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# A Hard Frost

## Theme

Appearance vs Reality

## Tone and mood

Whimsical

Mesmerising

## Vocabulary

Changeling - something exchanged secretly

Precocious - developed earlier than usual

Amorphous - without a specific form

Disconsolate - without comfort

Aconite - flower

Snowdrop - drooping white flower

Flounce - impatient movement

Filigree - Delicate

Clods - Lumps of Earth

## Form

2 Stanzas - similar length. No traditional rhyme scheme + lines

## Stanza 1

- 1 A frost came in the night and stole my world
- 2 And left this changeling for it - a precocious
- 3 Image of Spring, too brilliant to be true:
- 4 White lilac on the window-pane, each grass-blade
- 5 Furred like a catkin, maydrift loading the hedge

Line 1 is **personification** - frost is personified as a thief who steals from the speaker. "changeling" implies an imposter or fraud

"Dash" implies more info to follow. Line 1+2 comments on how the world's appearance has been altered by a layer of frost. Precocious Image suggests a premature imitation. Line 3 is a picturesque image of nature is deceiving. Line 4 is extended metaphor - compare the image of frost on a window to different features of spring. Line 5 is a simile and metaphor - frost on the hedge being compared to spring blossoms.

- 6 The elms behind the house are elms no longer
- 7 But blossomers in crystal stems of the mist
- 8 That hangs yet in the valley below, amorphous
- 9 As the blind tissue whence creation formed

Elm trees do not look like themselves. Line 7 has 2 metaphors - elm trees compared to crystal flowers - suggests that elm trees are the source from which mist grows. "mist" gives a mysterious atmosphere. "Amorphous" meaning shapeless. Line 9 is a simile - the mist compared to the matter that existed before the world was created - suggests infinite possibilities for growth. Life will come from here. In Stanza 1 the tone is distrustful. Suggests the frost is deceiving.

## Stanza 2

- 10 The sun looks out and the fields blaze with diamonds
- 11 Mockery Spring, to lend this bridal gear
- 12 For a few hours to a raw country maid,
- 13 Then leave her all disconsolate with old fairings
- 14 Of aconite and snowdrop! No, not here

Line 10 is personification - the sun is given the ability to look.

Metaphor - frost on the fields compared to sparkling flames. "Blaze" is heat and contrasts cold frost. "Mockery Spring" is being made fun of. "Bridal gear" is a metaphor - comparing the white dress to the white frost blanket. Line 12 frost personified as a cruel person who allows a peasant to look beautiful for a short period.

**Metaphor** - line 13 - winter compared to a poor girl who will be left heartbroken once frost melts. "old fairings of exonite and snowdrop" images of spring  
"!" - Exclamation mark - conveys his extreme disappointment. "No, not here" - tone changes from disapproving to defiant.

- 15 Amid this flounce and filigree of death  
16 Is the real transformation scene in progress,  
17 But deep below where frost  
18 Worrying the stiff clods unclenches their  
19 Grip on the seed and lets  
20 the future breathe

"Amid" is surrounded by. Line 15 is a **metaphor** - frost compared to an elaborate show that masks its true nature "Flounce and filigree" is **alliteration** "Worrying" means disturb Line 18 is **personification**. The ground is given the ability to hold a seed and allow it freedom. This allows the seeds the chance to sprout and break out of the soil to promise future life to go. Tone is now hopeful