## The Voice of the Rain

## Walt Whitman

And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,

Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:

I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,

Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,

Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same,

I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,

And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;

And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,

And make pure and beautify it;

(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering

Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

impalpable: something that cannot be touched

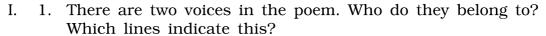
lave: wash; bathe

atomies: tiny particles

latent: hidden

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## Think it out



- 2. What does the phrase "strange to tell" mean?
- 3. There is a parallel drawn between rain and music. Which words indicate this? Explain the similarity between the two.
- 4. How is the cyclic movement of rain brought out in the poem? Compare it with what you have learnt in science.
- 5. Why are the last two lines put within brackets?
- 6. List the pairs of opposites found in the poem.
- II. Notice the following sentence patterns.
  - 1. And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower.
  - 2. I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain.
  - 3. Eternal I rise
  - 4. For song.. duly with love returns

Rewrite the above sentences in prose.

III. Look for some more poems on the rain and see how this one is different from them.

## Notes-

This is a nature poem celebrating the coming of the rain.

Understanding the poem

- Voices in the poem
- Sense of the poem
- Relating to the process of rainfall scientifically (across the curriculum)
- Noticing sentence structure in poems
- Comparison with other rain poems