

padhai | Class X

English

Notes



**Full
Explanations**



**Character
Sketch**



**Word
Meanings**



**Tone, Central
idea, devices....**

First Flight

FOG

–CARL SANDBURG

Detailed Explanation:

The poem portrays the **quiet arrival and gradual disappearance** of fog over a harbour city. The poet presents the fog as something that comes unexpectedly and noiselessly, likening it to a **cat**. The expression that the fog arrives **“on little cat feet”** suggests a soft, stealthy movement, emphasizing that it advances without any audible disturbance.

The comparison continues as the poet describes the fog as sitting over the harbour and the city, observing them **“on silent haunches.”** This creates the image of a cat calmly resting while attentively watching its surroundings. The phrase **“silent haunches”** reinforces this idea, as it reflects the typical posture of a cat sitting quietly with folded legs while remaining alert.

After remaining for a brief period, the fog vanishes as quietly as it had appeared. Just as a cat comes and goes without attracting attention, the fog also departs in complete silence. Through this brief yet striking depiction, the poet emphasizes the **gentle, elusive, and mysterious** character of fog.

At a deeper interpretative level, the poem suggests that many **natural occurrences** unfold silently and often go **unnoticed**. The fog represents something that arrives suddenly, exists momentarily, and then fades away without causing disruption. By focusing on this simple natural scene, the poet brings out the **subtle beauty** and **quiet dynamics** present in nature.

Although the poem is very short, it succeeds in presenting a strong and memorable image. By using a single sustained metaphor that equates fog with a cat, Sandburg effectively creates a clear and vivid picture of its **slow, silent, and mysterious** movement across an **urban landscape**.

Poetic Device Explanations

Metaphor

The poem is structured entirely around an extended metaphor in which fog is equated with a cat. The line **“The fog comes on little cat feet”** directly presents this comparison without using **“like”** or **“as,”** confirming it as a metaphor rather than a simile. This device highlights the quiet, smooth, and almost secretive motion of fog.

Personification

Fog is portrayed as if it possesses life and intention. The description **“It sits looking over harbour and city”** attributes animal-like or human-like behaviour to fog.

Imagery

The poem employs clear visual imagery to construct mental pictures. Expressions such as “little cat feet,” “harbour and city,” and “silent haunches” help the reader imagine the fog spreading gently and pausing over the cityscape. These images make the scene concrete and vivid.

Symbolism

Fog carries symbolic meaning beyond its literal presence. It represents mystery, uncertainty, and transience. Just as fog appears suddenly and disappears quickly, certain experiences in life are temporary and unpredictable. The poet subtly conveys this broader meaning through the natural image.

Alliteration

There is a soft repetition of consonant sounds in phrases like “sits...silent,” where the recurring ‘s’ sound produces a gentle, whispering effect. This sound pattern reinforces the quiet and smooth quality of the fog’s movement.

Extended Comparison

While technically a metaphor, the comparison between fog and a cat is sustained throughout the poem. Actions such as arriving, sitting, observing, and leaving are all characteristics associated with a cat, ensuring consistency in the comparison across the lines.

Central Message / Theme

The poem conveys that natural processes often occur in a quiet and subtle manner, yet they possess a significant presence.

It illustrates how an ordinary phenomenon like fog can become meaningful and beautiful when observed attentively. Additionally, it suggests that certain aspects of life are fleeting and unpredictable, much like fog that appears suddenly, lingers briefly, and disappears silently.

Through this simple observation, the poet encourages readers to become more aware of delicate details in nature and to appreciate its understated beauty.

Poet’s Tone

The tone of the poem is calm, reflective, and observant.

The poet adopts a quiet and thoughtful approach while describing the gentle movement of fog. There is an absence of dramatic emotion; instead, the tone conveys quiet admiration and careful observation of nature’s subtle processes.

Word Meanings

Haunches — the bent hind legs of an animal in a sitting position.

Harbour — a protected body of water where ships are anchored safely.

Fog — a dense layer of tiny water droplets near the earth’s surface that reduces visibility.

Silent — completely without sound; noiseless.

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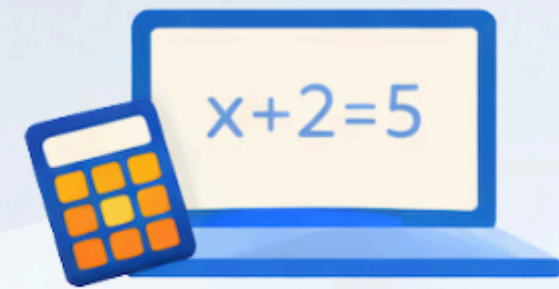
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