

## DUST OF SNOW

### Central Idea of the Poem

The 'Dust of Snow' by Robert Frost is a small and simple poem with a deep meaning. It expresses the significance of small things in changing one's attitude. The poem reiterates that the little things in life can make huge changes in our future. It also shows that if we take the hard times of life in stride eventually something will happen to change our situation into happier times.

### Themes

*Dust of Snow* has as its main themes:

1. communication between nature and humans.
2. nature healing and helping with negative human emotions.
3. the significance of small natural events

### Questions/Answers

Q1. What is a "dust of snow"? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet's mood changed?

A. "Dust of snow" refers to the tiny particles of snow. The particles are so small that poet referred to them as "dust". The poet was in an awful mood when particles of snow had fallen on him. This changed the poet's frame of mind instantly and his day got a lot better.

Q 2. How does Frost present nature in this poem? The following questions may help you to think of an answer.

(i) What are the birds that are usually named in poems? Do you think a crow is often mentioned in poems? What images come to your mind when you think of a crow?

A. Birds like sparrow, nightingale and peacock are more than often named in poems. Unlike these birds, crows are often seen as the indicators of doom and fear. They are often used for negative references.

(ii) Again, what is "a hemlock tree"? Why doesn't the poet write about a more 'beautiful' tree such as a maple, or an oak, or a pine?

A. Trees are also seen as mighty creatures imparting wisdom as they're too old. They give out oxygen and absorb the carbon dioxide which is connected with absorbing all the negative energy. But there are trees that are poisonous too, like a hemlock tree. The poet does not mention a more 'beautiful' tree such as maple, oak or pine because he wants to indicate a sad scene. Being poisonous, a hemlock tree is considered bad and so, he refers to it.

(iii) What do the 'crow' and 'hemlock' represent — joy or sorrow? What does the dust of snow that the crow shakes off a hemlock tree stand for?

A. Both crow and the hemlock tree represent sorrow. Frost has used both the negative creatures (crow and the hemlock tree) as the carriers of positivism and strength that transformed his day for the better. By not using birds like sparrow and nightingale and trees like maple, oak or a pine, the poet has tried to break down all the preconceived notions we have about certain agents of nature. He has tried to make us understand that we see the world not as how it is, but as how we want to see it. Thus, the crow sitting and a hemlock tree together made his day better. The dust of snow stands for joy.

