

- Summary of Paper Boat

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The poem "Paper Boat" by Rabindranath Tagore beautifully captures the innocence and hope of a child who floats paper boats down a running stream. Each boat carries the child's name and the name of their village, symbolizing a desire to connect with the unknown world beyond. The child loads the boats with shiuli flowers, representing purity and the dawn, hoping they reach a safe land. The poem also evokes a magical atmosphere where clouds become sails and fairies of sleep sail the boats at night, carrying baskets full of dreams. The imagery reflects themes of innocence, hope, imagination, and the longing for connection.

Key Elements

- **Theme:** Innocence and hope, imagination, connection with the world, and dreams.
- **Imagery:** Paper boats, running stream, shiuli flowers, clouds as sails, fairies of sleep.
- **Symbolism:** Paper boats symbolize messages or hopes sent out into the world; shiuli flowers symbolize purity and new beginnings.
- **Poet:** Rabindranath Tagore, a renowned Indian poet known for his lyrical and philosophical poetry.

Textual Evidence

"Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream." – This line shows the repetitive, hopeful act of sending messages into the unknown.

"I load my little boats with shiuli flower from our garden, and hope that these blooms of the dawn will be carried safely to land in the night." – The flowers symbolize purity and hope for safe passage.

"The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and the lading is their baskets full of dreams." – This line personifies sleep and dreams, adding a magical quality to the poem.

Solved Example

Question: What do the paper boats symbolize in the poem?

Answer: The paper boats symbolize the child's hopes and messages sent out into the world. They represent innocence and the desire to connect with others beyond their immediate surroundings.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- What does the child write on the paper boats?
- What flowers does the child put on the boats?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the clouds described as "white bulging sails".
- What is the role of the "fairies of sleep" in the poem?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Discuss the theme of hope and imagination in "Paper Boat" with reference to the poem.
- Analyze how Rabindranath Tagore uses imagery to create a magical atmosphere in the poem.

Answer Key

- The child writes their name and the name of their village on the paper boats.
- The child puts shiuli flowers on the boats, symbolizing purity and dawn.
- The clouds are imagined as sails, giving the boats a magical quality and showing the child's imaginative view of nature.
- The "fairies of sleep" symbolize dreams and the peaceful journey of the boats at night, adding a mystical element.
- The poem expresses hope through the child's act of sending boats with messages, and imagination through the magical descriptions of clouds and fairies.
- Tagore uses vivid imagery such as the running stream, bulging sails, and fairies to create a dreamlike, enchanting atmosphere.

Quick Reference

- **Poem:** Paper Boat
- **Poet:** Rabindranath Tagore
- **Themes:** Innocence, hope, imagination, connection
- **Key Symbols:** Paper boats, shiuli flowers, clouds, fairies

Glossary

- **Shiuli flower:** A fragrant flower that blooms in autumn, symbolizing purity and new beginnings.
- **Lading:** Loading or carrying a load.
- **Bulging:** Swelling or protruding outward.
- **Fairies of sleep:** A metaphor for the peaceful and magical nature of dreams.