

## Romanticism

- The Romantics were group of poets writing and publishing in the late 18th and early 19th century in Britain—and their poetry didn't start with "roses are red."
- Why do we call them "Romantics," then, if these guys weren't, you know, *romantic*?

- They were coming off the heels of the Enlightenment, when folks decided to value reason over emotion, and they were *not* cool with it.
- The Romantics were unconventional. Since they believed in being true to their emotions, they refused to be constrained by social, literary, or political conventions—conventions of any kind, for that matter.

### *Why Should I care?*

- Television, Internet, ads, movies: everyone is telling us what we should be doing with our lives, what we should want, what we should look like, and what we should feel.
- Are we *weird* for not wanting to take that job? For not wanting to dress like that? For not wanting to behave in that way? If you've ever had those questions, you've got more in common with the Romantics than you might have thought possible. Their big message to us readers is *you do you*.

### *Influences*

- **The Industrial Revolution**
  - When mechanized manufacturing processes transformed work and production, factories started popping up everywhere and people left the country for the city to work in them. Food for thought: there's less nature in the city.

- **Nature**

- According to the Romantics, we simply could not be happy or whole without a connection to nature. Lots of people like to refer to the Romantics' nature as Nature with a capital N because it was more than just the grass and the oceans—it was the whole concept.

- **Rebellion**

- The Romantics didn't like conventions. They rebelled against literary conventions, they rebelled against political conventions, and they rebelled against social conventions. They believed that we should first and foremost be true to ourselves, which means *not* going along with the herd.

*Find elements of romanticism in the following poem:*

## **A Poison Tree**

I was angry with my friend:  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe:  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.  
And I watered it in fears,  
Night and morning with my tears;  
And I sunned it with smiles,  
And with soft deceitful wiles.  
And it grew both day and night,  
Till it bore an apple bright.  
And my foe beheld it shine.  
And he knew that it was mine,  
And into my garden stole  
When the night had veiled the pole;  
In the morning glad I see  
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.