

ENGLISH



THE VOICE OF THE RAIN

~Summary~

-by Walt Whitman

Stanza- 1

And who art thou said I to the soft-falling shower,
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,

Explanation: The poem begins with the poet asking for the identity of the soft-falling rain shower. Much to the surprise of the poet, the rain replies to his question which the poet translates for his readers. The rain in its own voice tells the poet that she is the poem of this Earth. The rain is trying to say that, as music or poetry gives pleasure to human beings, the rain gives happiness to mother Earth.

Stanza- 2

Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea, Upward, to
heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same,

Explanation: The poet says that the rain is an eternal process, but it takes different forms at different times. It rises from the land and the deep sea in the form of intangible water vapour and goes up to the sky. There it takes an indistinct shape in the form of clouds. Although it changes in its form or shape, its core matter remains the same. Since vapour and clouds contain water they can get transformed into the other. The words 'impalpable' and 'eternal' indicate that nature is not fully understood and some part of it always remains beyond our reach.

Stanza- 3

I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;

Explanation: The raindrops pour down from above to wash away droughts and dust layers enveloping Earth. It satisfies the thirst of the dry Earth and heals everything that is degrading and is lying lifeless. The showers remove the dust particles and make Earth clean and green. The rain also helps in the germination of seeds which were lying dormant due to a dry spell.

Stanza- 4

"And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin, And make pure and beautify it;
(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

Explanation: The rain is involved in a continued process of giving life on Earth by providing water to dormant seeds and making the Earth more beautiful and full of greenery. Rain helps in enhancing the beauty of Earth as, in the absence of water, everything turns dull or lifeless and dust accumulates everywhere. The last two lines are the poet's own words and his reflections upon the answers given by the rain. The poet observes that the life of rain is similar to that of a song. A song or poem is creativity at its best. It has the power to calm, heal, rejuvenate, transform and thrill. In the same way, repeated evaporation and condensation purifies the rain. The entire environment gets drenched in the rain, dust particles settle down and there is greenery everywhere which makes the whole Earth beautiful to look at. The poet therefore draws a parallel between rain and music as both have rhythm and ability to thrill. Both of them rejuvenate and beautify life.