**English Romantic Verse** One-Page Guides

**Poet: Byron**

Poem: So We’ll Go no more A Roving

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| Context (biographical, Romantic attitudes, social/historical etc)  | Included in a letter to his friend Thomas Moore, who later published it after his death.Byron felt like he was getting old (written when he was 29). |
| A poem about… (Interpretations, key Romantic themes, nature, mortality) | Someone who has experienced the process of ageing and has decided to change his way of life from going out and wandering during the night, as much as he may desire to do so. |
| Speaker (who? talking to whom? attitude to subject- ironic, reverent etc) | No identified speaker but uses the first-person plural “we” throughout, suggesting this a combined experience and the individual speaker is not particularly important. It has a fairly sombre tone in regards to giving up “roving”, but the speaker is decisive and self-assured. Personal poem for Byron due to it being written in a letter and it has strong connections to his own life. |
| Form (sonnet, ballad, verse form, rhyme and rhythm) | Written in three short quatrains, giving it a light tone and a quick sense of movement like the “roving” he has decided to end.ABAB CDCD AEAE rhyme scheme – potentially ideas of conforming to societies expectations, but also how the speaker is decisive and assured of his decision. The repeated ‘A’ rhyme of “roving” and “loving” gives the poem a cyclical structure, and shows the lack of spontaneity now in the speaker’s life.The poem is written in trimeter and is mainly iambic, however all except lines 2 and 8 begin with an anapest. This gives the poem a song-like and gentle feel, however also suggests movement and spontaneity that is more associated with “roving” than stopping doing so as the regular iamb beat does. |
| Overall structure (shifts, changes, climax of narrative etc) | The first and third stanzas are very similar and use similar language to show the speakers decision to stop “roving”. This, along with the repeated rhyme, gives the poem a cyclical quality, and shows how he has come to an informed decision to stop roving. The middle stanza gives his reasons for this, and is surrounded by memories of the positives of this behaviour, but he still concludes the sensible thing to do is to stop. |
| Language (vocabulary - heightened or demotic; rhetorical features etc) | Simple and limited language used throughout, perhaps showing it is everyone’s experience, as it allows everybody to relate to the situation. There are also lots of clauses within the poem, linked with “and” and “though” for example, showing the speakers fluctuating emotions on what to do. |
| Sound effects (harsh and soft, onomatopoeia etc) | Mainly soft sounds used such as sibilance (for example with “still” repeated in the first stanza and “sword” and “soul” in the second) giving it a light quality, perhaps to disguise the mournful longing the speaker appears to still feel.There are also many slow, elongated sounds used at the end of the lines for example in “moon” and “breathe”, presenting the calmer and more relaxed life the speaker has chosen for himself. |
| Imagery (metaphor, simile, images etc) | The second stanza contains many metaphors, including some concerning the body. It personifies the “heart” needing to breathe, suggesting it is his body telling him to stop roving, and the reference to the “soul” has religious connotations associated to death (perhaps due to the speakers ageing).  |
| Patterns of language (semantic fields, repetitions, oppositions) | Repetition of key words, such as “roving”, “loving”, “night”, “moon” and “heart”. This shows the association the speaker has between the time of day, his emotions and the activity of “roving”, suggesting he is having to sacrifice all this joy he has previously known.  |
| Punctuation and grammar (sentence length, end-stopping, caesura, verb mood - imperative, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory) | Every line is end-stopped, and every stanza ends with a full stop. This shows how the speaker is trying to convince himself that this is the right thing to do, and represents how he has come to a final decision. There is no caesura or enjamnment, showing how the speaker is trying to control his emotions, perhaps a version of him trying to control his body and the larger process of ageing. |
| Links to other poems | Ode: Intimations of Immortality – trying to regain something lost, ageing, transience.On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year – changing attitudes towards life, moving on from love. |