

POETRY

Unit 11

P.6 Song of the Rain

by Kahlil Gibran

1. (a) **Given below are five lines from a poem but they are not in the right order. Get into groups of four. Read the lines and put them in the right order. Read the version that you develop to the whole class.**

The voice of thunder declares my arrival.

I emerge from the heart of the sea.

I descend and embrace the flowers.

I am dotted silver threads dropped from heaven.

The rainbow announces my departure.

- (b) **Who is 'I' in these lines?**
- (c) **Imagining yourself as the subject of this poem, write five lines about yourself in less than five minutes.**

You may like to

- define yourself
- state what you do
- explain why people like/dislike you
- mention any other characteristic about yourself

2. **Read the lines given in the boxes on the next page. They are in random order.**

Now listen to the recording of the poem carefully. As you listen, number the stanzas given in the boxes sequentially.

I am beautiful pearls, plucked from the
Crown of Ishtar by the daughter of Dawn
To embellish the gardens

I emerge from the heart of the Sea and
Soar with the breeze. When I see a field in
Need, I descend and embrace the flowers and
The trees in a million little ways

The voice of thunder declares my arrival :
The rainbow announces my departure.
I am like earthly life, which begins at
The feet of the mad elements and ends
Under the upraised wings of death

I am dotted silver threads dropped from heaven
By the gods. Nature then takes me to adorn
Her fields and valleys.

I touch gently at the windows with my
Soft fingers and my announcement is a
Welcome song. All can hear but only
The sensitive can understand

The field and the cloud are lovers
And between them I am a messenger of mercy.
I quench the thirst of the one,
I cure the ailment of the other.

I am the sigh of the sea, the laughter of the field;
The tears of heaven.

When I cry the hills laugh;
When I humble myself the flowers rejoice;
When I bow, all things are elated

So, with love-
Sighs from the deep sea of affection; Laughter
from the colourful field of the spirit; Tears from
the endless heaven of memories.

3. **Read the song once again.**

1 I am dotted silver threads dropped from heaven
By the gods. Nature then takes me, to **adorn**
Her fields and valleys.

5 I am beautiful pearls, plucked from the
Crown of **Ishtar** by the daughter of Dawn
To **embellish** the gardens.

When I cry the hills laugh;
When I humble myself the flowers rejoice;
When I bow, all things are **elated**.

10 The field and the cloud are lovers
And between them I am a messenger of mercy.
I **quench** the thirst of the one;
I cure the ailment of the other.

15 The voice of thunder declares my arrival;
The rainbow announces my departure.
I am like earthly life which begins at
The feet of the mad elements and ends
Under the **upraised** wings of death.

20 I emerge from the heart of the sea and
Soar with the breeze. When I see a field in
Need, I descend and embrace the flowers and
The trees in a million little ways.

I touch gently at the windows with my
Soft fingers, and my announcement is a

25 Welcome song. All can hear, but only
The sensitive can understand.

I am the sigh of the sea;
The laughter of the field;
The tears of heaven.



adorn : to decorate or add beauty to.

Ishtar : goddess of fertility, love, war and sex, in the Babylonian Pantheon, she “was the divine personification of the planet Venus”.

embellish : decorate.

elated : very happy and excited.

quench : satisfy thirst.

upraised : lifted or moved upwards.

- 30 So with love -
Sighs from the deep sea of affection; Laughter
from the colourful field of the spirit; Tears from
the endless heaven of memories.

About the Poet

*Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) was a Lebanese-American artist, poet and writer. His poetry is notable for its use of formal language as well as insights on topics of life using spiritual terms. One of his most notable lines of poetry in the English-speaking world is from **Sand and Foam** (1926) which reads 'Half of what I say is meaningless, but I say it so that the other half may reach you.'*

4.A. On the basis of your understanding of the poem, answer the following questions by selecting the correct option.

- (a) The rain calls itself the 'dotted silver threads' as_____.
- the shimmering drops fall one after the other
 - it ties heaven and earth
 - it dots the earth with shimmering water
 - it decorates the fields
- (b) The tone and mood of the rain in the poem reflects its_____.
- love for the earth
 - desire to take revenge
 - merriment as it destroys
 - desire to look beautiful
- (c) Choose the option that lists the examples of 'elated'.
- Asmi is convalescing from her ailment.
 - Gurdeep and Sanvi met each other after a decade.
 - Damehi heard the news that he had been nominated for an award.
 - Sohrab has witnessed a burglar in the dark.
- 1, 3
 - 2, 3
 - 3, 4
 - 1, 4

- (d) *Antithesis* is a figure of speech which brings out a contrast in the ideas by placing opposing words, clauses or sentences within a parallel grammatical structure.

For example:

- “To err is human; to forgive divine.” - Alexander Pope
- Hope for the best; prepare for the worst.
- Keep your friends close; keep your enemies closer.

From the following phrases in the poem, select the option that correctly lists the examples of *Antithesis*.

1. When I cry the hills laugh; When I humble myself the flowers rejoice;
 2. And between them I am a messenger of mercy.
 3. When I bow, all things are elated.
 4. The voice of thunder declares my arrival; The rainbow announces my departure.
 5. I am dotted silver threads dropped from heaven
 6. I touch gently at the windows with my Soft fingers
- (i) 1, 3, 4, 6 (ii) 1, 3, 4
 (iii) 1, 3, 4, 5 (iv) 1, 3, 5

4.B. Read the given extracts and answer the following questions by selecting the correct option.

- (a) *I am dotted silver threads dropped from heaven
 By the gods. Nature then takes me, to adorn
 Her fields and valleys.
 I am beautiful pearls, plucked from the
 Crown of Ishtar by the daughter of Dawn
 To embellish the gardens.*

- i) Select the option that DOES NOT include a visual connected to the given lines.

(i)



(ii)



(iii)



(iv)



- A. Option i
- B. Option ii
- C. Option iii
- D. Option iv

ii) Read the definitions given below:

Allusion: Reference to a famous person, place, or historical event, either directly or through implication.

Alliteration: Repetition of same consonant sound at the initial position in two or more neighbouring words.

Select the option that correctly includes examples of i) allusion and ii) alliteration from the extract.

- A. i) Ishtar ii) daughter of Dawn
- B. i) Dawn ii) dotted silver threads
- C. i) Nature ii) pearls, plucked from the Crown

(iii) Choose the option containing a statement that is NOT conveyed through the extract.

- A. The rain calls itself the shimmering drops sent by gods.
- B. The rain is the daughter of Dawn born to decorate the gardens.
- C. Nature has adopted rain to decorate her fields and valleys.
- D. The rain is beautiful pearls plucked from the crown of the goddess of fertility.

(iv) Ishtar is a Mesopotamian goddess and signifies diverse things in different cultures. Select which symbol of Ishtar is relevant in the extract with the most appropriate reason.

- A. The poet utilized the symbol of 'Love' to represent Ishtar because the rain brings love and peace to the world.
- B. Ishtar signifies 'War' as her power arises from her connection with storms.
- C. Ishtar here represents 'Fertility' because she is responsible for all life and so is the relevance to the rain.
- D. The poet meant to associate the symbol of 'Beauty' to Ishtar as the rain makes the world beautiful.

- (b) *The voice of thunder declares my arrival;
The rainbow announces my departure.
I am like earthly life, which begins at
The feet of the mad elements and ends
Under the upraised wings of death.*

- i) The rain says, 'I am like earthly life'. Select the option with the most suitable explanation of the expression.
- A) The rain undergoes the same phases as that of earthly beings.
 - B) Most of the rain's life is on the earth.
 - C) The fate of earthly life is dependent on the rain.
 - D) Rain has a concern for earthly life.
- ii) The tone and mood of the rain in the extract reflects _____.
- A) its merriment as it destroys
 - B) rain's desire to reach its destiny
 - C) its objective and realistic manner
 - D) the rain's pride at its might
- iii) Read statements 1 and 2 given below and choose the option that correctly assesses these statements.
- 1. Rainbow declares the rain's parting.
 - 2. Rainbow causes the end of the rain.
- A) Both statements 1 and 2 are false.
 - B) Statement 1 is true but 2 is false.
 - C) Statement 1 is the reason for statement 2.
 - D) Statement 2 is the cause of statement 1.

5.A. Answer briefly.

- (a) Why is the rain divine?
- (b) In this universe, rain performs many functions. What are those?
- (c) "*When I cry the hills laugh;*

When I humble myself the flowers rejoice;

When I bow, all things are elated."

Cry, humble and **bow** indicate different intensity with which the rain falls. Explain the three in the context of the poem.

- (d) The Poem invokes beautiful imagery which is built around '*sigh of the sea*', '*laughter of the field*' and '*tears of heaven*'. Explain the three expressions in the context of rain.
- (e) Define the role of rain as the "messenger of mercy".
- (f) Contrast the arrival of the rain with that of its departure

5.B. Answer in detail

a) Shakespeare’s ‘Seven Ages’ designates different stages of human life. Draw a parallel between the two poems to elicit the different stages of rain’s life.

b) *Imagery* evokes a mental image or other kinds of sensual impressions in literary writings.

“I am beautiful pearls...”, “dotted silver threads”, “laughter of the field” , etc.

Now, observe auditory images created by the words “sighs”, “thunders”, “laughter”, etc.

Critically appreciate the poem, explaining the effect these techniques create in the mind of the reader.

c) “When I see a field in need, I descend and embrace the flowers and the trees in a million little ways”.

Write an imaginary conversation between a flower, a tree and the field, discussing the role of rain in their lives.

You may begin like this:

Tree: My life began as a seed. I came to life only after the rain drops embraced me.

Field: My survival, thereby the survival of all mankind depends on me. And only rains can help me thrive...

Flower:

6. ‘Ode to Autumn’ is a beautiful poem written by the famous poet John Keats. From page 151, your teacher will read an excerpt from the poem. Pick phrases which personify autumn.

Phrases

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

7. Rain in the hills and rain in the desert present entirely different scenario. In the hills it revitalises the greenery and freshens the vegetation; it waters the parched land and relieves the thirsty and panting souls in the desert.

(i) This has been a year of scanty rains. Imagine how the rain would be welcomed when it pours in the hills and in the desert after a long dry spell. Choose one such place and describe

(a) What are you likely to see?

(b) What would happen to the rain water?

(c) What would be the scene before and after the rain?