NOW THE LEAVES ARE FALLING FAST

WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN (1907 -1973), who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1948 for his collection The Age of Anxiety, was a versatile and intellectually vigorous poet, verse

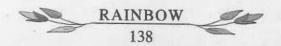
dramatist, critic, translator and editor. Poetry to him was a 'serious game' which should deepen people's self awareness but it should, in no case, directly affect men's political or religious choices. His early poems exhibit his interest in political affairs and ideas but his later poems are overtly Christian and more personal in tone. As a technician, Auden explored a variety of stanza forms and meters. He had a passion for word-coining and using archaic words, which makes him, at times, difficult to understand. He left England as early as 1939 to settle permanently in the United States. Auden's work is divided into the British and American phases. The notable works of the English phase are The Orators, The Dance of Death, Look



Phinone.

Stranger, Spain, and Another Time. The notable works of the American phase include New Year Letter, For the Time Being, The Age of Anxiety, and The Shield of Achilles. The present lyric 'Now the Leaves are Falling Fast' enacts the frustration inherent in human life, the aspirations that are not fulfilled and the sense of loneliness in which every individual lives and dies.

- A. Work in small groups and discuss these questions :
- 1 There is a season in which trees shed their leaves. Which season is this? What are the other things that take place in this season?
- 2 What feelings do the trees without leaves evoke in you?
- 3 How do old people think about their own life and age when they see a child?



NOW THE LEAVES ARE FALLING FAST

Now the leaves are falling fast, Nurse's flowers will not last; Nurses to the graves are gone, And the prams go rolling on.

Whispering neighbours, left and right,
Pluck us from the real delight:
And the active hands must freeze
Lonely on the separate knees.

Dead in hundreds at the back Follow wooden in our track, Arms raised stiffly to reprove In false attitudes of love.

Starving through the leafless wood Trolls run scolding for their food: And the nightingale is dumb. And the angle will not come.

Cold, impossible, ahead Lists the mountain's lovely head Whose white waterfall could bless Travellers in their last distress.

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B.1. Read the following sentences and write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements:

a) The leaves are falling very fast.

b) The nurses are still there to take care of the flowers.

All the prams are gone to the grave.

 d) 'Whispering neighbours' disturb the 'real delight' of the ageing persons.

e) Old persons feel lonely as they gradually become inactive.



- Death freezes the body and separates us from the crowd of the people. The promises of love are often deceptive. a) Starvation and suffering do not characterise human life. Travellers get one relief in the waterfall of the mountain. i) 'The prams go rolling on' suggests the continuity of life. i) B.2. Complete the following sentences on the basis of the poem: i. Nurses to therolling one. ii. Cold, impossible, ahead lovely head could bless last distress. B.3. Answer the following questions briefly: 1) What does the poet mean when he says "Now the leaves are falling fast"? 2) What are the words in the second stanza that suggest death and the effect of death on human body?
 - 3) How do we complete our last journey to the grave?
 4) What do 'Trolls' do in the 'leafless wood'?
 - 5) Who are the 'travellers' and how will they be 'blessed'?
 - 6) Which words in the first stanza suggest objects from Nature?
 - 7) Who are the 'whispering neighbours'?
 - 8) How does human life become miserable?
 - 9) In what way will the travellers be blessed?

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

Nurse's flowers (n): flowers growing under or beside a supporting tree called 'nurse'.

prams (n): (perambulators) a four wheeled baby carriage.

whispering neighbours: agents or messengers of death.

pluck (v): detach, take away

freeze (v): become ice cold after death

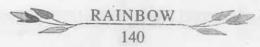
wooden (adj): in wooden coffins

stiffly (adj): in a hardened, difficult way

reprove (v): rebuke

attitudes (n): ways of thinking

trolls (n): wicked and ugly creatures in Scandinavian mythology.



angle (n): artistic or human perspective. last distress (n): end of life, death

C. 1. Long Answer Questions

- 1. Falling of leaves suggests the process of death and human waste on a large scale. Explain with reference to the poem.
- 2. The poet is critical of negative tendencies of the human society. What are these tendencies? Give details.
- 3. Who are the 'Strolls' in the real world '?
- Though the poet refers to 'death' several times, yet the poem is not a pessimistic one. Justify your answer.

C. 2. GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the following in groups or pairs:

- 1. Mortality and continuity are the two wheels on which 'life' runs.
- 2. Love and compassion alone can save humanity.

C. 3. COMPOSITION

Write a paragraph in about 100 words on each of the following:

- a. If winter comes, can spring be far behind?
- b. Let us make this world a better place to live in.

D. WORD STUDY

D.1. Dictionary Use

Ex. 1. Look up a dictionary and write two meanings of the following words – the one in which it is used in the lesson and the other which is more common

	nd St	-Why	reprove	Treeze
	stiff	attitude	distress	
D.2. Word-	formation			
Read caref	ully the followi	ing sentence take	n from the poen	1:
And the pra	ims go rolling oi	7		
In the abov	e sentence the	word 'pram' is the	shortened form	of perambulators. Write down
the short fo	rms of the follo	wing:	Control of the second s	- Por amountation of Trinto GOW
examination	n ——	The state of the s		
programme	. —			

department — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —	
D.3. Word-meaning Ex 1. Write the antonyms of the following of falling last freeze responsive impossible	- separate
E. GRAMMAR Ex. 1. Read the following sentences care 'And the prams go rolling on'. The line suggests continuity of an action. I rolling.'	fully: t can also be rewritten as: 'And the prams go on
Write five similar sentences with 'go on sleep, sketch.	' using the following verbs: swim, walk, read,
and 'ought to' which suggest 'suggestion' should', 'ought to' to complete the follow 1. We follow a suitable time.	sion' or necessity. 'Must' is different from 'should' n' or 'obligation'. Fill in the blanks with 'must', wing sentences: ne-table of study. erate about the sentiments of their elders. everything, life go on. the fashion? espect to the national flag.
F. ACTIVITIES	niwaile

Ex. 1. Have you read any other poem that describes the process of decay and regeneration? Make a summary of the poem and compare the ideas of the two poems.

Ex. 2. Observe how plants and trees grow and change in different seasons. Write one short paragraph each for the three main seasons. Use pictures of the seasons and paste them on the class-board.