



Byron: Poems

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To the nineteenth-century reader, George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824), was the archetype of the Romantic literary hero, a figure admired and emulated as much for the revolutionary panache with which he lived his life as the brio and allure of his verse. Our century has seen him more clearly as a poet whose intellectual toughness, satiric gifts, and utter inability to be boring have made him one of the great comic spirits in our literature.

Byron: Poems Details

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Joe Cowan says

Lord Byron has proved to be a witty and self-aware writer who tends to take upon the true personality of a bard waiting on an audience. Though I found most of the content boring or too elongated for my taste, it does not reflect on his skill or ability poorly at all. I will definitely claim one of his poems, "The Destruction of Sennacherib" as one of my all-time favorites.

kari says

Lord Byron is quite the wit. His poetry is entertaining, the ones that were topical in his day are a little tougher to read because I didn't really understand the context of them but still his commentary is great. There are samples of his poems in the first sixty-four pages and the rest is his narrative verse.

I really liked the way he tells the story in rhyme, although I could wish that he would occasionally get his clever self out of the way and keep telling the story as he does tend to pause to contemplate on this or that subject and give his opinion and tell a joke or two. These little bits do tend to be jarring just when the story's getting exciting but I know that's partly the time in which he lived and was writing. His poetry is beautiful and enduring.

Stacey West says

Never. Again. I mean the poems are fine but like 98% of the book is "i don't talk bad about people BUT..." Or "I hate gossip BUT..." And useless stuff that is about Byron and not the story he's telling constantly interjected. "Don Juan was born to a loveless marriage. (Now I never married and never will) His dad beat his mom" WHAT JUST HAPPENED?!?!?!?

J.D. says

Accepting Byron's limitations, especially when dealing with serious and deep subject-matter not related to strong emotions, his poetry is hopelessly and wonderfully romantic. While Don Juan was witty and funny at times, it's at the romantic where he excels, and this is especially true of the romantic love part (Byron being one of the few masters of the Romantic who actually wrote about romantic love at length). The Visions of Judgement is good but without the historical context it is distracting most of all and I'm pretty sure I won't read it again. In any case, for what he was, Byron was the best.

(The following are nice stanzas, but not the best so as not to spoil the experience of discovery, but may contain plot spoilers, although I would not worry about that at all.)

Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,

And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
'Tis pity though, in this sublime world, that
Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure;
Few mortals know what end they would be at,
But whether glory, power, or love, or treasure,
The path is through perplexing ways, and when
The goal is gain'd, we die, you know – and then—
(CXXXIII, Canto I of Don Juan)

It was such a pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
To watch him slumbering and to see him wake;
To live with him for ever were too much;
But the thought of parting made her quake:
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a wreck – her first love, and her last.
(CLXXIII, Canto II of Don Juan)

Ross Cohen says

A solid introduction, though I wish it contained more of his shorter works, especially "Darkness."

Jen Well-Steered says

What I liked about it: I honestly thought when I borrowed this book from the library that all of his poems were like To M.S.G.: When'er I dream of that pure breast, / How could I dwell upon its snows! / Yet is the daring wish repress'd, / For that - would banish its repose. / A glance from thy soul-searching eye, / Can raise with hope, depress with fear / Yet I conceal my love - and why? / I would not force a painful tear.' All forbidden romance and tragic death at 24 from tuberculosis that has got teenage girls worked into a lather for centuries. But actually, a lot of his poetry is about adventure stories, like Lara or Childe Harold's Pilgrimage or tragic narrative like Beppo. It turns out a lot of the hype that got the ladies worked up was just an early understanding of how publicity works.

I think my favourite of his works is Cain, in which the first murderer expresses his resentment at being kicked out of the Garden of Eden and made mortal for his parents' mistake:

And this is Life! Toil! And wherefore should I toil? - because my father could not keep his place in Eden. What had I done in this? I was unborn: I sought not to be born; nor love the state to which that birth has brought me.

He then goes on to meet Satan and kill his brother and get banished to the Land of Nod.

What I didn't like about it: Byron didn't write enough limericks. Here's the one example in the entire book: John Adams lies here, of the parish of Southwell / A carrier who carried his can to mouth well; / He carried so much and he carried so fast, / He could carry no more - so was carried at last; / For the liquor he drank, being too much for one / He could not carry off - so no he's carri-on. Limericks forever!

<http://omnibrowbooks.blogspot.com>

LemontreeLime says

Read this a long time ago now. He's interesting, not my go-to poet for literary satisfaction, but definitely worth the perusal once in a while.

Andrea says

Byron is considered one of the greatest poets in history and this volume of his work certainly demonstrates that fact. I love the story like quality that his writings offer. His wit and intelligence served him well and his legacy continues to endure. I should like to obtain a full volume of his complete works to read and savor. The Romantic poets have always inspired me as a reader, a writer and as a student of literature. Here is a familiar taste:

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

-From Hebrew Melodies
She Walks In Beauty (p.11)

Diana says

First of all, I want to state the fact that I did not read this book, just some poems by Lord Byron, but, obviously, I couldn't add every poem here.

The poems I read are: "My soul is dark", "We sat down and wept by the waters of Babel", "Solitude", "To a lady", "To Eliza" and "On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year".

The poems were, generally, beautiful. I enjoyed reading them and, but mostly, I enjoyed contrasting the Romanian version with the original one. I enjoy finding little connotation differences, although there were not many. English being not my first language, I had a little problems with words as: thee, thy, ne'er, thine, hath, but after some research, I now know that these words are part of the old English language and,

obviously, are not used anymore, but I do think that it is alright to know them.

What I noticed at Byron's poems is that the harp is an important element; music itself is powerful enough in Byron's poems to conquer over the evil.

I want to comment a little bit more on the last poem I read by Byron, "On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year". I find this poem really impressing, as it is more of an ode to death. The poet wants to give his soul to Greece for which he had fought for and where he had eventually died and his only wish is his art and creation to survive through time as an English man, but wants to be buried as a soldier, as a fighter for Greece. I like this poem a lot for it covers not only a theme of bravery, but also love for life, glory, death and regret.

I shall edit this review once I will have studied more of Byron's poems at the universal literature class.

Ely says

There were a couple of poems I was hoping to see in here that weren't included, but still, this solidified my growing obsession with Byron.

Arlene says

I much preferred Byron's lyrical verse over the narrative verse. I'm not a fan of poetry, but after reading Byron's works, I've realized I prefer lyrical poems that are short and sweet. Of the ones I came across, my favored ones were "On my thirty third birthday" and "So we'll go no more a roving." His satire is distinguishable and effective.

I didn't care too much for the narrative verses, "The Vision of Judgment" nor "Don Juan." It didn't keep my attention and to be frank, I didn't get what he was trying to convey. If I were to read anymore of his poetry, I would stick to his lyrical poems as they kept my interest and I was able to interpret them more easily. Bottom line, though, I don't get Byron.

James Violand says

Great poetry for a guy. A man's man of a poet.

Pontus says

Don Juan was pretty fun (but only Canto I and parts of Canto II were included).

His lyric verse was also somewhat enjoyable to read, but no one could get me to read 'The Vision of Judgement' again. Not only was it a response to Robert Southey's 'A Vision of Judgement' from 1821 (which I have not read, and never plan to read... probably), but it was also an excellent sleeping pill.

I got quite lost almost immediately and didn't bother to check for summaries or explanations, so yeah, that one might be on me now that I think about it...

