

Fear no more the Heat o' the Sun William Shakespeare

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The scepter, learning, physic, must,
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

Another name for this poem is Dirge for Fidele. It comes from Shakespeare's play Cymbeline. It is a lament (said not sung which this type of lament would traditionally be) by two young princes while they cover the body of a young friend with flowers. They think their friend Fidele is a male, but it is the name assumed by Imogen when she dresses as a man. The boys are actually her brothers (stolen from King Cymbeline in infancy) and she is heartbroken and in search of her banished husband Posthumus. They are not aware that they are siblings. At this point, Imogen is actually not dead but in a potion induced deep sleep. As in all Shakespeare's comedies, there is a happy ending all round.

Stanza 1 Weather introduces the poem. Neither summer's heat nor winter's bitter storms can touch their friend now. Physical circumstances no longer have any impact on 'him'. *Fear no more* the young men say and repeat this in later stanzas. These words suit this solemn occasion.

1. What emotions are they trying to express when they say this? /3/

Line 4 conveys a note of finality. *Home art gone*. They see Fidele's death as the completion of a *task* for which he receives payment/*wages*.

2. What do you understand this to mean? /3/

Their friend was young and full of life.

3a. Which word suggests that Fidele was young? /1/

b. What else does the same word imply about the youth? /2/

Shakespeare **contrasts** *golden lads and girls with chimney sweeps*. They all *must come to dust*.

4. Why does he do this? What is he saying here? /2/

Stanza 2 Fidele no longer has anything to fear from the *frown* of powerful people or the *stroke* of cruel ones.

5. What do the words *frown* and *stroke* suggest about Fidele's life? /1/

This is a formal lament, there is no place for personal sorrow. However the mention of small, familiar, daily acts (*Care no more to clothe and eat*) adds a poignancy/sadness to the words. Shakespeare condenses his thoughts so well into a few words. He uses **metonymy** – terms associated with men's professions or positions the *sceptre*, *learning*, *physic* in doing this.

6. Which people are being referred to in these 3 words? /3/

Stanza 3 *Thunder-stone* was a term commonly used by Elizabethans. In this last stanza, **sound** is particularly important.

7. Quote the words which are onomatopoeic. /2/

No longer need 'he' be afraid of the barbed tongues of others. Again Shakespeare uses **contrast**. Both *joy* and *moan* are things of the past for 'him' as they are for *all young lovers* who join with (*consign*) with Fidele.

Now look at the refrain, or kind of chorus throughout the poem. ...*must...come to dust*.

8. What is the effect of this repetition? /2/

Note that the rhyme pattern enhances the song-like quality.

9. Write it down. /1/