

Summary:

The poet laments over the loss of his childhood. In this poem, he makes an attempt to identify the day or the moment he lost his childhood. He wonders if it was the day that he ceased to be eleven or the day he began to realize that Hell and Heaven could not be found in geography as he had earlier thought. As a result he began to realize the fact that Hell and Heaven never existed.

The poet begins to ask over and over again about the moment he lost his childhood. As a child he had heard the adults speak and preach about love and he thought their actions complemented their words. But then, when he passed his childhood phase, he found the world to be quite contradictory to the perception he had earlier. He became aware of the hypocrisy of the adult world. They preach of love but fail to practice it in reality.

Again, the poet wonders if the moment he lost his childhood was the moment he became aware of his own ability to think and form ideas that were his own.

Towards the end of the poem, the poet tries to arrive at a conclusion about the disappearance of his childhood in order to console himself. He actually had no answer to where and when his childhood disappeared. Perhaps, it has gone to a place long forgotten and hidden itself beneath the face of an innocent infant. Thus, he comforts himself with a guess.

1. Identify the stanza that talks of each of the following:

Individuality - Stanza 3.

Rationalism - Stanza 1.

Hypocrisy - Stanza 2.

2. What according to the poem is involved in the process of growing up?

Answer: According to the poet, the process of growing up involves different elements. As a child he was simple and innocent. This gives way to rationalism during the process of growing up. He begins to realize that his idea about Hell and Heaven seem to be a mere fantasy. He also realizes the hypocrisy of the adult world that had been speaking and preaching of love all this while. Another element that is involved in the process of growing up is individuality. As a person grows up, he becomes aware of his own capacity to think and act. His thoughts are no longer influenced by others.

3. What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?

Answer: The poet laments over the loss of childhood. In his opinion, childhood is the period of innocence, simplicity, purity, ignorance and heavenly joy devoid of any kind of hypocrisy. He has to accept the reality as to the process of growing up which involves stages of realization and awakening. He seems to suffer from a sense of loss.

4. Which do you think are the most poetic lines? Why?

Answer: The most poetic lines in the poem 'Childhood' are -

'It went to some forgotten place,
That's hidden in an infant's face.'

The rhyming scheme is a couplet. These lines are filled with nostalgia and they highlight the innocence that's hidden in an infant's face.

Q. What is the poet's feeling towards the childhood?

Ans. The poet regards childhood as a period of heavenly innocence. A child sincerely feels that there is god above. He is free from all earthly evils. He believes that there is really a Heaven and a Hell. He is truly religious in his soul. A child knows no hypocrisy. He always means what he says. There is no difference between his thoughts and actions. A child is free from any sense of ego. He does not think himself to be different from or superior to others. In short, childhood is a state of heavenly innocence and purity of heart.

Q. What according to the poem, is involved in the process of growing up?

Ans. As a person grows up, he becomes a rationalist, an egoist and a hypocrite. He accepts nothing that is not logical. He loses faith in God. He does not believe in Hell or Heaven. He becomes very conscious of his self. He wants to follow his own desires and ideas. He becomes an egoist. He talks of love and preaches of love, but is not so loving in his actions. In short, he loses all his innocence of his childhood.

Q. How does the poet describe the process of being grown up?

Ans. The process of being grown up develops the critical thinking and analytical point of view in the person. It makes the person rationalized and able to take his decision by virtue of his seat of reasoning.

Q. How does the poet repent on his loss of childhood?

Ans. He expresses concern over his childhood's disappearance. Childhood cannot be regained. It keeps our life aloof from the world of hypocrisy, bitter reality and materialism.

Q. The poet has asked two questions one is about the time and other is about the place. Why has he used these questions?

Ans. He has used these two questions to interpret the time and place of way of going his childhood away. "When" points out the process of being rational at a particular time and "where" states the place where the innocent world of childhood resides.

Q. What does the Hell and heaven stand for?

Ans. It stands for the world of imagination that fascinates only small children. These are nothing but the product of our imaginative mind that helps the person to escape from reality.

Q. What contrast did he find in adult's behaviour?

They talked of human values but did not practise in their day to day life.