

For Anne Gregory

Introduction

The poem 'For Anne Gregory' has been composed by William Butler Yeats. In the poem, the poet imagines a conversation between himself and the young Anne Gregory.

Summary

Anne Gregory was the granddaughter of Lady Augusta Gregory, who was a dear friend of the poet. The poet observes that Anne's hair is of the same golden colour as honey. He tells her that the way her hair falls over her ear, entirely enveloping it within its strands reminds him of the wide walls around the fort erected for its protection. The poet says

that he is well aware that the sight of her beautiful hair makes many a young man to fall in love with her and he is also sympathetic towards them for the despair that they might feel on being rejected by her. However, he says that young men love her only for her beautiful hair, *i.e.* because of her external beauty and not because who she is as a person. To this, Anne Gregory replies that if her yellow hair is what men like, then she can easily dye in colours such as brown, black or carrot. These colours, she feels, are less appealing than blonde. Then it might be possible for the young men to look beyond her physical appearance and love her for the person that she is.

To this, the poet replies that the previous night he had been hearing a religious man who said that only God loves a person for who he is.

Message

The poet wants to convey the message that God is our father and it is only he who accepts and loves us in spite of all our follies and appearances.

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1. "Never shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-coloured
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

(a) According to the poet, why do young men love Anne?

(b) causes 'despair' to the young man.

- (i) Anne's hair (ii) The environment
(iii) The poet's hair (iv) Anne's voice

(c) Fill the blank with one word.

The colour of the young woman's hair is

(d) What does 'despair' mean?

Answers

(a) According to the poet, young men love Anne only for her beautiful hair, *i.e.* because of her external beauty and not because who she is as a person.

(b) (i) Anne's hair

(c) yellow

(d) Despair means the feeling of having lost all hope. *i.e.* hopelessness.

2. "But I can get a hair-dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair."

(CBSE SQP 2022-23)

(a) What is the poet's tone in the extract?

1. thoughtful
2. authoritative
3. agitated
4. insulting
5. argumentative

Select the appropriate option:

- (i) 1, 4 (ii) 3, 5
(iii) 2, 4 (iv) 1, 5

(b) What causes the young men to 'despair', according to the extract?

(c) Identify the reason for the speaker's need to colour her hair, as per the extract.

- (i) Her control over what makes her look beautiful.
(ii) Her desire to be loved for inner beauty.
(iii) Her need to change people's perception about beauty.
(iv) Her conviction that she is beautiful inside.

(d) Complete the analogy about the speaker's hair.

Yellow : blonde :: : carrot

(e) Select the sentence in which the word 'set' is used in the similar manner as in line 2 of the extract.

- (i) I want to set him up and get my work done this time.
(ii) Do you have another set of the books that I can read?
(iii) The dessert needs to set for two hours before being served.
(iv) The set for the school play looked quite grand.

Answers

(a) (ii) 3, 5

(b) Being hopelessly in love causes the young men to 'despair', according to the extract.

(c) (iv) Her conviction that she is beautiful inside.

(d) orange/red

(e) (iii) The dessert needs to set for two hours before being served.

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What are the things of the woman which make the young man to love her? (CBSE 2016)

Ans. The young man love Anne Gregory for her honey coloured hair falling on her ears which makes her look very beautiful. This means that the young men give more importance to the physical appearance than inner or spiritual beauty.

Q 2. The poet in the poem 'For Anne Gregory' conveys beauty as temporary. Explain with reference to the poem. (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The poet in the poem 'For Anne Gregory' conveys that we should give importance to the inner beauty and not to the physical appearance because the

external beauty is temporary. Anne is described as a lady with yellow hair and she thinks of dyeing them to carrot colour or black or brown. She states that by doing so young men might be able to see beyond her external beauty and love her for her inner beauty.

Q 3. What message does the poem 'For Anne Gregory' give?

Ans. The poem gives a clear message that physical beauty may be important for the human beings, but God loves all human beings for what they are. It also wants to convey the message that true love is not dependent upon physical appearances. It delves deeper into a person's soul.

Q 4. What does the young man mean by 'great honey-coloured/Ramparts at your ear?' Why does he say that young men are 'thrown into despair' by them?

Ans. By these lines, the poet wants to say that the young men find Anne Gregory exceptionally beautiful when her golden coloured hair fall on her ears, completely covering them. He says that the young men are 'thrown into despair' by them because they feel that they do not deserve such beauty and that if they approach Anne then they will be rejected.

Q 5. What is the colour of the woman's hair? Why will she change the colour of her hair? (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The colour of the young woman's hair is golden yellow, just like honey. She says that she will change

it into brown, black or carrot colour. She wants to do so in order to look ugly. She feels that if she looks ugly then she would only be approached by such men who love and appreciate her for the person that she is.



Long Answer Type Question

Q 1. Physical beauty is not permanent, but the beauty of character or internal beauty is permanent. Justify on the basis of your reading of 'For Anne Gregory'.

Ans. In the poem 'For Anne Gregory', the poet tells Anne that young men love her only because of her beautiful golden hair. He says that they do not know the person that she is. They are just enthralled by her physical beauty and claim that they love her. So, Anne decides that she would change her physical appearance by dyeing her hair in black, brown or carrot colour. By doing so, she would look ugly and hence young men who love her only because of her hair would stop doing so. However, the poet feels that this will be ineffectual. He knows that Anne is a truly beautiful person on the inside and that she cannot look ugly, even if she tries hard. So, we can conclude that physical beauty is not permanent but the beauty of character or internal beauty is permanent.



Practice Exercise

Extract Based Questions

1. Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

(a) What has changed the poet's mood?

(b) Comment on the last two lines.

(c) What has been saved?

- (i) The remaining part of the day
- (ii) The dust of snow
- (iii) The crow
- (iv) The hemlock tree

(d) What is the rhyme scheme of the given extract?

2. Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow:

He should be snarling around houses
At the jungle's edge,
Baring his white fangs, his claws,
Terrorising the village!

But he's locked in a concrete cell,
His strength behind bars,
Stalking the length of his cage,
Ignoring visitors.

(a) Why should we protect the tigers?

(b) 'A tiger in the zoo ignoring visitors' is an example of:

- (i) Apostrophe
- (ii) simile
- (iii) irony
- (iv) personification

(c) Fill the blank with one word.

The tiger is reacting to his in the zoo by ignoring visitors.

(d) Comment on the last four lines..

3. Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Don't bite your nails, Amanda!
Don't hunch your shoulders, Amanda!
Stop that slouching and sit up straight,
Amanda!

(a) Who is the speaker here?

(b) Amanda is a:

- (i) fairy
- (ii) mermaid
- (iii) young girl
- (iv) princess

(c) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract:

bite : chew : : crouch :

(d) What has been Amanda told?

4. Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow:

My head is full of whispers
which tomorrow will be silent.
Listen. The glass is breaking.
The trees are stumbling forward
into the night. Winds rush to meet them.
The moon is broken like a mirror,
its pieces flash now in the crown
of the tallest oak.

(a) Why will it be silent tomorrow?

(b) The glass is:

- (i) shining (ii) stumbling
(iii) breaking (iv) whispering

(c) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract:

rush : hurry : : flare :

(d) Which poetic device is used in 'The moon is broken like a mirror'? Explain.

5. Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Belinda embraced him, Mustard licked him,
No one mourned for his pirate victim.
Ink and Blink in glee did gyrate
Around the dragon that ate the pirate.

(a) Belinda embraced Custard:

- (i) out of shock (ii) out of fear
(iii) out of helplessness (iv) out of gratitude

(b) Fill the blank with one word.

Ink and Blink were because of the pirate being killed.

(c) What did Mustard, Ink and Blink do?

(d) Choose a word from the extract which is similar in meaning to 'grieved'.

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 6. What is a 'hemlock tree'? Why doesn't the poet write about a more 'beautiful' tree such as a maple, or an oak, or a pine?
- Q 7. What message does the poet want to convey through the poem 'Fire and Ice'?
- Q 8. What message does the poet want to convey through the poem 'A Tiger in the Zoo'?
- Q 9. What do we come to know about the chameleon in 'How to Tell Wild Animals'?
- Q 10. Do you think Amanda is sulking and is moody?
- Q 11. The poet describes the fog as a living being. Explain.
- Q 12. What do the roots and leaves of the tree do?
- Q 13. What did Custard do to the pirate?
- Q 14. What does the young man mean by 'great honey-coloured/Ramparts at your ear'? Why does he say that young men are 'thrown into despair' by them?

Long Answer Type Questions

- Q 15. How does the tone make the words stronger or the meaning more apparent in 'Fire and Ice'?
- Q 16. Do you know what a 'bearhug' is? It is a friendly and strong hug—such as bears are thought to give, as they attack you! Again, hyenas are thought to laugh, and crocodiles to weep ('crocodile tears') as they swallow their victims. Are there similar expressions and popular ideas about wild animals in your own language(s)?
- Q 17. Why does the poet say, 'I would not intrude on him'? Why doesn't he offer him money to buy another ball?

