

trickery but to do so without shutting oneself to all that is good and virtuous, for **many people continue with their unremarkable and unremarked acts of heroism in their daily lives**. The poem is peppered with qualifiers like, *but, as far as possible, especially etc.* which is due to the fact that life is a great complexity which cannot be reduced to an absolute. The beauty of the poem lies in its **balance and its implicit acknowledgement of the limitations of its application**.

The next stanza encourages one to be true to oneself, especially in matters of love and affection. It urges one **neither to make pretensions about love** "*especially do not feign affection*") **or be cynical about it**. A positive **simile** is used to describe the role of love during the hardships of life for it is one of the few things which thrives *as perennial as the grass* even in the face of hardships and hopelessness (*aridity and disenchantment*).

A **metonymy** (a figure of speech in which a concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with it for e.g. crown for king, hand for help, Silicon valley for tech industry) is used in the fifth stanza to describe the importance wisdom and experience of old age (counsel of years) which needs to be taken with a certain degree of openness and humility. Though one mustn't be anxious, one must be prepared to take on the challenges of life as is highlighted by the **alliteration** *nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune*. Once having disciplined oneself in a healthy manner, one mustn't be too hard on oneself either.

The sixth stanza contains one of the most striking lines in the entire poem. The positivity of the message in this stanza is unparalleled. It involves **recognising oneself as a part of the universe** in the same way as of the trees and the stars. By placing the individual as a strand in the great fabric of being, the stanza affirms that the cosmos is conspiring to make things happen as it should, whether or not it may lie within our comprehension.

The next stanza builds on the sixth stanza and encourages one to stay still and acknowledge that things happen according to the manner in which it is meant to be and that one should be at peace with God and with one's soul amidst the noisy confusion of life. It **eschews the narrow confines of religion** through the line *whatever you conceive him* (God) to be.

The last stanza **celebrates perfection within the imperfections of day-to-day life**. While much of the world is replete with defects, it is nevertheless a beautiful world. In such a world as this happiness is not state but action; it is an effort and an attitude. Perhaps this is why the poem ends with the lines: *Be cheerful. Strive to be happy*.