

Dust of Snow

Thinking about the Poem (Page 14)

Question 1:

What is a “dust of snow”? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet’s mood changed?

Answer:

The ‘dust of snow’ refers to the snowflakes and its fine particles. The poet’s mood changed due to the sudden shower of snowflakes. He was dismayed earlier, but it changed to a happy and joyful mood as he felt refreshed and energized to enjoy the rest of the day.

Question 2:

How does Frost present nature in this poem? The following questions may help you to think of an answer.

(i) What are the birds that are usually named in poems? Do you think a crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

(ii) Again, what is “a hemlock tree”? Why doesn’t the poet write about a more ‘beautiful’ tree such as a maple, or an oak, or a pine?

(iii) What do the ‘crow’ and ‘hemlock’ represent — joy or sorrow? What does the dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree stand for?

Answer:

In the poem, Frost presents nature in a very unconventional manner.

1. Generally, poets consider birds and trees to represent beauty and positive qualities. They write about birds such as parrots, peacocks, cuckoos, etc., and trees with beautiful flowers and bearing tasty fruits. In this poem, Frost mentions a crow, which is often not used in poems. Generally, a crow is a black bird with a harsh voice and is considered a bad omen. Therefore, the word ‘crow’ in the poem brings foreboding and depressing pictures to our mind.
2. Frost mentions “a hemlock tree”, which is a poisonous plant having small white flowers. The poet however, didn’t choose to use a maple, pine or oak tree that symbolize beauty and joyfulness. Instead, he chose the hemlock tree while leaving aside all the beautiful trees of nature to represent his sadness and regretful feelings.
3. The ‘crow’ and ‘hemlock’ tree represent sorrow and depressing mood and feelings felt by the poet in this world. The dust of snow symbolized a sense of natural joy and energy in him. The dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree refers to the sad and depressing moments experienced by the poet initially which were gone as he enters into a joyful and optimistic feeling.

Question 3:

Have there been times when you felt depressed or hopeless? Have you experienced a similar moment that changed your mood that day?

Answer:

Yes, there have been innumerable times when I felt sad, depressed and hopeless due to some unavoidable circumstances in my life. Sometimes, such moments were caused due to indifferent behaviour and attitude of other people and sometimes due to my own conduct. On one occasion, I returned tired and upset from school. Upon reaching home, my puppy jumped and embraced me. This little joy literally changed my mood

and I was overjoyed by such a nice gesture by the little creature. This uplifted my mood for the rest of the day. I played with my puppy for a while and caressed him with love and affection.

