

Happiness previously met with dispute (exile from England). Abandonment of hedonistic lifestyle to take up heroism and greater ambition

(Reference to Macbeth V, III) Time is running out /hopelessness. Previously meaningless gratification in relationships. Regret, like Macbeth, in lifestyle choices.

Self-comparison to the worm. Object of repulsion. Parasitic. Admission of the decline of his virility/potency

'Funeral pile' conveys the extent of his melancholy and hopelessness in tandem with the shortness of the iambic diameter speaks of his resignation, acceptance of the hand he's been dealt.

Past life has meant he has no access to that heroic death. No heroic endeavours. To embrace the life of a warrior. Torn between love and heroism. Defiance, reclaiming a victory or 'glory,' over his life — standing up for principles.

Triple, hyperbole that mirrors stanza four. Renewed purpose, having found his intention of serving Greece in battle. Capitalised. 'Glory and Greece' as an exclamative, patriotic cry of soldiers. Juxtaposed alliteration how he has fully transformed his passion for love to honour for Greece

Assimilates Greece as his motherland due to his rejection and exile. Loyalty through maternal personification.

Rejection of the past and embracing of his future. Consciousness of having his spiritual and cultural roots in ancient Greece.

Capitalised 'Beauty' that he exiles himself from it — realising the transience, fleeting nature of it.

Welcoming death as the closure to his exhausted and spent life, preserving his personal self and functions as a final end to his present crisis, seeking "honourable death."

CONTEXT: Byron wrote this poem three months before he died, while waiting in Greece to take up his fight for the cause of the Greek rebellion against the Turkish occupation

Great shift in direction. Still, Byron has not rejected love in the imperative form: "Let me love!"

Metaphor. Reflections on life's joys, union, companionship that have been lost. Autumnal imagery ("yellow leaf") of decay. Turning of the seasons.

Final acceptance. Stoicism in this judgement of the consequences of his behaviour (hedonism)

One-sided passion. No affection, warmth, or tenderness. Infatuation that was inexorable. Inevitable that it remits.

Asyndetic listing. Dual experience of love in all its power to heal, restore and the exultation that brings wonder and amazement; still, there are powerful feelings of hurt, rejection, and loss of the positives that note this celebration.

Elegiac tone, pre-empting his own funeral. It switches between downcast and celebratory, mirroring the conflict between liveliness and love and death and loneliness. Reflecting on his unlovable nature in the tumultuousness previous relationships. Full of hope for a new beginning of greater meaning

On this Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of Love are gone;
The worm—the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some Volcanic Isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of Love I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

— VOLTA —

But 'tis not thus—and 'tis not here
Such thoughts should shake my Soul, nor now,
Where Glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field,
Glory and Greece around us see!
The Spartan borne upon his shield
Was not more free.

Awake (not Greece—she is awake!)
Awake, my Spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down
Unworthy Manhood—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of Beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy Youth, why live?
The land of honourable Death

Acute awareness of a present conflict of impulses and perceptions within his psyche, conflict between the painful realisation that he no longer attracts love on the one hand and a persistent desire for what he cannot have.

To stop love after meeting first unrequited love, synecdochic of Byron's emotions

Metaphysical capacity for love but now full of repulsion and horror.

Begging/pleading. Envy of those that have found love?

Flowers and fruits as emblems of new life. Temporality and transient. Fleeting nature of love, beauty, and life. Advancement of age Loss of hope. Never experienced permanence of emotional bond. Always disappointed. Worm as phallic imagery. How he has valued sexual pleasure to the grief that he now experiences. Fricatives convey disappointment, disillusionment, longing

Conveys a loss of passion, enflaming that it kills. Hellish imagery. Damnation. Retribution in the gothic imagery. Inescapable consequences of vice and gratification. Self-awareness. Divine retribution that he deserves.

Active verb to 'cannot' — stopped by others. Entrapment of love. Tormented. Haunting gothic image.

Multiplicity of experience in love that follows this essential journey of romance. Fear of feeling. Fulfilment and depletion and destructive. No longer an experience to be shared.

Uncertainty of 'shake my soul,' to enliven him to greater action. Suggestive of loss, grief, embracing the unknown.

Abstraction of this narrated love because he cannot experience it again. Fictitious ideal. Posives emphasise inseparability of this experience, pain and beauty come side-by-side.

Foresees two outcomes: heroic death and defeat or heroic triumph and victory. He envisages, war and glory, irrespective of success or failure, as the solution to his personal crisis.

Ideals of antiquity — Sparta. Idealisation of military pre-eminence. Death as an honourable release. Spiritual awakening of reassurance of death. No hesitation.

Hedonism as unworthy. Lacking in any form of fulfilment. No point in such passion. The drawn-out length, marked by caesura, attempts at self-persuasion shows how strong his adherence to his former life and its pursuits still is and his resistance to a radical re-orientation. He appeals to several traditional (aristocratic and stoical) male values, which entail scripts for action, such as honour, freedom, and manliness

Longs for his extinction, he cannot think of death as the complete and definitive annihilation of his self in only "rest." Pronouns of "thee" "thy" stress the personal self-reference of the search for his grave. He makes his death his own achievement by deliberately and actively seeking it.

Iambic Tetrameter
Iambic Dimeter

LOVE, AGING,
MATURITY

GLORY AND
SACRIFICE

Disjointed. Dimeter. Lost jolted, sense of not belonging.

longing

longing

longing

Poem about a severe crisis to preserve himself. Indicative of a centrally Romantic recourse to the self as a source of meaning, stability and creativity.

*Is here:—up to the Field, and give
Away thy breath!*

*Seek out—less often sought than found—
A Soldier's Grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy Ground,
And take thy rest.*

Dying becomes the fitting personal conclusion to a life no longer worth living according to the old values: "for thee best," "take thy rest," "Choose thy ground."

Appears feeble and wary in his competition or death. Manifested in the poetic composition of the text, Byron's poem is characterised by conventional tropes even clichés indicative of exhaustion and stalemate.

Title: Byron is filled with a sense of ending, or, a longing for the end. This attitude (paradoxically) is highlighted by the title specifying his birthday, the day on which he commemorates the beginning of his life and desires its termination. Speaker views death in the light of his previous life; recollects successful achievements and fulfilled experiences in the past but foresees no meaningful continuation for the future and therefore longs for death as the appropriate closure.

Structure: Narrative sequence that underlies the poem, made up by ongoing succession of phrases in the speaker's reflections aimed at self-assessment and re-orientation.

Exploration of the Classical Greek notions of heroism, most notably psuche — concept of the soul or 'spirit.' 'Kleos' — fame and glory attained after dying on a battlefield.