

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING
William Wordsworth

Summary

‘Lines Written in Early Spring’, is a poem written by William Wordsworth. He wrote this poem on a walk near the village of Alford. He describes the scenes in nature that he witnessed. These moments are sweet and bitter at the same time. He is in a grove surrounded by the blended notes of nature. He looks more closely at the seemingly jubilant birds and plants. He is enchanted by these beautiful scenes. Even when he enjoys these scenes, they inspire a melancholic mood and he begins to have sad thoughts about humanity. Nature has connected itself to his soul. It leads him to consider sadly what man has made of man. He then has a good reason to be sad.

Steady rhythm makes the poem perfect. It is simple in form. It is composed of six four-line stanzas written in iambic pentameter. They follow a musical flow. It has the rhythm of living speech. The rhyme-scheme is **abab**. Figures of speech like personification and hyperbole, make the poem perfect. ‘To her fair works did nature link the human soul’ personifies nature as female. ‘Every flower enjoys the air it breathes’. Here the poet attributes human feelings to the flowers. ‘The birds around me hopped and played’ attributes playfulness to the birds. As a whole the poem is an excellent work.

Paraphrasing

ആയിരക്കണക്കിനു സംഗീത ശകലങ്ങൾ ഇഴുകിച്ചേർന്നു ഞാൻ കേട്ടു. ആ ചെറിയ കാട്ടിൽ ഞാൻ വിശ്രമിക്കുമ്പോൾ. ആ മധുര മനോഹരമായ സന്തോഷ ചിന്തകൾ നിറയുന്ന സമയത്ത് ദുഃഖകരമായ ചിന്തകൾ കൂടി മനസ്സിൽ നിറയുന്നു. പ്രകൃതിയുടെ മനോഹരമായ പ്രവൃത്തികളോട് മനുഷ്യ മനസ്സിനെ അവൾ ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. എന്നിലൂടെയും അതു കടന്നു പോകുന്നു. പക്ഷെ മനുഷ്യൻ മനുഷ്യനോടു ചെയ്യുന്നത് ഓർക്കുമ്പോൾ എന്റെ ഹൃദയം വേദനിക്കുന്നു. പ്രപഞ്ചം റോസ് കുലകളിലൂടെ, പച്ചയായ തണലിലൂടെ എവർഗ്രീൻ ചെടികൾ പടർന്ന് കയറുന്നു. എല്ലാ പൂക്കളും അതു ശ്വസിക്കുന്ന പ്രകൃതിയിലെ വായു ആസ്വദിക്കുന്നു എന്നാണ് എന്റെ വിശ്വാസം. എന്റെ ചുറ്റും പക്ഷികൾ സന്തോഷത്തോടെ ചാടിക്കളിച്ചു. അവയുടെ വികാര വിചാരങ്ങൾ അളക്കാൻ എനിക്ക് സാധിച്ചില്ല. പക്ഷെ അവയുടെ ചെറിയ ചലനങ്ങളിൽ പോലും സന്തോഷത്തിന്റെ അലയൊലികൾ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. തളിർ കമ്പുകൾ അവയുടെ തളിരിലകൾ മന്ദമാരുതനെ പുണരാൻ വിടർത്തി അവിടെയുള്ള എല്ലാറ്റിലും സന്തോഷം ഉണ്ട് എന്നു ചിന്തിക്കുവാൻ മാത്രമേ എനിക്ക് ആ സമയം ആകുമായിരുന്നുള്ളൂ. എന്റെ ഈ ചിന്ത സർഗത്തിൽ നിന്നു വന്നതാണെങ്കിൽ, പ്രകൃതിയുടെ പരിശുദ്ധമായ പദ്ധതി ഇപ്രകാരമായിരുന്നു. എങ്കിൽ എനിക്കു വിലപിക്കാൻ കാരണമില്ലേ, മനുഷ്യൻ പ്രകൃതിയോടും മനുഷ്യനോടും ചെയ്യുന്നതിൽ.

Questions and Answers

1. What does the expression ‘I sate reclined’ indicate about the poet’s state of mind? [He was in a happy mood.]
2. Why does the poet feel sad while reclining in the grove? [He feels sad because he thinks of what man has made of man.]
3. How does the poet associate himself with nature? [Nature linked him to her fair works.]
4. ‘And much it grieved my heart to think What man has made of man.’
What do these lines convey? [The poet is very sad when he thinks of the cruelties that man has done to man.]
5. What makes the poet think that every flower enjoys its existence? [Because the flowers trail their wreaths.]
6. What is nature’s holy plan? How does man work against it? [Nature’s holy plan is to make man a part of pleasure. But he commits so many cruelties to his fellow beings.]
7. Suggest an alternative title for the poem. [‘Nature Poem’, ‘Journey through Nature’ and ‘In the Lap of Nature’.]

Let's revisit

Activity 1

'What man has made of man' is one of the most striking expressions in the poem 'Lines Written in Early Spring'. It describes the feelings of Wordsworth, the poet and his thoughts about human activities against nature. What made the poet think so?

Wordsworth's thoughts about the human world.

Human beings destroy the harmony of nature by their various harmful activities. Whatever man does is against the plan of the creator. Human beings destroy the co-existence of nature by their selfishness. They destroy the ecosystem for the satisfaction of their greed. They destroy everything in nature and re-shape everything. They ignore the future generations.

Activity 2

William Wordsworth's poem 'Lines Written in Early Spring' is appealing to the readers because of its poetic devices. Fill in the boxes with suitable examples from the poem.

Personification (Refer to Page 89)

'To her fair works did Nature link'.

'And 'tis my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breaths'.

'The budding twigs spread out their fan, to catch the breezy air'.

Imagery (Refer to Page 89)

Visual – 'birds around me hopped and played'

'The grove', 'the green bower', 'the flowers'

Auditory – 'I heard a thousand blended notes'.

Alliteration – what man has made of man

Rhyme scheme – abab

Activity 3

'To her fair works did nature link

The human soul that through me ran'

These lines speak about man's vital relationship with nature. Discuss and write an appreciation of the poem.

(Answer is same as the Summary of the poem.)

Activity 4

The poem 'Lines Written in Early Spring' has great relevance in the present day world. Even nature is threatened, and many species are on the verge of extinction. Write a poem on 'Nature and Man' in the light of the events occurring around us. (Do it yourself.)

Listen and enjoy

Nature is treated by Wordsworth showing its limitless power to impart pleasure and joy. There are many other poets in English who have treated nature in the same manner. Here is a beautiful nature poem written by John Clare. Scan the QR code and listen to the poem. Then comment on it.

EXAM BASED QUESTIONS**I. A. Read stanza 1 and answer the questions.**

- Who is the 'I' in the poem?
- What did the poet hear?
- Where did the poet sit?
- What kind of thoughts came to the poet's mind?

B. Read stanzas 2 and 3 and answer the questions.

- 'To her fair works did Nature link'. What is the figure of speech used here?
- Why did the poet's heart grieve?
- Which flowers did the poet see in the bower?
- What did the flowers have in common?

C. Read stanza 4 and answer the questions.

- Who hopped and played around the poet?
- Identify the rhyme scheme of the poem?
- What 'seemed a thrill of pleasure' to the poet?
- What is not possible for the poet?
- How does the poet describe the mood of the birds?

D. Read stanzas 5 and 6 and answer the questions.

- What do the budding twigs do?
- Why did the budding twigs spread out their fan?
- Do you think that the poet has reason to lament? Why?
- Who is being equated with God in this poem? How?
- How can we say that the poem has a melancholic mood?

II. Prepare a critical appreciation of the poem 'Lines Written in Early Spring'.**III. Prepare a profile of William Wordsworth.**

(Hints are given on page 4)

ANSWERS - EXAM BASED QUESTIONS

I. A. 1. The poet is the 'I' in the poem. **2.** The poet heard a thousand blended notes. **3.** The poet sat in a grove. **4.** Pleasant and sad thoughts came to the poet's mind.

B. 1. Personification. **2.** The poet's heart grieved to think of what man has made of man. **3.** The poet saw primroses and periwinkles in the bower. **4.** All the flowers enjoyed the fresh air they breathed.

C. 1. The birds hopped and played around the poet. **2.** a b a b. **3.** Birds hopping and playing seemed to the poet a thrill of pleasure. **4.** It is not possible for the poet to measure the thoughts of the birds. **5.** The birds hopped and played. There seemed to be pleasure and excitement in their movement.

D. 1. The budding twigs spread out their fan to catch the breezy air. **2.** The budding twigs spread out their fan to catch the breezy air. **3.** The poet has reason to lament on what man has made of man. While the rest of the flora and fauna can live in harmony, man cannot live in peace with his fellow beings. **4.** Nature is being equated with God in this poem. The poet speaks of 'Nature's holy plan'. **5.** The poem has a melancholic mood because the poet tells: 'Have I not reason to lament'.

II. Answer is same as the Summary.

III. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

William Wordsworth was a major English Romantic poet. He was born in 1770. Lyrical Ballads, a collection of poems written by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge made him a major figure in the literary circle. He became poet Laureate in 1843. His famous works include Daffodils, Lucy Gray and The Prelude. In simple ordinary language, Wordsworth presents nature as an antidote to the corrupting influences of society. He is known as the poet of nature. He died in 1850.

Language Activities (From Text Page 33.)

Activity 1

Read the following sentences and punctuate them.

- The tree was older than the house.
- I saw a cobra and a mongoose fighting.
- What a spectacular sight!
- Will the mongoose kill the snake?
- Son, get down from the tree.
- Please answer me.
- Oh! What happy times those had been!
- What did man do to nature?

Discuss

- Based on the punctuation marks, how many sentence types can you identify? (4)
- Are there two types of sentences in the above set that end in a full stop? (Yes)
- What differences do you notice between these sentences? (Some sentences end in a full stop, some in question marks and some others in exclamation marks.)
- Based on your discussion, how many sentence types can you identify? (4)
- Which are the types of sentences you have identified? (Statement, Command/request, Question, Exclamation.)

Now categorise these sentences under these heads in the following table.

Statement

The tree was older than the house.

I saw a cobra and a mongoose fighting.

Command/request

Son, get down from the tree.

Please answer me.

Question

Will the mongoose kill the snake?

What did man do to nature?

Exclamation.

What a spectacular sight!

Oh! What happy times those had been!

* Statement sentences are called **Assertive**.

* Sentences that express command, order, request are called **Imperative**.

* Sentences that ask questions are called **Interrogative**.

* Sentences that express emotions and feelings are called

Exclamatory.

Now, write two examples each for the sentence types you have identified.

1. He is a student. 2. I can drive.
1. Close the door. 2. Please keep silent.
1. Can you do it? 2. Why do you stand here?
1. How sweet it is! 2. What an idea!

Activity 2

Read the sentences.

1. I had built a small platform on the tree.
2. I was not afraid.
3. Grandfather had a very beautiful garden.
4. The combatants were not aware of my presence in the banyan tree.
5. I don't get any sleep at all.
6. My first friend was a small grey squirrel.
7. The house was not electrified.
8. The snake slithered along my shoulder.
9. I was no mere image cut in granite.
10. The snake looked into the mirror and saw its reflection.

* **Categorise the above sentences into affirmative and negative and complete the following table.**

Affirmative (Positive)

I had built a small platform on the tree.

Grandfather had a very beautiful garden.

My first friend was a small grey squirrel.

The snake slithered along my shoulder.

The snake looked into the mirror and saw its reflection.

Negative

I was not afraid.

The combatants were not aware of my presence in the banyan tree.

I don't get any sleep at all.

The house was not electrified.

I was no mere image cut in granite.

Sentences which state positive facts are called affirmative or positive sentences. Sentences that express negative ideas are called negative sentences.

Now look at the following sentences.

1. Grandfather **rarely** smoked a pipe.
2. The maid would **hardly** clean the garden.
3. He could **scarcely** control his joy.
4. I will **seldom** pray for you.
5. There are **few** snakes in the garden.
6. There is **little** water in the pond.

* **Identify the words that make the sentences negative.** (The bold words are negative.) (Refer to 'Negative Words' on pages 40 and 41)

Rewrite the given sentences into negative sentences using the words you have identified.

1. **Few** students read textbook at home.
2. The boys **scarcely** do daring tasks.
3. It **hardly** rains heavily.
4. The students have **scarcely** completed their work.
5. The boys **seldom** play on the ground.
6. I **scarcely** write letters to my friends.

Rewrite the following affirmative sentences as negative sentences without changing their meaning. (Note that this might involve replacing a word with its antonym.)

1. Jack **always** agrees to help his friends.
Eg. Jack **never** disagrees to help his friends.
2. He drives his car carefully.
He **seldom** drives his car carelessly.
3. Stella is prettier than Mary.
Mary is **hardly as pretty as** Stella.
4. They have accepted the invitation for the party.
They have **hardly declined** the invitation for the party.
5. A fox is cleverer than a jackal.
A jackal is **hardly as clever as** a fox.
6. This shop sells expensive articles.
This shop **hardly** sells cheap articles.
7. She always keeps her room tidy.
She **seldom** keeps her room **dirty**.

8. He is polite to everyone.

He is **impolite to none**.

9. He is very industrious.

He is **seldom lazy**.

10. He is always present.

He is **never absent**.

Sentences containing words like 'never' are treated as negative sentences. (Refer to 'Negative Words' on pages 40 and 41)

Activity 3

Let's consider the following sentences:-

1. The boys are playing in the ground.
2. The old grandfather was helpless.

A noun phrase can either be a single word (head noun) or more than one word (head noun +modifier)

Identify the Noun Phrase and its modifiers from the following sentences. (Refer to 'Phrases' on pages 38 and 39)

1. The magnificent old banyan tree was mine.
2. An old tree was the centre of attraction.
3. The cobra was a skilful and experienced fighter.
4. The small rented room was not electrified.
5. A long supporting gable rested on the beam over the wall.

Words that can modify a noun are as follows:

1. **Articles** (a, an, the)
2. **Possessives** (Grandfather's, teacher's, my, his, her, your, their etc.)
3. **Demonstratives** (this, that, these, those)
4. **Adjectives** (old, long, smart, beautiful, etc.)
5. **Numerals** (three, five, twelve, etc.)
6. **Ordinals** (first, second, last, etc.)
7. **Quantifiers** (all, some, few, many, etc.)

* Articles, Possessives and Demonstratives are called **Determiners**.

* Sometimes a quantifier can appear before a determiner. In that case, we call it a **pre-determiner**.

E.g. All the students...

Some of the books...