

Dust of Snow

Answers to NCERT Questions

Thinking about the Poem

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

Ans: The ‘dust of snow’ means the fine particles or flakes of snow. The sudden shower in the form of the dust of snow changed the poet’s mood. The poet’s mood changed from sad to happy. He felt refreshed and wanted to enjoy the rest of the day.

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 crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

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

(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?

Ans: (i) Frost presents nature in a very different manner in the poem, generally, poets take the birds and trees which are known for their beauty and good qualities like peacock, parrot, cuckoo, mynah and trees full of beautiful flowers and fruits, etc. But here, Frost has taken a totally different approach. He chose a crow, which is not often used in poems. Crow is black in colour with very harsh voice and is believed to be a symbol of bad omen. Thinking of a crow brings very depressing and sorrowful pictures to our mind.

(ii) A hemlock tree is a poisonous plant with small white flowers. The poet, Robert Frost, didn’t choose to use an oak, maple or pine tree. Instead, he chose the hemlock tree and left all the beautiful trees present in the world. Actually, he did so to present his mood and feelings.

(iii) The crow and hemlock tree represent sorrow and depression felt by the poet in this materialistic world. The dust of snow is the symbol of natural joy and energy. The dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree means passing through the sad and depressing moments, the poet is entering into the time full of joy and optimism.

3. Have there been times when you felt depressed or hopeless? Have you experienced a similar moment that changed your mood that day?

Ans: There have been innumerable times when I too have felt depressed and hopeless. Sometimes, such moments were aroused by other people's behaviour and attitude, and sometimes due to my own conduct. On one occasion, when I was very upset, I went out for a walk. While walking in the park, I saw a girl playing with a puppy, embracing and feeding him. This little joy that they shared changed my mood and I felt very happy for the rest of the day. I also joined the two and played with them.

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. The way a crow

Shook down on me

The dust of snow

From a hemlock tree

- a. What did the crow do to the hemlock tree?
- b. What was there on the tree at that time?
- c. Where do you think was the poet then?
- d. Name the poem and the poet.

Ans:

- 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.
- d. The name of the poem is 'Dust of Snow' and the poet is 'Robert Frost'.

2. Has given my heart

A change of mood

And saved some part

Of a day I had rued.

- 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. What is the rhyme scheme of this stanza?

Ans:

- 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. The rhyme scheme of this stanza is 'abab'.
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Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

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 in 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 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 the 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, reflect the poet's mood.

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 dust of snow fell on him. It signalled something good and joyful, and his mood changed.

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, changed the poet's mood.

9. Where was the poet and what happened to him?

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

10. How 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 and the dust of snow fell on him. His mood changed and the rest of the day was saved for him.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

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.

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 things sometimes, have a big impact. An easy, uncomplicated language, coupled with unusual visual imagery and brevity of words create 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 poet's regretful thoughts. Today, when all of us live in stressful atmospheres, the poem teaches us to gain happiness from little things.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Shook down on me

The dust of snow

From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart

A change of mood

And saved some part

- 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?

2. The way a crow

Shook down on me

The dust of snow

From a hemlock tree.

- a. Name the poem and the poet.
- b. To whom does the word 'me' refer?
- c. What is the significance of the crow and the hemlock tree?
- d. What happened when the crow shook the tree?

Short Answer Questions

1. What did the poet think of the day before the fall of dust of snow on him?
2. What is the central idea of the poem?
3. What do the 'crow' and 'hemlock' symbolise?
4. What does the poet mean when he says 'saved some part of the day'?
5. Where was the crow sitting and what did it do?

Long Answer Questions

1. What is the underlying message for us about our hectic life in the poem, 'Dust of Snow'?
2. Our mental condition depends on our surroundings. Explain with reference to the poem, 'Dust of Snow'.