



# A Research Paper On Lyric Poetry

JIWAN JYOTI

## ABSTRACT

Lyric poetry is one of the most important and enduring forms of expression in English literature. It is based on ancient traditions and influenced by cultural and literary trends, has changed while preserving its fundamental focus: the human voice and emotional resonance. Via the study the researcher wants to convey the mechanism of lyric poetry. The researcher is presenting thematic and historical study of lyric poetry. This paper explores the transformation of lyrical voice in romantic poetry, with a focus on how inner emotional landscapes are externalised through nature imagery and this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how lyric poetry reflects evolving notions of selfhood and emotional experience.

**KEYWORDS:** - Lyric poetry, love, nature, loss, grief, emotions, feelings, romantic poetry, imagery, symbolism, sound devices, figurative language.

## INTRODUCTION

### POETRY AND LYRICS

Consider driving along in your car when your favourite music comes on the radio. If you are like most people, you will begin singing along without even noticing it. Did you realise that when this happens, you're singing poetry? All songs are considered poetry. They actually fall under the category of lyric poetry.

**“Keep your face always toward the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you”.**

Walt Whitman

**“I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul”**

Pablo Neruda

## LYRIC POETRY

Lyric poetry is a type of poetry in which the poet or a persona reveals his/her personal emotions, thoughts, or sentiments, usually in the first person. The term "lyric" is derived from the Greek word "Lyra," meaning lyre, as this poetry was originally intended to be sung. It is distinguished by its musicality and emphasis on regular metric and rhythmic structures. Lyric poetry has evolved to encompass a broader range of written forms, including Sonnets, Odes, and Elegies.

## Characteristics of Lyric Poetry

- **Personal Expression:**-Lyric poetry centres on the speaker's emotions, thoughts, and experiences, rather than telling a story or presenting a narrative.
- **Musicality:**-the term "Lyric" originates from the Greek "Lyrikos", referring to poetry accompanied by the lyre, an ancient Greek stringed instrument.
- **Intense feelings:**-Lyric poems often explore deep or complex emotions such as joy, sorrow, love, or loss.
- **First-person perspective:**-while not always strictly adhered to, lyric poems commonly utilise the first -person "I" to convey the speaker's perspective.

### Themes in lyric poetry

- Love and passion
- Nature and the sublime
- Time and mortality
- Self and identity
- Loss and grief
- Spirituality and faith

### Forms of lyrical poetry

**Sonnets:**-Famous sonnets of lyric poems are Shakespeare's Sonnet 18- "Shall I Compare Thee to a summer's day"? , Sonnet 130-"My Mistress' Eyes are nothing like the Sun"

**Odes:** - John Keats' "Ode on Grecian urn", "Ode to a Nightingale".

**Elegies:** - Milton's "Lycidas", PB Shelley's "Adonis"

**Hymns:**-James Weldon Johnson's "Lift every voice and sing", Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the thing with feathers."

**Free Verse (Modern Era):**- Walt Whitman's "A Noiseless Patient Spider", William Carlos William's "This is just to Say", Mary Oliver's "The Summer Day".

**Tanka:**-"Summer Moon" by Timothy Honeycutt, "The four Winds" by David Wood, "Nothing left" by L.Y.Rose

## Formal elements

### Sound and musicality

- Rhythm
- Meter
- Rhyme
- Sound devices

### Structure and forms

- Stanzas
- Lines
- Form

### Content and form

- Imagery
- Figurative language
- Symbolism
- Tone and mood

### Literature Review

Here's a more detailed look at its historical context:

#### Ancient Greece (7<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE)

This period is considered the “Age of Lyric Poetry”, with poets like Sappho and Pindar pioneering the form. The famous lyric poems of this period are:-

- “Deor”
- “Wulf and Eadwacer”
- “The Ruin”
- “The Wanderer”

#### Medieval period

Lyric poetry flourished in medieval Europe, with troubadours and trouveres, and composing songs and poems for courtly love and other themes. The famous lyric poems of this period are:-

- “Cuckoo Song”
- “Adam lay Ybounden”
- “I Sing of a Maiden”

#### Renaissance period

The Renaissance saw a renewed interest in classical forms, including lyric poetry. Italian poet Petrarch's sonnets became influential, and later, Shakespeare popularised the sonnet form in England. Lyric poetry during this time often explored themes of love, beauty, and humanism.

#### For example

- William Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day”
- Edmund Spenser-“Amoretti”
- Sir Phillip Sidney- “Astrophil and Stella”

The famous lyric poets of this period are:-

- ❖ Petrarch
- ❖ Francesco Bembo
- ❖ William Shakespeare
- ❖ Edmund Spenser
- ❖ Sir Phillip Sidney
- ❖ Gaspara Stampa
- ❖ Michelangelo

#### 17<sup>th</sup> Century period

This period in English poetry is sometimes referred to as the “Age of lyric”. Poets like John Donne, Ben Jonson, and Robert Herrick wrote short, emotionally intense poems, often exploring metaphysical themes and personal experiences. There are some well-known poets of late 17<sup>th</sup> century who wrote lyric poems are:-

- John Dryden
- Alexander Pope
- Samuel Johnson

## Romantic period

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, lyric poetry experienced resurgence with poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley. They emphasised subjective emotions, nature, and the power of imagination.

### For example

William Wordsworth-“I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge-“Love”

PB Shelley-“Ode to the West Wind”

John Keats-“Ode to a Nightingale”

Lord Byron-“She Walks in Beauty”

Quote by Lord Byron:-

**“And gentle winds and waters near  
Make music to the lonely ear”.**

## Modern Era and contemporary period

Lyric poetry continues to be vital form in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, with poets like William Butler Yeats, William Carlos Williams, Walt Whitman, Sylvia Path, T.S Eliot, Seamus Heaney, Carol Ann Duffy and Ted Hughes exploring diverse themes and styles. William questioned the traditional forms of lyric poetry, leading to experimentation with language and structure.

### Famous examples

- “A red, red rose” by Robert Burns S
- “The Hill We Climb” Amanda Gorman
- “Because I Could not stop for Death” by Emily Dickinson

A Famous poem of 19<sup>th</sup> century is “O Captain! My Captain” by Walt Whitman whose lyrics are:-

**O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought  
The port is near, the bells i hear, the people all exulting,  
White follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grin and daring;  
But o heart! Heart! Heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my captain lies  
Fallen cold and dead**

Another quote by Robert Frost:-

**“We love the things we love for what they are”**

Maya Angelou’s quote from poem ‘Still I Rise’

**“But still, like dust, I’ll rise.”**

## Conclusion

In Conclusion, lyric poetry is a rich and complex genre that continues to captivate readers today. Through the use of imagery, symbolism and other literary devices, lyric poetry conveys the depth of human emotion and experience in a unique and powerful way. By examine the techniques and devices used by lyric poets during different periods; we can gain a deeper influences, its impact on later literary movements, or its contemporary relevance and applications, lyric poetry remains a vital and expressive form of literature.

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