

the pumpkin, and the russet or gold of the leaf. In the winter, the landscape is a work of art, with pendent icicles, frosted meadows, or drifting snow.

### See the Beauty in People

.....One may interpret the cherry tree as a metaphor for children. In their innocence and purity, they are like the white cherry blossoms, and are always delightful to observe and be around. In this interpretation, summer represents young adulthood; autumn, middle age; and winter, old age and death. Each age has its beauty--even old age, when the soul shines through the eyes with the wisdom of accumulated experience.

## Meter

.....The meter in the poem varies, but most of the lines are in iambic tetrameter. In this format, each line has four pairs of syllables, the first syllable of each pair unstressed and the second stressed, as in lines 2 and 3:

.....1.....2.....3.....4  
Is **HUNG**..|.with **BLOOM**..|.a **LONG**..|.the **BOUGH**

.....1.....2.....3.....4  
And **STANDS**..|.a **BOUT**..|.the **WOOD**..|.and **RIDE**

Several tetrameter lines in the poem place stress in the first syllable and thus are in trochaic tetrameter. Line 4 is an example.

.....1.....2.....3.....4  
**WEAR** ing..|. **WHITE** fo..... **PAST** er..|. **TIDE**

You probably noticed that the fourth foot has only one syllable. The literary term used to identify such a foot is catalexis, and the foot is called a catalectic foot. Another example of trochaic tetrameter with a catalectic foot is line 6:

.....1.....2.....3.....4  
**FIF** ty..|. **SPRINGS** is..|. **LIT** tle..|. **ROOM**

## End Rhyme

.....In each stanza the first line rhymes with the second, and the third line rhymes with the fourth. Two successive rhyming lines make up what is called a couplet.

## Summary

.....On a ride through the woods after Easter Sunday, the speaker observes a cherry tree with its white blossoms. Noting that he is twenty years old, he estimates that about fifty years of his life remain. A half-century is not really a long time, he says. Consequently, he will make the most of the rest of his life, he says, by observing the cherry tree in winter--when snow clings to its boughs--as well as spring.

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