

The Blessed Damozel Summary and Analysis of "The Blessed Damozel"

Summary

Stanza I opens with an image of the subject of the poem, the blessed damozel, looking down from Heaven by leaning over a "gold bar." A description of the damozel's appearance follows. [The speaker](#) notes that the damozel's eyes are deeper than still waters, she has three lilies in her hands, and seven stars in her hair.

In Stanza II, the speaker continues describing the damozel. He notes that she is wearing a robe, which is unclasped. It hangs loosely around her and is not adorned or embroidered with flowers. The only thing on the damozel's robe is a white flower given to her by the Virgin [Mary](#) because of her piety. The speaker describes the damozel's hair as "yellow like ripe corn," and flowing onto her back.

The speaker tells us in Stanza III that the damozel feels as if she hasn't been in Heaven as an angel (referred to, in the poem, as "one of God's choristers") for more than a day. The damozel still feels wonder at being in Heaven, and the speaker can see this from the expression on her face. However, for the loved ones she left behind on Earth, it feels like ten years since she has left.

Stanza IV is in the voice of the damozel's lover (signalled throughout the poem by the use of parentheses). He feels as if she has been apart from him for "ten years of years"—a very long time. As he thinks about her, he imagines the feeling of her hair falling over his face. Sadly, it is merely the feeling of the falling leaves as the seasons change.

We return to the voice of the speaker in Stanza V, who reveals that the damozel was standing on the "rampart" of Heaven. (A rampart is a protective wall that surrounds a castle or city with a walkway on top of it.) When the damozel looks over the rampart, she is so high up and so far into space that she can hardly see the sun.

The description of the rampart and the damozel's exterior setting continues into Stanza VI, in which the speaker notes that the rampart acts as a bridge between Heaven and space (which is referred to as "the flood / of ether"). Below her, the damozel can see the "tides of day and night" ebb and flow through the passage of time. From up so high, the damozel can see the Earth, which spins like an anxious "midge," or small fly.

In Stanza VII, the speaker describes the damozel surrounded by other pairs of lovers who have been newly-reunited in Heaven. These lovers greet each other with "their heart-remember'd names." The damozel can see all the souls ascending to Heaven from Earth and they look like "thin flames."

Despite the splendor that surrounds her, the damozel can't help but look down towards the earth in Stanza VIII. She looks until the speaker muses that she must have made the gold bar holding her back warm with her body heat and that the lilies in her hand look "asleep / along her bended arm."

In Stanza IX, the damozel watches as time goes on in the world. She keeps her gaze upon space, trying with all her might to see her lover down below. The speaker prepares the reader for the damozel to speak, noting that "she spoke as when / the stars sang in their spheres."

The speaker notes, in Stanza X, that the sun has set and a crescent moon has risen in the sky. The weather is still. The damozel speaks, and her voice sounds like the stars in the sky all singing together.

Before we can hear what the damozel says, we are given the voice of the lover in Stanza XI. [The damozel's lover](#) is so consumed by his lost love that when he hears birdsong he imagines that he has heard her voice. Similarly, when he hears the tolling of bells, he thinks it is the damozel's footsteps coming towards him as she descends a flight of stairs.

In Stanza XII, the damozel finally speaks: "I wish that he were come to me, / For he will come." She rhetorically asks whether she has prayed enough (knowing full well that she has) for her lover to join her in Heaven. She also rhetorically asks whether her lover has prayed from Earth to be reunited with her, knowing, also, that he probably has. She questions whether two prayers put together are strong enough to bring the lovers back together, knowing that they should be "a perfect strength" in the eyes of God. Finally, she questions whether or not she should "feel afraid" as time passes and she continues to be separated from her love.

The damozel imagines in Stanza XIII the day when her lover finally *does* arrive. She imagines that when he arrives clothed in white and with a halo around his head, they will go together hand-in-hand to bask in the glory and light of God. They will step into the glory as if stepping into a stream and "bathe" in it while God watches.

The damozel dreams in Stanza XIV that she will lie with her lover in the holy shrine of the "occult" in Heaven, which is a holy shrine where prayers are sent to Heaven from Earth. The damozel and her lover will see their old prayers to be reunited, and, since they have been granted, watch the prayers dissipate into the sky like clouds.

In Stanza XV, the damozel muses that she and her lover will lie beneath the Tree of Life, where the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) can sometimes be found. Every leaf on the tree speaks God's name.

The speaker then plans to teach her beloved the songs that she sings in Stanza XVI. The damozel's lover will learn the songs slowly and take pauses so as to gain better knowledge.

We hear the voice of the lover again in Stanza XVII. He laments the promises that he and his lover have shared to stay together: "we two, we two, thou say'st!" He addresses the damozel, recalling the time when they were united as one. He then questions whether God will ever invite him to Heaven so that he can enjoy "endless unity" with the damozel.

The damozel begins to speak again in Stanza XVIII. She says that after her beloved arrives in Heaven, the two of them will look for the Virgin Mary in the groves. Mary has five handmaidens, who are named Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen, Margaret, and Rosalys.

In Stanza XIX, the damozel describes what Mary does with her handmaidens. They sit in a circle with their hair in braids and weave golden thread into white cloth, which is given to new members of Heaven.

The damozel imagines her lover's reaction to seeing Mary and her handmaidens in Stanza XX: "He shall fear, haply, and be dumb." The damozel plans on pressing her cheek against his and speaking proudly about the love that they share with each other. She imagines that Mary will approve of her strong emotions about her relationship and allow her to speak of their love.

The damozel imagines, in Stanza XXI, that once Mary approves she will take them hand-in-hand to the place where all souls kneel before God. They will see countless heads, adorned with halos, kneeling before God and angels will play instruments in the background.

In Stanza XXII, the damozel plans on asking Christ to allow her and her lover to live together forever in Heaven.

After the damozel is finished speaking, the speaker describes her expectant face as she sees souls rising from Earth towards heaven in Stanza XXIII. The damozel smiles.

In the final stanza, Stanza XXIV, the lover sees the damozel smile. When the damozel sees that the angels' paths are not headed towards her, she crosses her arms over the "golden barriers" of Heaven and weeps. Her lover, on earth, can hear her sobs.