

SUNRISE ON THE HILLS

H W LONGFELLOW

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REVIEW OF THE POEM

The poem “**Sunrise on the Hills**” is a didactic poem by the famous American Romantic H W Longfellow. It says if a person is fed up with hectic life (and cannot concentrate on one’s routine/ works) spending some time with nature will soothe / solve all his worries.

It is a subjective poem in which the speaker shares his own feelings and perceptions.

The poem makes use of several poetic devices. The poem abounds in images. The prominent one is the use of military image to highlight the paradox in the poem – man seeking solace from nature, which itself is a battlefield. The first stanza abounds in visual imagery, whereas the second has numerous auditory images.

End rhyme and alliteration used in the poem enhance its lyrical quality. It employs poetic devices like oxymoron (soft gales) and transferred epithet (noisy bittern wheeled his spiral way).

The mysterious charm of nature is vividly presented with the deft use of vocabulary. The simile “clouds.... in their fading glory shone like hosts in battle over throne” suggests the military air of the poem.

The speaker resorted to nature when he had a tough time, and exhorts us to do the same when we confront with difficulties in life. The paradox lies in the fact that the nature’s forces are active and powerful, but at the same time submissive to mightier forces.

TITLE OF THE POEM:

- The poet watches sunrise from the top of a hill. He observes the changes that occur in the nature, as the sun rises. The poem presents a number of visual and auditory images to speak about the coming of day, putting an end to the dark and silent night.

- A common childhood observation/ imagination is voraciously painted in this poem.
- The speaker sees nature as a source of inspiration, a cure, and an ultimate solution.
- The speaker realises that grace of sunrise conquers the glory of all other natural powers.
- Sun is a symbol (removes dark taints).

MOOD AND TONE OF THE POEM

There is no obvious mention about his **mood** in the first two stanzas. But from the last stanza it is clear that the speaker is not very comfortable. He might be fed up with disturbing thoughts that he cannot concentrate on his activities. Towards the end of the poem, the speaker advises us to do the same when we are fed up with life. Nature has the power to rejuvenate. The speaker appears to be didactic in **tone**.

POETIC DEVICES

- Use of symbols like sun, forest bittern, screech
- Sun makes all sights visible, removes sadness and darkness, highlights hidden beauty and treasures,
- Military image, auditory, visual, kinaesthetic
- Heaven's wide arch = Metaphor for horizon
- Sun's returning march = military image,
- The clouds....shone like hosts in battle over throne. = simile
- Veil of cloud = metaphor
- Noisy bittern wheeled his *spiral way* = transferred epithet
- Soft gales went forth to kiss the sun clad vales = kinaesthetic + tactile images
- Paradox # nature as a solace, nature at war

Paradox = one tries to find solace in nature, whereas nature itself is a battlefield

- First stanza = 18 lines, descriptive, visual images
- Second = 12 lines, descriptive, auditory images
- Third= 6 lines, didactic

DIDACTIC ELEMENTS IN THE POEM

A pensive speaker explores nature to ease his personal worries and realizes that all his troubles are universal. His reflections teach us that

1. Observing nature will help one forget his tensions and change one's mood.

2. More over there are several interesting and rejuvenating things around nature (diversity of resources).

3. Even a common sight gives one a lot of information.

4. The quench to conquer and outshine is natural instinct.

5. Everybody has unique appeal, but their glory subsides when stronger ones appear.

6. Nature has the power to rejuvenate. Troubles are natural; internal nature, not external nature can soothe one.