

POETICALLY SPEAKING

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WHĀT HAS (MOTHER) NATURE DONE?

BY

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This sonnet is from **Thě (Study of) Trees**. It is included here with additions, corrections and improved scansion notation which will appear in the second edition.

The *Spenserian*¹ sonnet is unique in that the quatrains are interlocked by their rime. The rime scheme is given by *abab bcbc cdcd ee* with the *volta* always occurring at the final couplet. The sonnet is sometimes classified as *Italian* because it only has *five* rimes. However, the *Italian* sonnet does not have a *rime-connection* between the octave and sestet of which Spenser's does with the *c*-rime. Spenser's form was not very popular, but it is very beautiful.

Whāt Has (Mother) Nature Done?

Behold! The fields are flushed with color red!
Methinks not blood, but blood it may well be.
Behold the sight! Nay turn my head instead,
Avert mine eyes, this travesty I see.
Their sound! They sound as one and all agree
That greatness comes in numbers more than one.
Who strives to flee their common repartee
Of dry repeated-ness and stories spun?
But lo! Their faces greet the noonday sun;
All 'tempt to dull her with their feign eclipse—
So many, what has Mother Nature done?
She stands aside, her hands upon her hips:
I wonder if the grass is truly green—
With poppies tall, the grass is rarely seen.

¹ Spenserian: Edmund Spenser (1552/1553—January 13, 1599) His exact date of birth is unknown because the parish records for the area of London he was born were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.

OVERVIEW

The title itself is unusual in its format and perhaps an explanation is required to clarify the reason. As implied, **Thě (Study of) Trees** consists of a selection of poems about trees, their thoughts and emotions under different circumstances. The second section involves the metrical analyses of the poems in the collection.

The scansion notation using the breve (˘) and macron (¯) are used and the titles have the appropriate metrical accent marked on the first word. Added to this, bracketed words may be left out or included in any particular reading.

Now what are we looking at? Something of beauty in nature or something horrific in the human-race? The point is both can occur simultaneously. It all depends how you look at it.

Oh, those tall poppies!

Essentially, this sonnet is about groups of people who believe that the greater number in support the better, irrespective of the quality that has been presented. We find this to be quite common today in that some poetry (Is it truly poetry?) is preferred over others, and the non-preferred type is insignificant or to be heavily criticized. You may say a type of bullying in literary circles. The fact is that many of these people are worthless critics, if critics you dare call them.

The poem can also be interpreted as Mother Nature dealing with unwanted growth, whether weed or in this case the *tall poppies*.

ANALYSIS

This sonnet can be easily read keeping with **strict iambic pentameter** (albeit the title itself is clipped iambic tetrameter).

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|----|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Běhōld Thě fiēlds āre flūshed wīth cōl ōr rēd |
| 2 | Měthīnks nōt blōod būt blōod ĩt māy wēll bē |
| 3 | Běhōld thě sīght Nāy tūrñ mŷ hēad ĩnstēad |
| 4 | Āvērt mīne ēyes thīs trāv ěstŷ Ĩ sēe |
| 5 | Thěir sōund Thěy sōund ās ōne ānd āll āgrēe |
| 6 | Thāt grēat nēss cōmes ĩn nūm bērs mōre thāñ ōne |
| 7 | Whō strīves tō flēe thěir cōm mōñ rēp ārtēe |
| 8 | Ōf drŷ rēpēat ěd-nēss ānd stō riēs spūn |
| 9 | Būt lō Thěir fā cēs grēet thě noōn dāy sūn |
| 10 | Āll ‘tēmpť tō dūll hēr wīth thěir fēign ěclīpse |
| 11 | Sō māñ ŷ whāt hās Mōth ěr Nā tūre dōne |
| 12 | Shě stānds āsīde hēr hānds ŷpōñ hēr hīps |
| 13 | Ĩ wōñ dēr ĩf thě grāss ĩs trū lŷ grēen |
| 14 | Wīth pōp piēs tāll thě grāss ĩs rāre lŷ sēen |

This sonnet is correctly classified as *iambic pentameter* because there is no variation in the rhythm or of it containing metrical substitutions. Naturally, this is expected of the sonnet form. The sonnet form is one of the strictest forms in poesy, and it needs to be respected for being such.

As with most sonnets, the only minor variation will be starting with the *trochee*. In general, *substitution for the iamb* is uncommon. However, in the *feminine* verse we will find the *amphibrach* ending. On others occasions the *anapest* may finish the verse. So—not altogether impossible, but for the sonnet? Not too many please.
