



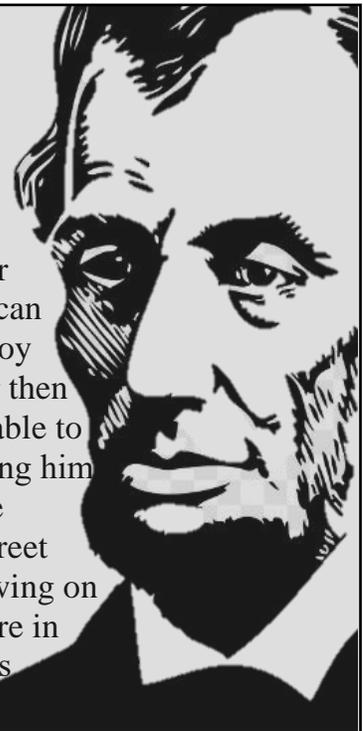
INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

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| Class: VIII | Department: ENGLISH | Date of submission: December 2023 |
| Question Bank no :26 | Topic: O Captain! My Captain! (Poem) | Note: To be written in notebook |

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

Summary

The poem, an elegy, mourns the death of President Abraham Lincoln, one of the world's greatest heroes for his abolition of slavery. The poem conveys two narratives and so is also an allegory. On one level, the poem is about a fearful voyage that is over. The ship has withstood all challenges of the weather and is bringing home the treasure it had sailed for. The speaker can hear the bells ringing on the shores and the crowds shouting in joy as they watch the ship steadily nearing the harbour. The speaker then reveals that the captain, however, is lying dead on the deck. Unable to accept his captain's death, the speaker tries to rouse him by telling him about the preparations made ready for his return in triumph. The people are holding flags aloft, they are calling out his name to greet him, they have brought bouquets and ribboned wreaths and blowing on their bugles to herald his return. The speaker knows his words are in vain for the captain's lips do not move in answer. The ship drops anchor in the harbour and the people continue in their exultation of the victory. The speaker, however, feels he has lost his father and is sunk in grief. On a deeper level, the poet is expressing his intense sorrow at the assassination of Lincoln through this poem. It is apparent that he had idolised Lincoln and despite the abolition of slavery which was a cause for rejoicing, he is heartbroken at Lincoln's death. He feels himself a son who has lost his father and is therefore unable to join the celebrations.



A1. Answer these questions.

Q1. Who is honoured by the speaker in the poem ‘O Captain! My Captain!’?

Ans: The sixteenth president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, is honoured by the speaker in this poem.

Q2. Why are the people exulting?



Ans: The people are exulting because the ship is returning with the treasure it had sailed for after a difficult voyage. Allegorically, the people are exulting because the northern states of America led by Abraham Lincoln have won the American Civil War which means that slavery is abolished.

Q3. What kind of preparation has been made to welcome the captain?

Ans: The people have lined the shores of the port and are shouting with joy. They are waving flags and blowing on bugles. They have brought bouquets and ribboned wreaths to greet the captain.



Q4. Which country is represented as a ship in the poem? What figure of speech is it?

Ans: The northern states of America is represented as a ship in the poem. The figure of speech is a metaphor.

Q5. Why is the captain not responding to the speaker?

Ans: The captain is not responding to the speaker because he is dead.

Q6. Why do you think some phrases are repeated throughout the poem?

Ans: Some phrases are repeated in the poem to act as a refrain and focus attention on the person referred to.

A2. Answer these questions with reference to context.

Q1. *“But O heart! heart! heart!*

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my captain lies,

Fallen cold and dead.”



a. **What does the phrase ‘bleeding drops of red’ mean?**

Ans: The phrase ‘bleeding drops of red’ refers to the drops of blood oozing from the wound.

b. **Who is lying on the deck?**

Ans: The ship’s captain is lying on the deck.

c. **Comment on the tone of the speaker?**

Ans: The speaker’s tone is one of utter despair.

Q2. *The ship is anchor’d safe and sound, Its voyage closed and done,*

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

a. **How is the ship described?**

Ans: The ship is described as victorious.

b. **What does the phrase ‘voyage closed and done’ mean?**

Ans: The phrase means that the ship’s voyage, which had been a difficult one, was finally over.

c. **Why does the speaker call the trip fearful?**

Ans: The speaker calls the trip fearful because the ship had to face many a storm and tempest during its voyage.



Think and Answer

1. **What is the mood of the poem? Is it different or same in every stanza? Provide contextual examples as evidence from the text to support your analysis.**

Ans: The mood of the poem is elegiac. In every stanza, the poet gives the refrain 'But O heart! heart! heart!', 'O Captain! My Captain!', 'Exult O shores, and ring O bells!', etc.

2. **Why did the poet use symbols like a boat, captain, sea-voyage in the poem? Discuss how these symbols elaborate the melancholic tone of the poem.**

Ans: The poet uses the symbols to convey the allegorical meaning of the poem. They help to deepen the melancholic tone by giving us images of storms, decay and death.

KNOW THE LEADER- Abraham Lincoln

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTjYG1TYaos>