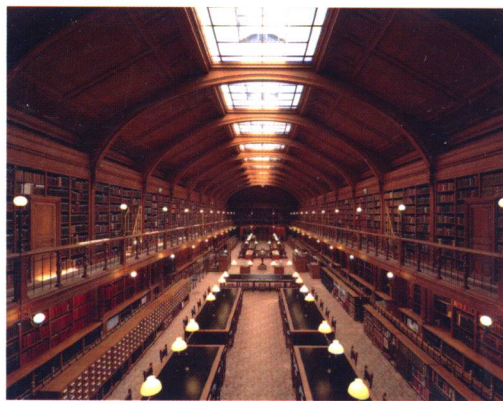




新维度外语系列教程



英语诗歌阅读与欣赏教程

English Poetry: Reading and Appreciation

丛书主编 谢群 陈立华

编著 谢艳明

 **北京理工大学出版社**

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(Preface)

以中国传统文化为根基的儿童启蒙家庭教育很多都是从诗歌开始的。当中国儿童还在懵懂学语的时候，他们的父母就开始教他们背诵儿歌和唐诗宋词之类的古典诗歌了。稍稍聪明一些的孩子不到5岁即能背诵上百首诗了。尽管很多孩子当时不能理解所背诵诗歌的含义，但他们从中感受到了语言的节奏，不知不觉地学会了说话，使得他们的口语习得成为了一种自然而然的过程。可见，诗歌学习对于语言习得起着十分重要的作用。然而，对于中国的英语学习者来说，很少有人是从诗歌学习开始的，甚至很多人学了一二十年的英语，还没有读过一首英文诗，这或许要归因于英语学习中诗歌教学的缺失。

尚在努力学习英语的人赶紧大声朗读和背诵英语诗歌吧！你会从中领悟到英语语言的节奏，大大地提高你的口语能力以及发音的清晰度和正确度，不知不觉地将语言学习转变成卓有成效的语言习得。

本书正是基于诗歌教学促进语言习得这一理论编写的，适合于英语专业的“英语诗歌选读”课程和非英语专业学生的阅读和口语操练。为适合一个学期的教学安排，全书共设计了17个单元，每个单元在一个主题下选编了3首诗，前两首为精读，后一首为泛读。此外，为了帮助读者学习和理解英语诗歌特性，本书的附录一编排有“诗歌术语”简介。本书选用了39位著名诗人的51首诗。附录二是对每位诗人的简要介绍。

本书在强调诗歌阅读的同时，还十分注重诗歌欣赏。每个单元的精读部分都配有对所选的两首诗的分析，帮助读者理解诗歌总体含义，懂得诗歌的格律、音韵、节奏、意象和象征等诗歌要素。每首诗后面配有两种类型的练习：第一种检验读者对诗歌形式的理解和掌握，主要是填空题；第二种侧重于对诗歌内涵的理解，主要由3~5个问答题组成。泛读部分只选用了一首诗，要求读者阅读诗歌，回答有关问题，并模仿精读部分对诗歌进行分析，达到融会贯通的学习效果。



由于编者水平有限，对诗歌的分析难免存在片面或不当的理解，请读者在阅读和使用本书的时候提出宝贵意见。

编者

2012年7月于武汉晓南湖畔



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Unit One

Life

Section A: Required Reading



1. A Psalm of Life

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807—1882)

Tell me not, in mournful numbers¹,
Life is but an empty dream! —
For the soul is dead that slumbers²,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest³,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
Find us farther than today.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting⁴,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.



In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac⁵ of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act, —act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime⁶,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn⁷ and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

[Notes]

1. mournful number; sad tone
2. slumber; sleep
3. Dust thou art, to dust returnest: You are born from dust, and you will return to dust.
4. fleet; fly, run very fast
5. bivouac: place used for camping
6. sublime: supreme, outstanding
7. forlorn: unhappy, despairing



[Analysis]

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow begins this poem with the same enthusiasm that continues through most part of it. He says in the first stanza that life is not in sad tones, and that life doesn't abruptly end when one dies; rather, it extends into another after life. Longfellow values this dream of the afterlife immensely and seems to say that life can only be lived truly if one believes that the soul will continue to live long after the body dies. The second stanza continues with the same belief in afterlife that is present in the first.

Longfellow states this clearly when he writes, "And the grave is not its goal." Meaning that, life doesn't end for people simply because they die; there is always something more to be hopeful and optimistic for. Longfellow begins discussing how humans must live their lives in constant anticipation for the next day under the belief that it will be better than each day before it; "But to act, that each tomorrow / Find us farther than today."

In the next stanza, Longfellow asserts that there is never an infinite amount of time to live, but art that is created during one's life can be preserved indefinitely and live on long after its creator dies. In the following stanzas, Longfellow likens living in the world to fighting on a huge field of battle.

He believes that people should lead heroic and courageous lives and not sit idle and remain ineffectual while the world rapidly changes around them; "Be not like dumb, driven cattle! Be a hero in the strife!" His use of the word "strife" is especially interesting, since it clearly acknowledges that life is inherently difficult, is a constant struggle, and will never be easy. Longfellow then encourages everyone to have faith and trust the lord and not to rely on an unknown future to be stable and supportive.

He advises people to seize the moments they have before them and act while thinking about their present situations. Longfellow continues his poem by citing the lives of great and important men who were able to lead incredible lives and leave their marks. He views these men as role models for people who have yet to live their lives; Longfellow encourages his readers to leave their own "footprints on the sands of time" and become important.

The next stanza continues with this same point. It describes how successful people in the past have their lives copied, while those who failed serve as examples of ways of life to avoid. The final lines of the poem echo the beginning



ones and offer perhaps the most important advice in a poem that is chocked full of it. Longfellow encourages all to work and try their hardest to make their lives great and accomplish as much as they can.

Longfellow conveys his message the same way he did in the rest of the poem: by speaking directly to the reader and providing his reasoning for believing in something more, in something better. Longfellow ensures his followers that the rewards for what they achieve will come eventually—if not in this lifetime, then, certainly, in the next.

[Exercises]

Fill in the following blanks.

Theme of this poem: _____

 _____.

Meter: _____

 _____.

End rhyme: _____

Alliteration

Stanza 1: _____.

Stanza 2: _____.

Stanza 3: _____.

Stanza 5: _____.

Stanza 8: _____.

Stanza 9: _____.

Simile

Stanza 4: _____.

Stanza 5: _____.

Metaphor

Stanza 1: _____.

Personification

Stanza 1: _____.

Stanza 2: _____.

Stanza 4: _____.

Stanza 6: _____.

**[Study questions]**

What is the poet's attitude towards life and death?

Do you agree with the philosophy of life presented in the poem? Explain your answer, noting at least two specific points of agreement or disagreement.

Do you think that living in the present without giving thought to the past or future is possible? Is it desirable? Explain.

Try to find out metaphors and symbols in this poem and explain their meanings.

**2. The World Is Too Much with Us**

By William Wordsworth (1770—1850)

The world is too much with us; late and soon¹,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon²!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,

The winds that will be howling at all hours,

And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,

For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn³;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;

Have sight of Proteus⁴ rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton⁵ blow his wreathed horn.

[Notes]

1. late and soon: Our fixation on materialism has been a problem in the past and will continue to be a problem in the future.

2. sordid boon: shameful gain; tarnished blessing. This phrase is an oxymoron, a form of paradox that juxtaposes contradictory words

3. suckled... outworn: brought up in an outdated religion



4. Proteus: in Greek mythology, a sea god who could change shape at will and who possessed complete knowledge of the past, present, and future

5. Triton: in Greek mythology, a sea god who had the body of a man and the tail of a fish. He used a conch—the spiral shell of a mollusk—as a trumpet

[Analysis]

William Wordsworth wrote this poem in 1807. Yet he seems to talk of our world—a world of capitalism, greed, global economics, and environmental pollution. His poem surely stands the “test of time.”

He talks of how we are more concerned with “getting and spending” (consumerism) than with “our powers” (learning and growing). He contrasts this to how we don’t recognize the God-given gifts of nature, not realizing they are for us (“that is ours”).

He says we are out of tune with the sea, the wind and all of nature. We are so blasé about the natural wonder of Earth, that he exclaims, “Great God! I’d rather be a Pagan...” He’d rather be brought up in an old religion so that he would see how once the earth and nature was worshipped and loved.

When he says we are out of tune with the sea, the wind, and nature, he is almost giving a prophecy of the world to come—seeing what lies in the distance in years to come, how we are truly out of tune with nature. We are exploiting all of nature—oil, water, land and using it as though it will last forever in our consumerist greed of “getting and spending.”

Our world of exploiting nature was already here during the time Wordsworth lived. At that time, city life and industrialization were in stark contrast to nature. However, he probably didn’t envision a worse world than what he experienced. Wordsworth laments the people of his time as we lament today about those who cannot see the environmental degradation of nature.

Most of us in our time were born into this world of concrete and steel versus nature and wildlife, yet it is easy to see how nature really would take over if we let it, when we see how plants grow easily in the most obscure places like the crevices in cement walls and sidewalks.

Wordsworth feels sad when he reflects on the inability of man to see nature, to protect nature, and to be in tune with nature, as he states, “standing on this pleasant lea have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.”

He is so sad he would rather see “Proteus rising from the sea” or “hear

old Triton blow his wreathed horn.” Meaning he would rather see life as of old when people worshipped nature as opposed to ignoring it and forgetting about it. Here he is again repeating the theme of being a pagan.

This poem is written in iambic pentameter and is a petrarchan sonnet meaning that it is composed of 14 lines, the first eight being an octave, and the last six a sestet. The rhyme is abbaabba cdcdcd. The first 8 lines pose a question and the last six lines give the answer. His question: Why do we reject nature for material things? His answer: He would rather live the old ways when man did not know of God, but only of nature.

[Exercises]

Read the poem carefully, try to find out figures of speech and fill in the blanks.

Alliteration

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 4: _____

Line 5: _____

Line 6: _____

Metaphor

Line 4: _____

Line 10: _____

Oxymoron

Line 4: _____

Personification

Line 5: _____

Simile

Lines 6-7: _____

[Study questions]

1. Write an essay arguing that Wordsworth's theme remains highly relevant today. Be generous with examples of people “getting and spending” while ignoring—or even abusing—nature.

2. What is a pagan? Read a short biography of Wordsworth, then decide whether he was serious when he wrote that he would rather be a pagan.



3. *Protean* is an English word derived from the name of the Greek god Proteus (line 13). In an authoritative dictionary, look up *protean* if you do not know the meaning. Then write a paragraph about a person who has a protean personality.

4. What is the meaning of *wreathed* in the last line of the poem? Hint: Read the definition of *Triton* under Notes, above, then look up the word *wreathed* in an authoritative dictionary.

Section B: Extended Reading



What Is Life?

By John Clare (1793—1864)

And what is Life? An hour-glass¹ on the run,
A mist retreating from the morning sun,
A busy, bustling, still-repeated dream.
Its length? A minute's pause, a moment's thought.
And Happiness? A bubble on the stream,
That in the act of seizing shrinks to nought².

And what is Hope? The puffing gale of morn³,
That of its charms divests the dewy lawn,
And robs each flow'ret of its gem—and dies;
A cobweb, hiding disappointment's thorn,
Which stings more keenly through the thin disguise.

And what is Death? Is still the cause unfound?
That dark mysterious name of horrid sound?
A long and lingering sleep the weary crave⁴.
And Peace? Where can its happiness abound?
Nowhere at all, save⁵ heaven and the grave.

Then what is Life? When stripped of its disguise,