

**9<sup>th</sup> February 2022, HS English**

**Topic : Asleep in the Valley**

**Answers to questions received from Students.**

**Q. Why does the poet repeatedly use the word ' sun ' in all the stanzas ?**

A. The sun is the source of energy for life to go on . Usage of the sun repeatedly brings out the futility of war that the poet is trying to establish. Even the sun is unable to do anything for the soldier who is dead. Herein lies the pity and horror of war.

**Q. Why does the poet ask Nature to keep the soldier warm ?**

A. Nature is supposed to be the saviour and mother of human beings. The poet is concerned that the young soldier lying in the valley may catch cold and urges Nature to save him. This is one of the many images used by the poet to bring out the uselessness of war. It takes away life which mother Nature too cannot bring back.

**Q. Where is the similarity between the futility of the sunlight as well as the celebration of the nature and the futility of the war ?**

A. The similarity lies in the fact that all these images are employed by the poet to express the horror and tragedy of war. Sunlight is the source of life on this Earth but it

cannot revive the life of the dead soldier. Nature with its splendour and bountiful elements create a perfect contrast against which the poet announces that the soldier is dead. This contrast shocks us and conveys the pity of war. Futility of war brings out the irrelevant loss of young lives.

**Q. Describe the smile of the soldier.**

A. The soldier has an innocent child like smile on his face. Soldiers are not inherently violent. The war mongers drive them to the battlefield and they kill their opponents as instruments of war. Thus the dead soldier bears no deception in his expression while in his eternal sleep.

**Q. Why does the stream look silvery ?**

A. The bright light of the sun falls on the vibrant water of the stream to produce a silvery effect.

**Q How can it be said that the soldier is sleeping in peace ?**

A. Amongst the elegance of Nature the soldier is lying in his eternal sleep. Just as Rimbaud celebrates life through the abundance of Nature, he end on a note of acceptance of death. Nothing can anymore make the dead soldier suffer. This state of being in an undisturbed never-ending sleep signifies peace.

**Q. How do you know that the valley is rich in flora and fauna ?**

A. The valley as described by the poet is green, which indicates existence of abundant plant life. The presence of water and light is expressive of ideal conditions of flora and fauna to survive. Moreover the ferns and bushes creating a pillow for the soldier, flowers adorning his feet, the heavy undergrowth mentioned, all show how rich in vegetation the valley is.

**Q. What kind of attitude towards war does the poet Arthur Rimbaud express in his poem “ Asleep in the Valley “ ?**

A. Rimbaud himself was a soldier in the Dutch colonial army and understood the futility of war. He believed that war cannot solve any problem. In this poem the life of the young soldier had no importance and Nature, however caring, can do nothing . No result came out of this death. Unnecessary and merciless destruction of young lives brings out the anti-war attitude of Rimbaud.

**Q. What does the word ' hollow ' signify here ?**

A. The word hollow here signifies the valley that has been described by the poet. A valley is a low area of land between hills or mountains, usually with a stream or river flowing through it. This space is referred to as hollow by the poet.

**Q. What is meant by the phrase ' sun-soaked bed'?**

A. Sun is the source Of life on earth . The valley absorbs abundant sunlight for thick vegetation to grow. The green grass bed contain in it the light that the sun fills the valley with. The word soaked suggests that the grass bed is saturated with sunlight .