

## Study material. Class IX Eng. Appreciation

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### A Prayer in Spring

-Robert Frost-

'A Prayer in Spring' is a short lyric written by Robert Frost, the most celebrated American poet of the first half of 20th century. It is written against a rustic back ground, but the treatment of the subject is modern. The poem expresses a longingness to experience pleasure in the visions of spring, while at the same time is haunted by an awareness of the autumn and the winter that await.

The poem is in the form of a prayer. The speaker asks god to give him pleasure in spring flowers, without making him think about the future reality. It is the prayer of a man who is aware of the 'uncertain harvest' that is to come. In the second and third stanzas, he presents three other visions of the spring. The white orchard which stands as itself in the day time, but resembles ghost in night, the happy bees who gather dilating round the trees and the darting bird with needle like beak are tempting him to be happy. In the last stanza, the speaker says that this is love and it is reserved only for God to sanctify to his purposes.

'A Prayer in Spring' deals with dual realities - experience and thought, spring and its ultimate harvest, day and night, happiness and gloom, man and God and present and future. These dual realities are in conflict with one another. The innocence and originality of the spring, thoughtless experiences in the day light are overshadowed by thoughts that are dark and gloomy. The speaker wants child-like pleasure in the day light of the present spring which is possibly disturbed by thoughts that make disillusionment.

The theme of the poem is presented through four images – the spring flowers, the orchard, the swarming bees and the humming bird. Flowers are purely visual images. The orchard tree is also seen, but leaves an unseen suggestion of ghastliness in night. The bees and the bird are at once visual and auditory as they stimulate both sight and sound. The airy sound of them suggests the shadow of anticipated change of season for bad. The poem is composed in four quatrains, each rhyming 'aabb'. The effect of the poem is reinforced by anaphoric repetition of the word 'and' and infrequent use of alliteration.

In short, 'A Prayer in Spring' presents the pleasure of thoughtless experience darkened by anticipations of the future changes. It also expresses a desire to continue in the present pleasure.