

Dust of Snow - Poem

BY ROBERT FROST

Message of the poem:

A person can get relief and inspiration even in the worst situation. Never feel hopeless and sorrowful when faced with problems and difficulties. Little things in life can make our life meaningful. Human judgment on certain issues can be misleading.

Summary:

One day while the poet was outside roaming in the open in the winter season. Suddenly a crow sitting on a hemlock tree, shook the tree and fine particles of snow fell on him. The poet uses the symbols of crow, dust and hemlock tree to show that his day was quiet bad and waste. He expected that the remaining day would go in the same way and so he was in a really bad and depressed mood.

The poet says that the crow, the dust of snow and the hemlock tree changed his mood. As the poet feels good when the soft and cold snow falls on him and he feels the icy touch of snow. It changed his mood from the state of sadness to happiness. He felt refreshed. The simple incident helped him enjoy the rest of the day.

DUST OF SNOW QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Q1. What is a “dust of snow”? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet’s mood changed?

A. “Dust of snow” refers to the tiny particles of snow. The particles are so small that poet referred to them as “dust”. The poet was in an awful mood when particles of snow had fallen on him. This changed the poet’s frame of mind instantly and his day got a lot better.

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

(i) What are the birds that are usually named in poems? Do you think a crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

A. Birds like sparrow, nightingale and peacock are more than often named in poems. Unlike these birds, crows are often seen as the indicators of doom and fear. They are often used for negative references.

(ii) Again, what is “a hemlock tree”? Why doesn’t the poet write about a more ‘beautiful’ tree such as a maple, or an oak, or a pine?

A. Trees are also seen as mighty creatures imparting wisdom as they’re too old. They give out oxygen and absorb the carbon dioxide which is connected with absorbing all the negative energy. But there are trees that are poisonous too, like a hemlock tree. The poet does not mention a more ‘beautiful’ tree such as maple, oak or pine because he wants to indicate a sad scene. Being poisonous, a hemlock tree is considered bad and so, he refers to it.

(iii) What do the ‘crow’ and ‘hemlock’ represent — joy or sorrow? What does the dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree stand for?

A. Both crow and the hemlock tree represent sorrow. Frost has used both the negative creatures (crow and the hemlock tree) as the carriers of pessimism and strength that transformed his day for the better. By not using birds like sparrow and nightingale and trees like maple, oak or a pine, the poet has tried to break down all the preconceived notions we have about certain agents of nature. He has tried to make us understand that we see the world not as how it is, but as how we want to see it. Thus, the crow sitting and a hemlock tree together made his day better. The dust of snow stands for joy.

Q3. Small things in life can make significant changes in our life. Elaborate with reference to the poem ‘Dust of Snow’.

Ans. The poem ‘Dust of Snow’ reiterates that little things in life can make huge changes in our future. It also shows that if we can take the hard times of life in our stride, eventually something will happen to change our situation into happier times.

The simple things that we do for others can make all the difference. Even random acts of kindness that we do can brightens a person’s day. It sometimes changes their future. Noticing and appreciating all the small things in life will make our life happier. It will also help us to have a spirit that is willing to change and be successful.

Figure of speech—

Rhyme Scheme—abab

1. **Metaphor**----- dust

2. **Imagery**--- sentences creating mental images

EX. The way a crow shook down on me a dust of snow from the hemlock tree.

3. **Synecdoche**-- Using a part to represent a whole or a whole to represent a part

EX. India won the match. (India represents the whole Indian team)

Synecdoche--- EX. Heart-- (his entire body felt better)

4. **Alliteration**--- EX. Has given my hear

And saved some part

5. **Enjambment**--- literary device in which a line of poetry carries its idea or thought over to the next line without a grammatical pause (punctuation) **Line 1-7 is carried forward without punctuation**

6. **Symbolism**--- A **symbol** is something that stands for or suggests something else; it represents something beyond literal meaning. In literature, a symbol can be a word, **object**, action, **character**, or concept that embodies and evokes a range of additional meaning and significance.

- EG- rainbow—symbolizes hope and promise
- red rose—symbolizes love and romance

Here in the poem -The dust of snow is the symbol of natural joy , energy, positivity and optimism

Crow and Hemlock tree represent sorrow, bad omen, despair, negativity and pessimism.

