

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN KEATS:

John Keats was a famous English poet who lived from 1795 to 1821. He was one of the main figures of the Romantic movement, along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley. He wrote many poems that are still admired today, such as “Ode to a Nightingale”, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, and “To Autumn”. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 25 in Rome.

He was born in London, the oldest of four children. His father was a livery-stable keeper who died when Keats was eight. His mother remarried but died of tuberculosis six years later. Keats went to a progressive school in Enfield, where he developed an interest in literature. He later became a surgeon’s apprentice and then a medical student, but he decided to pursue poetry instead.

“Here lies one whose name was writ in water”

Before we go to the introduction to poem, let’s first see what romantic poem is.

A romantic poem is a poem that expresses the writer’s imagination and emotions, often in relation to nature, love, or beauty. It is part of the Romantic movement, which originated in Europe in the late 18th century and lasted until the mid-19th century. Romantic poets rebelled against the rules and conventions of neoclassical poetry and emphasized the individual, the sublime, and the personal experience. Some examples of romantic poets are William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and William Blake.

INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM TO AUTUMN:

“To Autumn” is a poem by John Keats, an English Romantic poet. It was written in 1819 and published in 1820. It is the last poem in a series of six odes that Keats wrote in that year. The poem praises the season of autumn and its beauty, abundance, and transition into winter. It uses vivid imagery and sensory details to create a rich and harmonious picture of nature. The poem is divided into three stanzas, each with eleven lines and a rhyme scheme of ABABCDEDCCE.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE POEM TO AUTUMN:

The first stanza of To Autumn by John Keats is a celebration of the season's abundance and richness. The speaker personifies autumn as a close friend of the sun, who conspires with him to produce a bountiful harvest. The speaker uses imagery of fruits, flowers, and nuts to describe how autumn fills everything with ripeness and sweetness. The speaker also mentions the bees, who are still collecting nectar from the late-blooming flowers, as if they think summer will never end. The speaker admires autumn's generosity and productivity in this stanza.

The second stanza of To Autumn by John Keats depicts autumn as a personified figure who is engaged in various activities related to the harvest. The speaker asks rhetorically who has not seen autumn among her stores of grains, fruits, and flowers. The speaker then describes autumn in different scenarios: sitting on a granary floor, sleeping on a furrow, sparing the flowers from her sickle, carrying her load across a brook, or watching the cider press. The speaker uses imagery of labor, sleep, and patience to portray autumn as a calm and contented figure who enjoys her work and leisure.

The third stanza of To Autumn by John Keats shifts the focus from autumn to the sounds of the season. The speaker asks where are the songs of spring, and then answers his own question by saying that autumn has its own music too. The speaker then lists various sounds that create a musical harmony in autumn: the clouds, the gnats, the lambs, the crickets, the robin, and the swallows. The speaker uses imagery of dying, mourning, and fading to suggest that autumn is a time of transition and change, but also of beauty and joy.

THEME OF THE POEM:

The main themes of the poem "To Autumn" by John Keats are:

- **The beauty and richness of autumn**, as well as its transience and connection to death. Keats praises autumn as a season of abundance,

harvest, and ripeness, but also hints at the impending winter, the end of the year, and the end of his own life.

- **The power and influence of nature**, both on human life and on itself. Keats expresses reverence and awe for the great changes wrought by nature as autumn brings its riches to the landscape. He also depicts the many ways in which humanity is dependent on nature for its survival and enjoyment.
- **The passage of time and the acceptance of change**. Keats uses the three stanzas of the poem to illustrate the stages of autumn, from ripening to harvesting to the turn towards winter. He also reflects on the cycles of life and death, and the inevitability of time's passing. He shows that he can embrace the present moment, while being aware of its fragility and imperfection.
- **The consolation of beauty and music**. Keats's lines celebrate the great beauty of autumn even as they evoke a somber sensibility. He also finds solace in the sounds of nature, such as the songs of birds, insects, and animals. He suggests that autumn has its own music that can rival that of spring.

SETTING OF THE POEM:

The setting of the poem "To Autumn" by John Keats is the season of autumn in the countryside of England, where Keats was living in 1819. He wrote the poem after an evening walk near Winchester, Hampshire, in southern England, and was inspired by the sights and sounds of nature that he observed¹². The poem describes various aspects of autumn, such as the fruit, flowers, grains, animals, and insects that populate the landscape. The poem also captures the mood and atmosphere of autumn, such as the mist, the mellow light, the soft wind, and the wailful choir of gnats. The poem does not specify a precise location or time of day, but rather creates a general impression of autumn as a season of beauty and abundance, as well as decay and change.

LITERARY DEVICES;

Some of the literary devices used in the poem "To Autumn" by John Keats are:

- **Apostrophe:** The poem directly addresses the season of autumn as a personified figure, using the second person pronoun “thou” and asking rhetorical questions such as “Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?”
- **Personification:** The poem gives human qualities and actions to autumn, such as sitting, sleeping, keeping, watching, and conspiring. It also personifies other aspects of nature, such as the sun, the wind, the clouds, the gnats, and the swallows
- **Imagery:** The poem uses vivid and sensory language to describe the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of autumn, such as the fruit, flowers, grains, birds, insects, and animals. The poem appeals to all five senses and creates a rich picture of autumn in the reader’s mind.
- **Alliteration:** The poem uses the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words or syllables to create rhythm and emphasis, such as “mists and mellow”, “close bosom-friend”, “soft-dying day”, “stubble-plains”, and “wailful choir”
- **Rhyme:** The poem uses a complex rhyme scheme of ABAB CDEDCCE in each stanza, creating a musical effect and a sense of harmony. The rhyme scheme also varies slightly in each stanza, reflecting the changes and variations of autumn.
- **Metaphor:** The poem uses implicit comparisons between different things to create meaning and symbolism, such as comparing autumn to a friend of the sun, a gleaner, a patient watcher, and a musician. It also compares the clouds to flowers that bloom in the sky.
- **Simile:** The poem uses explicit comparisons using words like “like” or “as” to create imagery and contrast, such as comparing autumn to a person sitting careless on a granary floor or sleeping on a half-reaped furrow. It also compares the gnats to a choir that mourns.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the poem “To Autumn” by John Keats is that autumn is a season of beauty and abundance, as well as decay and change. The poet celebrates the present moment, while being aware of its fragility and imperfection. He embraces both the light and the dark aspects of nature and human existence. He shows that beauty can be found even in the face of mortality. The poem is also a reflection of Keats’s own life, as he was suffering from tuberculosis and knew that he did not

have much time left to live. The poem is an ode to autumn, but also an ode to life itself