

Chapter 1: Dust of Snow

Thinking about the Poem

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’ means the fine particles or flakes of snow. The sudden shower in the form of the dust of snow changed the poet’s mood. The poet’s mood changed from sad to happy. He felt refreshed and wanted 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.

1. What are the birds that are usually named in poems? Do you think crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?
2. Again, what is ‘a hemlock tree’? Why doesn’t the poet write about more ‘beautiful’ tree such as a maple, or an oak, or a pine?
3. 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:

Frost presents nature in a very different manner in the poem,

1. Generally, poets take the birds and trees which are known for their beauty and good qualities like peacock, parrot, cuckoo, mynah and trees full of beautiful flowers and fruits, etc. But here Frost has taken a totally different approach. He chose a crow, which is not often used in poems. Crow is black in colour with very harsh voice and is believed to be a symbol of bad omen. Thinking of a crow brings very depressing and sorrowful pictures to our mind.
2. A hemlock tree is poisonous plant with small white flowers. The poet, Robert Frost, didn’t choose to use an oak, maple or pine tree. Instead, he chose the hemlock tree and left all the beautiful trees present in the world. Actually he did so to present his mood and feelings.
3. The crow and hemlock tree represent sorrow and depression felt by the poet in this materialistic world. The dust of snow is the symbol of natural joy and energy. The dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree means passing through the sad and depressing moments the poet is entering into the time full of joy and optimism.

Question: 3

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

Answer:

There have been innumerable times when I too have felt depressed and hopeless. Sometimes, such moments were aroused by other people’s behaviour and attitude and sometimes due to my own conduct. On one occasion when I was very upset. I went out for a walk. While walking in the park, I saw a girl playing with a puppy, embracing and feeding him. This little joy that they shared changed my mood and I felt very happy for the rest of the day. I also joined the two and played with them.