

[W9/10t] THE TUFT OF THE FLOWERS

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[W9/10t] THE TUFT OF THE FLOWERS	
BASIC UNDERSTANDING QUESTIONS	
Question	Answer
Who is in the poem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">First-person: "I"Haymaker is speaking<ul style="list-style-type: none">"turn the grass" (c1, 1)Mower<ul style="list-style-type: none">"one who mowed it" (c1, 12)
What happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The speaker goes to a field to turn the grass that has been mowed thereHe feels lonely and wonders about the mower who came before himThen, he sees a butterfly, which leads his eyes to a tuft of flowers that the mower left untouchedThe joy that must have led the mower to admire and spare the flowers is transferred, through the sight of the flowers, to the speakerThis awakens in the speaker a sense of kinship with the mowerIt banishes his lonelinessHe feels now as if he were working with the mower side by side
When is this happening	
Where is it happening	

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS	
Question	Answer
1 Two different people go to a field one morning. Which words refer to these different people in the first couplet (stanza) of the poem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Haymaker is speaking "I"<ul style="list-style-type: none">"turn the grass" (c1, 1)Mower<ul style="list-style-type: none">"one who mowed it" (c1, 12)
2 What does each person do to the grass in the field (ie one person 'turns' the grass, and one person 'mows' it: what are these two jobs, and when do they do them (who does their job first)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Haymaker turns the grass<ul style="list-style-type: none">Turns grass into hay so that it can be easily transported and stored without danger of spoilageSo that it dries out properlyTo make them available as a forage feed in the winter monthsMower mows it<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cuts grassMower mows first then the haymaker takes the mowed grass and turns it
3 The two people are both involved in the same work - they are doing different parts of the same overall work of looking after the same field, one mowing, and then one turning the grass. But when the person who is doing the second part of the job ('turning') looks for the person who was doing the first part of the job (mowing), he has already left, and so the two men are actually working separately. What general thought does this make the speaker have with regards to human connectedness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">He feels alone<ul style="list-style-type: none">S4: "—alone"S5: "I said within my heart"He feels disconnected from the mower<ul style="list-style-type: none">S3: "looked" and "listened"<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeking communicationBut met with silence
4 But then something happens which makes the speaker change his mind about human connectedness. What happens, and why does this make the speaker change his mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">He sees a butterfly which leads his eyes to a tuft of flowers that the mower left untouchedThe admiration of the beauty of the flowers is transferred, through the spirit of the flowers, to the speakerThis makes the speaker feel connected with the mower - they share the same values, loves and motivationsHe no longer feels lonely and feels as if he were working with the mower side-by-side
C1a What does 'turn the grass' mean? Why do farmers do this?	
C1b What has already been done to the grass, before the speaker gets to the field, and by whom, and when?	
C2a What 'blade' is it, what is a 'keen' blade, and why does it say that the dew made it so keen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ImageryPersonification
C3a Who is the speaker looking for, and where?	
C3b How else is the speaker trying to detect the presence of the mower? What is a 'whetstone'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whetstone [a fine-grained stone used for sharpening tools]
C4 Does the speaker find the mower?	
C5a What is the speaker thinking?	
C6a What animal catches the speaker's eye as it passes by him?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Butterfly
C6b Is it noisy or quiet? What does 'wilderer' mean?	
C7 What is the animal trying to find?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Flowers
C8 What does the speaker see the animal do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
C9 What does the animal do now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
C10 What does the speaker do?	

ANALYSIS

LINE #	QUOTE/EVIDENCE	ANALYSIS	QUESTIONS
1	I went to turn the grass once after one Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C1a What does 'turn the grass' mean? Why do farmers do this?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Turns grass into hay so that it can be easily transported and stored without danger of spoilageSo that it dries out properlyTo make them available as a forage feed in the winter monthsC1b What has already been done to the grass, before the speaker gets to the field, and by whom, and when?<ul style="list-style-type: none">A mower had mowed the grass before the haymaker arrived
2	The dew was gone that made his blade so keen Before I came to view the levelled scene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">"Levelled scene"<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scene of destructionNature has been wiped clean - no more tall grass - by manContrast: keen blade vs levelled scene<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aftermath of mowingSomber moodMower may symbolise death - grim reaper - cutting people down flat - but	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C2a What 'blade' is it, what is a 'keen' blade, and why does it say that the dew made it so keen?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blade = SytheImageryKeen definition: finely sharpened, as an edge; so shaped as to cut or pierce substances readilyOne the dew is gone, you can see the sharp edgesC2b Why is the scene described as 'levelled'?<ul style="list-style-type: none">All of the grass had been mowed by the mowerNature has been wiped clean by manScene of destruction <negative>C3a Who is the speaker looking for, and where?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Looking for the mower behind an isle of treesC3b How else is the speaker trying to detect the presence of the mower? What is a 'whetstone'<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whetstone definition: a fine-grained stone used for sharpening tools
3	I looked for him behind an isle of trees; I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whetstone definition: a fine-grained stone used for sharpening tools"looked" and "listened"<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seeking communicationBut met with silence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C3a Who is the speaker looking for, and where?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Looking for the mower behind an isle of treesC3b How else is the speaker trying to detect the presence of the mower? What is a 'whetstone'<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whetstone definition: a fine-grained stone used for sharpening tools
4	But he had gone his way, the grass all mown. And I must be, as he had been, —alone,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">"—alone"<ul style="list-style-type: none">"—": acts as a caesura to create emphasis on the word	<ul style="list-style-type: none">C4 Does the speaker find the mower?<ul style="list-style-type: none">No

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, —alone,

As all must be, ' I said within my heart,
Whether they work together or apart.'

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a 'wilderer butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him.
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

Men work together, ' I told him from the heart,
Whether they work together or apart.'

Robert Frost

River - symbol of connection - flows between cities and towns - therefore symbolises the flow of connection between people

Is the poem trying to make us feel/think that he speaker's negative view ('we are always alone') is correct or incorrect?

What makes the speaker form this view?

- First 5 stanzas
- Emphasis on loneliness
 - Levelled scene of nothingness - just him
- He seeks communication and there is no reply
- Therefore he fors the view

Do we feel that this is a good reason for forming this view?

- No
- If the mower was still there/he wasn't late - would be have formed a different view?

Is the poem trying to make us feel/think that we are NEVER alone?

A) NO, because it's only a confused butterfly that guides him to the positive view
Or YES, because the butterfly represents nature itself, and is therefore a reliable guide

- Butterfly representing nature itself might be
- 6th stanza "Bewildered butterfly" - alliteration
 - Bewildered does not mean confused - excited, trying to get the farmer's attention
- 7,8,9th stanza

B) NO, because there are no such things as talking flowers ('tongue of bloom'), therefore the image is ridiculous, and part of a fantasy.
Or YES, because the 'tongue of bloom' image has the real beauty and...

5	"As all must be, " I said within my heart, "Whether they work together or apart."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generalisation - I must be --> All must be<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not a valid step of reasoning• Repetition of "heart-apart" rhyme<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The heart-apart rhyme repeated in C21• "I said within my heart"<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on loneliness• "Together or apart"<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eg. In a big city - everyone is densely packed together but you feel the most isolated - nobody really cares about you• Other people can never really share our experience - it is INSIDE of us , separate from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C5a What is the speaker thinking?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "As all must be, "
6	But as I said it, swift there passed me by On noiseless wing a 'wilderer butterfly,		
7	Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Archaic language	
8	And once I marked his flight go round and round, As where some flower lay withering on the ground.		
9	And then he flew as far as eye could see, And then on tremulous wing came back to me.		
10	I thought of questions that have no reply, And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;		
11	But he turned first, and led my eye to look At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,		
12	A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alliteration 'b'	
13	I left my place to know them by their name, Finding them butterfly weed when I came.		
14	The mower in the dew had loved them thus, By leaving them to flourish, not for us,		
15	Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him. But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.		
16	The butterfly and I had lit upon, Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,		
17	That made me hear the wakening birds around, And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,		
18	And feel a spirit kindred to my own; So that henceforth I worked no more alone;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Archaic language	
19	But glad with him, I worked as with his aid, And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;		
20	And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.		
21	Men work together,' I told him from the heart, Whether they work together or apart.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The heart-apart rhyme repeated in C5	

WORDS AND CONNOTATIONS

Word	Connotation
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- POET: ROBERT FROST
- 1874-1963
 - Small scale farmer
 - Seems simple but many people do not pay proper attention to the poems (lacking technical awareness), and therefore misunderstand them
 - Eg. 'The Road Not Taken'

- FORM
- 21 stanzas/couplets - 2 lines each
 - 42 lines
 - Written in heroic couplets
 - Paired iambic pentameter lines with a rhyme scheme of aa, bb, cc, dd
 - Iambic pentameter
 - Alternates stressed and unstressed syllables
 - 10 syllables per line
 - Sounds like a heartbeat - the meter/rhythm of love
 - Masculine rhyme
 - Only the last (single) syllable rhymes
 - Gives poem a marhning, old-fashioned sound
 - Archaic-sounding words ass to the effect: "o'er night"(c7/l13) and "henceforth" (c18/l35)
 - The tuft of flowers becomes a symbol of what unites the speaker and the mower. The speaker recognizes in himself the feelings that led the mower to spare the tuft of flowers and, with this recognition, he feels a bond between his values and the other man's values, between his work and the other man's work
 - Paradox - unity in isolation
 - Reflects in the form of the poem

- nature which we all recognise, and therefore does 'speak' the truth
- 12th stanza - "leaping tongue of bloom" - metaphor comparing the tuft of flowers to a bright flame of fire, brightness in the midst of desolation
 - "leaping togue" allusion to Holy Spirit - the flowers were spared
 - Tuft of flowers definition: a small group of flowers growing wild
 - The structure of the essay suggests that it should be about unity
 - 20 couplets have a aa,bb,cc rhyme scheme - the lines are always in pairs and never alone
 - Iambic pentameter of stressed and unstressed syllables - feels like a heartbeat
 - We all have hearts that beat - our hearts beat as one - unity - this fact unites us
 - The overall tone of the poem is peaceful and tranquil - no tone of moking the narrator to be thinking foolishly