



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NOTES - (2020-21)

THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

SUMMARY

The poem 'The Voice of the Rain' by Walt Whitman begins with the poet asking for the identity of the soft-falling rain shower. Much to the surprise of the poet, the rain replies to his question. And, the poet translates this 'voice' of the rain for his readers.

The rain identifies itself as the 'Poem of Earth'. It says that it rises from the land and the deep sea, in the form of the intangible water vapours, and goes up to the endless sky. It then takes the form of clouds with various shapes. Although it changes in its form and shape, its core existence remains the same.

It descends or falls on the surface of the earth to eliminate droughts, wash away the tiny particles and settle down the dust-layers. It reinvigorates the dry lands and gives life to the seeds that, otherwise, would have remained dormant and unborn. Thus, the rain drops rise in the form of vapours only to come back to its origin in the form of rain. During this cycle, it purifies and beautifies the planet.

The last two lines of the poem are the poet's reflection upon the answer given by the rain. The poet observes that the life of rain is similar to that of a song. A song originates from the heart of the poet, travels to reach others and after fulfilling its purpose (whether acknowledged or not), it returns to the poet/singer with all due love. Similarly, the rain rises from the land and oceans, wanders, fulfills its purpose of nourishing life and purifying the planet, and then returns to its birth-place.

STYLE OF THE POEM

Walt Whitman broke several conventions of poetry when writing this poem. There is no rhyme scheme nor do the lines stay of the same length. This kind of poetry was known as prosaic poetry (poetry that is written like prose).

Shifts:

There is a shift between lines 2 and 3, where the point of view changes from the poet to the Rain. The purpose of this shift is to show what the poet asks the Rain, and the subsequent answer by the Rain to him.

THEME

The Voice of the Rain is a poem that celebrates rain and its natural-cycle for the benefit of earth and the life it supports. The poem is in the form of a conversation between the poet and the 'rain'. The whole narrative of the Rain is about how it leaves the ground, fulfills its duties in the atmosphere, and comes back to the ground out of love in order to beautify the world and spread life. It says that it purifies earth and also gives life to it. It returns back to earth exactly like a song, which finally returns to the poet/singer after it is heard. The last couple of lines in particular are about the idea-"Love draws people back to their roots."