



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuliya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

### Introduction to the poem, 'The Last Ride Together'

'The Last Ride Together' is one of the finest dramatic monologues of Browning. It was published in 1855 in *Men and Women*. Eight years later, it was again published and included in *Dramatic Romances*.

The subject-matter of the poem is love. The lover is rejected and completely dejected but he resigns to his fate and does not murmur and curse his beloved. He implores her to grant his last wish to ride together and that wish being granted he begins to imagine a heaven upon this earth. He consoles himself by saying that it is not only he who is suffering because of the indifference and ingratitude of his beloved but also there are others who have met with the same fate in their lives with their own ladyloves. At a second thought he begins to compare himself with the statesman, soldier, poet, the sculptor and the music composer who aim at an achievement and attempt to reach Sublimate. But they ultimately do not succeed. Much is left undone. Failure is clearly marked on their faces. The lover also has failed. He had expected to win the heart of his beloved but he could not get success. He is rejected by her. But he is contented to cherish her memory. His last wish has been granted and so he thinks himself very fortunate. He has attained celestial touch and divine bliss through human agency.

=====

***The Last Ride Together*** is one of Robert Browning's most notable dramatic monologues. It focuses on the desires of a lover for a last ride together with his beloved and this journey is both passionate and evocative.

First published in 1855 in the book *Men and Women*, it has drawn much attention from the readers over the years, especially with regards to the possible psycho-sexual



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuilya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

content. **Some critics see Freudian symbols within the poem, the title in particular interpreted as a metaphor for the sexual act.**

This is a journey that takes place in heart and mind. Browning taps into the mindset of the modern man.

Towards the end of the poem, the speaker wishes for the journey to never end, to go on in some eternal instant.

Robert Browning and his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning were the most famous poetic couple of the age. Their publications became very popular and their life as lover-poets was well known.

They also travelled a lot and it was on one of these journeys that Robert Browning perhaps echoed the sentiments of *The Last Ride Together*.

*The Last Ride Together* encapsulates Browning's principal philosophies - life is always greater than art and love is the best thing life can bring. Experience here on earth is the ultimate and one doesn't have to wait for heaven to have a blissful life in the here and now.

=====

## **Analysis of the Poem, *The Last Ride Together***

### **1st Stanza**

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,  
Since now at length my fate I know,  
Since nothing all my love avails,



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuilya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

Since all, my life seem'd meant for, fails,  
Since this was written and needs must be—  
My whole heart rises up to bless  
Your name in pride and thankfulness!  
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim  
Only a memory of the same,  
—And this beside, if you will not blame;  
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

**In the first stanza of the poem, 'The Last Ride Together', Browning presents the plot and characters. Here, the speaker is a person who is proposing to his beloved for the last ride with him. The speaker knows what is going to happen to him. His love avails nothing as their relationship is about to end. Moreover, he thinks that it was already written in his "fate" and his life is only meant for failures. In this way, the poet briefly presents the pretext of the speaker's love story.**

**Thereafter, the speaker says his heart rises to bless the lady's name in pride and thankfulness. He requests her to take back the hope she gave to him. His only wish is to preserve only a mere memory of their love. It's an indirect invitation to the lady for having a ride with him. At last, the speaker implores his beloved not to blame him for the request. He at least deserves a moment with her after having a relationship with her for a certain time.**

**\*\*\*Explanations of the lines ---**

**since 'tis so** – since you can not love me and are obliged to reject me.

**Since now at length my fate I know**— I now know that I have to lead a disappointed life since you have rejected my love.

**Since all, my life seem'd meant for, fails,--** Life has no longer any meaning for him.

**this was written and needs must be**—the failure in love was inevitable.



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuliya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

**“My whole heart rises up to bless**

**Your name in pride and thankfulness!”** – My heart rises above all passions of resentment or bitterness or despair at the rejection and blesses you in the pride and gratitude that I loved a girl like you.

**“—And this beside, if you will not blame;”** – If you do not consider it improper

**“ Your leave for one more last ride with me”** – I am eagerly waiting for your permission to ride with me for the last time.

---

---

**2 nd Stanza**

My mistress bent that brow of hers,  
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs  
When pity would be softening through,  
Fix'd me a breathing-while or two  
With life or death in the balance: right!  
The blood replenish'd me again;  
My last thought was at least not vain:  
I and my mistress, side by side  
Shall be together, breathe and ride,  
So, one day more am I deified.  
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

In the second stanza, the speaker has beautifully portrayed the appearance of his lady love. After hearing the speaker's request she bent her brows. It seems the lady was not prepared for that. However, she accepts the request of the lover as she has also loved him once. The speaker says



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuilya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

her eyes are dark and deep. Her eyes portray the sense of pride that she takes in herself. Thereafter, the speaker says if she takes pity on him and her heart softens with this emotion, he demands only her breathing that one feels on his chest. Here, he requests her to hug him. In between her arms, he can feel life and death at the same time. Such a mixed kind of emotion is natural for a person like him who is on the verge of ending a relationship.

The lady has accepted his request. Love has replenished his heart. He can feel the same emotions that once drive him mad. Hence, he says, “My last thought was not vain.” Now, they are side by side, breathing and riding together. In this way, for one more day, he feels deified. Love has made him feel like a deity. And after this last ride with his beloved, he doesn’t mind if the world ends on that night. What he had got, is more than he ever thought of.

**\*\*\*Explanations of the lines ---**

**“Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs”** - Her deep dark eyes express a conflict. The lover realizes that a struggle is going on in her heart between her sense of pride and her sense of pity for the rejected lover.

**“ .....Softening through”** – softens her look.

**“ ...breathing –while...”** – moment

**“ With life or death in the balance: right! ...”**—The lady has granted my prayer.

**“The blood replenish’d me again;....”** – My face which grew death pale in the agony of eager suspense flushed crimson again.

**“So, one day more am I deified”** – The rejected lover has been transformed into a semi-god or god-like status. He has become semi-god because his prayer has been granted and he must get the scope of getting the celestial touch of his lady-love.

**“Who knows but the world may end to-night?”** -- It may be that the world may end to-night so that my happiness is thus eternalized.



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuliya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

### 3 rd Stanza

Hush! if you saw some western cloud  
All billowy-bosom'd, over-bow'd  
By many benedictions—sun's  
And moon's and evening-star's at once—  
And so, you, looking and loving best,  
Conscious grew, your passion drew  
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,  
Down on you, near and yet more near,  
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—  
Thus leant she and linger'd—joy and fear!  
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

In the third stanza of *'The Last Ride Together'*, the speaker tells the lady to keep quiet if she comes across some western cloud. Here, the western cloud is a symbol of hopelessness. However, he says the western cloud is “billowy-bosom'd” and “over-bow'd” by many benedictions. On this cloud, the sun, moon, and the evening star shower blessings like angels.

Then the lady grows conscious of the upsurge of passion in her heart. While they are riding for the last time, it seems the cloud, sunset, moonrise, and star-shine are coming nearer to her. So, the image shows them rising to heaven as if they have attained salvation. But, in the next line, the speaker says their togetherness making this journey heavenly and together they create heaven on earth. At some point in this journey, she leaned in his breast in both joy and fear. It's a joy of having him and the fear is, no doubt, for the unforeseen.

### \*\*\*Explanations of the lines ---

**Hush!**—be silent

**Western cloud**- evening cloud



Compiled and Circulated by Samir Kuilya, Faculty Member, Dept. of English, Narajole Raj College

=====

**“Hush! if you saw some western cloud ---**      The dramatic note is continued. I request you not to disturb me in what I feel and this moment when my beloved leans against my breast. If you have ever felt the same experience which I am now going to describe, you will not disturb me by asking me any question.

**All billowy-bosom’d, over-bow’d  
By many benedictions—sun’s      →  
And moon’s and evening-star’s at once— ”**

**“Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!— ”** In this blissful state all physical sensations vanished.

**“joy and fear!” --** I feel joy because my beloved leans against me and I fear because this moment of spiritual joy ( bliss) will not last long.

=====