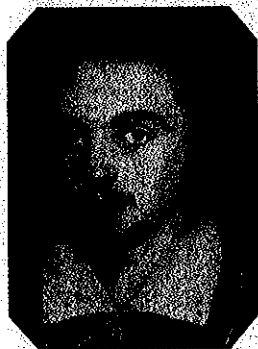


The Passionate Shepherd to His Love • The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd



Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593)

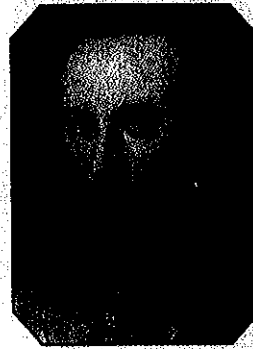
Killed before the age of thirty, Christopher Marlowe nonetheless managed to achieve renown as a brilliant playwright and poet. He spent

his college days writing plays and serving as a government agent.

A Pioneer in Drama *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe's first drama, dazzled the public with its dynamic characterization of the tyrant-hero: All of Marlowe's subsequent plays may be seen as variations on a single theme: the larger-than-life hero who "overreaches," seeking to dominate everything around him. The most famous example is the protagonist in *Doctor Faustus*, who thirsts for supreme knowledge and sells his soul to the devil. Marlowe matched the grandeur of his heroes with the grandeur of language, forging blank verse into a powerfully expressive medium for the first time in English drama.

A Life of Intrigue Marlowe has been described as a scoundrel, a ladies' man, and a hothead. By all accounts, his personal magnetism attracted both friends and enemies. When the court of Queen Elizabeth I wrote a letter implying that Marlowe had performed important government services, rumors flew about that he was a spy.

A Violent Death Marlowe was knifed to death in a tavern brawl in 1593. To this day, scholars question whether his death was really caused by his drunken refusal to pay his bill or whether he was murdered because of his undercover activities.



Sir Walter Raleigh (1554?–1618)

Sir Walter Raleigh is famed for having been a courtier, a navigator, a poet, and a historian.

A Charmed Life The half-brother of a famous sailor and an explorer,

Raleigh began to satisfy his taste for adventure early in life, when he volunteered as a teenager for army service in France. A favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, he was given estates and prestigious appointments. In 1584, he set up a colony on Roanoke Island, Virginia.

Disaster When it was discovered that Raleigh had been secretly married to one of the queen's maids of honor, he and his wife were imprisoned in the Tower of London for a time but then released. Following the queen's death in 1603, Raleigh was accused of conspiring against King James I and was imprisoned again in the Tower, where he remained for thirteen years. He was eventually released to seek out gold along the Orinoco River in Venezuela. Despite a royal command not to engage in battle with Spain, Raleigh's fleet entered Spanish territory. In the ensuing fight, Raleigh lost his son and was forced to return to England. There, Raleigh was executed for disobeying the king's orders.

Literary Achievements Raleigh was a friend of some of the leading poets of his age, including Sir Philip Sydney and Edmund Spenser. Like them, he wrote elegant verse, rich in vivid imagery and classical allusions. Among Raleigh's numerous prose works is an ambitious book entitled *The History of the World* (1614), composed while he was in prison.

Preview

Connecting to the Literature

The subjects of nature and love often bring contradictory images to mind. Some people think of roses and happiness, others of ice and heartbreak. These two poems, one inspired by the other, present both perspectives.

Literary Analysis

Pastoral

A **pastoral** work celebrates the pleasures of simple life in the country. In pastoral poems, some of the usual conventions include a shepherd, who addresses or describes a shepherdess with whom he is in love, and an idealized world of nature. Though pastoral poems seem to be about a carefree, country existence, such works are often written by sophisticated artists. Their literature allows urban readers to experience what they imagine to be the free and untroubled life of ordinary people.

- Look for details in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" that idealize the natural world.
- Identify details in "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" that comment critically on the idealized landscape in Marlowe's poem.

Comparing Literary Works

In these poems, Marlowe and Raleigh raise a number of **common themes** that occur so often in literature as to have a claim of being universal. One of these themes is the link between love and the delights of youth and nature. Another is the relationship of love to time. From one perspective, time stops for lovers. From another point of view, though, time and change are love's enemy, since youth gives way to age. This sober thought often prompts, in turn, the theme of *carpe diem*, or "seize the day." Note the variations of these common themes as you read each poem.

Reading Strategy

Identifying With the Speaker of a Poem

When you **identify with the speaker of a poem**, you put yourself in the speaker's place to understand his or her feelings and goals. Reconstructing these emotions can help you determine a poem's theme. As you read these poems, fill in a chart like the one shown to help you identify with each speaker.

Vocabulary Builder

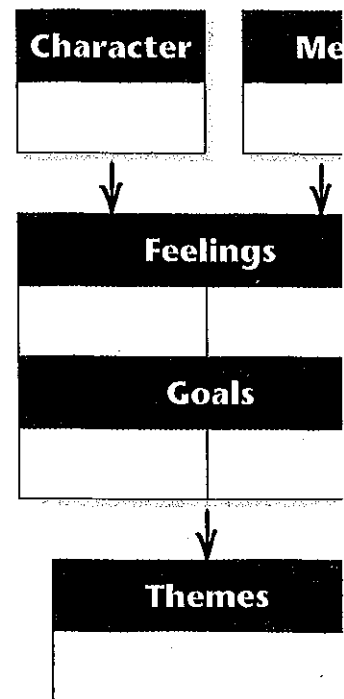
melodious (mə lō' dē əs) *adj.* sweet-sounding; tuneful (p. 250)

madrigals (mə' dri gəls) *n.* short love poems set to music (p. 250)

move (mōōv) *v.* persuade or impel (p. 250)

reckoning (rek' ən ŋ) *n.* accounting (p. 251)

wither (with' ə) *v.* fade or waste away (p. 252)



The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove¹
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

5 And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

10 And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle²
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
15 Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
20 Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Literary Analysis

Pastoral Which details in this stanza idealize the landscape?

Vocabulary Builder

melodious (mə lō' dē əs)
adj. sweet-sounding;
tuneful

madrigals (ma' dri gəls) *n.*
short love poems set to
music

move (mōōv) *v.* persuade
or impel

Reading Strategy

**Identifying With the
Speaker of a Poem**

Would you find the
speaker's offers enticing?
Why or why not?

1. **prove** experience.
2. **kirtle** skirt.

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Background "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" are examples of reply poems. Many poets travel in similar social circles, and their association with each other sometimes motivates them to construct poems in response to one another's work. In addition to Sir Walter Raleigh, for example, John Donne also wrote a reply poem, "The Bait," to Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." Such linkages can be found in many literary epochs and cultures: for example, twentieth-century Chinese poet Shu Ting composed a poem, titled "Also All," in response to Bei Dao's poem "All."

If all the world and love were young
And truth in every shepherd's tongue
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

5 Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel¹ becometh dumb,
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
10 To wayward winter reckoning yields:
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

1. **Philomel** the nightingale.

Vocabulary Builder

reckoning (rek' ən in) *n.*
accounting

Reading Check

According to stanza 3, what effect does time have on the fields and flowers?

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle,² and thy posies
15 Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
20 To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Has joy no date³ nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

2. **kirtle** skirt.
3. **date** ending.

Critical Reading

1. **Respond:** Do you think the speaker in "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" responds effectively to the shepherd? Why or why not?
2. (a) **Recall:** In "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," what does the speaker ask his love to do in the first stanza?
(b) **Interpret:** What kind of future life together does the speaker envision?
3. (a) **Recall:** What examples of repetition occur in the last two stanzas of "The Passionate Shepherd"? (b) **Draw Conclusions:** What is the effect of this repetition?
4. (a) **Recall:** Which lines in the first stanza of "The Nymph's Reply" echo the first stanza of Marlowe's poem? (b) **Infer:** What is the poet's purpose in these echoes?
5. (a) **Recall:** What happens to the nightingale in line 7 of "The Nymph's Reply"? (b) **Compare and Contrast:** According to lines 5 through 8, in what ways is the nymph's world different from that of the shepherd?
(c) **Analyze:** Which words in this stanza evoke a feeling of ruin or despair?
6. (a) **Recall:** According to lines 21–22 of "The Nymph's Reply," what might persuade the nymph to live with the shepherd?
(b) **Speculate:** Do you think these lines would console the shepherd?
(c) **Analyze:** How does the nymph present a realistic portrayal of time and change in the poem?
7. **Relate:** If you were the shepherd, what counterargument might you make in response to the "The Nymph's Reply"?

Vocabulary Builder
wither (*with' er*) v. fade or waste away

Literary Analysis
Pastoral and Common Themes What contrast does the nymph draw between the idealized world and the real world?

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