

Date 11 / 2 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / Lyric

Title "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Author / Director / Robert Frost

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I found this poem while on Shmoop while browsing during English 2XL in the library.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

"Nothing Gold Can Stay" begins by talking about nature and the fact that the beautiful golden colors that it can portray, such as in the beginning of spring, soon transform into the basic greens of summertime. The poem also references the fact that flowers too are only present for a short time in the spring, again quickly losing their beauty to what they truly are— green leaves. Finally, the speaker connects this fleeting and diminishing beauty with the tarnishing of the perfection that originally existed in the Garden of Eden as well as with the termination of a sunset.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"Nothing Gold Can Stay" is essentially a gigantic paradox. In the first few lines of the poem, the true signs of spring reveal themselves in absolute beauty and allure, both as gold concealing green and flowers hiding leaves. Nevertheless, as nature runs its course, these outward appearances slowly fade to things lesser in their existences, symbolizing the brevity and succinctness of supreme heights. Unfortunately, these changes seemingly involve an emotional loss, as the richness and elegance are unable to be preserved, leaving humans having to settle for much less. In reality, however, the appearing diminutions reflect a fall into a greater reality, a fortunate fall. Beauty may be the most desirable; however, it is merely transitory and brief, whereas a fall from this beauty ultimately gives rise to new value and fuller life. For example, dawn may be enticing and lovely, but its "going down to day" is in no way a degradation; in fact, dawn goes up to day, as day sustains humanity and is more long-lived. In a similar way, the fall of humans in Eden, though creating people who know sin and guilt, ultimately makes life more interesting, allowing humans to enjoy the intricacies of knowledge and the entry into a greater light. The beautiful aspects of life can be appreciated, but their longevity need not

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Nothing Gold Can Stay" consists of four rhyming couplets, and it is also written in iambic trimeter, meaning that three iambs, or an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable, exist in each line. This makes the poem flow smoothly in an organized and repetitive pattern as the reader progresses through the concise poem. Evident in the line, "Her hardest hue to hold," alliteration also facilitates the reading of the poem, and it grabs both the visual and mental attention of the reader in order to stress a point. Moreover, this same line personifies nature, making the point of the poem more relatable and easier to understand. Finally, paradoxical equalities also exist in the poem, such as when it says "Nature's first green is gold" and "Her early leaf's a flower." Obviously, gold is not green and flowers are not leaves; rather, they are merely disguises of their less beautiful yet more fulfilling counterparts.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections /

Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Very terse and compact, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" is straightforward and to the point, a summation of a profound sense of truth in just a few brief lines. The brevity and fluidity of this poem make it so easy to read and thus more enjoyable; however, such simplicity may lead to misunderstandings of its more complex and underlying meaning. For instance, even according to the title, the poem may seem to be written by a pessimist, who views the glass half empty, just as he believes in the rarity and diminution of beauty in the world. However, a closer examination would allow the reader to believe that the poem does in fact support the decline of beauty, but also that this decline of beauty leads to greater and more satisfying things. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* displays this reality in the opposition of the World State and the Savage Reservation. The inhabitants of the World State are constantly pleased in satisfied in a state of synthetic happiness; however, they are only content in their delusion by the forced processes of predestination and soma rationing, suggesting that the society will likely not persist in the long run. On the other hand, the people of Savage Reservation, although living in a seemingly degraded society both in terms of progression and happiness, actually get to experience life for what it truly is. By sacrificing perfect contentment, they are able to search for a fuller and more meaningful existence, one that absolute happiness cannot provide. This poem is poetic because of its simplicity yet profoundness. Frost manages to sum up a relevant and expansive truth in just a few lines. Moreover, by giving the appearance of a being a gloomy and depressing poem, Frost enlightens his readers when/if they come to understand its fundamental meaning. In spite of the poem's seeming dreariness, Frost transforms something good into something that is hopeful and optimistic.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)