

A photograph of a winter scene with snow-covered ground and several bare trees. The text is overlaid on the image.

Poetry Analysis
BLOW, BLOW,
THOU WINTER WIND

William Shakespeare

Background:

The poem entitled 'Blow! Blow! Thou Winter Wind' is a song sung by the character named Amiens in the drama *As you like it* written by William Shakespeare.

Things we need to understand:

1. Musical drama
2. Shakespeare as a poet
3. Personification and metaphor
4. Comedy
5. Rhymes

Song: “Blow, blow, thou winter wind”

BY [WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE](#)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,

Thou art not so unkind

As man’s ingratitude;

Thy tooth is not so keen,

Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:

Then, heigh-ho, the holly!

This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,

That dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot:

Though thou the waters warp,

Thy sting is not so sharp

As friend remembered not.

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly...

Fact Checks:

1. Shakespeare reveals his true meaning in the middle of the poem with the line “Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.” He is saying that people are often not true to their “friends” or “loved ones,” or that their friendship or love is not real. He uses the idea of a winter wind, which could be painful, to communicate how much more painful the false love and friendship is. So, when he says of the wind, “Thy tooth is not so keen,” he means that the pain caused by the wind (in the case, the wind’s metaphorical “tooth” can cause pain by biting) is not as hurtful as the emotional pain of the untrue friend or lover.
2. Rhyming structure:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind. A.

Thou art not so unkind B.

As man's ingratitude. C.

Thy tooth is not so keen, D.

Because thou art not seen, D.

Although thy breath be rude. C.

Thematic Appreciation:

The poet in the very beginning addresses the winter wind and says that it can blow as much hard as it likes because it is not so harsh and rude like man's nature of being ungrateful. The attack of the winter wind is not so sharp because it is not visible although it is biting cold. The poet asks the frosty sky to freeze because it won't cause him deep pain as caused by his friends who forget his favors instead of being thankful. The poet says that although the waters are frozen they don't cause sharp pain like one caused by his friend, who doesn't even bother to remember him. Thus, the frozen faces of the world are more painful than the frozen waters.

We should always be singing throughout the year like 'holly' (an evergreen plant). The poet here says that the friendship is only a pretense and loving is nothing but absurdity and foolery. He again tells that life is very wonderful and should be fully enjoyed. It is like a song and should be sung. The poet here projects a harsh reality through his song. The celebrated poet Shakespeare is known for his wise words. He is his same self here. His statements are weighty, pithy and precisely correct.