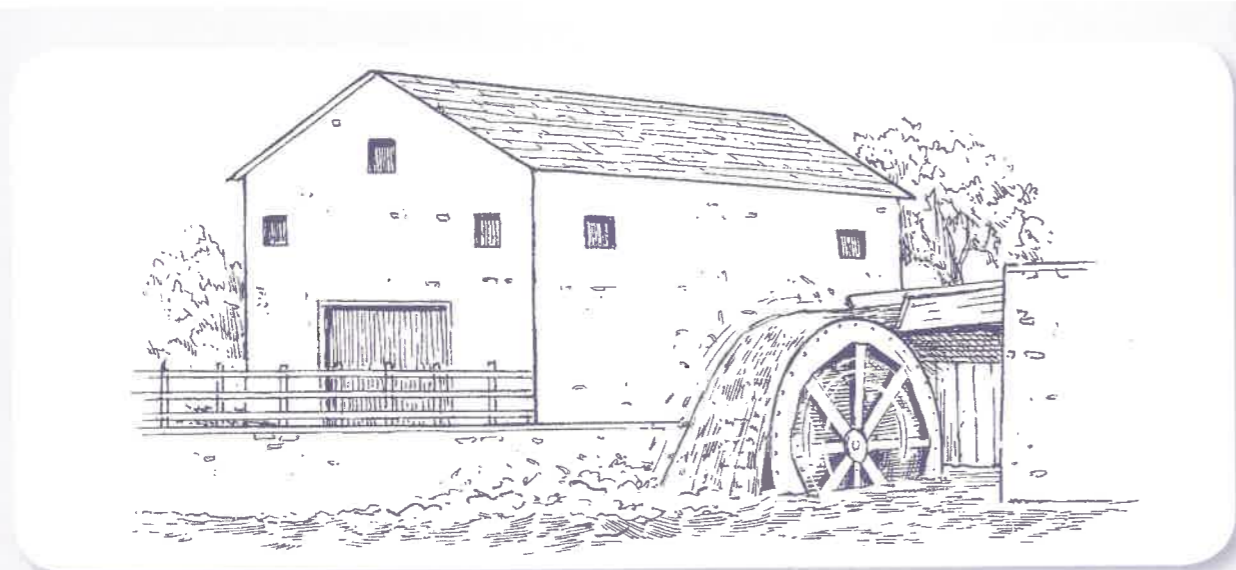


Keepsake Mill



This poem describes a mill with machinery that is powered by running water from a river – the flow of water turns a large waterwheel, which is attached to cogs and gears that work the machinery. Before the invention of electricity, mills were often used to grind corn.



Over the borders, a sin without pardon,
 Breaking the branches and crawling below,
 Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,
 Down by the banks of the river, we go.

5 Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,
 Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,
 Here is the sluice with the race running under –
 Marvellous places, though handy to home!

10 Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,
 Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;
 Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,
 Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill.

15 Years may go by, and the wheel in the river
 Wheel as it wheels for us children, to-day,
 Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever
 Long after all of the boys are away.

20 Home from the Indies and home from the ocean,
 Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;
 Still we shall find the old mill wheel in motion,
 Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,
 I with your marble of Saturday last,
 Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
 Here we shall meet and remember the past.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

1 a) List four words from the poem that demonstrate its ABAB end-rhyme pattern.

b) Give an example of internal rhymes.

2 Is the speaker an adult or a child? Explain your answer by quoting from the poem.

3 What word meaning 'gap' is used by the speaker when he refers to the garden wall?

4 What unforgivable 'sin' have the speaker and his friend committed?

5 What do you think is the 'race' that runs under the sluice? Use a dictionary to find out more.

6 How has the miller's health been affected by his work at the mill?

7 a) Explain the meaning of the word 'keepsake' in the title. Include a note of any keepsakes mentioned in the poem.

b) What do the giving, receiving and expected keeping of the keepsakes suggest about the relationship of the speaker and the person that he is talking to?

8 Give one example of each of the following:

a) alliteration: _____

b) assonance (repeated vowel sounds): _____

9 How do rhyme, alliteration and rhythm contribute to the effectiveness of this poem?
