

## Std 6 English Literature

### Ch 11: Summary of poem 'The Railway Junction'

Dear students hope you all are well.

- I am sending you the explanation of the poem 'The Railway Junction' by Walter de la Mare.
- This is only for your further understanding.
- Do not copy the summary.
- You do not have to learn the summary.
- **You have to learn the poem.**
- Word meanings are given below.

Thank you.

#### Word Meanings

1. Gloom : partial or total darkness
2. Forks into two : branches into two
3. Still : quiet
4. Palely : faint not bright, dimly
5. Thrush : a song bird
6. Throng : crowd of people
7. Appointed hour: at the given time
8. Bow-legged : having legs that curve outwards at the knees
9. Groom : man who is going to be married ( bride groom)
10. Parson : any clergyman or parish priest of a Church
11. Widow : a lady whose husband is dead
12. Gaunt : bony emaciated appearance / very thin especially because of hunger or sickness
13. Gamekeeper : a person whose job is to take care of wild animals and birds that are kept especially for hunting
14. Fair one : a handsome woman; a beauty
15. Discreetly : in a way that is careful not to attract too much attention
16. Veiled : face covered with a veil ( transparent cloth)
17. Mutely : without sound
18. Nocturnal : of the night or active at night
19. Ere : before
20. Their longings : their desires

Explanation of the poem is given below.

From here through tunnelled gloom the  
track  
Forks into two; and one of these  
Wheels onward into darkening hills,  
And one toward distant seas.

The poet starts the poem where he is at a cross-road of life. He sees the alternate future in front of him which can take him to two very different destinations..(one to the 'darkening hills' and the other to the 'distant seas').....one can take him to a harsher future and the other to hope he sees for himself...

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How still it is; the signal light  
At set of sun shines palely green;  
A thrush sings; other sound there's none,  
Nor traveller to be seen-

Where late there was a throng. And now,  
In peace awhile, I sit alone;  
Though soon, at the appointed hour,  
I shall myself be gone.

The poet takes one of the tracks and realizes how different it is from the life he has lead so far....( comparing 'How still it is' to 'Where late there was a throng').... In the journey he has decided to undertake , he finds that things are quite different ; quite silent because there seems to be no one with him at this moment of time and for a brief moment he finds a peace that he has always strived for....But he also know that this peace, this peculiar solitude is momentary ..Very soon some people will join this train of life and once again this brief peace and solitude will be gone..... ( 'Though soon, at the appointed hour, I shall myself be gone'.)

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But not their way (the bow-legged groom,  
The parson in black, the widow and son,  
The sailor with his cage, the gaunt  
Gamekeeper with his gun.

That fair one too, discreetly veiled  
All, who so mutely came, and went,  
Will reach those far nocturnal hills  
Or shores, ere night is spent.

Here the poet talks of the various people who he sees climbing this train of life. There are people of various hues he notices. He realizes that all of them are people like him. All of them trying to mutely find their own destination. But he expresses a fear for all of them; a fear that he feels for himself too. Whether they would, or for that matter even he, reach the destination he has chosen for himself. Be it the 'nocturnal hills' or the 'shores'....and where 'ere night is spent' is concerned, the poet means ' I hope I find my destination before I die'....

I nothing know why thus we met-  
Their thoughts, their longings, hopes,  
their fate:  
And what shall I remember, except-  
The evening growing late-

That here through tunnelled gloom the  
track  
Forks into two; of these  
One into darkening hills leads on,  
And one toward distant seas?

The poet here brings out that though he has traveled some distance with all the co-travelers in this train of life but he has never known their inner desires and the reason they climbed this particular train. The poet somberly states that the only thing which he is presently aware of (..other than the fact it's getting late in the evening... ) that he is at a crossroad of life....One which can lead to the 'darkening hills' and the other which can lead to the 'distant sea'..... 'the darkening hills' is the fear of a decision gone wrong and 'distant sea' is the eternal hope he has in the decision he has taken.....

The poet has put his actual anguish in a very small phrase...and it struck me much later ...He has put it simply as ‘... The evening growing late....’. The poet is growing older and is wondering whether the decisions he has made is correct or wrong... The poem talks as much about the people he will meet in the future as much as the people who have been in his past.....