**English Romantic Verse** One-Page Guides

**Poem: So we’ll Go No More a – Roving**

Poet: Lord Byron

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| Context (biographical, Romantic attitudes, social/historical etc) | * Written on 28 February 1817 in a letter to Byron’s friend, Thomas Moore. * Byron had left England a year earlier (after his wife had left him), to live in Venice. He was known as having a ‘scandalous’ life, represented in the poem. |
| A poem about… (Interpretations, key Romantic themes, nature, mortality) | * Bryon talks about growing old and weary of the ‘partying’ life. At the age of 29, he felt he was growing old and it was now time to rest. |
| Speaker (who? talking to whom? attitude to subject- ironic, reverent etc) | * The speakers use of ‘we’, in “We’ll Go No More A Roving” causes the reader to think he may be addressing someone, in this case Thomas Moore, or Byron may be talking to himself. * Autobiographical poem |
| Form (sonnet, ballad, verse form, rhyme and rhythm) | * Follows an ABAB structure with some ‘eye rhymes’ (words that looks similar but don’t necessarily rhyme)/half rhymes. Ambigious as to why – gives a sense of freedom, but keeps lyrical quality too * Every line in the poem contains an *anapest* (a foot that contains two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable e.g. ‘For the **sword**’) except for in line 2 and 8. This gives the poem a lighter ‘skipping’ quality, a musicality; this foot is common in children’s rhyme. * Written in quatrains – three stanzas of four lines each. * “A” rhyme returns in the final stanza as if the poem has gone in a circle, which perhaps represents the cycle of life that the speaker feels is coming to a close, or to show that the whole poem was about explaining and exploring the opening statement * The word ‘loving’ is always sandwiched by ‘roving’ to make a chiasmus (two parallel phrases in which corresponding words or phrases are placed in the opposite order), which again makes the poem seem compact and balanced. |
| Overall structure (shifts, changes, climax of narrative etc) | * The chiasmus gives the poem a cyclical feel, as it draws to an end with the same conclusion that it began with. * The three short stanzas add to the simple message of the poem, and also hints at the transience of life. |
| Language (vocabulary - heightened or demotic; rhetorical features etc) | * Significant use of anaphora (repetition of title and structure) which could represent the laborious nature of the ‘roving’ life. |
| Sound effects (harsh and soft, onomatopoeia etc) | * Sounds like a children’s song due to short rhymes and regular rhyme schemes which emphasises the nature of Byron’s youth, and how he is now growing too old for the lifestyle. |
| Imagery (metaphor, simile, images etc) | * Fitting with many Byron poems. The “sword outwears its sheath” gives the speaker a heroic ending to his lifestyle. * Semantic field of night time (night, moon, light, rest) |
| Patterns of language (semantic fields, repetitions, oppositions) | Semantic field of night time: moon, light, night, still  Repetition of ‘we’ll go no more a roving’. Anaphora adds to the emphasis on and laborious nature of the narrators roving lifestyle.  Repetition of the word ‘still’ alludes to the approach of death and may have a doubly meaning: ‘still’ implies continuity which may relate to the repetitive nature of roving, however may also allude to death i.e. the stillness of a dead body. |
| Punctuation and grammar (sentence length, end-stopping, caesura, verb mood - imperative, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory) | Lack of exclamatory punctuation represents the narrator’s decision to calm down his lifestyle. It also contributes the calm, accepting mood and tone of the poem as a whole with help from the declarative language. |
| Links to other poems |  |