



মণিপুরৰ শাসনভাগৰ শিক্ষা বিভাগ (সি.এম.ই.)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)

Government of Manipur

NOTES:

UNIT: II (poetry-iv)

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN! By Walt Whitman

About the poet: Walt Whitman (1819- 1892) was an American poet. His thinking was very original and people at first could not appreciate his work. He is mainly famous for his book of poems 'Leaves of Grass'.

'O captain! My captain!' is a tribute to the great American Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the united states of America. Lincoln ably managed his country during the civil war that followed but was killed soon after peace was well consolidated.

Substance: The captain and his men had completed their difficult journey. They had won the prize they wished and were returning home. They reached the harbor and anchored their ship safe and sound. The people had gathered in the sea-shore exultant and jubilant to welcome the brave and heroic captain of the ship. The air is filled with the sounds of the bugle and the church bells. Flags were flying everywhere celebrating the victory. But it was so unfortunate that the captain who was about to receive with grand celebration was lying dead and cold on the deck of the ship. The poet feels very pained to see such a sight. He wails and asks the captain to wake up and see how people all around are thronged with excitement to see his face and also to welcome him with bouquets and wreaths. The poet took the captain's head in his arm and bewailed that the captain was just like a dear father to him. He wondered whether it was a dream. Even though he called repeatedly, the captain did not reply. The poet called upon the crowd on the sea-shore to rejoice, for, after all, the mission which the captain had set out to accomplish had been achieved.

Word notes:

captain- Abraham Lincoln

ship- the united states of America

fearful trip- the fearful days of civil war , is done- the civil war is over

weathered- overcome

rack- trouble

port- destination

people- people of U.S.A.

exulting- to be greatly joyful

steady- stable/firm

bugle- musical instrument

trills- to play a tune with quivering sound

ribbon- tied with ribbon

wreaths- arrangement of flowers, leaves, etc. in a circle, garland

swaying- moving up and down

still- silent

anchored- to fix firmly in position

exult- rejoice greatly

tread- walk



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Lines 1-8

Paraphrase: O captain! My captain! our fearful trip is over. The ship has overcome every trouble. The prize that we were looking forward is achieved. The port seemed very near and he hears the sounds of the church bells ringing. The people are rejoicing and their eyes are on the ship. The ship appears grim and serious after such a tiresome journey. But how unfortunate, the poet's heart is broken to see the dead body of the captain who lying dead and cold on the deck of the ship.

Lines 9-16

Paraphrase: The poet asks the captain to rise up and hear the sounds of the church bells. For him the flag is flung, the bugles are playing in quivering notes. The people have brought bouquets and ribbon wreaths. The shore is crowded with people to show respect to the captain. The people are calling high names and swaying for him. They turn their faces following the course of the ship. And the captain, the poet addresses

as his dear father. His head was lying beneath his arm. It seems like he is in a dream that his father, the captain is lying cold and dead on the deck.

Lines 17-24

Paraphrase: The captain does not answer the poet's call. His lips are still and pale. He does not feel his arm, he had no pulse nor will. The ship is parked safe and sound. Its fearful journey is over with its object won. People rejoice on the shore. Bells are ringing and the poet on the other hand walk mournfully on the deck helplessly while his father, the captain was lying dead and cold.

