

The Earthen Goblet

O silent goblet! Red from head to heel,
 How did you feel
 When you were being twirled
 Upon the potter's wheel
 Before the potter gave you to the world?



'I felt a conscious impulse in my clay
 To break away
 From the great potter's hand that burned so warm,
 I felt a vast
 Feeling of sorrow to be cast
 Into my present form.'

'Before that fatal hour
 That saw me captive on the potter's wheel
 And cast into his crimson goblet-sleep,
 I used to feel
 The fragrant friendship of a little flower
 Whose root was in my bosom buried deep.'



'The Potter has drawn out the living breath of me
 And given me a form which is the death of me,
 My past unshapely natural state was best
 With just one flower flaming through my breast.'

- *Harindranath Chattopadhyaya*

Harindranath Chattopadhyay was born on 2 April 1898, in Hyderabad in a Bengali Hindu Kulin Brahmin family to Aghornath Chattopadhyay and Barada Sundari Devi. He was a multi talented personality as an Indian English poet, a dramatist, an actor, a musician and a member of the 1st Lok Sabha from Vijayawada constituency. He was the younger brother of Sarojini Naidu, the first woman President of Indian National Congress. He is famous for poems like *Noon* and *Shaper Shaped*.





Glossary

- twirl (*v*) : turn something round and round.
fatal (*adj*) : causing death
captive (*n*) : prisoner



Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is 'I' in the poem? Who is the speaker in the first stanza?
2. What does the phrase 'fragrant friendship' convey about the goblet's relationship with the flower?
3. The poem has the expression 'burned so warm'. Does the poet have tender feelings towards the goblet or the earth? What is your opinion?
4. The goblet has certain feelings towards its present life and past life. Which life does it like? Why?
5. What common things do you notice between the expression 'living breath' of me and 'natural state'?

Literary devices

The devices which can be used to recognize or identify the literary text are called literary devices. Literary devices are useful to interpret or analyse the literary texts.

Tone: The implied attitude towards the subject of the poem. Is it hopeful, pessimistic, dreary, worried? A poet conveys tone by combining all of the elements listed above to create a precise impression on the reader.

Genre: A category used to classify literary works, usually by form, technique or content (e.g., prose, poetry).

Satire: A literary tone used to ridicule or make fun of human vice or weakness.

Point of View - pertains to who tells the story and how it is told. The point of view of a story can sometimes indirectly establish the author's intentions.

Metaphor vs. Simile : A metaphor is direct relationship where one thing is another (e.g. "Juliet is the sun"). A simile, on the other hand, is indirect and usually only likened to be similar to something else. Similes usually use "like" or "as" (e.g. "Your eyes are like the ocean").