

# Blessing – analysis

Business



Blessing is a poem by Imtiaz Dharker and is set in a village in Pakistan. This is a descriptive poem, which uses imagery to illustrate sights and sounds, and creates an atmosphere of frantic joy. The poem also consists of some inconsistent usage of end-rhyme, followed by some usage of metaphors, personification, simile, assonance and alliteration.

The poet uses free verse in this poem to emphasize what the poem is about and to make the reader think about the situation and to think about the words used.

It has no fixed metrical pattern. The poem begins with a simile 'The skin cracks like a pod' this line immediately give the reader an impression of drought and a shortage of water. The usage of the word 'skin' could be a literal reference to a person's skin that had become chapped by constant exposure to the sun or it could be a more figurative reference to the dry, dusty ground that cracks and splits during heat waves and droughts. The word 'pod' can refer to a seed pod that opens in the hot weather to release its seeds.

The poet uses words that remind the reader that what we are dealing with is a hot country where thirst is common and where after all, 'there never is enough water.

'By the words of the first two-lined stanza we are in no doubt to the fact that the villagers here are desperate for water and how much of an amazing and special thing it is for them. The poet involves the reader by asking us to 'imagine the drip of it', which is telling us how small the quantity is and to imagine the tiny splash as the water droplet hits the bottom of the cup.

It seems as though the person describing the dripping water hasn't had a drink in a very long time and is fantasizing about that special and delicious drop of water. The fact that the tiny droplet of water creates an 'echo' in the mug suggests that the tin mug is almost empty and is like a drop of water hitting a parched tongue. It also makes you think, what kind of person would own a tin mug? Would it be a rich person or a poor person? The reference of a tin mug may imply that the person who owns a tin mug must be poor and not very fortunate.

The last line of the second stanza has a religious reference.

It personifies the echoing splash of the water as the 'voice of a kindly god.' God is seen as the provider of water and every drop received is a kind of gesture and therefore it is something miraculous and deeply special. The third stanza is the longest one of the poem. It tells us a story of a burst water pipe and how suddenly this ordinary small pipe is transformed into a powerful overflow of water. Water has so much importance and value to these people that throughout the poem it is referred to as if it was a precious metal like gold or silver.

The municipal pipe bursts' tells us the burst of this public (municipal) pipe is an amazing and incidental occasion. It is described by the metaphor 'the sudden rush of fortune', like somebody winning the jackpot and the money is rushing out of the machine. As the precious water splashes onto the ground the word 'rush' could mean that people are 'rushing' around trying to save as much water as they possibly can, as it is precious. This same idea is

echoed in another metaphor ' silver crashes to the ground. ' When caught in the right light water can look like silver or a high polished mirror.

The poet may have used the word ' silver' to emphasise how precious it is. Line ten flows to line eleven, and the water is described as a ' flow' that gives rise to a sudden burst of noise from the villagers, ' a roar of tongues'. The word ' roar' could refer to a group of people since we only have one tongue each and therefore the plural ' tongues' suggest a group. The tongues could be roaring with thirst or maybe they are shouting and their combined voices becomes a ' roar. ' In this same stanza, the use of the word ' congregation' may have two important meanings to the context of the poem.

Firstly it may refer to a congregation or group of people, but it also may refer to a group of people in church or being given a religious instruction. We see that the poet uses religious language, the affect being to make the process of saving the spilling water a kind of religious ritual. The poet has already described the water as a gift from a kindly god, so it is only right that collecting it should have some resemblance to a religious ritual. Pakistan is a place where many of them are very religious and have many ways of worship.

The men, woman and children are all eager for their share of the spilled water and come with any container that they are first able to see. The stanza concludes with the phrase ' frantic hands', which once again emphasizes the desperation that leads the villagers to take even handfuls of water.

The poet uses enjambment to link the third stanza to the fourth and final one. This focuses on the children of the village, where the children are described as naked and delighted of the chance to bathe in the water. 'Screaming in the liquid sun' is a metaphor that aligns the water to the sun to emphasise the pleasure and warmth of the experience.

It shows that all is not doom and gloom since the small children are playing in the water. Alliteration is also used in the phrases 'polished to perfection' and 'the blessing sings', they combine alliteration and assonance, which creates vivid imagery to portray the excitement of the occasion.

The word blessing continues the religious theme which has been running through the poem. The final line flows from the previous one 'sings/over their small bones.' It is a gentle ending, focusing on the children of the village who are in great need of this water.