

My Old Friend

Allen

Hello bourbon, my old friend.

I love the feeling that you bring

When I have drunk enough of you to make me sing.

It takes more of you than it used to

Because I have become so used to
you.

We have spent many years together

And even when I'm under the
weather

We have been through highs and
lows.

But that's how life goes.

We have loved; we have hated

And we have even mated.

We have sat at a bar. I have drunk you from a jar.

I have been all mollycoddled and drunk you from a bottle.

As a true friend of mine, I'm feeling just fine.

I may be feeling a little bit drunk but that's because

The amount of you I have sunk.

As friends of a feather, we have been so sick together.

Life partners in crime. I will drink you all the time.

We met back when I started drinking and some days

You changed the way I was thinking.

We have been through thick and thin.

And even when we have created some sin.

So as I look over at the time, the call of last drinks.

James Beam Bourbon suits me just fine

You old friend of mine.





Activities

Did you notice the full stops?

Even though this is a poem, the full stops still tell you how to read each set of lines – where to place the pauses in your reading.

Did you notice who wrote the poem?

Discuss with your tutor,
your impressions of Allen as a person,
from what you can guess by reading this poem.

What **adjectives** (describing words) might you use, if you were writing a poem about Allen. (Of course, we can only guess about the writer.)

For example, you might see him as a connoisseur?

Or you might see him as being lonely?

Your adjectives:

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You might need your tutor's help, to spell some words you want to use.

Notice that Allen only rhymes **some** line-endings in his poem – not the end of *every* line. Here are some **rhyming pairs** Allen uses:

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------------|-----------|
| bring/sing | to/you | together/weather | lows/goes |
| hated/mated | thin/sin | fine/mine | bar/jar |

From about the middle of the poem, Allen starts to use **rhyming pairs** in a different way: he puts one word in the middle of the line, and one word at the end. For example:

I have been all mollycoddled and drunk you from a bottle.

Identify the word that Allen rhymes with each underlined word:

As a true friend of mine, I'm feeling just fine.

I may be feeling a little bit drunk but that's because

The amount of you I have sunk.

As friends of a feather, we have been so sick together.

.....

We met back when I started drinking and some days

You changed the way I was thinking.

Now look at the **list of adjectives** that you compiled earlier (on page 2) – words that *might* describe Allen. Can you think of any words that rhyme *with each* of your choices? Write the words down **as pairs**.

Examples (*yours might be very different!*): lonely/only sad/lad

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Can you write **a few lines** about *your idea* of Allen, using a few of your own matching pairs?

Example: *I am lonely, wanting company only.*

OR *He is sad, thinking of being a lad.*

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Do you know the word **mollycoddled**?

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary and the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, mollycoddle is an old word, made up of two parts, molly and coddle, meaning "one who coddles himself".



Molly is a pet name or nickname for Mary, and refers contemptuously to a pampered or effeminate man or boy – what we might today call a wimp.

Coddle means to pamper, or over-indulge, and is also used when talking about cooking eggs in a delicate and gentle way.



According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, **bourbon** is a type of American whiskey made from corn, malt, and rye.

Can you think of **one word** to match each of the 3 descriptions below?

When I have drunk enough of you to make me sing =

under the weather =

all the time =

"under the weather" is one of several expressions that Allen uses, which require interpretation. You probably know that 'under the weather' means unwell.

Discuss the following expressions with your tutor.

"partners in crime" : What does Allen mean by this?

"through thick and thin": What does this mean?

"friends of a feather" is a twist on the expression 'birds of a feather'
Do you know the rest of the saying: "*Birds of a feather*"

