

Chapter 8: On the Grasshopper and Cricket

Working with the Poem

Question 1: Discuss with your partner the following definition of a poem.

A poem is made of words arranged in a beautiful order. These words, when read aloud with feeling, have a music and meaning of their own.

Answer: Poem is supposedly an artistic piece which contains a speech as well as a song, and is usually rhythmical and metaphorical. These beautiful arrangement of words beautify and add to the essence of the poem. Poems are supposedly read aloud to feel the intense passion and emotion with which they have been composed. The rhyming words in a poem puts various ideas and imaginations of the poet in sync. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, a poem can be defined as a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their sound and the images they suggest, not just for their obvious meanings. The words are arranged in separate lines, usually with a repeated rhythm, and often the lines rhyme at the end.

Question 2: 'The poetry of earth' is not made of words. What is it made of, as suggested in the poem?

Answer: 'The poetry of earth' is not made of words, but of the song and the rhythm produced by grasshoppers and crickets in various seasons. The music of the nature never loses its charm even with changing seasons. Summer and winter are the toughest seasons of the year. In summer it is extremely hot and in winter it is very cold. So in these two seasons there are rare songs of joy and music on earth. But here the poet points to the poetry of earth during summer and winter. In summer, the grasshopper seems to be excitedly hopping around, tirelessly, while even in lonely and dark winter nights, one can identify the shrill voice with which the insect cricket sings.

Question 3: Find in the poem lines that match the following.

(i) The grasshopper's happiness never comes to an end.

(ii) The cricket's song has a warmth that never decreases.

Answer:

(i) In summer luxury - he has never done With his delights,

The mentioned lines of the stanza portray the fact that the grasshopper's happiness never comes to an end.

(ii) The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,

This line exemplifies the fact that the cricket's song never loses its warmth, rather keeps increasing.

Question 4: Which word in stanza 2 is opposite in meaning to 'the frost'?

Answer: The word 'frost' in stanza 2 differs in meaning with the word 'grassy'. Frost has a chilly reference which means a degree or state of coldness sufficient to cause the freezing of water. This meaning lacks a green live feeling which is present in the word 'grassy'. Grassy means something which is like grass or pertains to grass.

Question 5: The poetry of earth continues round the year through a cycle of two seasons. Mention each with its representative voice.

Answer: The poem here describes two seasons through which continues the poetry of earth. The season of summer is portrayed here through the sound of the grasshopper which is found on grassy areas, in full bloom during summer. The voice of the grasshopper turns from hedge to hedge in this season. Quite opposite is the scene in winter when even in a silent, lonely night one can hear the sound of a cricket's song. Even in the silence of a winter night can be heard the shrill sound of a cricket.