

PV Log: (circle one) **Poem** / Movie / Picture / LyricDate 11/5/13Title "Journey of the Magi"Author / Director / T.S. Eliot

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

Found on Shmoop.com while searching for poems

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

This poem from its title is presumably the journey of the three kings riding on camels to find Jesus Christ near Christmas. Usually more emphasis is put on what happens when the three magi arrive and how they gave gifts to Christ, but this poem gives us a different perspective. This poem is about the rough, hard journey the magi took to get there. The narrator describes how hard it was to get there with no sleep and inhospitable towns. When they finally get to Bethlehem, the villagers won't help them find Jesus. Finally they find him. The last part is a reflection from one of the kings on the journey many years later. He doesn't know if it is a good or bad thing. He says he wants to die since his traditional way of religion will soon die with the changes that Christ will bring

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

The theme of this poem is clearly suffering for a cause. The magi suffer for days to get to Christ. They believe he is a new savior, and so they physically suffer to get to him. This poem is all about beginnings and endings. It is soon to be the end of old religious ways and the magi along with them, and the beginning of Christianity and a new world in general. Sometimes, we just need to forget the past and start over, and that is what this poem is all about.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

Jesus represents a new beginning, while the magi represent the old customs and traditions. The old traditions pay their respect to the new ones and then gradually fade off into the distance. The poem is set up into three main parts. The first describes how tough the journey is, the second describes arriving in Bethlehem, and the third is the magi's reflection and questioning of himself.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections / Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

Obviously the hardships the magi had to go through to find Jesus are unpoetic, but their goal was poetic. It was poetic to stop what you are doing and embark on a journey to find a newborn child who one day could be a savior. The hardships the magi encountered represent the old world. They are rude, cheat people, and seem to have forgotten about God. This is exactly what Christ came to change. Change can be poetic, especially change for the better.

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

The Journey of the Magi

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The was deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires gong out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty, and charging high prices.:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down

This: were we lead all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I have seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.