

# **ASM TUITION ACADEMY**

## **LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY**

### **Love's Philosophy**

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains mingle with the river  
And the rivers with the ocean,  
The winds of heaven mix forever  
With a sweet emotion;  
Nothing in the world is single,  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle—  
Why not I with thine?

See, the mountains kiss high heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another;  
No sister-flower would be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother;  
And the sunlight clasps the earth,  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—  
What are all these kissing's worth,  
If thou kiss not me?

### **Context of *Love's Philosophy* by Percy Bysshe Shelley**

*Love's Philosophy* was written by Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1820 and reflects the Romantic ideals that were central to his writing. As a Romantic poet, Shelley emphasized a deep connection with nature, emotions, and the individual's relationship with the world. In this poem, Shelley uses nature as a metaphor to explore human relationships, particularly romantic love. The poem was written during a time when Shelley was known for his rebellious, non-conventional views on love, which often challenged societal norms.

The poem presents a speaker who passionately argues for love and physical connection, using the natural world as evidence that everything in the universe is interconnected. The speaker's logic is simple: if everything in nature is paired and united, then human beings should also seek connection with one another, specifically through romantic or physical love. This makes the poem both a personal plea and an expression of the broader Romantic view of unity between the human soul and the natural world.

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### **Themes of *Love's Philosophy***

#### **1. Love and Unity**

- The main theme of the poem is the idea that love is a natural force that connects everything in the world. The speaker argues that just as elements in

nature (rivers, oceans, winds) come together, so too should human beings in love. The unity of nature serves as a metaphor for the union of souls and bodies in romantic relationships.

- **Example:** "Nothing in the world is single, / All things by a law divine."
  - 2. **Nature as a Reflection of Human Emotion**
    - Shelley uses nature to reflect human emotions and desires, a common theme in Romantic poetry. The speaker sees the natural world as a mirror of their longing for a romantic union. Natural elements such as rivers, oceans, mountains, and flowers are personified to represent love and connection, emphasizing that the desire for union is universal and divine.
    - **Example:** "The fountains mingle with the river / And the rivers with the ocean."
  - 3. **The Frustration of Unrequited Love**
    - Beneath the speaker's argument for love and connection is an underlying sense of frustration. The rhetorical questions in the poem suggest that the speaker's love is not reciprocated. The speaker laments that while everything in nature is connected, they are left without the romantic union they desire.
    - **Example:** "What are all these kissing's worth, / If thou kiss not me?"
  - 4. **The Natural and Divine Laws of Love**
    - The speaker suggests that love is a "law divine" — something ordained by a higher power and reflected in the natural world. By framing love as a divine and universal force, the speaker tries to make a persuasive case that romantic and physical union is a natural and moral imperative.
    - **Example:** "All things by a law divine / In one another's being mingle."
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## Grammatical Techniques in *Love's Philosophy*

1. **Personification**
  - Shelley personifies elements of nature to illustrate the theme of romantic unity. By attributing human characteristics to fountains, rivers, mountains, and waves, the speaker emphasizes the natural interconnectedness of all things and uses it to justify human love and connection.
  - **Examples:**
    - "The mountains kiss high heaven"
    - "The waves clasp one another"
    - "The sunlight clasps the earth"
2. **Repetition**
  - Repetition is used to reinforce the speaker's argument that everything in nature is connected. The word "mingle" is repeated to emphasize the natural pairing of elements, and words like "kiss" and "clasp" appear multiple times to illustrate physical union.
  - **Example:** "The fountains mingle with the river / And the rivers with the ocean."
3. **Rhetorical Questions**
  - The poem concludes both stanzas with rhetorical questions, which reflect the speaker's frustration and attempt to persuade their lover to reciprocate their feelings. These questions highlight the speaker's emotional plea, as they challenge the lover to recognize the natural logic of love.

- **Example:** "Why not I with thine?" and "What are all these kissing's worth, / If thou kiss not me?"
4. **Parallelism**
- The poem uses parallelism to compare natural phenomena with human relationships. This technique helps to create balance in the poem and draws direct connections between the way elements of nature interact and the speaker's desire for human connection.
  - **Example:** "The fountains mingle with the river / And the rivers with the ocean."
5. **Rhyming Couplet**
- Each stanza ends with a rhyming couplet, giving the poem a sense of resolution and emphasizing the speaker's final plea. The rhyme scheme is ABABCD, and the rhyming couplets at the end of each stanza create a sense of closure and urgency.
  - **Example:** "In one another's being mingle— / Why not I with thine?"
6. **Alliteration**
- Shelley uses alliteration to create a musical, rhythmic quality in the poem, which reinforces its lyrical nature. The repetition of consonant sounds also emphasizes key ideas within the lines.
  - **Example:** "The winds of heaven mix forever" (repetition of 'w' sound).
7. **Metaphor**
- The entire poem is built on an extended metaphor where natural elements symbolize human relationships. The speaker equates the mingling of rivers and oceans, the "kiss" of mountains and heaven, and the "clasp" of waves with the act of romantic and physical connection between lovers.
  - **Example:** "The waves clasp one another" as a metaphor for human love and unity.

## Conclusion

*Love's Philosophy* by Percy Bysshe Shelley is a passionate and persuasive argument for love and physical union, using nature as the speaker's primary metaphor for connection and intimacy. Through the themes of unity, nature's reflection of human emotion, and the frustration of unrequited love, Shelley creates a poem that is both lyrical and emotional. The poem's grammatical techniques—such as personification, repetition, and rhetorical questions—reinforce the speaker's central message: that love is a natural and divine force, and all things, including human beings, are meant to be united.

## COMPARISON WITH,

### Farmer's bride

### Porphyria lover

A comparison of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Love's Philosophy*, Charlotte Mew's *The Farmer's Bride*, and Robert Browning's *Porphyria's Lover* reveals key similarities and differences in

how these poems explore the themes of love, desire, control, and emotional relationships. While all three poems deal with romantic love, they approach it in contrasting ways, particularly in how they depict power dynamics, emotional connection, and unreciprocated desire.

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## 1. Theme of Romantic Love and Desire

- **Love's Philosophy** (*Shelley*)  
In *Love's Philosophy*, the speaker expresses a longing for romantic and physical union, but this desire is presented as a natural and pure force. The speaker argues that love is a divine law reflected in the natural world, where everything is interconnected. There is no sense of control or power imbalance, just a plea for mutual affection and connection. The speaker's frustration at unreciprocated love is conveyed through rhetorical questions.
    - **Example:** "What are all these kissing's worth, / If thou kiss not me?"
  - **The Farmer's Bride** (*Mew*)  
In *The Farmer's Bride*, the theme of romantic love is more complex and darker. The farmer's bride is terrified of him, and although he desires her, she is emotionally and physically distant. The farmer expresses a strong desire for his wife, but there is an element of control and frustration in his portrayal of the relationship. The power imbalance is clear: the bride has no voice, and her fear emphasizes the lack of emotional connection between them.
    - **Example:** "She turned afraid / Of love and me and all things human."
  - **Porphyria's Lover** (*Browning*)  
In *Porphyria's Lover*, love and desire take on an even more sinister tone. The speaker's obsession with control and dominance over Porphyria culminates in him killing her to preserve the moment of love and intimacy. The theme of love is intertwined with possessiveness and power. Unlike *Love's Philosophy*, where love is seen as something pure and mutual, *Porphyria's Lover* presents love as possessive and destructive.
    - **Example:** "That moment she was mine, mine, fair, / Perfectly pure and good."
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## 2. Unrequited Love and Frustration

- **Love's Philosophy**  
In *Love's Philosophy*, the speaker is frustrated because their romantic feelings are not reciprocated. The speaker uses nature as a metaphor to justify why they should be together, arguing that everything in nature finds a partner, and therefore, they should too. However, the frustration is emotional rather than destructive, and the tone remains hopeful and pleading.
  - **Example:** "Why not I with thine?"
- **The Farmer's Bride**  
The farmer in *The Farmer's Bride* experiences unrequited love in a more disturbing way. His bride is not only unresponsive but is actively fearful of him. This unrequited love leads to the farmer feeling increasingly frustrated and isolated. Unlike the

speaker in *Love's Philosophy*, the farmer's frustration is tinged with a desire to control his wife, and his feelings become increasingly obsessive.

- **Example:** "What's Christmas-time without there be / Some other in the house than we!"
  - **Porphyria's Lover**

In *Porphyria's Lover*, the speaker's unrequited love takes a violent turn. Porphyria expresses affection for the speaker, but he perceives that her love may not be fully committed, leading him to take extreme action to preserve her affection forever. His frustration leads him to kill her so that she cannot leave or assert any independence, making his love twisted and possessive.

    - **Example:** "I found / A thing to do, and all her hair / In one long yellow string I wound / Three times her little throat around."
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### 3. Power and Control

- **Love's Philosophy**

In *Love's Philosophy*, the speaker makes an emotional argument for mutual love but does not seek to control the other person. The speaker's desire for connection is expressed as a plea rather than a demand, and there is no sense of power or dominance in the relationship. The focus is on natural harmony and balance, suggesting an equal partnership.

    - **Example:** "All things by a law divine / In one another's being mingle."
  - **The Farmer's Bride**

The theme of control is central to *The Farmer's Bride*. The farmer expects his wife to fulfil her marital role, but when she does not, he becomes increasingly frustrated and desperate. The farmer's control over his bride is emphasized by the fact that she has no voice in the poem, and her fear of him suggests an imbalance of power. The farmer's control is not only physical but emotional, as he attempts to dominate her through his expectations and desires.

    - **Example:** "We chased her, flying like a hare."
  - **Porphyria's Lover**

In *Porphyria's Lover*, the speaker's need for control is extreme and ultimately fatal. The speaker feels powerless in the relationship because Porphyria has the ability to come and go as she pleases. In an attempt to assert absolute control, the speaker kills Porphyria, ensuring that she remains with him forever. This act of murder highlights the toxic and possessive nature of the speaker's love.

    - **Example:** "That moment she was mine, mine, fair, / Perfectly pure and good."
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### 4. Tone and Mood

- **Love's Philosophy**

The tone of *Love's Philosophy* is passionate and pleading. The speaker uses soft, natural imagery and rhetorical questions to persuade the subject of the poem to reciprocate their love. The mood is one of yearning, with a hint of frustration, but it remains hopeful. The speaker sees love as something natural and beautiful, which should be mutually experienced.

- **Example:** "See, the mountains kiss high heaven, / And the waves clasp one another."
  - **The Farmer's Bride**  
The tone of *The Farmer's Bride* is tense and melancholic, with underlying notes of frustration and longing. The farmer's sense of isolation and unfulfilled desire permeates the poem, creating a mood of despair. His inability to connect with his bride emotionally or physically makes the poem feel oppressive, and the reader senses his growing obsession and frustration.
    - **Example:** "I've hardly heard her speak at all."
  - **Porphyria's Lover**  
The tone in *Porphyria's Lover* starts calm but quickly turns sinister. The speaker's detachment from the murder he commits adds to the poem's eerie and unsettling mood. There is a clear shift from affection to violence, with the speaker rationalizing his actions as a way to maintain control and preserve his love. The mood becomes dark and disturbing as the speaker describes the murder and its aftermath with a chilling calmness.
    - **Example:** "No pain felt she; / I am quite sure she felt no pain."
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## 5. Use of Nature and Imagery

- **Love's Philosophy**  
Nature is central to the speaker's argument in *Love's Philosophy*. The speaker draws on natural imagery to justify the idea that love and union are natural, inevitable forces. The imagery of rivers, oceans, winds, and mountains personifies elements of nature to symbolize the interconnectedness of all things, suggesting that human relationships should follow the same principles.
    - **Example:** "The fountains mingle with the river / And the rivers with the ocean."
  - **The Farmer's Bride**  
Nature in *The Farmer's Bride* is used to reflect the emotional distance between the farmer and his bride. The imagery of wild animals (e.g., the bride running like a hare) and the seasons (e.g., the coldness of winter) symbolize the bride's fear and the farmer's frustration. Nature also serves to emphasize the farmer's rural life, where isolation intensifies his feelings of loneliness.
    - **Example:** "We chased her, flying like a hare."
  - **Porphyria's Lover**  
Nature in *Porphyria's Lover* mirrors the tumultuous emotions of the speaker. The poem opens with a stormy, unsettling natural scene that reflects the speaker's inner turmoil. However, once Porphyria enters, the setting becomes calm, as though her presence brings peace. After the murder, the calmness in the setting contrasts sharply with the violent act that has taken place.
    - **Example:** "The rain set early in tonight, / The sullen wind was soon awake."
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## Conclusion

*Love's Philosophy*, *The Farmer's Bride*, and *Porphyria's Lover* all explore romantic relationships, but they approach the subject of love in very different ways. *Love's Philosophy* presents a hopeful, emotional plea for mutual love, using nature as a metaphor for the interconnectedness of the world. By contrast, *The Farmer's Bride* and *Porphyria's Lover* both explore darker, more troubling aspects of love, where control and power dynamics overshadow mutual affection. *The Farmer's Bride* focuses on the farmer's unrequited desire and the imbalance of power in his marriage, while *Porphyria's Lover* delves into the extreme possessiveness that leads to violence and death.

The way each poem uses nature and tone reflects the different approaches to love: Shelley's vision is one of harmony and unity, while Mew and Browning present love as something more complex, involving fear, control, and obsession.

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