

ASM TUITION ACADEMY

SHE WALKS IN A BEAUTY

She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Summary of "She Walks in Beauty"

In this poem, Byron expresses his admiration for a woman's beauty, which he describes as harmonious and balanced between darkness and light. The opening line compares the woman's beauty to a clear, starlit night, suggesting that her beauty is both radiant and mysterious. Byron emphasizes how the best qualities of light and dark meet in her eyes, creating a "tender light" that is more gentle and subtle than the brightness of the day.

As the poem continues, Byron describes the delicate balance of the woman's physical features, noting how even a small change in shade or light would diminish her grace. Her "raven tress" (black hair) and serene expression convey an inner purity and sweetness that match her outward beauty.

In the final stanza, Byron highlights the connection between her outward appearance and her virtuous character. The calm and soft expression on her face reflects a peaceful mind and a pure heart. Her beauty is not just physical but also a reflection of her moral goodness, innocence, and inner peace.

Analysis of "She Walks in Beauty"

"**She Walks in Beauty**" is a celebration of the unity between a woman's external beauty and her inner goodness. Byron describes the woman in terms that merge the physical with the spiritual, emphasizing her perfection and balance.

1. Theme of Beauty:

- Byron focuses on the harmonious balance of opposites (light and dark, physical and spiritual) in his portrayal of the woman. He suggests that true beauty is not merely physical but is a reflection of one's soul and inner qualities. The poem contrasts the brightness of day with the "tender light" of night, implying that the woman's beauty is both subtle and profound.

2. Tone and Mood:

- The tone of the poem is one of quiet admiration and reverence. Byron speaks of the woman with awe, appreciating her as an ideal of grace and beauty. The mood is serene and contemplative, filled with gentle admiration rather than passionate desire.

3. Contrast between Light and Dark:

- One of the poem's central contrasts is between light and dark. Byron uses this contrast to describe the woman's beauty, highlighting how her features bring together the best qualities of both. The night, often associated with mystery or danger, is here transformed into something peaceful and beautiful. The balance between light and dark symbolizes both her physical appearance and her moral virtues.

4. Unity of Physical and Spiritual Beauty:

- Throughout the poem, Byron suggests that the woman's outward appearance is a reflection of her inner goodness. Her calm expression and serene demeanour indicate that she possesses not only physical grace but also a "mind at peace" and "a heart whose love is innocent." Byron praises her beauty not just for its superficial qualities but as a manifestation of her moral purity.

Poetic Devices in "She Walks in Beauty"

1. Simile:

- Byron begins the poem with a powerful **simile**, comparing the woman's beauty to "the night / Of cloudless climes and starry skies." This simile immediately establishes a connection between the woman's appearance and nature, implying that her beauty is as natural and effortless as the night sky.

Example:

"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;"

2. Alliteration:

- Byron uses **alliteration** to create a musical quality in the poem, enhancing its lyrical nature. The repetition of consonant sounds adds to the softness and flowing rhythm of the lines.

Example:

"Of cloudless climes and starry skies"
 "The smiles that win, the tints that glow"

3. **Imagery:**

- The poem is filled with vivid **imagery** of light and dark, night and day, and the woman's features. Byron describes the woman's beauty as something celestial, evoking a picture of her as both radiant and mysterious, like the night sky. The descriptions of her "raven tress" and "softly lightened" face create a detailed picture of her physical appearance, while also suggesting her inner serenity.

Example:

"Which waves in every raven tress,
 Or softly lightens o'er her face"

4. **Metaphor:**

- Byron uses metaphors to draw deeper connections between the woman's appearance and her moral character. For instance, he describes her face as expressing "thoughts serenely sweet," suggesting that her physical beauty reflects an inner purity.

Example:

"Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
 How pure, how dear their dwelling place"

5. **Antithesis:**

- Byron often uses **antithesis** (the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas) to highlight the woman's perfect balance of opposites. He speaks of "all that's best of dark and bright" meeting in her, suggesting that her beauty comes from a harmonious blend of contrasts.

6. **Meter and Rhyme:**

- The poem is written in **iambic tetrameter** (four beats per line, with an unstressed-stressed pattern). This regular meter creates a gentle, flowing rhythm, mirroring the calmness of the woman Byron describes. The poem also follows a **regular rhyme scheme** of **ABABAB**, contributing to its musical and harmonious quality.

Conclusion

"**She Walks in Beauty**" is a beautiful and delicate portrayal of a woman whose external beauty mirrors her inner goodness. Byron's use of nature-inspired imagery and the balance between light and dark highlights the perfection he sees in her. The poem is a timeless celebration of beauty that transcends mere physical appearance and encompasses the purity and innocence of the soul. Through poetic devices such as simile, imagery, and alliteration, Byron crafts a lyric that is as graceful and balanced as the subject of his admiration.

COMPARISON AND DIFFERENCES WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM:

1-she walks in a beauty

2-la belle dame sans merci

3-sonnet43

4-valentine

Comparing "**She Walks in Beauty**" with "**Valentine**" by Carol Ann Duffy, "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**" by John Keats, and "**Sonnet 43**" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning reveals both similarities and differences in how these poems explore love, beauty, and the human experience.

Comparison of Themes

1. Love:

- "**She Walks in Beauty**" focuses on an idealized and serene admiration of beauty. Lord Byron describes the subject's beauty as a perfect blend of light and dark, reflecting both her physical appearance and inner goodness. However, the love here is more about admiration and aesthetic appreciation rather than deep emotional attachment.
- In "**Valentine**", Carol Ann Duffy presents a realistic and unconventional view of love. She uses an extended metaphor of an onion to describe love, portraying its complexities, both the tenderness and the potential for pain and sorrow. This contrasts with Byron's more idealized portrayal of beauty.
- "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**" by John Keats, on the other hand, delves into love's destructive and supernatural aspects. It portrays love as enchanting but ultimately dangerous, as the knight is left desolate after being seduced and abandoned by the beautiful yet fatal "faery's child."
- "**Sonnet 43**" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning expresses a deeply passionate and spiritual love. In this sonnet, Browning describes how she loves her partner in multiple dimensions, both in the physical world and beyond death. The poem emphasizes the depth and enduring nature of true love.

2. Beauty:

- Byron's "**She Walks in Beauty**" is centred around physical beauty intertwined with inner purity. The poem is serene, peaceful, and filled with admiration for a harmonious balance between the woman's outer and inner qualities.

- In "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**", beauty is more dangerous and deceptive. The woman's enchanting beauty in Keats' poem lures the knight into a world of illusion, ultimately leading to his suffering and despair. Here, beauty is associated with manipulation and loss.
 - "**Sonnet 43**" does not focus on physical beauty but on the beauty of deep emotional and spiritual love. Barrett Browning describes love in terms of its intensity and moral goodness, contrasting with the physical appreciation in Byron's poem.
 - "**Valentine**" explores a more raw and realistic approach to love, emphasizing emotional depth and vulnerability rather than the idealization of beauty. Duffy's use of the onion as a metaphor strips away traditional symbols of love (such as flowers or hearts) and speaks to the complexities of human emotions.
3. **Idealization vs. Realism:**
- "**She Walks in Beauty**" idealizes the subject, presenting her beauty as perfect and serene, untarnished by any flaws or negativity. It reflects an idealized admiration of both physical appearance and inner goodness.
 - In contrast, "**Valentine**" by Duffy is highly realistic, even subverting the idealized romantic traditions by using the onion metaphor. It suggests that love can be painful, unpredictable, and intense—far from Byron's tranquil, detached admiration.
 - "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**" falls somewhere between realism and idealization. The knight is enchanted by an idealized figure of beauty, but Keats' poem reveals that this ideal is ultimately harmful and fleeting.
 - "**Sonnet 43**" balances realism and idealism, depicting love as both spiritual and deeply human. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's description of love encompasses everyday devotion as well as transcendental, eternal love.

Comparison of Tone

1. **Admiring vs. Cautionary:**
- The tone of "**She Walks in Beauty**" is gentle, admiring, and contemplative. Byron's speaker is entranced by the woman's beauty and goodness, and the mood of the poem is peaceful and serene.
 - In "**Valentine**", Duffy's tone is more direct, realistic, and sometimes stark. There is an underlying cautionary element in her portrayal of love, which suggests both tenderness and the potential for heartbreak.
 - "**La Belle Dame sans Merci**" carries a melancholic and ominous tone. Keats' poem warns of the dangers of idealizing beauty and love, presenting a haunting, sorrowful vision of a knight left broken by his experience.
 - "**Sonnet 43**" expresses a tone of devotion and intensity. Browning's poem is full of passion and sincerity, focusing on the strength and endurance of true love.

Poetic Devices

1. **Metaphor:**
- In "**She Walks in Beauty**", Byron uses **simile** and **metaphor** to describe the woman's beauty in relation to the night and the stars. The night sky becomes a metaphor for her balanced and tranquil nature.

- **"Valentine"** is rich in metaphor, with the onion serving as an extended metaphor for love. The layers of the onion symbolize the many layers of love, its potential for both tenderness and pain.
 - In **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"**, Keats employs **symbolism** and **allegory**. The faery woman represents love's dangerous allure, while the knight symbolizes the human tendency to fall prey to idealized visions of love.
 - **"Sonnet 43"** is filled with metaphorical language about love, particularly spiritual and eternal love. Browning uses the metaphor of counting ("How do I love thee? Let me count the ways") to quantify and express the vastness of her love.
2. **Imagery:**
- **"She Walks in Beauty"** relies heavily on **visual imagery**, such as "cloudless climes" and "starry skies," to create a sense of peaceful, natural beauty. Byron also uses light and dark imagery to reflect the balance in the woman's character.
 - **"Valentine"** uses the **sensory imagery** of the onion—its sharp scent, layers, and ability to cause tears—to evoke the emotional and sometimes painful nature of love.
 - **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"** is full of rich **medieval imagery**, such as the knight, the faery, and the barren landscape. The imagery here creates an eerie, haunting atmosphere, reflecting the tragic consequences of falling for a dangerous illusion.
 - **"Sonnet 43"** uses abstract and spiritual imagery, focusing more on the metaphysical aspects of love, such as "the depth and breadth and height" of her feelings.
3. **Form and Structure:**
- **"She Walks in Beauty"** is written in **iambic tetrameter** with an **ABABAB rhyme scheme**, contributing to the poem's smooth, flowing rhythm, reflecting the calm admiration of the subject.
 - **"Valentine"** is written in **free verse**, reflecting the poem's non-conventional approach to love. The lack of strict structure mirrors the complexity and unpredictability of love as described by Duffy.
 - **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"** is written in **ballad form**, with short, quatrain stanzas that contribute to the poem's folkloric and traditional feel, enhancing its narrative quality.
 - **"Sonnet 43"** follows the traditional **Petrarchan sonnet form**, with an **octave and sestet**, which mirrors the structured and profound declaration of love.

Key Differences

1. **Love as Ideal vs. Love as Complex:**
- **"She Walks in Beauty"** presents an idealized, almost untouchable vision of beauty and love, devoid of emotional complexity or challenges.
 - **"Valentine"** by Duffy challenges romantic conventions by portraying love as layered, sometimes painful, and full of contradictions.
 - **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"** presents love as dangerous and destructive, showing the negative consequences of being enchanted by beauty.

- **"Sonnet 43"** presents love as deep, intense, and spiritual, with a focus on its enduring nature beyond physical appearance.
2. **Subject Matter:**
- **"She Walks in Beauty"** is a celebration of a woman's beauty, without direct references to romantic love or emotional attachment.
 - **"Valentine"** focuses on love as a multifaceted, emotional experience, full of both joy and pain.
 - **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"** explores the darker side of romantic attraction, with its supernatural elements and tragic consequences.
 - **"Sonnet 43"** is a deeply personal and emotional exploration of the speaker's love for their partner, emphasizing devotion and eternity.
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Conclusion

Though all four poems explore the theme of love and beauty, they do so in strikingly different ways. **"She Walks in Beauty"** focuses on an idealized, serene beauty, while **"Valentine"** offers a more raw and realistic view of love. **"La Belle Dame sans Merci"** delves into the destructive power of love and beauty, and **"Sonnet 43"** presents a passionate, eternal love. These differences reflect the poets' varying approaches to love, whether as an ideal to be admired, a complex emotional experience, or a dangerous force.
