

John Keats
Ode to Autumn
Stanza 1: Easier questions!

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"Ode to Autumn" is regarded as Keats's best poem, written with graphic clarity just before his death. He personifies the season, dressed in its rich autumn colours and alive with life and mellow vibrancy. Everything is maturing now. The fruits on the trees are at their sweetest, the wine is oozing with heady tranquillity. Everywhere the birds and the insects are enriching the countryside with their melody.

1. "SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun."
 - What is a "bosom-friend"? (2)
 - What is the effect of the alliterated "m" in "mists and mellow"? (2)

2. "Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run."
 - Is the term "load and bless" a prayer? If so, who is praying to whom? (4)

3. "To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel."
 - What does the description of the "moss'd cottage-trees" tell you about the general climate of the region? (2)
 - The poet conjures up in these four lines a feeling of success and prosperity. How does he do it? What words in particular enrich this concept? (4)

4. "to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells."
 - Who is being referred to when the poet speaks of "they" who think the warm days will never cease? (2)
 - What are the "clammy cells" that have been "o'erbrimm'd"? (2)
 - What is the purpose of parenthesis? Identify an example of parenthesis in the above quotation. (4)

5. The poet often uses inverse word order. Restructure the following quotes so that their meaning becomes more clear:
 - "How to load and bless with fruit the vines"; (2)
 - "To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees"; (2)

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