

Summary of the Poem

The poem "Palanquin Bearers" has been written by Sarojini Naidu. She is called the Nightingale of India. In this poem, she gives the imagination of feelings of palanquin bearers about the bride while carrying her to her in-laws. The bearers say that the bride is like a flower in the wind that sways while they carry her in the palanquin. She is like a bird on the foam of a stream, like a laugh that floats from the lips of dream and she is very soft and delicate as a pearl on a string that is why they carry her lightly. They go on carrying her on their shoulders enjoying the travel by singing happily on the way.

The bearers in the poem compare the bride with the dew of their song that shines like a star. They also compare her with the ray of the curved tide that springs when the sunlight falls on it. It seems no burden on their shoulders. They sing and move easily to carry her along the way to her in-laws. The poem shows the conjuncture or critical moment for a bride and her parents.

Q1. What are the feelings of the palanquin bearers as they carry the princess inside the palanquin?

Ans. The palanquin bearers feel the princess like a pearl on the string which light, soft and delicate. They compare her with a flower, a bird on the foam of stream. They carry her lightly and her childhood home.

Q2. Lightly, O lightly we bear her along; she sways like a flower in the wind of our song. What are these opening lines of the poem suggestive of? Do you think that the palanquin bearers are sensitive to the presence of the bride?

Ans. These opening lines suggest that there is something delicate in the palanquin that needs to be carried carefully. These lines show the conjuncture moment for the bride and her parents. Yes, the palanquin bearers are sensitive to the presence of the bride in the palanquin that is why they carry the palanquin very lightly and softly.

Q3. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? Pick out the pairs of rhyming words in the poem.

Ans. The poem has an 'aa bb cc' type of rhyme scheme. Following are the pairs of rhyming words in the poem.

Along. . . Song

Stream. . . Dream

Sing....String

Tide....Bride.

Learning about the literary device

Q1. In, line 4 the poet says, 'She floats like a laugh from the lips of a dream' and in, line 10 she writes, 'She falls like a tear from the eyes of a bride.' Do you think that the poet has deliberately used the device of contrast? Why has she done so?

Ans. The first line shows the innocence. The bride does not know what is going to be next because dreams are imaginary, they are not real. In the next line, the bride knows she has to leave everything and has to live a new life in a new home until her death. The poet is a lady herself. She might have gone through this situation so she makes the readers realize the feelings of a bride.

Q2. Simile: a figure of speech used to compare the qualities of two objects or things using words such as or 'as'. For example

a. The poet compares the bride to a flower.

b. She hangs like a star in the dew of a song. The poem is full of similes. Pick out all the similes used by the poet in the poem.

Ans. Flower, bird on the foam of a stream, pearl on a string, star in the dew of song, beam on the brow of the tide, and tear from the eyes of a bride are the similes used by the poet in the poem.