

The Collar Themes

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Weight of Religious Duties: From the very beginning of the poem, we clearly see that the poet is feeling the weight of religious duties. He hits the table and says he will go out and leave his religious life.

*"I struck the board, and cried, "No more;
I will abroad!"*

This means he is angry and tired. He longs to do whatever he wants. He thinks his life is free as the open road, loose as the wind, and full of possibilities. The poet wants to live like other people—free, happy, and full of joy. He feels that his life is full of rules, pain, and no reward. Even the title "The Collar" is a reminder of the poet's spiritual conflict. Here, the

"collar"

is the priest's white collar. It can also mean a dog's collar, which is the symbol of being controlled. The poet suggests his life is fully controlled and restricted by religious faith.

Guilt and Sorrow: The poet thinks he only gets guilt and sorrow in return for his religious faith. He remembers a time when he felt joyful. He says:

*"Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it."*

He says there was

"wine"

and

"corn"

in his life. It means his life was full of pleasure and blessings. Now, he feels alone, and he feels he is the only unhappy person. He is left without any rewards

Desire and Doubt: Now, the poet is having more spiritual conflict. He thinks he can still go and grab what he desires. He can even make up for all these years of guilt and suffering by having **“double pleasures.”** So, he wants to stop thinking about what is morally right or wrong. He is even having doubts about his religious faith. He starts to convince himself that his faith is just a false **“cage”** he has built for himself from his own **“thoughts.”**

“Forsake thy cage,

Thy rope of sands,

Which petty thoughts have made,

Reconciliation with God:

But then something changes. In the last lines, when the speaker is ready to leave his religious duties, he thinks a voice is calling him:

“Child!

And I replied My Lord.”

God does not argue or punish. He just calls him gently—

“Child.”

And the poet’s heart changes. He answers with love—

“My Lord.”

This simple ending shows that the poet’s love for God is stronger than doubt.