South Valley University
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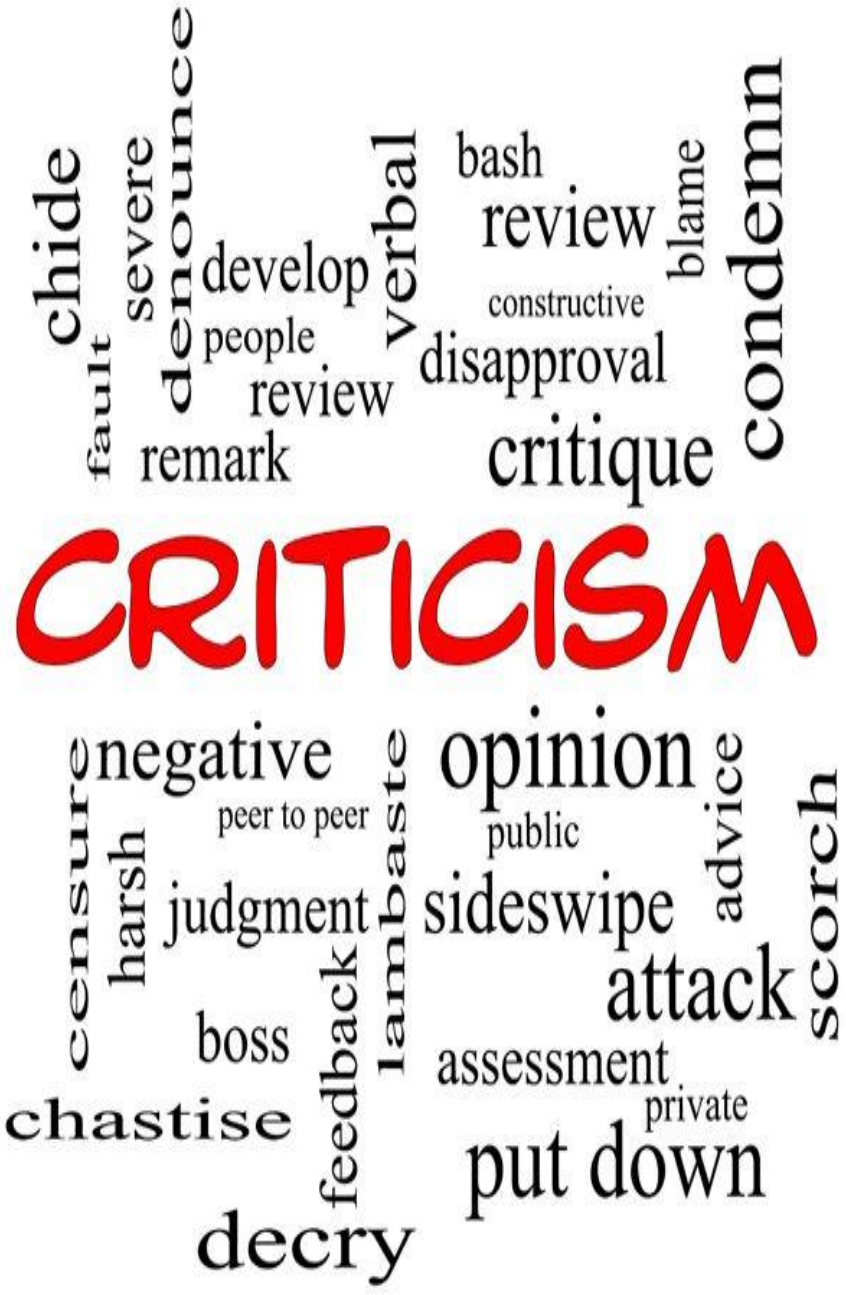
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Introduction

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Sir Richard Steele, Irish essayist and politician

Reading and writing seem to be inseparable acts, rather like two sides of the same coin. When we encounter a book that touches our emotions or disturbs our assumptions, for example, we want to share our reactions with someone else. We may call a friend to talk about it, or if there is nobody to listen, we may turn to writing to explain what we think and feel about what we have read.

Every piece of literature conveys meaning, but understanding its message can be a complicated process. In many cases, unless stated otherwise by the author, the message can be subjective. This means each of us might interpret the same text in a slightly different way. This is why scholars have devised ways to understand how people interpret a text. Practicing literary criticism requires more than a single effort or skill.

Literary criticism analyzes fiction, poetry, drama by considering key issues such as plot, character, setting, theme, imagery, and voice. Literary criticism may also consider the effectiveness of a work of literature, but it's important to note that in this context the word "criticism" doesn't simply mean finding fault with the writing but rather looking at it from a critical or analytical viewpoint in order to

understand it better. It's also important to note that literary criticism involves more than just summarizing the plot or offering biographical information about the author.

The practice of literary theory became a profession in the 20th century, but it has historical roots as far back as ancient Greece (Aristotle's Poetics is an often cited early example).

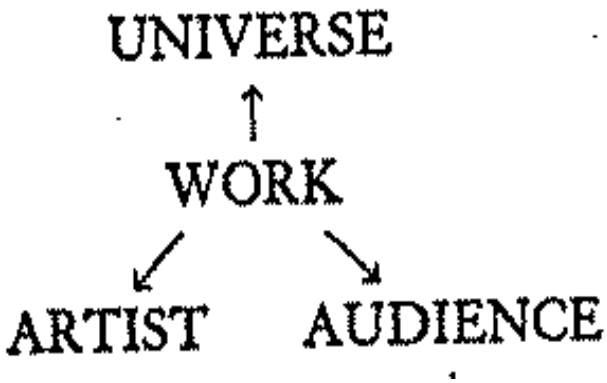

LITERARY CRITICISM

Four Critical Theories from the view point of M H Abrams

Meyer (Mike) Howard Abrams (born July 23, 1912) is an American literary critic, known for works on Romanticism, in particular his book *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Contribution of him in the postmodern literary criticism cannot be avoided. Abrams stands unique because of his four oriental critical theories which cover up entire history of English literary theories and criticism. In literature nothing is existed out of universe, text, artist, and audience. As Abrams demonstrates in the "Orientation of Critical Theories" chapter of his book The Mirror and the Lamp. From Plato until the late 18th century the artist was thought to play a back-seat role in the creation of art. He was regarded as no more than "a mirror," reflecting nature either as it exists or as it is perfected or enhanced through the mirror. This artist-as-mirror conception remained dominant until the advent of the Romantic era (Abrams sets the date around 1800), when the artist began to make his transformation from “mirror” to “lamp”—- a lamp that actively participates in the object it illuminates.

To work on M. H. Abrams is most influential studies in the field of criticism and theory. Till today, the chief tendency of modern criticism is to consider the aesthetic quality in terms of relation of art to the artist. M.H. Abrams in his essay “Orientation of critical Theories” tries to the growth of criticism in relation of art, artist, and audience. Considering a whole work of art, there are four elements which are well distinguished and made important in almost all the

theories, first, there is the work, the artistic product itself. Since this is a human product, the next common element is the artist. The work is directly or indirectly related to the universe inclusive of man, material things, events and ideas. The audiences come as the final element. On this frame work of artist, work, universe and audience, M.H. Abrams has spread out various theories for comparison. To make matters easier he has arranged the four elements in a convenient triangular pattern with the work of art, the thing to be explained in the center.



According to this frame work, M. H. Abrams gives four critical theories i.e. Mimetic, Pragmatic, Expressive, and Objective theories.

1) **Mimetic theory** - The first category of mimetic theories forms the oldest and is, according to Abrams, the “most primitive” of the four categories. According to this theory, the artist is an imitator of aspects of the observable universe. This theory focuses on the relationship between text and universe (by "universe" he means all things of the world apart from audience, text and author).

2) **Pragmatic theory**- The second type of theories are pragmatic theories, which are concerned with the relation between text and audience. According to Abrams, these theories have constituted the dominant mode of analysis from Horace to the early 19th century, and much of its terminology is borrowed from ancient rhetoric.

3) **Expressive theory**- which is concerned with the text-author relationship. By 1800, we begin to see “the displacement of mimetic and pragmatic by the expressive view of art,” a phenomenon due in part to the writings of Bacon, Wordsworth, and, later, the radical Romantics of the 1830s. With this new “expressive view” of art, the primary duty of the artist was no longer to serve as a mirror reflecting outer things, but instead to externalize the internal, and make one's “inner life” the primary subject of art. It is around this time in the early 19th century that the “mirror,” which had hitherto been the conventional symbol for the artist, becomes the “lamp.

To give an overview of the evolution of Western aesthetics up to this point, Abrams provides the following rough timeline. In the age of Plato and Aristotle, poets were mimetic poets, and their personal roles and intrusions were kept to a minimum. In the Hellenistic and Roman eras, poets were pragmatic, and they sought to satisfy the public, abide by the rules of decorum, and apply techniques borrowed from rhetoric. From 1800 to 1900, poets, specifically those of England and Germany, were

self-affirming figures whose task was to express to the world their inner genius.

4) **Objective theory** - the most recent classification, which focus on analysis of the text in isolation. Though extremely rare in pre-20th-century history, this fourth alternative— to view the text in isolation— has been the dominant mode for criticism for at least half of the 20th century. Proponents of this theory trace its origins to the central section of Aristotle's Poetics, where tragedy is regarded as an object in itself, and where the work's internal elements (plot, character, thought, diction, melody and spectacle, in order of importance) are described as working together in perfect unison to produce in the audience a "catharsis" of pity and fear.

As Abrams stated above that nothing exists other than universe, text, author and audience, any form of theory must fit into one of these four categories. Let's see these four critical into details. Abrams clearly identifies himself as a critical theorist, not a philosopher, not a psychologist, not a scientist. From his perspective, the purpose and function of critical theory is not to discover some "verifiable truth" but to "establish principles enabling us to justify, order, and clarify our interpretation and appraisal of the aesthetic.


Elements of a
Short Story

Short Story Analysis

A short story is a short work of fiction. Fiction, as you know, is prose writing about imagined events and characters. Prose writing differs from poetry in that it does not depend on verses, meters or rhymes for its organization and presentation.

Novels are another example of fictional prose and are much longer than short stories. Some short stories, however, can be quite long. If a short story is a long one, say fifty to one hundred pages, we call it a novella.

American literature contains some of the world's best examples of the short story. Readers around the world enjoy the finely crafted stories of American writers such as O. Henry, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Mark Twain and Edgar Allen Poe.

What makes these authors such remarkable short story writers? They are true masters at combining the key elements that go into every great short story. The following guide and questions may help you:

➔ ***Theme***

The theme is the main idea, lesson, or message in the short story. It may be an abstract idea about the human condition, society, or life. The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea. It is the author's meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey.

Theme is a hidden element, but incredibly important. Themes can be universal, meaning they are understood by readers no matter what culture or country the readers are in. Common themes include coming of age, circle of life, prejudice, greed, good vs. evil, etc.

Some simple examples of common themes from literature are:

- Appearances are deceptive
- Love is blind
- Don't judge a book by its cover

➔ ***Characterization***

There are two meanings for the word character:

1) The person in a work of fiction.

Persons in a work of fiction - Antagonist and Protagonist Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character - he/she is the PROTAGONIST. The oppose of the main character is called the ANTAGONIST.

2) The characteristics of a person.

In order for a story to seem real to the reader its characters must seem real. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways:

a) his/her physical appearance
b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
c) what he/she does or does not do
d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

Characterization: The characters in the story are the people or animals that author uses to represent various events and actions. Characters can be described as static or developing. Static, also called flat, means the character stays the same throughout the story. They do not change. Developing, also called dynamic, means the character changes. The change may impact the character's beliefs, attitudes, or actions. The change may be small or large. Flat characters do not play important roles in the stories. They often have only one or two traits with little description about them. On the other hand, the round characters play an important role, often the lead roles in stories. They are complex, dimensional, and well-developed.

➔ ***Setting***

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. In a short story there are fewer settings compared to a novel. The time is more limited. Ask yourself the following questions:

How is the setting created? Consider the following:

- When was the story written?
- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- How does the time period affect the language and events.
- The weather such as cloudy, sunny, windy, snow, or rain, etc.
- The time of year, particularly the seasons: fall, winter, summer, spring.
- The historical period such as what century or decade the story takes place.
- The geographical location including the city, state, country, and possibly even the universe, if the writer is writing science fiction.
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Setting can function as a main force that the characters encounter, such as a tornado or flood, or a setting can play a minor role.

Setting impacts characters through showing:

- The skills they've developed to survive
- The tools they'll have (weapons, money, clothing, transportation)
- The presuppositions your character brings into the story (religion, psychology, philosophy, educational assumptions, culture, all of which have a lot to do with the way your characters respond to stimuli)

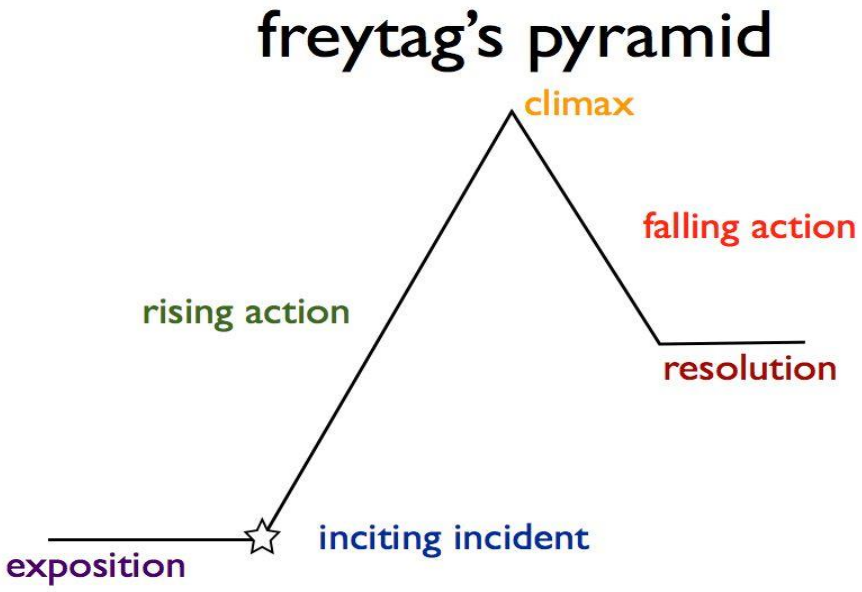
➔ ***Plot***

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story. In short stories the plot is usually centered around one experience or significant moment. Consider the following questions:

- What is the most important event?
- How is the plot structured?

Is it linear, chronological or does it move around?

Plot is the order of events in the story. The plot usually follows a particular structure called Freytag's Pyramid. Gustav Freytag, a German playwright who lived during the 1800s, identified this structure. Freytag's Pyramid has five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement, also known as resolution.



1. FREYTAG'S PYRAMID: EXPOSITION

Your story has to start somewhere, and in Freytag's Pyramid, it starts with the exposition. This part of the story primarily introduces the major fictional elements – the setting, characters, style, etc. In the exposition, the writer's sole focus is on building the world in which the story's conflict happens.

The length of your exposition depends on the complexity of the story's conflict, the extent of the world being written, and the writer's own personal preference. Use this part of the story to draw readers in. Make your fictional world as real as this one.

Your exposition should end with the "inciting incident" – the event that starts the main conflict of the story.

2. FREYTAG'S PYRAMID: RISING ACTION

The rising action explores the story's conflict up until its climax. Often, things "get worse" in this part of the story: someone makes a wrong decision, the antagonist hurts the protagonist, new characters further complicate the plot, etc.

For many stories, rising action takes up the most amount of pages. However, while this part of the book explores the story's conflict and complications, the rising action should investigate much more than just the story's plot. In rising action, the reader often gains access to key pieces of backstory. As the conflict unfolds, the reader should learn more about the characters' motives, the world

of the story, the themes being explored, and you may want to foreshadow the climax as well.

Finally, when you look back at the story's rising action, it should be clear how each plot point connects to the story's climax and aftermath. But first, let's write the climax.

3. FREYTAG'S PYRAMID: CLIMAX

Of course, every part of your story is important, but if there's one part where you really want to stick the landing, it's the climax. Here, the story's conflict peaks and we learn the fate of the main characters. A lot of writers enter the climax of their story believing that it needs to be short, fast, and action-packed. While some stories might require this style of climax, there's no strict formula when it comes to climax writing. Think of the climax as the "turning" point in the story – the central conflict is addressed in a way that cannot be undone.

Whether the climax is only one scene or several chapters is up to you, but remember that your climax isn't just the turning point in the story's plot structure, but also its themes and ideas. This is your opportunity to comment on whatever concept is driving your story's narrative, giving the reader an emotional takeaway.

Note: for playwrights, the climax is usually the middle act, though of course not every theatrical production follows the rules.

4. FREYTAG'S PYRAMID: FALLING ACTION

In falling action, the writer explores the aftermath of the climax. Do other conflicts arise as a result? How does the climax comment on the story's central themes? How do the characters react to the irreversible changes made by the climax?

The story's falling action is often the trickiest part to write. The writer must start to tie up loose ends from the main conflict, explore broader concepts and themes, and push the story towards some form of a resolution while still keeping the focus on the climax and its aftermath. If the rising action pushes the story away from "normal," the falling action is a return to a "new normal," though rising and falling action look dramatically different.

At the same time, the story must still engage the reader. When writing the story's falling action, be sure to expand on the world of the story, the mysteries that lie within that world, and whatever else makes your story compelling.

5. FREYTAG'S PYRAMID: RESOLUTION/DENOUEMENT

How do you end a story? One of the most frustrating parts of writing is figuring out where the narrative ends. Theoretically, the story can continue on forever, especially in the aftermath of a life-altering climax, or even if the story is set in an alternate world.

The resolution of the story involves tying up the loose ends of the climax and falling action. Sometimes, this means following the story's aftermath to a chilling conclusion—the protagonist dies,

the antagonist escapes, a fatal mistake has fatal consequences, etc. Other times, the resolution ends on a lighter note. Maybe the protagonist learns from their mistakes, starts a new life, or else forgives and rectifies whatever incited the story's conflict. Either way, use the resolution to continue your thoughts on the story's themes, and give the reader something to think about after the last word is read.

Some writers also use the term "denouement" when discussing the resolution. A denouement [day-new-mawn] refers to the last event that ties up the story's loose ends, sometimes expressed in the story's epilogue or closing scene.

➔ ***Climax***

The climax is the point of greatest tension or intensity in the short story. It is the point where events take a major turn as the story races towards its conclusion. It is helpful to consider climax as a three-fold phenomenon:

1) the main character receives new information
2) accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it)
3) acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).

➔ ***Conflict***

Conflict is essential to plot. Without conflict there is no plot. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones. Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the short story and is related to the main character. In a short story there is usually one main struggle.

The two *types* of conflict are:

1) **External** - A struggle with a force outside one's self.

2) **Internal** - A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

Conflict is the struggle between two entities. The main character, also known as the protagonist, encounters a conflict with the antagonist, which is an adversary. The conflict may be one of the following kinds:

- Character vs. character
- Character vs. nature or natural forces
- Character vs. society, culture, ideas, practices, or customs of other people.
- Character vs. the circumstances of life facing him/her.

➔ ***Style***

Style: The manner in which an author expresses himself or herself in writing.

The ***language*** that the authors use to convey their thoughts. What kinds of words are used? How are the words arranged?

What are *the* ***structure*** and organization of writing? Is it in letter form, does it have paragraphs separating main ideas? Are there lots of dialogues or just one long straight narrative? What does the title of the story tell you about what to expect? What Kind of grammar is used? What punctuation style do the authors use?

Figurative language. Are there lots of imagery? Are there flashbacks and foreshadowing used? Are there lots of literary devices used?

Various literary devices help convey meaning or create a mood. Look for these in a story to identify key points and their contribution to the author's overall meaning. The following are a few common literary devices.

Allusion. An indirect reference to another artistic work or person, event, or place. The author makes the allusion with the intention that the well-known object will create an association with the new object in the reader's mind.

Foreshadowing. The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in a literary work.

Irony. An implied contradiction between what is said and what is meant. Irony is used to suggest the difference between appearance and reality and between expectation and fulfillment. There are three kinds of irony:

verbal irony is when an author says one thing and means something else. what is said is actually the opposite of what is meant/intended. Verbal irony occurs when a narrator or character says one thing and means something else.

dramatic irony is when an audience perceives something that the characters don't know. It is also the contrast between what a character or narrator says and what a reader knows to be true.

situational irony is a contradiction between the expected result and the actual result or between appearance and reality, or between expectation and fulfillment, or between what is and what would seem appropriate.

Symbolism. The use of an object or action to mean something more than its literal meaning. Authors use symbolism to convey messages poetically or indirectly, through their stories, making them more interesting and complex pieces. Symbolism is depicted using a physical object or even a person to be an abstract idea. For example, a dove represents love and peace and a storm represents hostility and turmoil.

➔ ***Narrator and Point of view***

The point of view of a story is usually the angle from which the author tells his or her story. It is usually expressed in either the first person, second person, or third person.

In the **first** person point of view, the author or narrator tells his or her story; it is mostly used in autobiographical or eyewitness reports. The **second** person point of view is rarely used in narratives.

The **third** person point of view can be expressed in either third person limited or omniscient. In the *third person limited*, the narrator is usually not included as a character in the story. He or she is detached from the story; however, he or she is able to narrate the story based on what can be determined from one character in the story. In the *third person omniscient*, the character is fully involved in the story. He or she is able to see everything that is going on in the minds of the characters and is able to tell the movement of the characters as they progress from stage to stage.

Third-person limited means that the narrator limits him/herself by being able to be in one character's thoughts. Whereas, *third-person omniscient* means the narrator has unlimited ability to be in various character's thoughts. Writing in third-person point of view removes readers from the story because of the pronouns *he, she, it, him, her, his, hers, they, them*, and *theirs*.

Short Stories

" THE STORY OF AN HOUR"

Kate Chopin (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of

rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two

white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the key hold, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.

HILARY'S AUNT

– by Cyril Hare

Hilary Smith belonged to a good family, and his father never hesitated to mention this fact. The actual age of the family was doubtful, but Mr. Smith behaved like a man of the past. His ideas and manners were those of the Victorian age.

Unfortunately Hilary himself had some unimportant trouble with the bank about a few cheques. It seemed a very slight matter to the young man, but not so to his father. Hilary was sent off to Australia without delay. Mr. Smith knew little about that place , but he understood one thing. It was a convenient country for those who did not like the customs of old England.

Hilary did not like Australia, and Australia did not like Hilary. He therefore took the earliest opportunity of returning to England. He could not , of course, earn enough money to buy a ticket. So he had to wait until his father and his brother died. They fortunately did this at the same time. After that he received all the money which belonged to the good old family .

There was not a great deal of money, and Hilary soon spent it. (The old family had not been able to get much in recent years).When all the money had been spent, Hilary could do one of two things . He could die or work. The thought of neither of these gave him any

pleasure. Then he remembered that he was not alone in the world. He possessed an aunt.

She was his father's only sister, and he knew little about her. His father's ancient ideas were responsible for this unfortunate fact. When her name was mentioned , he never looked very pleased. " Your aunt Mary brought no honour to the family" , he said.

Hilary, of course, tried to discover what she had done. It seemed that she had failed to marry a nobleman.

Instead, she had chosen a husband who was connected with "trade". No old family could bear that sort of thing, of course.

As soon as she became "Mrs. Prothero" , her brother considered her dead. Later on , her husband died and left her a lot of money; but that did not bring her back to life in her brother's opinion.

Hilary discovered his aunt's address by talking to the family lawyer. Fortunately she had remained faithful to him even after she fell. So Hilary's sun shone again, and the old lady seemed to like him. When he was feeling honest, he could talk attractively. He frequently visited his aunt's house; and soon he was living comfortably in the building which the profits of trade had provided.

Hilary was very relieved when he was able to move into the house. He felt like a sailor who had just reached harbour. He had only about sixpence in his pocket.

One thing was immediately clear: his aunt was seriously ill. She acted bravely, but she was slowly dying. He had a private talk with her doctor which alarmed him greatly. The doctor told him that nothing could cure the old woman. She might perhaps live for some time, but the end was certain.

“Her condition may become worse at any moment”, the doctor said. “When it has passed a certain stage, she won’t want to live . No kind person will want her to live either.”

Hilary was very annoyed. Fate had found a home for him, and was now going to throw him out of it. Once again he would have to live in the hard world alone. There was only one thing that he could do. He chose an evening when his aunt was feeling better than usual. Then, very gently , he asked for details of her will.

When she heard the word “will” , his aunt laughed loudly. “Have I made a will?” she said. “Yes, of course I have. I left all my money to – now , what was it ? To whom did I leave it ? Some religious people in China, I think. Or were they in Polynesia ? I can’t remember . The lawyer, will tell you about it. He still has the will, I suppose. I was very religious when I was a girl.”

“Did you make this will when you were a girl, Aunt Mary?” “Yes, when I was twenty-one. Your grandfather told me to make a will. He believed that everyone ought to do that. I had no money then, of course, and so my will wasn’t very useful.”

Hilary had been filled with sorrow when he heard the first details; but now his eyes were happier again. “Didn’t you make another will when you were married?” His aunt shook her head “No, there was no need. I had nothing and John had everything. Then, after John died, I had a lot of money but no relations. What could I do with the money? Perhaps I ought to talk to my lawyer again.”

She looked at Hilary with steady eyes Hilary said that there was no need to hurry. Then he changed the subject.

On the next day he went to the public library and examined a certain book. It told him what he already believed. When a woman marries, an earlier will loses its value . a new will must be made. If no new will is made, the money goes to the nearest relation. Hilary knew that he was his aunt’s only relation. His future was safe.

After a few months had passed, Hilary’s problems became serious. The change in his aunt’s condition showed that the doctor had been right. She went to bed and stayed there. It seemed certain that she would never get up again. At the same time Hilary badly needed money. He had expensive tastes, and owed a lot of money to shopkeepers. They trusted him because his aunt was rich; but their bills were terrible.

Unfortunately his aunt was now so ill that he could not easily talk to her. She did not want to discuss money matters at all. She was in great pain and could hardly sleep; so she became angry when

money was mentioned. In the end they had a quarrel about the small amount of ten pounds. She accused him of trying to get her money.

Hilary was not very angry. He understood that Aunt Mary was a sick woman. She was behaving strangely because she was ill. He remembered the doctor's words , and began to wonder about a new problem. Was it kind to want his aunt to live any longer ? Was it not better for her to die now? He thought about this for a long time. When he went to bed, he was still thinking.

His aunt gave him some news in the morning. She told him that she was going to send for Mr. Blenkinsop. So she was going to make a new will ! Hilary was not sure that a new will would help him. She might leave all her money to someone else. What could he do then? He reached a clear decision. He must do a great kindness to the poor old woman.

Every night she took some medicine to make her sleep. Hilary decided to double the amount. He did not need to say anything to her about it. He could just put her to sleep forever.

He found that it was a very easy thing to do. His aunt even seemed to help his plans. An old servant had been nursing her, and she told this woman to go out. So the servant went off to attend to her own affairs. She was told to prepare the medicine before she went out . Then Hilary could give it to his aunt at the proper time.

It was easy for Hilary. He had only to put some more medicine into the glass. If anything awkward happened, he could easily explain.

He could say that he had not understood the plan. He had not known that the servant had put the medicine in. So he had put the proper amount into the glass. It was unfortunate, of course. The total amount was too great. But who would suspect dear Hilary?

His aunt took the glass from his hand with a grateful look. “Thank you, I want, more than anything , to sleep, and never to wake up again. That is my greatest wish” She looked at him steadily. “ Is that what you wish , Hilary ? I have given you your chance . Forgive me if I am suspecting you wrongly. Sick people get these ideas, you know. If I am alive tomorrow, I shall do better for you. My lawyer is coming here, and I shall make a will in your favour. If I die tonight, you ‘ll get nothing. Some people in China will get all the money. I ought , perhaps, to explain.

John Prothero never married me. He already had a wife and couldn’t marry me again. That made your foolish father very angry with me … No, Hilary , don’t try to take the glass away. If you do that , I shall know; and I don’t want to know. Good-night, Hilary.”

Then, very carefully, she raised the glass to her lips and drank.

THE NECKLACE

Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of becoming known, understood, loved or wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy. Women don't belong to a caste or class; their beauty, grace, and natural charm take the place of birth and family. Natural delicacy, instinctive elegance and a quick wit determine their place in society, and make the daughters of commoners the equals of the very finest ladies.

She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the delicacies and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poorness of her house as she looked at the dirty walls, the worn-out chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful. The sight of the little Brenton girl who did her housework filled her with terrible regrets and hopeless fantasies. She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestries, lit from above by torches in bronze holders, while two tall footmen in knee-length breeches napped in huge armchairs, sleepy from the stove's

oppressive warmth. She dreamed of vast living rooms furnished in rare old silks, elegant furniture loaded with priceless ornaments, and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed, made for afternoon chats with close friends - famous, sought after men, who all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dinner at a round table covered with a three-day-old cloth opposite her husband who, lifting the lid off the soup, shouted excitedly, "Ah! Beef stew! What could be better," she dreamed of fine dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestries which peopled the walls with figures from another time and strange birds in fairy forests; she dreamed of delicious dishes served on wonderful plates, of whispered gallantries listened to with an inscrutable smile as one ate the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She felt she was made for them alone. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be desired and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she no longer wanted to visit because she suffered so much when she came home. For whole days afterwards she would weep with sorrow, regret, despair and misery.

One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered:

"What do you want me to do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and it will be such a lovely occasion! I had awful trouble getting it. Everyone wants to go; it is very exclusive, and they're not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole ministry will be there."

She stared at him angrily, and said, impatiently:

"And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ..."

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. Two large tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

With great effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, as she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to a friend whose wife has better clothes than I do."

He was distraught, but tried again:

"Let's see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?"

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal and an alarmed exclamation from the thrifty clerk.

At last she answered hesitantly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred francs."

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a hunting trip the following summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

However, he said:

"Very well, I can give you four hundred francs. But try and get a really beautiful dress."

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter? You've been acting strange these last three days."

She replied: "I'm upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I will look cheap. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"You could wear flowers, " he said, "They are very fashionable at this time of year. For ten francs you could get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go and see your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"Of course. I had not thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a gold Venetian cross set with precious stones, of exquisite craftsmanship. She tried on the jewelry in the mirror, hesitated, could not bear to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. But I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck, over her high-necked dress, and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating:

"Would you lend me this, just this?"

"Why, yes, of course."

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, embraced her rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, tried to be introduced. All the cabinet officials wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness, made up of all this respect, all this admiration, all these awakened desires, of that sense of triumph that is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been doing since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a good time.

He threw over her shoulders the clothes he had brought for her to go outside in, the modest clothes of an ordinary life, whose poverty contrasted sharply with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to run away, so she wouldn't be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in expensive furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a moment, you'll catch a cold outside. I'll go and find a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and ran down the stairs. When they were finally in the street, they could not find a cab, and began to look for one, shouting at the cabmen they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those old night cabs that one sees in Paris only after dark, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly walked up the steps to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was remembering that he had to be back at his office at ten o'clock.

In front of the mirror, she took off the clothes around her shoulders, taking a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

"What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken.

"I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distraught.

"What! ... how! ... That's impossible!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

"Are you sure you still had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. That's probably it. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again.

"I'm going back," he said, "over the whole route we walked, see if I can find it."

He left. She remained in her ball dress all evening, without the strength to go to bed, sitting on a chair, with no fire, her mind blank.

Her husband returned at about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in the same state of blank despair from before this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more."

She wrote as he dictated.

At the end of one week they had lost all hope. And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace the jewel."

The next day they took the box which had held it, and went to the jeweler whose name they found inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold the necklace; I must simply have supplied the case."

And so they went from jeweler to jeweler, looking for an necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand francs if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

And he did borrow, asking for a thousand francs from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers, with every type of money-lender. He compromised the rest of his life, risked signing notes without knowing if he could ever honor them, and, terrified by the anguish still to come, by the black misery about to fall on him, by the prospect of every physical privation and every moral torture he was about to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, and laid down on the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

To the relief of her friend, she did not open the case. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she have taken her friend for a thief?

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be

paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labors of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, staining her rosy nails on greasy pots and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she hung to dry on a line; she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. And, dressed like a commoner, she went to the fruiterer's, the grocer's, the butcher's, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting over every miserable sou.

Each month they had to pay some notes, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five sous a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, everything, at usurer's rates and with the accumulations of compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window

and thought of that evening at the ball so long ago, when she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows, who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after the week's work, suddenly she saw a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognize her. She stammered:

"But - madame - I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."

"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred francs at most! ..."

TO BUILD A FIRE

Jack London

Day had broken cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth-bank, where a dim and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days must pass before that cheerful orb, due south, would just peep above the sky-line and dip immediately from view.

The man flung a look back along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle undulations where the ice-jams of the freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island. This dark hair-line was the trail -- the main trail -- that led

south five hundred miles to the Chilcoot Pass, Dyea, and salt water; and that led north seventy miles to Dawson, and still on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael on the Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

But all this -- the mysterious, far-reaching hair-line trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all -- made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a newcomer in the land, a chechaquo, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear-flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.

As he turned to go on, he spat speculatively. There was a sharp, explosive crackle that startled him. He spat again. And again, in the air, before it could fall to the snow, the spittle crackled. He knew that

at fifty below spittle crackled on the snow, but this spittle had crackled in the air. Undoubtedly it was colder than fifty below -- how much colder he did not know. But the temperature did not matter. He was bound for the old claim on the left fork of Henderson Creek, where the boys were already. They had come over across the divide from the Indian Creek country, while he had come the roundabout way to take a look at the possibilities of getting out logs in the spring from the islands in the Yukon. He would be in to camp by six o'clock; a bit after dark, it was true, but the boys would be there, a fire would be going, and a hot supper would be ready. As for lunch, he pressed his hand against the protruding bundle under his jacket. It was also under his shirt, wrapped up in a handkerchief and lying against the naked skin. It was the only way to keep the biscuits from freezing. He smiled agreeably to himself as he thought of those biscuits, each cut open and sopped in bacon grease, and each enclosing a generous slice of fried bacon.

He plunged in among the big spruce trees. The trail was faint. A foot of snow had fallen since the last sled had passed over, and he was glad he was without a sled, travelling light. In fact, he carried nothing but the lunch wrapped in the handkerchief. He was surprised, however, at the cold. It certainly was cold, he concluded, as he rubbed his numb nose and cheek-bones with his mittened hand. He was a warm-whiskered man, but the hair on his face did not protect the high cheek-bones and the eager nose that thrust itself aggressively into the frosty air.

At the man's heels trotted a dog, a big native husky, the proper wolf-dog, gray-coated and without any visible or temperamental difference from its brother, the wild wolf. The animal was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that it was no time for travelling. Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man's judgment. In reality, it was not merely colder than fifty below zero; it was colder than sixty below, than seventy below. It was seventy-five below zero. Since the freezing-point is thirty-two above zero, it meant that one hundred and seven degrees of frost obtained. The dog did not know anything about thermometers. Possibly in its brain there was no sharp consciousness of a condition of very cold such as was in the man's brain. But the brute had its instinct. It experienced a vague but menacing apprehension that subdued it and made it slink along at the man's heels, and that made it question eagerly every unwonted movement of the man as if expecting him to go into camp or to seek shelter somewhere and build a fire. The dog had learned fire, and it wanted fire, or else to burrow under the snow and cuddle its warmth away from the air.

The frozen moisture of its breathing had settled on its fur in a fine powder of frost, and especially were its jowls, muzzle, and eyelashes whitened by its crystalled breath. The man's red beard and mustache were likewise frosted, but more solidly, the deposit taking the form of ice and increasing with every warm, moist breath he exhaled. Also, the man was chewing tobacco, and the muzzle of ice held his lips so rigidly that he was unable to clear his chin when he expelled the juice. The result was that a crystal beard of the color and solidity of amber

was increasing its length on his chin. If he fell down it would shatter itself, like glass, into brittle fragments. But he did not mind the appendage. It was the penalty all tobacco-chewers paid in that country, and he had been out before in two cold snaps. They had not been so cold as this, he knew, but by the spirit thermometer at Sixty Mile he knew they had been registered at fifty below and at fifty-five.

He held on through the level stretch of woods for several miles, crossed a wide flat of niggerheads, and dropped down a bank to the frozen bed of a small stream. This was Henderson Creek, and he knew he was ten miles from the forks. He looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. He was making four miles an hour, and he calculated that he would arrive at the forks at half-past twelve. He decided to celebrate that event by eating his lunch there.

The dog dropped in again at his heels, with a tail drooping discouragement, as the man swung along the creek-bed. The furrow of the old sled-trail was plainly visible, but a dozen inches of snow covered the marks of the last runners. In a month no man had come up or down that silent creek. The man held steadily on. He was not much given to thinking, and just then particularly he had nothing to think about save that he would eat lunch at the forks and that at six o'clock he would be in camp with the boys. There was nobody to talk to; and, had there been, speech would have been impossible because of the ice-muzzle on his mouth. So he continued monotonously to chew tobacco and to increase the length of his amber beard.

Once in a while the thought reiterated itself that it was very cold and that he had never experienced such cold. As he walked along he rubbed his cheek-bones and nose with the back of his mittened hand. He did this automatically, now and again changing hands. But rub as he would, the instant he stopped his cheek-bones went numb, and the following instant the end of his nose went numb. He was sure to frost his cheeks; he knew that, and experienced a pang of regret that he had not devised a nose-strap of the sort Bud wore in cold snaps. Such a strap passed across the cheeks, as well, and saved them. But it didn't matter much, after all. What were frosted cheeks? A bit painful, that was all; they were never serious.

Empty as the man's mind was of thoughts, he was keenly observant, and he noticed the changes in the creek, the curves and bends and timber-jams, and always he sharply noted where he placed his feet. Once, coming around a bend, he shied abruptly, like a startled horse, curved away from the place where he had been walking, and retreated several paces back along the trail. The creek he knew was frozen clear to the bottom, -- no creek could contain water in that arctic winter, -- but he knew also that there were springs that bubbled out from the hillsides and ran along under the snow and on top the ice of the creek. He knew that the coldest snaps never froze these springs, and he knew likewise their danger. They were traps. They hid pools of water under the snow that might be three inches deep, or three feet. Sometimes a skin of ice half an inch thick covered them, and in turn was covered by the snow. Sometimes there were alternate layers of water and ice-skin, so that when one broke

through he kept on breaking through for a while, sometimes wetting himself to the waist.

That was why he had shied in such panic. He had felt the give under his feet and heard the crackle of a snow-hidden ice-skin. And to get his feet wet in such a temperature meant trouble and danger. At the very least it meant delay, for he would be forced to stop and build a fire, and under its protection to bare his feet while he dried his socks and moccasins. He stood and studied the creek-bed and its banks, and decided that the flow of water came from the right. He reflected awhile, rubbing his nose and cheeks, then skirted to the left, stepping gingerly and testing the footing for each step. Once clear of the danger, he took a fresh chew of tobacco and swung along at his four-mile gait. In the course of the next two hours he came upon several similar traps. Usually the snow above the hidden pools had a sunken, candied appearance that advertised the danger. Once again, however, he had a close call; and once, suspecting danger, he compelled the dog to go on in front. The dog did not want to go. It hung back until the man shoved it forward, and then it went quickly across the white, unbroken surface. Suddenly it broke through, floundered to one side, and got away to firmer footing. It had wet its forefeet and legs, and almost immediately the water that clung to it turned to ice. It made quick efforts to lick the ice off its legs, then dropped down in the snow and began to bite out the ice that had formed between the toes. This was a matter of instinct. To permit the ice to remain would mean sore feet. It did not know this. It merely obeyed the mysterious prompting that arose from the deep crypts of

its being. But the man knew, having achieved a judgment on the subject, and he removed the mitten from his right hand and helped tear out the ice-particles. He did not expose his fingers more than a minute, and was astonished at the swift numbness that smote them. It certainly was cold. He pulled on the mitten hastily, and beat the hand savagely across his chest.

At twelve o'clock the day was at its brightest. Yet the sun was too far south on its winter journey to clear the horizon. The bulge of the earth intervened between it and Henderson Creek, where the man walked under a clear sky at noon and cast no shadow. At half-past twelve, to the minute, he arrived at the forks of the creek. He was pleased at the speed he had made. If he kept it up, he would certainly be with the boys by six. He unbuttoned his jacket and shirt and drew forth his lunch. The action consumed no more than a quarter of a minute, yet in that brief moment the numbness laid hold of the exposed fingers. He did not put the mitten on, but, instead, struck the fingers a dozen sharp smashes against his leg. Then he sat down on a snow-covered log to eat. The sting that followed upon the striking of his fingers against his leg ceased so quickly that he was startled. He had had no chance to take a bite of biscuit. He struck the fingers repeatedly and returned them to the mitten, baring the other hand for the purpose of eating. He tried to take a mouthful, but the ice-muzzle prevented. He had forgotten to build a fire and thaw out. He chuckled at his foolishness, and as he chuckled he noted the numbness creeping into the exposed fingers. Also, he noted that the stinging which had first come to his toes when he sat down was already passing away.

He wondered whether the toes were warm or numb. He moved them inside the moccasins and decided that they were numb.

He pulled the mitten on hurriedly and stood up. He was a bit frightened. He stamped up and down until the stinging returned into the feet. It certainly was cold, was his thought. That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in the country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things. There was no mistake about it, it was cold. He strode up and down, stamping his feet and threshing his arms, until reassured by the returning warmth. Then he got out matches and proceeded to make a fire. From the undergrowth, where high water of the previous spring had lodged a supply of seasoned twigs, he got his fire-wood. Working carefully from a small beginning, he soon had a roaring fire, over which he thawed the ice from his face and in the protection of which he ate his biscuits. For the moment the cold of space was outwitted. The dog took satisfaction in the fire, stretching out close enough for warmth and far enough away to escape being singed.

When the man had finished, he filled his pipe and took his comfortable time over a smoke. Then he pulled on his mittens, settled the ear-flaps of his cap firmly about his ears, and took the creek trail up the left fork. The dog was disappointed and yearned back toward the fire. This man did not know cold. Possibly all the generations of his ancestry had been ignorant of cold, of real cold, of cold one hundred and seven degrees below freezing-point. But the dog knew; all its ancestry knew, and it had inherited the knowledge.

And it knew that it was not good to walk abroad in such fearful cold. It was the time to lie snug in a hole in the snow and wait for a curtain of cloud to be drawn across the face of outer space whence this cold came. On the other hand, there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man. The one was the toil-slave of the other, and the only caresses it had ever received were the caresses of the whip-lash and of harsh and menacing throat-sounds that threatened the whip-lash. So the dog made no effort to communicate its apprehension to the man. It was not concerned in the welfare of the man; it was for its own sake that it yearned back toward the fire. But the man whistled, and spoke to it with the sound of whip-lashes, and the dog swung in at the man's heels and followed after.

The man took a chew of tobacco and proceeded to start a new amber beard. Also, his moist breath quickly powdered with white his mustache, eyebrows, and lashes. There did not seem to be so many springs on the left fork of the Henderson, and for half an hour the man saw no signs of any. And then it happened. At a place where there were no signs, where the soft, unbroken snow seemed to advertise solidity beneath, the man broke through. It was not deep. He wet himself halfway to the knees before he floundered out to the firm crust.

He was angry, and cursed his luck aloud. He had hoped to get into camp with the boys at six o'clock, and this would delay him an hour, for he would have to build a fire and dry out his foot-gear. This was imperative at that low temperature -- he knew that much; and he turned aside to the bank, which he climbed. On top, tangled in the

underbrush about the trunks of several small spruce trees, was a high-water deposit of dry fire-wood -- sticks and twigs, principally, but also larger portions of seasoned branches and fine, dry, last-year's grasses. He threw down several large pieces on top of the snow. This served for a foundation and prevented the young flame from drowning itself in the snow it otherwise would melt. The flame he got by touching a match to a small shred of birch-bark that he took from his pocket. This burned even more readily than paper. Placing it on the foundation, he fed the young flame with wisps of dry grass and with the tiniest dry twigs.

He worked slowly and carefully, keenly aware of his danger. Gradually, as the flame grew stronger, he increased the size of the twigs with which he fed it. He squatted in the snow, pulling the twigs out from their entanglement in the brush and feeding directly to the flame. He knew there must be no failure. When it is seventy-five below zero, a man must not fail in his first attempt to build a fire -- that is, if his feet are wet. If his feet are dry, and he fails, he can run along the trail for half a mile and restore his circulation. But the circulation of wet and freezing feet cannot be restored by running when it is seventy-five below. No matter how fast he runs, the wet feet will freeze the harder.

All this the man knew. The old-timer on Sulphur Creek had told him about it the previous fall, and now he was appreciating the advice. Already all sensation had gone out of his feet. To build the fire he had been forced to remove his mittens, and the fingers had quickly gone numb. His pace of four miles an hour had kept his heart pumping

blood to the surface of his body and to all the extremities. But the instant he stopped, the action of the pump eased down. The cold of space smote the unprotected tip of the planet, and he, being on that unprotected tip, received the full force of the blow. The blood of his body recoiled before it. The blood was alive, like the dog, and like the dog it wanted to hide away and cover itself up from the fearful cold. So long as he walked four miles an hour, he pumped that blood, willy-nilly, to the surface; but now it ebbed away and sank down into the recesses of his body. The extremities were the first to feel its absence. His wet feet froze the faster, and his exposed fingers numbed the faster, though they had not yet begun to freeze. Nose and cheeks were already freezing, while the skin of all his body chilled as it lost its blood.

But he was safe. Toes and nose and cheeks would be only touched by the frost, for the fire was beginning to burn with strength. He was feeding it with twigs the size of his finger. In another minute he would be able to feed it with branches the size of his wrist, and then he could remove his wet foot-gear, and, while it dried, he could keep his naked feet warm by the fire, rubbing them at first, of course, with snow. The fire was a success. He was safe. He remembered the advice of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek, and smiled. The old-timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who

was a man could travel alone. But it was surprising, the rapidity with which his cheeks and nose were freezing. And he had not thought his fingers could go lifeless in so short a time. Lifeless they were, for he could scarcely make them move together to grip a twig, and they seemed remote from his body and from him. When he touched a twig, he had to look and see whether or not he had hold of it. The wires were pretty well down between him and his finger-ends.

All of which counted for little. There was the fire, snapping and crackling and promising life with every dancing flame. He started to untie his moccasins. They were coated with ice; the thick German socks were like sheaths of iron halfway to the knees; and the moccasin strings were like rods of steel all twisted and knotted as by some conflagration. For a moment he tugged with his numb fingers, then, realizing the folly of it, he drew his sheath-knife.

But before he could cut the strings, it happened. It was his own fault or, rather, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the spruce tree. He should have built it in the open. But it had been easier to pull the twigs from the brush and drop them directly on the fire. Now the tree under which he had done this carried a weight of snow on its boughs. No wind had blown for weeks, and each bough was fully freighted. Each time he had pulled a twig he had communicated a slight agitation to the tree -- an imperceptible agitation, so far as he was concerned, but an agitation sufficient to bring about the disaster. High up in the tree one bough capsized its load of snow. This fell on the boughs beneath, capsizing them. This process continued, spreading out and involving the whole tree. It

grew like an avalanche, and it descended without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was blotted out! Where it had burned was a mantle of fresh and disordered snow.

The man was shocked. It was as though he had just heard his own sentence of death. For a moment he sat and stared at the spot where the fire had been. Then he grew very calm. Perhaps the old-timer on Sulphur Creek was right. If he had only had a trail-mate he would have been in no danger now. The trail-mate could have built the fire. Well, it was up to him to build the fire over again, and this second time there must be no failure. Even if he succeeded, he would most likely lose some toes. His feet must be badly frozen by now, and there would be some time before the second fire was ready.

Such were his thoughts, but he did not sit and think them. He was busy all the time they were passing through his mind. He made a new foundation for a fire, this time in the open, where no treacherous tree could blot it out. Next, he gathered dry grasses and tiny twigs from the high-water flotsam. He could not bring his fingers together to pull them out, but he was able to gather them by the handful. In this way he got many rotten twigs and bits of green moss that were undesirable, but it was the best he could do. He worked methodically, even collecting an armful of the larger branches to be used later when the fire gathered strength. And all the while the dog sat and watched him, a certain yearning wistfulness in its eyes, for it looked upon him as the fire-provider, and the fire was slow in coming.

When all was ready, the man reached in his pocket for a second piece of birch-bark. He knew the bark was there, and, though he

could not feel it with his fingers, he could hear its crisp rustling as he fumbled for it. Try as he would, he could not clutch hold of it. And all the time, in his consciousness, was the knowledge that each instant his feet were freezing. This thought tended to put him in a panic, but he fought against it and kept calm. He pulled on his mittens with his teeth, and threshed his arms back and forth, beating his hands with all his might against his sides. He did this sitting down, and he stood up to do it; and all the while the dog sat in the snow, its wolf-brush of a tail curled around warmly over its forefeet, its sharp wolf-ears pricked forward intently as it watched the man. And the man, as he beat and threshed with his arms and hands, felt a great surge of envy as he regarded the creature that was warm and secure in its natural covering.

After a time he was aware of the first faraway signals of sensation in his beaten fingers. The faint tingling grew stronger till it evolved into a stinging ache that was excruciating, but which the man hailed with satisfaction. He stripped the mitten from his right hand and fetched forth the birch-bark. The exposed fingers were quickly going numb again. Next he brought out his bunch of sulphur matches. But the tremendous cold had already driven the life out of his fingers. In his effort to separate one match from the others, the whole bunch fell in the snow. He tried to pick it out of the snow, but failed. The dead fingers could neither touch nor clutch. He was very careful. He drove the thought of his freezing feet, and nose, and cheeks, out of his mind, devoting his whole soul to the matches. He watched, using the sense of vision in place of that of touch, and when he saw his fingers

on each side the bunch, he closed them -- that is, he willed to close them, for the wires were down, and the fingers did not obey. He pulled the mitten on the right hand, and beat it fiercely against his knee. Then, with both mittened hands, he scooped the bunch of matches, along with much snow, into his lap. Yet he was no better off.

After some manipulation he managed to get the bunch between the heels of his mittened hands. In this fashion he carried it to his mouth. The ice crackled and snapped when by a violent effort he opened his mouth. He drew the lower jaw in, curled the upper lip out of the way, and scraped the bunch with his upper teeth in order to separate a match. He succeeded in getting one, which he dropped on his lap. He was no better off. He could not pick it up. Then he devised a way. He picked it up in his teeth and scratched it on his leg. Twenty times he scratched before he succeeded in lighting it. As it flamed he held it with his teeth to the birch-bark. But the burning brimstone went up his nostrils and into his lungs, causing him to cough spasmodically. The match fell into the snow and went out.

The old-timer on Sulphur Creek was right, he thought in the moment of controlled despair that ensued: after fifty below, a man should travel with a partner. He beat his hands, but failed in exciting any sensation. Suddenly he bared both hands, removing the mittens with his teeth. He caught the whole bunch between the heels of his hands. His arm-muscles not being frozen enabled him to press the hand-heels tightly against the matches. Then he scratched the bunch along his leg. It flared into flame, seventy sulphur matches at once! There

was no wind to blow them out. He kept his head to one side to escape the strangling fumes, and held the blazing bunch to the birch-bark. As he so held it, he became aware of sensation in his hand. His flesh was burning. He could smell it. Deep down below the surface he could feel it. The sensation developed into pain that grew acute. And still he endured it, holding the flame of the matches clumsily to the bark that would not light readily because his own burning hands were in the way, absorbing most of the flame.

At last, when he could endure no more, he jerked his hands apart. The blazing matches fell sizzling into the snow, but the birch-bark was alight. He began laying dry grasses and the tiniest twigs on the flame. He could not pick and choose, for he had to lift the fuel between the heels of his hands. Small pieces of rotten wood and green moss clung to the twigs, and he bit them off as well as he could with his teeth. He cherished the flame carefully and awkwardly. It meant life, and it must not perish. The withdrawal of blood from the surface of his body now made him begin to shiver, and he grew more awkward. A large piece of green moss fell squarely on the little fire. He tried to poke it out with his fingers, but his shivering frame made him poke too far, and he disrupted the nucleus of the little fire, the burning grasses and tiny twigs separating and scattering. He tried to poke them together again, but in spite of the tenseness of the effort, his shivering got away with him, and the twigs were hopelessly scattered. Each twig gushed a puff of smoke and went out. The fire-provider had failed. As he looked apathetically about him, his eyes chanced on the dog, sitting across the ruins of the fire from him, in

the snow, making restless, hunching movements, slightly lifting one forefoot and then the other, shifting its weight back and forth on them with wistful eagerness.

The sight of the dog put a wild idea into his head. He remembered the tale of the man, caught in a blizzard, who killed a steer and crawled inside the carcass, and so was saved. He would kill the dog and bury his hands in the warm body until the numbness went out of them. Then he could build another fire. He spoke to the dog, calling it to him; but in his voice was a strange note of fear that frightened the animal, who had never known the man to speak in such way before. Something was the matter, and its suspicious nature sensed danger -- it knew not what danger, but somewhere, somehow, in its brain arose an apprehension of the man. It flattened its ears down at the sound of the man's voice, and its restless, hunching movements and the liftings and shiftings of its forefeet became more pronounced; but it would not come to the man. He got on his hands and knees and crawled toward the dog. This unusual posture again excited suspicion, and the animal sidled mincingly away.

The man sat up in the snow for a moment and struggled for calmness. Then he pulled on his mittens, by means of his teeth, and got upon his feet. He glanced down at first in order to assure himself that he was really standing up, for the absence of sensation in his feet left him unrelated to the earth. His erect position in itself started to drive the webs of suspicion from the dog's mind; and when he spoke peremptorily, with the sound of whip-lashes in his voice, the dog rendered its customary allegiance and came to him. As it came

within reaching distance, the man lost his control. His arms flashed out to the dog, and he experienced genuine surprise when he discovered that his hands could not clutch, that there was neither bend nor feeling in the fingers. He had forgotten for the moment that they were frozen and that they were freezing more and more. All this happened quickly, and before the animal could get away, he encircled its body with his arms. He sat down in the snow, and in this fashion held the dog, while it snarled and whined and struggled.

But it was all he could do, hold its body encircled in his arms and sit there. He realized that he could not kill the dog. There was no way to do it. With his helpless hands he could neither draw nor hold his sheath-knife nor throttle the animal. He released it, and it plunged wildly away, with tail between its legs, and still snarling. It halted forty feet away and surveyed him curiously, with ears sharply pricked forward. The man looked down at his hands in order to locate them, and found them hanging on the ends of his arms. It struck him as curious that one should have to use his eyes in order to find out where his hands were. He began threshing his arms back and forth, beating the mittened hands against his sides. He did this for five minutes, violently, and his heart pumped enough blood up to the surface to put a stop to his shivering. But no sensation was aroused in the hands. He had an impression that they hung like weights on the ends of his arms, but when he tried to run the impression down, he could not find it.

A certain fear of death, dull and oppressive, came to him. This fear quickly became poignant as he realized that it was no longer a mere

matter of freezing his fingers and toes, or of losing his hands and feet, but that it was a matter of life and death with the chances against him. This threw him into a panic, and he turned and ran up the creek-bed along the old, dim trail. The dog joined in behind and kept up with him. He ran blindly, without intention, in fear such as he had never known in his life. Slowly, as he ploughed and floundered through the snow, he began to see things again, -- the banks of the creek, the old timber-jams, the leafless aspens, and the sky. The running made him feel better. He did not shiver. Maybe, if he ran on, his feet would thaw out; and, anyway, if he ran far enough, he would reach camp and the boys. Without doubt he would lose some fingers and toes and some of his face; but the boys would take care of him, and save the rest of him when he got there. And at the same time there was another thought in his mind that said he would never get to the camp and the boys; that it was too many miles away, that the freezing had too great a start on him, and that he would soon be stiff and dead. This thought he kept in the background and refused to consider. Sometimes it pushed itself forward and demanded to be heard, but he thrust it back and strove to think of other things.

It struck him as curious that he could run at all on feet so frozen that he could not feel them when they struck the earth and took the weight of his body. He seemed to himself to skim along above the surface, and to have no connection with the earth. Somewhere he had once seen a winged Mercury, and he wondered if Mercury felt as he felt when skimming over the earth.

His theory of running until he reached camp and the boys had one flaw in it: he lacked the endurance. Several times he stumbled, and finally he tottered, crumpled up, and fell. When he tried to rise, he failed. He must sit and rest, he decided, and next time he would merely walk and keep on going. As he sat and regained his breath, he noted that he was feeling quite warm and comfortable. He was not shivering, and it even seemed that a warm glow had come to his chest and trunk. And yet, when he touched his nose or cheeks, there was no sensation. Running would not thaw them out. Nor would it thaw out his hands and feet. Then the thought came to him that the frozen portions of his body must be extending. He tried to keep this thought down, to forget it, to think of something else; he was aware of the panicky feeling that it caused, and he was afraid of the panic. But the thought asserted itself, and persisted, until it produced a vision of his body totally frozen. This was too much, and he made another wild run along the trail. Once he slowed down to a walk, but the thought of the freezing extending itself made him run again.

And all the time the dog ran with him, at his heels. When he fell down a second time, it curled its tail over its forefeet and sat in front of him, facing him, curiously eager and intent. The warmth and security of the animal angered him, and he cursed it till it flattened down its ears appeasingly. This time the shivering came more quickly upon the man. He was losing in his battle with the frost. It was creeping into his body from all sides. The thought of it drove him on, but he ran no more than a hundred feet, when he staggered and pitched headlong. It was his last panic. When he had recovered his breath and control,

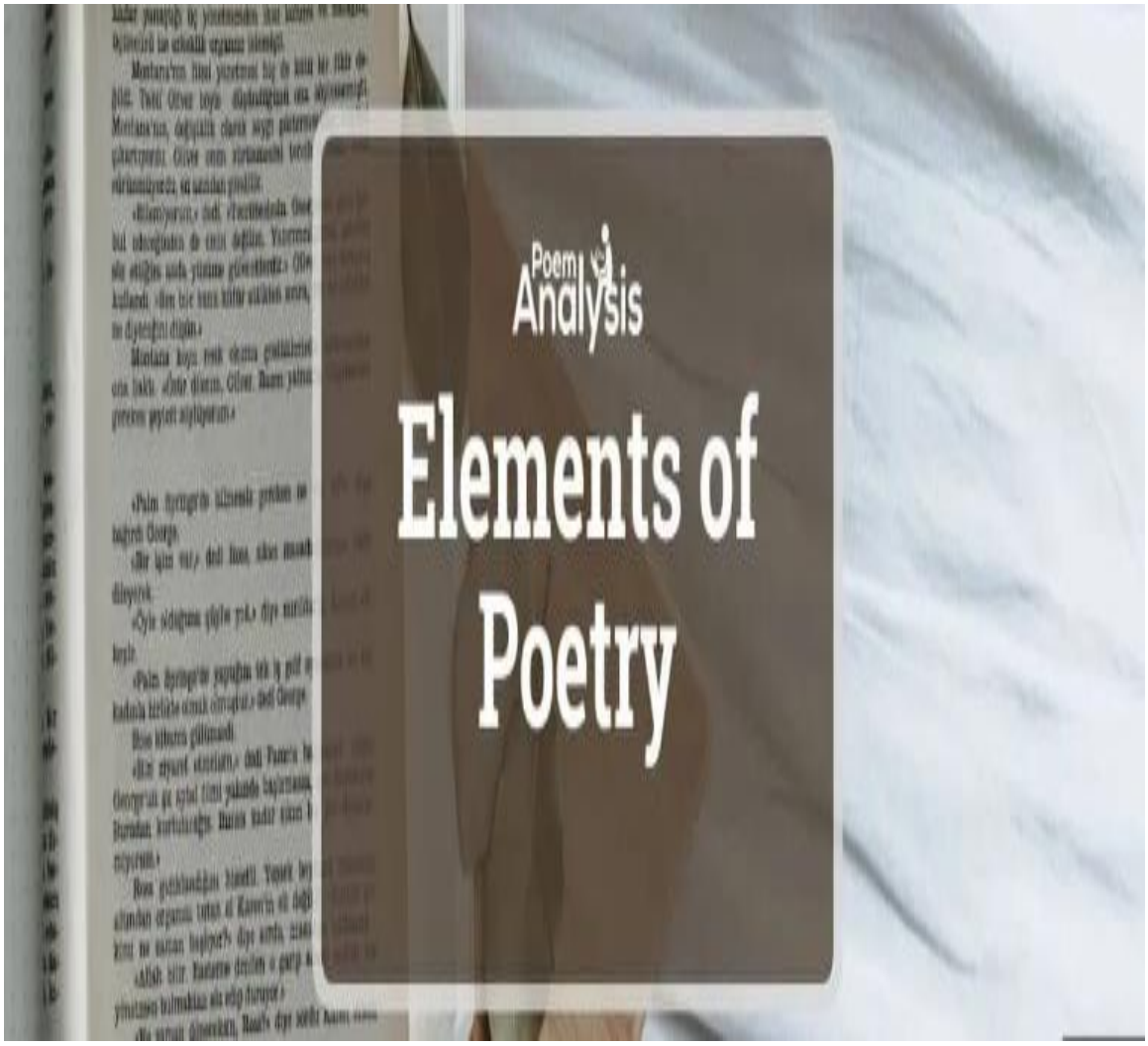
he sat up and entertained in his mind the conception of meeting death with dignity. However, the conception did not come to him in such terms. His idea of it was that he had been making a fool of himself, running around like a chicken with its head cut off -- such was the simile that occurred to him. Well, he was bound to freeze anyway, and he might as well take it decently. With this new-found peace of mind came the first glimmerings of drowsiness. A good idea, he thought, to sleep off to death. It was like taking an anesthetic. Freezing was not so bad as people thought. There were lots worse ways to die.

He pictured the boys finding his body next day. Suddenly he found himself with them, coming along the trail and looking for himself. And, still with them, he came around a turn in the trail and found himself lying in the snow. He did not belong with himself any more, for even then he was out of himself, standing with the boys and looking at himself in the snow. It certainly was cold, was his thought. When he got back to the States he could tell the folks what real cold was. He drifted on from this to a vision of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek. He could see him quite clearly, warm and comfortable, and smoking a pipe.

"You were right, old hoss; you were right," the man mumbled to the old-timer of Sulphur Creek.

Then the man drowsed off into what seemed to him the most comfortable and satisfying sleep he had ever known. The dog sat facing him and waiting. The brief day drew to a close in a long, slow twilight. There were no signs of a fire to be made, and, besides, never

in the dog's experience had it known a man to sit like that in the snow and make no fire. As the twilight drew on, its eager yearning for the fire mastered it, and with a great lifting and shifting of forefeet, it whined softly, then flattened its ears down in anticipation of being chidden by the man. But the man remained silent. Later, the dog whined loudly. And still later it crept close to the man and caught the scent of death. This made the animal bristle and back away. A little longer it delayed, howling under the stars that leaped and danced and shone brightly in the cold sky. Then it turned and trotted up the trail in the direction of the camp it knew, where were the other food-providers and fire-providers.


Poem Analysis
Elements of Poetry

Elements of Poetry Analysis

Poetry has many of the same elements as fiction: theme, narrator, characters, and setting, although it concentrates its elements in fewer words. Poets choose the words that they use very carefully, delighting in using figurative language, and vocabulary that has more than one meaning.

Before focusing on specific poetic elements, here are a few steps to help acquaint you with the poem:

1. Look at the poem – are there anything striking about the way it is set up? Do the lines have a pattern?

2. Read the poem out loud – take note of the way it sounds. Does it have a certain rhythm to it?

3. After reading the poem and obtaining a general idea of what it is about, look at the title. How does the title relate to the poem?

Next, analyze the five different components of the poem, the speaker, the structure, the meaning, the imagery and the rhythm, meter and rhyme scheme.

Speaker: Understanding the Speaker is an essential component of poetry analysis:

1. Who is the speaker? Is it a male or female? An object? An historical figure?

2. To whom or what is he/she speaking? About what? Someone else? About the past, present or future?

3. What is the speaker's tone? What is the speaker's mood? Is the poet reflective? Happy? Angry?

Structure: Examine the way the poem looks and is presented on the page:

1. How is the poem set up? Is it separated in to stanzas? Does it follow the pattern of one of the closed forms, such as sonnet, limerick, or haiku?

2. Is the poem in free verse? How are the lines set up? Is there one word per line or is it one long sentence?

3. How does the structure of the poem contribute to meaning?

Meaning: Read the poem for meaning.

1. As you're reading, note any words that you do not know. After you've finished reading, look these words up. Poets choose each word on purpose, not only for its sound, but for the nuance or multiplicity of meaning.

2. After you've looked up unfamiliar words, read the poem again as a whole. Try to determine the main idea of the poem - feel free to paraphrase in your own words.

3. Treat the poem as a puzzle: Figure out the meaning of the first line in the first stanza, then the meaning of the second and so on. At the end of the stanza, figure out how the lines work together to create meaning. Then put the summaries for each stanza together to determine the meaning of the poem as a whole.

Imagery: Not only do the words in a poem create a physical image on the page, but in their meaning and connection, they convey images to the reader.

1. The easiest images to pick out are similes and metaphors.

2. Look for words that reflect the five senses, phrases that create a picture, sound, taste, feeling or smell in your mind? Are words used such as buzz or cuckoo (onomatopoeia) which imitate what they name?

3. Look for the repetition of colors, sounds, images, or specific sensory words. Repetition of certain words creates meaning and puts importance on those words that are repeated.

Rhythm, Meter and Rhyme Scheme: Read the poem out loud.

1. Rhythm is the recurrence of stressed and unstressed sounds, which can sound melodic or discordant, fast or slow, etc. Rhythm's what gives some poems their "sing-song" quality.

2. Meter is a recurring pattern of rhythm.

3. The rhyme scheme of a poem describes the pattern of end rhymes. Rhyme schemes are mapped out by noting patterns of rhyme with small letters: the first rhyme sound is designated a, the second b, the third c, and so on.

5 Things to Consider When Analyzing Poetry

Poetry involves different elements like language, rhythm, and structure. Together, they tell a story and create a complexity that is unique to poetic verse. When studying poems in-depth, look at these individual elements:

1. **Theme**: Poetry often conveys a message through figurative language. The central idea and the subject matter can reveal the underlying theme of a poem.

2. **Language**: From word choice to imagery, language creates the mood and tone of a poem. The way language is arranged also impacts the rhythm of a poem.

3. **Sound and rhythm**: The syllabic patterns and stresses create the metrical pattern of a poem.

4. **Structure**: The framework of a poem's structure affects how it is meant to be read. A poet sculpts their story around stanzas, line breaks, rhyme patterns, punctuation, and pauses.

5. **Context**: The who, what, where, when, and why of a poem can help explain its purpose. Look at these elements to discover the context of a poem.

How to Analyze a Poem in 10 Steps

Reading poetry is a rewarding experience in and of itself. But to really see how all of the elements of a poem work together, you'll want to

study the qualities and characteristics of each. Follow this step-by-step guide to analyze a poem:

1. **Read the poem**. The first time you approach a poem, read it to yourself. Go through it slowly, appreciating the details you might miss when reading it quickly. Examine the title of the poem and how it relates to the meaning of the piece.

2. **Read the poem again, this time aloud**. Given its rhythmic patterns, poetry is designed to be read aloud. As you read a poem aloud, listen to how the words and syllables shape the rhythm. It can also help to hear someone else read the poem. Look online and find a recording of the poem, if you can. Listen to how the words flow from line to line, where the breaks are, and where the stress is placed.

3. **Map out the rhyme scheme**. You'll notice right away if a poem has a rhyme scheme or is written in free verse (i.e. without a rhyme scheme or regular meter). Map out the rhyming pattern by assigning each line a letter, giving lines that rhyme the same letter.

4. **Scan the poem**. Scansion is how you analyze the meter of poetry based on the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. Mark each foot—the basic measurement of a poetic line consisting of one stressed syllable paired with at least one unstressed syllable. Next, mark the pattern of stresses throughout the line. Identify the meter based on this information.

5. **Break down the structure**. Take a step back and look at the poem on the page. Notice the white space around the words. Poetry is meant to make a visual statement as well as an emotional one. Look at the details of this structure—like how many lines are in each stanza. Notice where the line breaks are. Does the end of every line coincide with the end of the thought? If not, the poet may be using enjambment, where one line continues into the next.

6. **Determine the form of the poem**. In your poem analysis, note what type of poem you're reading based on the elements you've examined. For example, if a poem has three quatrains (four-line stanzas) followed by a couplet, the poem is a sonnet.

7. **Study the language in the poem**. Poets make deliberate word choices to craft their poems. Examine each word and its significance in the line and the poem. How does it contribute to the story? If there are words you don't know, look them up. See how the poet plays with language through the use of metaphors, similes, and figurative language. Note any literary devices used, like alliteration and assonance, that help sculpt the poem's language.

8. **Study the content of the poem**. As you wade through the language of the poem, look at the content and message of the piece to uncover the theme. Learn when it was written to learn the historical context of the poem. Find out where it was written, and what language the poet used. If you're reading a translation, see if there are other variations that can show how different translators interpreted the original work.

9. **Determine who the narrator is**. Try to identify the speaker of the poem. Is it told through first-person point of view, second-person, or third-person? What tone does the narrator convey? The speaker's identity influences the telling of the poem based on their personal perspective.

10. **Paraphrase the poem line by line**. Finally, go through the poem again. Beginning with the first line, paraphrase each line. In other words, interpret the meaning, writing down your summary as you go. Once you've gone through the entire piece, read your words to grasp the meaning of the poem.


LET'S
READ
A
POEM
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William Shakespeare (1564- 1616)

Shakespeare was an English poet, playwright and actor of the Renaissance era. Shakespeare is widely recognized as the greatest English poet the world has ever known. Not only were his plays mainly written in verse, but he also penned 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other minor poems. Today he has become a symbol of poetry and writing internationally.

Shakespeare succeeded as a poet as much as in the theatre. His plays are wonderfully and poetically written, often in blank verse. Shakespeare's sonnets were composed between 1593 and 1601, though not published until 1609. That edition, *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*, consists of 154 sonnets, all written in the form of Shakespearean sonnet. The sonnets fall into two groups: sonnets 1-126, addressed to a "fair youth", a handsome and noble young man, and sonnets 127-152, to a malignant but fascinating "Dark Lady," who the poet loves in spite of himself.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

"Sonnet 18" is a sonnet written by English poet and playwright William Shakespeare. Like many of Shakespeare's sonnets, the poem is about the nature of beauty and with the capacity of poetry to represent that beauty. The poet is praising an anonymous person (usually believed to be a young man) through the poem.

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm’d;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature’s changing course untrimm’d;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

SONNET 18	***PARAPHRASE***
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	Shall I compare you to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	You are more lovely and more constant:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	Rough winds shake the beloved buds of May

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:	And summer is far too short:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	At times the sun is too hot,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	Or often goes behind the clouds;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	And everything beautiful sometime will lose its beauty,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;	By misfortune or by nature's planned out course.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade	But your youth shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;	Nor will you lose the beauty that you possess;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	Nor will death claim you for his own,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;	Because in my eternal verse you will live forever.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,	So long as there are people on this earth,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.	So long will this poem live on, making you immortal.

Summary

The speaker opens the poem with a question addressed to the beloved: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison. In line 2, the speaker prescribes what mainly differentiates the young man from the summer’s day: he is “more lovely and more temperate.” Summer’s days tend toward extremes: they are shaken by “rough winds”; in them, the sun (“the eye of heaven”) often shines “too hot,” or too dim. And summer is fleeting: its date is too short, and it leads to the withering of autumn, as “every fair from fair sometime declines.” The final quatrain of the sonnet tells how the beloved differs from the summer in that respect: his beauty will last forever (“Thy eternal summer shall not fade...”) and never die. In the couplet, the speaker explains how the beloved’s beauty will accomplish this feat, and not die because it is preserved in the poem, which will last forever; it will live “as long as men can breathe or eyes can see.”

Commentary

This sonnet is certainly the most famous in the sequence of Shakespeare’s sonnets; it may be the most famous lyric poem in English. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about the beauty of the beloved; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but the beloved is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the “eye of heaven” with its “gold complexion”; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the “darling buds of May” giving way to the “eternal summer”, which the speaker promises the beloved.

Sonnet 18 is the first “rhyme”—the speaker’s first attempt to preserve the young man’s beauty for all time. An important theme of the sonnet is the power of the speaker’s poem to defy time and last forever, carrying the beauty of the beloved down to future generations. The beloved’s “eternal summer” shall not fade precisely because it is embodied in the sonnet: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,” the speaker writes in the couplet, “So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

Analysis

The speaker initially tries to find an appropriate metaphor to describe his beloved (traditionally believed to be a young man)—suggesting that he might be compared to a summer’s day, the sun, or “the darling buds of May.” Yet as the speaker searches for a metaphor that will adequately reflect his beloved’s beauty, he realizes that none will work because all imply inevitable decline and death. Where the first eight lines of the poem document the failure of poetry’s traditional resources to capture the young man’s beauty, the final six lines argue that the young man’s eternal beauty is best compared to the poem itself.

The poem begins with the speaker suggesting a series of similes to describe the young man. In each case, he quickly lists reasons why the simile is inappropriate. For instance, if he compares the young man to a “summer’s day,” he has to admit that the metaphor fails to capture the young man’s full beauty: he’s more “lovely” and more “temperate.” As the poem proceeds, though, the speaker’s objections begin to shift. Instead of arguing that the young

man’s beauty exceeds whatever he’s compared to, the speaker notes a dark underside to his own similes: they suggest impermanence and decay. To compare the young man to the summer implies that fall is coming. To compare him to the sun implies that night will arrive—and soon.

However, as the speaker notes in line 9, “thy eternal summer shall not fade.” The young man’s beauty is not subject to decay or change. Clichéd, natural metaphors fail to capture the permanence of the young man’s beauty. To praise him, the poet needs to compare him to something that is itself eternal. For the speaker, that something is art. Like the young man’s “eternal summer,” the speaker’s lines (i.e., the lines of his poem) are similarly “eternal.” Unlike the summer or the sun, they will not change as time progresses. The speaker's lines are thus similar to the young man in a key respect: the poem itself manages to capture the everlasting quality of his beauty, something that the poem’s previous similes had failed to express. The poem itself will give eternal life to the young man: “So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

The speaker thus thinks that poems are eternal objects—that they do not change or alter as they encounter new readers or new historical contexts. He also thinks that poetry possesses a set of special, almost magical powers. It not only describes, it preserves. The poem is thus not simply a way of cataloguing the young man’s beauty, it propagates it for future generations. The poem, then, ultimately asks its audience to reflect on the powers of poetry itself: the ways that it does and does not protect the young man against

death, and the ways in which it preserves and creates beauty unmatched by the rest of the mortal world.

The Sun

In Renaissance love poetry, the sun is often used as a symbol for physical or personal beauty. Because the sun is the source of all light—and life—comparing someone or something to the sun suggests that they are unusually, even exceptionally beautiful.

In "Sonnet 18," the speaker considers comparing the young man to the sun, but rejects the comparison, noting that the sun's beauty is often dimmed by clouds. To reject this metaphor is to say that the young man is more beautiful than the sun because his beauty is more eternal.

Form

"Sonnet 18" is a Shakespearean sonnet, meaning it has 14 lines written in iambic pentameter and that follow a regular rhyme scheme. This rhyme scheme can be divided into three quatrains followed by a couplet. The sonnet has the regular rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. All of the end-of-line rhymes are full with the exception of temperate/date.

William Wordsworth (1770- 1850)

Wordsworth was born in the Lake District of northern England. Much of his poetry was inspired by the dramatic landscapes of the Lake District. Both Wordsworth's parents died before he was 15, and he and his four siblings were left in the care of different relatives. To deal with the great deal of grief and depression Wordsworth experienced, he indulged in writing poetry. He moved on in 1787 to St. John's College, Cambridge.

The most important thing he did in his college years was to devote his summer vacation in 1790 to a long walking tour through revolutionary France. He became an enthusiast for the ideals of the French Revolution. Upon taking his Cambridge degree—an undistinguished "pass"—he returned in 1791 to France. In December 1792, Wordsworth had to return to England and was cut off there by the outbreak of war between England and France.

The years that followed his return to England were the darkest of Wordsworth's life. Unprepared for any profession, rootless, virtually penniless, bitterly hostile to his own country's opposition to the French, he lived in London and learned to feel a profound sympathy for the abandoned mothers, beggars, children, and victims of England's wars. This experience brought about Wordsworth's interest and sympathy for the life, troubles, and speech of the "common man." These issues proved to be of the utmost importance to Wordsworth's work.

This dark period ended in 1795 when Wordsworth received a legacy from a close relative and he and his sister Dorothy went to

live together without separation. Two years later they moved again, to live near the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was an admirer of Wordsworth's work. They collaborated on 'Lyrical Ballads', published in 1798. This collection of poems, mostly by Wordsworth but with Coleridge contributing 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', is generally taken to mark the beginning of the Romantic movement in English poetry.

William Wordsworth was an innovative writer who marked the start of the Romantic Period in literature. He was a pioneer of Romanticism and the Poet laureate of England from 1843 till his death in 1850.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

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.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is one of the most famous and best-loved poems written in the English literature by William Wordsworth. It was written as a lyric poem to capture the bewitching beauty of the wildflowers and express a deeper feeling and emotions of the poet. It has become an eternal classic for describing the nature and its scenic beauty.

The poem is based on one of Wordsworth's own walks in the countryside of England's Lake District. During this walk, he

encountered a long strip of daffodils. In the poem, these daffodils have a long-lasting effect on the speaker, firstly in the immediate impression they make and secondly in the way that the image of them comes back to the speaker's mind later on. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is a quintessentially Romantic poem, bringing together key ideas about imagination, humanity and the natural world.

Paraphrase

The poet explains about his one day occasional aimless wandering. The term “wandered” means walking free of their own accord. The poet is referring to himself as the ‘cloud’ in a metaphorical sense of the word. Although the clouds mostly travel in groups, this cloud prefers singular hovering. However, he clearly mentions his passing through valleys and hills on a routine walk, simplifying the narrative.

The poet comes across a bunch of daffodils fluttering in the air. He’s dumbfounded by the beauty of those golden daffodils. Although, yellow would be more suitable for daffodils the poet intends to signify its beauty by using golden color. The daffodils are termed as hosts/ crowd since they are together in a collective bunch. The daffodils are a source of immense beauty for the poet.

The daffodils are firmly perched beside a lake, beneath some trees. It’s a windy day overall and the flowers dance and flutter as the wind blows. Let’s take a step back for a brief moment to locate the premises of the poet’s inspiration. The poet resided in the Lake District, a region rich in scenic locations entailing hills, valleys and lakes. As a result, the location is realistic in its entirety. The poet refers to daffodils dancing, a trait relatable to humans.

The above allegory is a clear and direct referral to our native galaxy Milky Way. The space continuum holds great mystery for our Romantic Era poet as he envisions the daffodils to be in a constant state of wonder as are the stars beyond the reach of humans.

Comparing the daffodils to stars in the sky, the speaker notes how the flowers seem to go on without ending, alongside a bay. The speaker guesses there are ten thousand or so daffodils, all of their heads moving as if they were dancing.

The poet makes an allusion to Milky Way, our galaxy filled with its own planetary solar systems stretched beyond infinity. The lake supposedly has a large area since the daffodils are dispersed along the shoreline. Along the Milky Way's premises lie countless stars which the poet alludes to daffodils fluttering beside the lake.

By ten thousand, he meant a collection of daffodils were fluttering in the air, spellbinding the poet at the beauty of the scene. It's just a wild estimation at best as he supposes ten thousand daffodils at a glance. The term sprightly comes from sprite which is primarily dandy little spirits people deemed existed in such times. They are akin to fairies.

Near the daffodils, the waves are glinting on the bay. But the daffodils seem more joyful to the speaker than the waves. A poet couldn't help being cheerful, says the speaker, in the cheerful company of the daffodils. The speaker stares at the daffodils slowly, without yet realizing the full extent of the positive effects of encountering them.

After the experience with the daffodils, the speaker often lies on the couch, either absent-minded or thoughtful. It is then that the

daffodils come back to the speaker's imaginative memory—access to which is a gift of solitude—and fills the speaker with joy as his mind dances with the daffodils.

Commentary

Considered one of the most significant examples of Romantic poetry, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” explores the relationship between nature and humanity. In doing so, it makes two key points. Firstly, it argues that humanity is not separate from nature, but rather part of it. And secondly, it suggests that the natural world—and a strong bond with it—is essential to human happiness. Though the reader might be fooled by the suggestion of solitude in the title, this is an optimistic poem with a positive outlook on the world. This happiness is drawn from the speaker’s interaction with nature, in turn encouraging the reader to appreciate the natural majesty that is all around them.

The poem introduces the idea of loneliness in the first line, but the speaker is not really alone at all. The speaker is in the presence of “a host of golden daffodils,” whose delicate “dancing” in the wind has a long-lasting effect on the speaker’s mind. This set-up introduces a sense of togetherness between humanity (represented by the speaker) and nature (represented by the daffodils). And though this togetherness is partly rendered by the personification of the daffodils that runs throughout the poem—they are “dancing” in every stanza—the speaker pre-emptively flips this personification on its head in the very first line. Here, the speaker compares himself to a natural element: a cloud. So, the human component of the poem is

like nature, and the natural component is like humanity. They are, in a word, together.

The poem suggests that this togetherness is something instinctive. It's clear that the beauty of the daffodils had an instant impact on the speaker—which is why the speaker "gazed and gazed"—but it was only later, when the experience "flashed" again in the speaker's mind, that the speaker realized its full significance. In this quiet moment, the speaker draws on the experience of the daffodils as an avenue to happiness. That is, everything that the daffodils represent—joy, playfulness, survival, beauty—"fills" the speaker with "bliss" and "pleasure." In the speaker's mind, the speaker is again dancing "with the daffodils." The poem, then, is arguing that communion with nature is not just a momentary joy, but something deeper and long-lasting. The reader is left with the distinct impression that, without these types of experiences with nature, the speaker would be returned to a genuine loneliness only hinted at by the title.

Stanzas 2 and 3 also make it clear to the reader that the togetherness described above is, of course, not solely about daffodils, but rather about nature more generally. "The stars" and "the sparkling waves" are both mentioned, suggesting a series of links between the smaller, less noticeable elements of the natural world (like the daffodils), humankind (like the speaker), and the wider universe (the stars). All are presented as a part of nature; though they are different, they are all in communion with one another. However, people have to make an effort to notice this and to engage with the natural world like the speaker does. The poem, then, is an

argument for active engagement with nature—a message perhaps even more important now than it was at the time, given humanity's wide-ranging effects on the planet it inhabits.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is a Poem of Nature. As this poem is about the captivating beauty of nature, it has been written from the subjective point of view. It details the poet's encounters with the majestic daffodils in the field beside the lake. The expression of wonder can be felt throughout the poem. The feeling of enjoying the beauty of nature and its impacts on the human mind can leave the reader desiring to spend more time with nature.

Throughout the poem, Wordsworth engages with themes of nature, memory, and spirituality. These three are tied together as the speaker, Wordsworth himself, moves through a beautiful landscape. He takes pleasure in the sight of the daffodils and revives his spirit in nature. At the same time, Wordsworth explores the theme of memory. The flowers are there to comfort him in real-time but also as a memory from the past.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-1892)

Alfred Tennyson was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets of the Victorian age. He is a representative poet of the Victorian age of the 19th century and was honored with the high office of the Poet Laureate. During the long span of his career as a poet he wrote every kind of poetry- the song, the dramatic monologue, the dialect poem, the descriptive, the ballad, the war ode, the epic, narrative and the drama. He wrote on classical romantic and modern subjects: on English history and legend, and on the deepest problems of philosophy and religion.

Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1827, At Cambridge where he met Arthur Hallam and became his closest friend. Tennyson was profoundly grieved when Hallam died in 1833, but he wrote some of his best work in the years after his friend's untimely death. These poems and others were contained in the profound two-volume *Poems*, published in 1842.

In 1850, after the publication of In Memoriam, dedicated to Hallam, Tennyson's fame was such that he was appointed the new poet laureate. *In Memoriam A.H.H.* was written as an elegy for his friend Arthur Hallam, after he died of a stroke at the age of 22. Here Tennyson deals with all the phases of personal grief and sorrows and discusses the conflict between knowledge and science on one side and faith/religion on the other. The poet marches from the state of despair to a state of hope and optimism.

Tennyson wrote poetry throughout the rest of his life. Late work included the twelve blank-verse poems on King Arthur and his

knights comprising *The Idylls of the King* (1859), and "Crossing the Bar."

Tennyson presented in his poetry all the essential feature of Victorian life: moderation in politics, refined culture religious liberalism, interest in the advance of scientific discovery, increasing sympathy with poverty. All these Victorian feelings find expression in Tennyson's poems.

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.

Crossing the Bar, is a short poem by Alfred Tennyson, written in 1889, three years before he died. He was 80 years old and recovering from a serious illness. Tennyson's illness and old age may have contributed to this very personal and memorable meditation on death. The poem contains four stanzas of four lines each, with a traditional ABAB rhyme scheme.

The poem is written as an elegy, utilizing an extended metaphor; a metaphorical meditation on death. The speaker compares dying to gently crossing the sandbar between a coastal area and the wider sea/ocean. Tennyson uses the metaphor of a sand bar to describe the barrier between life and death. The poem relates death to a sea voyage. He so much believed in his being able to see the face of God when his great journey of life and death was over. The point of view of the poem is first person with the poet as the speaker, who conveys his own thoughts on life and death.

The voyage is a metaphor for the final journey of man. "Crossing the Bar" is Tennyson's most famous metaphorical meditation on Death. Where "Bar" or sandbar is metaphor used for the demarcation between the harbor and the open ocean, as the barrier between life and death. Thus Crossing the Bar is the act of passing beyond life, or it can be said that it signifies meeting death.

The 1st stanza The poem begins with the phrase *sunset and evening star*. It depicts the transitional time between day and night. It

marks the end of the day and the beginning of the night. In a deeper sense, it also refers to the stage of life and death or end of life and beginning of the afterlife.

There are two metaphors for death in the first stanza: “Sunset and evening star.” Both bring the darkness. The sun setting in the west has always symbolized the end of a person’s life. When the poet adds the clear call, he states that death is calling to him. The bar is a place at the mouth of a river or harbor where tides deposit sand. The waves and wind blow over the bar and sounds of moaning come from it. These sounds denote that there is not enough water to sail over the bar. Symbolically, the reference to the bar shows the life and death of the ship or boat that would try to go over it when the tide is low or hopefully high. The passing over from life to death is the crossing of the bar.

The 2nd Stanza The second stanza can be an explanation of the first one. The poet says the tide which was full of might is moving now in such a way that it seems to be quiet and weak. Its might is gone it can neither produce sound nor foam. It came from deep inside the sea and now going back to its origin. Going deeper into the words we find that the tide here refers to the life. It seems to come from unknown place which takes the boat toward home. The boat will be taken out to sea toward home or heaven for the one who has passed away.

The 3rd Stanza The third stanza is quite similar to the first one. The poet uses different images to depict the same ideas described in the first stanza. He says that it is evening now and the evening bell has rung. The poet begins with two more references to the evening time

and the symbolic night: twilight of a person's life and the sounding of the death knell. After this, it would be dark. In a deeper sense, his end is near. Now he will die. Again he asks his friends not to be sad after he has gone. He wants no one to be sad or melancholy about his passing. The word embark gives the impression that he is starting a journey. To Tennyson who was a Christian, this is a journey that he may look forward to making.

The 4th Stanza The poet says that after his death he will be free from the bonds of time and place. The word flood here refers to the afterlife journey. The poet says that the journey will take him away from the limitations of the world and then only he will be able to see his Pilot or the One who has brought him in the world and is taking him back to his original home. All this will happen once he crosses the bar i.e. the wall between life and death. The poet thus presumes to see his Pilot. This is Tennyson's hope when he crosses the bar on his long trek to heaven. By capitalizing "Pilot" Tennyson has equated the Pilot with God, but God in the guise of a specially qualified and skilled mariner.

Stephen Crane (1871 – 1900)

Stephen Crane was an American poet and novelist. His poems convey themes relating to death, loss, war, religion and love. He is recognized by modern critics as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

Crane was considered an important figure in American literature. Crane's writing is characterized by vivid intensity, distinctive dialects, and irony. Common themes involve fear, spiritual crises and social isolation. Crane's poetry was unusual for his time, due to the use of free verse without rhyme or meter, and he often would not even put titles for his poems. His poems have also been unique for his logical prose and narrative content.

War Is Kind

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom --

A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

In this five stanza excerpt from ‘War is Kind’ by Stephen Crane, the poet does not use any pattern of rhyme or rhythm. In fact, the whole poem is written in free verse. But that doesn’t mean that there are moments of rhyme or techniques used to create rhythm. For example, the endings of lines one and five of stanza one rhyme with

the words “kind” and “kind”. So do lines three and six of stanza two with “die” and “lie.” These same endings are used again in the fourth stanza of the excerpt.

Repetition is also an important part of the poem. It is a technique used within all forms of poetry, but within free verse writing can help to unify the lines. In the case of ‘War is Kind’ Crane uses and reuses the phrase “War is kind” five times in this excerpt alone. The statement is always preluded by another three line phrase, “Do not weep”. These are two directions both aimed at the “maiden” referenced in the first line.

Stanza One

In the first stanza of ‘War is Kind’ the speaker begins by making use of the refrain. He tells a “maiden,” or unmarried woman, that she should not weep. “War,” he states, is “kind”. This is obviously a very unusual and likely ironic, thing to say. He goes on to tell the woman that her “lover threw” his hands in the air when he was confronted with war. When this happened, his “steed,” or horse ran alone. It was “affrighted,” a complicated way to say frightened. It is unclear what exactly happened to make the lover throw his hands in the air. Maybe it was in surrender, or perhaps something darker happened and he was injured or even killed.

The last two lines of this stanza are a reiteration of part of the first line, and the two statements which make up the refrain. These two lines bookend the stanza, as they do with stanzas three and five.

Stanza Two

In the second stanza of ‘War is Kind’ the speaker plays with the previous reference to a “steed” and uses the word “Hoarse”. This time though he is referring to the drums played by the regiment of soldiers. They sound “hoarse,” as if they are sick or in need of something to drink. In the next two lines the speaker says the soldiers are “Little souls” and are thirsting not for water, but “for fight”.

The phrase little souls is interesting, it contrast with the next lines which seem to suggest the men do not have souls. The speaker goes on to say that these men were born for nothing else other than to fight. They were born to “drill” as in train and practice, and then die. They are mechanical in their actions and in their purpose.

In the fourth line the speaker references “unexplained glory”. There is no clear definitive answer to what this glory is, but it could refer to the ephemeral nature of glory itself. It is something which spectators and outsiders from war imbue upon those who were in war. Glory is not something that actively seeks out soldiers on the battlefield.

In the last lines of the section the speaker mentions a battle god. What the speaker is doing here is setting out a scene, which is ruled differently than other kingdom. This particular kingdom is nothing more than a field where “a thousand corpses lie”. It’s a dark and terrible place, which is ruled over by a powerful force.

Stanza Three

In the third stanza the speaker begins by asking a “babe” not to weep. He has moved on from addressing a woman to speaking to a

young child. He tells the child that there is no reason to weep, and then provides them with a very good reason to do so. The child's father, who was in a battle of some kind died in "the yellow trenches". He had rage in his breast and in the simplest way, "gulped and died". The "rage" refers to his own thirst for war, and to the injury which killed him. The bullet entered his body, driven by another's rage. The refrain is again repeated. It is starting to become even more haunting as its deep irony is made clear.

Stanza Four

The flag of the regiment is mentioned in the fourth stanza of 'War is Kind'. It is "blazing" and pattered with a "crest of red and gold" and an eagle. There is another moment of repetition in which the line "These men were born to drill and die" is used again. It is a reminder, and its reuse helps create a rhythm to the poem. Along with the refrain "Do not weep. / War is kind" the poem starts to sound song-like.

In lines four through six of this stanza the speaker goes through some terrible images. He speaks to the flag, and tells it to make sure the men know that there is "virtue" in slaughtering one's enemies and that there is "excellence" in killing. The stanza ends with the repetition of the line "And a field where a thousand corpses lie."

Stanza Five

The fifth stanza of 'War is Kind' is directed toward a mother who was faced with the loss of her son. With the alliterative phrase "heart hung humble" the speaker describes the way she stood before his coffin. Her heart was on the "shroud" of her son, as simple as a button. Crane describes the heart as completing the action, a

technique known as metonymy. The excerpt ends with the speaker again telling someone not to cry, and that war is kind.

Style

"War is Kind" is Crane's free verse meditation on war and loss. The poet utilizes concrete imagery and irony to compose a portrait of the cosmic futility of war. Concrete imagery describes the world in terms of the senses, what we experience with our sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. By appealing to our senses, Crane can more effectively show the horrors of war directly. The tone of his descriptions is ironic, that is, he does not mean that war is kind, but that it is cruel and unjust. Another example of irony occurs in the second stanza when the speaker says "Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom …" It is also ironic that war's "kindness" means that the soldiers' deaths bring them release from their suffering.

The poem employs two levels of diction, or word choice. The language of the first, third, and fifths stanzas is plain and closer to everyday speech, while the language of the indented second and fourth stanzas is embellished and inflated, and uses more formal verse conventions such as end rhyme. The contrast between these two styles adds to the poem's complexity, and furthers the author's intention to deflate the idea of romantic heroism in all of its guises.

Historical Context

Although Crane never served in the United States military, as a journalist he covered a number of conflicts for various newspapers and news.


Glossary
of Terms
A-Z

Glossary of Literary Terms

Allegory: an allegory is a narrative in which the characters often stand for abstract concepts. An allegory generally teaches a lesson by means of an interesting story.

Alliteration: the repetition at close intervals of consonant sounds for a purpose. For example: wailing in the winter wind.

Allusion: a reference to something in literature, history, mythology, religious texts, etc., considered common knowledge. A direct or indirect reference to a person, place, thing, event, or idea in history or literature. Allusions imply reading and cultural experiences shared by the writer and the reader, functioning as a kind of shorthand whereby the recalling of something outside the text supplies an emotional or intellectual context. Use the verb form, allude.

Ambiguity: Double or even multiple meaning.

Analogy: a point by point comparison between two dissimilar things for the purpose of clarifying the less familiar of the two things.

Antagonist: the character or force that opposes the protagonist. (It can be a character, an animal, a force, or a weakness of the character.)

Antithesis – a balanced statement; a figure of speech in which words and phrases with opposite meanings are balanced against each other.

- "To err is human, to forgive, divine"
  (Pope, "An Essay On Criticism").
- "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." (Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities,)

Apostrophe: the device, usually in poetry, of calling out to an imaginary, dead, or absent person, or to a place, thing, or personified abstraction either to begin a poem or to make a dramatic break in thought somewhere within the poem. It is used to address a specific group, person, or thing including those that are absent, dead, or imaginary. Often, the address is preceded by O or Oh.

Assonance: the repetition at close intervals of vowel sounds for a purpose. For example: mad as a hatter.

The repetition of vowel sounds in stressed syllables. Assonance differs from rhyme in that rhyme is a similarity of vowel and consonant: "lake" and "fake" demonstrate rhyme, "lake" and "fate" demonstrate assonance.

Autobiography: The written account of a person own life.

Ballad: a narrative poem that was originally meant to be sung. Ballads are generally about ordinary people who have unusual adventures, with a single tragic incident as the central focus. They

contain dialogue and repetition, and imply more than they actually tell. Example: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Biography: The written account of someone else's life.

Blank Verse: Iambic pentameter without rhyme. The verse form closest to the natural rhythms of English speech.

- Example: Most of the content of Shakespeare’s plays; Milton’s “Paradise Lost”

Cacophony: Harsh, clashing, or dissonant sounds, often produced by combinations of words that require a clipped, explosive delivery, or words that contain a number of plosive consonants such as b, d, g, k, p, and t; the opposite of EUPHONY.

Caricature: A way of drawing or writing which makes the special features of a person or group stronger, so that they are ridiculous.

Catalog: a long list of anything; an inventory used to emphasize quantity or inclusiveness.

Caesura : A pause occurring in a line of poetry, either due to sense or to natural speech rhythm. A caesura is usually accompanied by some form of punctuation. It is conventional to notate a caesura with the “double pipe” sign: ||

- Example: “How do I love thee? || Let me count the ways” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “How Do I Love Thee?,” Sonnet 43)

Character: the vehicle (person, animal, creation) that moves the story forward. A character may be main or minor, depending on his or her role in the work of literature. While some characters are two-dimensional, with one or two dominant traits, a fully developed character has a unique complex of traits. A) dynamic characters often change as the plot unfolds. B) static characters remain the same.

Characterization: refers to the techniques employed by writers to develop characters. 1) The writer may use physical description. 2) Dialogue spoken by the character and by other characters reveals character traits. 3) A character's action may be a means of characterization. 4) The reactions of another character may also be revealing. 5) A character's thoughts arid feelings are also a means of characterization.

Chorus: In Greek drama the chorus watched the action of the play and told the story. The modern meaning can be simply a group of people other than the hero or heroine.

Chronicle: A history of events year by year – e.g. the Angelo-Saxon Chronicle in old English.

Classic:

a) A work that is recognized as a great work: e.g. Dickens novels are some of the classics of English literature.

b) Ancient Greek or Latin literature: e.g. we studied classics at university. c) Writing influenced by ancient Greek and Latin literature: e.g. Eighteenth century poets preferred classical forms. (adjective: classical)

Cliché :An expression that has lost its freshness or appeal due to overuse.

- Examples: the writing is on the wall, as easy as pie, what goes around comes around, or turn over a new leaf

Climax: the point at which the conflict of the story begins to reach a turning point and begins to be resolved. A moment of greatest intensity or emotional tension as a narrative's conflict is reached, usually marks a turning point in the plot.

Comedy: Something that is funny. A comedy usually means a play with a light happy story (adjective: comic)

Conceit: an elaborate figure of speech comparing two very dissimilar things. a figure of speech (such as an analogy, metaphor, hyperbole, or oxymoron) which sets up an unusual, exaggerated, or elaborate parallel between two different things (for example, comparing one's beloved to a ship or planet. The comparison may be brief or may extend throughout an entire poem.

Conflict: the struggle between two opposing forces that is the basis of the plot. 1) internal conflict character struggling with him/herself, 2) external conflicts – character struggling with forces outside of

him/herself. For example. Nature, god, society, another person, technology, etc.

Connotation: the associations, images, or impressions carried by a word, as opposed to the word's literal meaning.

Consonance: the close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after differing vowel sounds.

Convention: In general, an accepted way of doing things.

Couplet: Two lines of verse that rhyme.

Crisis: The most important part of a play, when the action takes an important turn and the feelings of the audience are strongest**.**

Dairy: A written record of daily events. The most famous dairy in English was written by Samuel Pepys.

Denotation: the precise, literal meaning of a word, without emotional associations or overtones.

Denouement: the final unraveling or outcome of the plot in drama or fiction during which the complications and conflicts of the plot are resolved.

Dialogue: A conversation between two or more people in a book, a play, etc.

Diction: A writer's specific choice of words, phrases, sentence structures, and figurative language, which combine to create

meaning. Discussions about diction consider why the writer uses this word rather than any other word that might have the same literal meaning.

Drama: A literary genre usually in the form of a story or play that focuses on and resolves some universal problem or situation.
a) Any kind of work written to be performed on the stage, including comedies, tragedies, etc.
b) Something exciting or important that happens. (adjective: dramatic)

Echo: the repetition of key words, sounds, syllables, lines or ideas for effect.

Edition: The printing of a book, often with changes made in second edition.

Elegy: A formal poem lamenting about the dead. A poem of mourning for someone who is dead.

Elision: Leaving out a vowel or a syllable, or running two vowels together, to make the correct metre in a line of verse.

Ellipsis: leaving out words which give the full sense: e.g. 'In wit [he was] a man: [in] simplicity [he was] a child.' (Pope)

Enjambment: when a sentence ‘steps over’ a line break into the next line without pause.

- Example:

I have lived long enough. My way of live

Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf (Macbeth)

- Shakespeare's Sonnet 130. The first line is end-stopped; the last two are enjambed.

My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
….……end-stopped
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
…….
As any she belied with false compare.
……...enjambment

Epic: A long narrative poem about the deeds of a hero, often set in a past that is depicted as greater than the present and praising heroic adventures.

Epigram: any witty, pointed saying. Originally an epigram meant an inscription, or epitaph usually in verse, on a tomb. Later it came to mean a short poem that compressed meaning and expression in the manner of an inscription. A short, funny, sharp poem or remark. Oscar Wilde was famous for his witty epigrams.

Epigraph: a motto or quotation that appears at the beginning of a book, play, chapter, or poem. Occasionally, an epigraph shows the source for the title of a work. Because the epigraph usually relates to the theme of a piece of literature, it can give the reader insight into the work.

Epilogue

An ending or an extra part after the end of a book or a play. Some of Shakespeare's plays have an epilogue addressed to the audience.

Epitaph: the inscription on a tombstone or monument in memory of the person or people buried there. Epitaph also refers to a brief literary piece that sums up the life of a dead person.

Essay: A short prose work that is not fiction, often showing the writer's own ideas on a subject.

Euphemism: Mild or indirect words replacing harsher or more direct words. Example: “he passed away” instead of “he died.”

Euphony: A succession of sweetly melodious sounds; the opposite of CACOPHONY. The term is applied to smoothly flowing POETRY or PROSE.

Exposition: background information at the beginning of the story, such as setting, characters and conflicts. In a short story the exposition appears in the opening paragraphs; in a novel the exposition is usually part of the first chapter.

Fable: a brief tale told to illustrate a moral. A legend; a story which trays to teach something.

Fairy tale - fairy story: A popular story usually told to children. These are imaginary stories, often with unreal character.
Cinderella, Snow white, Mother Goose, etc. are well- known fairy tales.

Falling Action: events that lead to a resolution after the climax.

Fantasy: An imaginative work that might have no basis in the real world; something imagined or dreamed.

Fiction: A work invented by the winter, with characters and events that are imaginary. Novels, short stories, etc. are all works of fiction. (adjective: fictional, fictitious). Non-fiction: refers to writing about factual subject.

Figurative Language: also called Figures of Speech – describe something as one thing when it is another, it is the opposite of literal language.

- Example: Shakespeare's phrase "My love is a fever" (Sonnet 147) is figurative because love is not a high body temperature. The phrase, rather, might describe the speaker's emotion in an alternative way to express the degree of feeling.
- Figurative language can be found in: allegory, apostrophe, conceit, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metonymy (and synecdoche), oxymoron, paradox, personification, simile, and symbolism.

Flashback: a scene, or an incident that happened before the beginning of a story, or at an earlier point in the narrative.

Foot: the basic unit of rhythm in poetry consisting of a group of two or three syllables. There is one stressed syllable, marked \ , and one or more unstressed, marked - . Types of feet: U (unstressed); / (stressed)

- Iamb: U /
- Trochee: / U
- Anapest: U U /
- Dactyl: / U U
- Spondee: / /
- Pyrrhic: U U

Free verse : A verse which the lines can vary in length, with no strict meter. Flowing lines, usually unrhymed, that vary in length and with no fixed meter.

Foreshadowing: a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events that will occur later in the narrative.

Genre: A type of literature. Example: Epic or Tragedy

Hero\ heroin:

a) the main character in a book or a play, although not necessarily good.

b) a good and brave man\ woman. (adjective: heroic)

Heroic couplet : A pair of lines in iambic pentameter that rhyme, widely written in the Restoration period.

Hexameter: A line of verse with six metrical feet, used by the ancient Greek and Latin poets but not used in English.

Hyperbole: an exaggeration for emphasis or humorous effect. Example: "Everyone in the world is mad at me today."

Imagery: words and phrases that create vivid picture for the reader. Using images such as metaphors and similes to produce an effect in the reader's imagination. Descriptive sensory words and specific details that “paint a picture” for readers. Emotions, moods, themes, and tone may be conveyed by images. A whole poem may be organized around a single image. For example, consider this image of the flowers in William Wordsworth’s poem Daffodils:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Irony: Something that has a second meaning intended by the writer, often the opposite, and often with a bitterly humorous tone. A contrast between the intent and the literal meaning of words or action. Irony is not a coincidence; rather, it is a planned and purposeful tool used to emphasize an idea.

In dramatic irony, the audience understands a second meaning that the character doses not himself understand. (adjective: ironic).

Verbal irony: a writer says one thing, but means something entirely different.

Situational irony: occurs when something happens that is entirely different from what is expected.

Dramatic irony: occurs when the reader knows information that the characters do not.

Lyric:

a) a poem, originally one meant to be sung, which expresses the poet's thoughts and feelings. (adjective: lyrical)

b) lyrics is a word now used for the words of a song, especially a pop song.

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a comparison or analogy is made between two seemingly unlike things, as in the phrase “evening of life.” A way of describing something by saying that it is like something else, without using the words 'like' or 'as': e.g. That man is a snake. Compare simile.

Metonymy: a figure of speech that substitutes the name of a related object, person, or idea for the subject at hand. A figure of speech in which a phrase or word is substituted for one which is closely related to it.

- Example: “The White House made an announcement today.” ‘The White House’ is used when what is literally meant is the president and/or his cabinet members and staff, etc.
- If someone says they are reading Dickens, they mean they are reading something written by the author.

Meter: Formal rhythm in lines of verse. The verse line is divided into feet which contain different rhythms and stresses (see foot). The most common English meter is the iambic pentameter, with five iambs or iambic feet.

Mood: the feeling, or atmosphere, that a writer creates for the reader. Connotative words, sensory images, and figurative language contribute to the mood of a selection, as do the sound and rhythm of the language.

Monologue: A speech by one person. Interior monologue is the name given to a prose style used by James Joyce and others, which gave the reader the stream of thoughts and feelings passing through a character's mind.

Motif: A unifying element in an artistic work, especially any recurrent image, symbol, theme, character type, subject or narrative detail.

Narrative: The telling of a story. Novels, short stories, etc. are narratives.

Narrator: the person from whose point of view events are conveyed.

- **First person**: the narrator is a character in the story, uses the pronoun "I." The first person narrator does not have to be the main character in the story.
- **Third person**: is indicated by the pronouns he, she and they. The third person narrator is not a participant in the action and thus maintains a certain distance from the characters.

A) In **third person omniscient** point of view, the narrator is all-knowing about the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

B) The **third person limited** point of view deals with a writer presenting events as experienced by only one character. This type of narrator does not have full knowledge of situations, past or future events.

C) In **third person objective** the story conveys only the external details of the characters—never their thoughts or inner motivations.

Novel: A book-length story whose character and events are usually imaginary. A writer of novels is a novelist.

Ode : A poem, originally to be sung, but now a grand lyric poem often in praise of someone or something.

Onomatopoeia. The use of words or passages that imitate sounds. Using the sounds of words, in poetry, to make the sound of what is being described: e.g. the word 'cuckoo' is onomatopoeia, because it is like the sound that the bird makes. Such as: buzz, or cuckoo, whose meaning is suggested by the sound of the word itself. (boom, click, plop)

Oxymoron: a figure of speech in which two contradictory words or phrases are combined in a single expression, giving the effect of a condensed paradox: “wise fool,” “cruel kindness.”

Paradox: a statement or situation containing obvious contradictions, but is nevertheless true. A statement that seems to be self-contradictory or even absurd, but is used to demonstrate a truth. Example: man is born to die.

Parallelism: the use of similar grammatical form gives items equal weight, as in Lincoln’s line “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Attention to parallelism generally makes both spoken and written expression more concise, clear and powerful.

Parody: an imitation of a serious work of literature for the purpose of criticism or humorous effect or for flattering tribute. Imitating

something in such a way as to make the original thing seem ridiculous.

Pastoral: Style of novels and stories, based on the adventures of men who are often wicked but lovable, and usually including many different places and events.

Personification: a figure of speech in which human qualities or characteristics are given to an animal, object, or concept.

Plot: the plan of action or sequence of events of the story.

Point of view: the vantage point, or stance from which a story is told, the eye and mind through which the action is perceived. (See also narrator.)

Prose : Written language in its usual form, not on lines of verse. The ordinary language of speaking or writing, without meter.

Protagonist: the central character in a story; the one upon whom the actions center. The protagonist faces a problem and must undergo some conflict to solve it.

Pun: A form of wit, not necessarily funny, involving a play on a word with two or more meanings.

Realism: Trying to show life as it really is. (adjective: realistic) Representation of objects, actions, or social conditions as they really are. There is usually an emphasis on the everyday, familiar, and an avoidance of idealization.

Resolution: the final unwinding, or resolving of the conflicts and complications in the plot.

Rhyme: Repetition of the same sound in words or lines. Two or more words with the same sound; e.g. 'Love′ and ′dove′ are rhymes. ′Day′ and ′weigh′ rhyme. ′ Meat′ rhymes with′ street′.

Rhyme scheme: the pattern of end rhyme in a poem.

Rhythm: See meter. Meter is the formal rhythm of verse, but prose also has rhythm. (adjective: rhythmic)

Rising Action: That part of the plot that leads through a series of events of increasing interest and power to the climax or turning point. The rising action begins with an inciting moment, an action or event that sets a conflict of opposing forces into motion.

Romance: A love story or an imaginative story usually with love and adventure. (adjective: romantic)

Romantic : The writers in England between about 1790 and 1830 are known as Romantic poets and authors.

Sarcasm: An unsophisticated or heavy-handed form of verbal irony (see “irony” for further clarification).

Satire: a literary technique in which foolish ideas or customs are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society. The writer of satire is a satirist. (verb: satirize; adjective: satirical)

A type of literary work which uses irony, sarcasm, wit, and ridicule to expose and criticize the follies and vices of a person, custom, or institution. Famous examples in English literature include Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and George Orwell's Animal Farm.

Setting: the time and place in which the action of a story occurs.

Simile: a figure of speech in which two seemingly unlike things are compared. The comparison is made explicit by the use of a word or phrase such as: like, as, than, similar to, resembles, or seems—as in: "my love is like a red, red rose," (Robert Burns "Red, Red Rose")

Soliloquy: A dramatic convention in which a character in a play, alone on stage, speaks his or her thoughts aloud. The audience is provided with information about the characters' motives, plans, and state of mind.

Sonnet : A poem of 14 lines with a fixed form. In the petrarchan sonnet the first eight lines (the octave) have a rhyme scheme of abbaabba and the next six lines (the sestet) rhyme cdecde. The Shakespearean sonnet is in iambic pentametre and ends with a couplet. The rhymes are abab cdcd efef gg or abba cddc effe gg.

Stanza : a unit of structure in a poem, consisting of a group of lines separated by blank space. Stanzas may be thought of as the paragraphs of a poem. A group of verse lines with a rhyme pattern, such as a quatrain (four lines), a sestet (six lines), an octave (eight lines), etc.

Stream of Consciousness: the technique of presenting the flow of thoughts, responses, and sensations of one or more characters is called stream of consciousness.

Structure: The plan of work, especially a novel or a play, including the plot, the design, etc.

Style: the way in which a piece of literature is written. Style refers not to what is said, but how it is said.

Suspense: the tension or excitement felt by the reader as he or she becomes involved in the story.

Symbol : something that has a deeper meaning or that represents something else: e.g. A snake may be a symbol of evil. A person, object, idea or action that stands for something else. In literature, a concrete image can express an emotion or abstract idea because of symbolism; a dove can represent peace, and scales can stand for justice. It is usually something literal that stands for something figurative. (adjective: symbolic)

Synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole or the whole represents a part. Example: “Philadelphia won the baseball game,” –
Philadelphia represents the Phillies’ baseball team.

Syntax: sentence structure (see handout).

Theme: the central idea in a literary work. The theme is usually an idea about life or about people. Writers sometimes state the story’s

theme outright, but more often they simply tell the story and let the reader discover the theme. Therefore, theme is an idea revealed by the events of the story; plot is simply what happens in the story; it is not the theme. A theme provides a unifying point around which plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols and other elements are developed.

Tone: the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject. Tone or mood is inferred by elements of the author's style. Just as a tone of voice in a conversation can convey an attitude, a tone in a written work can indicate a mood like seriousness, happiness, anger, nostalgia, etc. Note that the tone doesn't always coincide with its content; a poem about death may have a silly or ironic tone.

Tragedy : Something that is very bad or sad. In drama, a tragedy is a serious play, often with an unhappy ending and often concerned with important events. (adjective: tragic)

Understatement: a type of verbal IRONY in which something is purposely represented as being far less important than it actually is; also called **meiosis**.

Unity: Three unities were important in the classical drama, the unities of time, place and action. This meant that the scenes of a play should all take place close to each other, within 24 hours, and should all be about the main story.

Verse (plural: verses)

a) A general word for all kinds of poetry. (no plural)

b) A single line of poetry. (plural: verses)

c) A group of lines, a stanza, especially in a song.

Versification - Generally, the structural form of a verse, as revealed by scansion. Identification of verse structure includes the name of the metrical type and the name designating number of feet:

- Monometer: 1 foot
- Dimeter: 2 feet
- Trimeter: 3 feet
- Tetrameter: 4 feet
- Pentameter: 5 feet
- Hexameter: 6 feet
- Heptameter: 7 feet
- Octameter: 8 feet
- Nonameter: 9 feet

Wit : Using language in a clever and funny way. A wit is a person who does this. (adjective: witty)


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