

Date 12 / 10 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "A Route of Evanescence"Author / Director / Emily Dickinson

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I found "A Route of Evanescence" on Shmoop while browsing for poems to log.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

"A Route of Evanescence" is about a very fast object that often comes and go, and throughout the rest of the poem it can be inferred that this object is a hummingbird. The hummingbird is described as moving "With a revolving Wheel --," perhaps meaning that it comes and goes during various seasons. The speaker then describes the beautiful colors of the hummingbird, and how the bird moves so fast that it "every Blossom on the Bush / Adjusts its tumbled Head --." The speaker seems to think the bird has flown all the way from Tunisia, which is actually just a simple, everyday flight for the bird.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"A Route of Evanescence" discusses the phenomenon of the hummingbird in nature as compared to the capabilities of humans. The speaker stands in awe and amazement at the bird, though so seemingly insignificant, and he or she in a sense becomes shocked by nature itself, as if he or she can't even comprehend the mysticality of the bird. Thus, nature in this poem becomes something that is so complex and on a seemingly higher level than humanity. Humans are so simple and easy to describe in terms of their inclinations and patterns, but nature, which is often so mesmerizing and perplexing, can be entirely difficult to understand, especially when it is elusive like the hummingbird and Dickinson's succinct description of the hummingbird in this poem.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"A Route of Evanescence" is written in a hymn-like iambic meter, and the poem consists of two quatrains, or stanzas with four lines each. The poem is characteristic of a hymn because the first and third line of each stanza are made of eight syllables, and the lines of each stanza alternate with iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. There are some places where the meter gets disrupted; however, the poem, for the most part, takes the shape of a ballad or hymn. This ambiguity is aided by the vague descriptions of the hummingbird throughout the poem in order to make a point about nature.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections /

Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

"A Route of Evanescence" is quite an attention grabbing poem not only because of its short, descriptive nature, but also because neither the title nor the actual poem itself give the reader directly the topic of discussion. It is up to the reader to interpret what Dickinson is describing and the message she is trying to get across by this description, and obviously the most popular perception is that the item in her poem is a hummingbird. There is no doubt that many people will interpret this poem in a variety of ways because of this ambiguous nature, but it is this lack of straightforwardness that makes the poem so interesting and poetic. Many times nothing actually feels accomplished when something is given to someone on a silver platter, so simply and effortlessly. This poem makes the reader critically think, and, in doing so, it makes a very bold point. Nature is by far the most confusing and perplexing thing in existence, yet the various relationships and interactions that occur between organisms in the natural world are entirely astonishing. The awe that nature often brings reminds me of the article "The Lowest Animal" in which Mark Twain argues that humans are in fact that lowest animals in existence because their ability to freely choose has unfortunately corrupted their morality. Humans lack a beauty and righteousness that nature definitively exemplifies. Finally, the fact that humans aren't the greatest organisms on earth, and the realization that there are better things in existence is quite a poetic concept. When examined closely, humans are intrinsically evil and corrupted, and there is no doubt that some form of guidance is necessary for their progression. Nature provides this guidance. The beautiful harmony and stability of the natural world is what humans should look up to and regard as a standard to achieve rather than focusing inwards on themselves because they are seemingly more advanced with greater intellectual capabilities. The idea that humans aren't as important as they may think is significantly poetic.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)