

The Sick Rose

William Blake (1757 – 1827)

About Poem:

From the mighty pen of William Blake two specimen of wonder fully crafted group of poetry has taken birth –

1. Songs of Innocence
2. Songs of Experience.

The Sick Rose is included in Songs of Experience and it is sequel to “The Blossom” in songs of Innocence. The blossom celebrates the beautiful innocent picture of nature on the contrary The Sick Rose exposes the dark dismal picture of the nature. We can say that these two poems is the two end of same coin.

Substance:

[With the exquisite technique of symbolism the poet William Blake has crafted the poem and result is a poem imbued with symbolism and it is rhymed with stock phrase and under licking meaning.

The poem reflects how serene innocence is howled by / grasped by dark experiences. He portrays the destruction of innocence by the greed and avarice , the poet presents a symbolism, a rose is seduced by an invisible worm with darkest desire in its heart to break the hymen / virginity of Rose in the stormy night . Under the symbolism of rose and worm the writer has told us a tale of destruction of love by utter selfishness and mean mentality Holy innocence by mature experiences, platonic holy love by seductive desire.] According to poet the repressed secret feelings of love guillotine / murder real love.

Love is serene and innocent as far as it is devoid of / without lust. But when bodily desire overcomes love then love lost all its glory and charm. According to William Blake love should not surpass flashy attraction; under the attire / symbolism of sick rose the poet has represented the darkest desire of human soul to enjoy the blooming beauty at its best. The moment it is done the so – called symbol of ethereal heavenly beauty, Rose converted into “Sick Rose”, the beauty of it looted and plundered and it became sick, the Sick Rose. []

Significance:

Under the simple imagery and Allegory of Rose the poet here represents the ethereal beauty of a serene innocent lady. But that paradise of beauty is ravaged by darkest desire and with that ‘The Rose’ became “The Sick Rose”. The women herself is feeling sick after she loses virginity to an illicit love of a crooked person. The worm evokes the Biblical allusion of Satan, the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve and brought about their fall. The poem tells us a tale of fall of mankind from a state of innocence under the shroud / veil of symbolism.

Allegory is a symbolical narrative which has an under licking meaning behind the profound symbolism.

- i. **Rose** – Symbolism The Rose is a well-established and traditional symbol of beauty, modesty and serene innocence. With his super artistry the poet William Blake has given a new dimension with the symbolism of Rose here. The rose is poles apart with the traditional symbolism of informal sense.
- ii. **Worm** – Worm evokes the symbolical image of Biblical serpent (Satan in disguise). It is a venomous or poisonous source that destroys the ethereal beauty in nature.
- iii. **Bed of Crimson Joy** – It stands for bliss of sweet sensual pleasure.
- iv. **Dark secret love** –induces sickness
- v. **The Dark Night** – Implicitly suggested a symbolical meaning of love and malice and it is a pre assumed idea that every uncanny hush hush matter occurs at night. Through all these imagery and symbolism the writer has portrayed / presented slaying / killing of innocence with the darkest desire of contaminated / poisonous love.

Consider William Blake as a visionary poet with reference to “The Sick Rose”:

The poems of William Blake are imbued with visionary, zeal and ideas. He explores variety of dialectics with his experiences “The Sick Rose” tells us a tale of Blake’s vision of experiences. Through symbolism and imagery here Blake has used demurring / destruction of innocence of rose by the greed and avarice of experienced heart and soul. The secret sensual pleasure overcomes the rose’s bed of crimson Joy in a night of deluge. The dark desire of fleshy love ruffles the dewy petals of innocent rose. Through this imagery the writer here portrays / presents the losing of chastity of virgin rose. The worm represents the Biblical allusion of serpent that tempted Adam and Eve.

The assimilation of all these symbolism and imagery has crafted the world of experiences under the veil of symbolism.

What role does the Play? Or Symbolism of Rose.

Rose plays a pivotal role in the poem “The Sick Rose “Here the rose has been addressed as sick rose. Rose is stock symbolism of beauty, modesty, serenity in the horizon of world literature. It symbolizes a beautiful girl, stunning beauty, traditionally rose is attuned with innocence, purity, modesty, ethereal bliss but here in this poem the poem is sick rose- it is devoid of the paramount of good quality which is conferred upon it. Here the rose proclaims not the symbolism of innocence rather it has been called the sick which has the foul odor of experience. The experience doesn’t enhance the quality of it rather ruffles it.

How the innocence of Rose is being destructed?

The purity, the essence the flavor, the chastity, the innocence of rose is being ravaged by the howling storm and worm (Illicit love affair, sexual gratification, sensualistic pleasure, and carnal attraction) Insatiable thirst only can be satiated by enjoying every pores and warmth of love and probably the breaking of hymen which has been symbolized as crimson joy. The bed of crimson joy symbolizes illicit, carnal, fleshy desire for sensualistic gratification. Though she is publicly modest but with the pouncing of the darkness she became passionately wild. Her sickness is the consequence of her own passion. The worm (carnal desire, unsocial sexual gratification, longing to break the hymen, utter desire to demur the virginity) has found out her bed of crimson joy only to gratify the carnal need. Thus beauty and innocence attract the evil only to be loved and lost

The Role of Worm

In Blake's poem "The Sick Rose" "The Worm" is embodiment of evil force, illicit love affair, unsocial sexual gratification, sensualistic pleasure, carnal attraction, longing to break the hymen, desire to destroy the virginity. It can only corrupt ethereal, eternal innocence. The invisible worm which is nothing but the carnal desire, insatiable longing to enjoy every pores and flesh of lover proves lethal / fatal to the Rose. The surging storm energizes the worm and it takes shelter in the rose's bed of crimson joy. The worm evokes the image of Biblical Serpent, Satan in disguise. It is the symbol of the evil, carnal desire, unsocial sexual gratification longing to break the hymen, utter desire to destroy the virginity, corrupting the force that destroys the beauty of Nature. His dark secret love destroys the life of rose. Thus the worm becomes an instrument of destruction with a subtle allegorical undertone represents the invisible worm as Platonic loveless sexuality that corrupts mankind there by plunging in state of sinfulness which is imbued in utter sexual gratification.

Symbolism of Howling Storm

Etymologically howling storm means violent storm. Separately "Howling" means making long, loud noise, it is sort of Onomatopoeia and "The storm" represents profoundly inclement weather accompanied with strong wind and torrential rain all together. "Howling Storm" symbolizes incessant uncontrollable lethal attraction which only can be satiated by gratification of sexual desire, sensualistic bliss of sweet indolence. "The Storm" symbolizes evil, carnal desire, unsocial sexual gratification longing to break the hymen, utter desire to destroy the virginity, corrupting the force that destroys the beauty of Nature.

Fusion of Innocence & Experience.

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What does Crimson suggest? How this joy does turns into a premonition of destruction at the end?

Crimson is profoundly dark red color. It implies fatal sexual gratification. Rose is figuratively said to be crimson joy. The joy is profoundly felt by Seductive demonical lover. Here it has expressed sexuality which is which is subtly & artistically expressed by the word "Crimson" The Word Crimson probably suggesting breaking of hymen (Chastity or Virginity) The joy is Crimson for it is both sexual repression and demurring of innocence .

The Crimson joy is the emblem of losing of virginity for when hymen is disrupted/ ruffled the crimson color oozes from there it hued the canvass of virginity. When virginity & losing of virginity before the social marriage is a matter of shame. It is symbol rather than omen & it proclaims that virginity is soon to be converted into maternity rather lady would be stamped as whore.

