

Poetry
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Lecture - 11
Henry Howard: The Earl of Surrey

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Henry Howard
The Earl of Surrey (c.1517-47)



- Historical Context
- Literary Context
- The Earl of Surrey
- Two Poems
 - “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought”
 - “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings”
- Analysis



We are going to discuss the poems of Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, born around 1517 and passed away in 1547. Whenever we have a ‘c’ with dot or a question mark before or after a year, it means about we do not know the exact date of birth or date of death. So we mention this point through this use of ‘c’ that means ‘circa’ or ‘question mark.’

We will examine the historical context in which the poet wrote his poems. Similarly, we will look into the literary context in which the poet was able to write his poems. We will have a brief introduction to Henry Howard usually called The Earl of Surrey or simply Surrey.

For the sake of this video, we will analyze two poems. These are sonnets, Elizabethan sonnets, or just before Elizabeth, he wrote these sonnets. One is called “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought.” The second sonnet is “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings.” We will analyze these poems and then conclude our discussion.

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Historical Context



- Early 16th century
- War against the French
- Son of the Duke of Norfolk, who delayed attack on the French in Montreuil
- Surrey's participation in the war and getting wounded
- Saved by his friend Thomas Clere
- Executed at the age 30 on charge of treason by Henry VIII



Now, let us see the early 16th century. Just before the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there was always a war between England and France. In this war, many dukes, many lords, and soldiers participated.

The Duke of Norfolk was supporting the King. Our poet Surrey happens to be one of the sons of the Duke of Norfolk. And in this context, the Duke of Norfolk for some reason, delayed the attack on the French in a location called Montreal and this led to some suspicion on the part of the king regarding the motives of the Duke of Norfolk for delaying the attack.

Henry Howard also participated in the war and at one point of time, he got wounded. He was saved by his friend Thomas Clere. And after some time when there was a suspicion due to political problems in the country, Surrey was executed at the age of 30 on charge of treason by Henry VIII.

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Literary Context



- Contemporary of Wyatt, who influenced Surrey profoundly
- Junior to Wyatt by 14 years
- Translation from the Italian literature was common
- Different degrees and levels of translation
- *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) ushered a new taste in poetry
- The native tradition led by John Skelton went out of fashion



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Now, let us examine literary context. Surrey was a contemporary of Sir Thomas Wyatt who influenced Surrey profoundly. Surrey was junior to Wyatt by 14 years but then he took more interest in translation of writings from the Italian literature. It was a common phenomenon of the day and translations varied according to the level of closeness with the original.

Some poets simply imitated, some others freely translated. Some others went ahead with full imitation of the writers. These poems translated and some original, some of these sonnets and songs and other poems were collected in an anthology called *Tottel's Miscellany*, which was published in 1557. This publication assured a new taste in poetry in England.

At that time, there was a native tradition of poetry led by a well-known poet of that time, John Skelton. But this kind of native tradition went out of fashion when the fresh air of poetry came from Latin and other writings from the continent.

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The Earl of Surrey (c.1517-47)



- “the first English classical poet” [Thomas Warton, *A History of English Poetry* (1781)]
- Translated Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book II and IV into English,
 - Used blank verse as equal to Latin unrhymed hexameter
- Developed the sonnet of three quatrains and a couplet
 - Inventor of the **Shakespearean sonnet**
- Exploited the sonnet for an epitaph for his friend Thomas Clere and an elegy for his senior Wyatt



The Earl of Surrey is called the first English classical poet by the historian Thomas Warton in his book, ‘A History of English Poetry.’ The reason is Surrey took more interest in classical writings, particularly that of Virgil. Surrey translated Virgil’s epic *Aeneid*. Two books actually he translated into English.

For his translation, Surrey brought in a new experiment into English poetry. That is, he used blank verse as an equal to the Latin unrhymed hexameter. This particular innovation in English poetry has led to a great deal of new poetry in English for the rest of many years, many centuries.

Surrey also developed the sonnet of three quatrains and a couplet structure. This is called the Shakespearean sonnet. Hence Surrey is called the inventor of the Shakespearean sonnet. Surrey also exploited the sonnet form for an epitaph for his friend Thomas Clere and an elegy for his senior poet, that is, Thomas Wyatt. He was able to give new expressions in the sonnet form which is usually used for expressing love for a beloved. That love is normally not reciprocated.

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Two Poems



- Surrey has left about 15 sonnets
- Two poems for discussion
- “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought”
Adapted from Petrarch’s sonnet 140
- “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings”
Adapted from Petrarch’s sonnet 310



For our purpose, we have chosen two poems out of the 15 poems or sonnets that Surrey has left. There are many other songs and some sonnets which are doubtful authorship. So we have two sonnets for our discussion.

The first sonnet is adapted from Petrarch’s Sonnet No. 140. It is called “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought” and the second one is adapted from Petrarch’s sonnet number 310, which is known as “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings.”

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“Love, That Doth Reign and Live within My Thought”

Love, that doth reign and live within my thought,
And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
5. But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace
10. Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
For my lord’s guilt thus faultless bide I pain,
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.



Now, let us get into the poem.

	“Love, that doth reign and live within my thought	A
	And built his seat within my captive breast,	B
	Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,	A
	oft in my face he doth his banner rest.	B
5.	But she that taught me love and suffer pain,	C
	My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire	D
	With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,	C
	Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.	D
	And coward Love, then, to the heart apace.	E
10.	Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain.	C
	His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.	E
	For my lord’s guilt thus faultless bide I pain,	C
	Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove:	F
	Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.”	F

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Love, that doth reign and live within my thought



Love, that doth reign and live within my thought, A
And built his seat within my captive breast, B
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought, A
Of in my face he doth his banner rest. B
5. But she that taught me love and suffer pain, C
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire D
With shamefast look to shadow and refrain, C
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire. D
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace E
10. Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain, C
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face. E
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain, C
Yet from my lord shall not my foot **remove**: F
Sweet is the death that taketh end by **love**. F



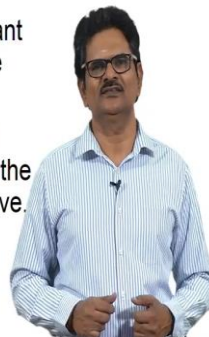
Here we have the poem with the rhyme scheme. As you can see, the last two lines end in a couplet. The rhyming words are 'remove' and 'love.' We call this rhyme, eye rhyme because the sound is different but they look alike.

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Thematic Contrast



- Themes of **love**, pain, guilt, **death**
- The love that lives in the heart of the lover comes out on his face and bravely shows up like a soldier in a battlefield.
- The woman who taught him love and the attendant pain becomes angry when he expresses his love without shame under cover.
- Then the coward love retreats into his heart and dare not show up again. The speaker suffers for the guilt of his lord but will stay with him hiding his love.
- Love is sweet though it brings death. (**paradox**)



Let us begin with a thematic analysis with your focus on contrast between two opposite ideas. In this poem, we have the themes of love and death and these themes are mixed with pain and guilt. The love that lives in the heart of the lover comes out on his face and bravely shows up like a soldier in a battlefield. The woman who

taught him love and the attendant pain becomes angry when he expresses his love without shame undercover.

Perhaps, the woman expect the lover to be a little more shy. Then the coward love retreats into his heart and dare not show up again. Because he feels defeated. The speaker suffers for the guilt of his lord but will stay with him hiding in his love. Paradoxically, the poem tells us love is sweet though it brings death.

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Poetic Devices



- **Personification:** Love
- **Conceit:** Love as a soldier, heart as a camp, the face as a battlefield
- Akin to the metaphysical conceit of Donne's compass
- **Epigram:** "Sweet is the death that taketh end by love."
- **Diction:** Military vocabulary – reign, captive, arms, fought, banner, flight, foot,
- **Alliteration:** love-live, hope-hot, shamefast-shadow, smiling-straight,
- **Assonance:** And built his seat within my captive breast



This paradoxical poem about love and death personifies love as a human being. It uses a device called conceit. The poet imagines love as a soldier. His own heart as a camp and the face as a battlefield. This may be akin to the metaphysical conceit of poets like Donne who used a compass in his poem.

In this poem we have an epigram that is a short pithy saying, summing up certain feelings or ideas. We have this example here, "Sweet is the death that taketh end by love." The diction used by the poet is of a specific variety that is the words have been chosen from the military vocabulary. Words like reign, captive, arms, fought, banner, flight, foot. All these words together create an atmosphere of battlefield.

This poem also uses alliteration quite effectively. There are many. Love-live, hope-hot, shamefast-shadow, smiling-straight. Quite interestingly, this poem has one whole line with this Assonance, "And built his seat within my captive breast." You

can see the highlighted letter 'I' in 'built,' 'his,' 'within,' 'captive.' Probably the poet is trying to say that the whole idea is within his heart.

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Rhyme, Rhythm and Meter



- Rhyme and rhyming words
 - ABAB: **thought**, **breast**, **fought**, **rest**:
 - CDCD: pain, desire, refrain, ire;
 - ECEC: apace, plain, face, pain,
 - FF: **remove**, **love** (eye rhyme)
- Rhythm: lines 9-10
 - And coward Love, then, to the heart apace ➤
 - Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,
 - His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
- Meter: iambic pentameter with a variation of trochee
 - And **built** his **seat** **within** my **captive** **breast**
 - Clad** in the **arms** **wherein** with **me** he **fought**,



Now, let us examine the rhyme, rhythm, and meter of this particular sonnet. We have this rhyme scheme of A B A B, C D C D, E C E C, F F, and the rhyming words are thought, breast, fought, rest.

Within this A B A B, we can see very close connection between the words used in this particular quatrain. Thought-breast; very minor distinction in sound but the poet is able to show that similar feelings coming together through the use of thought-fought and closely connected wall breast-rest.

In the second quatrain he uses words like pain, desire, refrain, and ire to indicate the rhyme. In the third quatrain, he has four words apace, plain, face, pain, and the last two lines in the couplet he has two words which we mentioned already, remove, love. They create a sense of rhythm or rhyme for eye. That is why we call it eye rhyme.

If we examine the rhythm of this poem, we will find it very interesting to see the different kinds of pauses in the middle and at the end and also the run-on lines that the poet has used. We have indicated this comma in highlight red and we have also shown the run on line by a marker you can see on the slide.

“And coward Love, then, to the heart apace

Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain,

His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.”

The variety in the pauses, in the moment of the thought process or emotion we can very well see in these three lines.

If we look at the meter we find it interesting to see, Surrey has used iambic pentameter with a variation of trochee. Some more variation also it is possible for us to see in the first line we have used as an example. “And built his seat within my captive breast,” is completely iambic except that one ‘within.’ Some readers may like to consider that both syllables unstressed. In such a case that may be peric but then we will consider it as ‘iam’ in general. And when we go to the next line, we see, “Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought.” Clad in, his example of trochee where the stress comes in the first word.

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Overall Impression



- Love is personified as a lord who comes out as a soldier to fight in the battle of love on the speaker's face.
- The lady teaches him not only love but also suffering.
- The lady smiles mischievously to defeat him.
- Unable to receive the lady's love, the speaker retreats with shame.
- Love suffers guilt and complains about the loss.
- The speaker endures the pain of guilt and commits himself to the lord of Love.
- Love is paradoxically sweet death.



On the whole, we have the impression of love being personified as a lord who comes out as a soldier to fight in the battle of love on the speaker's own face, when the lady, the lover in front of her. She finds a man with full of energy, that is, expressing his love openly without any kind of shame. That is where the lady feels a little upset. So she mischievously tries to be angry with the poet, the speaker. Unable to receive the lady's love, the speaker, or the speaker's lord that is love, retreats with shame and

goes into the heart of the speaker. As the love goes into the heart, love suffers guilt and complains about the loss that is loss of favor from the lady.

Now, the speaker endures the pain of guilt. However, the speaker commits himself to the lord of love. Then we see at the end, the paradox. Love is paradoxically sweet death for the speaker.

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The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings



The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her make hath told her tale.
5. Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings,
The fishes float with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings,
10. The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;
The busy bee her honey now she mings.
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things,
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.



Let us discuss the second poem we have chosen for this presentation.

“The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,

With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;

The nightingale with feathers new she sings;

The turtle to her make hath told her tale.

5. Summer is come, for every spray now springs;

The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;

The buck in brake his winter coat he flings,

The fishes float with new repaired scale;

The adder all her slough away she slings,

10. The swift swallow pursueth the flies small;

The busy bee her honey now she mings.

Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale.

And thus I see among these pleasant things,

Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.”

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The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings



The soote season, that bud and bloom forth **brings**, A
With green hath clad the hill and eke the **vale**; B
The nightingale with feathers new she **sings**; A
The turtle to her make hath told her **tale**. B
5. Summer is come, for every spray now **springs**; A
The hart hath hung his old head on the **pale**; B
The buck in brake his winter coat he **flings**, A
The fishes float with new repaired **scale**; B
The adder all her slough away she **slings**, A
10. The swift swallow pursueth the flies **small**; B
The busy bee her honey now she **mings**. A
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' **bale**. B
And thus I see among these pleasant **things**, A
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow **springs**. A



After the reading now we have the rhyme scheme in this presentation. We have also indicated the rhyme scheme through color code. If red for A, green for B; A B A B A B A B A B A B A A. That is how we have identified the rhyme scheme. It is a peculiar, the same rhyme scheme A B A B, and only two words change alternating rhymes. We have brings, vale, sings, tale, springs, pale, flings, scale, slings, small, mings, bale, things, springs. There is some beauty in this poem we will see.

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Thematic Contrast



- The winter season has given way to spring.
- Pleasant spring: greenery, nightingale, turtledove
- Summer has arrived: hart and buck, adder, fish, swallow,
- Bees make honey from flowers.
- Winter has disappeared.
- When it comes to the poet, it remains the same.
- Every care/sorrow disappears but his sorrow remains an eternal spring (source)



As we look into the thematic contrast in this poem, we can see contrast between two seasons; winter season, spring season, and then summer season. Winter is associated with sadness, suffering, and things like that. Spring gives a pleasant feeling. So these two seasons are contrasted and these two seasons share something with the poet.

The poet is able to watch the movement, the change of seasons but nothing changes in him. The winter of his love or the winter of his suffering does not change. That is why we find the poet saying, the winter season has given way to spring. Pleasant spring is full of greenery, nightingale, turtledove. Summer also has arrived with hart and buck, adder, fish, and swallow. At this time, bees also make their honey from flowers. Emphasizing winter has already disappeared. Because, during winter, flowers do not bloom so much. But when it comes to the poet, the season remains the same, he has his sorrow, all cares he has. He says, “every care, every sorrow, every suffering disappears but the poet’s own sorrow remains as an eternal spring or source of suffering.”

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Theme and Rhyme



- Changing season in nature
- Unchanging season in the speaker
- First twelve lines alternate in rhyme: ab, ab
- But the last two lines form a couplet with aa.
- The contrast is quite effective:
 - Pleasant things
 - Sorrow springs
- Up to line 12, lines are strongly alliterative.
- Lines 13 and 14 end in one alliteration not for harmony but for discord.



Now, let us examine the Theme and the Rhyme. Sometimes poet use rhyme so effectively to convey their theme. This poem deals with the changing season in nature and the unchanging season in the speaker. The first 12 lines alternate in rhyme A B A B. The last two lines do not change, they have the same rhyme, that is, A A, and thus form a couplet. As you can see, the contrast is quite effective. The first 12 lines, we have all pleasant things and in the last two lines, we have all sorrow. So up to line 12, lines are strongly alliterative. There also, we have some rhythm, rhyme, smoothness, pleasantness through alliteration. And in the case of lines 13 and 14, we have just one alliteration. It is not for smoothness or harmony but for disharmony and discord within the heart of the poet. This kind of effective use of theme and rhyme is found in some poems, this is a good example.

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Poetic Devices



- **Alliteration:** soote season, bud and bloom, turtle told her tale, summer spray springs, hart hath hung his old head, buck in brake, fishes float, slough she slings, swift swallow small, busy bee, winter is worn, sorrow springs,
- **Hyperbaton:** lines 3 and 11
The turtle [to her mate] hath told her tale.
The busy bee [her honey now she] mings
- **End stopped lines and caesura:** lines 5, 12, and 14
Summer is come, for every spray now **springs**;
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' **bale**.
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow **springs**



There are many Poetic Devices that the poet has used. In this particular poem, we find alliteration to be very strong. Soote season, that is, sweet season soote is actually sweet. Soote season, bud and bloom, turtle told her tale, summer spray springs, hart hath hung his old head, buck in brake, fishes float, slough she slings, swift swallow small, busy bee, winter is worn, sorrow springs. It is fantastic.

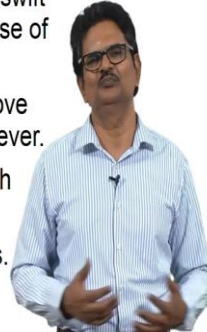
Within this poem, we have an example of Hyperbaton in lines 3 and 11. “The turtle [to her mate] hath (make is mate) told her tale.” We would normally have this word order, the turtle told her tale to her mate. And in the second example, we have “the busy bee [her honey now she] mings.” The words we have put in brackets, it will be good or it is normal to have at the end. The busy bee mings, that is, mingles or collects her honey now. We also have the example of this end-stopped lines and caesura in lines 5, 12, and 14. “Summer is come,” we have here pause “for every spray now springs;” end stop “Winter is worn,” a pause, “that was the flowers’ bale,” stop “Each care decays,” pause, “and yet my sorrow springs.” So, in the case of the first line that is summer is come, we have four syllables and in the last line that is each care decays, there also we have four syllables. In between we have winter is worn, that also has four syllables. But you can see graphically, some distance is shown to us to indicate variation in this different kinds of pauses.

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Overall Impression



- The season has become sweet with the arrival of spring after winter has receded.
- The whole environment is green and lively.
- The nightingale, turtle, hart, buck, fishes, adder, swift swallow, busy bee, and all have taken a new lease of life in spring. The harsh winter has gone away.
- But the speaker alone is unhappy because his love is not reciprocated firmly. His care continues as ever.
- The speaker contrasts his desolate condition with that of the sprightly spring season.
- Dejection is the eternal life that the speaker lives.



On the whole, we have a good impression of this poem. The sweet season is wonderful. The sweet season has arrived with the spring after winter has receded or gone away. The whole environment is green and lively full of vitality, joy and this joy of nature is conveyed to us through different kinds of animals, birds, insects which live happily from the nightingale, turtle, hart, buck, fishes, adder, swallow, bee. We have a new life for all of them. They all have taken a new lease of life in spring because the harsh winter has gone away. But the speaker alone is unhappy because his love is not reciprocated firmly by his lady love. Therefore, his own care or sorrow continues as ever without any change.

Thus the speaker contrasts his own desolate condition with that of the sprightly spring season. In such a situation dejection is abode of the poet and it appears to be eternal for the poet, and so it lives within him or he lives with that desolate state of mind.

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Summary



- Historical Context
- Literary Context
- The Earl of Surrey
- Two Poems
 - “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought”
 - “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings”
- Analysis



So far, we have discussed the two poems, the sonnets of The Earl of Surrey. We saw the historical context and the literary context in which he wrote his poems as a soldier, as a poet, as a courtier. Surrey was involved in the war with France. He was also involved in the political turmoils of his time. He was suspected of treason and that is why he was beheaded. The literary context was fantastic for him because that was the beginning of 16th century. Sir Thomas Wyatt had already introduced Petrarchan sonnet into English.

Surrey himself visited Italy and he was overjoyed by the dramatic output of literature in Italy and other European countries. He also returned not just returned, returned with Virgil, and translated Virgil’s poetry into English and some of the sonnets. Some like 15 sonnets attributed to Surrey we have.

We discussed two sonnets, “Love, that doth reign and live within my thought” and “The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings.” These two poems amply demonstrate the speaker’s love for his lady. The analysis tells us, love is a wonderful feeling that the poet has enjoyed though it might bring him pain, death and everything else.

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References



- Davis, W. R. 1974. "Contexts in Surrey's Poetry," *English Literary Renaissance*, 4(1): 40-55.
- Lathrop, H. B. 1905. "The Sonnet Forms of Wyatt and Surrey," *Modern Philology*, 2 (4): 463-470.
- Thomson, P. 1959. "The First Petrarchans," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 22 (2): 85-105



We have some references for you. You can, if possible, refer to at least the last one, "The first Petrarchans," you will find a comparison between Surrey and Thomas Wyatt. Enjoy yourself.