

Fifth Stanza

*Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.*

In the final stanza of the poem Tithonus is asking Eos to no longer hold him “in thine East” where the sun always rises. His “nature” is unable to mix with her own. Even though they may both be immortal, his visage and constitution are no longer, what they were. Tithonus does not feel for Eos the same way as he used to. Her light feels to him like a cold bath that “wrinkle[s]” his feet. This he experiences every morning when the sun is rising and setting “steam” floating up off the fields around him. He pleads with her to “Release” him and let him return to the “ground.” If she was to release him as he so deeply desires, she will still be able to “renew” her beauty every morning and see his grave within the earth. He will die and “earth in earth forget these empty courts,” or the empty days in which he has been living.

Symbols

King Arthur and Camelot To Tennyson,

King Arthur symbolizes the ideal man, and Arthurian England was England in its best and purest form. Some of Tennyson’s earliest poems, such as “The Lady of Shalott,” were set in King Arthur’s time. Indeed, Tennyson rhymes Camelot, the name of King

Arthur's estate, with Shalott in eighteen of the poem's twenty stanzas, thereby emphasizing the importance of the mythical place. Furthermore, our contemporary conception of Camelot as harmonious and magnificent comes from Tennyson's poem. Idylls of the King, about King Arthur's rise and fall, was one of the major projects of Tennyson's late career. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert envisioned themselves as latter-day descendants of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and their praise helped popularize the long poem. But King Arthur also had a more personal representation to Tennyson: the mythic king represents a version of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam, whose death at twenty-two profoundly affected Tennyson. Hallam's death destroyed his potential and promise, which allowed Tennyson to idealize Hallam. This idealization allows Tennyson to imagine what might have been in the best possible light, much as he does when describing King Arthur and his court.

Themes

The Reconciliation of Religion and Science

Tennyson lived during a period of great scientific advancement, and he used his poetry to work out the conflict between religious faith and scientific discoveries. These discoveries challenged traditional religious understandings of nature and natural history

Form

This poem is a dramatic monologue: the entire text is spoken by a single character whose words reveal his identity. The lines take the form of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter). The poem as a whole falls into seven paragraph-like sections of varying length, each of which forms a thematic unit unto itself.

Commentary

The source of suffering in the poem is not Aurora's forgetfulness in formulating her request to Zeus, but rather the goddesses referred to as "strong Hours" who resent Tithonus's immortality and subject him to the ravages of time.

Key characteristics of a dramatic monologue:

A single speaker who is distinct from the poet.

The speaker interacts with an implied audience.

It provides insight into the speaker's character and psychology.

Often explores deep emotions, conflicts, or critical moments.

Soliloquy and dramatic monologue are both important dramatic devices in literature, but they serve different purposes and have distinct characteristics:

1. **Soliloquy:** A soliloquy is a speech delivered by a character when they are alone on stage (or they believe they are alone), expressing their inner thoughts, emotions, or reflections. It is used to give the audience direct access to the character's mind.

Audience: The character speaks to themselves or to an abstract idea (e.g., fate, the universe) rather than to other characters.

Purpose: The primary function is to reveal the character's inner conflict, moral dilemmas, plans, or deeper emotions. The audience gains insight into the character's thoughts that would otherwise remain hidden. Example: Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" speech is a soliloquy because Hamlet is alone on stage, reflecting on life and death.

2. **Dramatic Monologue:** A dramatic monologue is a long speech by a character directed toward another character or the audience. The speaker reveals their thoughts, but the presence of a listener or audience is implied.

Audience: The character speaks to one or more other characters, even if they do not respond. The audience is also indirectly addressed as they observe the interaction.

Purpose: It reveals the character's thoughts, emotions, or motives, but in a way that engages with or responds to the presence of another person or situation.

Example: Robert Browning's poem *My Last Duchess* is a dramatic monologue, as the Duke speaks to an implied listener about his deceased wife, revealing his possessive nature.

Key Differences:

Presence of Others: In a soliloquy, the speaker is alone or believes they are alone, whereas in a dramatic monologue, the speaker addresses someone else, either directly or indirectly.

Focus: Soliloquies focus on internal, personal thoughts, while dramatic monologues often aim to persuade, explain, or narrate something to another character or the audience.

Interaction: Soliloquies are self-reflective and do not expect a response, while dramatic monologues often imply the existence of a silent listener. Both forms reveal character psychology, but the context and delivery differ.