

Sonnet: To Science

Edgar Allen Poe

Science! true daughter of old Time thou art,
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
5 How should he love thee, or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car,
10 And driven the hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the naiad from her flood,
The elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

What characteristics make this poem a sonnet?

Whom is the speaker addressing, and what literary devices does the speaker employ in doing so? Describe the tone of the poem.

What scientific principle is referred to in line 2? Explain. How is this reference somewhat ironic in this context?

What is the "Vulture" (line 4)? Why is it described this way? What literary device is this an example of? How is the description of its wings paradoxical (line 4), and what is the effect of this paradox?

What are the purpose and the effect of the rhetorical questions the speaker asks?

What do you think is the "treasure in the jewelled skies" (line 7)?

What other literary device is used in line 9, and what is its effect?

What do you think the "summer dream beneath the tamarind tree" (line 14) represents to the speaker?