

Chapter - 11 The Wild Swans Of Coole

Understanding The Poem

Question 1.

How do the 'trees in their autumn beauty', 'dry woodland paths', 'October twilight', 'still sky' connect to the poet's own life?

Answer:

The 'trees in their autumn beauty', 'dry woodland paths', 'October twilight', 'still sky' all represent some sort of senility similar to that of the poets'. Autumn is the season in which the trees prepare to shed their leaves. The woodland remains dry and there is no new evolving life until the rains set in. Though the twilight is the most beautiful part of the day, it lasts for a very short period of time and leads into the darkness of night. The stillness of the sky too is counted similar to the coldness of death. Everything associates to the poet's old age and the setting in of sadness and lonely atmosphere.

Question 2.

What do 'the light tread' and 'the sore heart' refer to?

Answer:

The 'light tread' refers to how the poet would walk some nineteen autumns back. He was a free man and could go wherever he wanted to – just like the Swans. But now he has a 'sore heart' while looking at the Swans since senility has grasped him. He can no longer trod around like a free soul. Neither do his mental and physical conditions allow him to do so.

Question 3.

What is the contrast between the liveliness of the swans and human life?

Answer:

The stark contrast between the liveliness of the swans and human life is that the Swans are still as full of life as they were some nineteen autumns back. The swans still could fly around as much as they want and go wherever they wish to. The poet feels a kind of pain seeing this. He compares himself to the swans and realises the decay in his physical self since he is old now.

Question 4.

What contributes to the beauty and mystery of the swans' lives?

Answer:

The beauty and mystery of the swan's lives is that even though so many years have passed, there is no change in how the swans behaved. The poet feels that the beauty of the swans is locked in the way they behave even today. There is no change in how they move around or spread love and are bound in companionship. The mystery is that human beings cannot understand the strength of love and brotherhood but these swans have understood. That is why it seems mysterious to the poet.

Language Study

Question 1.

Notice the rhyme scheme in the poem. Do you notice a consistent pattern? We use a new letter for every new sound at the end of the lines. The rhyme scheme for the first stanza is given alongside the lines. Do it for the rest of the poem.

Answer:

Stanza 2 – FGHGII

Stanza 3 – JKLKMM

Stanza 4 – NOPOQQ

Stanza 5 – RSTSUU