All You Who Sleep Tonight Vikram Seth

Roll Number = 1740256

Name: Jeevan Koshy

Subject Code: AEN 121

Department:

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Title:

# Poem –

All you who sleep tonight  
Far from the ones you love,  
No hand to left or right  
And emptiness above -  
  
Know that you aren't alone  
The whole world shares your tears,  
Some for two nights or one,  
And some for all their years.

## **Introduction to the author**

Vikram Seth was born to Prem Seth and Leila Seth, on 20 June 1952, in Calcutta, West Bengal. His father was an executive with Bata shoe company, while his mother was a judge. He was the eldest among his parents’ three children. After early schooling in India, he moved to England and completed his A-Levels from the Tonbridge School. He studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford and graduated with a B. A. Degree. He pursued his Ph.D. at Stanford University, California, U.S.A. Vikram Seth is also the author of a travel book, From Heaven Lake: Travels Through Sinkiang and Tibet (1983), an account of a journey through Tibet, China and Nepal that won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, and a libretto, Arion and the Dolphin: A Libretto (1994), which was performed at the English National Opera in June 1994, with music by Alec Roth. His poetry includes Mappings (1980), The Humble Administrator's Garden (1985), winner of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia), and All You Who Sleep Tonight: Poems (1990). His children's book, Beastly Tales from Here and There (1992), consists of ten stories about animals told in verse. Vikram Seth's Two Lives (2005), a memoir of the marriage of his great uncle and aunt.

## **WHY I CHOSE VIKRAM SETH**

I chose Vikram Seth because I could connect with this poem and we can relate our lives to this. Each of us children have to leave our parents at a certain point in our life for studies or when a death happens in the family. We have to still move on and continue with our lives. Hence this poem is relevant to everyone. Vikram Seth encourages us through this poem by telling us not to worry and we have the world by our side to help us in this phase of life.

## **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT**

“All You Sleep Tonight” is a collection of poems written by Vikram Seth. This poem connects with the reader stating that no one is alone in the journey of life & there are many invisible factors protecting, loving, guiding and taking care of you. The poet speaks to those who are far away from their loved ones. He sympathizes with the loneliness of those living alone at different places or has lost their loved ones. The poet feels sympathy towards them and ask them not to consider themselves alone. He says the entire world is by their side and shares their pain and sorrows – which means he isn’t the only one who is suffering with this issue. Separation is a part of life. Vikram Seth wants to tell us that this is just another phase of life and we have to go through it. Whenever people go to sleep, they normally think of the one who was with them for a certain period of time or someone who cared for them.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT**

Life is easy when one stays with those who loves and cares for them. A person feels more comfortable living with his loved ones or at a place where he is born and brought up, that place is considered as his comfort zone. At a comfort zone, a person lives happily with his loving and caring family. Even the office of a person can be considered a comfort zone if the person is happy and feels safe and secure there. But change is the law of nature; one cannot stay forever with his loved ones or in their comfort zones. Finally, when you realize the person you are missing is near you, you feel a lot better and you are able to sleep properly. We cannot sleep until and unless we are truly free within and make peace within ourselves. This poem acts as a sedative to that what is unable to sleep and helps in creating inner peace. This poem consists of only two stanzas each having four lines. The first line rhymes with the third and the second with the fourth.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I am certainly encouraged by this poem – that whenever I am alone and when no one is there to support me or surround me – the thought that there are many people who are in the same situation as I am in is very consoling. I should stay strong and focused in whatever I do – not getting distracted by the thoughts of loneliness. I can get through it and face life with confidence. Seth also tells me that there are people who are separated from their loved one forever (last line). Therefore, I should be ready and willing to face whatever happens!