

Wind

by Subramania Bharati



Central Idea of the Poem

The poem depicts the power of wind and how it is destructive. The wind, as described in the poem, blows violently and breaks everything around.

The poet has linked this powerful wind with the difficulties, obstacles and struggles of life. Just like the wind that destroys everything that is weak, these difficulties can also easily break down weak people. Only strong people can withstand them.

The poem then, encourages us to have courage and firm determination. It gives a message that we must have strong hearts as well as will power to face any troubles or hardships of life.

Explanation of the Poem

Stanza 1

Wind, come softly.
Don't break the shutters of the windows.
Don't scatter the papers.
Don't throw down the books on the shelf.

Word Meanings

Shutters – hinged panels used to close / open windows, Scatter – throw in different directions.

Explanation In these lines, the poet requests the wind to blow gently and not destroy anything with its force. He asks the wind not to break the shutters of the windows and scatter the papers here and there. He also asks the wind not to throw down the books from the shelf. The repetition of the word don't in these lines highlight the requests of poet for mercy.

Stanza 2

There, look what you did – you threw them all down.
You tore the pages of the books.
You brought rain again.

Word Meaning

Tore – shred or break into pieces

Explanation In these lines, as the wind had not paid any attention to the poet's request of not blowing strongly. The poet says that the wind has threw down the books from the shelf and it torn the pages of the books. The poet also accuses that the wind has also bring rain with it.

Stanza 3

You're very clever at poking fun at weaklings.
Frail crumbling houses, crumbling doors,
crumbling rafters,
crumbling wood, crumbling bodies, crumbling
lives,
crumbling hearts –
the wind god winnows and crushes them all.

Word Meanings

Poking fun at – making fun of, **Weaklings** – weak bodies/persons /things **Frail** – weak, **Crumbling** – destroying, breaking, **Rafters** – sloping beams supporting a roof, **Winnows** – a separating process, herein used to separate weak from strong.

Explanation In these lines, the poet seems to be a little sad as well as accusatory (critical tone).

The poet calls the wind clever as it makes fun of all weak things. The strong wind represents all the difficulties and struggles that an individual faces in life. The poet says that the wind destroys all weak things such as houses, doors, rafters and wood. It even destroys people, their lives and their hearts with its mighty power. The wind God continues destroying or separating weak until, only the strong people (who can go through hardships and face challenges) remain.

Stanza 4

He won't do what you tell him.
So, come, let's build strong homes,
Let's join the doors firmly.
Practise to firm the body.
Make the heart steadfast.
Do this and the wind will be friends with us.

Word Meanings

Firm – make strong, **Steadfast** – firm and determined

Explanation In these lines, the poet addresses the readers and asks them to make themselves strong as the wind will not listen to them. The poet asks the readers to build strong houses and to close/fix the doors tightly so that wind cannot harm them. He encourages his readers to become bold and strong so as to face all the troubles in life. The poet asks the readers to practice hard to get a firm mind as well as a strong body so that they can face the wind and any challenge of life. If they are able to do so, the wind will become their friend and will not harm them.

Stanza 5

The wind blows out weak fires.
He makes strong fires roar and flourish.
His friendship is good.
We praise him every day.

Word Meanings

Blow out – to stop a fire, **Flourish** – grow healthy.

Explanation In these lines, the poet describes wind as both a destroyer and a creator.

As a destroyer, the wind blows out the weak fires. As a creator, it encourages and nurtures strong fires. In other words, wind can destroy all weak things and can also flourish a thing which is already strong. The poet states that if we are strong, then the wind is a good friend to us and nothing can harm us. We will praise the wind God everyday for building our strength. Thus, we should make ourselves physically and mentally ready to accept all challenges. Once we are strong, we will easily overcome the challenges and live our lives comfortably.

Poetic Devices Used in the Poem

- **Personification** A figure of speech which is used for an inanimate object or animals/birds look or feel human.
The wind is personified throughout the poem. Some instances are:
Lines 5 - 8 There, look what you did — you threw them all down. / You tore the pages of the books. / You brought rain again. / You're very clever at poking fun at weaklings. (Here the poet is talking to the wind, gently admonishing it, just like to a human being).
Lines 12 - 13 The wind God winnows (separates) and crushes them all. / He won't do what you tell him. (Here the wind is personified as a God).
Line 18 Do this and the wind will be friends with us. (Here the wind is personified as a friend).
Line 21 He makes strong fires roar and flourish. (Here the wind is personified as a human).
Line 22 We praise him every day. (Here the wind is personified as a God).
- **Metaphor** A device which compares two things or qualities which are unlike.
Line 12 The wind God winnows (Here 'winnows' is a metaphor for separating the weak from the strong).
- **Anaphora** This means repetition of the same word in successive lines. The instances are:
Lines 2, 3 and 4 Repetition of 'Don't'
Lines 6, 7 and 8 Repetition of 'You'
Lines 9, 10 and 11 Repetition of 'crumbling'
Lines 14 and 15 Repetition of 'Let's'

NCERT FOLDER

(Here, we have covered questions given in the NCERT textbook along with their answers.)

I. Thinking about the Poem (Page 31)

1 What are the things the wind does in the first stanza?

Ans. In the first stanza, the wind blows so strongly that it breaks the shutters of the windows. It also scatters the papers and even throw down the books from the shelf.

2 Have you seen anybody winnow grain at home or in a paddy field? What is the word in your language for winnowing? What do people use for winnowing? (Give the words in your language, if you know them)

Ans. Yes, I have seen agricultural labour (usually women) winnowing grain, i.e. separating the heavier grains from the lighter chaff by letting it fall gently while a strong wind is blown.

The word for winnowing used in our language Hindi is 'Phatakana' (responses will vary in different languages).

For winnowing, usually a cane container with grain and a fan to blow air are used.

In Hindi, the winnowing fan called 'chhaaj' is used by the village people.

3 What does the poet say the wind god winnows?

Ans. The poet says that the wind God continue destroying or separating the weak unit the strong remains. He separates the weak from the strong such that only the strong and courageous exist in the world.

4 What should we do to make friends with the wind?

Ans. To make friends with the wind, we should make ourselves physically as well as mentally strong. We should make our bodies firm and heart strong. We should also build home that are stronger so that the wind favours us.

5 What do the last four lines of the poem mean to you?

Ans. The last four lines of the poem emphasise the essential theme that the poem wants to convey. It emphasises the need to be physically as well as mentally strong. It tells us that the wind will destroy the weak things but it flourishes the strong ones.

Just like the wind, difficulties and struggles also destroy everyone who is weak. It strengthens those people who are courageous and bold.

6 How does the poet speak to the wind — in anger or with humour? You must also have seen or heard of the wind 'crumbling lives'. What is your response to this? Is it like the poet's?

Ans. Initially, the poet speaks to the wind with anger, saying that it has thrown down his books from the shelves and torn their pages. However, later the poet's tone changes and he speaks to the wind with humour, inviting it to attack him, as he intends to prepare himself as if waiting for a 'friend'.

Yes, I have heard of the wind 'crumbling lives'. My response is similar to the poet's. I will prepare myself by becoming stronger and ready for any attack.

II. Thinking about the Poem (Page 31)

1 The poem you have just read is originally in the Tamil. Do you know any such poems in your language?

Ans. Yes, there are many similar poems in my language. (Do it yourself)

Hint : PB Shelley's – Ode to the West wind

Naresh Aggarwal – Toofan