



The Clothes-Line



*Hand in hand they dance in a row,
Hither and thither, and to and fro,
Flip! Flap! Flop! and away they go—
Flutt'ring creatures as white as snow,*

*Like restive horses they caper and prance;
Like fairy-tale witches they wildly dance;
Rounded in front, but hollow behind,
They shiver and skip in the merry March wind*

*One I saw dancing excitedly,
Struggling so wildly till she was free,
Then, leaving pegs and clothes-line behind her,
She flew like a bird, and no one can find her.*

*I saw her gleam, like a sail, in the sun,
Flipping and flapping and flopping for fun.
Nobody knows where she now can be,
Hid in a ditch, or drowned in the sea.*

*She was my handkerchief not long ago,
But she'll never come back to my pocket, I know.*

by Charlotte Druitt Cole

The Clothes-Line by Charlotte DrUITT Cole



Summary:

1st Stanza:

The poetess Charlotte DrUITT Cole is talking about the clothes hanging on the clothesline. To her, they look as if they are holding hands, standing in a row and dancing merrily. She compares them to the white birds that fly in the sky.

2nd Stanza:

Here the poetess compares the clothes hanging on the clothesline to restless horses that are leaping and galloping with happiness. As the clothes flutter on the clothesline, they form a bowl like shape that is round at the edges and hollow in the centre. The poetess also feels that the clothes are shivering and skipping in the wind that is very happy during the month of March.

3rd Stanza:

Without specifically stating, the poetess says that once she saw someone dance excitedly and with great struggle she freed herself. Then leaving the pegs and the clothesline she flew like a bird so far that no one was able to follow her and now no one can find her.

4th Stanza:

Continuing with the suspense, the poetess compares 'that someone' to a shining sail. The poetess tells us that she was flipping, flapping and flopping away with happiness. She flew away so fast that nobody knows where she went and where she could be. Thinking of the worst that could happen, the poetess wonders whether she is hiding in a ditch or may have drowned in the sea.

5th Stanza:

It's only in the last two lines of the poem that the poetess reveals that she was talking about her handkerchief that flew away not very long ago. She is sure that it will not come back to her and it is lost forever.

The poetess begins the poem with a happy note of clothes dancing on the clothes line but she ends it with a sad note of her handkerchief flying away and never coming back.

The Clothes-Line by Charlotte Drutt Cole

Answer the following questions.

*Q1. What is described in this poem? Or What is the poet talking about in this poem?

Q2. What according to the poet are the clothes doing?

Q3. How are they dancing?

Q4. Why are the clothes flipping, flapping and flopping?

*Q5. What are the clothes compared to?

*Q6. What do restive horses do?

*Q7. What do fairy-tale witches do?

Q8. What unusual sight did the poetess see one day?

*Q9. What did one of the fluttering creatures do?

Q10. How did the fluttering creature flee itself?

Q11. To what is the handkerchief compared to?

Q12. How did the handkerchief fly away?

Q13. Does anyone know where the handkerchief flew away?

*Q14. What could have happened to the one who flew away? Who was she?

Q15. Will the handkerchief ever come back? Why?

Q16. Write the rhyming words.

Q17. What is the rhyming scheme of the poem?

Q18. Identify the figures of speech in the following lines.

a) Hand in hand they dance in a row,
Hither and thither, and to and fro,

b) Flutt'ring creatures as white as snow,

c) Like restive horses they caper and prance;
Like fairy-tale witches they wildly dance;

d) One I saw dancing excitedly,

e) Flipping and flapping and flopping for fun.
