

# The School Boy

BY

WILLIAM BLAKE



Class VIII – Honeydew



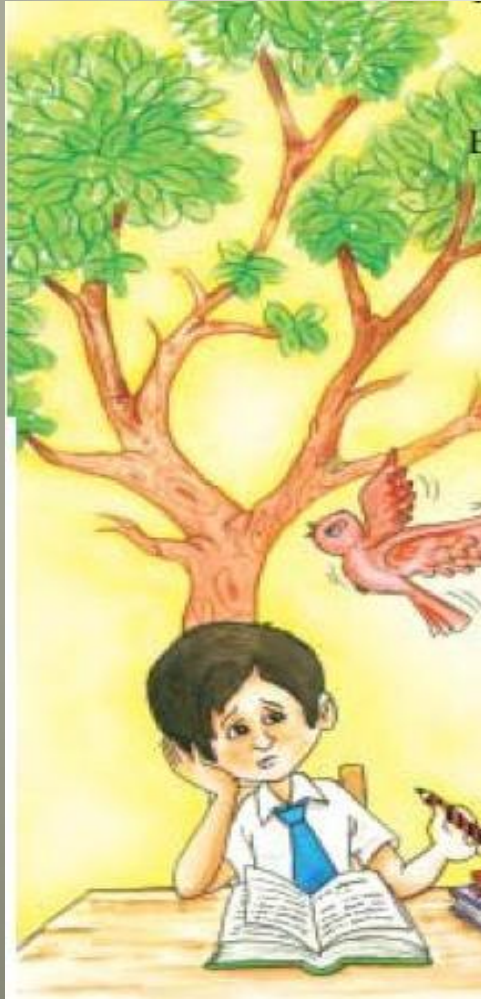
# ABOUT THE POET



**WILLIAM BLAKE** (28 NOVEMBER 1757 – 12 AUGUST 1872) WAS AN ENGLISH POET, PAINTER, AND PRINTMAKER. LARGELY UNRECOGNIZED DURING HIS LIFETIME, **BLAKE** IS NOW CONSIDERED A SEMINAL FIGURE IN THE HISTORY OF THE POETRY AND VISUAL ARTS OF THE ROMANTIC AGE.

# Theme of the Poem

## **“The School Boy”**



“The School Boy” is a short poem that is separated into six stanzas. The poem is penned from the perspective of a young boy who is fed up of formal teaching and hates being trapped in the class. The poem also highlights the truth that happiness lies in freedom.

# Stanza 1



In the first stanza of the poem the school boy says that he loves to rise in a summer morning when the birds sing on every tree, the huntsman blows his horn far away and the skylark sings with him. The stanza is

about all the things that make the school boy happy.



## Stanza 2

All his joy disappears when it is time to go to school. He feels very suffocated and disappointed under the strict supervision of his teacher. He really feels sad for himself and his classmates who are forced to confine in the classroom bearing with the unpleasant stare of the teacher.



# Stanza 3

The boy continues to be in the state of depression as he has to sit in the classroom unwillingly. He sits drooping and spends anxious hours in the class without finding any delight in the books. He is tired, and dull showering of words fail to teach him. Here Learning's bower refers to the classroom and showering of words refers to volley of words that comes from the teacher in quick succession.



# Stanza 4



The poet compares a child with a bird. A bird which is born just to chirp beautifully and fly freely in the sky, cannot sing sweet songs if it is caged. The boy feels like a caged bird who is not free to do anything at his own will. A caged bird droops its tender wings and forgets to fly. In the same way the school boy forgets to be happy.



## Stanza 5

Now the child appeals to his parents to save his childhood. According to him children are like tender plants who should be dealt with care. If the buds are nipped, how can these bloom. If the plants are stripped, how there will be joy in springtime.

It implies that if childhood pleasures are suppressed, he grows into a pessimistic adult.





# Stanza 6

In these concluding lines the poet emphasizes that if this happens i.e. plants are deprived of buds and flowers, there will be no joy let in the summer. This will result in flowerless and fruitless summer that will be utterly unattractive. In the same way a child who is deprived of natural joy and delight in the childhood stage can never grow as a cheerful and optimistic person.



# • Glossary

- Cruel eye outworn – the unkind stare
- Dismay – disappointment
- Drooping – depressed with head down
- Anxious – worried
- Learning's bower – classroom
- Dreary – cheerless
- Nip'd – crushed
- Strip'd – deprived

# Worksheet

Q. Read the extracts given on below and answer the questions that follow each:

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1. I love to rise in summer morn  
when the birds sing on every tree;

The distant huntsman winds his horn,

And the skylark sings with me

O! what a sweet company

Now answer the following questions –

- a) Who is 'I' in the above lines?
- b) When does he arise?
- c) Find a word from the above stanza which is opposite of 'near' ?
- d) Name the poet of these lines.

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2. But to go to school in a summer morn,

O! It drives all joy away;

Under a cruel eye outworn,

The little ones spend the day,

In sighing and dismay.

i) Who speaks these lines?

(a) A little boy

(b) The poet himself

(c) A school peon

(d) A school teacher

ii) Whose eyes are cruel?

(a) Principal's

(b) Teachers'

(c) Senior students'

(d) Classmates'

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ii) Those spending the day in dismay are

(a) The little children

(c) The teachers

(b) The office staff

(d) None of these

ii) Which word in the above stanza means 'disappointment'

(a) outworn

(c) dismay

(b) sighing

(d) None of these

# Assignment

- Answer the following questions:
  1. How does the child feel in the morning?
  2. What does the child feel at school?
  3. Why does the child compare himself to a caged bird?
  4. What does the child appeal to the parents?

Thank You  
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