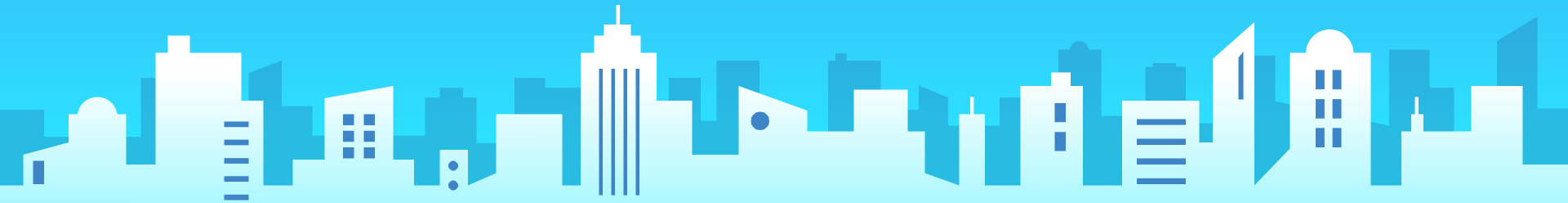


Fire & Ice



About Poet

Robert Frost was an American poet who depicted realistic New England life through language and situations familiar to the common man. He won four Pulitzer Prizes for his work and spoke at John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration.

Fire and Ice Poem Introduction

Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice" expresses the profound idea that the world would end in either of two ways, either by ice or fire. Both the components are compared with self-destructing human emotions: hatred and desire. The poem, very artistically, underpins the philosophy that we let our emotions rule us and if don't control them they will surely destroy everything around us. Similarly, he thinks fire and ice, both are just as competent in bringing the world to a catastrophic end.

**Some say the world will end in fire
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.**



Word meanings

Desire- a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen

Favour- approval, support

The poem expresses the profound idea that the world would end in either of two ways, either by ice or fire. One group is of the opinion that someday the Earth's core will get so heated up that it would lead to fire destroying the earth's surface. On the other hand, the second group says that if the temperature goes down to an extent that makes life on Earth impossible, it would have the same catastrophic effect.

The poet then compares fire and ice with the destructive features of human emotions; desire and hatred. He says that from what he is aware about “fiery desires”, he would favour the ones who say that it would be fire. By saying so, he brings about the idea that human beings let their emotions rule them and the consequence of unmonitored longing is chaos.



**But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.**



Word meanings

Perish- die

Suffice- be sufficient

Then by not waving off the first option of fire, he considers if the world has to expire twice, ice would be equally competent in ending it. He brings about a contrast between “ice” and “hatred”. The human capability of insensitivity and hatred has the potential for inner destruction. Though slow and steady, it has the same effect that desire has on us. So if given an option between fire and ice, ice would be just as good as fire to destroy the world.

Fire and Ice Literary devices

1. Rhyming scheme- Aba

abc

bcb

2. Assonance- it is repetition of vowel sounds in same line. The repetition is at different places in different words.

Example- The long sound of “o” in “I hold with those who favour fire”

3. Alliteration- alliteration is the repetition of a consonant sound at the start of two or more closely placed words.

Example- The sound of “f” in “favour fire”, “w” in “world will”

4. Imagery- Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses. Example- “Some say the world will end in fire”

5. Anaphora- the repetition of a word or expression at the start of two or more consecutive lines.

Example - “Some say” is repeated at the start of lines 1 and 2.

6. Personification- Personification is to give human qualities to inanimate objects. In this poem, “fire” and “ice” are capable of destruction. Thus, the poet personifies fire and ice by giving them mind and power to destroy anything.

7. Enjambment- it is defined as the thought or clause that does not come to an end at a line break, rather it moves over to the next line.

Example- “From what I’ve tasted of desire

I hold with those who favor fire”

Fire and Ice Summary

Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice" is a strong symbolic poem where fire is used as the emotion of desire and ice, that of hatred. He has used the idea of two groups who have their own possible explanation for the end of the world. One is of the opinion that fire alone, can destroy each and every possibility of life on Earth while the other thinks that if ice as a result of extreme low temperatures could cover the earth's surface, it would lead to the end of the world. Both the components are compared with self-destructing human emotions: desire and hatred. The poet is originally of the opinion that he has been very closely associated with the "fiery desires" and considers it capable of bringing human beings on the verge of destruction.

Thus, he considers fire as more competent for destruction. But then he thinks that “icy hatred” is just as capable of ruining humans, though slowly and steadily. Therefore, if Earth was to end twice, ice would be just as good as fire. If fire would lead to rapid destruction, ice would lead to silent damage. Similarly, if fire is pure passion, ice is pure reason. Thus, the poem, very artistically, underpins the philosophy that we let our emotions rule us and if don't control them they will surely bring us all on the verge of chaos.



THANK YOU

