

A Letter to God

Summary: This story is written by G L Fuentes. This is a story about the great faith of a simpleton in the God. The story begins with Lencho hoping for rains so that his crops would give a better yield. The rain does come but is followed by a devastating hailstorm. Hailstorm destroys all the standing crops and leaves Lencho staring into the bleak future ahead. But Lencho is a strong believer in the God and decides to write a letter to the God; asking for some monetary help. Lencho also wishes to repay the debt when the next crop would give him enough money. After seeing Lencho's letter, the postmaster is deeply touched by the strong faith of Lencho in the God. The postmaster collects money from his colleagues and sends some money to Lencho. But the money sent by the postmaster is less than what the Lencho had demanded through his letter. Lencho once again writes a letter to the God in which he expresses his doubts about the honesty of post office employees.

Question 1: What did Lencho hope for?

Answer: Lencho hoped for rains; because the crop in his field needed rains.

Question 2: Why did Lencho say the raindrops were like 'new coins'?

Answer: As raindrops would have helped in getting a better harvest, resulting in more prosperity, so Lencho compared them with new coins.

Question 3: How did the rain change? What happened to Lencho's fields?

Answer: The rain changed to hailstorm. All the crop in the field was destroyed.

Question 4: What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

Answer: After the destruction caused by hail, Lencho was shattered. He could see a bleak future for him and his family. He was worried about lack of food for the coming year.

Question 5: Who or what did Lencho have faith in? What did he do?

Answer: Lencho had faith in God. He believed that God could see everything and would help him out. Lencho wrote a letter to the God, explained his situation and asked for some money from God.

Question 6: Who read the letter?

Answer: The postmaster read the letter.

Question 7: What did the postmaster do then?

Answer: Postmaster was deeply touched by Lencho's faith in the God. The postmaster asked his colleagues to contribute some money so that they could send that to Lencho.

Question 8: Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Answer: The following sentences explain Lencho's faith in the God, "But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God. "Don't be so upset, even though this seems like a total loss. Remember, no one dies of hunger."

Question 9: Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Answer: Postmaster was moved by Lencho's complete faith in the God. So, he decided to send money to Lencho. Moreover, the postmaster did not want to shake Lencho's faith in God. So, he signed the letter 'God'. It was a good ploy to convey a message that God had himself written the letter.

Question 10: Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why/Why not?

Answer: As Lencho had complete faith in God, so he did not try to find out the actual sender of money.

Question 11: Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation?

Answer: Lencho had all his doubts on people working in the post office. The irony of the situation is the finger pointing on those who had tried to help out Lencho. In real life also we come across such situations. Many a time you would have tried helping someone and he may get a wrong message.

Question 12: Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Answer: Lencho was not surprised to get the money.

Question 13: What made him angry?

Answer: The fact that he received half the amount he had requested for, made him angry.

Question 14: Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the following list to answer the question.

Greedy, naïve, stupid, ungrateful, selfish, comical, unquestioning

Answer: In the real world it is almost impossible to find people, like Lencho. Lencho seems to be naïve and unquestioning. Naïve in the sense that he doesn't even bother to think about who sent the money or if God would actually send the money. Probably his naiveté comes from his unquestioning belief in the God.

Question 15: There are two kinds of conflict in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Answer: In the initial part of the story the episode of rainfall turning into a hailstorm shows the conflict between man and nature. When it is a rainfall the man is very happy dreaming about happy days ahead. But once the rain turns into hail the man is ruining the happening of hailstorm. The way Lencho is feeling sad and gloomy after the storm appropriately projects the conflict of the nature and the man. In the later part of the story when Lencho blames post office people for stealing part of the money then it is showing the conflict between humans. Although nothing is written what happened after that, but anybody can imagine the mental situation when postmaster read the letter.

There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their descriptions below, and fill in the blanks?

gale, whirlwind, cyclone, hurricane, tornado, typhoon

A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: __ __ c

__ __ __ __

Answer: Cyclone

An extremely strong wind : _ a _ _

Answer: Gale

A violent tropical storm with very strong winds : _ _ p _ _ _

Answer: Typhoon

A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: _ _
_ n _ _ _

Answer: Tornado

A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western
Atlantic Ocean: _ _ r _ _ _ _

Answer: Hurricane

A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and
causes a lot of damage: _ _ _ _ l _ _ _

Answer: Whirlwind

Dust of Snow(ROBERT FROST)

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Dust of Snow Poem and Explanation

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Shook- shake

Hemlock- a poisonous tree with small white flowers



The poem is set in a scene where the poet is in a bad mood and is walking by a tree, a hemlock tree. Hemlock tree is a poisonous tree. As he passes by, a crow happens to throw some snow dust on him. Whether it falls on his head or shoulders is unknown as there is no specific mention in the poem. Also, the readers are left in doubt about the bird's specific action. Whether the crow was landing, shivering with cold, re adjusting itself on the branch or taking off, it happened to send some particles of snow upon the author. Here, the two agents of nature, the hemlock tree and the crow are signifiers of sadness and gloom just like the poet's mood was in the opening scene.

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Rued- held in regret

For reasons unknown, the author was having a terrible day. But the falling of the snow on his head lifted his mood instantly. He had already spent his day in a bad mood but the rest of it was saved by the crow and the hemlock tree. Generally, hemlock tree and crow are used for negative references but the poet used them beautifully to portray that inauspicious things can bring joy and happiness too.

One must not take things for granted and should be open and accept whichever way the nature chooses to bless us.

Dust of Snow Literary Devices

i. **Rhyme Scheme-** abab cdcd

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-

i. **Has** given my **heart**

ii. And **saved** some **part**

iii. **inversion** - when the structure of a sentence is changed by the poet to create rhyme, this poetic license 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 stanza 1, 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.

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, through 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.

Question 1: What is a “dust of snow”? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet’s mood changed?

Answer: The snow falls like cotton flakes and settles on trees. When fresh it is having a powdery consistency. The dust of snow falls on the poet as a crow shakes the branch. This pleasant snow shower changes the poet’s mood. Poet was feeling negative because of some reasons and after the snow dust he is feeling happier.

Question 2: How does Frost present nature in this poem? The following questions may help you to think of an answer.

Answer: The poet Robert Frost explains a vivid picture of the nature. For him a crow is playful creature hopping from one branch to another. The hemlock tree is a poisonous plant with small white flowers. This explains the coexistence of diverse moods in nature. The poet’s initial mood can be compared to that of a hemlock tree, and the later mood is like that of a flower. Snowflakes are explained as something which should be enjoyed. Moreover, the contrast of black crow with white snow is also mirroring the bad and the good mood of the poet.

Although, the poet has mentioned just three things; but with the limited number of things and limited number of lines; he has explained a pleasant passing memory of a day to day life.

Fire and Ice (ROBERT FROST)

Some say the world will end in fire

Some say in ice.

From what I’ve tasted of desire

I hold with those who favour fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction ice

Is also great

And would suffice.

Fire and Ice - Poem and Explanation



Some say the world will end in fire
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.

Desire- a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen

Favour- approval, support

The poem expresses the profound idea that the world would end in either of two ways, either by ice or fire. One group is of the opinion that someday the Earth's core will get so heated up that it would lead to fire destroying the earth's surface. On the other hand, the second group says that if the temperature goes down to an extent that makes life on Earth impossible, it would have the same catastrophic effect. The poet then compares fire and ice with the destructive features of human emotions; desire and hatred. He says that from what he is aware about "fiery desires", he would favour the ones who say that it would be fire. By saying so, he brings about the idea that human beings let their emotions rule them and the consequence of unmonitored longing is chaos.



But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

Perish- die

Suffice- be sufficient

Then by not waving off the first option of fire, he considers if the world has to expire twice, ice would be equally competent in ending it. He brings about a contrast between “ice” and “hatred”. The human capability of insensitivity and hatred has the potential for inner destruction. Though slow and steady, it has the same effect that desire has on us. So if given an option between fire and ice, ice would be just as good as fire to destroy the world.

Fire and Ice - Literary devices

1. Rhyming scheme- Aba

abc

bcb

2. **Assonance**- it is repetition of vowel sounds in same line. The repetition is at different places in different words.

Example- The long sound of “o” in “I **hold** with **those** who favour fire”

3. **Alliteration**- alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the start of two or more closely placed words.

Example- The sound of “f” in “favour fire”, “w” in “world will”

4. **Imagery**- Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses. Example- “Some say the world will end in fire”

“To say that for destruction ice Is also great”

5. **Anaphora**- the repetition of a word or expression at the start of two or more consecutive lines.

Example - “Some say” is repeated at the start of lines 1 and 2.

6. **Personification**- Personification is to give human qualities to inanimate objects. In this poem, “fire” and “ice” are capable of destruction. Thus, the poet personifies fire and ice by giving them mind and power to destroy anything.

7. **Enjambment**- it is defined as the thought or clause that does not come to an end at a line break, rather it moves over to the next line.

Example- “From what I’ve tasted of desire

I hold with those who favor fire”

Fire and Ice Summary

Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice" is a strong symbolic poem where fire is used as the emotion of desire and ice, that of hatred. He has used the idea of two groups who have their own possible explanation for the end of the world. One is of the opinion that fire alone, can destroy each and every possibility of life on Earth while the other thinks that if ice as a result of extreme low temperatures could cover the earth's surface, it would lead to the end of the world. Both the components are compared with self-destructing human emotions: desire and hatred. The poet is originally of the opinion that he has been very closely associated with the "fiery desires" and considers it capable of bringing human beings on the verge of destruction. Thus, he considers fire as more competent for destruction. But then he thinks that "icy hatred" is just as capable of ruining humans, though slowly and steadily. Therefore, if Earth was to end twice, ice would be just as good as fire. If fire would lead to rapid destruction, ice would lead to silent damage. Similarly, if fire is pure passion, ice is pure reason. Thus, the poem, very artistically, underpins the philosophy that we let our emotions rule us and if don't control them they will surely bring us all on the verge of chaos.

Question 1: For Frost, what do 'fire' and 'ice' stand for?

Answer: The word 'desire' in the poem indicates towards all type of greed and lust. In today's world also humankind's greed is endangering the very existence of the planet earth.

The word 'hate' in the poem indicates towards hatred and indifference which is as cold as ice. If we compare this with people's attitude towards each other in modern times we can see the hate for each other among different communities. Hate between two nations is a surefire way to hasten the end of this world.

Question 2: What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? How does it help in bringing out the contrasting ideas in the poem?

Answer: Desire propels us in hot pursuit of something, hence a good comparison with fire.

Hate makes us cold towards other's progress and we try to shut our eyes towards that progress. The coldness of ice can numb your senses; that is why hate has been compared with ice.