

RESHAPING EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA

Readings

Below is the list of assigned poems for this week. It is also possible that your teacher may instruct you to read all poetry by Byron, Shelley, and Keats that is in the *Shorter Works Anthology*, so be sure to ask before you begin reading!

- George Gordon, Lord Byron
 - "When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home"
 - "Stanzas written on the Road between Pisa and Florence"
 - "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year"
 - "They say that hope is happiness"
 - "She walks in beauty"
 - Selections from *Manfred*
- Percy Bysshe Shelley
 - "Mutability"
 - "Ode to the West Wind"
 - Selections from *Prometheus Unbound*
 - "Stanzas Written in Dejection—December 1818, near Naples"
 - "A Song: 'Men of England'"
 - "To a Sky-Lark"
 - "To Wordsworth"
 - "Ozymandias"
- John Keats
 - "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"
 - "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
 - "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again"
 - Selections from "Sleep and Poetry"
 - Selections from *Endymion*
 - "The Eve of St. Agnes"

Recitation or Reading Aloud

Your teacher may allow you to choose your own selection for recitation or reading aloud, or may assign you one of the suggestions below:

- "She walks in beauty," by Lord Byron
- "Ozymandias," by Percy Bysshe Shelley
- "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," by John Keats

Defining Terms

You should continue your index card bank of literary terms this week, and make cards for whichever of these terms you do not already have. Be sure to write down exactly what you see here.

Terms for Beginning and Continuing Levels

- Anti-Hero(ine): A character who has the abilities of a hero but uses them to rebel against the beliefs and values of the community that produced him.
- Byronic Hero: A type of anti-hero who is usually presented as gloomy, tormented by a guilty past, wildly passionate, disdainful of most other human beings, and inflexibly determined to reach an impossible goal or die trying.
- Closet Drama: A drama that is written to be read silently by oneself or aloud in a small party, but not performed.
- Half-foot: In metrical poetry, a single "left over" syllable not attached to any other syllable to form a metrical foot.
- Hero(ine): 1) A character who has strong abilities, which may be beyond the limits of the natural, and which he uses to embody and support the beliefs and values of the community that produced him, 2) nowadays, also used as one of several common terms for the main character in any story.
- Metaphor: A device of imagery that identifies an object with an image, though it is understood that the object is not actually the image.
- Metrical Foot: Usually, one accented (heavily stressed) syllable and one or more unaccented (lightly stressed) syllables, in various patterns. The metrical foot is the basic unit used to measure verse.
- Metrical Line: A metrical line of poetry is one in which the syllables can be divided into metrical feet.
- Refrain: A phrase or line or stanza that is repeated at regular intervals throughout a poem.
- Scansion: The practice of measuring verse. "Scanning" poetry includes 1) finding metrical feet and lines, and 2) noting the overall metrical pattern(s) and variations from them.
- Simile: A device of imagery that uses comparison words such as "like," "as," or "more than," to explicitly show the reader that an object is being presented in an image that shares some of that object's qualities.

LITERATURE

Literary Introduction

Byron, Shelley, and Keats were later Romantic poets. Born in 1788, 1792, and 1795 respectively, they all died by 1824 and thus were never aware of a world untouched by revolution and warfare, or an age before the Age of Napoleon. In England, the writings of Wordsworth and Coleridge had already begun to revolutionize that nation's poetry and would have a strong influence on Shelley and Keats. It was an age of high-running emotions and widespread changes, in which anything seemed possible.

Byron and Shelley both embraced the spirit of struggle and revolution. Sadly, from the evidence of their writings and the way they lived their lives, it seems that both also rejected God. Byron depicts rebellious striving through his "Byronic" heroes, who are passionate and arrogant, yet tormented by guilt. They struggle towards impossible goals that they know will lead to doom, but are unwilling to repent or submit to any authority, including God. You will read this week about one such hero named Manfred, the protagonist of a closet drama by Byron. Byron also wrote passionately about the honor and glory that men can win for themselves, especially in wars for freedom. He himself died in an uprising, fighting for the freedom of Greece in 1824. To this day, he is a national Greek hero.

Shelley, though an atheist, presents a more hopeful picture of humanity: in his poetry he dreams of a race of supermen who would arise and, by their own will and striving, establish a new golden age without the help of God. Ironically, for all his fascination with human abilities, Shelley was unable to keep himself from drowning in a boating accident. Both he and Byron, though often optimistic, also show a dark underside of doubt and unhappiness in poems with titles like "Darkness" (by Byron) and "Stanzas Written in Dejection" (by Shelley).

Keats, by contrast with the other two poets, partook of a spirit from another age. Whereas Byron admired Pope and the neoclassicists, and Shelley belonged (according to Byron) to no school of poetry at all, Keats's poetry reminds us of the fragrant, musical, richly-textured works of the Elizabethan era. Keats also rejected Christianity, because he felt that it was an insufficient solution for the problems of life. Instead, he seems to have believed in a sort of salvation by beauty. He famously wrote, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." His poetry, however, does not speak of rebellion or striving, but explores the heights, depths, and intensities of human experience. It seems to be true (and tragic) that Keats was highly sensitive to both beauty and suffering, but refused our unspeakably beautiful Savior, whose suffering has cured mankind's problem of evil.

Though the messages of their works are often grievous and wrong, these Romantic poets do sometimes speak true things and express ideas and feelings that recur in the human heart. Shelley's "Ozymandias," for example, gives us the image of an ancient, broken statue of a king, and speaks of the destruction that time brings to even the mightiest human beings and endeavors. If you have ever stood in a museum and looked at artifacts of a long-dead people, perhaps you remember a feeling, or have acknowledged this truth about time, which is echoed in Shelley's poem.

Because of their ability to express recurring themes of the human heart in language that is powerful, many of these poets' works are simply dazzling. You will read this week imagery of a woman who "walks in beauty, like the night," having in her face and eyes all the loveliness of the vast night sky hung with stars. Or, using the same night imagery, but now more sadly, you can with Shelley ponder the fact that our lives "speed, and gleam, and quiver" and "streak the darkness radiantly," but are soon gone, swallowed up in night. This is an idea in the Bible as well, though Scripture uses the image of grass and flowers to express human fragility (i.e. Psalm 37:2 or 102:11).

Finally, you can take your images of the night on a walk with Keats, as he explains how, the first time he ever read Chapman's translation of Homer's poetry, it amazed and delighted him so much that he felt like a watcher of the skies, who sees a whole new planet "swim into his ken." To Keats, Chapman's translation of Homer opened up a whole new island in the "realms of gold"—the world of literature. Ahead of you now are the poems of these men: the fiery depths and snow-capped mountains and golden meadows of Byron, Shelley, and Keats, which are, after all, also part of those realms of gold.

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Beginning Level

- For each of the poems listed below, please do the following exercises: 1) identify at least one example of imagery and tell whether it is simply an image or a special type of image (either metaphor or simile), 2) explain what person, place, thing, idea, or emotion is being presented through it (this is meaning through form), and 3) tell how the image affects you as the reader.
 - Byron's "She walks in beauty"
 - Shelley's "Ozymandias"
 - Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"
- Chose one of the poems listed above and scan it. You can use the checklist at the end of Measuring Verse (Appendix D) in *Poetics*. See Appendix A of the *Shorter Works Anthology* for blank copies of the poems. Once you have finished scanning, write a description of your poem's meter, stanza form, and rhyme scheme, according to the examples provided in Appendix D of *Poetics*.
- Thinking Questions:
 - What characteristics of heroes (as Ryken describes them) might help to explain why the hero is the symbol of a community's values and worldview, and the embodiment of the way that community understands reality?
 - In what ways is a hero "larger than life"?
 - Does a Byronic hero fit Ryken's description of a hero, or is he an anti-hero? (See Defining Terms section on page 23 on "anti-hero.")
 - Is Byron's Manfred a Byronic hero? What about Shelley's Prometheus from *Prometheus Unbound*?
 - As a Christian, would you choose to adopt a Byronic hero as a model for your life? Why or why not?

Continuing Level

Do everything in the Beginning level, plus the following:

- In addition to the poems in exercise #1 above, do the same for each of the following poems:
 - Byron's "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year"
 - Shelley's "Mutability" (the word means "changeableness")
 - Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
- Thinking Questions: How does the "Byronic hero" compare to the Greek and biblical tragic heroes the you reviewed this week in *Words of Delight*? How has the concept of a tragic hero changed over time?
- In no more than a paragraph, use your own words and whatever appropriate literary terms you have learned, to describe the texture of "The Eve of St. Agnes." (You do not have to describe the meter, stanza form, and rhyme scheme of the poem.) The terms that you can use are image and imagery, metaphor, simile, high or archaic diction, low diction, sentence structure, tone, and descriptive style. If you need help with any of these terms, see the Terms Index (Appendix B) in *Poetics*.
- Name at least one example of one of the ten artistic elements, or an example of the artistic principle of meaning through form, from "The Eve of St. Agnes." Then, tell what you most enjoyed in this poem.
- Thinking Question: How is Keats's poetic texture like or unlike the "golden poetry" of the Elizabethan era?
- If your teacher has assigned you to read the optional selections on German literary criticism in "Literary Criticism" on the *Loom*, be prepared to discuss the questions for those selections (found at the end of each selection).

CHURCH HISTORY***Danger on the Streets of Gold*, by Irene Howat**

- How did God prepare Judson for his missionary work even when he was still a young man?
- What mistakes did Judson make that led him to reject Christianity in his youth? What verses in the Bible point to the consequences?
- Judson said that his conversion experience was, "just a quiet realization that the Bible is God's Word, and that it must be true because God doesn't tell lies. And if the Bible is true, then Jesus is God's son and only those who put their trust in him can have their sins forgiven and go to heaven."¹ Write a paragraph or two describing the events that led to your conversion, noting evidences of God's grace at work in you. Be prepared to share it in class.

¹ Irene Howat, *Danger on the Streets of Gold* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2001) 21.