



# American Romanticism

Pages 138-145

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. The American Romanticism era was from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (years).
2. What did the city represent to Rationalists?
3. What did the city represent to Romantics?
4. The Romantic journey is a flight both \_\_\_\_\_ something and \_\_\_\_\_ something.
5. Romantics value \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The Romantic era had influence not only on literature, but also on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in Europe.
7. Romanticism developed as a \_\_\_\_\_ against Rationalism.
8. Romantics believed that \_\_\_\_\_ was able to discover truths that the rational mind could not reach.
9. What was the highest embodiment of the imagination to the Romantics?
10. How did the Romantics rise above “dull realities”?
  - a.
  - b.
11. Why were Americans able to discover different subject matter than the Europeans?
12. How did the Europeans imagine the typical American?
13. Did the Romantics mind being viewed as unsophisticated? Explain your answer.
14. A typical American Romantic hero would be described as...
15. Do we still create Romantic heroes? Give a modern example of a Romantic hero.

# Thanatopsis

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—  
Go forth under the open sky, and list  
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—  
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—  
Comes a still voice—Yet a few days, and thee  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears,  
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim  
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,  
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
Thine individual being, shalt thou go  
To mix forever with the elements;  
To be a brother to the insensible rock,  
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain  
Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak  
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mold.  
Yet not to thine eternal resting-place  
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish  
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the infant world,—with kings,  
The powerful of the earth,—the wise, the good,  
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills  
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
The venerable woods—rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green; and, poured  
round all,

Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man! The golden sun,  
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom.—Take the wings  
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,  
Save his own dashings,—yet the dead are there:  
And millions in those solitudes, since first  
The flight of years began, have laid them down  
In their last sleep—the dead reign there alone.  
So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw  
In silence from the living, and no friend  
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe  
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh  
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care  
Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave  
Their mirth and their employments, and shall  
come  
And make their bed with thee. As the long train  
Of ages glide away, the sons of men,  
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes  
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,  
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed  
man—  
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side  
By those, who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan which moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and  
soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

- What happens to us when we die?
- What do you think or feel about death?
- How *should* we think or feel about death?

Read the poem closely and carefully to answer the questions below. Use the notes in the margins to help you understand allusions and vocabulary.

Note: Thanatos in Greek means death. Opsis in Greek means seeing. The title presents the poem as a way of seeing death.

1. In line 8, ere means “before.” What does Nature do for those who communicate with her?
2. In line 17, Nature begins to speak. When you get to line 30, sum up Nature’s advice to those who think sad thoughts of death.
3. In line 37, a sepulcher is a burial place. What does Nature say to those who fear the solitude of death?
4. In lines 40-45, what decorates the “tomb of man”?
5. In lines 48-57, what examples does the speaker use to explain that the dead are everywhere?
6. What comfort does Nature offer in lines 58-72?
7. The speaker’s voice resumes here. When you get to the end of the poem, sum up the speaker’s message in lines 73-81.
8. What is the theme (the insight into human experience) of this poem?
9. Do find the speaker’s attitude toward death comforting or disturbing, or do you have some other reaction? Explain.
10. Identify two specific examples (quotes) of elements of Romanticism from the poem.  
Element of Romanticism:  
Quote from the poem:  
  
Element of Romanticism:  
Quote from the poem:

**“The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

The tide rises, the tide falls,  
The twilight darkens, the curlew<sup>1</sup> calls;  
Along the sea-sands damp and brown  
The traveler hastens<sup>2</sup> toward the town,  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

1

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
But the sea, the sea in darkness calls;  
The little waves, with their soft, white hands  
Efface<sup>3</sup> the footprints in the sands,  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

6

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls  
Stamp and neigh, as the hostler<sup>4</sup> calls;  
The day returns, but nevermore<sup>5</sup>  
Returns the traveler to the shore.  
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

11

**VOCABULARY HELPER**

- 1) **curlew** – a common shorebird
- 2) **hasten** – to move or act quickly; to hurry
- 3) **efface** – to erase, wipe out
- 4) **hostler** – a person who takes care of horses
- 5) **nevermore** – never again; never thereafter

“The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls”  
3, 2, 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Paraphrase each of the THREE stanzas of “The Tide Rises, The Tide Falls”.

1.

2.

3.

Identify TWO Romantic characteristics in the poem, and explain how they are Romantic.

1.

2.

Identify the theme of this poem—its central insight into the relationship between human life and nature.

1.

## “To a Waterfowl” by William Cullen Bryant

Whither, 'midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As, darkly painted on the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed ocean side?

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,--  
The desert and illimitable air,--  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fann'd  
At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere:  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end,  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend  
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He, who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

“To a Waterfowl”

1. What questions does the speaker ask in the first three stanzas?
2. How does the third stanza fit the “mold” of Romanticism?
3. What guides the bird?
4. What comparison does the speaker make between the bird’s flight and his own life?
5. Knowing what you do about Romanticism, why do you think that “Power” is uppercased in the 4<sup>th</sup> stanza?
6. In the second to last stanza, Bryant says, “Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given/And shall not soon depart” (lines 11-12). How does this express Romanticism? Look back at your notes!
7. What characteristics from romanticism do you find in this poem?
8. Structurally compare this poem with “Thanatopsis”.
9. What do you think the lesson is that Bryant learns?