

جامعة تكريت
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المرحلة: الأولى

Subject Name: Intoduction to liteature

Lecture: "Winter" by William Shakespeare

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Seventh lecture

"*Winter*" by William Shakespeare

Introduction

Good morning, dear students. Today, we will study the poem "Winter" by William Shakespeare. This poem is part of his play "Love's Labour's Lost", written in 1594–1595. It beautifully describes the cold, harsh realities of winter and how it affects daily life. Despite its simple subject, the poem uses vivid imagery and sounds to bring the season to life. Let's explore its meaning, themes, and literary devices in an easy and academic way.

1 .Background on William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is considered one of the greatest writers in English literature.

He wrote 39 plays, 154 sonnets, and several narrative poems.

His works cover themes like love, power, nature, and the human experience.

"Winter" is from the play "Love's Labour's Lost", where it appears as a song at the end, contrasting the joyful scenes earlier in the play.

2 .Overview of the Poem "Winter"

"Winter" is a short, vivid description of rural life during the cold season. It captures both the challenges and the simple, everyday details of life in winter.

Here is the poem:

<When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,

Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

3 .Themes in the Poem

- 1 .Nature’s Harshness: The poem shows how winter affects people, animals, and the environment.
- 2 .Daily Life: Despite the harsh conditions, people go about their daily routines, like carrying logs and cooking.
- 3 .Contrast Between Beauty and Hardship: While winter is cold and difficult, there is beauty in its sounds, such as the owl’s song.

4 .Structure and Form

The poem is written in two stanzas, each six lines long, followed by a refrain.

The rhyme scheme is ABABCC, creating a musical, song-like quality.

The repetition of the refrain (“Tu-whit; Tu-who, a merry note”) adds rhythm and emphasizes the owl’s presence.

5 .Literary Devices in the Poem

Shakespeare uses several literary devices to bring the winter scene to life:

1 .Imagery

The poem is full of sensory details, such as “icicles hang by the wall” (visual) and “roasted crabs hiss in the bowl” (auditory).

These images help readers feel the cold and hear the sounds of winter.

2 .Personification

The owl is described as singing a “merry note,” giving it human-like qualities.

3 .Alliteration Repeated sounds, like “blood is nipp’d,” create a rhythmic effect and emphasize the chill of winter.

4 .Onomatopoeia

Words like “hiss” and “Tu-whit; Tu-who” mimic real sounds, making the poem more vivid.

5 .Contrast

The cold, harsh conditions are contrasted with the warmth of daily activities, like cooking and drinking warm drinks.

6 .Analysis of Key Lines

“When icicles hang by the wall”

This opening line paints a clear image of winter, with icicles symbolizing the cold and stillness of the season.

“And milk comes frozen home in pail”

This line shows how winter affects daily tasks, such as fetching milk, which freezes in the cold.

“When blood is nipp’d, and ways be foul”

The cold weather affects people physically, and the roads are muddy and difficult to travel.

“Tu-whit; Tu-who, a merry note”

The owl’s cheerful song contrasts with the harshness of winter, showing that there is still beauty in the season.

“While greasy Joan doth keel the pot”

This line describes a woman stirring a pot of stew, emphasizing the warmth and comfort of home during the cold season.

7 .Why is "Winter" Important?

Realistic Depiction: The poem gives a vivid and relatable picture of life in winter.

Timeless Appeal: Its themes of nature and daily life are universal and still resonate today.

Musical Quality: The rhythm and sounds make the poem enjoyable and memorable.

8 .Discussion Questions

1 .How does Shakespeare use imagery to describe the cold in the poem?

2 .Why do you think the owl's song is described as "merry?"

3 .How does the poem balance the harshness of winter with moments of warmth and comfort?

9 .Activity

Write a short paragraph or poem about a season you like or dislike. Include sensory details (what you see, hear, feel, etc.) to describe it.

Example:

Summer's golden light warms my face,
The scent of flowers fills the air.
Waves crash gently on the shore,
And laughter echoes everywhere.

Conclusion

"Winter" by William Shakespeare is a simple yet powerful poem that captures the beauty and challenges of the cold season. Through vivid imagery, sound, and contrast, it shows how nature and daily life are intertwined. Despite the hardships of winter, the poem reminds us to find joy in small things, like the owl's song or the warmth of home.

Thank you for listening, and I hope you enjoyed exploring this beautiful poem. See you in the next