

Stanza 3 (Lines 21–30): The Pain of Human Life

21. Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

He wants to fade away and forget everything.

22. What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The bird, unlike humans, does not suffer.

23. The weariness, the fever, and the fret

He describes human suffering—exhaustion, disease, and anxiety.

24. Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

People in the world suffer and lament.

25. Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Old people suffer from diseases like paralysis (palsy).

26. Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Young people also suffer and die early.

27. Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

Even thinking brings sorrow.

28. And leaden-eyed despairs,

People's eyes are heavy with despair.

29. Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Beauty fades over time.

30. Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Even new love does not last long.

Stanza 4 (Lines 31–40): Escape Through Poetry

31. Away! Away! For I will fly to thee,

Instead of drinking, he will use poetry to escape.

32. Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,

Not by wine (Bacchus, the god of wine, had a chariot drawn by leopards).

33. But on the viewless wings of Poesy,

He will use the invisible wings of poetry.

34. Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

Even though his mind sometimes slows him down.

35. Already with thee! Tender is the night,

He feels he is already with the nightingale.

36. And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

The moon is shining in the sky.

37. Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;

The stars surround the moon like fairies.

38. But here there is no light,
But the place where he is sitting is dark.

39. Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Only bits of light come through the wind.

40. Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.
Light filters through green leaves and mossy paths.

Stanza 5 (Lines 41–50): The Nightingale's Immortal Song

41. I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
It is so dark that the poet cannot see the flowers near him.

42. Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
He cannot see the fragrant flowers on the tree branches.

43. But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
He imagines the scents of the flowers around him in the
dark.

44. Wherewith the seasonable month endows
These scents are given by the season (spring or summer).

45. The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
The plants and trees are full of life.

46. White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

He mentions specific flowers—hawthorn and eglantine (sweetbriar).

47. Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;

Violets are fading and hidden under leaves.

48. And mid-May's eldest child,

He refers to the first-born flowers of mid-May.

49. The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

Musk roses, with dew like wine, are about to bloom.

50. The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

On summer evenings, flies buzz around the flowers.