

## PROCESS WORK

**Tone:** repulsion; dislike. Then changes to pity; sympathy

**Mood:** futility; desolation

**Theme:** desolation of humanity's subsistence: the utter helplessness of humanity in the face of adversity, as well as our own neglect of self and others

**Stanza One:** Introduces beggar as a repulsive outcast; a thing. How?

- **"sprawled in the dust..."** → beggar is treated immediately like a thing that has been thrown out - suggests shabby, lawless being.
- **"target..."** → (metaphor) beggar continues to be described as a thing - a convenience for others to use; singled out as an object for attack. "Dogs" and "flies" solidly establishes sub-human existence of beggar; "flies" suggest filth, a disease. That he is a target suggests his passiveness and helplessness.
- **"heap of verminous rags and matted hair"** → (metaphor) image of beggar is sustained as a thing : "verminous" is associated with the "flies", "matted hair" is associated with filth, dust, neglect of physical hygiene.
- **"he watches with cunning reptile eyes"** → (metaphor) a dramatic contrast: how can an inhuman bag of bones be capable of subtle and crafty scheming? Likened to an image of a "reptile" - like a snake, he watches, waiting for his prey. The pronoun "he" is used to remind us that this is a person and our revulsion is emphasised, for how can a human being be like this?
- **"noseless, smallpoxed face creased in a sneer"** → "noseless", "smallpoxed" suggests disease, leprosy which adds to the beggars repulsiveness. "Sneer" carries suggestion of the cunning reptile. To "sneer" shows arrogance.

**Stanza Two:** Although the poet sustains the image of the beggar as a repulsive outcast, he introduces the sub-theme - our neglect and inadequacies in dealing with the problem of human neglect. How?

- **"yellow stumps of teeth"** → (metaphor) physical ugliness is emphasised; "yellow" is colour of disease and decay, rotten. Image of "stumps" is more appropriate for an animal than a human being.
- **"whines"** → (metaphor) cringing sound associated with animals.
- **"perceiving that we bear the curse of pity"** → poet leaves the description of the beggar and comments on the general attitude to poverty and disease. "The curse of pity" : "curse" suggests bad; "pity" suggests "good". We don't want to know about it, but if we do we should show pity and offer our help.
- **"grotesque mask of death"** → (metaphor) physical deformity and sub-human existence of beggar is emphasised. How can this thing/animal be really alive? "Mask of death" symbolises the "face of death" - an image of death staring at us.
- **"with hands like claws about his begging bowl"** → (simile) image is of a skeleton; death-like hands clinging to his only source of existence (the begging bowl).

**Stanza Three:** Theme of suffering. Our feelings change from repulsion to sympathy. How?

- **"lying all alone"** → no longer "sprawled" but "lying" on the ground. The tone here is one of quietness - "all alone" suggests that he is no longer the target for others. It is the time to be aware of his suffering.
- **"shadow of a crumbling wall"** → "shadow" suggests absence of light; darkness. Image of loneliness with the shadow of death near. "crumbling" suggests decay and ruin; the lack of a home.
- **"lost in the trackless jungle of his pain"** → (metaphor) pain racks his entire body, so much that it consumes his total energy. "Trackless jungle" suggests the amount of pain - endless - filling and crammed into every part of his body. No escape from this pain.
- **"clutching the pitiless red earth in vain"** → (personification) "clutching" suggests the beggar's desperation. "Red" personifies the blood of life, nourishment, energy and strength, and "earth" is the sole source of humanity's existence. Even the earth is without pity. All "in vain" - there is no solution, no help.
- **"whimpering like a stricken animal"** → (simile) emphasises the beggar's total suffering; his total defeat.