

Dust of snow summary

The short poem by Robert Frost throws light upon the unimaginable healing power of nature and tiny things. From a bad mood to ill-health, there is nothing that can't be cured by nature. The author was experiencing one such bad day when a crow's movement near a hemlock tree dusted snow upon him. The snow instantly makes him happier. His day gets a lot better. Thus, the supremacy of nature as a whole made him realise how petty his problem was. The fact that hemlock tree is poisonous combined with crow being the indicator of doom and fear are used in the poem as the carriers of happiness in the life of narrator, is ironical. The poet thought these objects has tried to highlight that sometimes creatures linked with negative aspects of life can be the bringer of change and happiness. Being outdoors in nature, with all its unpredictability can benefit anyone, anywhere at any time.

Dust of Snow Question and Answer

Q1. What is a "dust of snow"? what does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet's mood changed?

A1. "Dust of snow" refers to the tiny particles of snow. The particles are so small that poet referred to them as "dust". The poet was in an awful mood when particles of snow had fallen on him. This changed the poet's frame of mind instantly and his day got a lot better.

Q2. 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 a crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

A. Birds like sparrow, nightingale and peacock are more than often named in poems. Unlike these birds, crow is often seen as the indicators of doom and fear. They are often used for negative references.

[2] 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?

A. Trees are also seen as mighty creatures imparting wisdom as they're too old. They give out oxygen and absorb the carbon dioxide which is connected with absorbing all the negative energy. But there are trees that are poisonous too, like a hemlock tree. The poet does not mention more “beautiful” tree such as maple, oak or pine because he wants to indicate a sad scene. Being poisonous, a hemlock tree is considered bad and so, he refers to it.

[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?

A. Both crow and the hemlock tree represent sorrow. Frost has used both the negative creatures (crow and the hemlock tree) as the carriers of positivism and strength that transformed his day for the better. By not using birds like sparrow and nightingale and trees like maple, oak or a pine, the poet has tried to break down all the preconceived notions we have about certain agents of nature. He has tried to make us understand that we see the world not as how it is, but as how we want to see it. Thus, the crow sitting and a hemlock together made his day better. The dust of snow stands for joy.

Dust of Snow Literary Devices

- I. Rhyme Scheme- abab
- II. Alliteration-the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

The instances of alliteration are as follows-

- Has given my hear
- And saved some part

III. inversion-when the structure of a sentence is changed by the poet to create rhyme, this poetic licence is called inversion. In stanza 1, inversion can be seen.

IV. assonance- the prominence of a vowel sound throughout a line is called assonance. In stanza1, line 2-“shook down on me”- ‘o’ sound is prominent.

v. enjambment- when the same sentence continues to the next line without the use of any punctuation marks, it is called enjambment. It has been used throughout the poem.