Aurora Leigh Study Guide

Aurora Leigh by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

As early as 1844, Elizabeth Barrett wrote Robert Browning that she was thinking about writing a novel in verse form on modern themes. Several years later, she began work on *Aurora Leigh* (1857), which turned into one of the longest poems in the English language in its number of lines. Browning thought it her most mature work, and it turned out to be her biggest commercial success. *Aurora Leigh* deals with some of the major social problems of her age, particularly the difficulty of being a professional woman. There is a frank treatment in the story of the □fallen woman□ in an effort to show an unwed mother as a victim and not necessarily someone to be condemned, as was the Victorian practice. The poem also reveals a distrust of socialist theory, in that Browning feared that communist-style communities would exclude artists and poets.

Aurora Leigh elicited much praise from the public and other poets, but professional reviewers found it coarse, vulgar, and highly flawed. Even those who admired the work found deficiencies and inconsistencies, while those who decried the book admitted that the attempt showed genius. Undeniably, *Aurora Leigh* was one of the most avant-garde publications of its day. A progressive thinker, Browning was also definite about her morality and the joy that romantic love had brought to her. Thus, this largely autobiographical poem does not discuss prostitution lightly, and the liberated poet decides in the end that the pursuit of one's art cannot bring to a woman's life the satisfaction found in an enduring, loving marriage. Modern readers of Browning are more familiar with her romantic poetry, particularly *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, her love lyrics to her husband. However, as evidenced by a 1996 Norton publication of *Aurora Leigh*, edited by Margaret Reynolds, feminist scholarship has resurrected interest in this verse novel and promoted a new appreciation of the talent and intellect of Browning.

Author Biography

Nationality 1: British

Birthdate: 1806

Deathdate: 1861

The oldest of Edward Moulton Barrett and Mary Graham Clarke's twelve children, Elizabeth Barrett was born on March 6, 1806. Part Creole, her family had derived great wealth from Jamaican sugar plantations for two hundred years but went to England to live the life of gentry at Hope End estate in Herefordshire. Educated at home, Barrett became an expert in several languages and the ancient classics. At age fourteen, she contracted a lung illness that lasted all her life and, at fifteen, suffered a spinal injury that contributed to chronically ill health. In 1828, her mother died, and then, in 1832, the family fortune declined, causing the Barretts to move to the coastal town of Sidmouth for three years before settling in London. In 1838, she returned to the coast to recuperate from a serious illness. There, Barrett's favorite brother, Edward, drowned, sending her back to London and into a five-year decline as a recluse and invalid.

Nonetheless, she continued a writing career that she had begun at age twelve. Her first collection of poetry was published in 1826, and a translation of *Prometheus Bound*, by the Greek dramatist Aeschylus, came out in 1833. Her reputation as a poet grew throughout the 1830s. When she published another collection in 1844, international celebrity and a prolific correspondence with the poet Robert Browning resulted. Barrett's tyrannical father did not want any of his children to marry, so she eloped with Browning in 1846, moving immediately to Italy, where her health improved. Her father never spoke to her again. A son, Robert Wieland, nicknamed Pen, was born in 1849. *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which she wrote for Robert before their marriage, was published in 1850 and has become probably the most widely known book of English love lyrics. Elizabeth Browning's intense interest in Italian politics, as well as social concerns about slavery, child labor, and other injustices, are reflected in later works. In 1857, she published a controversial and groundbreaking verse novel, *Aurora Leigh*, that addressed professional roles for women. Considered the greatest female poet of her time, Browning died in Florence on June 29, 1861. Her place of esteem in literature waned after the Victorian period but has been revived by feminist scholarship.

Plot Summary

First Book

As a personal narrative, *Aurora Leigh* begins when the central character is born in Italy to an English father and Tuscan mother. When Aurora Leigh's mother dies, the grieving father withdraws to a mountain cottage, where he educates Aurora in the classics amid the wonders of nature. However, when she is only thirteen, her father dies, and she is taken away from her beloved nurse and sent to England to live with a coldhearted maiden aunt who had not approved of Aurora's mother. There, Aurora is submitted to a conventional female education. Her only comforts are her father's books; her cousin, Romney Leigh; and Romney's friend, the painter Vincent Carrington, who talks of Italy.

Second Book

The expectation is that Aurora will marry Romney, heir to the family estates, and he proposes to her when she is twenty years old. Romney thinks that Aurora should join him in his work for social reform, but she believes that she has a right to her own vocational fulfillment and does not want to be just his helper. He scoffs at her artistic ambitions, thinking them of little value compared with his noble endeavors. Dismayed by his attitude, Aurora rejects Romney's proposal. Angered by this refusal, her Aunt Marjory disinherits her and dies shortly thereafter. Aurora heads to London nonetheless, determined to begin a new life and maintain her independence.

Third Book

Aurora loses touch with Romney over the seven years that she pursues her career as a writer in London. With only three hundred pounds a year on which to support herself and little income to be had from writing poetry, she works days as a prose writer and spends only evenings on poetry until her verse gains sufficient reputation to provide a living. Lady Waldemar, a wealthy widow, visits Aurora to tell her that Romney is going to marry Marian Erle, a lower-class woman he has rescued from her deathbed. He has found Marian a job as a seamstress and now wants to marry her in a socialist gesture to equalize the classes. Lady Waldemar wants Aurora to stop the wedding, but Aurora refuses to interfere. Instead, Aurora seeks out Marian. She hears Marian's story about the abusive parents who eventually abandoned her, leaving her to wander alone and ill until a stranger took her to a hospital, where she met Romney, who was making a charitable visit.

Fourth Book

Marian tells Aurora how, a year after first meeting Romney at the hospital, she encounters Romney again when Lucy, a fellow seamstress, dies. Romney proposes

marriage to her with the idea that she will help him in working to bring rich and poor together. Marian adores Romney for his kindness, but when he happens by, he explains to Aurora that although he is fond of Marian, he is marrying her primarily to make a social statement. He thinks his love of humanity is better than romantic love. Aurora thinks he is hopelessly unrealistic and living in the abstract, but she wishes the couple well. She goes to the wedding, where, on the groom's side of the church, Romney's high-society friends are gossiping unkindly about the marriage. On the bride's side are seated many of the destitute people who are aided by Romney's projects. However, Marian does not show up. Instead, she sends a note explaining that Lady Waldemar has convinced her that the marriage would be a mistake and that she could not make Romney happy. When the indigent wedding guests hear of the cancellation, they riot. Aurora faints and is carried away by Lord Howe, a friend of Romney's. As Romney fruitlessly tries to find Marian, he relies on Aurora as a confidante, and they reconcile as friends but continue to disagree about each other's life choices.

Fifth Book

This book opens two years later. There is an extended description of a party at Lord Howe's and several hundred lines dedicated to the art of poetic composition. Aurora expresses her rebellion against established literary conventions and decides that poetry must change with the times, not only in content but also in form. She remarks that women artists are often too dependent on a single person, be it a friend or a lover, and are at a disadvantage as artists because of their emotional nature. There is also an admission of loneliness for the woman poet who forgoes real love to write about love. In addition, she is critical of the quality of the drama of her era and recommends that writers look to the stage of the soul instead□that is, practice the intense subjectivity characteristic of poetry. Aurora has heard that Romney has converted his estate into almshouses, that Lady Waldemar is his most active partner in charity, and that he plans to marry her, unaware that her efforts are an insincere ploy to win him. Aurora has an unpleasant encounter with Lady Waldemar at Lord Howe's. Depressed and disheartened, Aurora decides to avoid the wedding and try to find solace in Italy.

Sixth Book

Aurora leaves England and passes through Paris, where she happens to see Marian with a baby. Aurora follows Marian and learns about the misfortune that has befallen her. She was supposed to go to Australia, but the man that Lady Waldemar sent to help Marian get away took her to Paris instead and sold her to a brothel, where she was drugged and raped. Driven nearly to madness by the realization of her circumstances, Marian had escaped but endures many struggles to survive.

Seventh Book

Marian tells Aurora about finding refuge with a miller's wife, only to be kicked out when it is discovered that Marian is pregnant. She has been working for a seamstress, but Aurora persuades Marian to come with her to Italy. Aurora wants to write Romney, but she thinks he has already married Lady Waldemar, and she does not want to hurt him with the news of what his wife did to Marian. Instead, Aurora writes to Lord Howe to ask him to tell Romney that she has found Marian and is caring for her. Then Aurora writes a scathing letter to Lady Waldemar, tempering it with a promise not to seek vengeance if Lady Waldemar takes good care of Romney. As Aurora and Marian settle into life in Italy, Aurora begins to think that Romney was right in stating that neither art nor a woman could fully comprehend universal truth or capture the meaning of life's experiences. Aurora then hears from Vince Carrington, a painter and friend to Romney, that her new book is doing well and that Lady Waldemar has nursed Romney through an illness.

Eighth Book

Just before Romney appears on her terrace, Aurora experiences a strange reverie about the city of Florence that is dreamy and sexy. Aurora and Romney have a long conversation in which they each admit their mistakes and faults, but Aurora still holds back on her feelings because she thinks Romney is married. Romney tells Aurora that the people he tried to help turned on him and burned down his estate. He is discouraged by the failure of his social reforms, and, after reading Aurora's book, he is more understanding of her endeavors. Aurora is about to send him away when she finally learns that he never married.

Ninth Book

The news that Romney did not marry Lady Waldemar is verified by a stinging letter that he brings to Aurora from Lady Waldemar. Romney still feels obligated to Marian and once again offers to marry her. However, Marian declares that she must devote her life only to her child and makes plans to leave, to live on her own. With this turn of events, Romney and Aurora are freed to admit their love for each other. Aurora says that they gave God too small a part in their plans. She also realizes that she should have first sought fulfillment as a woman, and then her art would have grown from that strong base. Aurora and Romney agree to marry and work together for the good of humankind.

Themes

Woman as Artist

Browning was committed to writing as a woman, so her main character in *Aurora Leigh* has the same intensity of purpose. Furthermore, the emphasis is on the right of a woman to work as an artist. Aurora rejects Romney's proposal because he sees her role in marriage as a partner in his work, with no room for a career of her own. Romney also belittles Aurora's work as unimportant compared with his endeavors, so Browning makes sure that Romney fails in his socialist endeavors while Aurora succeeds as a writer and communicator. Thus, the reader is left with the impression that perhaps a poet can indeed have more influence than philanthropist reformers on changes in society.

It is important to the message of the story that Aurora is successful as a poet. In Victorian times, Browning and other female writers complained about the gender prejudice evidenced by critics. They wanted to be judged as authors, not as women. They did not want their works to be dismissed out of hand just for being written by a woman. To avoid the problem, a number of female authors used male pseudonyms, for example, Mary Ann Evans writing under the name of George Eliot. Browning refused to resort to this tactic to get an impartial reading. Instead, she insisted, through her own perseverance as a writer and through the character of Aurora Leigh, that women could and should be accepted, even successful, as poets.

The Proper Subject Matter of Poetry

In the mid-eighteenth century, literary debate often focused on the proper subject matter for poetry. Intrinsic to this debate was the relationship of poetry to current affairs. While some writers called for a poetic representation of the times, others, such as the noted critic and poet Matthew Arnold, declared that contemporary concerns were unsuitable for poetry. It was thought that poetry should concern itself only with lofty ideals and representations of pastoral beauty and love. Browning came down decidedly on the side of those who believed that current affairs were appropriate to poetry. *Aurora Leigh* is her most notable effort that takes this position, since it discusses issues of importance to Victorian society, such as the □woman question,□ the problems of prostitution and poverty, and the value of socialist reform.

Love or Art

The moral to the story of *Aurora Leigh* is that without love the rewards of fame and success are insufficient. The entire story line is a journey for Aurora and Romney to this conclusion. Romney learns that he cannot save the world by himself; further, he will do better in his work if he first gets his own life right and has love to support him. Aurora realizes that she, too, should have based her life on love and that she would have been

an even better poet because of it. As partners, fortified by the strength and confidence that comes with love, Aurora and Romney have a fulfilling and fruitful future ahead of them.

The Fallen Woman

Victorians placed so much value on purity and virtue for women that a failure to adhere to these ideals received severe disapproval. Scandal could result from just a hint of impropriety. Hypocritically, at the same time that Victorians preached about the sanctity of marriage and the home, prostitution became a major social problem. Part of the cause for this situation was the lack of good employment opportunities. There was a surplus of women in the population, leaving many women unmarried but without jobs to occupy and support them. What jobs were available involved such poor working conditions that some women preferred prostitution to the harsh life in the mines and factories. Browning addresses this situation in *Aurora Leigh*, not only through what Aurora says but also through the characters of Rose Bell and Marian Erle. Rose's story was a brief one told by Marian about a delightful, motherless little girl she knew who could not escape her poverty and grew up to be a prostitute. This sad story set up the later events that happened to Marian. Even though Marian was virtuous, she became the victim of circumstances. Although she did not become a prostitute, she did become an unwed mother. Such a woman would have been ostracized by Victorian society, and Browning wanted to show how unjust that judgment could be. Consequently, Browning makes Marian as good and noble as she could be, to evoke sympathy from the readers and persuade them to consider a kinder, more understanding approach to women placed in compromised positions.

Style

Kunstlerroman

This specialized form of the bildungsroman, a novel form that addresses psychological and moral growth, concerns itself with the development of a writer or other artist. In this case, the protagonist reaches maturity upon achieving mastery of his or her craft. Thus, graduating from apprenticeship not only ends the formative stage of life but also establishes the destiny that the hero has sought. Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* are examples of this subtype. The most likely influence on Browning's choice to write a *kunstlerroman* was the poet William Wordsworth's lengthy autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, published in 1850. The story lines and themes are very similar, including criticism of radical social reform and the conclusion that poetry can be a force for goodness in the lives of individuals. However, Wordsworth's hero worries that he feels too much, whereas Aurora recognizes a need for human love.

The Female Bildungsroman

When the protagonist of a bildungsroman is a female, the genre takes on an extra dimension. The protagonist encounters not only the usual problems of growing up but also the unique problems of growing up female in a male-dominated world. As a woman trying to make it as a professional, Aurora encounters these problems head on. Early examples of the female bildungsroman followed the traditional expectation that a woman would see marriage as her fulfillment upon reaching maturity. In a sense, that is true of Aurora, but Browning's conclusion is more like later novels that portrayed women as accepting marriage not just for social advancement or exposure to the world but also as the culmination of the mutual growth that occurs in a loving relationship. While a male protagonist in a bildungsroman might meet his pivotal crisis in the course of his professional career, the female protagonist's turning point traditionally results from a romantic entanglement. Her voyage of discovery is much more internal, or psychological, than that of her male counterpart, who has more opportunities for interaction with the public world. Although Aurora does not lack for involvement in the public world, it is true that her conflict is more psychological and internal than just professional.

Blank Verse

Blank verse is poetry written in an unrhymed meter, particularly iambic pentameter, which is a line of poetry containing five accented syllables and ten syllables in all; the result is poetry that has the sound of the natural rhythms of English speech. Blank verse should be read in sentences; line breaks are determined by the meter, so the narrative has a strong pull from line to line. Blank verse originated in Italy in the sixteenth century

and became very popular in Renaissance literature, because it sounded like classical poetry. It became the standard in poetic drama for such writers as Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. John Milton used blank verse for *Paradise Lost* in 1667. In the next century, blank verse was used for a number of important works by Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. It was a natural choice, then, for Browning to write *Aurora Leigh* in blank verse, since it was the medium for many admired long works and the best fit for the innovation of the verse novel. In the twentieth century, the use of blank verse was continued by poets of the caliber of William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, and Wallace Stevens.

Allusions

One of the most frequently used literary devices in *Aurora Leigh* is the allusion. As a reference to a person or event outside the story, the allusion serves as a shortcut to a connection with the reader's knowledge base. The point is to avoid lengthy explanations of an idea. However, for the modern reader, the abundance of allusions to classical literature and the Bible in *Aurora Leigh* are more of a hindrance than a help. Browning was an expert in mythology and a devout reader of the Bible; therefore, it was natural for her to include this knowledge in her writings. However, her familiarity with ancient Greek and Roman literature is so much more extensive than the average reader's that her allusions become obscure and make the reading more difficult. Footnoted editions of *Aurora Leigh* often devote half of a page just to explaining the multitude of allusions in the text. Nonetheless, the allusions in *Aurora Leigh* bring a richness to the work that is an education in itself.

Historical Context

Victorian Poetry

The Romantic movement was dominated by poets, but the Victorian age is better known for its novels. Still, poetry was an important and popular form of literature for the educated public, and some of England's best-known poets come from this time period. Browning's reputation was growing as a poet in the 1830s, while that of her friend Alfred Tennyson was being established as that of the greatest poet of the era. A successor to Keats and Shelley, Tennyson at first lent his remarkable lyric talent to highly subjective verse. Then he turned to the public issues of the day and introduced two new poetic techniques. One is that of the dramatic monologue, also developed by Robert Browning, and the other is the English idyll, which combines glimpses of the contemporary scene with a casual debate. Later in his career, Tennyson built long poems out of short ones, such as *In Memoriam*, an elegy that is shaped by 133 individual lyrics. Tennyson was named poet laureate of England in 1850. Robert Browning contrasted Tennyson's style with more stark and colloquial poetry. Browning's dramatic monologues engage the reader in the thought process of an unconventional character and require active participation in the sense of personal discovery and morality. Another notable Victorian poet is Matthew Arnold, whose lyric talent blended with the dark philosophical attitude of the times. Arnold, too, experimented with a process he called □the dialogue of the mind with itself.□ Later in his career, however, he became better known for his literary criticism.

Nineteenth-Century Feminism

The □woman question□ was an important topic of debate in Victorian England. Gender inequality in politics meant that women could not vote or hold office. Women's suffrage was advocated already in the 1840s but did not become law until 1918. Economically, married women had to give control of their property to their husbands until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870-1908. The first college for women was not established until 1848, but by the end of the Victorian era, women could get degrees at twelve colleges, though not at Oxford or Cambridge. The Industrial Revolution brought thousands of lower-class women to the cities for factory jobs and showed the need for a changed attitude about women's work. Unfortunately, when reform of working conditions for poor women finally came, the argument was not for equality but that women were too frail to withstand the sixteen-hour day and other hardships. In the meantime, the reaction of Victorian society was to put further emphasis on the importance of the woman's role in the home.

An immensely popular poem by Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*, published in 1856, stressed the value of a woman's purity and selflessness. Women's enshrinement in the home became an entombment for many. Browning, Charlotte Brontë, Florence Nightingale, and others complained that middle-class and upper-class

women were taught such trivial skills that they had almost nothing important to do. *Aurora Leigh* pointed out the constriction placed on the female mind by the traditional education in homemaking. The only respectable employment was that of a governess, until utter boredom and the example of successful novelists like the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, and George Sand provoked women to rebel in the late Victorian period and demand a wider variety of opportunities.

Critical Overview

Perhaps the best summary of the critical reaction to *Aurora Leigh* is the following quote from William Edmondstoune Aytoun, the famous literary critic for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*: □With all its faults, this is a remarkable poem; strong in energy, rich in thought, abundant in beauty.□ Aytoun had blasted the poem as □fantastic, unnatural, exaggerated□ and had found the character of Aurora to be unattractive, some of the language coarse and revolting, and the images often bewilderingly intensified. Nonetheless, writing in 1857, he felt that *Aurora Leigh* sustained Browning's high reputation.

Similarly, W. C. Roscoe, a contemporary of Aytoun's, wrote in the *National Review* that Browning □has produced a work which, in completeness of form and artistic execution, falls far short of many of her previous efforts; but which in matter far surpasses the best of them.□ Roscoe thought the poem excessively long with superfluous detail and remarked that the characters were □vague hazy embodiments given to certain contrasted sets of ideas.□ Another contemporary, Henry Fothergill Chorley, commented that he could write page after page about □the huge mistake of the plan, the disdain of selectness in its details.□ On the other hand, he could also write multiple pages about □the high thoughts, the deep feelings, the fantastic images showered over the tale with the authority of a prophetess, the grace of a muse, the prodigality of a queen.□

A later critic, examining the work of the greater Victorian poets, wrote in 1892 for *The Victorian Age of English Literature*: □The remarkable thing in [*Aurora Leigh*] is its energy and strong poetical vitality, the rush and spring of life□ of its narrative, which, however, was □not sufficient for the fervour and power of utterance.□ Not long after, in the early twentieth century, changes in taste and critical emphasis led to a devaluation of Browning's work. Her irregular meters and half rhymes did not suit a new insistence on technical correctness. Besides, cultural expectations assumed that no great poetry could contain womanly topics. On the other hand, Browning's relationship with her husband was the stuff of romance and the appropriate realm of a woman, so she was idealized as the loving companion of her husband, the great poet Robert Browning. Her own talents were thereby dismissed.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, however, the growth of women's studies led to a reexamination of *Aurora Leigh* from a feminist perspective. This reevaluation has led to a new appreciation of the innovative techniques and messages contained in the poem. In 1986, Dorothy Mermin declared in the *Victorian Newsletter* that *Aurora Leigh* □goes farther than any other poem or novel of the Victorian period towards transcending the limits imposed on literature by gender.□ In her analysis of *Aurora Leigh* for the *Review of English Studies*, Catherine Maxwell comments on the □many allusions and intertextual influences.□ Maxwell also points to the □poem's intelligent self-consciousness, its images of visual art, especially portraiture, and its metaphors of reading and writing.□

Regardless of the critic or the century, the innovative uniqueness of *Aurora Leigh* provides a challenge. Although she was writing in 1980, Kathleen Hickok probably speaks for every reader when she says in the *International Journal of Women's Studies*, "In *Aurora Leigh*, Barrett Browning departed from the feminine traditions of the century with sufficient force to impress many, alarm some, and startle nearly all of her readers." As with all new inventions, there are flaws and missteps in *Aurora Leigh*. Nonetheless, the consensus is that this verse novel was a bold step for a poet, a grand experiment, and a remarkable achievement.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Kerschen is a school district administrator and freelance writer. In this essay, she examines the influences that affected Browning's themes about women in Aurora Leigh *and the allusions in the poem that indicate these influences.*

In 1822, when Elizabeth Barrett was only sixteen, she started an essay, under the original title of □An Essay on Women,□ that she never finished but whose subject matter found its way into many of her other works. Thus, it is apparent that women's issues were a lifelong cause for Browning that culminated in the publication of *Aurora Leigh*, a story about the woman as an artist. In the unfinished teenage essay, Browning argues that women's poetry was being suppressed by the dominance of poetic forms and subject matter that were male oriented. Consequently, *Aurora Leigh* is an experiment in a new poetic form, the verse novel, and has as its subject matter those things that were issues of the day for Victorian women.

One of Browning's closest friends was the poet Alfred Tennyson. His 1846 long, blank-verse poem *The Princess* addressed the role of women, but his story was a fantasy. While Browning was disappointed by the manner of presentation of the ideas, Kerry McSweeney points out, in her introduction to a 1993 edition of *Aurora Leigh*, that Browning □could hardly have failed to notice that *The Princess* explores the relation of sexual love, marriage, and the nurturing of children to the intellectual and vocational aspirations of nineteenth-century women.□ Perhaps his example helped inspire Browning to explore these same topics in a work of her own.

Role models were scarce for Browning, who once complained in a letter, □I look everywhere for grandmothers and see none.□ However, there were a few women writers to whom she could look for example. She highly regarded the poetry of Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) and gleaned ideas about the special gifts and problems of female poets from two significant poets of the next generation, Felicia Hemans (1793-1835) and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838). In terms of writing a novel, Browning found help in many contemporary works, such as Madame de Stael's *Corinne* (1807), which portrays a modern woman. Aurora borrows much from the story of Corinne, who had an Italian mother and an English father, lives in Italy as a child, is taken to England when orphaned, is raised to follow social conventions but decides to be an artist, and returns to Italy to pine for a man who has married someone else. George Sand's novels were favorites of Browning's. Sand's *Consuelo* was a female odyssey in which the main character insists on liberty as an artist. Browning did not like the novels of Jane Austen, but she did admire Charlotte Brontë and possibly patterned Romney after the hero in *Villette* and after Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, who is blind at the end of the novel.

Besides these literary influences, Browning was, of course, aware of the attitudes about women in her day, and she was involved in discussions about changes in the social, political, and economic positions of women. Consequently, *Aurora Leigh* is filled with allusions to the attitudes about and the problems for women of her culture. For example, Aurora says that her father, she knows, loved her, □but still with heavier brains, / And

wills more consciously responsible, / And not as wisely, since less foolishly.□ The □heavier brains□ phrase alludes to anatomy studies that noticed that men tend to have brains that weigh more than women's. This fact is not surprising, given the relative difference in average body weight. The difference was taken to mean, however, that the male possessed a higher intellect than the female.

Aurora describes her Aunt Marjory, saying, □She had lived / A sort of cage-bird life, born in a cage, / Accounting that to leap from perch to perch / Was act and joy enough for any bird.□ The reference is to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), in which she describes women as a feathered race confined in cages with nothing to do but to plume themselves. The image of the caged bird is a distinctly female metaphor in literature of the nineteenth century. In describing the type of instruction that her aunt provided, Aurora says that she read books on womanhood that portrayed English women to be □models to the universe,□ □comprehending husband's talk / When not too deep,□ but who otherwise □keep quiet by the fire,□ □their angelic reach / Of virtue chiefly used to sit and darn.□ Numerous books on moral and practical advice for women were published in the 1830s and 1840s, particularly those of Sarah Stickney Ellis, whose twelve editions of didactic instructions created, Browning says, □model-women of the most abominable virtue.□

In the Second Book, when Romney says, □Among our female authors we make room / For this fair writer, and congratulate / The country that produces in these times / Such women, competent to . . . spell,□ he is being used to parody the condescending reviews that Browning's poetry sometimes received from male critics. Later, Romney says that he □took / The woman to be nobler than the man,□ expressing a common Victorian supposition that in a woman was placed an elevated sense of moral and spiritual values. Conveniently, this belief fed into the double standard that men could misbehave and be excused because they were men but that misbehavior in a woman was reprehensible.

Aurora herself repeats one of the platitudes of sexual difference that was commonly accepted as truth in her times. In the Fifth Book she says, □We women are too apt to look to one,□ that is, the notion that a woman could be inspired only by the personal and the sentimental. This concept appears also in Aurora's argument with Romney in the Second Book, reappears in the Sixth Book, and is discussed again in her revised debate with Romney in the Eighth and Ninth Books. In addition, love was assumed to be a woman's whole concern, but just a part of a man's life. Browning refers to this belief in Vince Carrington's letter to Aurora, announcing his intent to marry Kate Ward, when he says, □Most women . . . counting love Life's only serious business.□ These notions added fuel to the opinion that female poets could write only about sentimental and domestic matters, whereas men wrote about loftier aims. Browning has Lady Waldemar express this criticism in her letter in the Ninth Book when she says, □A woman who does better than to love, / I hate; she will do nothing very well: / Male poets are preferable, straining less / And teaching more.□

While the whole verse novel is concerned with the position of a woman as a professional, it is not until the Fifth Book that Browning actually uses the phrase □the

Woman's question.□ This public debate involved the issues of employment, education, property rights, voting, and equality in marriage, all of which were supported by Browning. A specific instance is alluded to in the Third Book with the lines □As ready for outrageous ends and acts / As any distressed sempstress.□ One of the few occupations open to Victorian women was that of a seamstress, yet they were so poorly paid and work was so scarce because of the overabundance of women in the trade that many seamstresses turned to prostitution as an income supplement. The situation was so common that just being a seamstress called one's virtue into question. An example of the desperation of women is given in the character of Rose Bell, Marian's sweet childhood friend who becomes a prostitute. In another reference to the problem of prostitution, in the Eighth Book, Browning mentions the huge numbers of women engaged in the illicit profession in London: □With eighty thousand women in one smile, / Who only smile at night beneath the gas.□

Prostitutes often committed suicide because of their situation, however. Since they worked the docks, it was convenient for them to jump to their deaths in the river, be it the Thames in London or the Seine in Paris. Browning refers to this practice in the Seventh Book when Marian says, □I might sleep well beneath the heavy Seine, / Like others of my sort.□ Since decent people were not supposed to talk about prostitutes, Browning was highly criticized for making this occupation such a prominent topic in *Aurora Leigh*. Browning even dared to include in Marian's story references to □the stews,□ which were brothels, and to □the poor street-walker.□

Another common expression referred to the □charming woman,□ as referenced in the Fifth Book. This type of woman was the kind that men did not want to marry because she had too strong a personality, was political, and was perhaps even forward in her speech and actions. Victorian sensibilities were such that the line in the Fifth Book □catch / Upon the burning lava of a song / The full-veined, heaving, double-breasted Age□ was shocking. This juxtaposition of images of lava and a woman's breast in the same simile was too radical for the critics, but it was just the type of writing that Browning wanted to introduce into literature.

Browning intended for *Aurora Leigh* to be bold and shocking. As Margaret Reynolds notes in her preface to the 1996 Norton edition of *Aurora Leigh*, what appeals to the modern reader is that Aurora □is bold, she is brave, she is independent and liberated and, above all, she gets everything she wants in the end.□ Reynolds added that *Aurora Leigh* spoke to the anxieties of the nineteenth-century woman concerning the □exclusions and prohibitions that hedged about their aspirations□ and □said things would be all right.□ Venturing into the forbidden territory of those subjects debated in the □Woman's question□ was a way for Browning to challenge society through poetry and, in the process, to defend the claims for women's poetry. The book had a big impact when it was published, and it is worthy of study yet today.

Source: Lois Kerschen, Critical Essay on *Aurora Leigh*, in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2006.

Adaptations

Aurora Leigh: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism (1994) is available on audiocassette, edited by Margaret Reynolds and produced by HarperCollins Publishers.

Topics for Further Study

Browning was an avid reader of the French and English novelists of her day. Make an annotated list of these novelists and their works, providing the most notable information in terms of their influence, themes, and popularity.

Robert Browning was, of course, an important influence on his wife's life and works. Write a brief biography of Robert Browning, including mention of his major works, a comparison with his wife's career and commitment to women's issues, and an analysis of the artistic relationship of the couple.

Browning has become of interest to modern feminists. What questions were being addressed about the role of women in Victorian England? What were the feminist influences on Browning?

Browning was very well read in the classics. Compare the importance of ancient Greek and Latin literature in Victorian education with that of today.

The Barrett family fortune came from Jamaican sugar plantations. Research the history and economic impact of such Caribbean plantations during the 1700s and 1800s and write a summary of your findings.

Compare and Contrast

1856: For the first time, during the Crimean War, the government allows women to provide nursing services in combat. Florence Nightingale and thirty-eight other women care for sick and wounded soldiers and promote sanitary practices and record keeping in hospitals and in the field. Nightingale made nursing a respectable profession and opened up a new employment avenue for women.

Today: Almost all modern nursing systems and techniques can be traced back to Florence Nightingale. Her promotion of data and statistical evidence has led to the use of patient medical histories, calculation of mortality rates, and an organized method of medical and surgical education. While nursing is no longer a job solely for women, the role of women in medicine has expanded enormously because of their entry into nursing.

1856: The synthetic dye industry begins when an eighteen-year-old chemistry student, William Henry Perkin, accidentally discovers purplish mauveine while working with aniline and quinine. The next year, he and his father open the first synthetic dye factory.

Today: Natural dyes have been almost completely phased out, as more than seven thousand different color-providing substances have been found for commercial use. Synthetic dyes are no longer used just for textiles but also in paints, inks, plastics, rubber, and cosmetics.

1856: The Steinway Piano Company, founded in 1853 in New York City, builds its first grand piano and will obtain the first patent for a concert grand in 1875.

Today: Making more than five thousand pianos each year, Steinway is a highly prestigious brand name and the instrument of choice for most of the world's concert pianists.

1856: During the Crimean War, Henry Bessemer invents a more powerful artillery shell, but the cast-iron cannons are not strong enough to deal with it, so Bessemer then develops an improved iron-smelting process capable of producing large quantities of ingots of superior quality that can be used for making cannons.

Today: The Bessemer steelmaking process that is still used is an extension and refinement of the one developed in 1856 and is the dominant steel-manufacturing technology for mass-producing steel inexpensively.

What Do I Read Next?

Browning's best-known work today is probably *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850). These are forty-four interlocking love poems that she wrote for her husband. The sonnets are available in many editions, one of which was published in 1997 with twenty-two other Browning works.

Christina Rossetti, another Victorian poet, was influenced by Browning. Her work, collected in *The Complete Poems* (2001), shows a wide range of subject matter and verse form.

Middlemarch (1872), by Mary Ann Evans under the pen name of George Eliot, is about a fictional English provincial town in the 1830s and the individuals who shape the community. It is considered one of the best novels of all time.

Lady Audley's Secret (1887), written by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, was a bestselling sensationalist novel in Victorian England that mocked the typical heroine of the times and the respectability of the middle class.

The poetry of Robert Browning, which later exceeded his wife's in reputation, is available in numerous editions, including *Robert Browning's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Criticism* (1980).

A close friend of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning was their fellow poet Alfred Tennyson, whose fame continues today. A collection of his poetry can be found in *Tennyson's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Context, Criticism* (1999).

Further Study

Bristow, Joseph, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Containing a detailed chronology of the period, this book provides a good overview of the poets of the period, their culture and interests, and the critical interpretations they have received over the years.

Bloom, Harold, ed., *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, Chelsea House Publishers, 2002.

Bloom's book is a collection of expert modern criticism concerning the works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with a helpful introduction and bibliography.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Yale University Press, 2000.

This groundbreaking book of feminist criticism is an important study of women writers in the Victorian era that provides a different perspective for critiquing these authors and their messages and motivations.

Leighton, Angela, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, Indiana University Press, 1986.

This book assesses all the recurring themes of Browning's life and works in light of feminist theory, particularly the poet's relationship with her father and family and the difficulty a woman poet has in dispossessing herself from her masters and her own past.

Radley, Virginia, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, Twayne Publishers, 1972.

One of the best known of Browning's biographies, this book actually presents only a short life history, followed by a series of analyses of her works in chronological order. Radley provides extensive notes and a bibliography.

Stone, Marjorie, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, St. Martin's Press, 1995.

An authority on Victorian and gender studies, Stone applies gender and genre ideologies to the works of Browning and reestablishes their value and impact for the modern reader.

Stott, Rebecca, and Simon Avery, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, Longman, 2003.

Not just a biographical survey, this book also contains criticism of the poet's works and comments on her influence in literature. Myths are dispelled about her reclusiveness, and her intellect and innovations are emphasized.

Bibliography

Arnold, Matthew, *The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 1840-1867*, Oxford University Press, 1913, p. 1.

Aytoun, William Edmondstoune, □Mrs. Barrett Browning□*Aurora Leigh*,□ in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 81, No. 495, January 1857, pp. 23-41.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, *Aurora Leigh*, edited by Margaret Reynolds, W. W. Norton, 1996, pp. 7, 10, 14, 18-19, 46, 51, 86, 143, 150, 162, 174, 218, 232, 265, 289.

Chorley, Henry Fothergill, Review of *Aurora Leigh*, in *Athenaeum*, No. 1517, November 22, 1856, pp. 1425-27.

Hickok, Kathleen K., □New, Yet Orthodox: Female Characters in *Aurora Leigh*,□ in *International Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 5, September/October 1980, pp. 479-89.

Maxwell, Catherine, □*Aurora Leigh*,□ in *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 180, November 1994, pp. 586-87.

McSweeney, Kerry, ed., □Introduction,□ in *Aurora Leigh*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. xvi.

Mermin, Dorothy, □Genre and Gender in *Aurora Leigh*,□ in *Victorian Newsletter*, No. 69, Spring 1986, pp. 7-11.

Oliphant, Mrs., □Of the Greater Victorian Poets,□ in *The Victorian Age of English Literature*, Vol. 1, Lovell, Coryell, 1982, pp. 203-46.

Roscoe, W. C., □*Aurora Leigh*,□ in *National Review*, Vol. 4, No. 8, April 1857, pp. 239-67.

BOOKRAGS

Copyright Information

This Premium Study Guide is an offprint from *Poetry for Students*.

Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture
Beverly Jendrowski

Permissions
Mary Ann Bahr, Margaret Chamberlain, Kim Davis, Debra Freitas, Lori Hines, Jackie Jones, Jacqueline Key, Shalice Shah-Caldwell

Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

©1997-2002; ©2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc.

Gale and Design® and Thomson Learning™ are trademarks used herein under license.

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any

form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

For permission to use material from this product, submit your request via Web at http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax: 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, The Gale Group, Inc. does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. The Gale Group, Inc. accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". © 1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's"For Students" Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently

studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals— helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man–the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes “The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,” a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children’s Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

“Night.” Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the “Criticism” subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on “Winesburg, Ohio.” Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. “Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,” Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. “Richard Wright: “Wearing the Mask,” in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Poetry for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331–3535