

Poetry - Pablo Neruda (1904 – 1973)

The Chilean poet Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basoalto was a diplomat and politician as well. He wrote using his pen-name Pablo Neruda. In the poem 'Poetry' the poet Pablo Neruda talks about poetry that arrived in search of him. He did not know where it came from, or how or when. He did not hear any voices speaking to him. He says he was summoned away by an invisible force, and the poetry touched him. The theme of the poem is the ecstatic and inexplicable experience of the poet when he was embraced by the poetic creativity. He had in his mind many ideas which he could not express effectively before he was blessed by that creativity.

By the arrival of poetry, though he could not utter words and his eyes became blind, he felt something started in his soul, like a fever. He could make his own way to express his ideas and thoughts by deciphering the "fire" of poetry. He wrote his first feeble, faint and substance-free line, and suddenly, the heavens opened up in front of him and he could see everything from the planets to the shadows, fire, flowers and all that make up the universe. By the arrival of poetic inspiration, his imagination became boundless. Although he was an infinitesimal being, by the touch of poetry, he was suddenly elevated to a world of ecstasy, he felt about himself being a pure part of the abyss and free to wheel with the stars. He describes the whole experience as his "heart breaking loose on the wind."

Free verse is the style of the poem; passion or ecstasy is the tone. 'The poetry arrived in search of the poet and touched him'-assuming poetry as a person, the poetic device Personification is very aptly applied here. 'Winter' and 'river' represent a 'frozen' but 'flowing' state and which make a contrast. In the same way, expressions like 'not voices', "nor silence"; 'pure nonsense', 'pure wisdom' are example of subtle application of the literary device Contrast. The poet has not used the end-rhyme, but instances of assonance are there in the line "I don't know how or when" which add beauty to the rhythm. Application of Alliteration can be seen in lines, "and something started in my soul, / fever or forgotten wings" and "planets, / palpitating plantations,".

By the touch of the poetry, a world of ecstasy is opened in the mind of the poet. References to flowers, violent fires, the branches of night, the heavens, wings, planets, plantations, part of abyss etc. create beautiful and perfect visual images of the universe in the imaginations of the readers.