



GINGEE FORT STUDY CENTRE

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REMEMBRANCE - SIR THOMAS WYATT

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)

- ❖ He was a 16th century poet and English Ambassador in the reign of Henry VIII.
- ❖ He was born in Kent and his father Henry Wyatt was a counselor in the court of Henry VIII.
- ❖ He introduced **Petrarchan Sonnet in English**.
- ❖ None of the Wyatt's poem was published during his lifetime.
- ❖ The first book Tottel's Miscellany was published in 1557 i.e. 15 years after his death.
- ❖ In 1535 Wyatt was knighted and appointed High Sheriff of Kent and in 1541 was elected Knight of the Shire.
- ❖ In 1520 he married to Elizabeth Brooke.
- ❖ Tottel's Miscellany was named after its printer Richard Tottel who included 97 poems attributed to Wyatt's among total 271 poems. Tottel's Miscellany is also called Songs and Sonnets.
- ❖ He experimented stanza forms like rondeau, epigrams, terza rima, ottava rima, satires, monorime, quatrains, and iambic tetrameter.
- ❖ C.S. Lewis called him the "father of the drab age".
- ❖ In 1536 Wyatt was imprisoned in the tower of London for allegedly committing adultery with Anne Boleyn the wife of Henry VIII.
- ❖ He started Wyatt Rebellion against the marriage of Mary I and Philip II.
- ❖ He was died of illness in 1542.

- ❖ The structure of Wyatt sonnet or Petrarchan sonnet is octave and sestet and a caesura in between. ABBA ABBA + CDC CDE or CDC CDC
- ❖ 'They Flee from Me' is a poem written by Thomas Wyatt referring Wyatt's affair with high born woman of court of Henry VIII (Anne Boleyn). Opening Line of the poem is:
"They flee from me, that sometime did me seek with naked foot stalking in my chamber."

THEY FLEE FROM ME

- ❖ "They Flee from Me" is a short lyric poem by Sir Thomas Wyatt.
- ❖ Some critics believe the poem may reflect Wyatt's personal experiences with women in the **court of Henry VIII**.
- ❖ The poem features a **dramatic first-person voice** expressing feelings of loss and complaint about a beloved who has left.
- ❖ It is structured in rhyme royal, a poetic form introduced by **Geoffrey Chaucer**.
- ❖ **Rhyme royal** consists of seven lines written in **iambic pentameter**.
- ❖ The rhyme scheme for **rhyme royal is ABABBCC**.
- ❖ This specific structure enhances the poem's emotional depth and highlights the lyrical voice's sentiments.
- ❖ Overall, the poem captures themes of love, loss, and longing in a refined poetic form.

Points to remember:

- ❖ Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542): Key figure in English literary history; introduced the sonnet to the English language.
- ❖ Sonnet Origins: Derived from Italy; popularized by 14th-century poet Francesco Petrarch (Petrarchan sonnet).
- ❖ Influence of Petrarch: Wyatt translated several of Petrarch's works; notable poem "They Flee From Me" reflects this influence.

Comparative Analysis:

- ❖ "Whoso List to Hunt, I Know where is an Hind" (Wyatt) vs. "Una candida cerva sopra l'erba" (Petrarch).
- ❖ Both poems use hunting as a metaphor for love and sex.

Geoffrey Chaucer's Impact:

- ❖ 14th-century poet known as the "father of English poetry."
- ❖ Adapted European forms for English; used rhyme royal extensively.
- ❖ Rhyme royal later employed by William Shakespeare in "The Rape of Lucrece."

Themes

- ❖ Explores the complexities of love; modern in expressing emotional doubt with clarity.
- ❖ Wyatt's work parallels that of John Donne, another bold love poet of the Renaissance.

Historical Context:

- ❖ Set against the backdrop of Henry VIII's tumultuous royal court (Tudor period: 1485-1603).
- ❖ Henry VIII's conflict with the Catholic Church over his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

Wyatt's Role in Court:

- ❖ Involved in political intrigue; served as ambassador to Rome.
- ❖ Faced execution for alleged affair with Anne Boleyn; possibly witnessed her execution from the Tower of London.

Enduring Relevance:

- ❖ Wyatt's poems transcend personal biography; resonate with modern readers' conflicted emotions.

TEXT

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek
With naked foot, stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild, and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once, in special,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small;
Therewith all sweetly did me kiss,
And softly said, 'Dear heart, how like you this?'

It was no dream: I lay broad waking;
But all is turned, thorough my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodness,
And she also to use newfangledness.
But since that I so kindly am served,
I would fain know what she hath deserved.

SUMMARY**Stanza-1**

- ❖ The lyrical voice expresses feelings of abandonment as the beloved no longer pays attention, marking a shift from past affection to present neglect.
- ❖ The phrase "**They flee from me**" highlights the sudden end of frequent visits that once characterized their relationship.

- ❖ The beloved, previously described as “**gentle tame and meek,**” has transformed into a wild figure, indicating a drastic change in character.
- ❖ A stark contrast is drawn between the **past intimacy and the current emotional distance** in their relationship.
- ❖ The beloved is metaphorically compared to a **deer**, a common image used by Petrarch, symbolizing vulnerability and closeness.
- ❖ The beloved has forgotten their past connection and is now depicted as seeking sustenance elsewhere, emphasizing the sense of loss and change.

Stanza-2

- ❖ The second stanza of "They Flee from Me" reflects on a past relationship between the lyrical voice and the beloved one, highlighting gratitude.
- ❖ The lyrical voice emphasizes the depth of their past connection by stating it was "**Twenty times better.**"
- ❖ A specific memory is recalled where the beloved's gown slips off, illustrating her seductive actions.
- ❖ The beloved actively seduces the lyrical voice, contrasting with the current dynamic in their relationship.
- ❖ Vivid and intense descriptions convey the lyrical voice's fond memories of those intimate moments.
- ❖ The tone shifts as the stanza concludes with playful words from the beloved, portraying her as an enticing woman rather than a wild animal.

Stanza-3

- ❖ The final stanza highlights a stark contrast between the joyful **memories of the past** and the current state of the relationship with the beloved one.
- ❖ The speaker insists that these happy recollections were real experiences, not mere dreams, emphasizing their significance.
- ❖ A shift in tone occurs as the speaker reflects on how the relationship has changed, describing it as a "**strange fashion of forsaking.**"

- ❖ The speaker's mood darkens, comparing the past fondness to the beloved's present indifference, feeling abandoned and hurt.
- ❖ In a sarcastic twist, the speaker blames himself for being too kind, questioning what the beloved truly deserves, revealing feelings of resentment and seeking empathy from the audience.

