

Robert Frost – A Short Biography

About the Poet



Robert Frost was a famous American poet. He was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874. His father belonged to New England, and his mother was a Scottish emigrant from Edinburgh. By 1920s, Frost was the most celebrated poet in America. His poetical works 'A Boy's Will' (1913), 'North of Boston' (1914), 'New Hampshire' (1923), 'A Further Range' (1936) 'Steeple Bush' (1947) and 'In the Clearing' (1962) increased his fame and honour. The poem 'Dust of Snow' was published in 'New Hampshire' in 1923. This collection gave him the Pulitzer Prize.

Introduction of the lesson- Dust of Snow

INTRODUCTION

Robert Frost, a well known American poet of nature, in this poem presents a moment that seems simple but has a larger significance. It is a highly symbolic poem. One day the poet was in a depressed mood. A pleasant thing happened in a tree. It changed the poet's mood. It saved the rest of the day for the poet.



(रॉबर्ट फ्रॉस्ट अमेरिका का एक चिर-परिचित प्रकृति प्रेमी कवि, इस कविता में एक ऐसे पल के बारे में बताता है जो है तो बहुत आम लेकिन बहुत अधिक महत्वपूर्ण है यह एक अति प्रतीकात्मक कविता है। एक दिन कवि बहुत ही हताशा भरे मूड में था। एक वृक्ष पर एक सुखद घटना घटी। इस ने कवि के मूड को बदल दिया। इसने कवि के शेष दिन को बचा दिया।)

**Plot/ Theme / Central Idea of the Lesson/ Literary Analysis of Dust of Snow/
Main Idea**

Central Idea of the Poem

'Dust of Snow' is a small poem written by the famous American poet, Robert Frost. The poem is set on a wintry day. In the first stanza, the poet describes a simple natural happening. The snow is falling heavily. The snowy flakes have covered the top of the trees. The poet is standing under a hemlock tree. The movement and alighting of a crow on that tree, make the dust of snowfall on the poet.

The crow, a symbol of ill omen and the hemlock tree, associated with a person, is not auspicious things. However, in the second stanza, the falling of snowflakes and the scene leave a tremendous effect on the mental state and mood of the poet. So far, the day has been quite gloomy and wastage for him. But this ordinary natural happening suddenly brings the desired change in his mood. It gladdens his heart. He realises that the falling of snowflakes on him has saved the day. Now he has no regret as the whole of the day has not gone waste. The moments of the snowfall and their effect have saved the day. They have brought a change in his mood and gladdened and uplifted his spirits.



Summary in English- Dust of Snow

DETAILED SUMMARY

'Dust of Snow' is an awful poem of nature by Robert Frost. In this poem a symbolic incident is present. The poet is standing under a hemlock tree. He is in a sad mood. He thinks that his day has been lost then a crow shakes the hemlock tree and the dust of snow falls on him. This little incident brings about a sudden change in the state of the poet's mind. His mood has 'changed'. He thinks that it has saved the rest of his day and gets busy with his work like the crow.

Detailed Summary (2)

1.Flakes of Snow:It was a day of winter. It was snowing all around. A fine dust of

snow had covered the tops of the trees. A hemlock tree was standing there. The top of the hemlock tree was all covered with the fine dust of snow. The poet was standing under that hemlock tree.

2. Sudden Arrival of a Crow, Falling of Snow Dust on Poet:A crow from nowhere came and perched on the top of the tree. The sudden movement of the crow made the dust of snow fall down. The flakes of snow fell on the poet who was standing under that tree.

3. Simple Natural Happening:The arrival of a crow and its sitting on the hemlock tree is just an ordinary happening. There is nothing great about the incident. On the other hand, the crow stands for an ill omen and the hemlock the tree is associated with poison. But these seemingly simple things of nature leave a deep impact on the mind and mood of the poet.

4. Change in the Mood:This ordinary incident leaves a deep impact on the poet. So far it has been a very dull and disappointing day for the poet. The day has not gone well for him. But the falling of the flakes and dust of snow on him are welcome signs for the poet. His mood changes for the better and his spirits are uplifted. Now he realises that the whole day has not gone waste. Those moments while he is enjoying the fall of snow dust on him are his happy moments. They lift up his mood and gladden his heart. Now he realises that at least some part of the day has been spent happily. In the end, satisfaction replaces regret.

Value Points of the Poem

1. It is a winter's day.
2. The treetops were covered with masses of snowflakes.
3. The poet was walking under one such snow covered tree.
4. This tree was a hemlock tree, a conifer associated with poisonous qualities.
5. A crow alighted on the hemlock tree suddenly.
6. The sudden movement of the crow, the mass of snowflakes started falling down the tree.
7. The snowflakes fell down upon the poet who was standing under the tree.
8. The mass of snowflakes was so light and fine that it looked like the dust of white snow.
9. The sudden movement and arrival of the crow and the falling of the flakes of snow look like just ordinary happenings.
10. But the falling of fine snowflakes on the poet leaves a tremendous effect on him.
11. Before this, the poet was in a gloomy or despairing mood.
12. However, this simple beautiful act of nature has a very comforting effect on him.
13. The fall of snow over him changes his mood and mental state.

14. It gladdens his heart.
15. Before this incident, that particular day was not going too well for him.
16. He had decided in his mind that day would go waste.
17. However, the fall of snowflakes on him makes him realise that the whole day has not been wasted.
18. At least, this part of the day when he is enjoying the snowflakes has been saved.
19. At least, some part of the day has been pleasant.
20. If he had not experienced such a pleasant experience, he would have regretted at the wastage of the whole day.

DETAILED SUMMARY in Hindi – Dust of Snow

SUMMARY IN HINDI

'Dust of Snow' रॉबर्ट फ्रॉस्ट द्वारा लिखी गई प्रकृति से संबंधित एक सुंदर कविता है। इस कविता में एक प्रतीकात्मक घटना का वर्णन किया गया है। कवि धतूरे के एक पेड़ के नीचे खड़ा है। वह उदास मूड में है। वह सोचता है कि उसका दिन खराब हो चुका है। तभी एक कौवा धतूरे के पेड़ को हिला देता है और ऊपर से बर्फ की धूल उस पर गिरती है। यह छोटी-सी घटना कवि की मानसिक दशा में एक बहुत बड़ा परिवर्तन लाती है। उसका मूड बदल जाता है। वह सोचता है कि इसने उसके शेष दिन को बचा लिया है और वह कौवे की भाँति अपने काम पर लग जाता है।

Following is the complete question bank for Dust of Snow-

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Who shook down the hemlock tree?

- (A) crow (B) cuckoo
(C) mynah (D) parrot

Ans. (A) a crow

2. Which tree did the crow shake?

- (A) mango (B) mapple
(C) hemlock (D) oak

Ans. (C) hemlock

3. What fell on the poet?

- (A) dust of tree (B) dust of snow
(C) dust of rain (D) dust of crow

Ans. (B) dust of snow

4. In what mood was the poet earlier?

- (A) happy (B) good
(C) pleasant (D) sad

Ans. (D) sad

5. What was the effect of the fall of the dust of snow on the poet?

- (A) changed his mood (B) changed his luck

- (C) changed his job (D) changed his colour

Ans. (A) changed his mood

6. What was saved for the poet?

- (A) crow (B) tree

- (C) some part of the day (D) snow

Ans. (C) some part of the day

7. Under which tree was the poet standing?

(A) oak (B) hemlock

(C) maple (D) pine

Ans. (B) hemlock

8. Who is the poet of the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

(A) Robert Frost (B) Robert Browning

(C) William Wordsworth (D) John Keats

Ans. (A) Robert Frost

COMPREHENSION OF STANZAS

Read the following stanzas and answer the questions that follow :

STANZA 1

The way a crow

Shook down on me

The dust of snow

From a hemlock tree

Questions :

(a) What did the crow do to the hemlock tree?

(b) What was there in the tree at that time?

(c) Where do you think was the poet then?

(d) What is the name of the poem?

(e) What is the name of the poet?

(f) Write the rhyming words.

Answers :

- (a) The crow shook the hemlock tree.
- (b) There was snow in the tree at that time.
- (c) Then the poet was under a hemlock tree then.
- (d) The name of the poem is 'Dust of Snow'.
- (e) The name of the poet is Robert Frost.
- (f) crow – snow me – tree

STANZA 2

Has given my heart

A change of mood

And saved some part

Of a day I had rued.

Questions :

- (a) What had given the poet 'a change of mood'?
- (b) What had the poet thought of that day?
- (c) How was some part of the day saved for the poet?

(d) Name the poem.

(e) Name the poet.

(f) What is the rhyme scheme of this stanza?

Answers :

(a) The falling of dust of snow on the poet had changed his mood.

(b) He had felt sad about that day. But the fall of snow dust changed his mood.

(c) He stopped ruining the day and his mood changed.

(d) Dust of Snow.

(e) Robert Frost.

(f) The rhyme scheme of this stanza is 'abab'.

Stanza-3:

The *waya* crow

Shook down on me

The *dust* of snow

From a *hemlock* tree.

Word-Meaning: **Way**—manner, **Shook down** —shook the snow dust down, **Hemlock** — a poisonous tree,

Paraphrase

All of a sudden a crow comes from nowhere. The crow sits on a poisonous hemlock tree. A lot of snow dust has already gathered at the top of the tree. The movement of the crow brings some dust of snow down. The fine dust of snow falls on the poet. He is standing under that hemlock tree.

Questions:

(a) How did the crow come and sit on the tree?

(b) What kind of tree it was?

(c) Where was the poet standing and what happened to him?

(d) Where was the poet sitting?

Answers:

(a) All of a sudden, a crow came from nowhere and sat on the hemlock tree.

(b) It was a poisonous tree named hemlock.

(c) The poet stood under the hemlock tree where fine dust of snow was falling on him from above.

(d) The poet was sitting under a hemlock tree.

Stanza-4:

Has given my *heart*

A *change* of *mood*

And *saved* some *part*

Of a day I had *rued*.

Word-Meaning: A change of mood —a change in the present condition of mind, **Saved** — saved from being wasted, **Part** —portion, **rued** —regretted deeply, felt sad deeply,

Paraphrase

This falling of fine dust of snow on him gladdens his heart. A change comes into his mood. His mood brightens all of a sudden. He had given all hopes of saving that dull and cheerless day. But now, cheerfulness replaces the sense of regret. The poet realises that the whole day has not gone waste. At least, a part of the day has been

saved and redeemed. The act of the falling of the fine dust of snow on him has cheered his heart and mood.

Questions:

- (a) Why did the poet's mood change?
- (b) How did the poet feel in the end?
- (c) Why did the poet rue earlier?
- (d) What does the poet mean when he says that he had saved some part of the day?

Answers:

- (a) The sight of the falling of the fine dust of snow cheered the mood of the poet.
- (b) Earlier, the poet felt deeply sad that the whole day had been wasted.
- (c) The poet felt happy in the end.
- (d) The poet has saved some part of the day as he did not waste the time in repenting and regretting.

Extract Based / comprehension test Questions and Answers of Dust of Snow

Read the extract given below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

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.

(a) What do the 'crow' and 'hemlock' symbolise?

(b) The mood of the poet changed because_____ .

(c) What does the poet mean when he says and saved some part of the day?

(d) Who shook the dust of snow?

Or

(a) What is the dust of snow?

(b) What mood of the poet is conveyed in these lines?

(c) What did the crow do to the hemlock tree?

(d) What did the tree have on it then?

Ans. (a) The 'crow' symbolises 'joy' and the 'hemlock' tree symbolises 'sorrow'.

(b) He saw a crow sitting on a hemlock tree shook off the dust of snow on him. Thus, the falling of dust of snow changed his mood.

(c) The poet has saved some part of the day as he did not waste the time in repenting and regretting.

(d) A crow shook the dust of snow.

Or

(a) Dust of snow refers to the particulate matter of snow that settles on surfaces after a snowfall.

(b) The poet's altered mood, one that changes from sorrow to joy is depicted here.

(c) The crow shook the dust of snow from the hemlock tree.

(d) The tree had snow on its leaves.

VERY SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

[Answer in one sentence each]

Q.1. Where was the crow sitting? (H.B.S.E. March 2017 (Set-D))

Ans. The crow was sitting in a hemlock tree.

Q.2. What did the crow shakedown on the poet? (H.B.S.E. March 2017 (Set-D))

Ans. He shook down snow on the poet.

Q.3. In what mood was the poet before falling of snow on him?

Ans. He was in an unpleasant mood.

Q.4. What type of plant is 'a hemlock tree'?

Ans. It is a poisonous plant with small white flowers.

Q.5. What fell on the poet from the hemlock tree?

Ans. Sonic dust of snow fell on the poet from the hemlock tree.

Q.6. How did the dust of snow affect the poet?

Ans. It changed the poet's mood.

Q.7. Who is the poet of the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

Ans. The poet of this poem is 'Robert Frost'.

Short Answer Type Important Questions

Answer the following questions in 30-40 words:

1. How has the poet observed nature in the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

Ans. The poet has observed nature as a positive medium of change for him. The poet had been the sorrowful and depressive mood in the poem. But then the way a crow shook snow dust off, it changed his mood. Nature gave him the inspiration to

behave in a positive manner.

2. What is the underlying message for us in our hectic life with reference to the poem, 'Dust of Snow'?

Or

What is the central idea of the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

Or

What does the poet want to convey through the poem 'Dust of Snow'?

Ans. In the poem 'Dust of Snow', the poet wants to convey that sometimes certain moments or actions which are simple have larger significance. They can change the mood or life of a person. The way a crow shakes down dust of snow on the poet

inspires and gives him the idea to shake off his depressive thoughts, become cheerful and do something useful.

3. What side of nature do 'crow' and 'hemlock' represent?

Ans. 'Crow' is a black, harsh-voiced bird and 'hemlock' is a tree with poisonous bitter fruit. Both are not beautiful. They represent the dark, depressive, sorrowful and bitter side of nature.

4. Why does the poet use such poetically uncommon bird and tree? What does it reflect?

Ans. The poet seems to be in a depressive and sorrowful mood. In such a mood, one cannot think of a sweet and beautiful side of nature. The harsh, bitter and poisonous images come to his mind. That is why he uses an uncommon, harsh, ugly crow and poisonous tree like hemlock.

5. Justify the role of the crow in the poem "Dust of Snow" in changing the poet's mood.

Ans. I think, 'the way snow dust was shaken off' changed his mood. Perhaps it gave the poet inspiration/idea to behave in the same manner—shake off his depressive thoughts and revive his cheerful mood.

6. What mood of the poet is reflected in the poem? How does it reflect?

Ans. The sorrowful and depressive mood of the poet is reflected in the poem. The use of the bird 'crow', which is ugly and harsh, and hemlock tree, which is a poisonous plant, reflects the poet's mood.

Q.7. What did the poet think of the day before the dust of snow fell on him?

Ans. Before the fall of the dust of snow, the poet thought that his day was ruined. He was in a bad mood. But then the use of snow fell on him. It signalled something good and joyful. His mood changed.

Q.8. Write a note on the setting of the poem.

Ans. The poem presents a perfect setting. There are four elements in the poem. All these four elements match one another. The snow stands for depression. The hemlock tree is a symbol of sadness. The crow considered ominous. The poet's mood was also sad. But suddenly the way in which the crow shook the hemlock tree and falling off the dust of snow. change the poet's mood.

Q.9. Where was the poet and what happened to him? [H.B.S.E. March 2017 (Set-C)]

Ans. there was snow everywhere. The poet was under a hemlock tree. The tree was covered with snow Suddenly a crow shook the tree The dust of snow fell on the poet. It changed his mood.

Q.10. The flow was the poet's mood? What brought a sudden change in it?

Ans. The poet was in a bad mood. He considered that his day was ruined. But the crow shook the tree. The dust of snow fell on him. His mood changed. The rest of the day was saved for him.

Q11. How did the poet feel before the 'change of mood'? Why did he feel so?

Ans. The poet was in a very depressive and hopeless mood. The day offered no relief, comfort or happiness for the poet. He felt that the whole day had been wasted for nothing. Perhaps his dull and depressive mood led him to such a conclusion.

Q12. Do you think that the poet presents a very bright or cheerful side of nature in the poem? Give a reasoned answer.

Ans. No, Robert Frost has presented nature in its elemental and raw form. It is quite a dull and depressive wintry day. The fall of fine dust of snow does bring a sudden change in the mood of the poet. It refreshes his spirits and brings cheerfulness to his depressed spirits and mood.

Q13. Describe the scene of falling off the dust I snow. What impact does it have on the poet?

Ans. It is a dull and depressive day of the winter. Snow is falling. The fine dust of snow has accumulated on the top of the trees. Nature seems to be in its elemental and raw state. However, the fall of fine dust of snow brings a sudden change in the mood of the poet. His depressive spirits are uplifted and his mood becomes cheerful.

Q14. 'The Crow' and the 'hemlock tree' are generally considered to be inauspicious and ominous symbols. Does the poet use them so?

Ans. 'The Crow' and 'the hemlock tree', no doubt, don't represent cheerfulness or brightness. Both of them are generally considered to be inauspicious. But 'the crow' in the poem causes the dust of snowfall on the poet. This leads to the sudden change of mood in the poet. The feeling of cheerfulness replaces the feeling of regret. Similarly, the hemlock tree is the tree under which the poet is standing and experiencing the change of his mood.

Q15. Why does the poet say that he had 'saved some part of a day I (he) had rued'?

Ans. The whole day had been rather gloomy, dull and hopeless. The poet had a feeling that the whole day would go waste. However, the falling of fine dust of snow on him suddenly changes his mood. It cheered his depressed spirits. He felt as if he had saved some part of the day.

Q16. What is the message that Robert Frost wants to convey to the readers in the poem 'Dust of snow'?

Ans. Robert Frost gives quite a positive message to the readers. Depression and hopelessness do cloud our hearts, spirits and moods. However, there is a silver-lining beyond every cloud. The poet had given up all hopes and declared that the whole day would go waste. Suddenly, the falling of fine dust of snow on him brings a sudden change in his mood. Cheerfulness replaces the feeling of regret.

Q17. What happened when the dust of snow fell on Robert Frost?

Ans. Robert Frost was unhappy. He was deep down in his heart due to some personal reasons. When the dust of snow fell on him, his mental state changed. Now he looked at the surroundings.

Q18. What did the poet think of the day before the fall of the dust of snow on him?

Ans. The poet thought unhappiness of the day before the fall of the dust of snow on him. But after the incident, he started to look at the surroundings.

Q19. What is the dust of snow?

Ans. The dust of snow is snowflakes or small and soft particles of snow that settle down on the various objects on the earth during the snowfall.

Q20. What is a hemlock tree?

Ans. A hemlock tree is a poisonous tree with white flowers. It stands for sorrow. The dust of snow had covered this tree.

Important Long/ Detailed Answer Type Questions- to be answered in about 100 -150 words each

Answer the following questions in 100-120 words:

1. Positive attitude in life can make the world a better place to live in. Do you agree or disagree with reference to the poem 'Dust of Snow'? Express your views bringing out the inherent values.

Ans. I completely agree with the statement that positive attitude can make the world a better place to live in Robert Frost, in 'Dust of Snow', talks of how an otherwise bad day altered into a not so bad one, due to the action of a crow. It was a seemingly disconnected occurrence that brought about a change of mood in the poet. One lesson that can be learnt from the poet, is to see the brightness amidst the gloom. The crow, the hemlock and the snow are all dark images, and yet, the poet sees the colour of happiness. Another lesson is that life is made up of small joys. It is through them that one can always manage to see positivity in negativity.

2. Our attitude towards a situation evokes both negative and positive response. Analyze this with reference to the poem, 'Dust of Snow' to bring out the inherent valuable lessons.

Ans. Whatever situation life throws at us, it evokes both positive and negative responses. The poet, in the poem 'Dust of Snow,' was in a sorrowful mood. However, when a crow shook down the 'dust of snow' on him, his bitter mood changed into a more optimistic one. Now, being in a sorrowful or bad mood already, the poet could have got angry at the crow also. However, the dust of snow becomes a positive medium of change for him. It made him cheerful to some extent and helped him forget his sadness, at least for a few moments. Thus, we see that instead of seeing the negative aspect of a happening, one should see the positive aspect, and one's response may greatly affect the outcome of incidents.

3. The poet has succeeded in giving valuable information in a light-hearted manner. What creates the desired effect? Highlight its importance in present-day life.

Ans. Truly, Frost has used simple language to drive home a very significant message, that little thing sometimes, have a big impact. An easy, uncomplicated language, coupled with unusual visual imagery and brevity of words creates the desired effect. The poet's bitterness finds reflection even in the environment around him. The noisy, dark crow, the poisonous hemlock and the icy snow around—all are essentially depressing images. However, despite the negativity, when the crow shakes down the dust of snow onto the poet, it also shakes off some of the author's regretful thoughts. Today, when all of us live in stressful atmospheres, the poem teaches us to gain happiness from little things.

4. There are times when we feel depressed and hopeless. We think that things will never change. Suddenly, a change comes in our mood when cheerfulness replaces the sense of regret. Justify the above statement in the context of the poem 'Dust of Snow'.

Ans. Change is the law of nature. Man's mood and spirits change like the change of the weather. In the poem, the poet is in a depressed and hopeless mood. He feels that the whole of the day has been wasted. But fortunately, this is not so. The falling of the fine dust of snow on him brings a sudden change in his mood. He realises that all is not lost. There is still hope for redemption. No doubt, a large part of the day has already been lost. It has been rather a bad day so far. But no more now. Now a part of the day has been redeemed. The change of landscape has changed his mood. Cheerfulness had replaced the feeling of regret. His spirits are

no more depressed. The sudden change outside also cheers his heart and mood.

5. Poets have great power of imagination. Robert Frost also explains his imagination very well and proves that sometimes the bad symbols change into a boon. Discuss.

Ans. It is well known that poets have great imaginative power. On the basis of this power, the poet gives this world a new idea and pleasure. They do dip down into the ocean of imagination and carry valuable things. Then they present before the world an exotic moment. Robert Frost, in this poem, represents the crow and hemlock tree as inauspicious. But when the crow shakes off the dust of snow from the hemlock tree, it falls on the poet. It changes his dejected mood and saves the day from being spoilt.

6. Our mental condition depends on our surroundings and it can be changed according to it. Explain and prove.

Ans. It is true that our mental condition depends on our surroundings. For example, if we go to greener places or nearby waterfalls, we get immense pleasure. This poem also describes it. The poet was sitting under a hemlock tree in a dejected mood, but when a crow shakes this tree and dust of snow falls on the poet, it changes the poet's mood. It was a pleasant incident.