

## Narrative Poetry

53

The Ballad is a narrative poem in quatrains (four lines that rhyme abab). It is of two kinds: The popular ballad and the literary ballad. The popular ballad is often anonymous. Passing along by word of mouth from one person to another. It is simple in theme and form, condensed in narrative, dealing with elementary emotions such as love, hate, jealousy, fear and so on. Its themes are varied ranging from domestic themes to love tragedies, folklore and superstition. Technically, the ballad makes frequent use of rhyme, repetition and refrains to create a high musical effect. Amongst the well-known popular ballads are Sir Patrick Spans which is an old anonymous Scottish ballad describing the disastrous loss at sea of Sir Patrick, His ship and his crew - as a result of royal vanity. Also very famous are the stories about Robin Hood. He is the hero of many popular ballads. He was a huntsman who lived in a forest called Sherwood. He stole from the rich to give to the poor.

The literary ballad resembles the popular ballad in theme and treatment, but is different in being more complex sophisticated. It is not anonymous and it is not transmitted orally from generation to generation or from place to place as the popular ballad. Literary ballads usually deal with more complex stories involving psychological themes. The most famous of this type of ballad is S.T.Coleridge's (1772-1834), The Rime of The Ancient Mariner, a story of guilt, suffering and repentance.

The Romance is a long narrative (in verse or prose) of love and adventure in which the events are surprising, magical or miraculous. The

Menu CamScanner 12-22-2023... X + Create Sign in

All tools Edit Convert Sign Find text or tools Q

### NARRATIVE OR DESCRIPTIVE POEMS Part II 61

In fear's surprise  
Watch largely as she goes,  
Watch largely as she goes.

When you have read and been thrilled by the story, go over it many times and look for the gems of language, for "He that would search for pearls must dive below."

A Smuggler's Song is taken from Puck of Pook's Hill, one of the many notable books written by Rudyard Kipling. In earlier days smuggling was very prevalent in England. It was a difficult and dangerous task, for the smuggling was done mostly on moonless nights, when, perhaps, the sea was rough and the weather foul; and then there was the added danger of being caught by the king's officers. As this story relates, people living near the coast knew very well from certain signs when the smugglers were busy, but they took care never to betray them, either through fear of the consequences, or because they hoped for a share in the smugglers' spoil.

The Knight's Leap is a legend. It is a fine narrative, told in a straightforward manner, of a brave knight who, besieged in his castle, refused to be taken prisoner, and went bravely to his death.

27 40



## Dramatic Poetry

Dramatic poetry is concerned with the use of verse on the stage - in plays. But there are many poems described as 'dramatic' without being necessarily written for stage purposes. They are dramatic in print only. In dramatic poetry, the poet, like dramatist to portray life or a character, depends on the use of dialogue (carried out in poetic language) and action. At the time it was natural and fitting to write plays in verse forms. Both author and audience delivered that poetry was the right medium for writing plays.

Verse drama traditions are old in history. The play developed first with poetry. In England the use of verse in drama was popular during the Middle Ages when stories from Bible and The lives of saints were illustrated in verse form. It was believed that such serious themes could only be expressed in language which is elevated and dignified as poetry. But it was during Shakespeare's time that verse drama achieved complete maturity. Shakespeare made great advances in this tradition, as did the Elizabethans who preceded him. The Elizabethans chose to write their plays in verse because in these plays they were generally concerned with great persons: kings, queens, statesmen, nobles and generals. They were not writing about the ordinary man in the street. It was the convention that such people as nobles, kings ...etc, spoke in a more elevated way than the ordinary people and therefore poetry seemed to be very appropriate. Hence most of the subject of tragedy