**English Romantic Verse** One-Page Guides

**Poem: Fare Thee Well**

Poe Byron

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| Context (biographical, Romantic attitudes, social/historical etc) | The speaker’s emotions in the poem might reflect the emotions that Byron was feeling at the time of the separation from his wife, Annabella. It is ambiguous whether Byron was really in love with his wife or not. |
| A poem about… (Interpretations, key Romantic themes, nature, mortality) | Love, Loss, Regret, Death? |
| Speaker (who? talking to whom? attitude to subject- ironic, reverent etc) | Speaker probably quite close to Byron, moving through a range of emotions from love to pain to anger and bitterness |
| Form (sonnet, ballad, verse form, rhyme and rhythm) | Monologue style – no stanzas in the version in the anthology, but sometimes printed with four-line (quatrain) stanzas (which therefore all have either a colon, a question mark or a fullstop at the end   * monologue shows intensity of inner feelings; stanzas have individual thoughts feelings expressed   AB rhyme scheme shows intensity of speakers speech  Use of 4 beat line often increases intensity further (e.g. **Sear’d** in **heart,** and **lone,** and **blight**ed – accentuates the pain, perhaps, with language of pain and infection) |
| Overall structure (shifts, changes, climax of narrative etc) | Cyclical – “Fare thee well” repeated near end, with a more painful pattern of language in final quatrain (‘sear’d’, ‘torn’)  Develops quatrain by quatrain, with a section from ‘And when thou woulds’t solace gather…’ onwards, mentioning the child (probably the child Byron had with Annabella), particularly bitter in tone |
| Language (vocabulary - heightened or demotic; rhetorical features etc) | Repeated language of the body, ‘head’, ‘breast’, ‘heart’, ‘bleeding’ etc give poem a sense of physical pain of separation. ‘heart’ is polysemic, though, being both the physical and emotional centre of this painful separation  Use of direct address gives the poem a stronger emotive feel: “Wilt thou teach her to say Father” – bitterness towards wife about taking his daughter away from him. |
| Sound effects (harsh and soft, onomatopoeia etc) |  |
| Imagery (metaphor, simile, images etc) | Motif of heart – “hearts can thus be torn away” |
| Patterns of language (semantic fields, repetitions, oppositions) | Body parts – “breast”, “hands” – add to the personal emotional intenstity |
| Punctuation and grammar (sentence length, end-stopping, caesura, verb mood - imperative, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory) | “Founded on another’s woe:” Colon emphasises how he cannot stop loving someone, despite all that has happened between them. |
| Links to other poems | Blake – ‘The Sick Rose’; the Bronte Gondal poems? |