

Hi, this is Ross from Learning without Borders and today we're going to be learning about the poem *She Walks in Beauty* by Lord Byron. This poem was written about a woman the poet met at a ball. She was a widow, a woman whose husband has died, and so is dressed in black. Byron found her so beautiful that she inspired him to write one of his most famous poems.

He compares her beauty to a cloudless night – black, like the clouds she wears – however, he also mentions that this night is full of shining stars, adding beauty to the blackness. This theme is continued when he talks about her eyes, which he says contain “all that's best of dark and bright”.

He goes on to say that “one shade the more” or “one ray the less” would be less beautiful; in other words, she is the perfect balance of darkness and light. This idea is extended to her personality, which he describes as “pure” and “innocent” – ideas connected to brightness, whilst her own innocence is contrasted with the sad fact that her husband has died – something we associate with darkness and the night.

Here is the poem:

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 mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,

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A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

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