about himself and about his own unhappiness.

Hellas is a lyrical drama inspired by the possibility of a Greek revolt against Turkish domination; but the work never reaches a real dramatic intensity, even though there are great lyrical moments. However, the most strikingly lyrical compositions are *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills* and *Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples.* Other works to be remembered as far as those lyrics written in 1820 are concerned are *Ode to the West Wind, To a Skylark* and *The Cloud.* While among those which were published in 1824, the songs *Rarely, Rarely, Comest Thou, Spirit of Delight, To Night, A Lament* and *When the Lamp is Shattered* have for a long time represented Shelley's poetry for the majority of readers.

Shelley's lyrics do not have a succession of images: these vary with the mood and so there is no organic sequence of the images themselves. The abstractness that is to be found in most of Shelley's poetry is also present in *A Defence of Poetry*, written in 1821 and published in 1840. The work is a widely theoretical essay on the nature and the function of poetry. The central idea is that the poet, through the imagination, establishes a direct contact with the real world. Language is the best means for the imagination:

[20] P. B. Shelley, Preface to *The Cenci* in E. Chinol, *op. cit.*

> [...] to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression.[21]

Another of Shelley's arguments in *A Defence of Poetry* is the assertion that the imagination is a blessing, inasmuch as it widens the capacity to understand, and therefore so is poetry, which strengthens the imagination. The essay is not lacking in intuition about the nature of language but, all things considered, it is more important for its tone than for its logic.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821). He was perhaps the greatest representative of the second generation of Romantic poets who flourished and then burnt out prematurely. Keats did not belong to any particular literary school, on the contrary, one of the most striking things about him was the independence of his particular literary dimension. He looked to the Middle Ages for inspiration. Like Wordsworth he believed in the importance and the pleasure of sensations, and not only of the visual or auditory ones, but also of those that call into play the senses of taste, touch and smell. For Keats, as for Wordsworth, sensation represented the way to reach an awareness of reality, but for him a poet's task was to convey sensation in words in a convincing way.

Keats' first poetical work, *Endymion,* was written in 1817 and published the year afterwards. Based on the Hellenic myth of the shepherd of Mount Latmos who was loved by the moon, the work loses itself in the picturesque descriptions of the scenery through which the protagonist moves. Keats himself realized the mistakes he had made in *Endymion* even before he had finished writing it, and in fact he wrote in the preface:

> Knowing within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public. What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must

[21] P. B. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* in H. Bloom, L. Trilling, *op. cit.*

> soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished.[22]

After *Endymion* Keats' work matured very rapidly. It is impossible to say just when he suspected or realized that he did not have much longer to live, but he certainly realized the gravity of his condition. His next work *Hyperion* was written in *blank verse.* Here, as in *Endymion,* the theme is taken from Greek mythology, but although some descriptive passages stand out, on the whole the poem does not seem to have a real structure, and at a certain point Keats was unable to carry on with it. He did not finish it, then went back to it in a second revised edition, *The Fall of Hyperion,* but again left it unfinished.

The Eve of St. Agnes, written at the beginning of 1819, is not only the greatest narrative work by the poet, but is also the one which best illustrates the "Romantic" aspects of his art. The theme is that epic medieval one in which passion victoriously challenges every danger. The atmosphere is medieval but the setting is in a symbolic Middle Ages which forms the background to the representation of the theme of a perfect love threatened by an unknown danger.

Keats' works written during his brief period of maturity are just as remarkable: *La Belle Dame sans Merci,* where he took up the popular theme of the "femme fatale" which led him to the expression of a sense of terror and mystery. While in his great odes he dramatizes with brilliant poetical vigour the relationship between pleasure and pain, happiness and sadness, imagination and reality, art and life.

The *Ode to a Nightingale* expresses the emotions typical of Romantic poetry. Eternity and the escape from life are symbolized in the nightingale's singing. Art and death become two forms of escape, so that the real theme of the ode is the relationship between art, death and life; the same theme as in *Ode on a Grecian Urn* where art, which "halts" time, is seen both as an advantage and as a loss. In the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* beauty and immortality survive in the figures of the urn. To *Autumn* is a perfect work in which the portrayal of a landscape, a season and a mood make it a significant example of English descriptive poetry.

[22] J. Keats, Preface to *Endymion* in A. Guidi, *Selected Poems,* Milano, 1962.

It can no doubt be said that even if Keats was influenced by medieval themes and by what he felt to be the atmosphere of the Middle Ages, it was Ancient Greece which more deeply influenced his imagination. His knowledge of the Hellenic civilization was essentially based on the Elgin Marbles and on Chapman's Iliad but even so his intuition allowed him to bring these limited elements to fruition. Keats was the last great English poet for whom Greek mythology was not only a constant, living source of inspiration, but was also a means to a conscious perception of the natural world.

Adriana D'Angelo

William Blake

SONGS OF INNOCENCE [23]

INTRODUCTION

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry chear:"
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy Pipe, thy happy pipe;
"Sing thy songs of happy chear:"
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
"In a book that all may read."
So he vanish'd from my sight,
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

[23] In *Songs of Innocence* published in 1798 Blake recovered the spontaneous joy and innocence of childhood. The poet discovered that his sense of freedom and happiness was equivalent to the condition of childhood. The language of the songs is simple and clear.

THE SHEPHERD

How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot!
From the morn to the evening he strays;
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call,
And he hears the ewe's tender reply;
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their Shepherd is nigh.

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, & bid thee feed
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?

  Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
  Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, & he is mild;

He became a little child.
I a child, & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!
  Little Lamb, God bless thee!

THE LITTLE BLACK BOY

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereav'd of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissed me,
And pointing to the east, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
"And gives his light, and gives his heat away;
"And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
"Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
"That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
"And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
"Is but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear,
"The cloud will vanish; we shall hear his voice,
"Saying: 'Come out from the grove, my love & care,
" 'And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.' "

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me;
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

When my mother died I was very young,
And my Father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry " 'weep ! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep ! "
So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd: so I said
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare
"You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE[24]

INTRODUCTION

Hear the voice of the Bard!
Who Present, Past, & Future, sees;
Whose ears have heard
The Holy Word
That walk'd among the ancient trees,

Calling the lapsed Soul,
And weeping in the evening dew;
That might controll
The starry pole,
And fallen, fallen light renew!

"O Earth, O Earth, return!
"Arise from out the dewy grass;
"Night is worn,
"And the morn
"Rises from the slumberous mass.

"Turn away no more;
"Why wilt thou turn away?
"The starry floor,
"The wat'ry shore,
"Is giv'n thee till the break of day."

[24] After the mystical joy expressed in *Songs of Innocence*, Blake bitterly voiced his indignation and compassion in *Songs of Experience*. In experience free and joyous love is crushed by selfishness. In experience the innocent laughter of children is silenced by interfering adults. These songs, published in 1794, reverberate the intensity of his feeling in brilliant denunciatory phrases. His attack is, on the one hand, against the Church that remained apthetic to gross abuses, on the other against the State that supported the vested interests.

EARTH'S ANSWER

Earth rais'd up her head
From the darkness dread & drear.
Her light fled,
Stony dread!
And her locks cover'd with grey despair.

"Prison'd on wat'ry shore,
"Starry Jealousy does keep my den:
"Cold and hoar,
"Weeping o'er,
"I hear the Father of the ancient men.

"Selfish father of men!
"Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!
"Can delight,
"Chain'd in night,
"The virgins of youth and morning bear?

"Does spring hide its joy
"When buds and blossoms grow?
"Does the sower
"Sow by night,
"Or the plowman in darkness plow?

"Break this heavy chain
"That does freeze my bones around.
" Selfish! vain!
"Eternal bane!
"That free Love with bondage bound."

THE SICK ROSE

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

THE TYGER

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

THE GARDEN OF LOVE

I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I never had seen.
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turn'd to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And Priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars my joys & desires.

LONDON

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the Chimney-sweeper's cry
Every black'ning Church appalls;
And the hapless Soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlot's curse
Blasts the new born Infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) To which of Blake's poems do the rhyme schemes of the following verses correspond?

1st verse	*3rd verse*	
a b c b	a b c d	_____
a b c b	a b c b	_____
1st verse	*4th verse*	
a b a a b	a b c d b	_____
a b c c b	a b a a b	_____

2) Which of the above is an eye-rhyme? What are the words?

3) Blake uses predominantly masculine rhymes in the poems here. Identify four words that are feminine rhymes.

STYLE

1) Re-write the following hyperbolic phrases in their normal word order.

a) "As white as an angel is the English child"

_____

b) "So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep"

_____

c) "And by came an angel who had a bright key"

_____

d) "And binding with briars my joys and desires"

_____

Comment on the consequences of these instances of hyperbation in terms of a) metre b) sense.

2) Comment on the syntactic ambiguity of the last two lines of *The Sick Rose.*

3) List all the a) oxymorons (eg. "happy chear") and b) metonymys (eg. "distant deeps") Blake uses in the poems. Which section contains most examples of each?

4) What archaisms and poeticisms does Blake use for the following?

your	_____	poet	_____
through	_____	unhappy	_____
get up	_____	morning	_____
only	_____	over	_____
sad	_____	given	_____

5) Which of Blake's poems has the highest number of subordinate clauses? Underline them and comment.

RHYTHM

1) Listen to the recording and complete the following for the scansion of *Earth's Answer.*

	Syllables	Beats
1st verse		
	5	3
	-	-
	-	-
	3	2
	-	4
2nd verse	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
3rd verse	6	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
4th verse	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

5th verse	-	-
	7	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	4

What do you notice about the pattern? Comment on it.

FORMS

1) Which poems are written in the following metre ?

a) anapestic tetrameter; b) iambic pentameter; c) trochaic tetrameter; d) trochaic trimeter.

SOUND

1) Which poems have the following assonances in their first lines?

/ə/ /ai/

2) Plot the sound patternings of a) *The Lamb*, b) *The Tyger*. What do they have in common and in what do they differ?

CONTENT

1) Are there any poems in *Songs of Innocence* here that find their direct contrast in *Songs of Experience*? If so which? Describe the nature of the contrast.

2) Consider the use of rhetorical questions in *The Lamb, The Tyger* and *Earth's Answer*. What different effects do they produce in each poem?

William Wordsworth

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING [25]

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure: —
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

[25] This poem, written and published in 1798, is meaningful for the understanding of Wordsworth's poetical theories. In fact it shows the poetical principles expressed in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads:* his love for nature and the emotion aroused in his own hearth by the various aspects of the countryside through purest poetry written in the simplest words.

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY[26]

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,

[26] This poem contains Wordsworth's essential characteristics. It shows how through the various stages of our lives nature can strengthen our character and humanize our attitude toward man. The poet had seen Tintern Abbey again after fifteen years and he tried to show how he imagined that nature had moulded his character.

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
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.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
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!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:

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. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thought, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
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. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
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, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory by as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

THE LUCY POEMS [27]

STRANGE FITS OF PASSION

Strange fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!

[27] The following five poems, known as *The Lucy Poems*, are strictly connected in a real sequence. They were written in Germany in 1799, except for *I Travelled among Unknown Men* which was composed later. Lucy has been variously identified in real life, but it is not so important to discover who she was. It should be noted how Wordsworth succeeds in communicating, through simple words, the depth of his feelings and the idea that natural phenomena sympathize with human emotions. In the last lines of *A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal*, when Lucy dies, we read: "She neither hears nor sees; Rolled round in earth's diurnal course, With rocks, and stones, and trees". Her death is the moment for entering into communication with nature.

And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!
'O mercy!' to myself I cried,
'If Lucy should be dead!'

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
- Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER

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.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;
  I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
  The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
  She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
  With rocks, and stones, and trees.

I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I travelled among unknown men,
  In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
  What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
  Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
  To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
  The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
  Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
  The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
  That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE[28]

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING CALM AND FREE[29]

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make

[28] This is one of Wordsworth's best sonnets. The poet, through the contemplation of nature, creates a different image of London. This sonnet was probably written in 1802 and published in 1807.

[29] This poem was composed on a beach near Calais, in the autumn of 1802; it was published in 1807.

A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US [30]

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

[30] Wordsworth's romantic creed is well expressed in this sonnet and the poet corroborates his conviction that if man withdraws from nature he falls into the materialism of the world. This sonnet was probably composed in 1802 and published in 1807.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD[31]

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;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
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.

[31] Once again nature appears in its most beautiful forms: hills, lakes, rivers, fields of flowers, and the external world seems to melt in it. Composed in 1804 and published in 1807.

THE SOLITARY REAPER[32]

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

[32] A moment of joy becomes something to be remembered; this is the concept expressed in this poem that contains some usual themes of romantic poetry such as loneliness and remoteness. Written in 1805 it was published in 1807.

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) There are only two half-rhymes among the poems here. Find the two poems that contain them.

2) Which poem in this selection has the highest number of feminine rhymes?

STYLE

1) In spite of Wordsworth's claim in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* that he uses a "language really spoken by men" he does employ a number of poeticisms and archaisms. Find the words that have the same meaning as the following:

happen _____

here _____
near _____
sleep _____
daily _____
yours _____
does _____
towards _____
never _____
glides _____
beautiful _____
over _____
your _____
it is _____
burden _____
through _____

happiness _____
often _____
jolly _____
over there _____
melody _____
sing _____
plays _____
lamenting _____
notes _____
song _____
whatever _____
walk _____
lie _____
will _____
in the middle of _____
perhaps _____

2) Look for all the synonyms in the poems for the following recurring concepts: BEAUTY; SOLITUDE; HAPPINESS; CALM; SORROW.

3) Choose <u>one</u> answer for each question:

1. "A violet by a mossy stone" (*She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways*) means:

a) A flower that has been crushed
b) Something difficult to see
c) Something that stands out by contrast

2. "The sounding cataract haunted me/like a passion" (*Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*) is:

a) A sound that fills the poet with preoccupation
b) A sound that drives him mad
c) A sound that completely captivates him

3. "What man has made of man" (*Lines Written in Early Spring*) means:

a) What man has done to other men
b) What man makes other men become
c) What man makes of other men

4. "But they/Out-did the sparkling waves in glee" (*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*) means:

a) The daffodils were floating on the sea
b) The waves expressed happiness even more than the daffodils
c) The daffodils expressed happiness even more than the waves

<u>RHYTHM</u>

1) Listen to the recording of *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*. What metre is it in? What can you say about the distribution between its syllables and beats?

2) Consider the distribution between enjambed lines and end-stopped lines in *Tintern Abbey*. Which of the two have the highest frequency?

FORMS

1) Wordsworth uses the Miltonic sonnet. How does it differ from the Shakespearean sonnet? What advantages/disadvantages does this form have as a vehicle of expression?

2) Look at the two sonnets *Composed upon Westminster Bridge* and *It Is a Beauteous Evening Calm and Free*. What parallel expressions can you find? Comment on the two sonnets.

3) Below is the original version of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*. Compare it to the final version and comment on the changes made.

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;
Along the lake, beneath the trees,
Ten thousand dancing in the breeze.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:-
A poet could not but be gay
In such a laughing company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the shew 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.

SOUND

1) Which of the sonnets has the following alliterative pattern in one of its lines?

/ b / / n / / b / / n /

2) Although Wordsworth does not on the surface seem to deliberately seek explicit effects of sound, show examples from the poems here to prove that this is not always so.

CONTENT

1) Explore the psychological dimensions of *Tintern Abbey, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and *The Solitary Reaper* to show how time, memory and nature are intrinsic to the poet's moral growth.

2) Trace the way in which nature reflects the poet's changing emotional states in *The Lucy Poems*.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER[33]

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

Part I

An ancient mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

[33] This long poem is included in the *Lyrical Ballads* and was first published in 1798. It is written in the form and style of the old ballads; the story is about a mariner, the narrator himself, who, during a voyage, kills an albatross and, as a result, brings down a curse on himself and his companions. The ship is becalmed and all the sailors die; only the old sailor survives, but he is condemned to wander from place to place and tell his story in expiation of his sin. The poem is superb in its descriptions of the adventurous voyage and in its realistic details which, combined with its supernatural and fantastic elements, make the story fascinating.

The Wedding-guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and con-strained to hear his tale.

He holds him with his glittering eye —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon —'
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;

And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

'And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled and roared and howled
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! The Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus! —
Why look'st thou so?' — With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more. The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

The Wedding Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown".
Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

The many men, so beautiful!
And they, all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

And envieth that they should live and so many lie dead.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! More horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.

Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his hearth.

O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me
And I blessed them unaware.

The spell begins to break.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

KUBLA KHAN[34]

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
  Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
  And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:

[34] It is an incomplete poem because it was written under the effect of opium and it was the remembrance of a vision had in a dream. The main source of the poet was *Purchas his Pilgrimage* that goes back to the *Million* by Marco Polo. The poem is full of magic and lovely descriptions coming from the unconscious mind of the poet. It is incomprehensible and strange, but is a miracle of harmony, imagination and fantasy. Composed in 1797, it was published in 1816.

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
  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!

  A damsel with a dulcimer
  In a vision once I saw:
  It was an Abyssinian maid,
  And on her dulcimer she played,
  Singing of Mount Abora.
  Could I revive within me
  Her symphony and song,
  To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those 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,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

CHRISTABEL[35]

Part I
(Lines 1-68)

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu — whit! —— Tu — whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

[35] The first part of this poem was written in 1797; the second part in 1800. It was published in 1816. *Christabel* is another fragmentary poem of rare and delicate beauty, pervaded with mystery. It tells a medieval story of witchcraft in which the struggle between good and evil is personified in an innocent girl, Christabel, and a malignant supernatural creature in the form of the fair Geraldine.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothéd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell. —
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
    What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) Write down the rhyme scheme for the first ten stanzas of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. What do you notice?

2) What sort of rhymes are the following? Put the words in the appropriate slot:

Part I	met/set
	stone/man
	follow/hollo
	thus/albatross
Part II	woe/blow
	motion/ocean
	root/soot
	cross/albatross
Part IV	long/brown
	beat/feet
	water-snakes/flakes
	pray/sea

Full rhyme	Half rhyme	Eye rhyme	Internal rhyme

STYLE

1) What expressions are used in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in place of the following?

immediately _____

why _____

has _____

them _____

yes _____

spoke _____

stops _____

while _____

said _____

overtaking _____

2) Look for examples of inversions of word order in Coleridge's poems here (eg. "fog-smoke white"). Make a list of them. Say how effective the word ordering in each case is on a) a metrical level b) a phonological level c) level of semantic sequence.

RHYTHM

1) What do you notice about the distribution between syllables and accents in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*?

2) The first four lines of *Kubla Khan* have the following two scansions. Listen to the recording and say which two lines go with which scansion?

X / X / XXX /
X / X / X / X /

FORMS

1) Consider the various ways in which Coleridge deviates from the deceptive simplicity of the ballad form in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

SOUND

1) Consider the phonic patterning of *Khubla Khan.* Are there any particularly dominant sounds? What does the sound patterning contribute to the meaning?

2) Consider Coleridge's exploitation of onomatopoeia as a central rhetorical device in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

CONTENT

1) Discuss the symbology of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

2) Coleridge was interrupted by a friend while he was writing *Kubla Khan.* When he went back to the poem he lost his inspiration and could not complete it. Based on the elements of the poem try composing another five lines!

3) Consider the role rhyme plays in the comedy of *Christabel.*

George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY[36]

I

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

II

One shade the more, one ray the less,
  Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
  Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
  How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

III

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
  So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
  But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
  A heart whose love is innocent!

[36] This poem was written in 1814 and published in 1815; it is a good example for the understanding of a romantic and sentimental Byron.

SONNET ON CHILLON[37]

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
  Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
  For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd —
  To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
  Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
  And thy sad floor an altar — for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
  Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
  For they appeal from tyranny to God.

[37] Byron wrote this poem in Switzerland in 1816 (it was published in the same year) after visiting the Castle of Chillon situated on the shore of Lake Geneva. In this castle's prison Francois Bonnivard (1493-1571), prelate to a small monastery near Geneva and patriot leader of the Genevese against the rule of Duke Charles III of Savoy, was imprisoned. Byron wrote also a long poem on this subject called *The Prisoner of Chillon.*

SO, WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING[38]

I

So, we'll go no more a roving
  So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
  And the moon be still as bright.

II

For the sword outwears its sheath,
  And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
  And love itself have rest.

III

Though the night was made for loving,
  And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
  By the light of the moon.

[38] Byron wrote this little poem after a gay Carnival in Venice. Composed in 1817, it was published in 1830.

DON JUAN[39]

FRAGMENT

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
  As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling —
Because at least the past were pass'd away —
  And for the future — (but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
  So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say — the future is a serious matter —
  And so — for God's sake — hock and sodawater!

CANTO THE FIRST

CIV

'Twas on the sixth of June, about the hour
  Of half — past six — perhaps still nearer seven —
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
  As e'er held houri in that heathenish heaven

[39] It is Byron's masterpiece; it is a very long poem running to sixteen cantos and part of a seventeenth, and remains unfinished. Byron began it in 1819; it was published in 1824. Juan is at the centre of the plot, but the minor characters, more vividly drawn excite more interest. Don Juan's adventures are a pretext for Byron to espress his ideas about politics, love, poetry with a disconcerting sarcasm.

Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have been given,
With all the trophies of triumphant song —
He won them well, and may he wear them long!

CV

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken place,
And even if I knew, I should not tell —
People should hold their tongues in any case;
No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to face —
When two such faces are so, 'twould be wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

CVI

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious heart
Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong,
Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong!
How self-deceitful is the sagest part
Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along! —
The precipice she stood on was immense,
So was her creed in her own innocence.

CVII

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
And of the folly of all prudish fears,
Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
I wish these last had not occurr'd, in sooth,
Because that number rarely much endears,
And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

CVIII

When people say, ' I've told you *fifty* times';
They mean to scold, and very often do;
When poets say, ' I've written *fifty* rhymes ',
They make you dread that they'll recite them too;
In gangs of *fifty* thieves commit their crimes;
At *fifty* love for love is rare, 'tis true,
But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.

CIX

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love
For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,
She never would disgrace the ring she wore,
Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake — she thought it was her own;

CX

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair;
And to contend with thoughts she could not smother
She seem'd, by the distraction of her air.
'Twas surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so —
I'm very certain *mine* would not have done so.

CXI

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
  Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
As if it said, ' Detain me, if you please';
  Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze;
  She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
  A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

CXII

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
  But what he did is much what you would do;
His young lip thanked it with a grateful kiss,
  And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew
In deep despair, lest he had done amiss, —
  Love is so very timid when 'tis new:
She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,
And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

CXIII

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
  The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
  Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
  Sees half the business in a wicked way,
On which three single hours of moonshine smile —
And then she looks so modest all the while.

CXIV

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;
The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.

CXV

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
And half retiring from the glowing arm,
Which trembled like the bosom where 'twas placed;
Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
Or else 'twere easy to withdraw her waist;
But then the situation had its charm,
And then — Good knows what next — I can't go on;
I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

CXVI

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controlles core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers: — You're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb — and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

CXVII

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion;
But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
A little still she strove, and much repented,
And whispering 'I will ne'er consent' — consented.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

II

But time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man, — and, as we would hope, — perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,

We know not this — the blood flows on too fast:
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion:
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion;
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf ', and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

V

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line;
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
  This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
  Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
  True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic,
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
  Perhaps no better than they have treated me,
Who have imputed such designs as show
  Not what they saw, but what they wished to see;
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so,
  This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

STANZAS WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN FLORENCE AND PISA[40]

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory!

Oh FAME! — if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover,
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

[40] Byron's pessimistic attitude towards life is well expressed in this short poem. Written in 1821, it was only published in 1830.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR[41]

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze —
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus* — and 'tis not *here* —
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,

[41] Byron wrote this poem on January 22nd 1824 on the occasion of his birthday; the poet died three months later. It was published in 1824.

Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece — she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood! — unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here: — up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out — less often sought than found —
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) The following is the rhyme scheme of *Sonnet on Chillon* jumbled. Put it into the right order:

c a d e c a a d e b b e a d

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2) Make a list of all the feminine rhymes in *Don Juan*. Comment on the effect of these rhymes?

STYLE

1) Say whether the following lines from *Don Juan* are subordinate clauses or main clauses:

a) "perhaps still nearer seven"

b) "I know not well/How this same interview had taken place"

c) "She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth"

d) "and very often do"

e) "besides much more"

f) "she thought it was her own"

g) "The hand which still held Juan's"

h) "hallowing tree and flower"

i) "The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes"

j) "And whispering 'I will ne'er consent'-"

2) Part of the comedy of *Don Juan* is the mixing of linguistic registers. Go through the poem and write down ten examples of a) mock poeticisms b) colloquial speech.

RHYTHM

1) Which three lines in *Sonnet on Chillon* begin within a counterpoint beat?

2) Look for examples in *Don Juan* in which rhyme strains the metre so that certain syllables have to be exaggeratedly stressed for comic effects.

3) Which of the other poems in this selection are in the following metres? a) anapestic tetrameter b) iambic tetrameter

FORMS

1) What form of sonnet is *Sonnet on Chillon*? How different is it to the sonnet form that Wordsworth uses? Which do you prefer and why?

SOUND

1) Which first line in Canto the First of *Don Juan* contains the assonance

/i /?

2) What are the dominant alliterations of stanza CXIV of *Don Juan*? Comment on them.

CONTENT

1) With close reference to the poem comment on *Don Juan* as a parody of Romanticism.

2) There are two conflicting voices in Byron's poetry: one self-serious brooding and romantic, the other cynical and self ironic. In what ways can these two apparently different voices be seen as the product of one poetic sensibility?

Percy Bysshe Shelley

STANZAS
WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES[42]

I

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
  The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
  The purple noon's transparent might,
  The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds;
  Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
  With green and purple seaweeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
  Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
  I sit upon the sands alone, —
The lightning of the noontide ocean
  Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

[42] This is a wonderful piece of autobiographical introspection. The poem begins with a description of the beauties of nature: the sun, the snowy mountains, the blue isles. But soon the poet's mind changes and deep melancholy takes the place of the joy he felt before. Nevertheless, because of the happiness of nature "despair itself is mild" as the poet says at the beginning of the fourth stanza. Written in 1818, it was published by Shelley's wife in *Postumous Poems*, in 1824.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned —
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround —
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament — for I am one
Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND[43]

I

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

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

[43] This wind is something more than a simple gale. It represents the strength of nature on the one hand and the energy of the poet on the other. The wind is the symbol of freedom; it is uncontrolled: nobody and nothing can stop it. The poet talks to the wind as if it were a living creature, as it can create and destroy, like life itself can create and destroy. Composed in 1819 and published in 1820.

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

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

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

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

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

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

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

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

IV

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

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

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

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

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

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

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

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

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

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

THE CLOUD[44]

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,

[44] Shelley was always fascinated with clouds, mists, winds, rivers and seas. The cloud, ever beautiful and transitory, is a favourite with him, representig on the physical side the cyclic mutation of water (vapour, cloud, rain, dew, vapour again) and on the intellectual side the human spirit's mutability yet permanence. This poem was written and published in 1820.

Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine aëry nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, —
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK[45]

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see — we feel that it is there.

[45] The poet believes that the skylark's song represents sublime poetry; he wants to learn the secret of the bird's song to move the world. Composed in 1820 and published in the same year.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody!

Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aëreal hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view!

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chant,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest — but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

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.

ADONAIS[46]

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
He hath awakened from the dream of life —
'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. — *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

[46] *Adonais* (written and published in 1821) is an elegy on the death of Keats. In consists of fifty-five "spenserian stanzas" and begins with the words: "I weep for Adonais" that is the symbol of beauty and immortality and in the poem is Keats himself. It means that a poet never dies because he keeps on living through his works.

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, far from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never-wearied love.
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress —
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th'unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

THE WANING MOON[47]

And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass —

[47] This simple and profound poem was written in 1820 and published in 1824 after Shelley's death.

FRAGMENT: TO THE MOON[48]

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth, —
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

Thou chosen sister of the spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it pities ...

[48] This short lyric, like the preceding one, is dedicated to the moon. Composed in 1820 it was published in 1824.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION[49]

I

Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up, — to thy wonted work! come trace
The epitaph of glory fled, —
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

II

We wandered to the Pine Forest
That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

[49] Shelley wrote two famous poems to Jane Williams, *To Jane: The Invitation and To Jane: The Recollection.* In *The Invitation* the poet dreams about the wonderful day to be spent with Jane; but the recollection of that day was sweeter and Shelley expressed this sensation through the musicality and melody of his verses. Composed in 1822, it published by Mrs. Shelley in 1839.

III

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
That under Heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

IV

How calm it was! — the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced, —
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling, silent life, —
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

V

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough, —
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day —
In which the lovely forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.
And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth expressed;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters, seen.

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) What is the rhyme scheme of *Ode to the West Wind*?

2) Which of the following rhymes from *Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples* is the most irregular. What type of rhymes are they?

clear/wear

bright/might/light/delight

bude/floods/solitudes

are/care/bear/air

gone/moan/one

3) Make a list of all the feminine rhymes Shelley adopts in *To a Skylark*. What do you notice? What do these feminine rhymes contribute to the poem's tone?

STYLE

1) Say whether the following are examples of metaphor or simile:

a) "thou breath of autumn's being"

b) "Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed!"

c) "A heavy weight of hours"

d) "What if my leaves are falling"

e) "this closing night/Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre"

f) "If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear"

g) "oh lift me as a wave"

h) "Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth"

i) "The trumpet of a prophecy"

2) Decide which of the alternative meanings given is the most satisfactory (all phrases are taken from *To a Skylark*):

1. "In profuse strains of unpremeditated art" refers to:

a) A voice singing out of tune
b) A voice singing in tune
c) A voice singing naturally

2. "Like an unbodied joy" means

a) out of oneself with joy
b) an unseen manifestation of joy
c) a ghostly joy

3. "thou scorner of the ground refers to the skylark" that:

a) flies over the ground

b) mocks earthly things
c) mocks the ground

4. "Such harmonious madness" is

a) a paradox
b) a simile
c) nonesense

3) What poeticisms does Shelley use instead of the following in *To a Skylark*?

Were _____

evening _____

spring _____

does _____

lack _____

It is _____

RHYTHM

1) Listen to the recording and comment on the metrical irregularity of *To a Skylark* and say what it contributes to the poem's tone.

2) Which of the poems here is in the following metres?

a) iambic tetrameter; b) anapestic tetrameter; c) iambic pentameter
d) terza rima pentameter

FORMS

1) Shelley experimented with a variety of poetical forms. Which of the poems here is in a) terza rima b) Heroic Ode c) Spenserian Stanza?

2) Five line stanzas are not very common in English poetry. What does *To a Skylark* gain in being so structured?

SOUND

1) Which of the following lines in *Ode to the West Wind* contain both alliterations and assonances?

3 , 7 , 18 , 25 , 28 , 34 , 39 , 40 , 52 , 64 , 70

2) Re-read the first stanza of *The Cloud* and indicate the dominant sound patterns. What do they contribute to the poem's meaning ?

CONTENT

1) With reference to its rhetorical features (rhyme, metre, language, sound) trace the development of the poet's mood in *Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples.*

2) Show how the dense semantic patterning of *To a Skylark* contributes to the complexity of the poem's theme of poetic inspiration and spiritual freedom.

John Keats

ENDYMION: A POETIC ROMANCE[50]

Book I (Lines 1-24)

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon
For Simple sheep; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

[50] Keats' early poem *Endymion* (composed in 1817 and published a year later), in four books, deals with the legend of the man who fell in love with the Greek moon-goddess. This work is the celebration of beauty.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER[51]

Much have I travelle'd in the realms of gold,
  And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
  Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
  That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
  Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
  When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
  He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
  Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

[51] Keats wrote this sonnet after reading, in an old folio edition, some of the finest passages of Chapman's translation of Homer. This is a very important tribute from a poet to another. The sonnet was written in October 1816 and published in 1817.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS[52]

When I have fears that I may cease to be
  Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in charactery,
  Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
  Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
  Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
  That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
  Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

[52] The form and inspiration are clearly Shakespearian, but the poem also reveals the pathos of Keat's unhappy life. The thought of his fatal and growing illness must often come to his mind, so that "Love and Fame to nothingness do sink". Composed in 1818, it was published in 1848.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI [53]

I

O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
  Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
  And no birds sing.

II

O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
  So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
  And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lilly on thy brow,
  With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
  Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a lady in the meads,
  Full beautiful — a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
  And her eyes were wild.

[53] *La Belle Dame sans Merci* is about a knight who dreams of his lady, but wakes alone on a cold hillside, "where no birds sing". In this poem Keats achieved the highest perfection of the ballad in the briefest possible space. It was composed in 1819 and published in 1820.

V

I made a garland for her head,
  And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
  And made sweet moan.

VI

I set her on my pacing steed,
  And nothing else saw all day long;
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
  A faery's song.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
  And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said —
  'I love thee true'.

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
  And there she wept and sigh'd full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
  With kisses four.

IX

And there she lulled me asleep
  And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
  On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings and princes too,
  Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
  Hath thee in thrall!'

XI

I say their starved lips in the gloam,
  With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
  On the cold hill's side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here
  Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge has wither'd from the lake,
  And no birds sing.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE[54]

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
  But being too happy in thine happiness, —
    That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
      In some melodious plot
  Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
    Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
  Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
  Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
  Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
    With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
      And purple-stained mouth;
  That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
    And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

[54] The poet reveals his sense of joy deriving from the beauty of the bird's singing and contrasts it with the sense of sorrow which follows the thought that life is too short to be enjoyed. Written and published in 1819.

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN[55]

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
  Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
  A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
  Of deities or mortals, or of both,
    In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
  What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
    What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
  Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
  Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
  Thy song, nor even can those trees be bare;
    Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
  She cannot fade, though thou has not thy bliss,
    For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

[55] This ode, written in 1819 and published in 1820, deals with the human and mutable on the one hand, and the immortal and essential on the other. The urn of Keats' poem is not a particular urn, but an imaginary one; it is the symbol of beauty and youth. While everything decays and dies away in the real world, the urn will live forever because, as Keats says: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty".

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
  Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
  For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
  For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
    For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
  That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
    A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
  To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
  And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
  Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
    Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
  Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
    Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
  Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
  Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
  When old age shall this generation waste,
    Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
  'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' — that is all
    Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

TO AUTUMN[56]

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
  Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
  With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
  And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
  With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
    For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
  Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
    Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
  Steady thy laden head across a brook;
  Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

[56] In this poem, written in 1819 and published in 1820, Keats gives a magnificent picture of a lovely autumn day, showing the serenity of mind he received through the contemplation of the various aspects of nature.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
  Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, —
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
  And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
  Among the river sallows, borne aloft
    Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
  Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
  The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
    And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

EXERCISES

RHYME

1) Complete the following rhyme scheme for *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer:*

a — b — — — b — — d — — c —

2) Identify the rhyming words from *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and say what kind of rhymes each are:

sing/done/dew/wild/long/wide/loitering/all/begone/due/song/moan/sore/long/true/child/side/too/thrall/zone

3) Which of the odes has the following rhyme scheme for its first stanza?

a b a b c d e c d e

STYLE

1) Keats employs a number of exotic and archaic diction. What words would normally be used for the following?

realm _____

bards _____

ken _____

garners _____

grot _____

thrall _____

sojourn _____

lustrous _____

retards _____

haply _____

wherewith _____

darkling _____

self-same _____

2) Underline all the instances of hyperbation in the sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* and show how Keats strains language to maintain the poem's rhyme scheme.

RHYTHM

1) Identify the poems that begin with the following metres:

a) X / X / X X X / X / X
b) / X X / X / X / X X
c) X / / X X / X / X /
d) X / X / X / X / X /

2) Describe the metre of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. What do you notice about the final line of each stanza? How effective would you say the metre is in rendering the poem's content?

3) What happens to the metre in line 4 of *To Autumn*? Why do you think

it is different to the rhythm of the rest of the first stanza?

4) Comment on the way in which metre contributes to the meaning of the following lines from *To Autumn*:

"And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook."

FORMS

1) Identify the sonnet forms Keats uses and show how many parts each one is divided into in terms of line forms.

2) Illustrate Keats's ability to use the form of his odes in such a way as to make the reader unaware of their formal patterning. Comment on the interplay between formal restraint and formal flexibility.

SOUND

1) Comment in detail on the sound patterning of the following lines from *Ode to a Nightingale*:

" ... and a drowsy numbness pains/My sense ... "

"Singest of summer in full-throated ease"

"With beaded bubbles winking at the brim"

"The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves"

2) Comment in detail on the sound patterning of the following lines from *To Autumn*:

"To bend with apples the moss'd cottage trees
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core"

"Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind"

"Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours"

"Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn"

"And gathering swallows twitter in the skies."

3) Which poems contain the following assonances in their first lines?

/ ai / / ei /

CONTENT

1) Go through the poems in chronological order to trace the development of Keats's technical and rhetorical skills.

2) Explore the conflict between the real world and the world of fantasy in Keats's poetry. To what extent do you think Keats's vision depends upon escape from the real world?

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

William Blake

1757

Born 28th November in London, third son of James Blake, a hosier.

1761

The faculty of "vision" came to the poet when he was only four years old. He was taught at home to read and write. At the age of ten he was sent to Mr. Pars' drawing school in the Strand.

1772-79

Apprenticed for seven years to James Basire, engraver to the Society of Antiquaries.

1780

Became acquainted with Thomas Stothard, an illustrator, and with Flaxman. Exhibited for the first time at the Royal Academy.

1782

Married Catherine Boucher.

1783

Published his earliest compositions *Poetical Sketches*. His father died and his brother, Robert, came to live with him.

1787

His brother died. Later, Blake tells us, his brother appeared to him and revealed in a vision the secret of illuminated printing. During this period he was much in the society of sympathizers with the French Revolution. He also met some of the most advanced thinkers of the day: Dr. Price, Tom Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin.

1789

Published *Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel.*

1790

Published *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

1793

Published *America: A Prophecy.*

1794

Published *Songs of Experience, Europe: A Prophecy, The First Book of Urizen.*

1796

Engraved Young's *Night Thoughts.*

1797-99

Suffered from lack of employment as engraver. Obtained some commissions from Thomas Butts, his life long friend.

1800-03

Was introduced by Flaxman to William Hayley who invited him to Felpham. There he executed various commissions for Hayley.

1804

Began the composition of *Jerusalem.*

1807-09

Designed illustrations for *Paradise Lost.*

1810

Publication of his engraving of the *Canterbury Pilgrims.*

1811-17

Occupied with sketches and engravings.

1818

Wrote *The Everlasting Gospel.*

1820

Executed water-colour designs illustrating the *Book of Job* for Thomas Butts.

1822

Received a donation of £ 25 from the Royal Academy.

1823

Commissioned by Linnell to paint and engrave replicas of the designs for *Job.*

1825

First met Crabb Robinson, the diarist. Began designs in illustration of Dante for Linnell.

1827

Died 12th August.

William Wordsworth

1770

Born 7th April at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. Had three brothers and one sister, Dorothy. When he was seven his mother died and the family dispersed.

1779-87

Lived for eight years in Hawkshead at the house of Anne Tyson. These years were among the happiest of his life. His sensibilities were sharpened and his love of nature confirmed. Wordsworth's father died in 1783.

1787-91

Entered St. John's College, Cambridge. Although cut off from his native hills, he experienced at times, even in the level fields of Cambridgeshire, exaltation in the presence of nature. Took his degree in January without distinction.

1792

At Orleans fell in love with Annette Vallon who bore him a daughter. Became a complete convert to French Republicanism. Composed *Descriptive Sketches*.

1793

Published *An Evening Walk*. He intended to marry Annette, but in February war broke out between France and England, making his return to France impossible. He was not to see Annette or her daughter again until 1802.

1794-95

Moved about in the Lake District where he spent several delightful weeks with Dorothy. He established a home with Dorothy at Racedown, in Dorsetshire.

1797

Met Mary Hutchinson. In June the close friendship with Coleridge began.

1798

In January, Dorothy began her famous Journal. A walking trip along the River Wye with Dorothy resulted in the famous *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*. *Lyrical Ballads* were published in September.

1799

Wrote *The Lucy Poems, Ruth* and parts of *The Prelude.* Travelled in Germany and returned to England in May.

1800

Finished the fragment *of The Recluse,* and many other poems, including *Michael.* Published a second edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* with the famous Preface.

1802

On 4th October married Mary Hutchinson.

1803-04

After the birth of his first son, John, set off with Dorothy and Coleridge on a tour of Scotland. A series of poems resulted from the tour. His daughter Dora born.

1805-06

Finished *The Prelude.* Second son, Thomas, born.

1807-08

Published *Poems in Two Volumes.* Daughter Catherine born.

1809

Published *The Convention of Cintra,* a political tract.

1810-11

Son William born. Became estranged from Coleridge. Moved to Grasmere.

1812-13

Became reconciled with Coleridge. Death of his children Catherine (in June) and Thomas (in December). Moved to Rydal Mount, his home for the rest of his life.

1814-23

Made a tour of Scotland. Published *The Excursion.* Made a tour of Belgium.

1828-29

With Coleridge and Dorothy made a tour up the Rhine. Visited Ireland.

1831
Made a tour of the Highlands with Dorothy.

1835
Published *Yarrow Revisited* and *Other Poems*.

1837
Made a tour through France and Italy.

1843
Succeeded Southey as Poet Laureate.

1850
Died 23rd April at Rydal Mount and lies buried in Grasmere Churchyard.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772

Born 21st October at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, youngest son of the Reverend John Coleridge. Was a precocious and imaginative child.

1782-91

Following the death of his father was sent to Christ's Hospital in London. Was a voracious reader of highly imaginative and of difficult and abstruse works. Established a lifelong friendship with Charles Lamb.

1791-93

Won a scholarship and entered Jesus College, Cambridge. Under the influence of William Frend became a unitarian and a democrat.

1794

On a visit to Oxford met Robert Southey and roused him to an acceptance of the Utopian scheme of "Pantisocracy", an ideal community. Wrote with Southey a crude tragedy, *The Fall of Robespierre.*

1795

First met Wordsworth. Married Sara Fricker and settled in Bristol.

1796

Published *Poems on Various Subjects.* To gain relief from a violent attack of neuralgia, began at about this time the fatal habit of taking opium.

1797

In July Wordsworth moved to Nether Stowey to be near Coleridge. The intimate association of the two poets awakened in each the best of his genius. They wrote the now famous *Lyrical Ballads* (published 1798). Coleridge composed *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel* (part one), and *Kubla Khan.*

1798

Decided to visit Germany and in September accompanied by Wordsworth and his sister left England. After a ten months' absence returned to Stowey.

1799-1804

Settled with his family in Greta Hall, some thirteen miles from the Wordsworths at Grasmere. Waged an unsuccessful battle against broken health, marital strife, and a dangerous overindulgence in opium.

1804-07

Made a trip to Malta and the Mediterranean in search of health. Suffered from homesickness and returned to England in worse health than when he had left two years earlier. Opium now an inveterate habit. Visited the Wordsworths at Coleorton. Separated from his wife.

1808

Went to live with the Wordsworths at Grasmere.

1810

Soon after leaving Grasmere for London, quarrelled with Wordsworth. Later their differences were patched up, but the two men had inevitably grown apart. Their friendship could never be renewed again.

1813-16

Suffered financial distress. Began work on *Biographia Literaria*. Published *Christabel, Kubla Khan*.

1817

Published *Lay Sermons, Biographia Literaria*.

1825

Published *Aids to Reflection*, a theological work which was well received. Toured Germany with the Wordsworths.

1834

Died 25th July.

George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron

1788
Born 22nd January in London, son of Captain John Byron and his second wife, Catherine Gordon Byron. Of noble descent on both sides of his family.

1801-06
Attended Harrow School. In 1806 entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Following the Easter term (1806) was absent from Cambridge for a year. Spent his time at Southwell and London.

1807
January: *Hours of Idleness*, a revised selection of his juvenile poems, appeared.

1809
Took his seat in the House of Lords. In March published anonymously *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* In July set sail for a tour of the Mediterranean. Visited Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar and Malta. In Athens by December, where he finished the first canto of *Childe Harold.* Remained in Athens until May 1811.

1811
Returned to London in July. Mrs. Byron died in August. Within a short time two of his most cherished friends, Charles Matthews and John Wingfield, died. For some months his life seemed a dreary void. By late October arranged with John Murray for the publication of *Childe Harold, I* and *II.* Established a friendship with Tom Moore, which was to last for life.

1814
Published *The Corsair* (13,000 copies sold on the day of publication). Addressed a contemptuous ode to Napoleon on his abdication. Published *Lara.* In September his engagement to Anne Isabella Milbanke was announced.

1815
Married on 2nd January at Seaham. Was in straitened financial circumstances. Met Sir Walter Scott. His daughter Augusta Ada born.

1816

On 25th April he sailed from Dover never again to return to England. Landed at Ostend. Met Shelley and Mary Godwin at Geneva. Enjoyed the companionship of Shelley, who was living close by. Shelley took back to England the manuscript of *Childe Harold III, The Prisoner of Chillon,* etc. They were published by Murray.

1817-18

Murray published *Manfred* and *The Lament of Tasso. Beppo* and *Childe Harold IV* published in February and April. Met Shelley in Venice. Began *Don Juan.*

1819-20

Moved to Ravenna. Published *Ode on Venice, Mazeppa* and *Don Juan, I* and *II.* Became involved in the Carbonari plot against Austria.

1821

Published the *Prophecy of Dante, Marino Faliero, Don Juan III, IV, V.* Left Ravenna and settled at Pisa. Published *Cain, Sardanapalus, The Two Foscari.*

1822

Leigh Hunt arrived in June to join Byron and Shelley in establishing a literary journal, *The Liberal.* In July, Shelley and Williams were drowned off Leghorn and their bodies burned on the shore by Trelawny, Hunt, and Byron. *The Liberal* was abandoned after only four numbers. Published *The Vision of Judgement.*

1823

Published *Werner, Heaven and Hearth, The Age of Bronze, The Blues, The Island,* and *Don Juan VI-XIV.* Elected to the London Greek Committee and asked by that body to go to Greece to lend his aid and prestige to the cause. In December crossed over to Missolonghi and was received with full military honors.

1824

Don Juan XV, XVI appeared in March. The country around Missolonghi was a fever-ridden morass and the weather bad. Byron's health rapidly declined and he died on 19th April. His body was returned to England.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

1792

Born 4th August at Field Place, in Sussex, eldest son of Timothy Shelley, a country squire of commonplace talents and Elizabeth Pilfold. At the age of ten began attendance at Syon House Academy.

1804-10

At Eton. Rebelled against the system of fagging; in retaliation his schoolmates baited him repeatedly.

1810-11

Took up residence at University College, Oxford. Formed a close friendship with Thomas Jefferson Hogg, with whom he shared his new-formed political idealism founded on reason. With Hogg as co-author hastily wrote and published *The Necessity of Atheism*, which resulted in his and Hogg's expulsion from Oxford. Married Harriet Westbrook.

1812-13

Was in Ireland speaking and writing for reform. Published *A Declaration of Rights* and *Letter to Lord Ellenborough.* Was under government suspicion as a reformer. Daughter Ianthe born.

1814

Published *A Refutation of Deism.* In May and June, frequent meetings with Mary Wollstonecraft. Eloped to France with Mary in July. Returned to England in September. Harriet's second child, Charles Bysshe, born in November. In London many friends deserted him because of his elopement. He also suffered financial distress, and had to move about from place to place and keep in hiding to escape imprisonment for debt.

1815-16

Sir Bysshe, Shelley's grandfather, died in January, relieving the poet of immediate financial worries and making him financially secure for the rest of his life. Mary's child, William, born in January 1816. *Alastor* published in March. Shelley

and Mary started out in May from Dover for Geneva. There they met Byron. From June to September, almost daily association with Byron. Composed *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.*

1818

The Revolt of Islam was published. Shelley left England for Italy in March. Wrote *Julian and Maddalo* and *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills.* Visited Rome and settled in Naples.

1820

At Pisa January-June. Interest in the revolution in Spain resulted in *Ode to Liberty.* Published *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci.*

1821

Wrote *Defence of Poetry* (published 1840). Keats died in Rome, 23rd February. *Adonais* printed in July. Paid a brief visit to Byron at Ravenna. Planned with Byron to found *The Liberal* and invited Leigh Hunt to Italy as editor. Shelley increasingly admired Jane Williams.

1822

Composed lyrics to Jane and enjoyed sailing, almost daily, with Edward Williams. Worked on *The Triumph of Life* (unfinished). On 8th July, was drowned with Williams in Shelley's boat. The bodies of the two friends cremated on the beach by Trelawny, Byron and Hunt. The poet's ashes taken to the Protestant Cemetery in Rome and buried close by the grave of Keats.

John Keats

1795

Born 31st October in London, eldest son of Thomas Keats, head ostler to Mr. John Jennings, and Frances Keats, only daughter of Mr. Jennings. Besides John, there were two other sons, George and Tom, and a daughter, Frances.

1803-11

Sent to the school kept by Mr. John Clarke at Enfield. Learned to read French and Latin and acquired a reputation for his quick temper, his pugnacity, his wit, and his generosity. His father died in 1804. In his last year at school developed a passionate liking for reading. In 1810 his mother died of tubercolosis.

1811-15

Left school at Enfield and was apprenticed to an apothecary-surgeon at Edmonton. Was introduced by Clarke to Spenser, whose *Epithalamion* and *Faerie Queene* awakened his creative genius. Left Edmonton in 1815 and entered Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital, London. Began to compose sonnets and other verses.

1816

His first poem, *Solitude,* published in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner.* Passed his examinations and received a certificate from Guy's and St. Thomas's, but decided to give up medicine for literature. Wrote many sonnets, including the famous Chapman's Homer sonnet. Met Haydon, the painter, and Hazlitt, Lamb, and Shelley.

1817-18

Published *Endymion.* Wrote *Isabella* and numerous short poems. He was constantly preoccupied with George's departure for America and Tom's failing health. Started out late in June with Charles Brown on a walking trip into Northern England, Scotland, and Ireland. Was shocked by the misery and brutishness of the Irish peasantry. The tour ended abruptly in August when a severe sore throat (the first hint of the disease that was to kill him) caused Keats to return to London. The autumn was spent at Hampstead with Tom, who was slowly dying. In September two Tory journals, the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's,* attacked *Endymion.* Tom died in December. In his loneliness and not knowing how fatal the state of his health was he fell deeply in love with Fanny Brawne.

1819

Financial difficulties, anxieties about his sister, the failure of his poems, his growing illness and hopeless love - all combined to induce a winter depression of spirits. In January wrote *Eve of St. Agnes* and in April *Ode to Psyche,* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci.* In May came the four 'great odes': *Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode on Melancholy, Ode to a Nightingale, Ode on Indolence.* Finished *Lamia* and began *Fall of Hyperion.* In September wrote his last great poem *To Autumn.*

1821

Died 23rd February in Rome. Lies buried in the Protestant Cemetery. Engraved on his tombstone, as Keats desired, are the words: 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water'.

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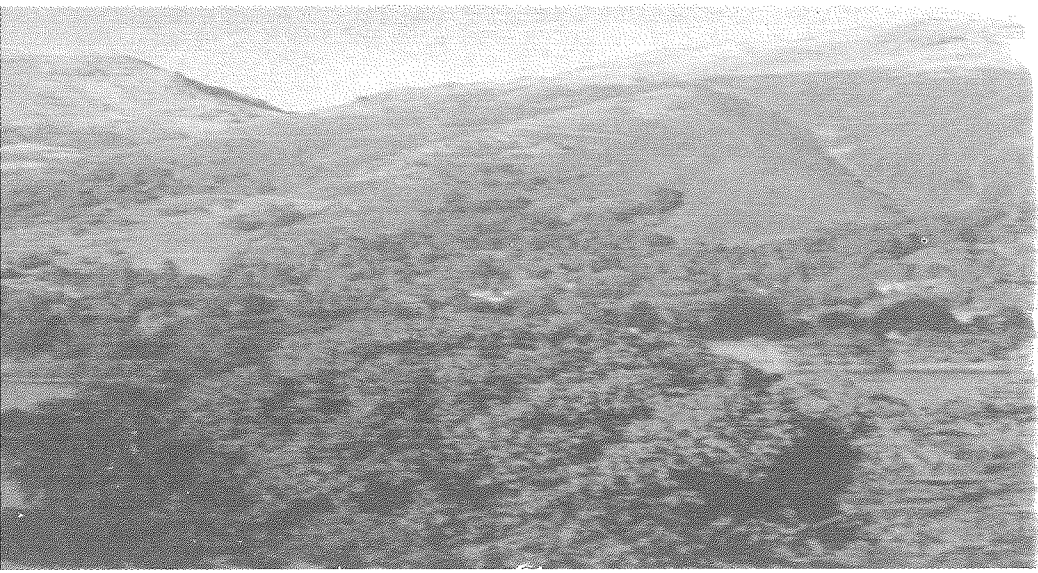
Finito di stampare
nel mese di giugno 1999
dall'*Industria grafica DE.MA. s.a.s.*
per le Edizioni Tracce
Via Vittorio Veneto, 47
65123 - Pescara
Tel. 085/76658



L. 32.000
ISBN 88-86676-36-0