



Dust of Snow

—Robert Frost

About the Poet

Robert Frost was a famous American poet. He was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874. His father belonged to New England, and his mother was a Scottish emigrant from Edinburgh. By 1920s, Frost was the most celebrated poet in America. His poetical works 'A Boy's Will' (1913), 'North of Boston' (1914), 'New Hampshire' (1923), 'A Further Range' (1936) 'Steeple Bush' (1947) and 'In the Clearing' (1962) increased his fame and honour. The poem 'Dust of Snow' was published in 'New Hampshire' in 1923. This collection gave him the Pulitzer prize.



Central Idea of the Poem

'Dust of Snow' is a small poem written by the famous American poet, Robert Frost. The poem is set on a wintry day. In the first stanza, the poet describes a simple natural happening. The snow is falling heavily. The snowy flakes have covered the top of the trees. The poet is standing under a hemlock tree. The movement and alighting of a crow on that tree, make the dust of snowfall on the poet. The crow, a symbol of ill omen and the hemlock tree, associated with person, are not auspicious things. However, in the second stanza, the falling of snowy flakes and the scene leave a tremendous effect on the mental state and mood of the poet. So far, the day has been quite gloomy and a wastage for him. But this ordinary natural happening suddenly brings a desired change in his mood. It gladdens his heart. He realises that the falling of snowy flakes on him, has saved the day. Now he has no regret as the whole of the day has not gone waste. The moments of the snowfall, and their effect have saved the day. They have brought a change in his mood and gladdened and uplifted his spirits.

larger thing /
Q1. What is a 'dust of snow'? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet's mood changed?
... a fine mass

Q4. 'The crow' and the 'hemlock tree' are generally considered to be inauspicious and ominous symbols. Does the poet use them so?

Ans. 'The crow' and 'the hemlock tree', no doubt, don't represent cheerfulness or brightness. Both of them are generally considered to be inauspicious. But 'the crow' in the poem causes the dust of snow fall on the poet. This leads to the sudden change of mood in the poet. The feeling of cheerfulness replaces the feeling of regret. Similarly, the hemlock tree is the tree under which the poet is standing and experiencing the change of his mood.



Fire and Ice

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Central Idea of the Poem

'Fire and Ice', is an extremely compact little lyric. Not a syllable is wasted. The theme of the poem is the age-old question. The question is whether the world will end in fire or in ice. The poet decides that any of the two options would achieve its purpose sufficiently well. The poet shares the common belief that everything that exists will have its end too. People are divided on this issue. Some think that the natural element of fire will cause destruction of this world. Others believe that ice will be the cause of the end. Putting in terms of human emotions, the element of 'fire' stands for passions, desires and love. Unbridled passions and desires can cause the end of the world. The poet has experienced both these emotions. It doesn't matter how the world will end. Even hate born out of cold and icy reason is sufficient to cause destruction and the end of the world.

Style

The little lyric is extremely compact. Not a single syllable is wasted. The aim is aphorism – brevity. For Frost truth remains ambiguous. The question goes unanswered. The subject is highly sublime. The treatment or the language is very simple. The rhyme scheme of the poem is: *a, b, a, a; b, c, b, c, b.*

world.

Q2. What do people think about the end of the world? Who does the poet side with and why?

Ans. People are divided over the cause of the end of this world. Some people think that 'fire' symbolised by unbridled passions, desires and fury will destroy this world. Others believe that 'ice' symbolised by cold reasoning, indifference and hatred will be the cause of destruction. The poet sides with those who believe that 'fire' or unbridled passions and desires will result in the destruction of the world.

Q7. What is the message of the poem 'Fire and Ice'?

Ans. The metaphors of 'fire' and 'ice' are used very effectively to convey a definite message to the readers. 'Fire' here stands for our unbridled, uncontrolled and unchecked passions, desires, lust and fury. Such passions are disastrous to human beings. Similarly cold reasoning devoid of all human warmth, love, sympathy will bring insensitivity, cruelty and rigidity. This hatred will lead to the end of this world.