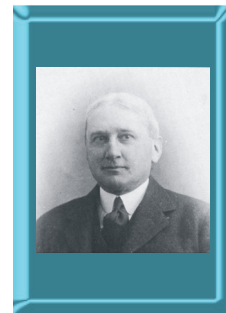


TO BLOSSOMS

Robert Herrick



Robert Herrick was born in Cheapside, London. In 1607, he became apprenticed to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, who was a goldsmith and jeweller to the king. The apprenticeship ended after only six years when Herrick, at age of twenty-two, matriculated at St John's College, Cambridge. He graduated in 1617. He spent some time preparing his lyric poems for publication, and had them printed in 1648 under the title *Hesperides; or the Works Both Human and Divine of Robert Herrick*, with a dedication to the Prince of Wales.



Human life is often compared to blossoms which wither away within a short span of time. We wish the blossoms to stay longer, but it is not so.

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
 Why do ye fall so fast ?
 Your date is not so past
 But you may stay yet here a while,
 To blush and gently smile;
 And go at last.

What ! were ye born to be
 An hour or half's delight,
 And so to bid goodnight?
 'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth
 Merely to show your worth,
 And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
 May read how soon things have
 Their end, though ne'er so brave:
 And after they have shown their pride
 Like you a while, they glide
 Into the grave.

Glossary

pledge	pledʒ	a serious or formal promise.
blush	blʌʃ	to become pink in the face, usually from embarrassment.
leaves	li:vz	used as pun in the sentence. Pun means an amusing use of a word or phrase which has several meanings or which sounds like another word.
brave	breɪv	beautiful.
pride	praɪd	youth.
glide	glɑɪd	to move easily without stopping and without effort or noise.

Understanding the Poem

1. In what way are the blossoms pledges of the fruitful tree?
2. What is the poet's wish about blossoms?
3. What does the poet mean by saying 'why do you fall so fast'?
4. Why does the poet compare human life to blossoms?
5. Name some blossoming trees in the state of J&K.
6. What is 'pity' referred to in second stanza?

Learning about the literary device

Personification: It means the representation of an abstract quality as human; a representation of an abstract quality or notion as a human being, especially in art or literature.

1. What is personified in the poem?

Discussion

What is your idea of a beautiful life? Do you think life can be beautiful even though short?

Suggested Reading

Gather Ye Rosebuds by Robert Herrick

Daffodils by William Wordsworth

Quote to remember

*Too much sanity may be madness.
And maddest of all, to see life as it
is and not as it should be!*

Miguel de Cervantes

Tongue Twister

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck
if a woodchuck could chuck wood?
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could,
and chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would
if a woodchuck could chuck wood.