


Class 9 - English (Beehive)

Poem - The Snake Trying

By WWE Ross

About the Poet

William Wrightson Eustace Ross (June 14, 1894 - August 26, 1966) was a Canadian poet and geophysicist. He was the earliest published poet in Canada to write imagist poetry, and later the earliest to write surrealist poems, both of which have led some to call him "the first modern Canadian poet."

W.W.E. Ross	
Born	William Wrightson Eustace Ross June 14, 1894 Peterborough, Ontario
Died	August 26, 1966 Toronto, Ontario
Occupation	geophysicist
Nationality	 Canadian
Notable work(s)	<i>Irrealities, Sonnets & Laconics</i>

Introduction to the Poem

In the poem, the poet says that the snake tries to escape from being hit by the stick held by a person who is trying to kill it. The poet wants to say that all snakes are not harmful. Humans have a notion that snakes are dangerous and try to kill them as soon as they spot one but this is not true. He tells us how a harmless green - coloured snake tries to hide behind the green bushes in order to save itself.

Poem and Explanation



The snake trying
to escape the pursuing stick,
with sudden curvings of thin
long body. How beautiful
and graceful are his shapes!

Pursuing: Chasing, following

Curvings: Twisting

The snake tries to escape from being hit by the stick that is following it. As the snake crawls, its body twists and turns forming fascinating shapes.

He glides through the water away
from the stroke. O let him go
over the water
into the reeds to hide
without hurt. Small and green
he is harmless even to children.

Glides: Moves

Stroke: Hitting of the stick

Reeds: Water or marsh plants with thick stems

The snake moves through the water in order to save itself. The poet pleads to let it escape and hide behind the thick marshy plants as it is harmless. The small green - coloured snake is harmless even to children.

Along the sand
he lay until observed
and chased away, and now
he vanishes in the ripples
among the green slim reeds.

Vanishes: Disappears

Till it was spotted and chased away by the person holding a stick, it lay quietly in the sand. In order to save itself, the snake disappears in the ripples of the water and hides in the camouflaging green bushes of the marshy plants.

Literary devices

1. Rhyme scheme is absent. The poem is written in free verse.
2. Transferred epithet: the adjective used with a noun refers to a noun other than the one with which it is used.

Pursuing stick - pursuing refers to the person who is holding the stick and not the stick itself.

3. Alliteration: the repetition of a consonant sound in 2 or more consecutive words.

He is harmless - 'h'

Summary

This poem deals with the plight of a snake in a beautiful manner. One day, a snake was lying on the bank of a water body. This water-body could have been a river or a pond. Then a human catches the glimpse of this snake that was lying there peacefully. As is expected from any human, this person becomes terrified after catching a glimpse of the snake and runs after him with a stick. Obviously, as one can expect from a human, the person immediately intends to kill this snake. Now sensing danger, the snake tries to escape from the approaching attack.

In order to run, the snake makes sudden curves in its body. Furthermore, the body of the snake is long and thin. The poet expresses his fascination with the graceful movements of the snake. Moreover, the snake glides through the water in order to save itself from the stroke.

The snake moves through with the aim of saving itself. This is a natural thing for any animal to do. Any animal on sensing would instinctively try to protect itself from the possible harm. It seems that the poet has sympathy for the poor creature. Furthermore, the author pleads the pursuer to let it escape and leave it unharmed. The poet requests the pursuer to not disturb the snake. He expresses his desire to let the snake go without hurting it. It seems that an author is a person with a good heart and clearly has an affection for the living creatures. This affection is something that every human must-have. He says that the snake is green in color. Furthermore, the author says that the snake is small in size. Also, according to the author, the snake is harmless even to children.

As it turns out, the pursuer does not pay attention to the poet's request. Furthermore, the pursuer continues with his chase of the snake. One can see here the resemblance with a persistent evil person here. No matter how many times one asks an evil person to stop, the evil person relentlessly carries on his evil act. While this chasing was going on, the snake escapes the danger in the ripples among the green slim reeds. As such, the snake disappeared and the chase came to an end. The snake hid in the bushes of the marshy plants. The snake had the advantage of the camouflaging bushes that were green in color. Most noteworthy, the snake was able to save its life.

Question Answers

1. What is the snake trying to escape from?

A. The snake is trying to escape the person who is chasing it with a stick and is trying to hit it.

2. Is it a harmful snake? What is its colour?

A. The snake is harmless. It is green in colour.

3. The poet finds the snake beautiful. Find the words he uses to convey its beauty.

A. The words used to describe the snake are beautiful and graceful.

4. What does the poet wish for the snake?

A. The poet wishes that the snake saves itself.

5. Where was the snake before anyone saw it and chased it away? Where does the snake disappear?

A. Before it was seen, it was lying in the sand. It disappears behind the marshy plants.

Extra Questions and Answers

(The given answers are for your idea. Develop your own answers.)

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

What is the snake trying to escape from?

Answer:

The snake is trying to escape from a being hit by a stick, or even worse, being killed. It is being chased by someone with a stick. The person is afraid of the snake and perceives it as a potential threat.

Question 2.

Is the snake harmful?

Answer:

No, it is not a harmful snake as it is not poisonous. The poet says the snake is a green one.

Green snakes are generally garden snakes and are considered harmless as they are not venomous.

Question 3.

Why did the person with a stick attack the snake?

Answer:

The person attacked the snake when he saw it lying on the sand. He was driven by his own fear of snakes and their being venomous that led him to attack the snake to either kill it or drive it away.

Question 4.

What do you learn about the person attacking the snake?

Answer:

The person attacking the snake is governed by his fear of snakes. He wishes to kill or hurt the snake and rushes in to attack the snake, without pausing to consider that the snake is a green garden snake which is not venomous. Moreover, the snake is lying on the sand and is not about to attack anyone. The man is also pitiless as he goes to hurt or kill the snake.

Question 5.

What does the poet wish for the snake?

Answer:

The poet sees the snake as a beautiful creation of Nature. Moreover, it is a green garden snake and not a harmful one. He wishes that it should not be assaulted with the stick. It should be allowed to go under the water into the reeds to hide without being hurt.

Question 6.

Where was the snake before someone saw it and chased it away? Where does the snake disappear?

Answer:

The snake was lying unobserved on the sand till someone saw it and, fearing it, rushed to attack it with a stick. The pursuer chased it away. The snake disappeared in the ripples of the water among the green reeds.

Question 7.

What does the poet mean when he says 'O Let him go'?

Answer:

The poet tells the man chasing the snake with a stick to let the snake go. The poet wishes that the snake should not be hurt and should be allowed to make its escape and reach its destination safely.

Question 8.

'He is harmless even to children.' What does the poet think about the snake?

Answer:

The poet is of the opinion that the snake which is being chased is a green snake of the garden variety and is not venomous. It is not harmful, not even to children who are more vulnerable. He feels the snake should not be hurt and should be allowed to reach its place safely.

Question 9.

What impression do you form of the poet in this poem?

Answer:

The poet loves Nature and all its creations. He finds the snake and its graceful movements beautiful. He is compassionate and does not want the snake harmed. He tries to stop the person with the stick from attacking the snake and is happy to see the snake glide away into the reeds.

Question 10.

What is the central idea of the poem “The Snake Trying”?

Answer:

The poet says that all snakes are not venomous or harmful. Nor do they attack without provocation. Even if a snake is poisonous, it will do us no harm if it doesn't see any danger from us. It is wrong to attack or kill a snake as soon as we see it. But sadly, human beings always try to kill a snake as soon as they see it. All creatures have a right to their life. Like the snake in this poem all try to save themselves in case of danger.

Question 11.

How does the snake look when it tries to escape?

Answer:

The snake was lying on the sand when someone saw it and chased it with a stick. The snake glided away through the water and disappeared among the reeds. It looked beautiful and graceful and its body curved and glided across the water.

Question 12.

Where did the snake finally go? How did the poet view its escape?

Answer:

The snake glided away through the water into the reeds and finally disappeared among the ripples in the green reeds. The poet heaved a sigh of relief when the snake reached there safely

Question 13.

What is the message of the poem ‘The Snake Trying’?

Answer:

The poet conveys the message that we should not attack or kill animals, even animals that may be venomous like snakes. He points out that not all snakes are poisonous; in fact, some of them are quite harmless. Human beings are cruel and attack snakes without provocation, based on their own fears. Even if a snake is poisonous, it will not harm anyone until it perceives some danger because a snake only bites in self-protection.

Question 14.

Is the snake in the poem 'The Snake Trying' a victim or a threat?

Answer:

The snake in the poem 'The Snake Trying' is a victim and not a threat. It is a harmless snake, who is lying on the sand till he is chased by a human being with a stick. Yet, despite being attacked, the snake makes good its escape, rather than retaliate.

Long Answer Type

Question .

Why does the man want to kill the snake? How does the snake protect itself?

Answer:

Seeing the snake lying on the sand, the man sees it as a potential threat and reacts to it in that manner. He takes a stick and rushes to attack the snake. He tries to kill it, or at least hurt it. The snake, which is a garden snake, and not dangerous even to children, makes good its escape. He does not react even to provocation.

He only tries to escape before the man can reach it and kill it. The movement of the snake is very graceful and elegant. The snake does not stick to one straight path but wends its way in and out of the path. At last, the snake floats over the water and hides itself among the green reeds.
