

II MA ENGLISH
VICTORIAN LITERATURE – MEN32
(Prepared by Ponnivalavan P, Assistant Professor, Thiruvalluvar University College of Arts
and Science, Tirupattur)
UNIT I – POETRY

Part 1- Detailed Poems

1. Dover Beach by Mathew Arnold

ORIGINAL TEXT

Dover Beach

BY MATTHEW ARNOLD

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's
shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

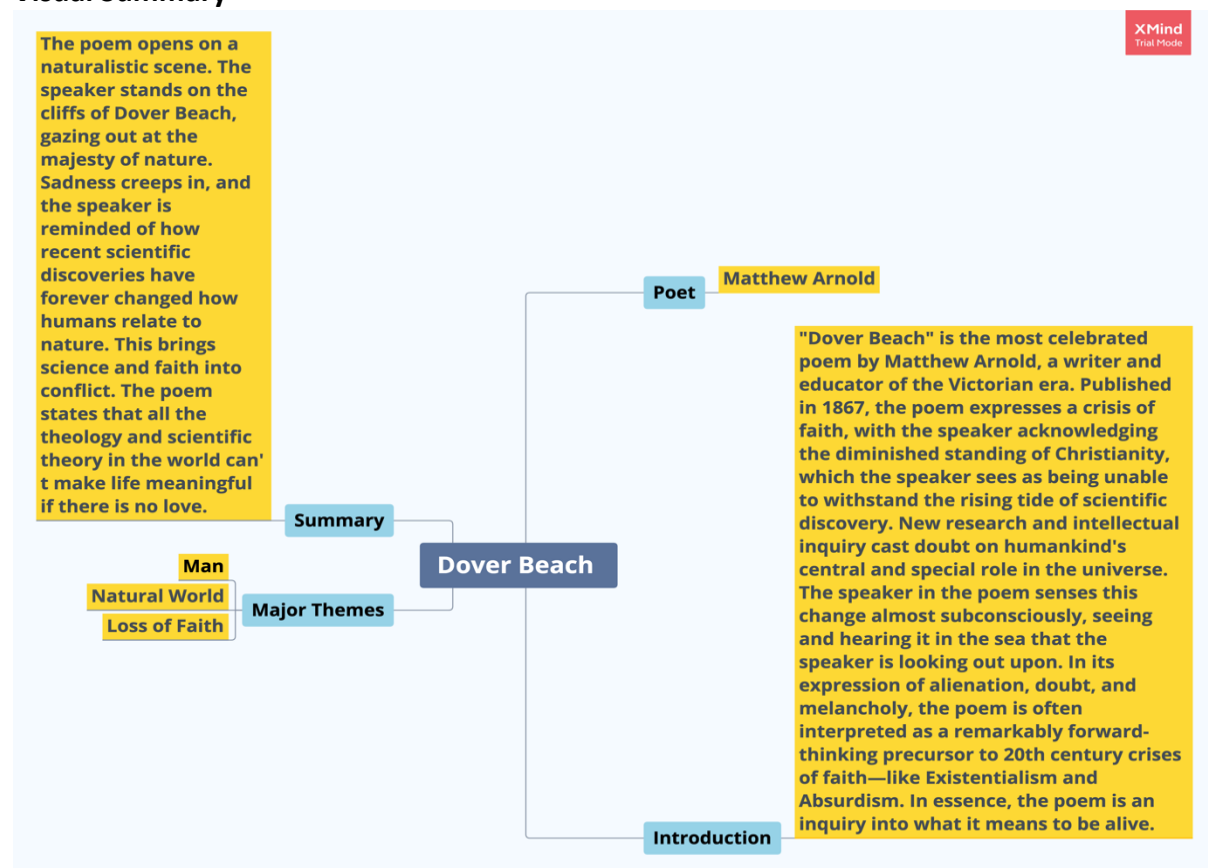
Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and
flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

About the Poet

Matthew Arnold (1822-88) is the eldest son of Thomas Arnold, educated at Rugby, Winchester, and at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1851 he became an inspector of schools, in which capacity he served for 35 years, travelling extensively throughout England, and observing at first hand the social conditions that prompted much of his later critical work. His first volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (by 'A', 1849), contains 'The Forsaken Mermaid', 'The Sick King in Bokhara', and sonnets written at Balliol, including 'Shakespeare'. In 1851 he married Fanny Lucy Wightman. Part of 'Dover Beach' (1867) dates from his honeymoon, which continued on the Continent, and also inspired his 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' (1855). In 1853 appeared a volume of poems containing extracts from

the earlier books, and 'Soh-rab and Rustum', 'The Scholar-Gipsy', 'Memorial Verses to Wordsworth' (who had been a personal friend of Arnold). In his maturity Arnold turned increasingly to prose, writing essays on literary, educational, and social topics that established him as the leading critic of the day and which greatly influenced writers as diverse as Max Weber, T S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and R. Williams. His lectures on translating Homer, with his definition of 'the grand style' (delivered in 1860), were published in 1861; *Essays in Criticism (First Series)* in 1865 (*Second Series*, 1888); *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (which caused Oxford to establish a chair of Celtic studies) in 1867; *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869; *Friendship's Garland* in 1871; *Literature and Dogma*, a study of the interpretation of the Bible, in 1873. In these and other works, Arnold sharply criticized the provincialism, philistinism, sectarianism, and utilitarian materialism of English life and culture, and argued that England needed more intellectual curiosity, more ideas, and a more comparative, European outlook.

Visual Summary



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Detailed Overview

Dover Beach is a 'honeymoon' poem. Written in 1851, shortly after Matthew Arnold's marriage to Frances Lucy Wightman, it evokes quite literally the sweetness and light which Arnold famously found in the classical world, in whose image he formed his ideals of English culture. In fact, those public values are privatised in the very word the poem conjures for us: honeymoon. Dover Beach fundamentally seems to be about a withdrawal into personal values. Historical pessimism moves in swiftly as a tide.

One night, the narrator of "Dover Beach" sits with a woman inside a house, looking out over the English Channel near the town of Dover. They see the lights on the coast of France just twenty miles away, and the sea is quiet and calm.

When the light over in France suddenly extinguishes, the speaker focuses on the English side, which remains tranquil. He trades visual imagery for aural imagery, describing the "grating roar" of the pebbles being pulled out by the waves. He finishes the first stanza by calling the music of the world an "eternal note of sadness."

The next stanza flashes back to ancient Greece, where Sophocles heard this same sound on the Aegean Sea, and was inspired by it to write his plays about human misery.

Stanza three introduces the poem's main metaphor, with: "The Sea of Faith/Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore." The phrase suggests that faith is fading from society like the tide is from the shore. The speaker laments this decline of faith through melancholy diction.

In the final stanza, the speaker directly addresses his beloved who sits next to him, asking that they always be true to one another and to the world that is laid out before them. He warns, however, that the world's beauty is only an illusion, since it is in fact a battlefield full of people fighting in absolute darkness.

Arguably Matthew Arnold's most famous poem, "Dover Beach" manages to comment on his most recurring themes despite its relatively short length. Its message - like that of many of his other poems - is that the world's mystery has declined in the face of modernity. However, that decline is here painted as particularly uncertain, dark, and volatile. What also makes the poem particularly powerful is that his romantic streak has almost no tinge of the religious. Instead, he speaks of the "Sea of Faith" without linking it to any deity or heaven. This "faith" has a definite humanist tinge - it seems to have once guided decisions and smoothed over the world's problems, tying everyone together in a meaningful way. It is no accident that the sight inspiring such reflection is that of untouched nature, almost entirely absent from any human involvement. In fact, the speaker's true reflection begins once the only sign of life - the light over in France - extinguishes. What Arnold is expressing is an innate quality, a natural drive towards beauty. He explores this contradiction through what is possibly the poem's most famous stanza, that which compares his experience to that of Sophocles. The comparison could be trite, if the point were merely that someone long before had appreciated the same type of beauty that he does. However, it is poignant because it reveals a darker potential in the beautiful. What natural beauty reminds us of is human misery? Because we can recognize the beauty in nature, but can never quite transcend our limited natures to reach it, we might be drawn to lament as well as celebrate it. The two responses are not mutually exclusive. This contradictory feeling is explored in many of Arnold's poems - "The Scholar-Gipsy" and "A Dream" are two examples - and he shows in other poems an instinct towards the tragic, the human inability to transcend our weakness (an example would be "Consolation," which presents time as a tragic force). Thus, the allusion to Socrates, a Greek playwright celebrated for his tragedies, is particularly apt.

Such a dual experience - between celebration of and lament for humanity - is particularly possible for Arnold, since mankind has traded faith for science following the publication of *On the Origin of Species* and the rise of Darwinism. Ironically, the tumult of nature - out on the ocean - is nothing compared to the tumult of this new way of life. It is this latter tumult that frightens the speaker, that has him beg his lover to stay true to him. He worries that the chaos of the modern world will be too great, and that she will be shocked to discover that even in the presence of great beauty like that outside their window, mankind is gearing up for destruction. Behind even the appearance of faith is the new order, and he hopes that they might use this moment to keep them together despite such uncertainty.

The poem epitomizes a certain type of poetic experience, in which the poet focuses on a single moment in order to discover profound depths. Here, the moment is the visceral serenity the speaker feels in studying the landscape, and the contradictory fear that that serenity then leads him to feel. To accomplish that end, the poem uses a lot of imagery and sensory information. It begins with mostly visual depictions, describing the calm sea, the fair moon, and the lights in France across the Channel. "The cliffs of England stand/Glimmering and vast" not only describes the scene, but establishes how small the two humans detailed in the poem are in the face of nature. Perhaps most interestingly, the first stanza switches from visual to auditory descriptions, including "the grating roar" and "tremulous cadence slow." The evocation of several senses fills out the experience more, and creates the sense of an overwhelming and all-encompassing moment.

The poem also employs a lot of enjambment (the poetic technique of leaving a sentence unfinished on one line, to continue and finish it on the next). The effect is to give the poem a faster pace: the information hits us in rapid succession, forming a clear picture in our minds little by little. It also suggests that Arnold does not wish to create a pretty picture meant for reflection. Instead, the beautiful sight is significant because of the fear and anxiety it inspires in the speaker. Because the poem so wonderfully straddles the line between poetic reflection and desperate uncertainty, it has remained a well-loved piece throughout the centuries.

2. Tithonus by Alfred Tennyson

ORIGINAL TEXT

Tithonus

By ALFRED TENNYSON

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men, who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

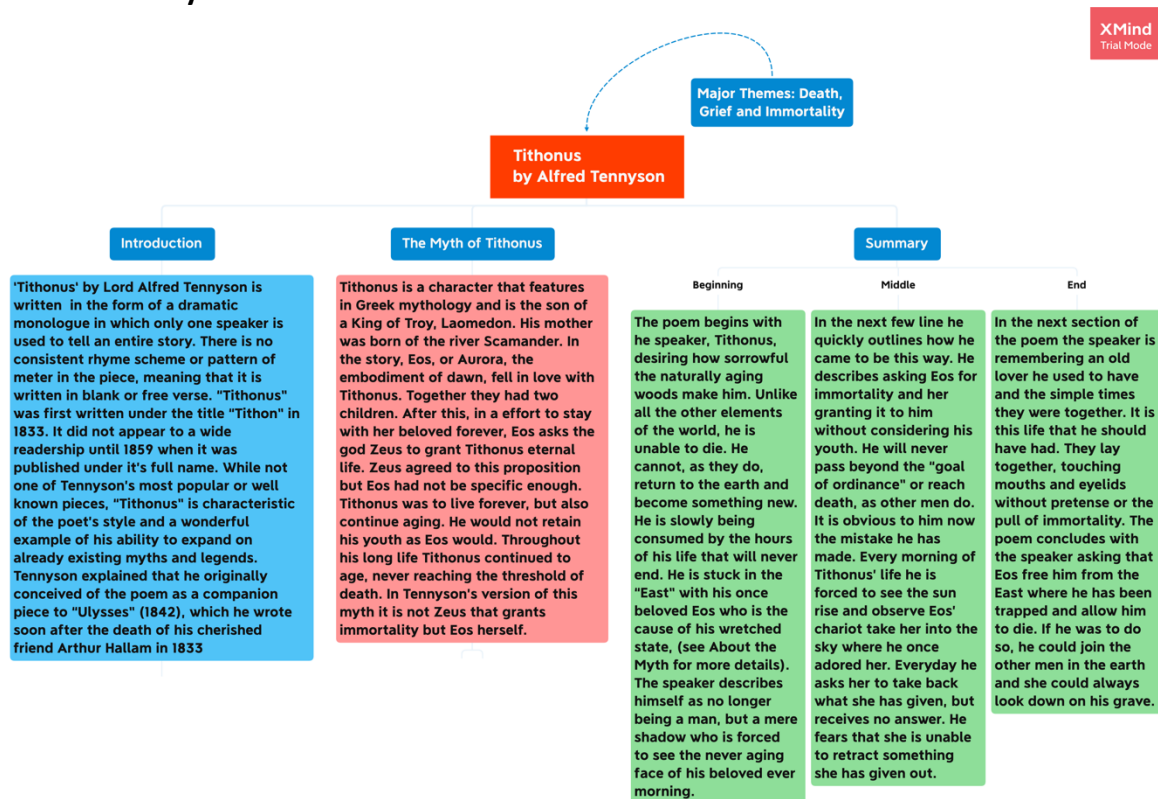
Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

About the Poet

Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, the third surviving son of the rector, George Tennyson. In 1829 he won the chancellor's medal for English verse with 'Timbuctoo', the first poem in blank verse to win. *Poems by Two Brothers* (1827) contains some early work that he chose not to reprint even in his *Juvenilia*, as well as poems by his brothers Charles and Frederick (below). *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (1830, including 'Mariana') was unfavourably reviewed by Lockhart and John Wilson. In 1832 he travelled with Hallam on the Continent, visiting among other places Caunteret, a landscape that was to be a lasting inspiration. Hallam died abroad in 1833, and in that year Tennyson began *In Memoriam*, expressive of his grief for his lost friend. In Dec. 1832 he published a further volume of *Poems* (dated 1833), which included 'The Two Voices', 'Oenone', 'The Lotos-Eaters', and 'A Dream of Fair Women'; 'Tithonus', published in 1860, was composed 1833-4. In 1842 appeared a selection from the previous two volumes, many of the poems much revised, with new poems, including *'Morte d'Arthur' (the germ of the *Idylls*), *Locksley Hall*, 'Ulysses', and 'St Simeon Stylites'.

Visual Summary



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Detailed Overview

The woods in the forests grow old and their leaves fall to the ground. Man is born, works the earth, and then dies and is buried underground. Yet the speaker, Tithonus, is cursed to live forever. Tithonus tells Aurora, goddess of the dawn, that he grows old slowly in her arms like a "white-hair'd shadow" roaming in the east.

Tithonus laments that while he is now a “gray shadow” he was once a beautiful man chosen as Aurora’s lover. He remembers that he long ago asked Aurora to grant him eternal life: “Give me immortality!” Aurora granted his wish generously, like a rich philanthropist who has so much money that he gives charity without thinking twice. However, the Hours, the goddesses who accompany Aurora, were angry that Tithonus was able to resist death, so they took their revenge by battering him until he grew old and withered. Now, though he cannot die, he remains forever old; and he must dwell in the presence of Aurora, who renews herself each morning and is thus forever young. Tithonus appeals to Aurora to take back the gift of immortality while the “silver star” of Venus rises in the morning. He now realizes the ruin in desiring to be different from all the rest of mankind and in living beyond the “goal of ordinance,” the normal human lifespan.

Just before the sun rises, Tithonus catches sight of the “dark world” where he was born a mortal. He witnesses the coming of Aurora, the dawn: her cheek begins to turn red and her eyes grow so bright that they overpower the light of the stars. Aurora’s team of horses awakes and converts the twilight into fire. The poet now addresses Aurora, telling her that she always grows beautiful and then leaves before she can answer his request. He questions why she must “scare” him with her tearful look of silent regret; her look makes him fear that an old saying might be true—that “The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.”

Tithonus sighs and remembers his youth long ago, when he would watch the arrival of the dawn and feel his whole body come alive as he lay down and enjoyed the kisses of another. This lover from his youth used to whisper to him “wild and sweet” melodies, like the music of Apollo’s lyre, which accompanied the construction of Ilion (Troy).

Tithonus asks Aurora not to keep him imprisoned in the east where she rises anew each morning, because his eternal old age contrasts so painfully with her eternal renewal. He cringes cold and wrinkled, whereas she rises each morning to warm “happy men that have the power to die” and men who are already dead in their burial mounds (“grassy barrows”). Tithonus asks Aurora to release him and let him die. This way, she can see his grave when she rises and he, buried in the earth, will be able to forget the emptiness of his present state, and her return “on silver wheels” that stings him each morning.

3. My Last Duchess by Robert Browning

ORIGINAL TEXT

My Last Duchess

BY ROBERT BROWNING

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,

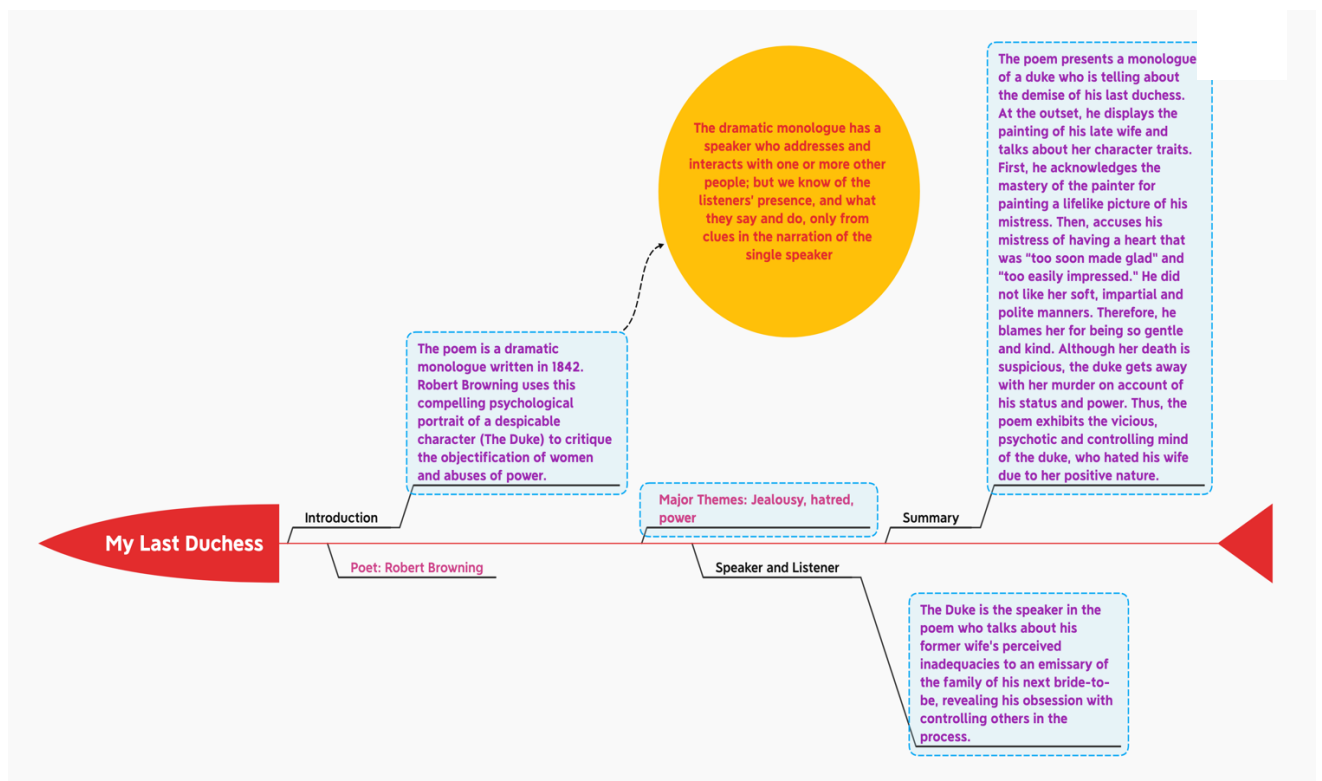
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but
thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave
commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she
stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

About the Poet

Robert Browning (born May 7, 1812, London—died Dec. 12, 1889, Venice) is a major English poet of the Victorian age, noted for his mastery of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. His most noted work was *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69), the story of a Roman murder trial in 12 books. Browning produced comparatively little poetry during his married life. Apart from a collected edition in 1849 he published only Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day (1850), an examination of different attitudes toward Christianity, perhaps having its immediate origin in the death of his mother in 1849; an introductory essay (1852) to

some spurious letters of Shelley, Browning’s only considerable work in prose and his only piece of critical writing; and *Men and Women* (1855). This was a collection of 51 poems—dramatic lyrics such as “Memorabilia,” “Love Among the Ruins,” and “A Toccata of Galuppi’s”; the great monologues such as “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “How It Strikes a Contemporary,” and “Bishop Brougham’s Apology”; and a very few poems in which implicitly (“By the Fireside”) or explicitly (“One Word More”) he broke his rule and spoke of himself and of his love for his wife. *Men and Women*, however, had no great sale, and many of the reviews were unfavourable and unhelpful.

Visual Summary



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Detailed overview

The Duke of Ferrara, the speaker requests a guest to direct his attention to the painting of his last Duchess i.e. his former wife, which is on the wall. The Duke lauds the work of art for being so lifelike and then comments on the efforts of the painter, Fra Pandolf. The duke asks the guest to sit and look at the work. The duke then explains that he deliberately mentioned the name of the painter, because strangers like the emissary always look at the duchess’s painted face—with its deep, passionate, and earnest glance—and turn to the duke (and only the duke, since only he pulls back the curtain that reveals the painting) and act as though they would ask, if they dared, how an expression like that came into her face. The duke reiterates that the guest isn’t the first person to ask this question.

The duke continues by saying that it wasn't only his presence that brought that look into the painted eyes of the duchess or the blush of happiness into her painted cheek; he suggests that perhaps Fra Pandolf had happened to compliment her by saying "her shawl drapes over her wrist too much" or "paint could never recreate the faint half-blush that's fading on her throat." The duke insists that the former duchess thought that polite comments like those were reason enough to blush, and criticizes her, in a halting way, for being too easily made happy or impressed. He also claims that she liked everything and everyone she saw, although his description suggests that she was ogling everyone who crossed her path. The duke objects that, to his former duchess, everything was the same and made her equally happy, whether it was a brooch or present from him that she wore at her chest, the sun setting in the West, a branch of cherries which some interfering person snapped off a tree in the orchard for her, or the white mule she rode on around the terrace. He claims that she would say the same kind words or give the same blush in response to all of them. The duke also objects to her manner of thanking men, although he struggles to describe his concerns. Specifically, he complains that she values his pedigree and social position (his 900-year-old name) as equally important to anyone else's gifts to her.

The duke rhetorically asks whether anyone would actually lower themselves enough to argue with someone about their behavior. The duke imagines a hypothetical situation in which he would confront the former duchess: he says that even if he were good with words and were able to clearly say, "This characteristic of yours disgusts me," or, "Here you did too little or too much"—and if the former duchess had let herself be degraded by changing, instead of being stubborn and making excuses— that even then the act of confronting her would be beneath him, and he refuses to ever lower himself like that.

The duke then returns to his earlier refrain about his former wife's indiscriminate happiness and complains to his guest that, while the duchess did smile at him whenever they passed, she gave everyone else the same smile as well. The duke explains that she began smiling at others even more, so he gave orders and all her smiles stopped forever, presumably because he had her killed. Now she only lives on in the painting.

The duke then asks the guest to stand up and to go with him to meet the rest of the guest's downstairs. He also says that the Count, revealed here as the guest's master and the father of the duke's prospective bride-to-be, is so known for his generosity in matters of money that no request the duke could make for a dowry could be turned down. The duke also adds quickly that he has always insisted since the beginning of their discussions that the Count's beautiful daughter, and not the dowry, is his primary objective.

The duke ends his speech by demanding that he and the Count's emissary go downstairs together, and on their way, he directs the emissary's attention to a statue of the God Neptune taming a seahorse, which is a rare work of art that Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze specifically for him.

4. The Windhover by Gerard Manley Hopkins

ORIGINAL TEXT

The Windhover

By GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

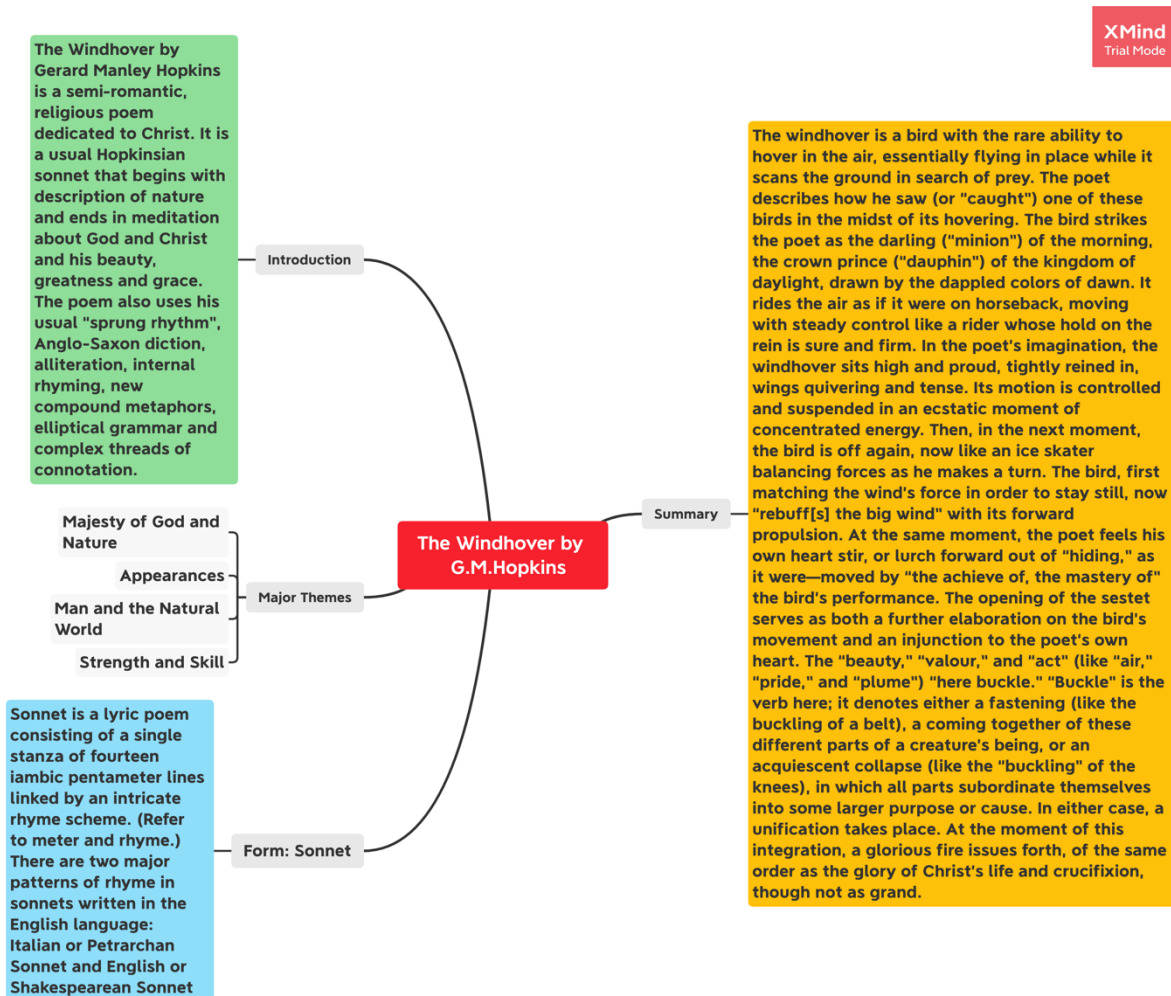
Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

About the Poet

Gerard Manley (1844-89), born in Stratford, Essex, the eldest of nine children in the High Anglican, artistically minded home of Kate and Manley Hopkins. He worked in Chesterfield and London before being sent to Oxford, 1878-9; any hopes that he would be Newman-like in the community were not realized. Parish life in industrial Liverpool (1880-1) and Glasgow overwhelmed him; he resumed teaching at Roehampton and Stonyhurst. In 1884 he was appointed to the chair of Greek and Latin at University College, Dublin. The earliest poems express a Keatsian sensuousness and a Ruskinian zest for natural detail, but a distinctive flair for aural and rhythmic effects is also evident. Oxford texts such as 'Heaven-Haven' and 'Easter Communion' trace his desire and need to convert. Always too scrupulous and self-critical, Hopkins never reconciled writing poetry and serving God. When he joined the Jesuits, he symbolically burned his poems, though he sent some copies to Bridges for safe keeping. The writing stopped for eight years, but language and poetic theorizing did not. Ironically, a disaster at sea in 1875 revived his creativity and produced 'The Wreck of the Deutschland'. While studying for ordination, inspired by 'God's grandeur' in Wales, he composed a remarkable series of sonnets including 'The Windhover', 'Spring', and 'Pied Beauty'. Aesthetic and moral questions intensify in subsequent poems such as 'Henry Purcell' and 'Binsey Poplars'.

Visual Summary



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Detailed Overview

Hopkins has mixed his romantic fascination with the nature with his religious favor of gratitude towards God for giving us a beautiful nature. The beauty of nature is here illustrated by a wonderful bird flying in the air. He describes a bird which he saw flying in the sky that morning. Like in a romantic poem, he remembers the experience to express his feelings. That morning, the speaker had been out at dawn. From the excited description in the poem, we can infer that the speaker was probably in the field. His attention was suddenly drawn by the scene of a bird flying in the sky.

The first stanza of the poem is a description of the different tricks of the bird's flight. In the second the speaker remembers the beauty of Christ and says that he is a billion times loveliest. So, claiming that the nature's beauty is no wonder, he concludes in the last stanza that everything he looks at reminds him the pain and suffering of Christ which has made human life so beautiful and given this opportunity to enjoy it. To this devotee of Christ, everything brings the image of Christ and his wounds and pain and sacrifice. This suggests

that he always remembers and becomes thankful to Christ. As the subtitle suggests, the poem is a thanksgiving to Christ.

The *Windhover* is a sonnet whose octave describes the flight of a kestrel (windhover) that he saw that morning. The sestet is divided in two parts: the first three lines are about the bird and the comparison of the bird with Christ who is 'a billion times lovelier', and the last three lines express his memories and appreciation of Christ. But the poem is rather difficult because the poet has used odd old English words, only implications, and Christian symbols to suggest the pain (gall), wound (gash), blood (vermillion), sacrifice, and so the greatness of Christ. The bottom-line of the difficult ideas in this poem is that 'it is because of the sacrifice of Christ that we have such a life, and we can enjoy the majestic beauty of the nature: so we should thank him.

The speaker compares the bird with Christ, "my chevalier", who is a billion times lovelier, more brute (wild) and dangerous (consuming) in his beauty. The fire or brilliance of Christ is dazzling this bird is no wonder. "No wonder", says the poet about the bird because the real wonder of the world is another supreme gift of God, his son, the Christ. His steps on the soil make a semblance (shape) of a wound (gash) when the blood-red (vermillion) and golden light of the sun is cast on it. The flight of the bird reminds the speaker of his Christ's crucifixion; his blood falls on us for redemption: his suffering (gall) is also another thing to remember.

The last stanza associatively brings together unrelated words, each telling something about Christ and his suffering and sacrifice for human beings. The description of the first stanza and the comparison of the second stanza are all forgotten when the poet deeply meditates and exalts in the sacrifice and greatness of Christ in the last three-line stanza. The red ember-like the light of the morning sun on the horizon of the blue-bleak sky and he is lost in contemplation.

The poem is almost impossible to understand without good background knowledge about Hopkins's ideas and his odd words. There are many words of the Anglo-Saxon origin like *rung* (past tense of 'ring' meaning go round), *minion*, *dauphin*, *chevalier* (prince), etc. There are also unusual combinations like "dapple-dawn-drawn", which is an image of the bird. The last stanza is particularly complex because of the associatively linked words related to Christ and his sacrifice. Finally, the grammar is also odd; actually the poem does not follow any traditional grammar and structure. In short, the poem can be discussed as a sonnet because it has some of the features of the typical sonnet, but it must be called a modified sonnet adapted to a different kind of subject, word-game and music.

By implication, the poem is therefore a poem of thanksgiving to Christ. It is a hymn that is romantic in form but religious in theme. When the poet sees the beautiful bird, he is reminded of Christ and becomes thankful and appreciative of him. The poem's theme is therefore related to the poet's praise of Christ rather than being about the bird.

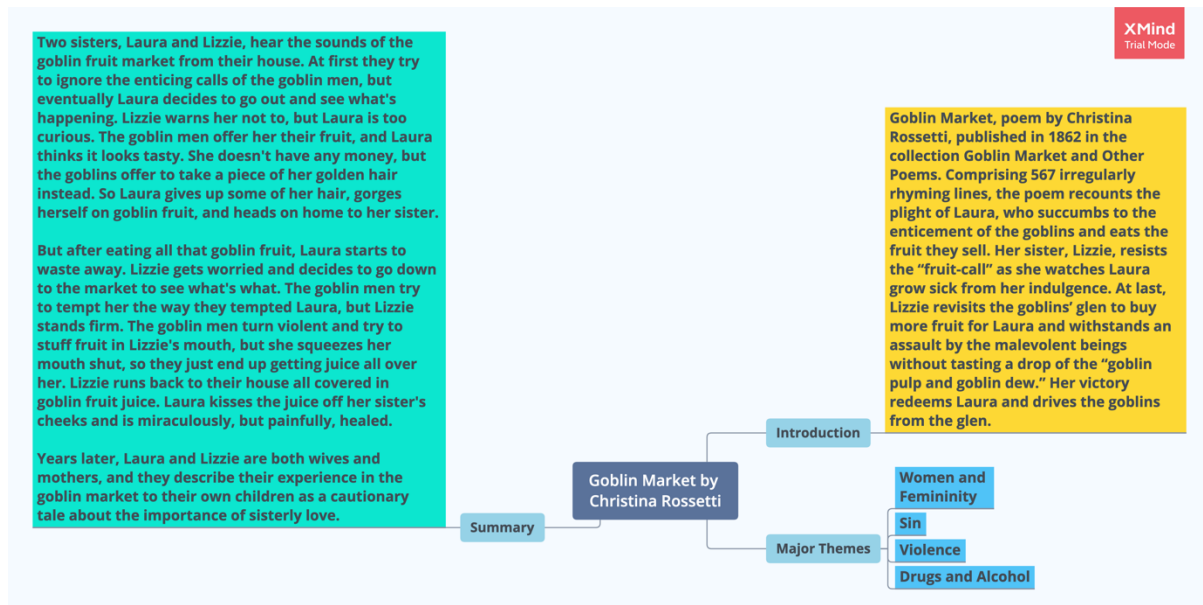
Part 2 – Non detailed Poems

5. Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti

About the Poet

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94) was the sister of D. G. and W M. Rossetti. She was educated at home, shared her brothers' intellectual interests, and contributed to their childhood family journals. Christina, like her mother and sister Maria, was a devout High Anglican, much influenced by the Tractarians. She contributed to the *Germ* (1850), where five of her poems appeared under the pseudonym 'Ellen Alleyn'. In 1861 *Macmillan's Magazine* published 'Up-hill' and 'A Birthday', two of her best-known poems. *Goblin Market and Other Poems* appeared in 1862, *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* in 1866, *Sing-Song, a Nursery Rhyme Book* (with illustrations by Arthur Hughes) in 1872, and *A Pageant and Other Poems* in 1881. *Time Flies: A Reading Diary* (1885) consists of short passages and prose, one for each day of the year. She also published much prose and poetry in periodicals and anthologies, and many prose devotional works. Her *Poetical Works*, ed. W M. Rossetti, with a memoir, was published in 1904. Her work ranges from poems of fantasy and verses for the young to ballads, love lyrics, sonnets, and religious poetry. Much of it is pervaded by a sense of melancholy, verging at times on the morbid.

Visual Summary



Infographic created using the trial version of Xmind

Detailed Overview

Each morning and evening young women hear the cry of the **goblin men**, who seductively describe the **fruits** they're selling and urge the young women to "come buy." One evening, sisters **Laura** and **Lizzie** hear the goblins' call while visiting a brook to draw water. They grow fearful and crouch down to hide themselves. Lizzie warns Laura not to look and covers her own eyes for protection, but the incurably curious Laura looks directly at the goblins. Laura

describes the goblin men's odd movements and wonders where the luscious and unusual fruit they're selling might have grown. Still, Lizzie is steadfast in her refusal to look and warns Laura once again that the goblin men mean to harm them. Lizzie then puts her fingers in her ears to block the sound of the goblins' cries and runs away, leaving Laura on her own. Laura chooses to stay and watch the goblins. She notices that they share physical characteristics with animals, including doves, rats, wombats, and cats, and have kind, pleasant voices. Fascinated, she stretches her neck toward them. The goblins approach Laura and seem delighted to find her alone. Laura wants to buy their fruit but has no money to offer in exchange. The goblins take a lock of Laura's hair as payment instead, and she then begins ravenously eating the fruit.

After gorging herself, Laura gathers up a fruit pit and, in a state of bewilderment, returns home to find her sister waiting up for her. Lizzie scolds Laura for staying out so late and reminds her of the fate of **Jeanie**, a young woman who, like Laura, accepted fruit from the goblins. After eating the fruit, Jeanie was abandoned by the goblins, pined away, and died. Now, no flowers will grow on her grave. Laura tries to reassure her sister, promising to bring back fruit from the goblins for Lizzie to try. Laura describes the fruit as otherworldly and unbelievably delicious. The two sisters go to sleep enfolded in one another's arms. The next evening, when Laura and Lizzie return to the brook to draw water, Laura tries to delay their departure so that she might meet the goblins again. But try as she might, she cannot hear their calls. This greatly distresses Laura, who fears that she will never again eat the goblin fruit that she craves. The sisters return home, but Laura's heart aches. They go to bed, and Laura gnashes her teeth and weeps as she grieves for the lost fruit. Days pass, and Laura pines for the fruit. She listens in the hopes of once more hearing the goblins, but she never again hears their cry. In her despair, Laura's hair begins to turn gray and she ages prematurely. One day, she remembers the fruit pit she took back with her after first meeting the goblins. Although she plants it in a sunny spot and waters it with her tears, it never grows. Laura becomes listless, refusing to perform her household duties or to eat. The once-active Laura now spends her days sitting by the chimney nook.

Fearing that Laura will die, Lizzie resolves to find the goblins and purchase some fruit for her sister. Lizzie knows that she will be putting herself in danger, but she nevertheless puts a silver coin in her purse and goes to the brook at twilight. For the first time, she actively listens and looks for the goblins. The goblins are delighted to find Lizzie looking for them. They hug, kiss, and caress her as they try to tempt her to eat their fruit. Lizzie tosses them a coin, but the goblins try to persuade her to stay and eat with them. She refuses, saying she must return home to her sister, and asks for her penny back if they will not sell their fruit. At this, the goblins become furious and begin to attack Lizzie. They call her proud and uncivil, stamp on her feet, scratch her, pull her hair out, and try to squeeze the fruit against her mouth to make her eat it. Yet despite the viciousness of the goblins' attack, Lizzie refuses to give in. Finally, the goblins realize their efforts are futile and they toss back her penny before departing, leaving Lizzie alone with the fruit juices dripping down her face.

In a daze, Lizzie runs home. She calls out to her sister and tells her to drink the juice from her face. Laura is horrified at first, fearing that Lizzie has eaten the fruit herself. Yet as Laura begins to taste the now-bitter juice, she behaves as if she is possessed, leaping, singing, tearing her robe, wringing her hands, and beating her breast. She loses consciousness and

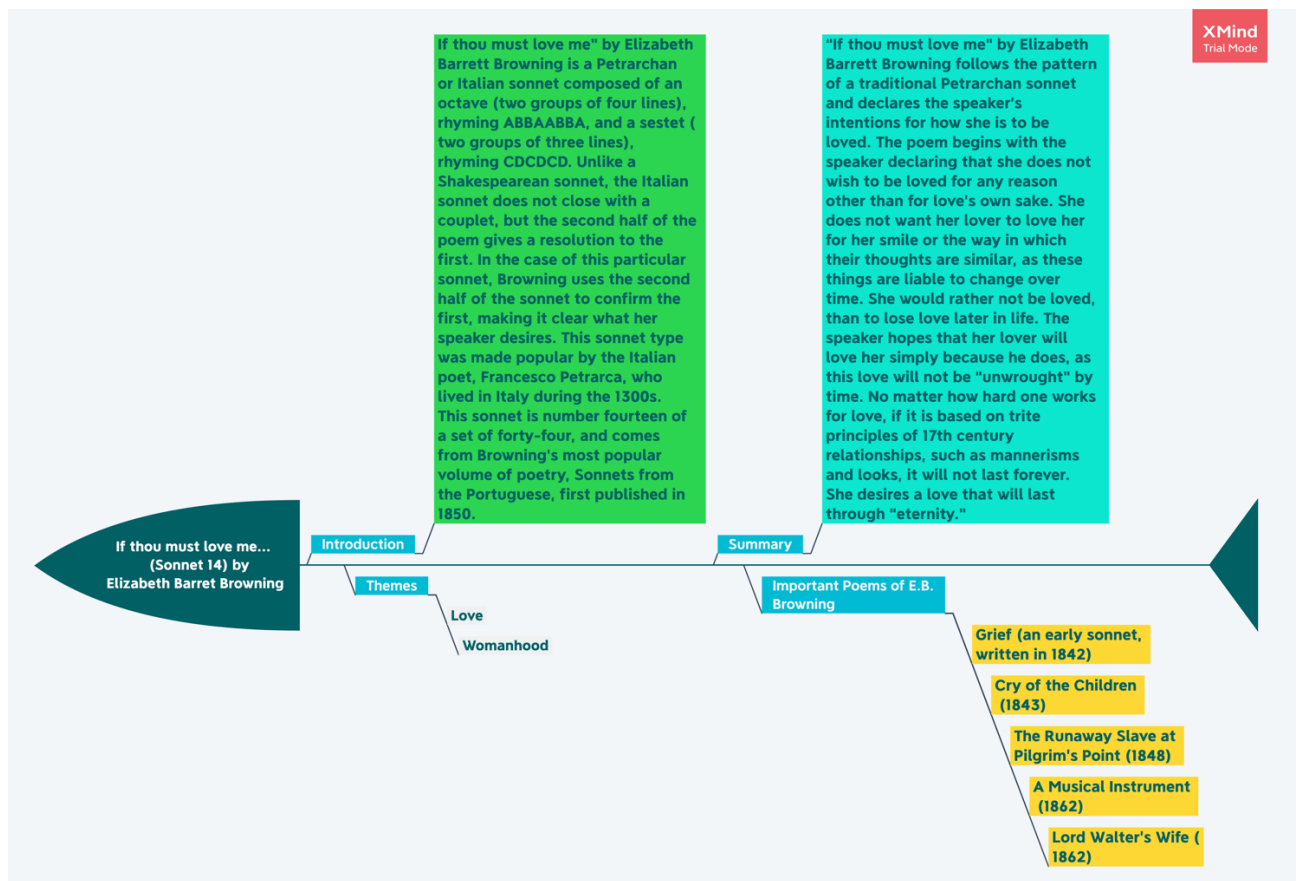
falls down. Lizzie keeps watch over Laura throughout the night, checking her pulse and breathing, giving her water, and fanning her to keep her cool. By the time Laura wakes at dawn, a transformation has taken place. Laura's youth is restored along, and she embraces her sister. Years later, when Laura and Lizzie are both wives and mothers, Laura warns their children about the predatory goblin men and their dangerous fruit. More importantly, she shares the story of how her sister braved the goblin men to save her.

6. If thou must love me... (Sonnet 14) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

About the Poet

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), eldest of the twelve children of Edward Moulton Barrett; she spent her childhood at Hope End in Herefordshire. She became deeply versed in the classics and in prosodie theory, and later published translations from ancient and Byzantine Greek poetry. In 1832 the Barrett family moved to Sidmouth, and in 1835 to London. In Sept. 1846 Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett were secretly married and left for Italy. Casa Guidi in Florence became their base for the rest of Mrs Browning's life. Throughout her married life Mrs Browning was passionately interested in Italian and French politics. She also became fascinated by spiritualism, though this—unlike her political enthusiasms—played no part in her poetry. Mrs Browning's juvenilia, *The Battle of Marathon* (1820), *An Essay on Mind* (1826), and a translation of *Prometheus Bound*, with other poems (1833), appeared anonymously, and the first two were privately printed at her father's expense. *The Seraphim, and Other Poems* (1838) was her first work to gain critical and public attention. Her next set of *Poems* (1844) was so highly regarded that, when Wordsworth died in 1850, her name was widely canvassed as his most appropriate successor as poet laureate. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* first appeared in a collected edition of her poems in 1850; *Casa Guidi Windows*, on the theme of Italian liberation, in 1851; and her magnum opus, *Aurora Leigh*, in 1857. The stridently political *Poems before Congress* (1860) injured her popularity. *Last Poems*, issued posthumously in 1862, contained some of her best-known lyrics.

Visual Summary



Detailed Overview

The poem is a sonnet consisting of 14 lines in total. A sonnet is generally divided into an eight-line unit known as an octave, and a six-line unit known as a sestet. The octave and sestet can together form a single stanza (which is the case here), or appear as two separate stanzas. The 14 lines of this poem are divided into meaningful segments for the purposes of this summary in order to make the poem easier to follow and understand.

Lines 1 – 6:

*If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
'I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'—*

In these lines, the poet tells her beloved that he is neither required nor expected to love her. However, if he chooses to do so, the choice must be made on the basis of love and only love. She should never hear him say that he loves her because she has a pretty smile. He must not say he loves her because she is herself beautiful. He must not say that he loves her because she speaks in an elegant manner. He must not say that he loves her because they think alike and that because they do, she had been able to soothe his mind on a certain day when he was perhaps in an agitated mental state. None of these reasons are acceptable as a reason to love where the poet is concerned.

Lines 7 – 10:

*For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—*

In these lines, the poet says that all the reasons she has asked him never to cite as reasons that he loves her are liable to alter, or else they may seem to have altered particularly to him. And if such a thing happens, then the love they had built up together will come unraveling. Another reason he must never give for loving her is the pity he feels for her that causes him to wipe the tears from her cheek, and that endears him to her as well.

Lines 11 – 14:

*A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.*

In these lines, she refers to herself as just a 'creature' among the many others created by God on this earth. She says that a creature like her might turn out to be ungrateful for all that her beloved has done to alleviate distress from her life. She might forget to cry, and as a result, lose both his pity and his love. However, if he were to love her for the sake of love alone, then their relationship would last a lifetime. This is what the poet wants with all her heart.

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