

"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" **"The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"**

Pastoral poetry depicts country life in idyllic, idealized terms. The term pastoral derives from the Latin word that means shepherd, and originally, pastorals were about rural life, shepherds, and nymphs (minor divinities of nature in classical mythology represented as beautiful maidens dwelling in the mountains, forests, trees, and waters).

Idealized setting

In pastoral poems, the environment of rural life is idealized--time is always spring or summer; shepherds are young and enjoy a life of song and love; and the sheep seem to take care of themselves. *Choose an example from "The Passionate Shepherd" that depicts the shepherd's idealized view of his surroundings. Then, contrast that example with one from "The Nymph's Reply" that reveals the harsher, more realistic aspects of rural life. How do the shepherd and nymph's different perceptions of the environment reveal their different characters?*

Mood

Renaissance poets did not use the pastoral form to accurately and realistically portray rustic life but to convey their own emotions and ideas about life and love. *Decide on the **mood**, or the overall feeling and atmosphere, that each poem evokes. Identify details that create a pastoral atmosphere or that reject the pastoral atmosphere as unrealistic.*

Tone

Tone is the attitude the speaker takes toward his or her subject. *Using your tonal scale chart, choose the two words that most accurately describe the tones of each poem. Support your perception of tone with quotations from the poems. How do these contrasting tones reinforce the contrasting meanings of the poems?*

Dialogue

Though these two poems are by different authors, they function as a pair with the two speakers talking directly to one another. Responding to Marlowe's poem, Raleigh pretends to take each of the shepherd's idealized promises about pastoral life literally and then allows the nymph to prove each promise to be empty or incapable of fulfillment due to the harsh reality of rural life. *Choose one promise that the shepherd makes and the response of the nymph to that promise; then, explain how the nymph proves that the shepherd's promise cannot work in reality.*