She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless dimes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.
One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Pasea bella, cual noche
Despejada de cielos estrellados;
Y lo mejor de la oscuridad y el fulgor
Se unen en su aspecto y en sus ojos,
Dulcificados, bajo la tierna luz
Que el cielo niega al vulgar día.
Una sombra de más, un rayo de menos,
Habrían empañado la gracia inefable
Que ondula en cada trenza de ébano,
Y alegra delicadamente su cara;
Donde pensamientos dulces y serenos muestran
Lo puro y anhelado de su morada.

Y en su mejilla, y sobre su cara,
Suaves, serenas aunque elocuentes
Las sonrisas conquistadoras, matices resplandecientes
Que hablan de días saludables.
De una mente en paz con lo terrenal,
Y de un corazón inocente de amor.
George Gordon Byron (Lord Byron) was born in 1788 in London. Byron's father, son of a Vice-Admiral, had previously seduced the married Marchioness of Caernarthen and, after she divorced her husband, he married her. His treatment of her was brutal and she died after having given birth to two daughters, only one of whom survived: Byron's half-sister, Augusta. Byron's father had married his mother for her money, descendant of a Scottish noble family descendant of James I of Scotland, which he soon squandered and then fled to France, where he died in 1791. When Byron was a year old, he and his mother moved to Aberdeen, Scotland, and Byron spent his childhood there. He was born with a clubbed foot, with which he suffered throughout his life. He was renowned for his personal beauty, which he enhanced by wearing curl-papers in his hair at night. He was athletic, a competent boxer, horse-rider and an excellent swimmer. For most of his life he was a vegetarian. Upon the death of his great uncle in 1798, Byron became the sixth Baron Byron of Rochdale and inherited the ancestral home, Newstead Abbey in Nottingham, which was in embarrassing state of disrepair and had to be rented. He attended Harrow School from 1801 to 1805 and then Trinity College at Cambridge University until 1808. Byron's first publication was a collection of poems, *Fugitive Pieces* (1807), which he himself paid to have printed, and which he revised and expanded twice within a year.

From 1809, Byron went on the Grand Tour, then customary for a young nobleman. The Napoleonic Wars forced him to avoid most of Europe, and he turned to the Mediterranean. Correspondence among his circle of Cambridge friends also suggests that a key motive was the hope of homosexual experience or an affair with a married woman, Mary Chaworth, a former love. He was also attracted to Turkey, for he had read about the Ottoman and Persian lands as a child, and was interested in Sufi mysticism. He also travelled in Spain, Portugal, Albania, Malta and Greece. He returned to England and in 1812 embarked on a well-publicised affair with the married Lady Caroline Lamb that shocked the British public. She never entirely recovered, pursuing him even after he tired of her. He then formed a close relationship with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, interpreted by some as incestuous. In 1814, Augusta (who was married) gave birth to her third daughter rumoured by some to be Byron's. He left again to visit Belgium and Germany and settling at Villa Diodatti in Lake Geneva Switzerland, with his personal physician John William Polidori. There Byron befriended the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Shelley's future wife Mary Godwin. He was also joined by Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont, with whom he had had an affair in London. Kept indoors by incessant rain over three days in June in what was known as the year without a summer, the group turned to reading and devising gothic tales. Mary Shelley produced what would become *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*, and Polidori was inspired by a fragmentary story of Byron's, *Fragment of a Novel*, to produce *The Vampyre*.

Byron began to court Anne Isabella Milbanke ("Annabella"), who eventually married him in 1815. Byron never met his daughter (Augusta) Ada Lovelace, born the following year. He also had an illegitimate child in 1817 Clara Allegra Byron, born to Claire Clairmont after their affair. Byron resolved to escape the censure of British society (due to allegations of sodomy and incest) by living abroad. Allegra lived with Byron for a few months in Venice, where he became acquainted with Armenian culture and language, and participated in the compilation of the *English Armenian dictionary*. Allegra died aged five of a fever in Italy while Byron was in Pisa. He was deeply upset by the news and move to Ravenna between 1819 and 1821 where he received a visit from Thomas Moore, to whom he confided his autobiography, which his publisher, John Murray burnt in 1824, a month after Byron's death. During these years he wrote *Childe Harold and Don Juan*.

In 1822 he gave a number of parties in which he included the Shelleys. P.B. Shelley rented a house on the coast, became involved in yachting, and drowned in a boating accident on 8 July 1822. He moved to Genoa soon after, and from there to Greece, where he actively supported war against Turkey to recover some of the southern territories (the port of Lepanto at the Gulf of Corinth) for independent Greece. He was injured and developed a septic infection that caused his death in 1824. His burial in Westminster Abbey was refused for his questionable morality. Modern appreciation of the poetry of Lord Byron is focused mainly on his works about male characters who in some ways represent the poet, or at least the person the poet liked to think he was. The Byronic hero pervades much of his work, and Byron himself is considered to epitomise many of the characteristics (an idealised, but flawed character whose attributes include: great talent; great passion; a distaste for society and social institutions; a lack of respect for rank and privilege (although possessing both); being thwarted in love by social constraint or death; rebellion; exile; an unsavory secret past; arrogance; overconfidence or lack of foresight; and, ultimately, a self-destructive manner) of this literary figure. But there were, in fact, several Byronic heroes, from the intensely silent man of action to the sensitive artist. Byron inspired works by composers Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Giuseppe Verdi.

Byron's *She Walks in Beauty* is a poem written in 1814, when Byron was twenty-six years old, and published in 1815 as a part of his volume *Hebrew Melodies*, published by John Murray, one of the founding sponsors of the London evening newspaper *The Star* in 1788, and publisher of Byron's major works. In 1824 Murray burnt Byron's memories which he had given him for publication. Murray thought that the scandalous details would damage Byron's reputation. *Hebrew Melodies* was set to music by the Anglo-Australian composer and musicologist Isaac
Nathan who in 1813 he conceived the idea of publishing settings of tunes from synagogue usage and persuaded Byron to provide the words for these.

The poem is said to have been inspired by the poet's sight of his young cousin by marriage, Mrs. Anne Beatrix Wilmot, who wore a black gown brightened with spangles (the dark/light duality present in the poem) at a party hosted by Byron's his friend, James Wedderburn Webster, at the London home of Lady Sarah Caroline Sitwell. Other accounts situate his half-sister Augusta as subject of the poem.

The theme of the poem is the woman's exceptional beauty, internal as well as external. The first stanza praises her physical beauty. The second and third stanzas praise both her physical and spiritual; goodness/beauty (Neoplatonism). She is also a representation of art itself, "half-impaired", "nameless grace", difficult to express with words, but present in her features and in the way she walks, recreated in the cadence of the poem’s rhythm. The repetition of the "unstressed-stressed" words gives us a soft, stepping rhythm. Just as the poet had described in the first two lines how pleasantly the woman walks in her dress. The Canadian critic Northrop Frye remarked the "caressing rhythm" of the poem (see Frye: 1959, 152-53).

Byron presents an ethereal portrait of the young woman in the first two stanzas by contrasting white with black and light with shadow on a cloudless starlit evening. His words use nature’s opposites to celebrate the unique beauty (bright eyes, dark hair). Formally, the effect of communion is achieved by ‘enjambment’, (carrying the sense of one line of verse over to the next line without a pause), used in the first two lines of the poem. Thus, there is no pause after night. Pauses occur at the end of the other lines. There are only six rhyming sounds in this eighteen-line poem because the poem rhymes ababab, cdcdec, efefef. The meter is predominantly iambic tetrameter, a pattern in which a line has four pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables—eight syllables in all. The first two lines demonstrate the pattern followed throughout the poem except for line 6, which has nine syllables. Alliteration occurs frequently to enhance the appeal of the poem to the ear. The most obvious examples of this figure of speech include the following:

- Line 2: cloudless climes; starry skies
- Line 6: day denies
- Line 8: Had half
- Line 9: Which waves
- Line 11: serenely sweet
- Line 14: So soft, so
- Line 18: Heart Whose

Examples of other figures of speech are the following:

Lines 1, 2: Simile comparing the movement of the beautiful woman to the movement of the skies; Metaphor: “like the night.”
Lines 2-6-11: “cloudless climes,”(2) “starry skies,”(2) which sounds like the woman’s skirt dragging on the ground, and the sound of ‘d’ in “day denies,”(6) with the feeling of denial and rejection. Also “serenely sweet”(11) ‘s’ sounds that amplifies the image of softness
Line 5: Synesthesia: “tender light,” a mixture of visual and tactile that amplifies softness.
Lines 6-15: Metonymy: “smiles”(15) to represent “the woman,” and “heaven”(6) to represent “god.”
Lines 8-10: Metaphor: “nameless grace / which waves in every raven trees,”(8-9) the poet compares “grace”(8), the quality of the woman, to an observable phenomenon “raven trees”(9)
Lines 11-12: Metaphor and personification comparing thoughts to people; metaphor and personification comparing the mind to a home (dwelling-place)
Lines 13-16: Metaphor and personification comparing the woman's cheek and brow to persons who tell of days in goodness spent.
Lines 15-18: Personification “smiles that win”(15), "heart whose love is innocent,”(18) Metonymy: We could associate the sound of “starry skies,”(2) represented by the sound ‘s,’ with the, and adapted by David Lasky (http://www.flickr.com/photos/dflasy/6963085915/)

Sources
Shelley, Percy Bysshe "A Defence of Poetry."1821. The essay examines the various functions of reason and imagination in the poet's work.