**UNIT – 3**

**POETRY**

**1 – SNAKE**

**BY D.H.** **Lawrence**

**AUTHOR INTRODUCTION**:

David Herbert Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930) was an English writer, novelist, poet and essayist. His works reflect on modernity, industrialization, emotional health, vitality, spontaneity and instinct. His best known novels—Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love, and Lady Chatterley's Lover

**INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM:**

Snake’ by D.H. Lawrence is a sixteen stanza poem that is separated intostanzas of varying lengths. Some of these stanzas contain two lines, while the longest stretches out to seventeen. They are all written in free verse. This means that there is no specific pattern of rhyme or rhythm. The meter changes throughout, allowing Lawrence to alter the speed with which a reader moves through the poem.

**SUMMARY OF THE POEM:**

‘Snake’ by D.H. Lawrence describes a speaker’s various interactions with a snake that came to drink at his water-trough.

The poem begins with the speaker describing coming upon the snake in his pyjamas. He was unprepared to see it but immediately happy it was there. Although pleased to see the animal, and more than willing to wait his turn, his inner voice was talking to him. The “voice of his education” was telling him to kill the snake—that he was only refraining from doing so because he was a coward.

The speaker admits that he was frightened of the snake, but did not want to drive it away. He liked looking at it and felt honored that it had come to him. Finally, the snake stopped drinking and wriggled through a hole in the wall. The speaker didn’t like to watch this happen and threw a log at the wall. This only causes the snake to disappear faster and makes the speaker feel regret for his petty action. This is something he says he has to atone for at the end of ‘Snake.’

**2 – ULYSSES**

BY Alfred Tennyson

**AUTHOR INTRODUCTION**:

Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson FRS (6 August 1809 – 6 October 1892) was an English poet. He was the Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign. In 1829, Tennyson was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal at Cambridge for one of his first pieces, "Timbuktu". He published his first solo collection of poems, Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, in 1830. "Claribel" and "Mariana", which remain some of Tennyson's most celebrated poems, were included in this volume. Although described by some critics as overly sentimental, his verse soon proved popular and brought Tennyson to the attention of well-known writers of the day, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Tennyson's early poetry, with its medievalism and powerful visual imagery, was a major influence on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM:**

Ulysses" is a poem in blank verse by the Victorian poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), written in 1833 and published in 1842 in his well-received second volume of poetry. An oft-quoted poem, it is a popular example of the dramatic monologue. Facing old age, mythical hero Ulysses describes his discontent and restlessness upon returning to his kingdom, Ithaca, after his far-ranging travels. Despite his reunion with his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus, Ulysses yearns to explore again.

**SUMMARY :**

Ulysses (Odysseus) declares that there is little point in his staying home “by this still hearth” with his old wife, doling out rewards and punishments for the unnamed masses who live in his kingdom.

Still speaking to himself he proclaims that he “cannot rest from travel” but feels compelled to live to the fullest and swallow every last drop of life. He has enjoyed all his experiences as a sailor who travels the seas, and he considers himself a symbol for everyone who wanders and roams the earth. His travels have exposed him to many different types of people and ways of living. They have also exposed him to the “delight of battle” while fighting the Trojan War with his men.

Ulysses declares that his travels and encounters have shaped who he is: “I am a part of all that I have met,” he asserts. And it is only when he is traveling that the “margin” of the globe that he has not yet traversed shrink and fade, and cease to goad him.

Ulysses declares that it is boring to stay in one place, and that to remain stationary is to rust rather than to shine; to stay in one place is to pretend that all there is to life is the simple act of breathing, whereas he knows that in fact life contains much novelty, and he longs to encounter this. His spirit yearns constantly for new experiences that will broaden his horizons; he wishes “to follow knowledge like a sinking star” and forever grow in wisdom and in learning.

Ulysses now speaks to an unidentified audience concerning his son Telemachus, who will act as his successor while the great hero resumes his travels: he says, “This is my son, mine own Telemachus, to whom I leave the scepter and the isle.” He speaks highly but also patronizingly of his son’s capabilities as a ruler, praising his prudence, dedication, and devotion to the gods. Telemachus will do his work of governing the island while Ulysses will do his work of traveling the seas: “He works his work, I mine.”

In the final stanza, Ulysses addresses the mariners with whom he has worked, traveled, and weathered life’s storms over many years. He declares that although he and they are old, they still have the potential to do something noble and honorable before “the long day wanes.” He encourages them to make use of their old age because “ ’tis not too late to seek a newer world.” He declares that his goal is to sail onward “beyond the sunset” until his death. Perhaps, he suggests, they may even reach the “Happy Isles,” or the paradise of perpetual summer described in Greek mythology where great heroes like the warrior Achilles were believed to have been taken after their deaths. Although Ulysses and his mariners are not as strong as they were in youth, they are “strong in will” and are sustained by their resolve to push onward relentlessly: “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

**3 - THE VILLAGE SCHOOLMASTER**

by [*Oliver Goldsmith*](https://www.poetrynook.com/poet/oliver-goldsmith)

**AUTHOR INTRODUCTION**:

Oliver Goldsmith (10 November 1728 – 4 April 1774) was an Anglo-Irish novelist, playwright, dramatist and poet, who is best known for his novel The Vicar of Wakefield (1766), his pastoral poem The Deserted Village (1770), and his plays The Good-Natur'd Man (1768) and She Stoops to Conquer (1771, first performed in 1773). He is thought to have written the classic children's tale The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes (1765).

**INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM:**

The poem "The Village Schoolmaster" by Oliver Goldsmith is an extract from his famous poem The Deserted Village. The word "village" in the title clearly suggests that the poem is set in a rural area, probably where the speaker lived. The poem portrays a realistic picture and the speaker's sentiments about a teacher. The Schoolmaster presented in the poem might be the poet’s teacher Thomas Byrne. The poem is about the characteristics of the Schoolmaster who is respected by all the villagers due to his knowledge and interest in reading. It also talks about how things could change in the course of time, a kind of looking back at past

**SUMMARY:**

The village school master runs his little school in a small village. The poem starts with a description of the location of the school. The school is situated next to an irregular fence which is dilapidated and also leaning over. The road leading towards the school is lined with flowers, which are not being admired or appreciated by the people. The school is mentioned as a ‘noisy mansion’ following the rules of the school master. The village teacher is equipped to manage a class and teaches his lessons there. He is a very strict disciplinarian and also a stern person to observe. The speaker says that he and all other truants know him well because they have undergone the master’s rage. The students have learnt to sense the mood of the teacher by observing his face. The day’s trouble is noticed from his forehead.

The school master is a contradiction. Although he is strict, he is kind and good-humoured. He tells many jokes. Whenever he tells some jokes, the children laugh with pretended joy. If they notice any sign of anger on his face they will spread the news throughout the classroom. But basically the schoolmaster is a kind man. If at all he has any fault, it is because of his intense love for learning.

The schoolmaster is admired and respected by the villagers. Everyone in the village praise him for his great knowledge. He can write, do mathematics, and predict weather patterns and tides. It is also assumed that he can do accurate survey and determine borders easily. He can also debate intelligently and have discussions with the village parson, a person who was greatly respected by his parishioners. The master uses difficult words and emotional language to convince and impress the poorly educated village people. The parson also accepts the master’s skill in debate. Sometimes even after being defeated in arguments, the schoolmaster continue to speak. The village people wonder how his small head could contain so much knowledge.

Though the poem presents the pleasant remembrances of the poet about the schoolmaster, the poem ends in a sad tone. The last two lines tell the present condition. The great fame of the schoolteacher has become a thing of past. At present the school where he faced many successes is forgotten.