

Snowflakes Sail Gently Down Literary Devices

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Figures of Speech

Simile (Comparison using like or as) Examples:

- “And the branches... **bow like grief-stricken mourners.**”
- “bent-backed elms bowing and swaying to **the winter wind like white-robed Moslems salaaming** at evening prayer.”

Explanation:

The elm trees are compared to mourners and to Muslims praying at evening time. Both comparisons show humility, sadness, and peace.

Definition:

A

simile

compares two different things using

like

or

as.

Metaphor (Indirect comparison) Examples:

- “white funeral cloth is slowly unrolled over deathless earth.”
- “oil palms bearing suns for fruits.”

Explanation:

The falling snow is compared to a white funeral cloth covering the earth. It suggests death and stillness. The “suns” on oil palms mean light, hope, and renewal.

Definition:

A

metaphor

directly compares two different things without using

like

or

as.

Personification Examples:

- “**The snow flakes sail gently down** from the misty eye of the sky and fall lightly lightly on the winter-weary elms.”
- “and **the earth lying** inscrutable like the face of a god in a shrine.”

Explanation:

The “misty eye of the sky” makes the sky seem alive and human. The “earth” is also described as if it has a calm and mysterious face.

Definition:

Personification

gives human feelings or actions to non-living things.

Alliteration Examples:

- “Snow flakes sail gently down.”
- “Winter-weary elms.”

Explanation:

The repetition of

s

and

w

sounds creates a soft, musical rhythm that matches the calm movement of snow.

Definition:

Alliteration

repeats the same consonant sound at the beginning of nearby words.

Imagery Examples:

- “The snow flakes sail gently down from the misty eye of the sky and fall lightly lightly on the winter-weary elms.
- “White funeral cloth is slowly unrolled over deathless earth.”
- “Bent-backed elms bowing and swaying to the winter”

Explanation:

These lines help the reader see the soft snow, feel the cold air, and sense the quiet beauty of nature.

Definition:

Imagery

uses words that appeal to our five senses.

Symbolism Examples:

- “White funeral cloth” – symbolizes death, silence, and peace.
- “Oil palms bearing suns for fruits” – symbolizes fertility, hope, and new life.
- “Snow flakes” – symbolizes purity and spiritual calm.

Explanation:

Common natural images like snow, trees, and suns are used to express deeper ideas about life, death, and rebirth.

Definition:

Symbolism

means using symbols to represent larger ideas or meanings.

Repetition

Examples:

- “Lightly lightly on the winter-weary elms.”

- “Then I awoke. I awoke.”

Explanation:

The repetition of “lightly” shows the softness of snow. The repeated “I awoke” marks the poet’s movement from dream to reality.

Definition:

Repetition

is when a word or phrase is used more than once to stress an idea or feeling.

Contrast Example:

- “The weight of the weightless snow.”

Explanation:

The poet contrasts “weight” and “weightless” to show how something light and gentle like snow can still make the trees bend.

Definition:

Contrast

means placing two opposite ideas together to make the difference clear.

Hyperbole Example:

- “The weight of the weightless snow.”

Explanation:

The poet exaggerates by calling the snow “weightless” yet “heavy,” to show the emotional or symbolic pressure of sorrow.

Definition:

Hyperbole

means using exaggeration to create a strong effect or emotion.

Metonymy Example:

- “From the misty eye of the sky.”

Explanation:

The word “eye” stands for the whole sky, giving it a human-like watching quality.

Definition:

Metonymy

is when one word is used to stand for something closely related to it.

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