

## On Shakespeare-1630

John Milton

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones,  
The labor of an age in pilèd stones,  
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid  
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?  
Dear son of Memory, great heir of fame,  
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?  
Thou in our wonder and astonishment  
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.  
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring art,  
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book  
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,  
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,  
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;  
And so sepúlchr'd in such pomp dost lie,  
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

### About the Poem:

Milton wrote this poem as a tribute to Shakespeare to commemorate the Bard's everlasting works. As Milton puts it, there is no need to create a tomb or monument for Shakespeare as the great writer has already created one in the hearts of his readers. The poem bears a prophetic note on the ageless literary reputation of Shakespeare. Milton was one among the seers who predicted Shakespeare's lasting impression on the history of literature.

### Glossary:

hallow'd: holy, sacred

reliques: a part of a deceased holy person's body or belongings kept as an object of reverence: memento

bereaving: to deprive and make desolate esp, by death

sepulchre: a burial chamber in which a dead person is laid or buried

### 1. Choose the correct alternative:

- (a) "Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,"-  
Who do the lines refer to ?
- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| (i) The poet      | (ii) Monuments |
| (iii) Shakespeare | (iv) Pyramid   |

- (b) 'Built' thyself a live-long monument'?  
How did Shakespeare build his monument himself when he was alive?
- (i) On rocks (ii) With bricks and cement  
(iii) His writings (iv) His paintings

**2. Answer the following questions in 15-20 words each:**

- (a) Find out the words used for monuments in the poem.  
(b) What does the poet mean by 'thy easier numbers flow'?  
(c) Why does the poet ask that Shakespeare's "hallowed relics" be hidden under star-y pointing pyramid?  
(d) What do you understand by self-bereaving?

**3. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words each:**

- (a) How did Shakespeare make his live-long monument?  
(b) Why did Milton feel it was not necessary to put a monument for Shakespeare?  
(c) What does the 'weak- witness of thy name' refer to?  
(d) What will be the best tribute to Shakespeare?

**4. Answer the following questions in 150 words each:**

- (a) Write critical summary of the poem 'On Shakespeare 1630'.  
(b) How does Milton describe Shakespeare as the source of inspiration for all succeeding generations of poets?