

The Nightingale
by Mark Akenside

To-night retired, the queen of heaven
With young Endymion stays;
And now to Hesper it is given
Awhile to rule the vacant sky,
5 Till she shall to her lamp supply
A stream of brighter rays.

Propitious send thy golden ray,
Thou purest light above!
Let no false flame seduce to stray
10 Where gulf or steep lie hid for harm;
But lead where music's healing charm
May soothe afflicted love.

To them, by many a grateful song
In happier seasons vow'd,
15 These lawns, Olympia's haunts, belong:
Oft by yon silver stream we walk'd,
Or fix'd, while Philomela talk'd,
Beneath yon copses stood.

Nor seldom, where the beechen boughs
20 That roofless tower invade,
We came, while her enchanting Muse
The radiant moon above us held:
Till, by a clamorous owl compell'd,
She fled the solemn shade.

25 But hark! I hear her liquid tone!
Now Hesper guide my feet!
Down the red marl with moss o'ergrown,
Through yon wild thicket next the plain,
Whose hawthorns choke the winding lane
30 Which leads to her retreat.

See the green space: on either hand
Enlarged it spreads around:
See, in the midst she takes her stand,
Where one old oak his awful shade
35 Extends o'er half the level mead,
Enclosed in woods profound.

Hark! how through many a melting note
She now prolongs her lays:
How sweetly down the void they float!
40 The breeze their magic path attends;

The stars shine out; the forest bends;
The wakeful heifers graze.

Who'er thou art whom chance may bring
To this sequester'd spot,
45 If then the plaintive Siren sing,
O softly tread beneath her bower
And think of Heaven's disposing power,
Of man's uncertain lot.

O think, o'er all this mortal stage
50 What mournful scenes arise:
What ruin waits on kingly rage;
How often virtue dwells with woe;
How many griefs from knowledge flow;
How swiftly pleasure flies!

55 O sacred bird! let me at eve,
Thus wandering all alone,
Thy tender counsel oft receive,
Bear witness to thy pensive airs,
And pity Nature's common cares,
60 Till I forget my own.

11 Which statement provides an objective summary of the text?

- A The speaker has lost his one true love.
- B The speaker uses nature to disregard problems.
- C The speaker is on a quest to find a nightingale.
- D The speaker is passionate about reading Greek mythology.

12 What can be inferred from the poem?

- A The speaker is inspired by the bird's ability to sing beautifully despite the hardships of the world.
- B The speaker is critiquing how the bird's music can influence other people's view of the world.
- C The speaker is determined to show the world how a bird's music transforms lives.
- D The speaker is horrified that the world disrespects the power of a bird's song.

13 According to the first stanza of the poem, who is the "queen of heaven"?

- A the nightingale
- B Hesper
- C Endymion
- D the sun

14 In the second stanza, what does propitious mean?

- A atrociously

- B discreetly
- C benevolently
- D instantaneously

15 What is the effect of using the word afflicted in the second stanza rather than the word grievous?

- A It shows that songs can heal the pain of love.
- B It conveys the idea that love is a choice that can harm.
- C It explains why men can become bitter and melancholic.
- D It describes a lonesome man instead of a jealous one.

16 What is the effect of the use of the word choke in line 29?

- A It demonstrates there is no peace for the speaker.
- B It demonstrates there is no escape for the nightingale.
- C It illustrates how attractive this area is for the nightingale.
- D It illustrates how confusing this experience is for the speaker.

17 Based on stanza 8, what does "Of man's uncertain lot" mean?

- A It is arduous to make decisions.
- B Nature does not trust humans.
- C No one knows what will happen in life.
- D Love is difficult to maintain sometimes.

18 How does the author's choice of words in lines 49–54 impact the meaning of the poem?

- A The author's choice of words displays the difference between problems of humans versus nature.
- B The author's choice of words furnishes a reason to search for the nightingale.
- C The author's choice of words shows how unproblematic it is to begin a war.
- D The author's choice of words provides an outlet for the speaker's problems.

19 What can be inferred from the last stanza of the poem?

- A The nightingale's song is beautiful no matter what.
- B The bird helps the speaker better understand nature.
- C The problems in nature outweigh the problems of the speaker.
- D The song of the nightingale helps the speaker to forget his own problems in life.