B.A.- III
English Special
English Poetry, Semester- VI, Paper-XIII

1) The Lady Shallot

- **Alfred Lord Tennyson**

- **Part I**
- On either side the river lie
- Long fields of barley and of rye,
- That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
- And thro' the field the road runs by
- To many-tower'd Camelot;
- The yellow-leaved waterlily
- The green-sheathed daffodilly
- Tremble in the water chilly
- Round about Shalott.
-
- Willows whiten, aspens shiver.
- The sunbeam showers break and quiver
- In the stream that runneth ever
- By the island in the river
- Flowing down to Camelot.
- Four gray walls, and four gray towers
- Overlook a space of flowers,
- And the silent isle imbowers
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- Underneath the bearded barley,
- The reaper, reaping late and early,
- Hears her ever chanting cheerly,
- Like an angel, singing clearly,
- O'er the stream of Camelot.
- Piling the sheaves in furrows airy,
- Beneath the moon, the reaper weary
- Listening whispers, ' 'Tis the fairy,
- Lady of Shalott.'
-
- The little isle is all inrail'd
- With a rose-fence, and overtrail'd
- With roses: by the marge unhail'd
- The shallop flitteth silken sail'd,
- Skimming down to Camelot.
- A pearl garland winds her head:
- She leaneth on a velvet bed,

- Full royally apparelled,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- **Part II**
- No time hath she to sport and play:
- A charmed web she weaves alway.
- A curse is on her, if she stay
- Her weaving, either night or day,
- To look down to Camelot.
- She knows not what the curse may be;
- Therefore she weaveth steadily,
- Therefore no other care hath she,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- She lives with little joy or fear.
- Over the water, running near,
- The sheepbell tinkles in her ear.
- Before her hangs a mirror clear,
- Reflecting tower'd Camelot.
- And as the mazy web she whirls,
- She sees the surly village churls,
- And the red cloaks of market girls
- Pass onward from Shalott.
-
- Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
- An abbot on an ambling pad,
- Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
- Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
- Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
- And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
- The knights come riding two and two:
- She hath no loyal knight and true,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- But in her web she still delights
- To weave the mirror's magic sights,
- For often thro' the silent nights
- A funeral, with plumes and lights
- And music, came from Camelot:
- Or when the moon was overhead
- Came two young lovers lately wed;
- 'I am half sick of shadows,' said
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- **Part III**
- A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,

- He rode between the barley-sheaves,
- The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
- And flam'd upon the brazen greaves
- Of bold Sir Lancelot.
- A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
- To a lady in his shield,
- That sparkled on the yellow field,
- Beside remote Shalott.
-
- The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
- Like to some branch of stars we see
- Hung in the golden Galaxy.
- The bridle bells rang merrily
- As he rode down from Camelot:
- And from his blazon'd baldric slung
- A mighty silver bugle hung,
- And as he rode his armour rung,
- Beside remote Shalott.
-
- All in the blue unclouded weather
- Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
- The helmet and the helmet-feather
- Burn'd like one burning flame together,
- As he rode down from Camelot.
- As often thro' the purple night,
- Below the starry clusters bright,
- Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
- Moves over green Shalott.
-
- His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
- On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
- From underneath his helmet flow'd
- His coal-black curls as on he rode,
- As he rode down from Camelot.
- From the bank and from the river
- He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
- 'Tirra lirra, tirra lirra:'
- Sang Sir Lancelot.
-
- She left the web, she left the loom
- She made three paces thro' the room
- She saw the water-flower bloom,
- She saw the helmet and the plume,
- She look'd down to Camelot.
- Out flew the web and floated wide;
- The mirror crack'd from side to side;

- 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- **Part IV**
- In the stormy east-wind straining,
- The pale yellow woods were waning,
- The broad stream in his banks complaining,
- Heavily the low sky raining
- Over tower'd Camelot;
- Outside the isle a shallow boat
- Beneath a willow lay afloat,
- Below the carven stern she wrote,
- *The Lady of Shalott.*
-
- A cloudwhite crown of pearl she dight,
- All raimented in snowy white
- That loosely flew (her zone in sight
- Clasp'd with one blinding diamond bright)
- Her wide eyes fix'd on Camelot,
- Though the squally east-wind keenly
- Blew, with folded arms serenely
- By the water stood the queenly
- Lady of Shalott.
-
- With a steady stony glance—
- Like some bold seer in a trance,
- Beholding all his own mischance,
- Mute, with a glassy countenance—
- She look'd down to Camelot.
- It was the closing of the day:
- She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;
- The broad stream bore her far away,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- As when to sailors while they roam,
- By creeks and outfalls far from home,
- Rising and dropping with the foam,
- From dying swans wild warblings come,
- Blown shoreward; so to Camelot
- Still as the boathead wound along
- The willowy hills and fields among,
- They heard her chanting her deathsong,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- A longdrawn carol, mournful, holy,
- She chanted loudly, chanted lowly,

- Till her eyes were darken'd wholly,
- And her smooth face sharpen'd slowly,
- Turn'd to tower'd Camelot:
- For ere she reach'd upon the tide
- The first house by the water-side,
- Singing in her song she died,
- The Lady of Shalott.
-
- Under tower and balcony,
- By garden wall and gallery,
- A pale, pale corpse she floated by,
- Deadcold, between the houses high,
- Dead into tower'd Camelot.
- Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
- To the planked wharfage came:
- Below the stern they read her name,
- *The Lady of Shalott.*
-
- They cross'd themselves, their stars they blest,
- Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest.
- There lay a parchment on her breast,
- That puzzled more than all the rest,
- The wellfed wits at Camelot.
- 'The web was woven curiously,
- The charm is broken utterly,
- Draw near and fear not,—this is I,
- The Lady of Shalott.'

- **Summary**
- Part I: The poem begins with a description of a river and a road that pass through long fields of barley and rye before reaching the town of Camelot. The people of the town travel along the road and look toward an island called Shalott, which lies further down the river. The island of Shalott contains several plants and flowers, including lilies, aspens, and willows. On the island, a woman known as the Lady of Shalott is imprisoned within a building made of "four gray walls and four gray towers."
- Both "heavy barges" and light open boats sail along the edge of the river to Camelot. But has anyone seen or heard of the lady who lives on the island in the river? Only the reapers who harvest the barley hear the echo of her singing. At night, the tired reaper listens to her singing and whispers that he hears her: " 'Tis the fairy Lady of Shalott."

- Part II: The Lady of Shalott weaves a magic, colorful web. She has heard a voice whisper that a curse will befall her if she looks down to Camelot, and she does not know what this curse would be. Thus, she concentrates solely on her weaving, never lifting her eyes.
- However, as she weaves, a mirror hangs before her. In the mirror, she sees "shadows of the world," including the highway road, which also passes through the fields, the eddies in the river, and the peasants of the town. Occasionally, she also sees a group of damsels, an abbot (church official), a young shepherd, or a page dressed in crimson. She sometimes sights a pair of knights riding by, though she has no loyal knight of her own to court her. Nonetheless, she enjoys her solitary weaving, though she expresses frustration with the world of shadows when she glimpses a funeral procession or a pair of newlyweds in the mirror.
- Part III: A knight in brass armor ("brazen greaves") comes riding through the fields of barley beside Shalott; the sun shines on his armor and makes it sparkle. As he rides, the gems on his horse's bridle glitter like a constellation of stars, and the bells on the bridle ring. The knight hangs a bugle from his sash, and his armor makes ringing noises as he gallops alongside the remote island of Shalott.
- In the "blue, unclouded weather," the jewels on the knight's saddle shine, making him look like a meteor in the purple sky. His forehead glows in the sunlight, and his black curly hair flows out from under his helmet. As he passes by the river, his image flashes into the Lady of Shalott's mirror and he sings out "tirra lirra." Upon seeing and hearing this knight, the Lady stops weaving her web and abandons her loom. The web flies out from the loom, and the mirror cracks, and the Lady announces the arrival of her doom: "The curse is come upon me."
- Part IV: As the sky breaks out in rain and storm, the Lady of Shalott descends from her tower and finds a boat. She writes the words "The Lady of Shalott" around the boat's bow and looks downstream to Camelot like a prophet foreseeing his own misfortunes. In the evening, she lies down in the boat, and the stream carries her to Camelot.
- The Lady of Shalott wears a snowy white robe and sings her last song as she sails down to Camelot. She sings until her blood freezes, her eyes darken, and she dies. When her boat sails silently into Camelot, all the knights, lords, and ladies of Camelot emerge from their halls to behold the sight. They read her name on the bow and "cross...themselves for

fear." Only the great knight Lancelot is bold enough to push aside the crowd, look closely at the dead maiden, and remark "She has a lovely face; God in his mercy lend her grace."

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- **Form**
- The poem is divided into four numbered parts with discrete, isometric (equally-long) stanzas. The first two parts contain four stanzas each, while the last two parts contain five. Each of the four parts ends at the moment when description yields to directly quoted speech: this speech first takes the form of the reaper's whispering identification, then of the Lady's half-sick lament, then of the Lady's pronouncement of her doom, and finally, of Lancelot's blessing. Each stanza contains nine lines with the rhyme scheme *AAAABCCCB*. The "B" always stands for "Camelot" in the fifth line and for "Shalott" in the ninth. The "A" and "C" lines are always in tetrameter, while the "B" lines are in trimeter. In addition, the syntax is line-bound: most phrases do not extend past the length of a single line.
- **Commentary**
- Originally written in 1832, this poem was later revised, and published in its final form in 1842. Tennyson claimed that he had based it on an old Italian romance, though the poem also bears much similarity to the story of the Maid of Astolat in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. As in Malory's account, Tennyson's lyric includes references to the Arthurian legend; moreover, "Shalott" seems quite close to Malory's "Astolat."
- Much of the poem's charm stems from its sense of mystery and elusiveness; of course, these aspects also complicate the task of analysis. That said, most scholars understand "The Lady of Shalott" to be about the conflict between art and life. The Lady, who weaves her magic web and sings her song in a remote tower, can be seen to represent the contemplative artist isolated from the bustle and activity of daily life. The moment she sets her art aside to gaze down on the real world, a curse befalls her and she meets her tragic death. The poem thus captures the conflict between an artist's desire for social involvement and his/her doubts about whether such a commitment is viable for someone dedicated to art. The poem may also express a more personal dilemma for Tennyson as a specific artist: while he felt an obligation to seek subject matter outside the world of his own mind and his own immediate experiences—to comment on politics, history, or a

more general humanity—he also feared that this expansion into broader territories might destroy his poetry's magic.

- Part I and Part IV of this poem deal with the Lady of Shalott as she appears to the outside world, whereas Part II and Part III describe the world from the Lady's perspective. In Part I, Tennyson portrays the Lady as secluded from the rest of the world by both water and the height of her tower. We are not told how she spends her time or what she thinks about; thus we, too, like everyone in the poem, are denied access to the interiority of her world. Interestingly, the only people who know that she exists are those whose occupations are most diametrically opposite her own: the reapers who toil in physical labor rather than by sitting and crafting works of beauty.
- Part II describes the Lady's experience of imprisonment from her own perspective. We learn that her alienation results from a mysterious curse: she is not allowed to look out on Camelot, so all her knowledge of the world must come from the reflections and shadows in her mirror. (It was common for weavers to use mirrors to see the progress of their tapestries from the side that would eventually be displayed to the viewer.) Tennyson notes that often she sees a funeral *or* a wedding, a disjunction that suggests the interchangeability, and hence the conflation, of love and death for the Lady: indeed, when she later falls in love with Lancelot, she will simultaneously bring upon her own death.
- Whereas Part II makes reference to all the different types of people that the Lady sees through her mirror, including the knights who "come riding two and two" (line 61), Part III focuses on one particular knight who captures the Lady's attention: Sir Lancelot. This dazzling knight is the hero of the King Arthur stories, famous for his illicit affair with the beautiful Queen Guinevere. He is described in an array of colors: he is a "red-cross knight"; his shield "sparkled on the yellow field"; he wears a "silver bugle"; he passes through "blue unclouded weather" and the "purple night," and he has "coal-black curls." He is also adorned in a "gemmy bridle" and other bejeweled garments, which sparkle in the light. Yet in spite of the rich visual details that Tennyson provides, it is the sound and not the sight of Lancelot that causes the Lady of Shalott to transgress her set boundaries: only when she hears him sing "Tirra lirra" does she leave her web and seal her doom. The intensification of the Lady's experiences in this part of the poem is marked by the shift

from the static, descriptive present tense of Parts I and II to the dynamic, active past of Parts III and IV.

- In Part IV, all the lush color of the previous section gives way to "pale yellow" and "darkened" eyes, and the brilliance of the sunlight is replaced by a "low sky raining." The moment the Lady sets her art aside to look upon Lancelot, she is seized with death. The end of her artistic isolation thus leads to the end of creativity: "Out flew her web and floated wide" (line 114). She also loses her mirror, which had been her only access to the outside world: "The mirror cracked from side to side" (line 115). Her turn to the outside world thus leaves her bereft both of her art object and of the instrument of her craft—and of her very life. Yet perhaps the greatest curse of all is that although she surrenders herself to the sight of Lancelot, she dies completely unappreciated by him. The poem ends with the tragic triviality of Lancelot's response to her tremendous passion: all he has to say about her is that "she has a lovely face" (line 169). Having abandoned her artistry, the Lady of Shalott becomes herself an art object; no longer can she offer her creativity, but merely a "dead-pale" beauty (line 157).

2) My Last Duchess

- **Robert Browning**

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint

Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Summary

"My Last Duchess" is narrated by the duke of Ferrara to an envoy (representative) of another nobleman, whose daughter the duke is soon to marry. These details are revealed throughout the

poem, but understanding them from the opening helps to illustrate the irony that Browning employs.

At the poem's opening, the duke has just pulled back a curtain to reveal to the envoy a portrait of his previous duchess. The portrait was painted by Fra Pandolf, a monk and painter whom the duke believes captured the singularity of the duchess's glance. However, the duke insists to the envoy that his former wife's deep, passionate glance was not reserved solely for her husband. As he puts it, she was "too easily impressed" into sharing her affable nature.

His tone grows harsh as he recollects how both human and nature could impress her, which insulted him since she did not give special favor to the "gift" of his "nine-hundred-years-old" family name and lineage. Refusing to deign to "lesson" her on her unacceptable love of everything, he instead "gave commands" to have her killed.

The duke then ends his story and asks the envoy to rise and accompany him back to the count, the father of the duke's impending bride and the envoy's employer. He mentions that he expects a high dowry, though he is happy enough with the daughter herself. He insists that the envoy walk with him "together" – a lapse of the usual social expectation, where the higher ranked person would walk separately – and on their descent he points out a bronze bust of the god Neptune in his collection.

Analysis

"My Last Duchess," published in 1842, is arguably Browning's most famous dramatic monologue, with good reason. It engages the reader on a number of levels – historical, psychological, ironic, theatrical, and more.

The most engaging element of the poem is probably the speaker himself, the duke. Objectively, it's easy to identify him as a monster, since he had his wife murdered for what comes across as fairly innocuous crimes. And yet he is impressively charming, both in his use of language and his affable address. The ironic disconnect that colors most of Browning's monologues is particularly strong here. A remarkably amoral man nevertheless has a lovely sense of beauty and of how to engage his listener.

In fact, the duke's excessive demand for control ultimately comes across as his most defining characteristic. The obvious manifestation of this is the murder of his wife. Her crime is barely presented as sexual; even though he does admit that other men could draw her "blush," he also mentions several natural phenomena that inspired her favor. And yet he was driven to murder by her refusal to save her happy glances solely for him. This demand for control is also reflected in his relationship with the envoy. The entire poem has a precisely controlled theatrical flair, from the unveiling of the curtain that is implied to precede the opening, to the way he slowly reveals the details of his tale, to his assuming of the envoy's interest in the tale ("strangers like you….would ask me, if they durst, How such a glance came there"), to his final shift in subject back to the issue of the impending marriage. He pretends to denigrate his speaking ability – "even had you skill in speech – (which I have not)," later revealing that he believes the opposite to be true, even at one point explicitly acknowledging how controlled his story is when he admits he "said 'Fra Pandolf' by design" to peak the envoy's interest. The envoy is his audience much as we are Browning's, and the duke exerts a similar control over his story that Browning uses in crafting the ironic disconnect.

In terms of meter, Browning represents the duke's incessant control of story by using a regular meter but also enjambment (where the phrases do not end at the close of a line). The enjambment works against the otherwise orderly meter to remind us that the duke will control his world, including the rhyme scheme of his monologue.

To some extent, the duke's amorality can be understood in terms of aristocracy. The poem was originally published with a companion poem under the title "Italy and France," and both attempted to explore the ironies of aristocratic honor. In this poem, loosely inspired by real events set in Renaissance Italy, the duke reveals himself not only as a model of culture but also as a monster of morality. His inability to see his moral ugliness could be attributed to having been ruined by worship of a "nine-hundred-years-old name." He is so entitled that when his wife upset him by too loosely bestowing her favor to others, he refused to speak to her about it. Such a move is out of the question – "who'd stoop to blame this kind of trifling?" He will not "stoop" to such ordinary domestic tasks as compromise or discussion. Instead, when she transgresses his sense of entitlement, he gives commands and she is dead.

Another element of the aristocratic life that Browning approaches in the poem is that of repetition. The duke's life seems to be made of repeated gestures. The most obvious is his marriage – the use of the word "last" in the title implies that there are several others, perhaps with curtain-covered paintings along the same hallway where this one stands. In the same way that the age of his name gives it credence, so does he seem fit with a life of repeated gestures, one of which he is ready to make again with the count's daughter.

And indeed, the question of money is revealed at the end in a way that colors the entire poem. The duke almost employs his own sense of irony when he brings up a "dowry" to the envoy. This final stanza suggests that his story of murder is meant to give proactive warning to the woman he is soon to marry, but to give it through a backdoor channel, through the envoy who would pass it along to the count who might then pass it to the girl. After all, the duke has no interest in talking to her himself, as we have learned! His irony goes even further when he reminds the envoy that he truly wants only the woman herself, even as he is clearly stressing the importance of a large dowry tinged with a threat of his vindictive side.

But the lens of aristocracy undercuts the wonderful psychological nature of the poem, which is overall more concerned with human contradictions than with social or economic criticism. The first contradiction to consider is how charming the duke actually is. It would be tempting to suggest Browning wants to paint him as a weasel, but knowing the poet's love of language, it's clear that he wants us to admire a character who can manipulate language so masterfully. Further, the duke shows an interesting complication in his attitudes on class when he suggests to the envoy that they "go Together down," an action not expected in such a hierarchical society. By no means can we justify the idea that the duke is willing to transcend class, but at the same time he does allow a transgression of the very hierarchy that had previously led him to have his wife murdered rather than discuss his problems with her.

Also at play psychologically is the human ability to rationalize our hang-ups. The duke seems controlled by certain forces: his own aristocratic bearing; his relationship to women; and lastly, this particular duchess who confounded him. One can argue that the duke, who was in love with his "last duchess," is himself controlled by his social expectations, and that his inability to bear perceived insult to his aristocratic name makes him a victim of the same social forces that he

represents. Likewise, what he expects of his wives, particularly of this woman whose portrait continues to provide him with fodder for performance, suggests a deeper psychology than one meant solely for criticism.

The last thing to point out in the duke's language is his use of euphemism. The way he explains that he had the duchess killed – "I gave commands; Then all smiles stopped together" – shows a facility for avoiding the truth through choice of language. What this could suggest is that the duchess was in fact guilty of greater transgression than he claims, that instead of flirtation, she might have physically or sexually betrayed him. There's certainly no explicit evidence of this, but at the same time, it's plausible that a man as arrogant as the duke, especially one so equipped with the power of euphemism, would avoid spelling out his disgrace to a lowly envoy and instead would speak around the issue.

Finally, one can also understand this poem as a commentary on art. The duke remains enamored with the woman he has had killed, though his affection now rests on a representation of her. In other words, he has chosen to love the ideal image of her rather than the reality, similar to how the narrator of "Porphyria's Lover" chose a static, dead love than one destined to change in the throes of life. In many ways, this is the artist's dilemma, which Browning explores in all of his work. As poet, he attempts to capture contradiction and movement, psychological complexity that cannot be pinned down into one object, and yet in the end all he can create is a collection of static lines. The duke attempts to be an artist in his life, turning a walk down the hallway into a performance, but he is always hampered by the fact that the ideal that inspires his performance cannot change.

3) Love Came Down at Christmas

- Christina Rossetti

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:

But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
Love shall be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and to all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.

Summary:

In "Love Came Down at Christmas," Christina Rossetti praises the divine love that, according to the New Testament, humans could only access after the birth of Jesus Christ. With the line, "Love was born at Christmas," Rossetti equates Jesus Christ with Love. She states that this love should be the key to human existence, and people should consider divine love as the essential quality of being.

Analysis:

"Love came down at Christmas" is made up of three stanzas with four lines each. The first two stanzas follow an ABCB pattern and the final stanza follows a DBDB pattern. The lyrics are simple and sincere, which lends heartfelt feeling to the poem. Composers have since set the words to music, transforming Rossetti's piece into a popular Christmas carol.

The theme of the poem is evident through Rossetti's repeated use of the word "love." She starts eight lines with "love." Her use of anaphora emphasizes the idea that Christ was born as a human so that he could share his divine love with mankind.

Rossetti invokes the narrative surrounding Christ's birth without using specific details. For this reason, the poem might feel cryptic to readers who are unfamiliar with the Bible. "Love came down at Christmas" refers to Jesus Christ's birth unto the Virgin Mary. Shepherds who were tending their flocks and three wise kings in a distant land saw David's star in the sky and took it as a divine sign. The shepherds came immediately to witness the incarnation of Christ as man in the form of the baby Jesus. Rossetti describes Christ's love as "love incarnate, love divine."

In the last stanza of the poem, Rossetti calls for love and fellowship amongst her Christian brothers and sisters. She believed that Christ's love was the essential facet of her religion.

4) No Second Troy

- **William Butler Yeats**

About William Butler Yeats

Though William Butler Yeats's real interest was in poetry, he also penned play after play with incoherent and fanatic plots, for example; The Islands of Statues, The Seeker, Mosado, etc. But later being sick of this craze of playwriting, he began to explore theosophy, Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Rosicracianism. He also took interest in India Philosophy and religious thought, and so penned down a few poems with an Indian setting. Some of the major contributions made by Yeats in the world of poetry include: Seven Woods, The Withering Boughs, The Crazed Moon, Cool Park, The Winding Stair and many others.

Summary:

The twelve-line poem, *No Second Troy,* is addressed to Maud Gonne, who, to Yeats's great distress, married John MacBride in 1903. Yeats was shattered by Maud's sudden marriage to John MacBride in the February of 1903. Maud Gonne was the Irish revolutionary whom Yeats loved but who rejected his proposals of marriage. The poem was written after the final rejection of Yeats's love offer and sudden marriage to John MacBride, who, ironically was later made the martyr of *Irish Freedom Movement* by the efforts of Yeats himself. Although this marriage of Maud and MacBride resulted in a separation, two years later, it left Yeats in great distress.

No Second Troy **Analysis**

Why should I blame her that she filled my days

With misery, or that she would of late

Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,

Or hurled the little streets upon the great,

Had they but courage equal to desire?

The above lines quoted in the question are the opening lines in *No Second Troy*. Published in 1921 in the collection titled The Green Helmet and Other Poems, W.B. Yeats's this twelve-line poem is the most celebrated poem having a combination of personal and political concerns. The poem begins on a personal plane with a rhetoric question saying that Yeats ('I' of the poem) should not blame her (Maud Gonne) for filling his life with misery. From here it goes to refer to and comment on the political concerns of Maud Gonne, an Irish revolutionary loved by Yeats.

The poem opens with a rhetorical question, the answer to which is implied in the question itself. The poet is unhappy that Maud Gonne has not responded to his love, but he argues that he should not blame her for filling his days with misery. He should not also blame her for teaching innocent Irish people the revolutionary methods to get freedom for the country of Ireland. The poet is scornful of the petty violence of those who would 'hurl the little streets upon the great', i.e., instigate the innocent people of Ireland to perpetrate violence against the British rulers, which is futile. The poet blames the revolutionary lady for hurting his love cruelly but waves that blame and is prepared to forget and forgive her. However, he fails to understand her political attitude and the revolutionary violence that the lady preached to her countrymen (Irish people) for winning the freedom of her country against the British tyranny.

This first section does not contain a great deal of imagery and instead focuses on fully explaining the initial question. However the descriptions in the latter part of the poem are far more vivid and draw on metaphors in order to create powerful imagery.

What could have made her peaceful with a mind

That nobleness made simple as a fire,

With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind

That is not natural in an age like this,

Being high and solitary and most stern?

Why, what could she have done, being what she is?

Was there another Troy for her to burn?

In the above five concluding lines, the beautiful revolutionary lady Maud Gonne is seen in terms of destruction. Her beauty is said to be like a tightened bow. Her mind is made simple as a fire of

nobleness. Simplicity is not a quality that we associate with fire. Here Yeats seems to suggest how uncompromising intensity and dedicated single-mindedness are capable of being both noble and, in terms of a practical world, naïve (foolish). The tightened bow further suggests an inherent tension in heroic beauty that necessarily results in destructiveness.

But heroic beauty cannot avoid its terrible consequence. It must not be blamed because it cannot help itself. It is not until the last line that images lock securely in their pattern. The organizing thrust is cleverly withheld. The marching suspense of the single-syllable words in the last but one (eleventh) line, with 'why', 'what' and 'what' repeating the accumulated questions, is a brilliant piece of dramatic manoeuvring. Then the Helen image strikes into the poem (in the last line). It raises the question which the whole structure of the poem has answered. It puts everything in its pre-destined order. It is the demonstration, and an important one, of a technique that he brings to its perfection in "The Second Coming."

The purpose of civilization is not to provide bonfires for eternal or heroic beauty. Ireland has not failed because it has not been burnt like Troy. The complete pattern of images as well as the rhetorical control in the poem are clearly demonstrated only when we read the last line. The poet clearly demonstrates the destructive aspect of beauty not only in personal terms, but also in national as well as mythological terms.

Personal Comments

Published in 1992 in the collection titled The Green Helment and Other Poems, the twelve-line poem, *No Second Troy*, is the most celebrated, and combines personal passion with political passion. The poem happens to be one of the several poems written by Yeats about his beloved Maud Gonne. This short lyric is half criticism and half tribute to that Irish Revolutionary lady, who worked devotedly to the cause of Irish freedom struggle with her husband MacBride.
The poet also loved her and worked with her. The poem opens on a sad note that Maud Gonne rejected the poet's love proposal and filled him with misery but then takes a turn to question her revolutionary and violent methods which she preached to the people of Ireland to free their country from British subjugation. The title of the poem, *No Second Troy*, reminds the readers of the "Helen Of Troy" which was destroyed and burnt down at the end of a ten-year war. It points

at the contrast of the Homeric times when there was beautiful city of Troy and the times of “an age like this” when there is no second Troy to be destroyed and burnt down.

5) The Hollow Men

- **T. S. Eliot**

A penny for the Old Guy

I
We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

II
Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
These do not appear:
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn

Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves
In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer—

Not that final meeting
In the twilight kingdom

III
This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this
In death's other kingdom
Waking alone
At the hour when we are
Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone.

IV
The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places
We grope together
And avoid speech

Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men.

V
Here we go round the prickly pear
Prickly pear prickly pear
Here we go round the prickly pear
At five o'clock in the morning.

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow
Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is

Life is
For Thine is the

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

Summary:

“The Hollow Men” is a poem by the American modernist poet T.S. Eliot, first published in 1925. Uncanny and dream-like, “The Hollow Men” describes a desolate world, populated by empty, defeated people. Though the speaker describes these people as “dead” and the world they inhabit as the underworld (“death’s twilight kingdom”), the poem shouldn’t be read simply as a description of life after death. It's also a reflection on the sorry state of European culture after the First World War. For the speaker of the poem, the horrors of the war have plunged Europe into deep despair—so deep that European culture itself is fading away into nothingness.

- 1.

The speaker declares that he is part of a group of empty people. These people are stuffed, perhaps like scarecrows, and lean against each other with their heads full of straw. "Oh well," the speaker says. Their voices are so dried-out that they can barely be heard when they whisper to each other, and what they say is as meaningless as the rustling of wind in dead grass, or the skittering of rats over shattered glass in a dry cellar.

These men are bodies without definition, shadows without color, frozen strength, action without movement.

Those who’ve crossed over to the other kingdom of the dead, looking straight ahead the whole time, don't remember these hollow men as lost, angry spirits (if they remember them at all), but rather as empty people, as people stuffed, metaphorically, with straw.

2.

The speaker sees eyes in his dreams but refuses to look back at them. In death's dream kingdom (perhaps a reference to Heaven), these eyes don’t appear. There (likely in the

speaker's dream, though what "there" refers to is deliberately ambiguous), the eyes the speaker sees are like sunshine on a broken column. There, a tree is waving in the breeze and you can hear voices singing in the wind. Those voices are farther away and more somber than a dying star.

The speaker doesn't want to get any closer (perhaps to those eyes) in death's dream kingdom. He also wants to wear elaborate disguises to conceal himself: the skin of a rat or a crow, sticks crossed in a field, twisting and turning like the wind. The speaker doesn't don't want to be any closer—not even when having that final meeting in the shadowy world of death.

3.

This is the dead country, the speaker says, a land filled with cactus. Here, stone statues are erected and the dead bow down before them, under the light of a dying star.

Is it like this in the other places where death is king, the speaker wonders (likely referencing to Heaven and/or Hell)? When the hollow men are walking alone and filled with love, instead of kissing someone they say prayers to the broken stone statues.

4.

The eyes aren't here: there aren't any eyes here, in this place where the stars die, in this empty valley, this broken jawbone, which once belonged to the body of a magnificent kingdom.

This is the final meeting place. The hollow men walk blindly, silently, together; they gather on the shore of a swollen river.

The hollow men are blind, unless their eyesight suddenly returns—like an undying star, like a rose with many leaves, a rose that belongs to death's shadowy kingdom. That rose is the only hope for empty people like the hollow men.

5.

The hollow men are dancing around the cactus—a word the speaker repeats three times. Here they are dancing around the cactus at 5 a.m., the speaker says again.

The speaker says that between an idea and its actual existence, between the desire and the fulfillment of that desire, there is a shadow. Because the kingdom belongs to You, the speaker—or, more likely, some new, unnamed entity—says, quoting the Bible.

Between having an idea and making it real, between having a feeling and acting on it, there is a shadow. Life is very long, says the speaker or that same unnamed entity.

Between desire and orgasm, between the power to create something and the thing that gets created, between the ideal and the disappointing reality, there is a shadow. Because the kingdom belongs to you, says a voice that may or may not be the speaker's once again.

The speaker begins to repeats that phrase but stumbles: "Because yours is Life is
Because yours is the..." and then the speaker trails off.

This is how the world ends, the speaker says three times in a row. Not with a loud burst but with a quiet whimper.

6) Tonight I Can Write

- **Pablo Neruda**

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense without her.
And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

What does it matter that my love could not keep her.
The night is shattered and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight searches for her as though to go to her.
My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

Another's. She will be another's. Like my kisses before.
Her voide. Her bright body. Her inifinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my arms
my sould is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer
and these the last verses that I write for her.

About Pablo Neruda: Pablo Neruda is the pen name of Ricardo Eliécer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto, a Chilean diplomat and poet. He was born in the year 1904 in Parral, Chile. He first composed his poems in 1914. In 1917, he published his first work in a local newspaper. He moved to Santiago in 1921, from where he published his first volume of verse in the year 1923. Later after returning to Chile, he was offered a diplomatic post and the events in this post changed him as a man and poet. He was involved in many political activities, and he even found himself in exile in later stages of his life. He was the winner of many notable awards including International Peace Prize and Nobel Prize in Literature.

About Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines: One of the notable works of Pablo Neruda is the '*Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada'* (Twenty Love Poems and A Desperate Song). This volume of verse contains the poem in question, 'Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines'. It was published in the year 1924. It is the recipient of much critical acclaim but also of much censorship primarily due to its eroticism which shocked the then general public, especially considering the author's young age. Now it remains the best selling Spanish poetry book, even after its 100 years of publication.

Setting of the poem: The poem takes place under the great, endless sky dotted with numerous stars. The speaker who recently lost the love of his life is bitterly regretting the separation and the night sky he now sat under only reminded him of the moments he spent with her.

Poetic Devices

Metaphor: 'The night is shattered' and 'The blue stars shiver in the distance'; these are metaphors for the current state of the speaker's love life. His love is now shattered like the night and where there was once warmth, now existed coldness, coldness between the lovers, cold enough to make him shiver.

Irony: The speaker says in the beginning that he loved her and sometimes she loved him back. It induces a theory that the love that was now lost was first lost from the side of the girl. But then the speaker says she loved him and he loved her back sometimes. So now we're unclear as to who was primarily responsible for the love lost.

Imagery: The night is shown to us in many ways throughout the poem. In the second paragraph, 'the night is shattered' and 'blue stars shiver' make us see the night as the speaker sees it; shattered and cold. Imageries continue in the following paragraphs with 'endless skies', 'dew to the pasture' and 'night whitening the trees'. The imagery makes us feel the sadness of the speaker acutely.

Repetition: Many lines in this poem are repeated. The title of the poem itself is repeated three times throughout the poem. Then the lines like 'I loved her' and 'loved me sometimes' are also seen to be repeated. These repetitions put an emphasis on the feelings of the speaker and portray the state of their love while it lasted. It puts an emphasis on the melancholy and sadness the speaker is feeling.

Free Verse: The poem is without rhyme or rhythm. It is a free verse written in a simple and concise language, understood by all.

Personification: There is a bit of personification when the speaker says the 'blue stars shiver'.

Summary of Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines by Pablo Neruda

The speaker of the poem says that that night he could write the saddest lines. He loved a girl and the girl loved him back too, but only at some times. That night was like the nights in which he held her and kissed her. He loved her great still eyes. But now he does not have her, he lost her. He knew the nights were immense but without her they seemed more immense than ever. The verse of his poems fell to his soul like dew to the pasture. His love could not hold her back. He could hear someone singing somewhere but no song could satisfy him now. His eyes and heart seek her but she is nowhere to be seen. The nights they lived through remained the same though but they themselves changed. He says he no longer loved her but he used to love her and how; he tried to find the wind just to hear her voice. And soon she will be another's. He no longer loves but thinking again, maybe he still does. Their love existed for a short time but the forgetting part is taking so long. Because nights like that night reminded him of all the time he spent with her. He ends the poem by saying that these will be the last verse her writes for her and he will no longer be subjected to suffering due to her.

Analysis of Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines by Pablo Neruda

The speaker of the poem recently lost the love of his life. We can tell though that some time passed since the separation from the first sentence. He says 'tonight I can write' implying that till that day he couldn't. Maybe the emotions and pain he felt were still too raw to put it down to words. In that case this line implies that he is slowly healing from the separation.

Poets generally describe a broken heart using metaphors and imagery. Pablo Neruda's style is simple and concise. But the speaker says he can write flowery language too in the second paragraph. That is how heart-broken he is.

The speaker says that he loved her and she sometimes loved him back too. This puts us in a state of thinking that the one who was primarily responsible for the separation was the woman. The night he was sitting under was like the nights he used to hold her and kissed her. He describes the sky as endless. Maybe he felt his love would be like the sky too but sadly, it had ended. He says 'kissed her again and again'. This type of eroticism was shocking to the general public at the time, especially when the poet was only 18 years old. Sentences like this earned the poem collection censorship.

The speaker continues by putting emphasis on his loss and sadness. He uses repetition and some imagery to pull at the heart string of the reader. One feels sympathy for the speaker as he repeats again that she loved him sometimes. The night which was described as endless before felt much more so after the separation. And this makes him feel verse of poetry flow as naturally into his soul as dew falls onto the pasture. This makes the reader feel that it was indeed true that the most beautiful poetry flows from a broken heart.

'The same night whitening the same trees'. He repeats 'same' twice to show that while they both changed the world remained the same. Now he says that he no longer loved her as he used to.

He thinks that soon she will be another's. 'Like my kisses before.' This line can have either of the two following meanings. The speaker of the poem is now together with another girl and he kissed her recently. In this case, he says that like how his kisses belonged to another now, hers will be too. Or he simply says that she will be kissed by another man like how he used to kiss her. The meaning is closer to the latter one when the whole poem is considered.

The speaker now contradicts himself saying that he no longer loves her for sure and then immediately saying that maybe he loves her. This shows the conflict within in the speaker. He loved her so deep that he finds it hard not to. This conflict is spoken of throughout the poem, albeit in allusions.

He says love is so short but forgetting is so long. This is one of the best remembered quotes from the poem. And the nights aren't helping his forgetting process. Nights like the one that day particularly remind him of the time when he held her. And when these thoughts crossed his mind, his soul becomes dissatisfied with the fact that he lost her. The conflict is shown deeply in these two lines.

The speaker ends the poem saying that this, that particular night would be the last night he suffers pain because of her and this poem will be the last one he will write for her. This shows that the speaker has now finally resolved to completely move on.

Central Idea of Tonight I Can Write the Saddest Lines

The idea of the poem is to show the speaker of the poem's sadness and regret on losing the woman he loved. And he succeeds in doing so by using concise language.

Tone of the poem: The tone of the poem is sad, melancholic, love-struck, and bitter.

Conclusion: Pablo Neruda shows us the pain and suffering a lover experiences when he separates from his other half. The simple language makes the general populace empathize more with the speaker of the poem. This poem is the penultimate one of the collection, the collection wherein he shows a full cycle of a love life.

7) The Professor

- **Nissim Ezekiiel**

Remember me? I am Professor Sheth.
Once I taught you geography. Now
I am retired, though my health is good.
My wife died some years back.
By God's grace, all my children
Are well settled in life.
One is Sales Manager,
One is Bank Manager,
Both have cars.
Other also doing well, though not so well.
Every family must have black sheep.
Sarala and Tarala are married,
Their husbands are very nice boys.
You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.
How many issues you have? Three?
That is good. These are days of family planning.
I am not against. We have to change with times.
Whole world is changing. In India also
We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
Old values are going, new values are coming.
Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.
I am going out rarely, now and then
Only, this is price of old age
But my health is O.K. Usual aches and pains.

No diabetes, no blood pressure, no heart attack.
This is because of sound habits in youth.
How is your health keeping?
Nicely? I am happy for that.
This year I am sixty-nine
and hope to score a century.
You were so thin, like stick,
Now you are man of weight and consequence.
That is good joke.
If you are coming again this side by chance,
Visit please my humble residence also.
I am living just on opposite house's backside.

Summary:

- The poem "The Professor" by Nissim Ezekiel is essentially a satire on Indian English. The poem is presented in the form of a dialogue between the professor and his student. Since the listener is silent throughout it can be aptly termed as a monologue. Just as in "Goodbye Party for Miss.Pushpa T.S," the poet mocks at Indianisms in English, and adaptation of the language to adopt to the native language structure. It caricatures the geography professor,Mr.Sheth, as he converses in English with one of his former students. A professor is the one who teaches, and should be in proper command of the medium he utilizes. Therefore, it is indeed ironical.
- Far from pertaining to any academic subject, the Professor showcases his family achievements. He is indeed boastful as he poses his sons as social showpieces to be displayed, as he asserts:
- Are well settled in life. One is Sales Manager, One is Bank Manager, Both have cars He states that though he is healthy, he is retired. Therefore he projects retirement (generally) not as personal choice but something born of compulsion. He shows himself to be an exception. The poet also mocks the Indian tradition that makes use of rhyming names for their kids. 'Sarala and Tarala,' he says as are married. He puts this forth with an air of satisfaction. In Indian society, the end-point for girls is (considered) to get married. Boys, on the other hand, are meant to have (or rather project) high-paying jobs. Thus both the sexes are victims of society. The poet yet again jibes at Indian English when he says:
    - You won't believe but I have eleven grandchildren.

- How many issues you have? Three?
-
- He makes a string of mistakes in grammar and usage as he states:
-
- Other also doing well, though not so well.
- Every family must have black sheep.
-
- Though he advocates family planning, he does not seem to adopt it. Indians are so obsessed with the use of the present continuous tense instead of simple present tense:
-

- We are keeping up. Our progress is progressing.
- Old values are going, new values are coming.
- Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.
- I am going out rarely, now and then.

-
- His language appears to be quite hilarious. It appears to be a direct translation of the native language, with the same structure and tone. At the same time the poem is stuffed with clichés and insipidity. The tone is serious, though subject is trivial as with the mock-heroic style. Indian English does have its stock usages as the speaker earlier asks: "No issues?" Their conversation does not even verge on academic topics. Though the poet utilizes a number of figures of speech, the language is ineffectual, ungrammatical and unidiomatic. The professor that he professes to be neither proves to be a good one academically nor a morally supportive one, as he is an incorrigible egocentric obsessed with his own matters. The tendency of Indians to exaggerate (or use hyperbole) idiomatically for emphasis is apparent in :

- -Now you are man of weight and consequence.
- -Everything is happening with leaps and bounds.
- -Our progress is progressing.
- -This year I am sixty-nine."
- -You were so thin, like stick.

-
- He resorts to the Indian mania of comparing people to objects:
-

- You were so thin, like stick,
- Now you are man of weight and consequence.
- That is good joke.

-

- And ofcourse, it is a good joke. Indians resort to vulgarisms unknowingly in their endeavor to sound sophisticated:
-

- If you are coming again this side by chance,
- Visit please my humble residence also.
- I am living just on opposite house's backside.

8) A Hot Noon in Malabar

- **Kamala Das**

- This is a noon for beggars with whining
- Voices, a noon for men who come from hills
- With parrots in a cage and fortune-cards,
- All stained with time, for brown *Kurava* girls
- With old eyes, who read palm in light singsong
- Voices, for bangle-sellers who spread
- On the cool black floor those red and green and blue
- Bangles, all covered with the dust of roads,
- Miles, grow cracks on the heels, so that when they
- Clambered up our porch, the noise was grating,
- Strange…… This is a noon for strangers who part
- The window-drapes and peer in, their hot eyes
- Brimming with the sun, not seeing a thing in
- Shadowy rooms and turn away and look
- So yearningly at the brick-ledged well. This
- Is a noon for strangers with mistrust in
- Their eyes, dark, silent ones who rarely speak
- At all, so that when they speak, their voices
- Run wild, like jungle-voices. Yes, this is
- A noon for wild men, wild thoughts, wild love. To
- Be here, far away, is torture. Wild feet
- Stirring up the dust, this hot noon, at my
- Home in Malabar, and I so far away ……..

The poem, *A Hot Noon in Malabar,* is taken from the collection of poems titled 'Summer in Calcutta" (1965). It deals with Kamala Das's happy childhood spent in her grandmother's house in Malabar. It is full of pathos which shows Kamala Das's loss of happy and peaceful days of childhood which she spent in the loving and caring company of her grandmother. The action of

the poem tosses between memory and desire, between nostalgia and estrangement. The poetess longs for the hot noon in Malabar which was full of life as compared to her torturing experience of noon in a big city where she settled after her marriage.

A Hot Noon in Malabar Analysis

This is a noon for beggars with whining

(…)

All stained with time,

This is the opening section of the poem *A Hot Noon in Malabar*, which can be read in full here, written by the renowned Indian English poetess Kamala Das.

It dramatizes the tragedy of her marital life in which she has lost all her freedom and identity. It is almost a torture for her to live far away from her parental house in Malabar where she was loved and respected.

The poetess is reminded of her parental house in Malabar during the hot noon of the summer season. It was the time of the arrival of beggars who begged by raising their jarring disturbing voices. People used to come from hills with caged parrots and with stained dirty cards to predict the fortunes of the local inhabitants.

The poetess is in a state of nostalgia which brings her face to face with her ancestral house at Malabar. She has imaginatively recreated the live picture of the hot noon in Malabar filled with life and multiple activities.

for brown Kurava girls

(…)

Clambered up our porch, the noise was grating,

This part of the poem is the extension of the lively picture of the preceding section which deals with the arrival of the poor beggars in Malabar at noon to be beg for their survival. It shows how the fortune –tellers were busy predicting the future of their customers by reading fortune cards.

The brown-coloured Kurava girls used to visit the Malabar. The girls, with their experienced eyes, predicated the future of their customers by minutely studying the palms of their hands. They foretold the future in their carefree nasalized way. The bangle-sellers spread on the ground

dust-ridden bangles of different colours to sell them to the people of Malabar. They used to come to Malabar after travelling long distances. Their heels developed cracks due to long journey on foot. As they ascended the porch of the poetess's parental house, their cracked heels produced harsh, jarring sounds which seemed to them to be very strange

The poetess is all lost recollecting the life of a hot noon in Malabar which she enjoyed during her early stay in it. She was all fascinated by this colourful sight and was totally identified with it. Unlike her present unpleasant and boring city life, her past life in Malabar was very enjoyable and exciting. Her separation from her parental house has totally destabilized her life. She has lost all her happiness and peace of mind in the soul-killing city-life. The ellipse (dots) here shows the poetess's longing for her past stay in Malabar which was very familiar and pleasant.

This is a noon for strangers who part

(…)

So yearningly at the brick-ledged well.

The poem, *At Hot Noon In Malabar*, had its own fascination. It was the time when *Kurava* girls visited Malabar to predict the future of their clients by reading the palms of their hands and fortune cards. The bangle-sellers displayed their multi-coloured dust-ridden bangles on the ground to attract the attention of the buyers.

During the progress of the summer noon, the strangers used to pass by the poet's parental house. The poetess visualizes the strangers from the outside world parting the window curtains and peering through the window of her room, with their hot and burning eyes, and searching for shelter from the scorching heat of the sun. Failing to locate any occupant, they looked anxiously towards the brick-ledged well to quench their thirst and relax their and protect themselves from the intense heat of the sun.

The poetess is in a mood of reminiscence. It shows her total identification with the description of the noon in Malabar. Kamala Das's descriptive power is shown at its best in this part of the poem. She has given us the very feel of the place which was filled with life and rural activities. She has imaginatively revisited the scene in which she had actually participated in the past.

This

Is a noon for strangers with mistrust in

(…)

Home in Malabar, and I so far away ……

The poetess recaptures the scene of the noon in Malabar which she had witnessed during her earlier stay in her ancestral house. It was the time of the arrival of fortune-tellers and bangle-sellers that spared no efforts to attract their customers. Fed up with the scorching heat of the sun, they could be seen heading towards wells to quench their thirst.

It was a noon for the strangers-fortune-tellers and bangle-sellers who had come to Malabar to earn their livings. An expression of distrust could be seen vividly reflected from their eyes. They were dark and speechless. They were apprehensive of whatever they observed. They spoke little but when they did speak, their voices sound unfamiliar and wild, like the jungle sounds. Undoubtedly, it was a noon exclusively meant for wild-men , wild though and wild love.

The poetess is regretful of having missed that sight after being shifted to the remote city from Malabar. It is a torture for her to live in the intense heat of the sun in the strange city where she presently stays. It reminds her of the hot noon in Malabar where she stayed in her parental house, where she was happy, satisfied and never protested against the scorching heat of the sun. The life in Malabar was quite different, though the people moved about in the hot noon there as elsewhere.

The poetess's migration from Malabar to the city proved to be traumatic experience of her life. She suffered from an acute sense of alienation and all her life was destabilized. She loved the life of Malabar with all its limitation. She feels suffocated and alienated in the city, but always felt happy and contented in her parental rural house in Malabar. The poetess has given us a striking comparative picture of the rural and urban life in the concluding section of the poem.

Critical Note

The poem, *A Hot Noon in Malabar*, shows Kamala Das's deep-rooted involvement in the past. It is a personal poem in which Das's love for her parental house in Malabar is movingly described. Kamala presents a comparative picture of her life at ancestral home in Malabar and her life in cities. The poetess glorifies the rural life but condemns the urban life in this poem. She finds herself totally alienated in the city, but is always firmly rooted in the rural life of Malabar. This poem is a powerful articulation of Kamala Dass's feminine sensibility.

The poet has given us the exact feel of the Indian locale in this poem. The poem is rich in creating the typical colour of life in Kerala. No attempt has been made for the romantic glorification of life in Malabar. The beggars have "whining voices", fortune cards are "stained with time", *kurava* girls have "old eyes", bangles are "covered with dust of the road", feet are "cracked" causing "grating and strange" noise and strangers have "mistrust" in their eyes". It shows that Kamala Das affirms life with all its limitation.

9) A River

- **A.K. Ramanujan**

In Madurai,
city of temples and poets,
who sang of cities and temples,
every summer
a river dries to a trickle
in the sand,
baring the sand ribs,
straw and women's hair
clogging the watergates
at the rusty bars
under the bridges with patches
of repair all over them
the wet stones glistening like sleepy
crocodiles, the dry ones
shaven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun
The poets only sang of the floods.

He was there for a day
when they had the floods.
People everywhere talked
of the inches rising,
of the precise number of cobbled steps
run over by the water, rising
on the bathing places,
and the way it carried off three village houses,
one pregnant woman
and a couple of cows

named Gopi and Brinda as usual.

The new poets still quoted
the old poets, but no one spoke
in verse
of the pregnant woman
drowned, with perhaps twins in her,
kicking at blank walls
even before birth.

He said:
the river has water enough
to be poetic
about only once a year
and then
it carries away
in the first half-hour
three village houses,
a couple of cows
named Gopi and Brinda
and one pregnant woman
expecting identical twins
with no moles on their bodies,
with different coloured diapers
to tell them apart.

Critical Appreciation

The poem "A River" is written by A.K. Ramanujan. In this poem, the poet has compared and contrasted the attitudes of the old poets and those of the new poets to human suffering. He has come to the conclusion that both the groups of the poets are indifferent to human sorrow and suffering. Their poetry dose not reflects the miseries of the human beings. He has proved this point in the present poem.

The river Vaikai on whose bank the historic city of Madurai stands has been mentioned in the poems of many poets, both past and present. The river is intimately associated with the life and culture of the Tamil people. The peculiar thing, which appeals to the poets, is that the river presents two different spectacles in two different season. It is completely dry in summer and flooded in full in the rainy season.

In this poem, the poet refers to the river Vaikai which flows through the city of Madurai. The word Madurai means a "sweet city". It is a Tamil word. As a matter of fact, this city is the center of Tamil culture and learning. It is also a holy city full of temples including the famous Minakshee temple. The poets have written many poems on the temples and the river. In the present poem, A.K. Ramanujan deals with the river.

In the poem "A River", we get two pictures based upon two different kinds of description. In the summer, the river is almost empty. Only a very thin stream of water flows. So the sand ribs on the bed of the river are visible. The stones that lie on the bed of the river also exposed to view. The portion of the river under the bridge has also been described. We get a vivid picture of the river in the summer season.

There is also the picture of the river in the rainy season. Generally, all kinds of poets have written about it in their poems.

During the rainy season when the floods crone the people observe it very anxiously. They remember the rising of the river inch by inch from time to time. They remember how the stone steps of the bathing place are submerged one by one.

They see how three village houses were damaged and carried off by the floods. They now how two cows named Brinda and Gopi were carried away. They also know how a pregnant woman was also drowned in the river during the flood. Both the old and new poets have mentioned these things in their poems. But the way they have described these things in their poems shows that they were not much alive to or sympathetic with human suffering.

They did not mention the name of the woman who was carrying twins. Before their birth, she was drowned in the flooded river. At the time of drowning, most probably the twins must have kicked the sides of her womb. She must have got much pain out of this. But both the new poets and old poets did not refer to all these miseries of the woman in their poetic creations.

This becomes ultimately clear that they are not sympathetic with suffering human beings. They are totally callous and indifferent. This kind of attitude makes their poetry weak and unappealing, dry and cheerless.

The tone of the poem is based on sarcasm and irony. The structure of the poem has been in paragraphs and single lines. There are four longer verse paragraphs and a shorter one in the beginning. There are only two single isolated lines. This kind of structural arrangement contributes to the effect of irony. It also helps to grasp the main points clearly. Secondly, a word can be said about the language used in the poem. It is very simple on account of which the thought sequence of the poem is presented unmistakably and clearly.

I Victorian Poetry

Victorian literature is the literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837 – 1901). England, during this time, was undergoing a tremendous cultural upheaval; the accepted forms of literature, art and music had undergone a radical change. The Romantic Movement, which preceded the Victorian Renaissance, had often portrayed the human pursuit of knowledge and power as a beautiful thing, for example in works of Wordsworth.

Victorian poetry definition

Poetry written during the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901 is defined as **Victorian poetry.** The **defining** characteristics of **Victorian poetry** are its focus on sensory elements, its recurring themes of the religion/science conflict, and its interest in medieval fables and legends.

During the Victorian era, however, there was a lot of radical social change and as such, many poets of this time didn't like the romanticized version of society. The Victorian poetry is, thus, divided into two main groups of poetry: **The High Victorian Poetry** and **The Pre-Raphaelite Poetry.**

Features of Victorian Poetry:

The most important and obvious characteristic of Victorian Poetry was the use of **sensory elements**. Most of the Victorian Poets used **imagery** and the **senses** to convey the scenes of struggles between Religion and Science, and ideas about Nature and Romance, which transport

the readers into the minds and hearts of the people of the Victorian age, even today. Lord Alfred Tennyson lives up to this expected characteristic in most of his works.

One notable example is the poem **Mariana**, in which Tennyson writes, The doors upon their hinges creaked; / The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse / Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked. These images of the creaking door, the blue fly singing in the window, and the mouse with the moldy wood panelling, all work together to create a very definite image of an active, yet lonely farmhouse.

Another characteristic of Victorian poetry was the **sentimentality**. Victorian Poets wrote about Bohemian ideas and furthered the imaginings of the Romantic Poets. Poets like Emily Bronte, Lord Alfred Tennyson prominently used sentimentality in their poems.

The husband and wife poet duo, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning and Robert Browning conducted their love affair through verse and produced many **tender and passionate poems.** Most prominent of which are Elizabeth Barrett-Brownings Sonnets from Portuguese, the most notably her If thou must love me and How do I love thee.

Alfred Lord Tennyson's Style:

Lord Alfred Tennyson, arguably the most prominent of the Victorian Poets, held the title of Poet Laureate for over forty years. His poems were marked a wide range of topics from romance, to nature, to criticism of political and religious institutions; a pillar of the establishment not failing to attack the establishment.

His Charge of the Light Brigade was a fierce criticism of a famous military blunder; while the Princess dealt with pseudo-chivalry common among the royalty. The poems of In Memoriam dealt with Tennyson's exploration of his feelings of love, loss, and desire.

The reclaiming of the past was a major part of Victorian literature with an interest in both classical and medieval literature of England. The Victorians loved the **heroic**, **chivalrous** stories

of knights of old and they hoped to regain some of that noble, courtly behaviour and impress it upon the people both at home and in the wider empire.

The best example of this is Alfred Tennyson's Idylls of the King, which blended the stories of King Arthur, particularly those by Thomas Malory, with contemporary concerns and ideas. Poets like Gerard Manley Hopkins drew inspiration from verse forms of Old English poetry such as Beowulf.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood also drew on **myth and folklore** for their art, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti regarded as the chief poet amongst them, though modern scholars consider his sister Christina to be a stronger poet, of the two.

Comic verse abounded in the Victorian era. Magazines such as Punch magazine and Fun magazine teemed with the humorous invention and were aimed at a well-educated readership. The most famous collection of Victorian comic verse is the Bab Ballads.

Victorian Poetry, thus, marks an important era in the history of poetry, providing the link between the Romantic Movement and the Modernist Movement (Pre-Raphaelitism) of the 20th Century.

Above were the key Characteristics of Victorian Poetry.

II Modern English Poetry

Introduction:

The 20th century was like no time period before it. Einstein, Darwin, Freud, and Marx were some of the thinkers who profoundly changed the Western Culture. These changes took distinct shape in the literature of the 20th century. Modernism was a movement that was a radical break from 19th century Victorianism. Modernism led to post-modernism, which emphasized self-consciousness and pop art. While 20th-century literature is a diverse field covering a variety of genres, there are common characteristics that changed literature forever.

20th Century English Poetry Development

The 20th century English poetry emerged in the early years of the 20th century through various schools, styles, and influences:

1st Phase

The first phase of the movement includes the school of imagism, the style of French symbolist poetry influence of Dome and the dominance of war poetry. These were all different manifestations of modernism in English poetry (**1909-16**).

2nd Phase

During the flowering of Modernist poetry **between 1917 and 1929**, the 2nd phase of the movement, all these initial manifestations of modernism combined to find a full nature expression in the poetry of **T.S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell** and later **Yeats** most notable of which is, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Sitwell's *Gold Coast Customs* and Yeats's *Michael Robartes and the Dances*

3rd Phase

The 3rd and the final phase of Modernist is largely the **decade of the 30s** which is marked by the Marxed (Non-Marxist) poets such as **Auden, Louis McNiece, C. Day-Lewis** and **Stephen Spender.**

Characteristics of Modern Poetry:

Diverse Variety of Themes:

Modern poetry can be written on almost any subject. The modern poets find inspirations from railway trains, tramcars, telephones and things of commonplace interest. Modern poets have not accepted the theory of great subjects for poetic composition. The whole universe is the modern poet's composition. He writes on themes of real-life e.g. *The Songs Train* by John Davidson, *Goods Train of Night* by Ashley, *Machine Guns* by Richard Aldington, *Listeners* by Walter

Realism:

The poetry of the 20th century is marked with a note of realism. Realism in modern poetry was the product of a reaction against the pseudo-romanticism of the last century over and above the influence of science. The modern poet sees life and paints it as it is with all its anticipations and ugliness. He tears the covering which the romanticists had clinched between life and art. Robert Frost, Edmund Blunden, and Gibson are the poets of realism in modern poetry.

Love:

Love forms the subject of many modern lyrics. Robert Bridges has produced fine sonnets of love in *The Growth of Love.* E.g. *I Will Not Let Thee Go.* W.B. Yeats'*When You are Old* etc.

Pessimism:

There is a note of pessimism and disillusionment in modern poetry. The modern poet has realized the pettiness of human life and the tragedy and suffering of the poor have made him gloomy and sad. Poetry as the expression of the feeling has become autumnal in tone T. Hardy, Huxley and T.S. Eliot are the poets of Pessimism and disillusionment in modern poetry.

Romantic Elements:

In spite of the dominance of realism, in modern poetry, the spirit of romance continues to rule the minds of certain poets like Yeats, E. Thomas, Masefield etc. The works of these poets have the fact that the spirit of romance is as old as the life itself. Walter De La Mare's poetry is full of true romantic spirit bordering on supernaturalism. With him, the ghosts and fairies of the old world have come into their own in the 20th century.

Nature:

Nature attracts the modern poet no less than the poets of the earlier ages. But for the modern poet, nature is not a mystic. He does not find any spiritual meaning in nature. He feels jolly at the sight of nature's loveliness. He gives a clear picture of birds, clouds landscapes, sea and countryside in his poetry. Masefield, Robert Bridges, Edmund Blunden etc are the great poets of nature in modern poetry.

Humanitarian and Democratic Note:

Modern poetry is marked with a note of humanitarianism and democratic feeling. The modern poet, more than Wordsworth, is interested in the life of labourers, workers etc. He sees, in the daily struggles of these people the same potentialities that the older poets found in those of high rank. Masefield, Gibson, Goldsworthy are mainly interested in the common man and his sufferings.

Religion and Mysticism:

The modern age is the age of science, but even in this scientific age, we have poems written on the subject of religion and mysticism. W.B. Yeats, Francis Thompson, Robert Graves etc are the great poets who have kept alive the flame of religion and mysticism in their poetry.

Diction and Style:

Modern poets have a preference for simple and direct expression. Modern poets have chosen to be free in the use of the meter. They have followed freedom from the trammels of verse. Verse rhythm is replaced by sense rhythm. There is free movement in 20th-century English poetry.

III Modern Indian English Poetry

Introduction:-

Modern Indian poetry in English can be defined as **poetry written or published from 1947 onwards** (the year India gained Independence from British rule). It is a poetry **written by poets of Indian origin**, writing in the English language. This includes poetry from the Indian Diaspora, written by poets of Indian origin or ancestry, born or settled outside of India. Modern Indian Poetry can be divided into **3 phases**:

1. **Imitative poetry**: This was at the time of the colonial period. The Indian poets like **Dezorio**, also known as the father of Indian English Poetry, **Toru Dutt**, etc. imitated the romantic poets like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelly, Blake, etc.
2. **Assimilative poetry**: This phase of poetry was essentially romantic but, filled with various emotions like nationalism, mysticism and the like. In this phase, **Aurobindo, Tagore** and **Sarojini** Naidu were the prominent poets.
3. **Contemporary or the Modern Poetry**: This phase of Indian English Poetry started when the colonial rule ended. So, the theme was mainly of identity crisis. The Indian poets were trying to establish their individualistic contribution to the English Poetry. This phase contains a lot of themes and variations. Some poets used poetry as an autobiographical medium; others used it to highlight the ill practices of society. The modern poets are experimenting with new themes every now and then. And modern poetry is not rigid and not based on just one theme or pattern.

Features of Modern Poetry:-

1. **Free verse** or Non-rhyming poems with irregular verses.
2. Themes are more **intellectual** than emotive.
3. More use of **satire and cynicism**.

4. It questions the order of society.
5. Less stress on idealism and perfection.
6. Much more **experiments with language and imagery**.
7. **Beliefs are questioned** and comparatively cold and dispassionate tone is used.
8. Poetry is written as an **art for art's sake** without considering many differences between moral and immoral. Hence, we also have poems about sex these days.
9. Poems are written about topics that are concrete (**education, war, rape, a woman's smile**, etc) rather than those which are abstract (truth, virtue, moral, beauty, etc)
10. There is **no imitation**, everything is looked at from different angles, different perspectives.
11. Poems are about more than **love and beauty** and are grounded in images and descriptions. *Love is like a red red rose*. It is more like the ecstatic feeling that is rarely experienced.
12. Modern poems are **outspoken** and deal with the subjects without any fear.
13. Modern poetry has an **influence of globalization** and poems tend to borrow from other cultures and languages.
14. **Fragmentation** is one characteristic of modern poetry.
15. Unconventional **use of metaphors** is found in modern poems.
16. Modern poets use **Stream of consciousness** technique in their poetry. It is a literary style in which a character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions are depicted in a continuous flow uninterrupted by objective description or conventional dialogue.

Modern Indian Poets:-

The Modern Indian poets are classified on the basis of their exile. Some Indian poets (Parthasarathy, Vikram Seth and Ramanujan) have visited foreign countries and lived there. However they contributed Indian English poetry. Some (Ezekiel, Moraes and Jussawala) went abroad but returned and settled in India. Some never visited the abroad. Therefore their poetry reflects accordingly. They express the feelings like anxiety, self-identity and alienation