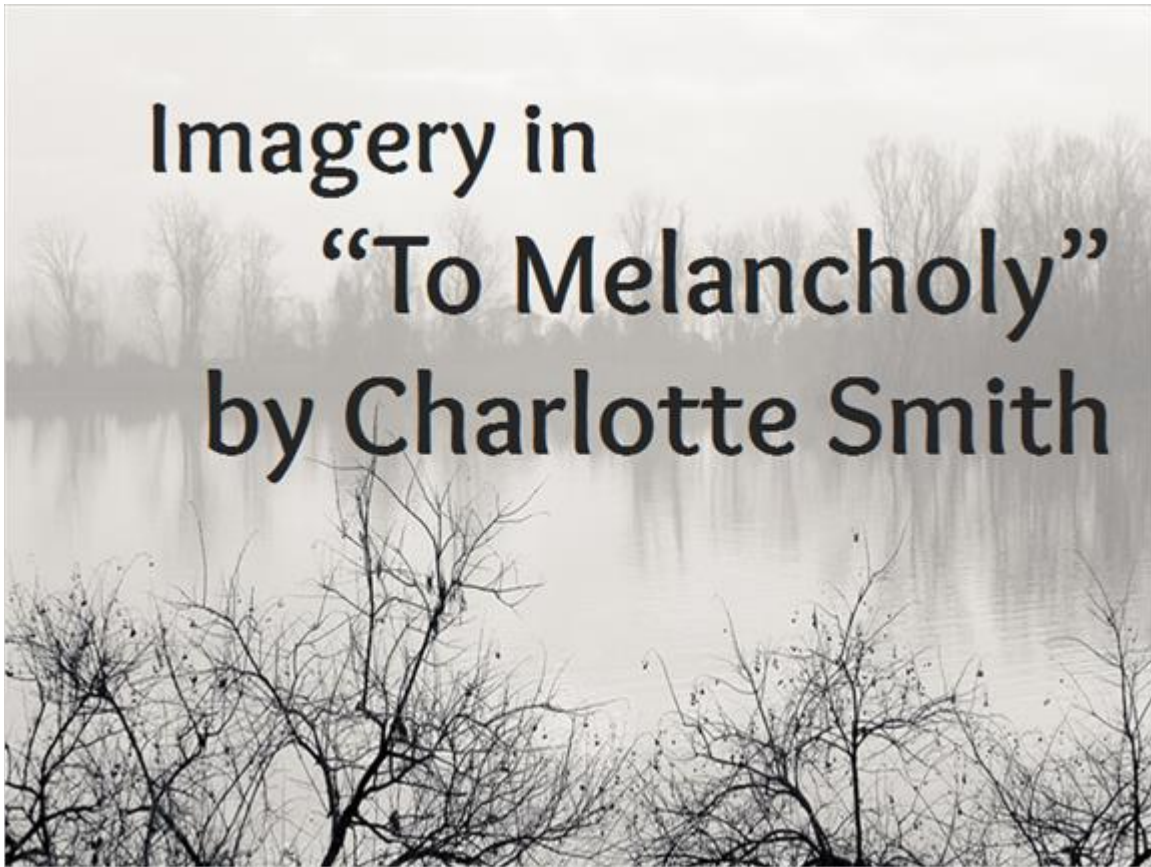


## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 2 Content: Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith Notes



Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 2 Content: Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith Notes



English poet and novelist  
during the 1800s

Romantic Period

nature, emotion, and imagination

went to debtor's prison

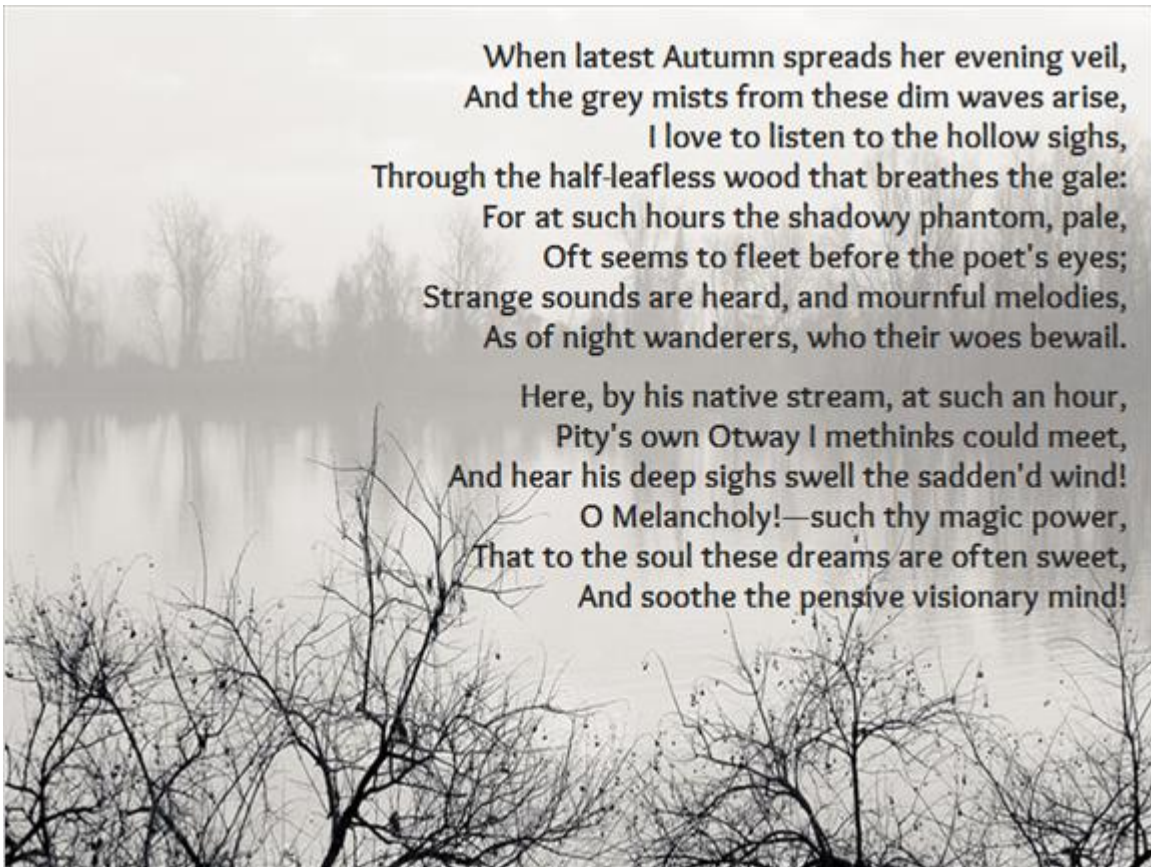
Charlotte Smith

Charlotte Smith was an English poet and novelist during the 1800s. The period in which she wrote is known as the Romantic Period, during which authors used their writing to celebrate nature and describe things with emotion and imagination. During her time, Smith was recognized as a talented poet by other Romantic writers, like William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Unfortunately, Smith had an unhappy marriage and ended up in debtor's prison with her husband. She used money from the sales of her work to get them released. She faced extreme poverty her entire life. Today, she is recognized as one of the most talented poets from the Romantic Period.

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 2 Content: Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith Notes



When latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,  
And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,  
I love to listen to the hollow sighs,  
Through the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:  
For at such hours the shadowy phantom, pale,  
Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;  
Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,  
As of night wanderers, who their woes bewail.

Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,  
Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,  
And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!  
O Melancholy!—such thy magic power,  
That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,  
And soothe the pensive visionary mind!

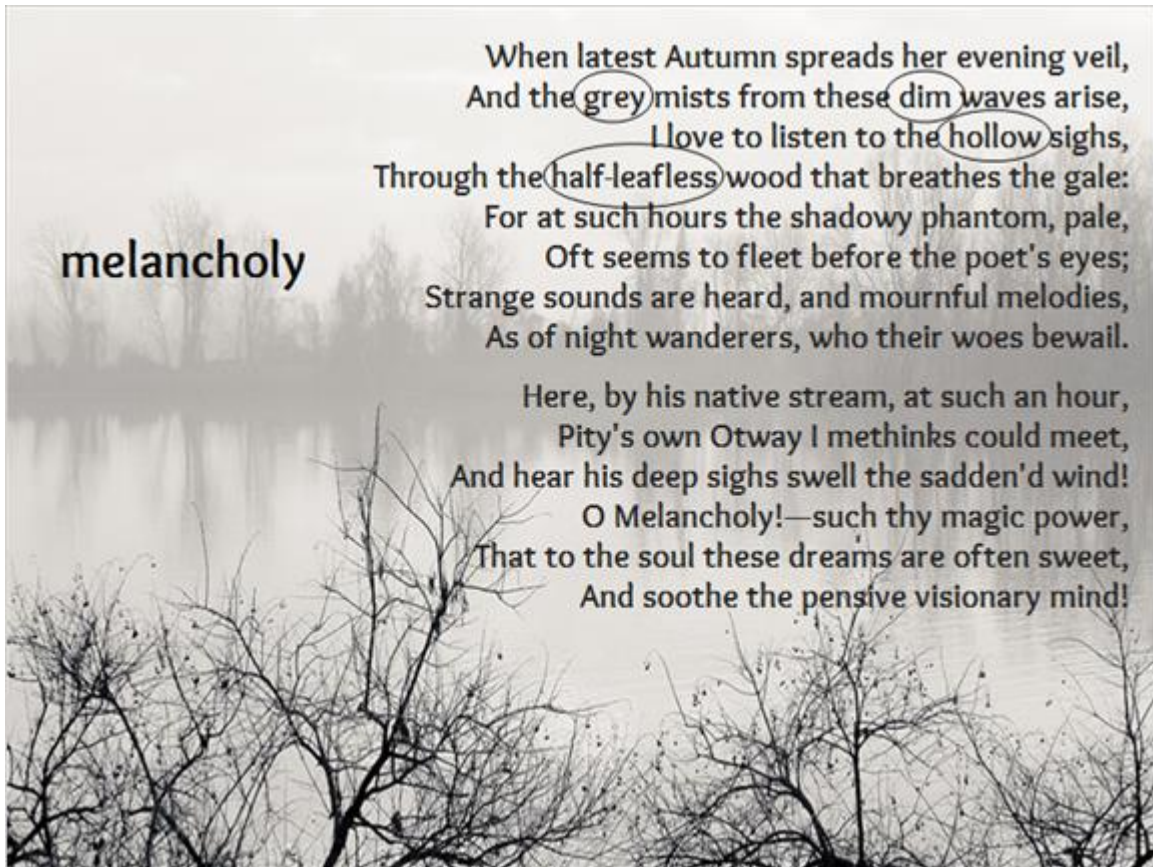
Now, listen to a reading of “To Melancholy,” and read along while you listen. Make note of any imagery you see or hear.

When latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,  
And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,  
I love to listen to the hollow sighs,  
Through the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:  
For at such hours the shadowy phantom, pale,  
Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;  
Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,  
As of night wanderers, who their woes bewail.

Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,  
Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,  
And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!  
O Melancholy!—such thy magic power,  
That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,  
And soothe the pensive visionary mind!

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 2 Content: Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith Notes



Take a moment to think about how the poem made you feel and then relate it to the title. In "To Melancholy," Charlotte Smith wants you to feel just that - the melancholy of the river. She uses words like grey, dim, hollow, and half-leafless to describe her surroundings. These descriptive words are intended to make you "see" a certain image or have a certain feeling.

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 2 Content: Imagery in "To Melancholy" by Charlotte Smith Notes

octet

sonnet

sestet

When latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,  
And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,  
I love to listen to the hollow sighs,  
Through the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:  
For at such hours the shadowy phantom, pale,  
Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;  
Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,  
As of night wanderers, who their woes bewail.

Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,  
Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,  
And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!  
O Melancholy!—such thy magic power,  
That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,  
And soothe the pensive visionary mind!

You already know that a sonnet is a fourteen line poem with a strict structure and rhyme scheme. Sonnets, like "To Melancholy," are composed of two parts - an octet, or a section with eight lines, and a sestet, or a section with six lines. If you take a look at the poem shown here, you will notice that these two parts are clearly marked.