

Romanticism Notes(1830-1865)

Who: “The Fireside Poets”

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (“The Big Kahuna”)
- James Russell Lowell
- Oliver Wendall Holmes
- William Cullen Bryant
- John Greenleaf Whittier

*Called Fireside poets because families would sit by the fire and read the poetry

What?

1st popular literary movement in America

1st truly American literature

- American Characters
- American Settings
- American Subjects/Content
- BUT British Style (rhythm/meter, rhyme, language/diction)

How?

Romantics valued/prized:

- Imagination
- Emotion
- Individuality
- Nature

- Sunshine and Shadow Effect: Focused on the contrasts/opposites in life, found the good within the bad

- Lyrical Poetry: Relies on rhythm/meter, rhyme, diction, style to convey message (as opposed to narrative poetry which relies on a story to convey message)

Why?

5 Beliefs of the Fireside Poets:

- Intuition, imagination, and emotion are superior to reason
- Poetry is superior to science
- Contemplation of the natural world is a way to discover the truth behind reality (nature to mirror emotion)
- Distrust of industry and city life
- Interest in the “natural” past and supernatural/spiritual

Goal: To rise above reality to a realm of higher truth.

Results

- Rebellion against previous literature
- Led to an emotional and intellectual awakening among the general public
- “Romantics found messages that spoke to the soul and gave it strength.”

Psalm of Life: What the Heart of the Young Man said to the Psalmist

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Annotate the poem as a group: 1. Define words to the left. 2. Summarize to the right. 3. State the theme at the bottom. 4. Underline and explain any poetic devices (metaphor/similes/ imagery) 5. Generate 2 questions that either you have or for the class to think about for a quiz.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream ! —
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal ;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
Be a hero in the strife !

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant !
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act,— act in the living Present !
Heart within, and God o'erhead !

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time ;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Something Worth Leaving Behind by Lee Ann Womack

How does "Something" connect with the ideas of "Psalm?" From your romanticism notes, what elements of romanticism do you see? Respond to these questions below the poem.

Hey Mona Lisa, who was Leonardo?
Was he Andy Warhol?
Were you Marilyn Monroe
Hey Mozart, what kind of name is Amadeus
It's kind of like Elvis
You got to die to be famous
I may not go down in history
I just want someone to remember me

I'll probably never hold a brush
that paints a masterpiece
Probably never find a pen
that writes a symphony
But if I will love then I will find
That I have touched another life
And that's something
Something worth leaving behind

Hey Midas you say you have the magic touch
But even all that shiny stuff
Someday is going to turn to dust
Hey Jesus it must have been some Sunday morning
In a blaze of glory
We're still tellin' your story
I may not go down in history
I just want someone to remember me

I'll probably never dream a dream
and watch it turn to gold
I know I'll never lose my life
to save another soul
But, if I will love then I will find
That I have touched another life
And that's something
Something worth leaving behind

Hey baby see the future that we're building
Our love lives on in the lives of our children
And that's something
Something worth leaving behind

The Village Blacksmith by Longfellow

Annotate the poem as a group: 1. Define words to the left. 2. Summarize to the right. 3. State the theme at the bottom. 4. Underline and explain any poetic devices (metaphor/similes/ imagery) 5. Generate 2 questions that either you have or for the class to think about for a quiz.

Under a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And bear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise!
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies;
And with his haul, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, --rejoicing, --sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes;
Each morning sees some task begin,
Each evening sees it close
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught!
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

Ronnie's Song by Tim Barry

How does Ronnie's song connect with the ideas of "Psalm" and "Blacksmith?" From your romanticism notes, what elements of romanticism do you see? Respond to these questions below the poem.

Best friends came and went,
And not without incident.
On a hill they're all moving in,
But I don't care much.

I'm dodging branches from maple trees,
They've stolen heavy in steady sleep.
They seized every city street with tuition,
And bought fill-dirt.

And I sat the river with Ronnie, watching the cormorants,
And the osprey, diving for their prey.
He asked about old friends, I said: "I ain't seen none of them."
He said: "They're all transient man, and their footprints, they washed away."

Still I walk this town,
Hoping to get lost somehow.
It seems by now I've smoothed a path
In every sidewalk.

It's all painted black and gold,
Black tar where once stood homes.
Gold in the hand
Of these student-based franchises.

And I sat at the river with Ronnie, watching the cormorants,
And the osprey, diving for their prey.
He asked about old friends, I said: "I ain't seen none of them."
He said: "How'd you get here man? And why'd you stay?"

Come on brother lets make a list,
Of all that's gone that we still miss.
Let's make a list of what they believed,
And we still do.

Like: "Living first and working last,"
And: "Beating the day before it's past."
Like: "What's mine is yours man,"
And: "What's yours is mine."

I think I'll stay here getting older--and angrier,
And getting louder with each passing day.
And think about old friends,
And all that I have learned from them.

They may have moved on Man,
But we'll all be gone some day.

Maidenhood

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Annotate the poem as a group: 1. Define words to the left. 2. Summarize to the right. 3. State the theme at the bottom. 4. Underline and explain any poetic devices (metaphor/similes/ imagery) 5. Generate 2 questions that either you have or for the class to think about for a quiz.

Maiden! with the meek, brown eyes,
In whose orbs a shadow lies
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,
On the brooklet's swift advance,
On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still, that gliding stream
Beautiful to thee must seem,
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,
When bright angels in thy vision
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hearst thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

Oh, thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands,--Life hath snares
Care and age come unawares!

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;--
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows,
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth.

And that smile, like sunshine, dart
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art.

Oh, that dew, like balm, shall steal
Into wounds that cannot heal,
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

The Chambered Nautilus By Oliver Wendell Holmes

Annotate the poem as a group: 1. Define words to the left. 2. Summarize to the right. 3. State the theme at the bottom. 4. Underline and explain any poetic devices (metaphor/similes/imagery) 5. Generate 2 questions that either you have or for the class to think about for a quiz.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main,--
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed,--
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn;
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings: --

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!