

Read ‘Love From the North’ (1862) by Christina Rossetti. What is the poem about, and how does the rhyme contribute to the meaning and overall effect?

I had a love in soft south land,
Beloved through April far in May;
He waited on my lightest breath,
And never dared to say me nay.

He saddened if my cheer was sad,
But gay he grew if I was gay;
We never differed on a hair,
My yes his yes, my nay his nay.

The wedding hour was come, the aisles
Were flushed with sun and flowers that day;
I pacing balanced in my thoughts:
‘It’s quite too late to think of nay.’ –

My bridegroom answered in his turn,
Myself had almost answered ‘yea’:
When through the flashing nave I heard
A struggle and resounding ‘nay’.

Bridesmaids and bridegroom shrank in fear,
But I stood high who stood at bay:
‘And if I answer yea, fair Sir,
What man art thou to bar with nay?’

He was a strong man from the north,
Light-locked, with eyes of dangerous grey:
‘Put yea by for another time
In which I will not say thee nay.’

He took me in his strong white arms,
He bore me on his horse away
O’er crag, morass, and hairbreadth pass,
But never asked me yea or nay.

He made me fast with book and bell,
With links of love he makes me stay;
Till now I’ve neither heart nor power
Nor will nor wish to say him nay.

(Sisson, 1984, p.62)