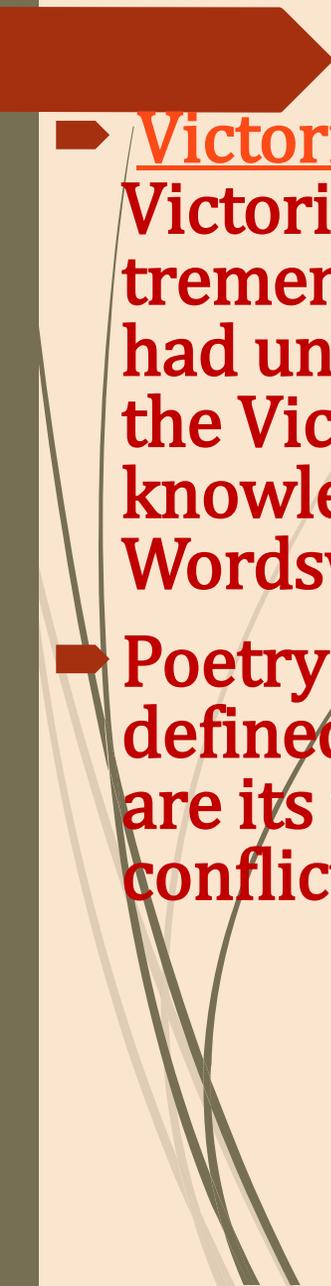


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The POETRY of the Victorian Era (1837-1901)

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- 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.
 - 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.

Salient features of Victorian poetry

- During the Victorian era, however, there was a lot of radical social change and as such, many poets of this time did not 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.
- 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.

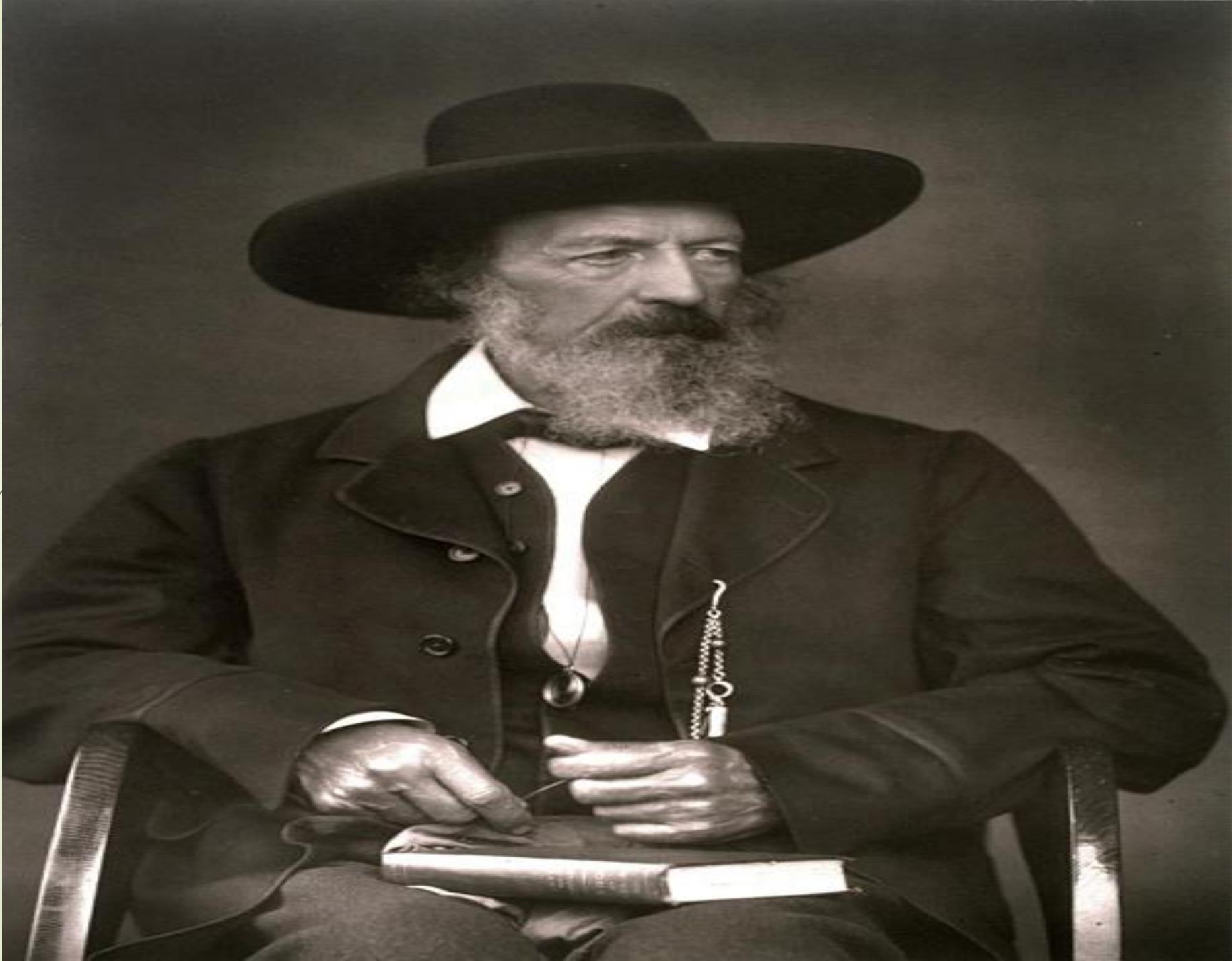
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Another characteristic of Victorian poetry was the sentimentality. Victorian Poets wrote about Bohemian ideas and furthered the imaginings of the Romantic Poets. Poets like Emily Bronte, Lord Alfred Tennyson prominently used sentimentality in their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

Before the 19th century, the relationship between poet and poem was simple; the poet was the maker and the poem was product. If poems were discussed in terms of emotion, this always mean the reader's emotion, not the poet's. After the Romantic Movement a new conception appeared, that of a poem as the expression of the poet's emotion: a poem is now seen as retaining an umbilical link with its creator. This gave a new twist to the old doctrine of inspiration. The poet who feels uninspired no longer sees himself as out of touch with an external force, but as in proper touch with his own feelings. This doctrine continues right through the 19th century and is still with us.

Famous Poets of the Victorian era

- The notable Victorian poets include Byron, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Browning, Shelley, William Wordsworth etc. Byron's brooding romantic poems attracted a lot of attention in a society noted for its high regard for morality.
- Tennyson was a prolific writer whose love for nature and romance found expression in beautiful poems many of which were based on myths and legends of a long past classical era. Shelly and Wordsworth are other Victorian poets whose works paint a brilliant picture of nature.





LORD ALFRED TENNYSON

(6 August 1809 – 6 October 1892)

More than any other Victorian writer, Tennyson has seemed the embodiment of his age, both to his contemporaries and to modern readers. In his own day he was said to be—with Queen Victoria and Gladstone—one of the three most famous living persons, a reputation no other poet writing in English has ever had.

He stands as one of the major innovators of lyric and metrical form in all of English poetry.

Tennyson first began to achieve critical success with the publication of his Poems in 1842. Much of his verse was based on classical mythological themes, such as "Ulysses" and "Tithonus".

He continued and refined the traditions of Romantic Movement left to him by his predecessors, Wordsworth, Byron and Keats. His poetry was considered remarkable for its metrical variety, rich descriptive imagery and exquisite verbal melodies.



❖ Tennyson's use of the musical qualities of words to emphasise his rhythms and meanings is sensitive.

❖ As source material for his poetry, Tennyson used a wide range of subject matter ranging from medieval legends to classical myths and from domestic situations to observations of nature.

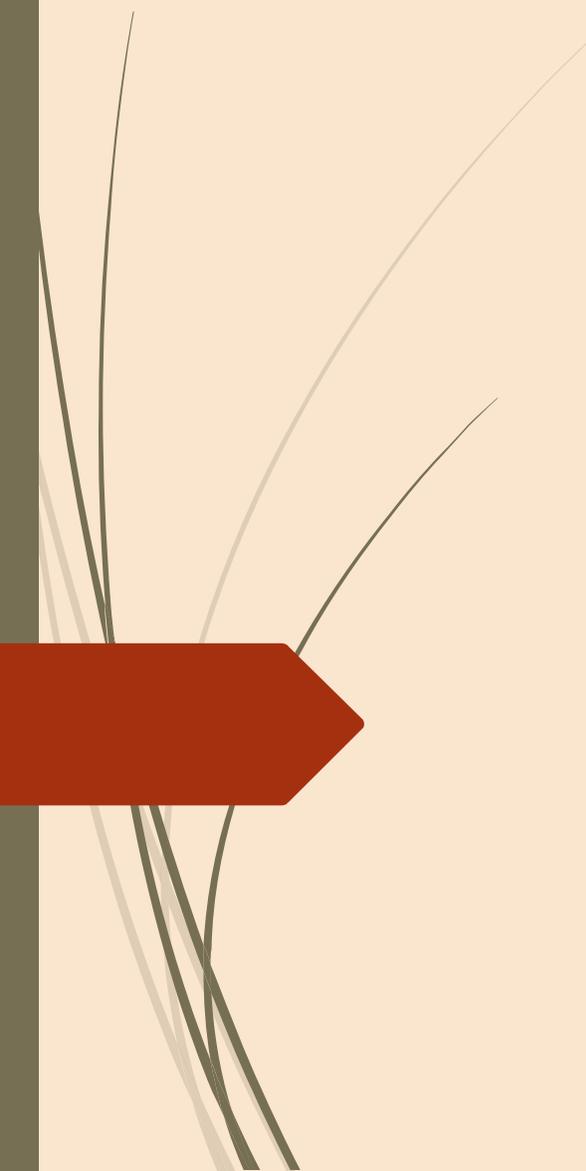
❖ He experimented in adapting the quantitative metres of Greek and Latin poetry to English.

❖ He reflects the Victorian period of his maturity in his feeling for order and his tendency towards moralising.

❖ He also reflects a concern common among Victorian writers in being troubled by the conflict between religious faith and expanding scientific knowledge.

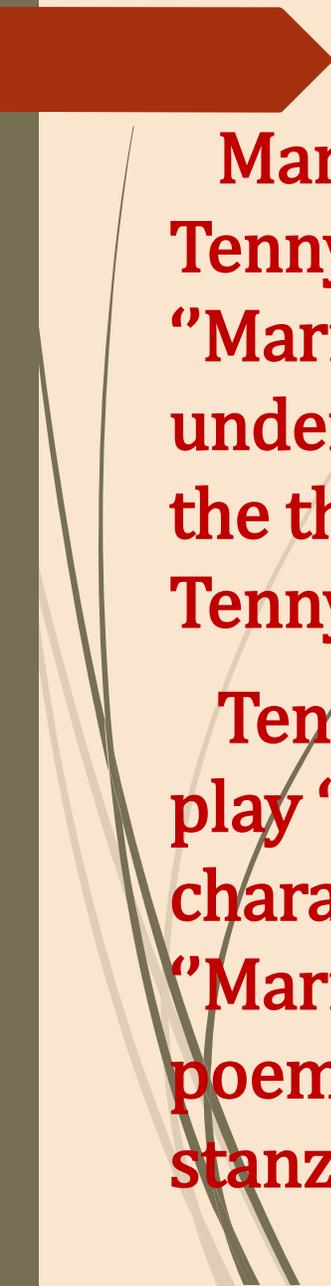
Tennyson's poetry style

- ▶ Lord Alfred Tennyson, arguably the most prominent of the Victorian Poets, held the title of Poet Laureat 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.



MARIANA

LORD ALFRED TENNYSON

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Mariana is a poem which was written by Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson, first published in his collection poems, chiefly lyrical. He wrote “Mariana” in the form of third person narrative to help the reader to understand Mariana’s suffering and isolation in deeper context. It follows the theme of isolation and memory which are commonly explored in Tennyson’s work.

Tennyson based his Mariana on a character in William Shakespeare’s play “Measure for measure” in the play, Mariana is rejected by the character Angelo and Pines, alone for him. And in Tennyson’s poem “Mariana” waits for her lover and her sadness increases throughout the poem as she waits longer and longer for him, he never arrives. Each stanza describes Mariana’s state of mind increasing sadness.



With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

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The poem begins with the description of an abandoned farmhouse, or grange, in which the flower-pots are covered in overgrown moss and an ornamental pear tree hangs from rusty nails on the wall. The sheds stand abandoned and broken, and the straw covering the roof of the farmhouse is worn and full of weeds. “Mariana” begins with a vivid description of setting and mood. The flower-plots are clagged with “blackest-moss” like “Mariana”, they are fertile but bereft of human care; they remain follow “Mariana” deals with the psychological world. “Farm house” describes her inner world. There is a relationship between external description and Mariana’s inner world. It is a linking poem. A woman, presumably standing in the vicinity of the farmhouse, is described in a four line refrain that recurs with slight modifications as the last lines of each of the poem’s stanzas: “She only said, ‘My life is dreary/ He cometh not,’ / She said, ‘I am aweary, aweary/ I would that I were dead!’ “



Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am weary, weary,
I would that I were dead!"

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She is in a pessimistic situation. She is awake here and so she could not sleep, “Mariana” is in an unlucky situation and so she wishes that she were dead. She also cries a lot. She cries in the morning and she cries at night. There is no hope of change because of the middle of the night. She cannot think about the sweet things in life. At night “Whom the both have come and gone, and the sky is dark. She opens her window curtain and looks out at the expanse of land. She comments that “the night is dreary” and repeats her death-wish refrain. Everything else stays the same, thought. He uses imagery in “thickest dark”. We see that same refrain here again “He cometh not”. “Dark night, black, gray are convention and pessimistic symbols.”



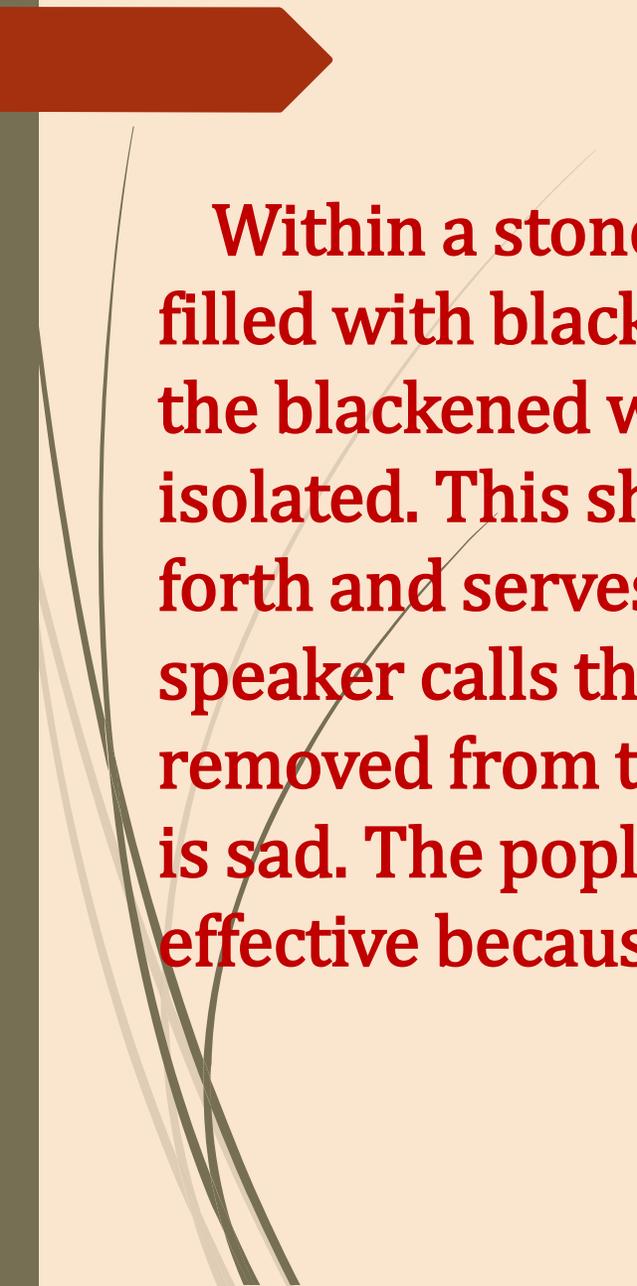
Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

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In the middle of the night, the woman wakes up to the sounds of the crow, and stays up until the cock calls out an hour before dawn. She hears things which sound like her lover (Angelo): The “night-fowl crow” and the oxen’s low”. She hears the oxen make their morning noises. This is a kind of pathetic fallacy: where inanimate things or animals echo the emotions of a character in this case mocking her pain. This is the cause of fallacy: “Mariana” perceives only the gloomy quality of things because she is so distraught. Mariana has no hope because she does not think anything will ever change. She has convinced that she will be missing her love and wandering around forever. We are back to the refrain again. But this time, instead of “life” or “night” we have “day”. It seems that there is no hour that is not affected by her sadness. She knows that tomorrow will be just as hopeless as the next day. So, she repeats the dead-wish refrain exactly as in the first stanza except that this time it is “the day” and not “my life” that is dreary.



About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said "I am aweary, aweary
I would that I were dead!"

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Within a stone's throw from the wall lies an artificial passage for water filled with black water and moss. She feels surrounded, even imprisoned by the blackened waters and the "clustered marsh-masses. The water is isolated. This shows pathetic fallacy. A silver-green, poplar tree, shakes back forth and serves as the only color in an otherwise flat, level, gray landscape. The speaker calls the land "waste" and describes it as gray. All the color has been removed from the picture. Because the woman who is seeing the landscape is sad. The poplar tree is a symbol of her loneliness. The refrain is so effective because it establishes the hopeless tone of the poem.



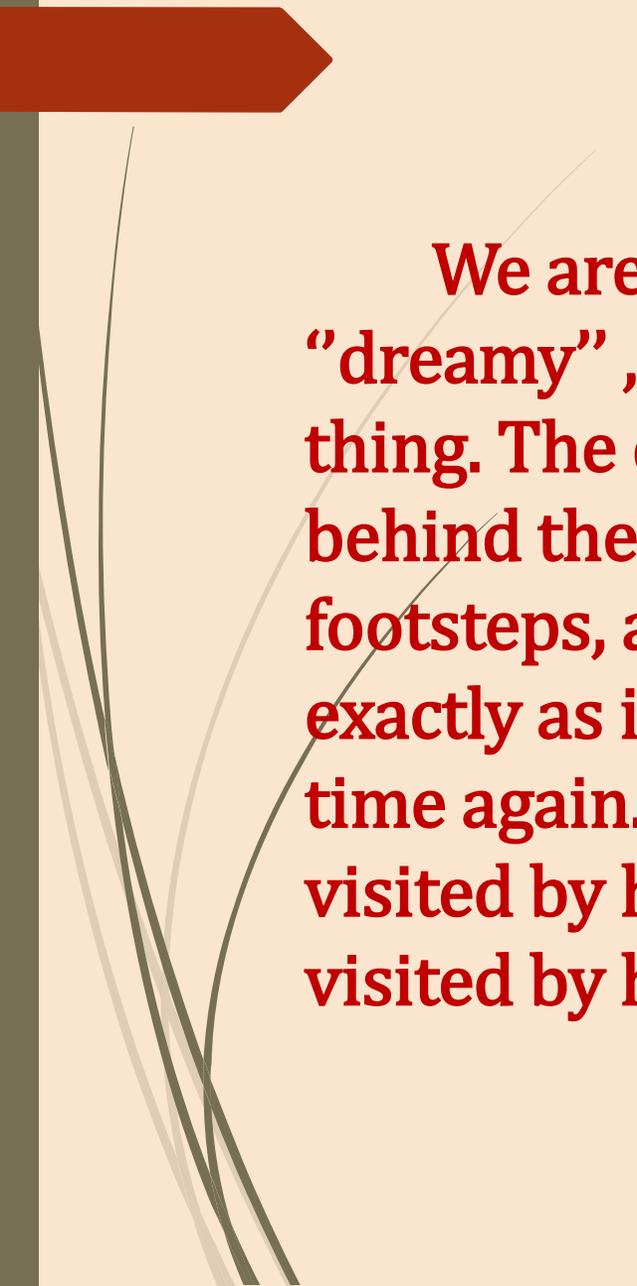
And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said "I am weary, weary,
I would that I were dead!"



When the moon lies low at night, the woman looks to her white window curtain, where she sees the shadow of the poplar swaying in the wind. But when the moon is very low and the wind exceptionally strong, the shadow of the poplar falls not on the curtain but on her bed and across her forehead. The wind is strong. In mythology, the wind could not appear unearthen. She has hallucination and illusion because she imagined there are someone and heroes voices. Her psychology is getting bad. She seems very close to dead.



All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

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We are back in daytime again. The house is described as “dreamy” , though. That seems to fit the whole “sleepwalking” thing. The doors creak, the fly buzzes, and a mouse squeaks behind the wall. The farmhouse is haunted by old faces, old footsteps, and old voices and the woman repeats the refrain exactly as it appeared in first and fourth stanzas. It is refrain time again. We are back to her “dreary life”. She has being visited by her memories in lines 65-68. When she has being visited by her memories, she is still sad.



The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am weary, weary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

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The final stanza of poem ends dramatically. “He will not come” Mairana is now sure that her lover will not come and her suffering will go on. Tennyson wants to show that how anyone suffer from psycholological pain when he or she is abandoned. Tennyson here also uses the method to create great emotional force. She cannot make description between real and unreal things. She cannot stand on her feet because woman is emotional and weak. Her life is dependent on man not herself because the society created thoughts which woman cannot use her mentality and ability. In the Victorian society woman is inferior but man is dominated. Also, Tennyson implies that love does not bring happiness everytime, it somtomes brings hopelessness and all love does not end with the happy ending, sometimes it ends with bad ending.



Zübeyde KAYA
Fatma AKYÜREK
Dilara DOĞAN
Nergis ÇETİN