

## UNIT-2

### POEM - 1

#### LUCY GRAY

-WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:  
And, when I crossed the wild,  
I chanced to see at break of day  
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;  
She dwelt on a wide moor,  
—The sweetest thing that ever grew  
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,  
The hare upon the green;  
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray  
Will never more be seen.

“To-night will be a stormy night—  
You to the town must go;  
And take a lantern, Child, to light  
Your mother through the snow.”

“That, Father! will I gladly do:  
‘Tis scarcely afternoon—  
The minster-clock has just struck two,  
And yonder is the moon!”

At this the Father raised his hook,  
And snapped a faggot-band;

He plied his work;—and Lucy took  
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:  
With many a wanton stroke  
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,  
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:  
She wandered up and down;  
And many a hill did Lucy climb:  
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night  
Went shouting far and wide;  
But there was neither sound nor sight  
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood  
That overlooked the moor;  
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,  
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,  
“In heaven we all shall meet;”  
—When in the snow the mother spied  
The print of Lucy’s feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill’s edge  
They tracked the footmarks small;  
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,  
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:  
The marks were still the same;

They tracked them on, nor ever lost;  
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank  
Those footmarks, one by one,  
Into the middle of the plank;  
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day  
She is a living child;  
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray  
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,  
And never looks behind;  
And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind.

### **CRITICAL APPRECIATION:**

This stanza provides the setting and the foreshadowing for the rest of the poem. The reader knows that Lucy Gray has been heard of before, and often. The speaker then claims that he saw “the solitary child” right “at break of day”. At this point, the speaker does not reveal why he has heard of Lucy Gray. Nor does he reveal why seeing her is worth mentioning. The first stanza simply strikes up curiosity about Lucy and sets her up as an important figure.

This stanza continues to create curiosity about Lucy. The speaker says that she has “no mate” and “no comrade”. This corresponds with his description of her in the previous stanza as a “solitary child”. Then he says that “she dwelt on a wide moor”. It is a strange thing to imagine a child with no friends or family, alone, and living outside. One might begin to think that he is describing some kind of feral child, but line three of this stanza contradicts

that idea entirely. The speaker says that she is “the sweetest thing that ever grew beside a human door”. Now, the readers can understand that Lucy is a sweet, darling child. The last line says that she grew “beside a human door”. It seems strange that she did not grow inside that door, since she is a human child. The speaker has already mentioned that “she dwelt among the moor”. These two descriptions cause the readers to wonder about Lucy and her strange identity.

Here, the speaker talks directly to the readers and says that they may “spy the fawn at play” and that they may catch sight of a “hare upon the green” but that “the sweet face of Lucy Gray will never more be seen”. With this stanza, the speaker reveals that something has happened to Lucy.

The quotes here indicate that the speaker is now telling a story. This, perhaps is a story he has heard from another. He begins to talk from another’s point of view. This person apparently sent the child out in the snow with a lantern to find her mother.

The speaker has already described Lucy as “the sweetest thing” so it does not come as a surprise that she should respond, “That, Father! Will I gladly do:”. This also reveals that the speaker within the quotes is Lucy’s father. The father sends his daughter out at two o’clock in the afternoon. He asks her to take a lantern to her mother. Lucy gladly goes.

This stanza continues the story from the original speaker’s point of view. He says that the father returned to his work as Lucy went out with “the lantern in her hand”.

This stanza describes Lucy as walking along slowly and carelessly, kicking up the “powdery snow” as she walks, and watching it rise “like smoke”. These descriptions of Lucy help to continue to paint a picture of a sweet and innocent child. The more the reader gets to know Lucy, the more he feels anxious about her, because the speaker has previously stated that she is to be seen no more. The image of a little girl, doing as her father asked, kicking up snow as she walks, serves to attach the readers to Lucy.

With the first line of this stanza, the speaker reveals what will happen to Lucy. “The storm came on before its time” and Lucy “wandered up and down” and climbed “many a hill...but never reached the town”. With this description, the readers can imagine poor little Lucy, lost in the storm and climbing hill after hill only to be lost in the storm.

This stanza reveals that at some point during the night, Lucy's mother returned home. When her parents realized that Lucy had never made it to town with the lantern, they were "wretched...all that night" as any parent would be as they frantically search for their child. They "went shouting far and wide" but found nothing in the darkness and silence of the night.

Again, the speaker mentions day-break. This is a significant time in the poem. This is the time of day when the speaker mentions having seen Lucy Gray. This is also the time of day when the parents realize that Lucy has probably not made it through the winter storm.

At this point, the parents weep and give up their search for Lucy. They turn home and cling to the hope that they would meet with their daughter again in heaven. At that moment, "the mother spied the print of Lucy's feet". She has been all night in the storm. She is not likely to have survived. However, the sight of her footprint gives hope.

With this, the parents begin to follow her footprints. They see that she walked "through the broken hawthorn hedge and by the long stone-wall". With hope in their hearts, they continue to follow her footsteps. By now, the reader is likely fully sympathizing with the parents. The feeling of frantically searching, the weeping and accepting her death, and the renewed hope at seeing her footsteps are all feelings the readers can either relate to or at least imagine.

The parents track her prints all the way across the field and to a bridge. The readers can imagine the way the parents must be feeling as they followed their daughter's footprints and were forced to imagine her trudging through the snowstorm, lost and afraid.

This stanza invokes the feeling of intense loss. While the parents follow the footsteps of the child, there is hope that she might be found alive at the end of those footprints. Instead, the prints led the parents to the "middle of the plank" on the bridge, and suddenly the footprints stop. The only conclusion is that Lucy fell off the bridge.

This stanza reveals to the readers that the body of little Lucy was never found. Had it been found, people would not continue to claim that "she is a living child". But they do, and furthermore they claim that she can still be seen "upon the lonesome wild". This suggests that it is the spirit of Lucy that is alive and can still be seen. This also gives more insight into the opening stanzas in which the speaker claims that he saw her and that she was a "solitary

child". It was the spirit of Lucy Gray which he had often heard of and which he claims to have seen.

The speaker repeats again that he has seen Lucy Gray, and he describes her as she is now. He says that "she trips along and never looks behind" as she "sings a solitary song". This gives a peaceful description of Lucy, and implies that she perhaps sang and skipped along before the storm took her away. It suggests that she was not terrified by the storm, but that she was taken suddenly and by surprise. Essentially, it suggests that she died happy, skipping along in the snow. This, of course, would be what the parents would have desperately hoped for after realizing that their daughter was not alive. The story perpetrated about Lucy Gray suggests that if her spirit lives on, it is the happy spirit of a lively young child skipping along through the snow.

## **POEM-2**

### **ODE TO AUTUMN**

**-JOHN KEATS**

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees,  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,  
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook  
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:  
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep  
Steady thy laden head across a brook;  
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,  
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?  
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—  
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,  
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;  
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn  
Among the river sallows, borne aloft  
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;  
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;  
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;  
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

### **CRITICAL APPRECIATION:**

This is a very beautiful poem written by John Keats. He was a poet of the Romantic Movement. In this poem he has written about stages of autumn in three stanzas. These stanzas depict nature truly. The first stanza is about maturation in which the season of autumn matures. In the second stanza there is a reference of sleep which denotes death of autumn and in final stanza we can find music associated with autumn which symbolizes funeral music.

In the first stanza the poet says that autumn is the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. Maturing sun is the bosom friend of autumn and both these friend conspire to load fruits with ripeness. With the overload of apples the branches bend over the moss'd cottage tree. The gourd and the hazel shell swell with sweet kernel. The budding in the flowers are more so that bees are compelled to think that warm days will never cease. The cells are clammy because they have been over brimmed with sweetness of nectar. There is a reference of summer because autumn is extended period of summer and in London autumn is followed by winter.

In second stanza personification of autumn has been done by the poet. Autumn is treated like a woman which can be seen by everyone. She is commonly found everywhere. She can be seen in the granary store as well as in the country side sitting carelessly. She acts like a winnower and her hair is softly lifted by the winnowing wind. This line discloses that autumn acts like a woman because 'thy hair' symbolizes a woman. There is a reference of sleep and it symbolizes death of the autumn. She is sleeping as if she is under the influence of poppies. In sleep she is reaping and the sickle 'hook spares the next swath and all its twined flowers'. Sometimes she acts like a gleaner. She is watching the cyder-press patiently unto the last 'oozings hours by hours'.

In the final stanza the poet says that-we are made aware that autumn has its own music. This music is the music associated with funeral. This stanza reveals that this music is the music of mourning of small gnats. The loud bleating of lambs and the singing of hedge crickets, the red breast whistling from the garden croft and the twittering of the gathering swallows in sky. All these creatures add music to autumn and thus Keats has proved that not only spring but even autumn has its own music. This poem has been written in form of an ode which can be sung beautifully. This poem has three stanzas and every stanza has eleven lines having a rhyme scheme ABABCDEDCCCE. It is written in Iambic Pentameter and it is interesting to find that all the five senses can be found in this poem. It is one of the reasons that John Keats was also known as a sensuous poet and on his grave it is written that "Here lies one whose name was writ in water".