

## **Pre-romantic poetry**

### **William Cowper**

#### **My Mother's picture**

An elegy lamenting Cowper's mother who died when he was only six years old.

His life was rough without his mother and her kind words.

He remembers her words urging him not to grieve and to chase his fears away.

The poet expresses his gratitude to the immortalizing power of art which can obstruct the cruel and oppressive claim of time.

The poet reveals his plight when he lost his mother for ever. He raises a series of questions which reveals the pain he went through during that episode.

He moves to lament the loss of their pastoral house. He reveals memories from childhood.

He wonders if he could reverse the course of time by resorting the hours he has with his mother.

He suddenly comes to a realization that he must bid a farewell to the memories of his mother.

He says that time has only half-succeeded in his theft .  
His mother's physical presence and her power to  
comfort him has been lost to him forever.

## **William Collins**

### **Ode to Evening**

The poem is a single stanza of fifty-two lines addressed to a goddess figure representing the time of day. This nymph is chaste in contrast to the bright sun.

The poem has three parts: the opening salutation, locating Eve in the countryside; the center, a plea for guidance in achieving a calm stoicism; and a grand finale with a roll call of the seasons and a return to a universal dimension.

Collins acknowledges Eve's authority combining pastoral imagery with classical allusions .Nature takes over the first section with images of water, clouds and winds. There is allusion to Milton's "Lycidas" in the auditory image which invades the stillness in these lines. The second part starts with a request to the maid who is worthy of emulation. The poem presents the cyclical pageant of nature, starting with a series of images befitting and summarizing each season.

The poem is a Horatian rather than a pastoral ode.

Collins uses conventional neoclassical poetic diction.

The language depicts pastoral images, such as "yon western tent" of the sun. The image of spring would be overpowered by this picture.

## **Romanticism**

### **Ode to The West Wind**

#### **Percy Bysshe Shelley**

The poem illustrates the most powerful impact of a specific wind. It also exhibits the poet's desire to utilize the mighty west wind as a medium to make people realize the importance of this natural blessing.

The poem manifests two important points; the power of the west wind and the power of poetry.

He asks the wind to transform him to a musical instrument to play the tune of his thoughts to make the world aware of his presence.

Major themes :

Power, human limitations( mortality) and the natural world.

The west wind symbolizes the power of nature and of imagination inspired by nature. It is an agent of change. Even as it destroys , the wind encourages a new life on earth.