Do not go gentle into that good night

By: Dylan Thomas (1914 –1953)

1  Do not go gentle into that good night,
2  Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
3  Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

4  Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
5  Because their words had forked no lightning they
6  Do not go gentle into that good night.

7  Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
8  Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
9  Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

10 Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
11  And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
12  Do not go gentle into that good night.

13 Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
14  Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
15  Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

16 And you, my father, there on the sad height,
17  Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
18  Do not go gentle into that good night.
19  Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Questions to consider:

● What is the Good Night?
● What is the dying of the light?
● What does Thomas mean when he says, “rage, rage” against it?

Note: Older definition of gay: having or showing a merry, lively mood: gay music.
Dylan Thomas was a Welsh poet and prose writer known for his comic exuberance, rhapsodic lilt, and pathos. Born on October 27, 1914 in Swansea, Wales, he left school at age 16 to work as a reporter. His early verse, such as "The Map of Love" (1939), gained him fame for its rich metaphoric language and emotional intensity. He became widely popular in his lifetime; and remained so after his death at the age of 39 in New York City. By then, he had acquired a reputation, which he had encouraged, as a "roistering, drunken and doomed poet." He came to be appreciated as a popular poet during his lifetime, though he found earning a living as a writer difficult. He began augmenting his income with reading tours and radio broadcasts. His radio recordings for the BBC during the late 1940s brought him to the public's attention, and he was frequently featured by the BBC as an accessible voice of the literary scene.

Thomas first traveled to the United States in the 1950s; his readings there brought him a degree of fame; while his erratic behavior and drinking worsened. His time in the United States cemented his legend; and he went on to record to vinyl such works as A Child's Christmas in Wales. During his fourth trip to New York in 1953, Thomas became gravely ill and fell into a coma. He died on November 9 at age of 39, and his body was returned to Wales. On November 25, he was interred at St. Martin's churchyard in Laugharne, Carmarthenshire.

Although Thomas wrote exclusively in the English language, he has been acknowledged as one of the most important Welsh poets of the 20th century. He is noted for his original, rhythmic, and ingenious use of words and imagery. His position as one of the great modern poets has been much discussed, and he remains popular with the public.