

THE FIRST SNOWFALL

James Russell Lowell

The snow had begun in the gloaming,¹
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

5 Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine² too dear for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

10 From sheds new-roofed with Carrara³
Came Chanticleer's⁴ muffled crow,
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window
The noiseless work of the sky,
15 And the sudden flurries of snowbirds,
Like brown leaves whirling by. **H**

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn⁵
Where a little headstone stood;
How the flakes were folding it gently,
20 As did robins the babes in the wood. **I**

Up spoke our own little Mabel,
Saying, "Father, who makes it snow?"
And I told of the good All-father
Who cares for us here below.

1. **gloaming:** twilight.
2. **ermine:** the expensive white fur of a type of weasel.
3. **Carrara:** Carrara marble, a white marble named after the Italian city where it is mined.
4. **Chanticleer's:** a rooster's.
5. **Auburn:** Mount Auburn Cemetery, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

COMMON CORE L.5b

Language Coach

Synonyms Often the word *dear* (line 6) is used as a term of affection. However, *dear* can also mean "high-priced." Other words with similar meanings, or **synonyms**, of *dear* include *costly*, *valuable*, and *precious*. Read lines 5–8, and write down the words related to wealth or luxury. How are the descriptions in the poem enhanced by these words?

- H MOOD**
Reread lines 1–16. How would you describe the mood created by the poet's use of **rhyme and meter**? Explain your answer.

- I PARAPHRASE**
Paraphrase lines 17–20. How does the mood shift in these lines?

Deer Hunt

Because the warden is a cousin, my
mountain friends hunt in summer when the deer
cherish each rattler-ridden spring, and I
have waited hours by a pool in fear
that manhood would require I shoot or that
the steady drip of the hill would dull my ear
to a snake whispering near the log I sat
upon, and listened to the yelping cheer
of dogs and men resounding ridge to ridge.
I flinched at every lonely rifle crack,
my knuckles whitening where I gripped the edge
of age and clung, like retching, sinking back,
then gripping once again the monstrous gun—
since I, to be a man, had taken one.

Judson Jerome

Dunning, Stephen, et al. Reflections on a Gift of
Watermelon Pickle... + Other Modern Verse 292
New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1966.
Print.