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ENGLISH

CHAPTER 1: DUST OF SNOW



DUST OF SNOW

~Summary~

-by Robert Frost

Stanza- 1

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Explanation: The poet, Robert Frost, recounts a small incident that changes his mood. It seems very simple but it has a great significance. The poet was, once, very depressed and hopeless. He was in a state of sorrow and was lost in his thoughts. He was standing under the hemlock tree. Suddenly a crow, that was sitting on the tree, shook the tree and the fine particles of snow from the tree fell on the poet.

Stanza- 2

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Explanation: When the soft and cold snow fell on the poet, it changed his mood from the state of sadness to happiness. He started feeling soothed (peaceful and refreshed). This simple incident helped him enjoy the remaining part of the day. He, thus, became happy as it saved his rest of the day from being wasted and held in regret.

Conclusion of Dust of Snow

The poem teaches us a lesson that every small act in life can illuminate our soul and motivate us to do better.

NCERT SOLUTION

Questions (Page No. 14)

(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’ refers to the snowflakes and its fine particles. The poet’s mood changed due to the sudden shower of snowflakes. He was in dismay 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 amore ‘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.

Generally, poets consider birds and trees to represent beauty and positive qualities such as a parrot, peacock, cuckoo, etc. and trees consist of beautiful flowers and bear tasty fruits, etc. In this poem, Frost mentions a crow in this poem, which is often not used in poems by poets. Generally, a crow is a black colour bird that has a harsh voice and is considered a symbol of bad omen. Therefore, the word ‘crow’ in the poem depicts foreboding and depressing pictures to our mind.

Frost mentions “a hemlock tree” that 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.

The ‘crow’ and ‘hemlock’ tree represent sorrow and depressing mood and feelings felt by the poet in this capitalistic 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 and this uplifted my mood for the rest of the day. Soon I freshened up and played with my puppy for a while and caressed him with love and affection.