

A POISON TREE : LITERATURE : FORM 5 POEM

A discussion on the poem 'A POISON TREE' by William Blake

A Poison Tree

I was angry with my friend:

I told my wrath, my wrath did end.

I was angry with my foe:

I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,

Night and morning with my tears;

And I sunned it with smiles,

And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,

Till it bore an apple bright.

And my foe beheld it shine.

And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole

When the night had veiled the pole;

In the morning glad I see

My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

Wiles	<p>A trick to deceive</p> <p>A wile is a cunning trick. Here, it suggests that he may be planning some sort of a devious scheme for his enemy</p>
Wrath	Extreme anger
Foe	An enemy
Outstretch	Stretch out/ extend/ spread out
Veiled	<p>When the night veiled the pole</p> <p>A concealing cover</p>
pole	North pole/ South pole
Watered it in fears and sunned it with smiles	<p>he "waters" and "suns" his anger, much like one would water and provide sunlight for a tree.</p> <p>As the poem puts it, he "waters" the anger with his tears, and then "suns" it with the false smiles he offers his enemy.</p> <p>The poet means for us to see ourselves in the persona who nurtured his anger at his enemy by watering it with his "tears" and sunning it with his deceitful "smiles." If we stuff down our anger, pretend we're happy, and don't resolve our conflicts, our anger will grow and grow until it becomes like a poisonous plant that will hurt other people.</p>
Till it bore an apple bright. And my foe beheld it shine.	<p>Bore : to produce or yield</p> <p>Past tense of bear (bear fruits)</p> <p>Beheld it shine : see it shining</p> <p>The narrator explains that the plant (his anger) grew "both day and night" until it produced fruit. The narrator says that it is an</p>

	<p>apple, but it's simply a metaphor for a lure. The speaker uses that apple to lure his enemy into the garden and be poisoned.</p> <p>Then he grows angry at an enemy. Rather than communicate with his enemy and hash the problem out, he holds the anger inside. As the poem puts it, he "waters" the anger with his tears, and then "suns" it with the false smiles he offers his enemy.</p> <p>Eventually, this anger grows and grows until it becomes a tree that bears a shiny, poisonous apple. The enemy eats the apple and dies.</p>
--	--

Metaphor-A growing apple tree is an extended metaphor for the growing anger and it shows how destructive anger can be. The title "A Poison Tree" is the central metaphor. **The apple has become poisonous as it has been nurtured with anger.** In other words, the tree grew with negative emotions. When we stay angry for a long time, we may become "A Poison Tree" (a person full of negative emotions).

Setting-The persona's garden. The garden where the apple tree grows. The apple tree that features the apple which lures the enemy.

Symbolism-The apple represents **anger**. The apple grows large till it ripens. Similarly, anger grows till it becomes **vengeance**.

Themes:

Managing Anger: It is not totally wrong to be angry. However, it is rather important for us to **know how to deal with anger**. If we nurture our anger, it might grow and be harmful to us. In this poem, **two ways of handling anger were shown** with different outcomes. In the first scenario, the anger disappeared but in the second the anger **grew into something aggressive and negative**.

Importance of Communication: As shown in the poem, if the persona had communicated with his enemy, his anger would have been controlled. However, his refusal to communicate has allowed anger to become something that is very destructive. Therefore it is often **better if we can communicate with people on the issues that is bugging us**. The poet indirectly is trying to persuade his readers to talk about their anger. We can talk about it not only with our friends but with our enemies too. If we talk, the anger might just reduce and it might just ease our troubles. In turn, it will prevent us from causing hurt unto others.

Moral Value

The poem tells us about the **disastrous consequences of one's own failure to communicate with another person**.

What is the poem about:

"A Poison Tree" examines the effects of unresolved anger.

In the poem, the narrator or persona first gets angry at a friend. He talks to his friend and that dialogue resolves his problem so that he can forgive his friend.

Then he grows angry at an enemy. Rather than communicate with his enemy and hash the problem out, he holds the anger inside.

As the poem puts it, he "waters" the anger with his tears, and then "suns" it with the false smiles he offers his enemy.

Eventually, this anger grows and grows until it becomes a tree that bears a shiny, poisonous apple. The enemy eats the apple and dies.

Our personal connection to poem:

The poet means for us to see ourselves in the persona who nurtured his anger at his enemy by watering it with his "tears" and sunning it with his deceitful "smiles." If we stuff down our anger, pretend we're happy, and don't resolve our conflicts, our anger will grow and grow until it becomes like a poisonous plant that will hurt other people. The poet shows us a different and healthier path in the first stanza, where the persona confronts the friend who makes him angry and works out the problem. The poem suggests that we have a choice about how we behave and that resolving our issues with others is far better than letting them fester.

What is the moral of the poem "A poison tree?"	<p>In this Blake poem, an individual who hides and nurses his anger is contrasted with a person who goes immediately and tells his "friend" why he is angry.</p> <p>The person who confesses his anger is able to get over it and move on.</p> <p>The person who buries it from his "enemy" pretends everything is all right. Meanwhile, beneath the surface, the anger festers.</p> <p>The man waters his anger with his tears and suns it with false smiles. By doing this he cultivates his anger so that it grows bigger and bigger.</p> <p>Finally, the anger grows into a tree that bears poisonous fruit.</p> <p><i>The moral of the poem is that we should not nurse our anger towards another person but confront the person who hurt us and work out our issues directly. Otherwise, we become something poisonous that destroys other people.</i></p>
---	--

<p>In the poem "A Poison Tree" why did the persona's wrath end when he told his friend about it?</p>	<p>In "The Poison Tree," the point of the poem is that the anger we hold onto grows into something ugly and poisonous that hurts other people.</p> <p>Blake contrasts this to anger we get over. One good way to overcome anger is to talk about it with the person who angered you. If you can trust another person enough to confide in him and her, you can clear up misunderstandings and give the other person the opportunity to tell his side of the story and explain what happened. It also offers the other person the chance to apologize, because often people don't even know they have offended. With this kind of communication, forgiveness and reconciliation can occur. Then you can move on with your life.</p> <p>In contrast, as the poem shows, if you dwell on your wrath without trying to resolve it, it becomes bigger and bigger and more and more poisonous--Blake imagines it as a poisonous apple--and becomes especially poisonous if you pretend to the person who offended you that nothing is wrong.</p>
---	--

<p>How did the persona of "A Poison Tree" deal with his anger while his enemy was alive? Give two things he did.</p>	<p>In "The Poison Tree," the persona deals with his anger while his enemy is still alive by nurturing it.</p> <p>He does this in two ways. First, as Blake puts it, he "water'd it in fears / night and morning with my tears." This means that when the persona wakes up in the morning and when he goes to bed at night he remembers over and over how he has been hurt by his enemy. He dwells on his "fears": how his enemy could hurt him again, and he thinks about his enemy with "tears" over the original injury.</p> <p>The persona also pretends that nothing is wrong. Blake states it this way: "I sunn'd it [his anger] with smiles / And with soft deceitful wiles." Rather than confront his enemy or talk it through, the persona stuffs his anger down and pretends everything is fine. He smiles at his enemy. He is kind on the surface to his enemy. Meanwhile, the unresolved anger grows and grows.</p>
---	--

	<p>We don't know how the enemy injured the persona, but the poem leads us to believe that whatever it was, the persona blows it (or grows it) all out of proportion both by dwelling on it silently and by pretending publicly that he is happy.</p>
--	--