

Lake Morning in Autumn

Douglas Livingstone

Brief Overview

As the title suggests, the poem explores a particular natural scene, focusing on a stork. The bird is initially at rest, perhaps exhausted from its long migration from the northern hemisphere. It is alone; the first of its kind to arrive. It also seems to be thoughtful, perhaps reflecting on its journey. Then as dawn breaks, it climbs slowly into the sky, resuming its long journey.

The colours of the dawn and the movements of the bird are vividly captured. There seems to be something dignified, almost regal (majestic) about this bird.

Summary

The poem revolves around the stork's natural instincts to migrate at a certain time of the year. In the poem it is some weeks early. In nature things occur systematically and if it does not, those involved might be endangered or might become despondent.

Creatures belonging to a social structure in nature can become unhappy and depressed and do not function well alone. They can easily change their behaviour as with the stork migrating too early.

The Poem

Before sunrise the stork was there
resting the pillow of his body
on stick legs growing from the water.

A flickering gust of pencil-slanted rain
swept over the chill autumn morning:
and he, too tired to arrange

his wind-buffed plumage,
perched swaying a little
neck flattened, ruminative,

beak on chest, contemplative eye
filmy with star vistas and hollow
black migratory leagues, strangely,

ponderously alone and some weeks
early. The dawn struck and everything
sky, water, bird, reeds

was blood and gold. He sighed.
Stretching his wings he clubbed
The air; slowly, regally, so very tired,

aiming his beak he carefully climbed
inclining to his invisible tunnel of sky,
his feet trailing a long, long time.