



THE REBEL

by D.J.Enright

SUMMARY

The poem "The Rebel,"** written by D. J. Enright talks about a rebel and describes how he does things differently from others. A rebel, by definition, is a person who goes against the established rules. A rebel deliberately tries not to match his preferences and choices with others. He likes to have a different personality and be a unique person. His preferences for indoor and outdoor activities also differ from everyone else. However, it is implied that although it is good to be a rebel, the adverse nature of a rebel may not be appreciated.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

When everybody has short hair,
The rebel lets his hair grow long.
When everybody has long hair,
The rebel cuts his hair short.

Explanation: The poem starts with the rebel growing his hair long when he sees everybody else cutting their hair short. However, the moment he realizes that everybody has long hair, he will cut his hair short.

The above lines imply that the rebel likes to do things differently. He intends to stand out of the crowd in terms of appearances.

It is important to note that the rebel is a male person because of the use of "him" and "his."

Stanza 2

When everybody talks during the lesson,
The rebel doesn't say a word.
When nobody talks during the lesson,
The rebel creates a disturbance.

Explanation: During lesson time, the rebel won't speak if everyone is talking. He will go completely silent. However, when the situation reverses and others stay silent, the rebel starts making noise and disturbs the lesson.

Stanza 3

When everybody wears a uniform,
The rebel dresses in fantastic clothes.
When everybody wears fantastic clothes,
The rebel dresses soberly.

Explanation: The rebel wears bright and fancy clothes when everybody wears a uniform. This makes the others look dull and serious while the rebel looks bright and fantastic. However, he starts dressing in a simple and sober manner when others wear bright and colorful clothes.

Stanza 4

In the company of dog lovers,
The rebel expresses a preference for cats.
In the company of cat lovers,
The rebel puts in a good word for dogs.

Explanation: When the rebel is surrounded by people who like dogs, he would say that he likes cats. As expected from the rebel, the moment he finds himself among cat lovers, he would start praising the dogs and speak about them in a positive way.

Stanza 5

When everybody is praising the Sun,
The rebel remarks on the need for rain.
When everybody is greeting the rain,
The rebel regrets the absence of Sun.

Explanation: In regards to weather conditions, when everyone is appreciating the Sun, the rebel would talk about how rain is needed. At other times, when others are enjoying and appreciating the rain, the rebel expresses his sorrow at the absence of the Sun.

Stanza 6

When everybody goes to the meeting,
The rebel stays at home and reads a book.
When everybody stays at home and reads a book,
The rebel goes to the meeting.

Explanation: The rebel prefers to stay at home and read a book if everybody is going for a meeting. However, he would go out for a meeting if everybody decides to stay at home to read a book.

Stanza 7 and Stanza 8

When everybody says, Yes please,
The rebel says, No thank you.
When everybody says, No thank you,
The rebel says, Yes please.
It is very good that we have rebels.
You may not find it very good to be one.

Explanation: The rebel refuses to accept something if everybody else agrees to take it. However, if everyone starts saying no to it, then he would jump in and accept it. The last two lines of the poem express that it is indeed good to have rebels but it might not be a good choice to become a rebel oneself.

Here, the poet seems to imply that it is good for a society to have rebels since they think and do things differently. Rebels are one of the reasons for the changes that occur in the society. They embrace the difference in preference and promote individuality. Even so, the society doesn't seem to fully accept and appreciate the rebels. Therefore, one might find it difficult to be rebel.

Word – Meaning

Word	Meaning
Soberly	Dull not bright
Preference	A liking for
Regret	Be sorry or apologetic