

Frost At Midnight

by : S.T Coleridge

In the poem Frost at midnight the poet talks about (celebrate the birth of his son)

Coleridge wrote “Frost at Midnight” in (1798) .

The poem is a that is written in blank verse (conversational poem) .

Coleridge’s creed of nature has developed under the influence of (Wordsworth) .

Q / Why “ Frost at Midnight ” could be seen as autobiographical poem ?

because Coleridge discusses his childhood experience in a negative way and asserts the need to be reared in the lap nature. He believes that his son will enjoy greater freedom and healthier life if he was raised in the country side .

Q / In “ Frost at Midnight ” what did the poet asserts ?

the poet asserts the importance of countryside; nature, in the formation of individual personality and also in inspiring the poet to write poetry.

Q / In light of your study ? Mention the name of the poet and its title . Elaborate lines below .

**The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.**

In the first Stanza, the atmosphere is gloomy. Coleridge is sitting alone in his cottage besides the fireplace, watching the snow as it forms. There is no wind to help the formation of the snow. The snow is a symbol of *death* . *death in this poem is not physical but spiritual*. Coleridge is spiritually dead because he cannot write poetry. He looks for a source of inspiration. He suddenly hears the owl's cry at intervals. He looks around him and finds that all the members of his family have fallen asleep leaving him in perfect solitude as if he is surrounded by death. His little son (Hartley), who is a symbol of *life* .is peacefully sleeping in a cradle by his side. There is perfect silence around him. In fact, it is so silent that he is disturbed in his thoughts. Here the poet suggests a well-known psychological fact. and also known that too much solitude produces a feeling of loneliness and uneasiness in the mind and thus disturbs deep thinking.

Q / Explain the second stanza

The movement of the film stirs Coleridge's imagination. It reminds him of his childhood and the days he has spent in Christ's Hospital school. As a child, Coleridge superstitiously believed that seeing the film on the grate means that he would have a visitor next day. The visitors for the children are good omen because they bring sweets and gifts with them. Then, the poet thinks of his birth-place and hears the ringing of the church bells which was the only music the poor villagers could enjoy. The sound of the church bells aroused in him deep emotions of joy. In the next morning, he went to school and waited for the visitor he had thought of the previous night. He pretended to be reading carefully. But in reality he was absent minded. The word "swimming" is used metaphorically and means that the words of the book were swimming in front of his eyes. His eyes were fixed on his book but his mind was at the door. Whenever the door was half opened, he would steal a hasty glance, expecting the appearance of a visitor. He expected that a townsman, an aunt, or his beloved sister with whom he had played during his childhood when both of them were dressed alike might come to visit him.

Q / How did the poet address his son in third stanza ? (discuss)

In the last stanza, the poet addresses his son, Hartley, who is the second source of inspiration. Contrary to the film, the child, who is a symbol of life, childhood, and purity, will inspire him to think of the future. The poet is lost in his idle thinking and no sound could be heard except the sound of his son breathing. The child's breath inspires him to reconnect his chain of thoughts. The sight of the child sleeping in the cradle fills him with joy. Coleridge decides that his son will be brought up in entirely different surroundings and will be given an entirely different knowledge of his own. The poet regrets the fact that he received his education in the London, where he could not get the freedom of enjoying the beautiful scenes of nature. He could only look at the sky and the stars. The poet says that if his son is raised in the lap of nature, he will wander like a breeze by the lake and sandy shores. He will have a healthy life away from the city and its social diseases. He will find a meaning in every natural sound. He will be able to hear the eternal language of nature, nature here is personified. In romantic poetry, nature is treated as a teacher or preacher. The poet says that his son will be subjected to this influence. Nature will mold his personality in such a way that he will develop a keen desire to submit himself to its moral effect.

Q / Why Nature has a religious significance in this poem ?

it reflects the greatness of its creator, God. Nature as a teacher has a great educative influence.

Q / What does the poem contain ?

They contain pantheistic belief that a divine spirit pervades all the objects of nature and God prevails himself through nature. This leads us to the fact that nature has a moral influence on mankind .

In the last part, the poet talks about the consequences of the child's attachment to nature. He believes that under the influence of nature, the child will come to love all the seasons equally. Whether the earth is covered with green grass in summer or the redbreast sits on a leafless apple-tree in winter and sings while the rain drops fall and freeze into icicles that shine quietly in the quiet moon, his son will appreciate the beauty of nature.

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