

"la belle dame sans
merci" and "bredon
hill"



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This is an essay about how love can be a hurtful experience for some people. I have chosen to write about “ La Belle Dame Sans Merci” and “ Bredon Hill”. Both poems show a different side of love, one looks at the physical consequences of love and the other shows the emotional consequences of love. I will firstly examine La Belle Dame Sans Merci.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci was written by John Keats in 1818. He lived from 1795 till 1824. He died from the disease Tuberculosis. He was also a member of the Romantic Movement. This poem is a ballad.

Poets of Keats day loved the middle ages. This poem is a literary ballad, this means that it was written in a later generation and uses the middle age style of writing. The first verse has an unidentified narrator. This person sees a wandering knight in arms and asks him what is troubling him.

We find out nothing about the knights appearance until later. We get the feeling that this will be a sad poem because it says “ And no birds sing”. When birds sing, it’s a happy sound, when they don’t; it’s just a sad silence. In the second verse the narrator describes the knight to us. He describes him as haggard and miserable.

We also find out what time of year it is. It is early winter. Again we get the feeling this will be a sad poem, because poems written about this time of year are usually sad. In verse 3 the writer goes into more detail about the knight he is sweating and flustered and his cheeks are very red. “ I see a lily on thy brow, with anguish moist and fever dew, and on thy cheeks a fading rose, fast withereth too” These are all metaphors.

They all suggest an illness or a fever about him. In verse 4 the knight speaks for the first time. He tells of beautiful woman he met in the meadows. She had long hair and she could dance and she had “ wild eyes”.

This suggests strangeness about her. In the 5th verse the knight says he made a garland, bracelets and a belt for her. Men of this day did this to show that they had strong feelings for someone. He says she moaned as he made love to her. The 6th verse uses a phallic symbol to say that they made love, “ I set her on my pacing steed, and saw nothing else all day long.

” This is also a euphemism. She sang a faerys song to him. We wonder how she came to know a faerys song. This also suggests strangeness about her. In verse 7 she finds food for the knight to eat, strange items like wild honey and manna dew.

Later in the poem we get some suspicions that this was a sleeping potion she created. “ And sure in some language strange she said, “ I love thee true” She speaks to him in a strange language, which he thinks she says she loves him, he is sure of it. Again we get a strange feeling about her. In verse 8 the woman takes the knight back to her elfin grot. This lady cannot be normal because normal people don’t live in elfin grots. She cried, maybe this is because she has done something to him and she is regretting it, he kissed her eyes shut.

“ And there I shut her wild, wild eyes, with kisses 4.” Again it mentions how wild her eyes are, suggests strangeness about her again. In verse 9 she makes him fall asleep, or maybe he just thinks she is, but it is probably the

sleeping potion kicking in. He dreams about being on a cold hillside. He seen kings and princes and warriors.

"Death pale were they all." This suggests that they all are sick in some way. They all said that the woman had tricked him into sleeping with her. Verse 9 tells more about how the people in the knight's dream looked. "I saw their starved lips in the gloam, with horrid warning gaping wide." He could see by their looks that they warned him.

He awakens and finds himself on a hillside. Verse 10 is the final verse. He says that is the reason that he is on this hillside, on his own, where the birds don't sing. This poem is mostly a love poem but has a lot of sadness in it.

This poem expresses one of the physical consequences of love. I will now examine the poems Bredon Hill. This is mostly about the emotional consequences of love. Bredon Hill is written by Alfred Edward Housman. After reading it briefly for the first time, you would class it as a generally happy poem, but as you read into it in more detail, you see that this isn't the case. The first verse starts off in present tense and the speaker uses the word "summertime".

This means happiness in a sense. Also he says that bells can be heard. Bells are a happy sound. The second verse is written in past tense, and the speaker tells of how on a Sunday morning he looks at the "coloured counties." This alliteration gives a happy tone.

The 3rd verse again speaks of belle, symbol of happiness. The first 3 verses have been happy so far. "The bells ring to call her." This means that he

must not go to church, because they call " her" not him. But his love chooses to stay with him over going to church. The 4th verse reveals to us that he will go to church someday.

He uses the alliteration " springtime Thyme" which means the poem is still in a happy tone. The writer reveals to us that he will go to church when he is to be wed to his love and that when he hears the bells that day; he will be there on time for it. In the 5th verse the word " but" is introduced to the poem. When a poem uses the word but it usually means a tone change.

The word " snow" is also used, which is a symbol for death. The writer uses euphemism to tell us that his love is dead. " My love rose up so early and stole out unbeknown and went to church alone" This means that she is dead in a more polite way. Also, all the verses so far have been in past tense. The 6th verse is still in past tense.

The writer is at the church, but not as a groom, but as a mourner for his wife's death, and only one bell is ringing. The 7th verse changes into present tense. The writer hears the bells calling the good people to church, and he gives in and says that he will go. " Oh noisy bells be dumb, I hear you, and I will come.

" This could also mean that he will make a similar trip to the church, as his love did. Maybe he is thinking of killing himself because he is so heartbroken. I have now examined both poems. Each shows a different side of what can happen if you fall in love. La belle dame sans merci shows the physical consequences of love, that you can catch STI's from woman like that. Bredon

Hill shows the emotional consequences of love, that you will get your heart broken if you become too attached to someone you love a lot.