



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

Class: Grade 8	Department: ENGLISH	Date of submission: October 2023
Worksheet No:19	Topic: Ode to Autumn (Poem)	Note: Notebook Work

An ode is a lyrical poem that expresses praise, glorification, or tribute. It examines its subject from both an emotional and an intellectual perspective.

In the poem 'Ode to Autumn' Keats describes the beauty and characteristic spirit of autumn in a series of memorable pictures, exhibiting the beauty of nature.



Summary

The poem is a direct address to the season of autumn. It is a misty season filled with the mellow and warm sunlight that ripens the grapes hanging from the vines running around the thatched leaves. It makes the apple-trees bend under the load and fills them to the core with a sweetness. It swells the gourds and fattens the hazel shells with sweet nuts. It encourages more buds to bloom and these late blossoms attract the bees in droves till their hives are swollen with honey, making them think that it was summer still.

Autumn is imagined as a winnower sitting carelessly on the granary floor with hair blowing softly in the draughts created as she winnows the grain. Autumn is imagined as a reaper too. The scent of poppies made her drowsy and so her scythe has spared the next swath of corn and the flowers twined on the stalks as she lies sound asleep on the half-reaped furrow. Finally, Autumn is pictured as a gleaner holding her load of corn steady on her head as she crosses a brook or standing patiently by a cider-press, watching the last oozing from the grain.

Autumn has her own music and so need not feel any less than Spring. At dusk when the stubble plains are bathed in the rosy hue of the setting sun from behind the clouds, the gnats raise a wailful choir among the river willow trees and the hedge-crickets chirp their song. The full-grown lambs bleat as they head home, the robin redbreast whistles softly from a garden croft and the swallows twitter as they gather in the sky for their migratory flight to warmer lands.

Theme of the Poem

The central theme of the poem, an ode to Autumn, written by John Keats is about the beauty of autumn season. The poet describes the poem in its three stanzas, the three different aspects of the season which are its fruitfulness, its labour and its ultimate decline. Through the stanzas there is a progression from early autumn to mid-autumn and then to the heralding of winter. The poet expresses his love for nature, beauty, imagination through beautiful imagery. The poet describes how nature is related to man, what changes time brings to the autumn season, the aesthetics that are visible during autumn, how it transforms from summer and later transforms to winter.

Poetic/Literary Devices

1. Personification: Personification is to give human characteristics to non-human things. Keats has used personification in the opening lines of the poem: “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;” He personifies the autumn season and the sun by calling them friends as if these abstract things are humans with close relations.
2. Simile: A simile is a figure of speech used to compare an object, animal or person with another object or person or animals to make its meaning clear. Keats has used simile in the nineteenth line, “And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep.” Here, he compares autumn with a person who gathers the remaining food from the field.
3. Imagery: Keats’s imagery evokes the perceptions of sight, hearing, smell and taste. For instance, “thatch-eyed”; “mossed cottage-trees”; “the granary floor”; “plump the hazel shells” and “full-grown lambs.” There is also olfactory (sense of smell) imagery in the second stanza such as, “fume of poppies” and “sweet kernel.”
4. Onomatopoeia – whistles, twitter, wailful, bleat
5. Rhyme scheme – ababcdedcce, ababcdedcde, ababcdedcde.

A1. Answer the following questions:

Q1. What does the season of autumn do to the trees and the vines? Whose help does it take in the process?

A1. The Autumn season loads the trees with such abundance of apples that the branches bend with their weight. The season ripens the grapes on the vines. It takes the help of its closest friend, the mature sun.

Q2. Explain the lines: “*And fill all fruits with ripeness to the core;/To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells....*”

A2. The sun and the season act together and make the fruits ripe and juicy, swell the gourds and make the hazel nuts inside their shells plump.

Q3. How has the speaker personified autumn in the poem?

A3. The speaker has personified Autumn as a winnower, a reaper, a gleaner and a cider-presser.

Q4. Which season does the speaker compare autumn to in the last stanza and why?

A4. In the last stanza, the speaker compares Autumn to Spring as a reminder of her own music.

Q5. Mention the onomatopoeic words used in the poem to describe the music of autumn.

A5. The onomatopoeic words are ‘wailful’, ‘bleat’, ‘whistles’ and ‘twitter’.

A2. Answer these questions with reference to the context.

1. *‘Thee sitting careless on a granary floor, Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind...’*

a. Who or what is being referred to as ‘thee’ in the above lines?

Ans. The season of Autumn is being referred to as ‘thee’ in the lines.

b. Explain the phrase ‘sitting careless on a granary floor!’

Ans. Autumn is portrayed as a winnower sitting in a serene manner on the floor inside a granary.

c. Comment on the mood displayed in the above lines.

Ans. The mood in the lines is one of contentment.

2. *'While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue...'*

a. Which season of the year is being described in the above lines?

Ans. The season of autumn is being described here

b. What imagery comes to your mind while reading the above lines?

Ans. The image that comes to mind is that of the tawny coat of a tiger dappled by sunlight through the long grass.

c. Explain the phrase 'the soft-dying day'.

Ans. The phrase 'soft-dying day' means the gradual fading of daylight.

A3. Think and answer.

1. What do you learn about the speaker from the poem Ode to Autumn? Support your answer with quotations from the poem.

Ans. The speaker has a keen appreciation of the subtle charm of the season of Autumn. He loves its soft appeal and plenitude. The speaker has an aesthetic sense because he enjoys the season using his senses of touch, hearing, and sight. He feels the coolness of the 'mists' and the 'mellow warmth' of a mature sun on his skin. He hears the music of the 'wailful choir' of the gnats, the redbreast's soft 'whistle', the swallows' 'twitter' and the lambs' bleats. He sees the winnower 'sitting careless on the granary floor/ Hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind', the reaper asleep 'drows'd by the scent of poppies', and others such as the 'soft-dying day' casting a 'rosy hue' on the 'stubble plains'. Unlike most people, the speaker does not think of Autumn as a prelude to Winter and so he revels in its abundance and contentment.

2. How can we say that the autumn is a season of abundance and contentment?

Ans. Autumn is a season of abundance because it gives rich harvests of fruits and grains. It is a season of contentment because it brings everything to fruition. The farmers are happy to see their orchards filled with trees bent with the weight of apples and the vines with ripening grapes, the fat hazel nuts and the swollen gourds. They are glad to see the beehives clammy with honey and their granaries filled with grains.

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