

So We'll Go No More a Roving

LORD BYRON (GEORGE GORDON)

Declarative statement of certainty in the decisive, simple future tense.

Elegy for youthful wildness, undertone of regret. Writer hints that their lust for life has not gone away. Highlights the conflict and poignancy of pretending to be mature whilst still feeling the excitement of youth. May have been a consequence of his separation with his wife, demonstrating the tumultuousness nature of love that has taken everything away from him; his leaving England may be of geographical significance in the commencement for a turn of behaviour.

Context: his wife left him, considering Byron insane in January 1816, taking their daughter and began proceedings for a legal separation. The scandal of the separation, the rumours about Augusta, and ever-increasing debts forced him to leave England in April 1816, never to return.

Captures a transitional phase between the end of youth and beginning of mature, uncertainty whether this transition is embraced or forced in the ephemerality of love.

So, we'll go no more a roving

The "so" makes the poem seem conversational at the start, reinforcing the notion that he is addressing a friend. Stresses that the declaration is a consequence of something (hedonism?) Cannot be pursued at the same pace

The moon is a romantic image, a symbol of love. His love is waning. The night-time signifies mysterious, dark fantasies and the taboo of pleasure. Perhaps, Byron is trying to convey the diminishing nature of this lifestyle (seeking pleasure)

So late into the night,

Though the heart be still as loving,

Word "still" used in the definition of continuation. Speaker claims that they will no longer wander into the night. Reader is to intend the question why?

And the moon be still as bright.

"Sword"/"sheath" and "breast"/"breathe" reinforced by the fact that these word pairs fall on the same beats in their respective lines. Byron may be implicitly connecting the decay of carnal urges with the rest of intangible, transcendent emotions

For the sword outwears its sheath,

Sentimentality of decay and degradation and being worn out. Reminder that even people outgrow situations. Aging and turn of feelings take a toll on body and lives. Phallic imagery suggests that sexuality, desire, and pleasure are traits that will erode whilst aging.

In the sibilance, "sword outwears its sheathe," extending the delicate sound of the /s/ to convey Byron's state of fragility and further emphasising his listlessness due to his increasing age

And the soul wears out the breast,

And the heart must pause to breathe,

And love itself have rest.

Multiple experiences. Love signifying a number of experiences; romance, friendship, of life.

Cyclicity in chiasmus. Repetition suggests that the reader may still be persuading themselves. Illustrates the drawing influence of lust and excitement

Though the night was made for loving,

Byron has adapted his source material from the "Jolly Beggar," shifting from narrative to lyric about the expression of personal emotions and thoughts than complex storytelling.

And the day returns too soon,

Assonance of "no go" in the long vowel sounds to add a wearied tone/. Additionally, the consonance of "too soon" form a longing attachment to something that has inevitably ended.

Yet we'll go no more a roving

Resolved to no longer wander.

Iambic trimeter that provides a steady rhythm, that in tandem with a three-beat accentual meter, evokes both the waning of youth and unceasing progression of age

By the light of the moon.

The sequence of the gentle/ m/ sounds may reflect the speaker's wistfulness in their regret of the abandonment of their days of hedonistic pleasures, suggesting both nostalgia and renunciation

The tight, closed rhyme scheme (ABAB CDCD AEAE) emphasises the closure of the end of youth, although the imperfect rhymes ("loving" "roving") that may echo the speaker's resistance to this essential development.

Shift from 'bright' to 'light' signifies the permanence and renewing nature of the moon's presence, emphasising the speaker's developing feelings. Its tidal phases, therefore, makes it a conventional symbol of change. It's relation to insanity and wild abandon may link to his wife attempting to have him incarcerated for insanity.