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Class 11 English (Hornbill) Notes

THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

Poem-3

The Voice of the Rain

By Walt Whitman

The Voice of the Rain' celebrates rain and the accompanying water cycle that supports life and benefits the Earth. The poet recounts a 'conversation' he had with the falling raindrops. He asks the rain, 'And who art thou?' and strangely, the rain answers, calling itself 'the Poem of Earth'. The rain says that it is born in the form of intangible vapours that rise eternally from the earth's land and deep water bodies. It then reaches upwards towards heaven in the form of clouds, impalpable, vaguely formed and altogether changed. Yet, at its core, it remains the same as it was at birth. It, then, returns to its origin, the Earth, as rain drops to wash away the dust and rejuvenate the drought-ridden and dry land.

The poet compares the rain to a poem/song. A song is born in the heart of a human and after giving pleasure and joy to one and all comes back to the creator in the form of appreciation. Similarly, rain originates from the Earth and the bottomless sea; soars up to heaven taking the form of clouds and comes down to give joy to its birthplace (Earth) and makes it clean, pure and beautiful.

Very Short Answer Questions

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. And who art thou? said I to the soft falling shower.
Which strange to tell gave me an answer, as here translated: I am the Poem of Earth,
said the voice of the rain, Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless
sea.
 - a. Name the poem and the poet.
 - b. Why does the rain call itself 'the Poem of Earth'? (Hint-Originates from earth
and later beautifies it.)
 - c. What gives eternity to rain?
2. Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same,
I descend to lave the draughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe, And all that in
them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;
 - a. Who does 'I' refer to? In what way does T altogether change?
 - b. How is T useful to the world?
 - c. Explain: 'latent, unborn'.
3. I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land-and the bottomless sea.
Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same.
 - a. In the first line, who does 'I' refer to?
 - b. Name the figure of speech used in the phrase 'Poem of Earth'.
[Hint:Metaphor]
 - c. In what way is the rain altogether changed?
4. And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin.
And make pure and beautify it:
(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering Reck'd or unreck'd,
duly with love returns.)
 - a. Where and in what form does the 'song' return to its origin? [
Hint:- Composer in the form of fame/criticism] (1)
 - b. What is the 'birth place' of the 'song'? (1)
 - c. 'I give back life to my own origin'. How does the 'rain' do so?

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following questions in not more than 30-40 words.

1. How does the rain define itself?
 2. Why does the rain call itself 'impalpable' in the poem?
 3. What happens to the 'Poem of Earth' when it goes upward to heaven?
 4. What happens when the rain descends in the form of rain showers?
 5. What message does the poem give to its readers?
 6. What surprises the poet in the beginning of the poem?
 7. There are two voices in the poem. Whom do they belong to?
 8. What is the parallel drawn between rain and music in the poem 'The Voice of Rain'?
 9. Name the two origins of the rain.
 10. How is the cyclic movement of rain brought out in the poem?
 11. Why are the last two lines put within brackets?
 12. The rain is the harbinger of life. Do you agree? Why or why not?
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