

Third class\Najlaa Kamil\ 2023

Ode To a Nightingale\third stage\Poetry

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thy happiness,---

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the Trees,

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been

Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,

Tasting of Flora and the country green,

Dance, and Provencal song, and sun-burnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,

Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen'

And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! Away! For I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! Tender is the night,
And apply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit –tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To ease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain---
To thy high requiem become a sod

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! The very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! Adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:---do I wake or sleep?

Third stage\poetry\ 2023\Explanation of the Ode to a Nightingale.

1-Inspring 1819, a nightingale builds its nest in my house.

2-Keats felt a tranquil and continuous joy in her song; and one morning he took a chair from the breakfast table to the grass-plot under the plum-tree, where he sat for two or three hours.

It has published by one of Keats' friend after his death.

The word ode means a song or lyric that focuses on the poet's emotion to praise something or someone in elevated language.

I

Listening to the beautiful song of the nightingale, the speaker says that his heart hurts as if he has just drunk poison. "Hemlock is the poison that the Greek philosopher Socrates took when he was put to death for corrupting the youth. The poet then feels intoxicated as if he is under the effect of opium or as if he is sinking in Lethe—In Greek mythology,

"Lethe" was a river in Hades (the Underworld) that made people forget all their memories if they drank from it. It is the river of oblivion which suggests that the beauty of the bird's song makes him forget reality. The poet adds that the pain he feels is not because he is jealous of the bird's happiness. Instead, he is excessively happy for the bird's happiness. He describes the bird as Dryad (a tree nymph in Greek mythology).

II

The poet longs for a cup of wine "Vintage" is made of grapes that had been kept for a long time under the earth which, tastes of flowers and the plants of the countryside and the songs of the festivities at grape-harvest. Keats drinks wine in order to avoid any surprise that it might taste flowers "Flora" and plants "country green". He also longs for a beaker (a bowl) of the warm "South" (wine from the Mediterranean). The blushful Hippocrene is also a reference to red wine. On the other hand "Hippocrene"—in Greek mythology—is the fountain of the Muses and hence the fountain of inspiration. He wants to have a drink of such magical wine so that he can leave the world of men unnoticed by others "unseen" and disappear with the bird in the dark forest.

III

THE poet dreams of fading away, dissolving into nothingness to forget everything about the troubles and the suffering of this world: "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" which the bird has never to change and decay.

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies

Where to think is to be full of sorrow

The poet is hinting at his own sickness and his suffering as a young man. Even beauty (which will be one of the main themes of this poem) is transient and temporal in this world "Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes".

IV

The poet tells the nightingale to fly away and he decides to follow it, not by being drunk (as in stanza I) but, this time by using the "viewless" of poetry.

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards

But on the viewless wings of poesy

He says that is already with the bird in the dark forest and though the moon maybe shining surrounded by the stars, it is hidden by dark-green trees expect the light that breaks through the breeze-moved branches.

V

In this darkness of the night and because the moon is veiled by trees, the poet cannot see the flowers in the glade but he can guess them by their smell: white hawthorn, eglantine, violets and the musk-rose "the murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves". The white hawthorn and the musk rose confirm that this poem was written in May because they come out in May.

VI

He listens in the darkness to the nightingale's song and amid his extensive joy he finds it a suitable time to have an easy death while the bird continues his ecstatic song. In the past, he says, he has been "half in love with easeful death because of his sickness, (again, a reference to his personal life), and that is why he wishes to die now in his happiness while the bird is "pouring forth" his soul in her song in ecstasy.

VII

The poet feels that the nightingale is an immortal bird, free from the human fate of being mortal and of having to die and this very song of the nightingale is also an immortal song. The same song was heard in ancient times by both kings and poor peasants alike. Perhaps it was the same song heard by Ruth (Ruth, in the Old Testament, a Moabitess, accompanied her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Bethlehem. There, in an alien country, she became gleaner in the fields of Boaz. Ruth ii, 1-3). Perhaps, it was the same song that was heard in fairylands of the remote, far away forgotten "forlorn" past. Hence, the nightingale's song becomes timeless and immortal in this stanza.

VIII

The word "forlorn", the last word in the previous stanza works like a bell which tolls him back to reality and brings him back to himself. He discovers that he cannot escape with the bird. After the climax of the ecstatic experience he has with bird's song, the poet describes the bird as a "deceiving elf" and bids her "Adieu! Adieu". The experience he has had with the nightingale seems confusing, and now that the song is gone "thy plaintive anthem fades", he is not sure whether it was "a vision or a

waking dream", whether it was a real song or a dream or whether he was awake or asleep.

Themes

The themes of the poem are the transience of life, art and creative expression, immortality of art and beauty, and escape. The first theme is related to the personal life, his sickness and his disappointment in love with Fanny Brown. The poem gives a negative idea of life as a place of suffering, frustration, sickness and death where people "groan" of pain and "youth grows pale" like the poet himself, and beauty is transient. This is presented in contrast with the happiness of the bird's song which in turn has made him more aware of the unhappiness of life in spite of the temporary ecstatic joy he felt.

This is strongly related to the wish to die. In many respects Keats' life had been unsatisfactory for some time before he wrote the poem. His family life was shattered by the departure of one brother to America, the death from tuberculosis of the other and his own sickness and disappointment in love.

Immortality of art is the second main theme. The nightingale's song, no doubt, is presented as a work of art, as an anthem which fascinates the poet with its beauty. It is also described as eternal and immortal; more likely, however, he was thinking of the nightingale as a symbol of poetry, which has a permanence. Art immortalizes beauty; Keats' Ode immortalizes the beauty of the nightingale's song.

From the very beginning of the poem, the poet expresses his wish to escape life's miseries and to fade away with the bird, either by means of wine or by means of imagination. In fact, he succeeds temporarily and shares the bird's ecstatic joy till he is tolled back to reality by the last word of stanza VIII, "forlorn" and his joy is over. The bird ceases to be a symbol and returns to its actual nature and the poet also returns to the real world.

Form

The poem, as the title indicates, is an ode, a form which is revived at the hands of Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. This ode is written in eight ten-line stanzas and in iambic pentameter. The language is not as simple as that of Wordsworth; the references to Greek mythology and ancient religious make it rather difficult for the modern reader.

