**UNIT I**

**ALL THE WORLD’S A STAGE - WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

1.  Fill in the blanks using the words given in the box to complete the summary of the poem.

Shakespeare considers the whole world a stage where men and women are only (1) actors. They (2) enter the stage when they are born and exit when they die. Every man, during his life time, plays seven roles based on age. In the first act, as an infant, he is wholly (3) dependent on the mother or a nurse. Later, emerging as a school child, he slings his bag over his shoulder and creeps most (4) reluctantly to school. His next act is that of a lover, busy (5) composing ballads for his beloved and yearns for her (6) attention. In the fourth stage, he is aggressive and ambitious and seeks (7) reputation in all that he does. He (8) promises solemnly to guard his country and becomes a soldier. As he grows older, with (9) maturity and wisdom, he becomes a fair judge. During this stage, he is firm and (10) serious. In the sixth act, he is seen with loose pantaloons and spectacles. His manly voice changes into a childish treble. The last scene of all is his second childhood. Slowly, he loses his faculties of sight, hearing, smell and taste and exits from the roles of his life.



***SUMMARY***

The man begins his act on the stage as an infant; he pukes in the arms of his nurse and cries to be in the comfort of his mother.
The second act starts right when he turns into a school going boy, who is unwilling to go to school and unwilling to take the responsibility of being a student.

The third act , then comes when he turns into a lover; his lover is the only person he sees dancing in front of his eyes. For him, there is absolutely no other place that can comfort him, than the eyebrow of his lover.

The fourth act of All The World’s A Stage portrays the man as a soldier or a fight for the nation. His beard depicts all those strange oaths that he takes to protect his country and all the men and women living in it. No doubt he quarrels, but he also maintains his dignity to create and develop his reputation in front of others around him. This is perhaps the toughest stage in his life.

Then comes the fifth act, where he turns into justice, the one who knows what is good and what is right. At this stage, he is perhaps the best person to approach to find out who is correct and who is wrong.

The fifth stage comes into his life as he enters the stage of Pantalone, where he has a high status in society, yet he is greedy for more. This stage does not remain for long in his life.

Alas! The last stage comes for him to go through oblivion. No matter how hard he tries to remember things, he is just not able to. When he enters old-age, he turns into a child again. Slowly, he begins losing his teeth, his vision, the taste in his mouth and the love or greed for everything that he once wanted in his life.

***THE ROAD NOT TAKEN – ROBERT FROST***

Stanza 1

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveller, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

diverged: separated and took a different direction

yellow wood: a forest with decomposing leaves

undergrowth: dense growth of plants and bushes means the forest)

*Once the poet was walking down a road and then there was a diversion, there were two different paths and he had to choose one out them. The poet says that as he was one person, he could travel on one road only. He had to choose one out of these two roads Yellow wood means a forest with leaves which are wearing out and they have turned yellow in colour – the season of autumn. It represents a world which is full of people, where people have been living for many years. They represent people who are older than the poet. The poet kept standing there and looked at the path very carefully as far as he could see it. Before taking the path, he wanted to know how it was. Was it suitable for him or no. He was able to see the path till from where it curved after which it was covered with trees and was hidden. It happens in our life also when we have choices, we have alternatives, but we have to choose only one out of them, we take time to think about the pros and cons, whether it is suitable for us or not and only then, we take a decision on what path we should choose.*

Stanza 2

Then took the other, just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same.

fair: As good as the other one,

claim: Better option

grassy: unused

wanted wear: had not been used

*The poet kept on looking at one path for a long time to check if it is the right path for him or not and them he decided and started walking on another path because he felt that the both paths were equally good. He says just as fair, so, he felt that both paths were equally good and started walking on one of them. He adds that maybe he felt that the path was better for him so he chooses it as it had grass on it which means that it was unused. Not many people had walked on this path earlier that is why this path was grassy. ‘And wanted wear’ means that it was not walked over by many people. After he walked on the path for some distance, he realized that both the paths had been worm out the same way. Both the paths were similar and worn out.  Even in our life, we take any path or option but all of them have the same benefits, disadvantages, problems, challenges and we must face them. We think that we are choosing a better option, but it is not that way.*

Stanza 3

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

trodden means walked over.

*The poet says that both the paths were similar that morning. Both had leaves on them and no one had stepped on them as they were still green in colour. He decided that that day he would take one path and keep the other path for another day, although he knew that one way leads on to another way. He knew that he could not go back on the choice that he had made. Similarly, even in our life once we choose an option, we must keep on moving ahead with that option and we never get a chance to come back and take the other option that we had left earlier.*

Stanza 4

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence;

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —

I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

sigh: deep breath

hence: here, in the future

*He says that in the future, he will take a deep breath and say that once upon a time, he had reached such a point in life that there were two options for him and he travelled on that road which had been travelled upon by lesser number of people. That decision of his decided his future. Similarly, in future, when you grow up, then you will say that once upon a time, when you were young, you had two options. The choice that you made, made you what you became of it. This is a very strong message for all the students - that you should be wise and be careful while making choices out of the options that you have in your life because your future depends on the choice that you make today.*

 5.Repetition: ‘Ages’ is repeated. ‘Two roads diverged in a wood’- this sentence is repeated in stanzas 1 and 4.

**Question and Answers**

1. Where does the traveller find himself? What problem does he face?

A. The traveller finds himself standing on a fork in the path. He is in a problem as he must choose one path and is unable to decide which one to choose.

2. Discuss what these phrases mean to you.

(i) a yellow wood

A. ‘Yellow wood’ refers to the forest which has withering leaves as in the season of autumn. It represents a world full of aging people.

(ii) it was grassy and wanted wear

A. It means that the path had a lot of grass on it. This means that it had not been walked over by many people. It had to be worn out by the steps of the people who walked on it.

(iii) the passing there

A. It means that when he walked over the path that he had chosen.

(iv) leaves no step had trodden black

A. It means that no one had walked over the leaves as they were still green. If they had been walked over, they would have turned black.

(v) how way leads on to way

A. It means that as we walk on a path, we come across more options and make choices further. We keep on walking ahead on that way.

3. Is there any difference between the two roads as the poet describes them

(i) in stanzas two and three?

A. The two paths were similar. In the beginning, the poet felt that one of them was grassy and had not been walked over by many people, but when he walked on it for some distance, he realized that it was like the other road.

(ii) in the last two lines of the poem?

A. Here, again the poet talks of his initial decision when he thought that the roads were different and chose the one that had been walked over by a lesser number of people.

**UNIT – II**

***ODE TO THE WEST WIND – P.B.SHELLEY***

### Summary

The speaker invokes the “wild West Wind” of autumn, which scatters the dead leaves and spreads seeds so that they may be nurtured by the spring, and asks that the wind, a “destroyer and preserver,” hear him. The speaker calls the wind the “dirge / Of the dying year,” and describes how it stirs up violent storms, and again implores it to hear him. The speaker says that the wind stirs the Mediterranean from “his summer dreams,” and cleaves the Atlantic into choppy chasms, making the “sapless foliage” of the ocean tremble, and asks for a third time that it hear him.

The speaker says that if he were a dead leaf that the wind could bear, or a cloud it could carry, or a wave it could push, or even if he were, as a boy, “the comrade” of the wind’s “wandering over heaven,” then he would never have needed to pray to the wind and invoke its powers. He pleads with the wind to lift him “as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!”—for though he is like the wind at heart, untameable and proud—he is now chained and bowed with the weight of his hours upon the earth.

* **ODE TO THE WEST WIND**

[How does the poet end each of the final stanzas of parts 1, 2, and 3?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-does-the-poet-end-each-of-the-final-stanzas-2174069)

In the first stanza, the speaker personifies the west wind as the "breath of Autumn's being," and then proceeds to describe the power of the wind to scatter the autumn leaves. At the end of the...

[What is the breath of autumn in “Ode to the West Wind”?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-is-the-breath-of-autumn-in-ode-to-the-west-2140229)

In Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," autumn is personified as a living being, and the eponymous "West Wind" is described, metaphorically, as the "breath" of that being. In other words, the breath...

[How is the natural world being transformed in "Ode to the West Wind"? How is the speaker being transformed?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-is-the-natural-world-being-transformed-in-ode-2159889)

Throughout most of the poem, the natural world is transforming to winter. The most obvious transformation that the speaker notes is the west wind becoming powerful and blowing the leaves off the...

[Discuss Shelley's idea of spiritual and imaginative force with reference to Ode to the West Wind.](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/discuss-shelley-s-idea-of-spiritual-and-2100829)

In his "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley describes nature as a spiritual force that spreads itself across the planet. He addresses nature as a "wild spirit," depicting it as a moving force that...

[What is the central image in each of the first three cantos of Ode to the West Wind by Percy Bysshe Shelley?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-central-image-each-first-three-sections-ode-135765)

The central image of the first section of this poem is death. The section talks about ghosts and graves and corpses and pestilence. The wind is like death, sweeping away all life. To me, at...

[How are sections 4 and 5 different in tone and emphasis from the first three in "Ode to the West Wind"?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-are-sections-4-and-5-different-in-tone-and-2071531)

In the first three sections of the ode, Shelley apostrophizes the West Wind in order to define it. Only in sections 4 and 5 does the speaker bring himself into this fantastic scenario of nature's...

[How are the leaves and clouds affected by the wind?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/how-are-the-leaves-and-clouds-affected-by-the-wind-2037737)

The autumn leaves, falling from the trees, are blown all over by the wind. The poem compares the wind to a chariot, carrying the leaves everywhere. Meanwhile, the wind blows around the clouds that...

[In the poem "Ode to the West Wind," the poet has personified the west wind. Whom do you think the poet has personified the west wind as?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/in-the-poem-ode-to-the-west-wind-the-poet-has-183493)

In "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley does indeed use personification to describe the west wind; however, what Shelley personifies the wind as shifts throughout the poem. At the start of the poem,...

[What stages of life do spring, summer, and winter stand for in the poem?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-stages-of-life-do-spring-summer-and-winter-1992469)

Spring in Shelley's poem stands for a time of new growth, when the seeds dropped in the autumn begin to come to renewed life. Summer is time of dreams, when everything is coming to a beautiful...

[What message does Shelly want to give in the last two stanzas in of "Ode to the West Wind"?](https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-message-does-shelly-want-to-give-in-the-last-1869912)

In the penultimate stanza of "Ode to the West Wind," Shelley implores the wind to "Scatter" his words like "Ashes and sparks" from a fire to an "unawakened Earth

**LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI – JOHN KEATS**

### Stanza 1, Lines 1-4

*"O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*
*Alone and palely loitering?*
*The sedge has wither'd from the lake,*
*And no birds sing.*

* + The poem opens with a question: an unnamed speaker asks a "knight at arms" what's wrong, or what's "ail[ing]" him.
	+ Something is clearly wrong with the knight – he's "loitering" by himself around the edge of a lake, and he's "pale."
	+ The speaker says that the "sedge," or marsh plants, have all died out from around the lake, and "no birds sing." So we're guessing that it's autumn or even early winter since all the birds have migrated, and the plants have "withered."
	+ The presence of the "knight at arms" reminds us of medieval fairy tales with knights and ladies in towers. We think that this is the response Keats intended

### Stanza 2, Lines 5-8

*"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*
*So haggard and so woe-begone?*
*The squirrel's granary is full,*
*And the harvest's done.*

* + The first part of the stanza echoes the first line of the poem word-for-word. Apparently the knight doesn't answer immediately, so the unnamed speaker has to repeat the question.
	+ This time, we get two more adjectives to describe the knight: he's "haggard," or worn-out and tired-looking, and "woe-begone." The knight is obviously both sick and depressed.
	+ The last two lines of the stanza do more to set the scene: the squirrels have finished filling up their "granary," or storage of food for the winter, and the crops have already been harvested.
	+ We can now safely assume that it's late autumn.

### Stanzas 3 & 4

### Stanza 3, Lines 9-12

*"I see a lily on thy brow*
*With anguish moist and fever-dew.*
*And on thy cheeks a fading rose*
*Fast withereth too."*

* + The speaker continues to address this sick, depressed "knight at arms." He asks about the "lily" on the knight's "brow," suggesting that the knight's face is pale like a lily.
	+ The knight's forehead is sweaty with "anguish" and with "fever," so he's obviously sick.
	+ The last two lines of the stanza describe how the healthy color is rapidly "fading" from the knight's cheeks.

### Stanza 4, Lines 13-16

*"I met a lady in the meads,*
*Full beautiful – a faery's child,*
*Her hair was long, her foot was light,*
*And her eyes were wild.*

* + This stanza changes point of view.
	+ All of a sudden, the knight answers the unnamed speaker's questions. So now the "I" is the knight, rather than the original speaker.
	+ The knight says that he met a beautiful, fairy-like "lady" in the "meads," or fields.
	+ She had long hair, was graceful, and had "wild" eyes. (We're not sure what "wild" eyes would look like, but apparently the knight thought it was attractive.)

### Stanzas 5 & 6

### Stanza 5, Lines 17-20

*"I made a garland for her head,*
*And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;*
*She look'd at me as she did love,*
*And made sweet moan.*

* + The knight made a flower wreath, or "garland," for the lady, along with flower "bracelets."
	+ The "fragrant zone" is a belt made of flowers.
	+ We get the idea that the knight decks out the maiden with flowers.
	+ "Fragrant zone" could also be a reference to her lady parts, which would make sense, given where the next two lines go.
	+ And where do the next two lines go? Well, the lady is "look[ing]" at the knight while "lov[ing]" and "moan[ing]," so we think that they two are having sex.

### Stanza 6, Lines 21-24

*"I set her on my pacing steed,*
*And nothing else saw all day long;*
*For sidelong would she bend, and sing*
*A faery's song.*

* + The knight puts the lady on his horse (his "pacing steed") to take a ride. Yes, there might be sexy connotations to this line, too.
	+ The knight is so absorbed with his erotic encounter with this fairy lady that he doesn't notice anything else "all day long."
	+ The lady leans "sidelong," or sideways off of the horse and sings "fairy songs" to the knight.

### Stanzas 7 & 8

### Stanza 7, Lines 25-28

*"She found me roots of relish sweet,*
*And honey wild and manna-dew;*
*And sure in language strange she said,*
*'I love thee true.'*

* + The knight says that the fairy lady found him tasty roots, honey, and manna to eat ("of relish sweet").
	+ "Manna" is the food that the Jewish scriptures say that the Israelites ate when they were wandering around the desert after Moses freed them from slavery in Egypt. It's supposed to be food from heaven, so this word makes the fairy lady seem supernatural, if not actually divine.
	+ Alternatively, the association could be with the slavery from which the Israelites had just been freed. After all, the knight does become enslaved to the beautiful fairy lady. This allusion becomes even more potent when it's associated with the "honey wild" that the fairy lady fed the knight. (The Israelites were trying to find the Promised Land, which would flow with "milk and honey.")
	+ The fairy lady tells the knight that she loves him, but she says it "in language strange."
	+ He doesn't say what language it is, or how he's able to understand her. Maybe he's just hearing what he wants to hear, or maybe her magical influence has enabled him to understand her "language strange."

### Stanza 8, Lines 29-32

*"She took me to her elfin grot,*
*And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;*
*And there I shut her wild, wild eyes*
*With kisses four.*

* + The fairy lady takes the knight to her "elfin grot." "Elfin" just means having to do with elves, as any Tolkien fans probably figured. And a "grot" is a grotto, or cave.
	+ Once they're back at her fairy cave, she cries and sighs loudly. The knight doesn't say why she's crying, and we never find out – it's left to our imagination.
	+ The knight kisses her weepy eyes four times. (Why "four" kisses? Isn't "three" usually the magic number in fairy tales? )
	+ Again, her eyes are described as "wild," and this time it's repeated twice.

### Stanzas 9 & 10

### Stanza 9, Lines 33-36

*"And there she lullèd me asleep,*
*And there I dream'd – ah! woe betide!*
*The latest dream I ever dream'd*
*On the cold hill's side.*

* + The fairy lady "lulls" the knight to sleep like a baby in her cave, and he starts to dream something.
	+ He interrupts himself with a dash – in line 34, and exclaims "Ah! woe betide!" because even the memory of the dream is horrible as he repeats it to the unnamed speaker.
	+ "Woe betide!" is an archaic exclamation used to express extreme grief or suffering. It was old-fashioned even when Keats was writing.
	+ The knight's use of this expression emphasizes the medieval romance setting.
	+ The knight's dream in the fairy cave is the "latest," or last, dream he'll ever have.

### Stanza 10, Lines 37-40

*"I saw pale kings and princes too,*
*Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:*
*They cried, 'La belle Dame sans Merci*
*Hath thee in thrall!'*

* + The knight describes the dream he had: he saw "kings," "princes," and "warriors, and they were all "death pale." In fact, he repeats the word "pale" three times in two lines.
	+ This procession of "pale" men could be an allusion to the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse that gets described in the Book of Revelation in the Christian bible. The fourth horseman is Death, and he rides on a pale horse.
	+ The pale warriors, princes, and kings all cry out in unison that "La belle dame sans merci" has the knight "in thrall," or in bondage.
	+ Line 39 has the title of the poem in it, so it's time to translate it. The title is French and it translates to "the beautiful woman without mercy."
	+ (If you want to know more about the title, go to the "What's Up With the Title?" section, and then come back.)

### Stanzas 11 & 12

### Stanza 11, Lines 41-44

*"I saw their starved lips in the gloam*
*With horrid warning gapèd wide*
*And I awoke and found me here*
*On the cold hill's side.*

* + The knight continues to describe the pale warriors from his dream – in the "gloam," or dusk, all he can make out are their "lips."
	+ Their mouths are "starv'd" and hungry-looking, and their mouths are all open as they cry out their warning to the knight.
	+ The word "gloam" just means dusk or twilight, but it's no accident that Keats uses it – after all, "gloam" sounds a lot like "gloom."
	+ The knight wakes up from the dream alone and cold on the side of a hill.

### Stanza 12, Lines 45-48

*"And this is why I sojourn here*
*Alone and palely loitering,*
*Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,*
*And no birds sing."*

* + The knight has finished his story. He tells the original, unnamed speaker, that this is why he's hanging out ("sojourn[ing]" and "loitering") by himself, even though it's so dismal outside.
	+ The knight repeats the unnamed speaker's words from the first stanza, so that the poem ends with almost exactly the same stanza with which it began.

## UNIT III ULYSSES

* Ulysses expresses frustration at how dull and pointless his life now seems as king of Ithaca, trapped at home on the rocky island of Ithaca. His wife is old, and he must spend his time enforcing imperfect laws as he attempts to govern people he considers stupid and uncivilized. In Ulysses's eyes, all his people do is try to store up wealth, sleep, and eat. They have no conception of who Ulysses really is or what his life has been like. Ulysses still yearns to travel the world like he used to do. As long as he's alive, he doesn't want to stop doing the things that, in his eyes, make life worth living. He found joy, he claims, in every moment he spent traveling, even at the times when he was suffering. He found joy both when he was with his faithful crew members and when he was by himself; both when he was on land and when he was sailing the sea through rainstorms. He has become famous throughout the world as an explorer who was continually traveling and yearning to know more. Ulysses reflects that he has seen and learned a great deal about all the places where people live, about their lifestyles, cultures, and ways of governing themselves. Everywhere he went, he was shown honor and respect. Ulysses also found joy fighting alongside his fellow soldiers, men he honored and respected, when he fought in battles far from home in the Trojan War. Ulysses feels that each person and place he has encountered has been changed by the encounter, as has he himself. But all these experiences have not satisfied his desire for travel; rather, each encounter has only whetted his appetite to see more of the world. No matter how much of the world he sees, there is always still more to see, and it is these unseen regions that he always tries to pursue. Ulysses exclaims that it is boring and unsatisfying to stay in one place and stop doing the activities that defined your life, comparing himself to a sword that has been allowed to rust uselessly away rather than being used gloriously in battle. Merely being alive doesn't mean you are truly living. Ulysses feels that multiple lifetimes would still have been too little time to do all he wishes to do, and he is almost at the end of the one lifetime he has. Still, every hour that he has left to live before he dies has the potential to bring new opportunities for action. It would be disgraceful, he feels, to sit tight at home and just try to eat and stay alive for a few more years, when, even as an old man, his greatest desire is still to explore the world and keep learning more. He wants to go beyond the limits of what humans have seen and known, the way a shooting star seems to go beyond the horizon when it falls and disappears from sight.

Ulysses then starts to describe his son, Telemachus, who will inherit Ulysses's role as ruler of the island when Ulysses dies. Ulysses affirms that he loves his son, who is conscientious and thoughtful about how he will best carry out his responsibilities as ruler. With patience and judgement, Telemachus will work to civilize the fierce, wild people of Ithaca and make them more gentle, and gradually teach them to devote their lives to productive civic activities. Ulysses cannot find any faults in Telemachus; he devotes his life to the responsibilities of his role, he pays proper respect to his people and his parents, and after his father dies, he will continue offering appropriate sacrifices to the gods that Ulysses most honored. Telemachus is well suited for the role of ruler—just as Ulysses is well suited for a different role, the role of explorer.

Ulysses looks out towards the port, where the wind is blowing in the sails of his ship and where he can see the wide, dark sea. He now addresses his former crew, the men who worked alongside him and explored the world and gained new knowledge with him. He reminds them that they always accepted joyfully whatever their travels would bring, whether trouble or good luck, and proudly faced every obstacle with resolution and bravery. Ulysses then acknowledges that both he and they have grown older, but insists that even as old men, they can still work do hard work and earn respect. Soon they will die and their chance to do great deeds will be over; but before they die, they can still accomplish something heroic, something fitting for men that once battled the gods. The people of Ithaca are beginning to light lamps in their homes; night is falling; the moon is rising in the sky; the waves of the sea are murmuring almost as if they are speaking to Ulysses. Ulysses urges his crew, as his friends, to join him on one last voyage—even now, they're not too old to explore some unknown region of the world. He invites them to board a ship, push away from shore, and man the oars so they can beat the waves; because Ulysses still has the goal of sailing past the horizon, as far as he can go, before he ultimately dies. He acknowledges that the waves may sink their ship; but they may also find their way to the place where the souls of the blessed go after death. There, they might even see their old companion, the accomplished warrior Achilles. Many of their heroic qualities have been diminished by old age, but they haven't been lost completely. They don't have the same strength or physical prowess they possessed as younger men fighting epic, world-changing battles; but inside, Ulysses declares, they are ultimately the same men they always were. Their minds and hearts are still brave and composed in the face of danger and obstacles. Their bodies have been weakened by old age, something all human beings are destined to face, but their spirits are as strong as ever. They remain determined to work hard, to pursue their goals and accomplish them, and to never give up.

**MY LAST DUCHESS - ROBERT BROWNING**

This poem is loosely based on historical events involving Alfonso, the Duke of Ferrara, who lived in the 16th century. The Duke is the speaker of the poem, and tells us he is entertaining an emissary who has come to negotiate the Duke’s marriage (he has recently been widowed) to the daughter of another powerful family. As he shows the visitor through his palace, he stops before a portrait of the late Duchess, apparently a young and lovely girl. The Duke begins reminiscing about the portrait sessions, then about the Duchess herself. His musings give way to a diatribe on her disgraceful behavior: he claims she flirted with everyone and did not appreciate his “gift of a nine-hundred-years- old name.” As his monologue continues, the reader realizes with ever-more chilling certainty that the Duke in fact caused the Duchess’s early demise: when her behavior escalated, “[he] gave commands; / Then all smiles stopped together.” Having made this disclosure, the Duke returns to the business at hand: arranging for another marriage, with another young girl. As the Duke and the emissary walk leave the painting behind, the Duke points out other notable artworks in his collection.

**UNIT – IV**

**A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER – W.B.YEATS**

SUMMARY:
Stanza 1:
A violent, dreadful storm is blazing outside. The poet says that the ‘haystack and roof-leveling wind’ is blowing directly from the Atlantic but is obstructed by just one naked hill and the woods of Gregory’s estate. The poet then introduces her infant daughter who is sleeping in her cradle, well protected from the assaults of the dreadful storm that is raging outside. The poet keeps pacing the cradle up and down while praying for her daughter because a storm has been raging in his soul too. He is worried for his daughter’s future and his mind is full of apprehension for the future of humanity.
Stanza 2:
In the following stanza, the poet describes the condition of the place the poet dwells in. The poet can hear the shrill sound of the sea-wind that is hitting the tower and below the arches of the bridge which connects the castle with the main road and in the elms above the flooded river. The poet has been praying for over an hour and he is disturbed by the shrill sound of the sea-wind. He is haunted by fear. The poet imagines the future, in course of his excitement and fear; that the future years have come out of the sea and it is dancing to the crazy beat of the drums. Like every affectionate and caring father, the poet is anxious for his infant daughter.
Stanza 3:
Now the poet talks about what he is praying for his daughter. He says he is praying that his daughter may be granted beauty but not so much that it disturbs or distracts others. The poet says that women who are very beautiful forget their natural kindness and are unable to accept sincere love. Thus, they fail to have an appropriate life partner and hence they remain unsatisfied.
Stanza 4:
Here the poet refers to the Greek mythological character, Helen. Helen was the beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda. She eloped with Prince Paris of Troy which led to the destruction of Troy. Aphrodite also married Hephaestus and betrayed him later on. In the same manner, Maud Gonne too had rejected Yeats’ proposal and had married a foolish man and was not happy with him. Yeats says that beautiful women are too proud and foolish and therefore they suffer and lead a miserable life.
Stanza 5:
The poet prays for his daughter that she should have something more than just bewitching beauty. She should be courteous. The poet believes that hearts can be won by the virtue of courtesy; even those who are not beautiful can win hearts by their courtesy. Maud Gonne was very beautiful and Yeats was a fool to believe that she loved him too. Later on he realized his mistake and he ultimately understood that it was courtesy and not beauty that won his heart.
Stanza 6:
The poet pleads that the soul of his daughter should flourish and reach self-fulfillment like a flourishing tree. Like the linnets, her life should be clustered around happy and pure thoughts. These little creatures are symbols of innocence and happiness that make others happy too. So he wishes his daughter to be happy within as well as keep others happy too.
Stanza 7:
The poet then talks about his own mind and heart. He says that on looking into his own heart, he finds hatred which has come because of the experience of life and the sort of beauty he loved. He prays for his daughter to keep away from such evils and says that if the soul is free from any kind of hatred, nothing can ruin one’s happiness and innocence.
Stanza 8:
The poet feels that intellectual hatred is the worst kind of hatred. He considers it as a great flaw in someone’s character. So he wants his daughter to shun any such kind of hatred or strong bitter feelings for anyone. He wants his daughter to avoid the weaknesses that Maud Gonne had. Maud Gonne’s good upbringing and charming beauty proved useless when she chose a worthless person for a husband.
Stanza 9:
The poet says if his daughter is free from this intellectual hatred, she will be a happy soul. She will have inner peace within herself. She will be able to keep herself and others happy even when she is going through hardships and misfortunes.
Stanza 10:
In the final stanza of “Prayer for My Daughter”, the poet prays that her daughter gets married to a good, aristocratic and decent family. He prays that she would get a husband from such a family who would take her to a house where the aristocratic traditions are followed. He wants his daughter to live a life on high, spiritual values. Arrogance and hatred should not be entertained there. He believes that in the atmosphere of custom and ceremony, real beauty and innocence can take place.

## “Journey of the Magi” Summary

* "It was freezing. We traveled at the worst time of the year, and it took us ages. The paths were difficult and the weather was horrible—it was a brutal winter." Our camels were in pain, unwilling to go on. They lay down in the snow. Me and the other magi missed the old days—the days of revelry in palaces, when beautiful women would bring us luxuries. The camel drivers were unreliable, full of complaints—some of them ran away, craving alcohol and women. Our fires kept going out and it was hard to find shelter. Wherever we went, the people seemed to dislike us. The villages we visited were filthy and lodging was expensive. It was a difficult journey. We decided to travel throughout the night, sleeping when we could. We heard voices telling us to stop being foolish and turn back.

Then one morning we arrived at a pleasant valley. It was damp but not snowy, and full of plant life. There was a stream and a water mill, and three trees on the horizon. We saw a white horse in a nearby meadow. We pulled up at a tavern with vines above the door. People asked us for money, and everyone there was drunk. No one gave us any useful information, so we continued along our way. That evening, we finally got to Bethlehem. It was, well... acceptable.

This all happened a long time ago, as I recall. If I had to, I would do it again. But write this down: did we undertake the journey for birth or death? We saw the baby Jesus, yes. I thought I knew birth and death, but I was wrong. Jesus's birth did not feel like a positive development, but something full of pain—like it represented our own death. We went back to our kingdoms and felt like we didn't belong there anymore, in the old ways. Our people seemed foreign to us, with their false idols. I would be happy to encounter another death.

**UNIT – V**

**THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN – W.H.AUDEN**

* The Unknown Citizen" is a deeply [**ironic**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/irony) poem that takes the form of a parody. These are words to mark the unveiling of a statue dedicated to a "citizen" known only by his identification number. The speech is meant to be a kind of [**elegy**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/elegy) commemorating this man's death and celebrate his exemplary life—which was exemplary only because he behaved exactly as the state wanted. Like a parasite, the state has taken hold a form usually meant to express deep emotion, sincere sentiment, and genuine regret, and instead uses it here to make tribute to somebody for their sheer conformity.

Though the poem is rhymed and has some metrical elements, the form is just one long stanza of 29 lines (with an epitaph at the beginning). This makes it quite prose-like—indeed, the poem avoids sounding beautiful or emotionally moving, and reads more like a presentation given in a conference room. Essentially, it is a list of all the thing the unknown citizen did right during his life, and the various ways that he was closely watched by the state. Two [**rhetorical questions**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/rhetorical-question) at the poem's end indicate that "freedom" and "happiness" are "absurd" concepts in this particular dystopia.

### Meter

"The Unknown Citizen" does use meter, but not in a particularly consistent way. The poem is based mostly around the **[anapest](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/anapest)**, which is a three-syllable foot that goes da-da-**DUM** (unstressed-unstressed-**stressed**). But there are variations in meter and line length throughout. Lines 9 and 10 come close to being purely anapestic (though both substitutions):

Yet he **was**- | n't a **scab** | or **odd** | in his **views**,
For his **U**- | nion re**ports** | that he **paid** | his **dues**,

The loosely anapestic sound gives the poem a sing-song quality, which is deliberately at odds with the supposedly serious occasion (this contrast between the poem's lighthearted tone and sinister content is part of the poem's overall [**irony**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/irony)). But the meter is intentionally clunky and cumbersome throughout the poem, giving it a stop-start feel too—as though the music of the poem is under constant interruption. That's because the poem is in the voice of a faceless bureaucrat, or the state itself—not a usual source of beautiful poetry. At times, the poem sounds more like a presentation than a tribute.

### Rhyme Scheme

"The Unknown Citizen" uses rhyme throughout, but there is no regular [**rhyme scheme**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/rhyme-scheme). Sometimes the poem uses rhymes one after another, creating neat and tidy couplets, and sometimes these rhymes sounds are more spread out. For example, line 8's end-word "Inc." doesn't chime with its partner until line 13 ("drink"). On the other hand, lines 6 and 7 rhyme together directly ("retired" and "fired").

Perhaps the rhyming is used to establish the poem's sense of [**irony**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/irony)—this is not a real elegy, but rather a mock one. It's a parody of what is usually a heartfelt expression of emotion—and the inability to emote properly is part of the state's problem (or what Auden sees as its problem). That is, the state doesn't really sympathize with the dead man—and so it's rhyming seems appropriately random and insincere.

That is, there's a massive disconnect between the almost frivolous rhyming sounds with the seriousness of the subject—which, after all, is a man's entire life. Again, take the aforementioned couplet in lines 6 and 7:

Except for the War till the day he**retired**
He worked in a factory and never got **fired**,

These lines account for the unknown citizen's whole career, but they sound more like a limerick or a nursery rhyme. If the speaker of the poem—the state itself or a state representative—sincerely admires the unknown citizen, perhaps they would strike a more somber tone in the discussion of his death.

Towards the end of the poem, three lines rhyme in a row (25-27):

He was married and added five children to the **population**,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his **generation**.
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their **education**.

These are distinctly unattractive rhymes, all relying on the ending "-tion." These make the lines read more like official documentation that has been turned into poetry in a way that fails to hide its original source. Remember, this is meant to be a tribute—but reads more like a bureaucratic report into the efficiency of human life.

The poem also uses some [**internal rhyme**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/internal-rhyme)/[**assonance**](https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/assonance) to build this tension between what is being said and the way it is being said. In line 5, for example, "h**e**" chimes with the end-word "Communit**y**," and in line 14 "p**a**per" links with "d**a**y." These just add to the oddly chirpy sound of the poem, deliberately used to highlight the inappropriateness of the speaker to the occasion.

"Night of the Scorpion

**Summary**

In "Night of the Scorpion," the speaker tells a story from his childhood in which his mother was bitten by a scorpion. The poem begins with a simple declaration: "I remember the night my mother / was stung by a scorpion" (1-2). The scorpion had entered the speaker's home because it wanted to hide from the rain. When it bit the speaker's mother, it was hiding beneath a sack of rice.

The speaker describes the incident in which the scorpion stings his mother without mentioning his mother at all. Instead, he focuses on the scorpion and what he did immediately afterward: "Parting with his poison—flash / of diabolic tail in the dark room— / he risked the rain again" (5-7). Rather than stick around and look at the scene he had caused, the scorpion ran back outdoors.

After the speaker's mother was bitten, the speaker notes that poor people went to his mother's side "like swarms of flies," buzzing with Christianity and hoping to kill one of their visions of Satan (8). The peasants look for the scorpion on their hands and knees with lanterns. Their wish is to find the scorpion quickly because they believe that every movement the scorpion makes without getting killed affects the speaker's mother: "With every movement that the scorpion made his poison moved in Mother's / blood, they said" (16-18).

The peasants begin to share good wishes for the speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion will die that night, or at least sit still, that the sins of her past life will be burned away, and that she may return to an even better life in her next life because of her suffering.

The peasants continue making wishes for the speaker's mother, wishing that the forces of evil might be diminished by the speaker's mother's pain. They sat on the floor around the speaker's mother, hoping that the scorpion's bite would "purify" her, with "the peace of understanding on each face" (29).

As more people come to visit the speaker's mother, the speaker takes in his surroundings: "More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, / more insects, and the endless rain" (30-31). The speaker's mother, oblivious to it all, spent this time suffering and twisting on a mat.

The speaker turns his attention to his father, who he describes as a "sceptic" and "rationalist" (34). The speaker notes that even his father is making an effort to help his mother in any way that he knows how, which means turning towards that which he wouldn't otherwise believe: "trying every curse and blessing, / powder, mixture, herb and hybrid" (35-36). The speaker's father even lit the bite on fire in an attempt to remove the poison.

The speaker's mother suffered for 20 hours. Her only response at the end of it all was her gratitude that it didn't happen to anyone else in their family: "My mother only said / Thank God the scorpion picked on me / And spared my children" (43-5).