

Post card from Kashmir

classmate

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The poem entitled 'Postcard from Kashmir' is a prologue poem in Agha Shahid Ali's anthology, "Half Inch Himalayas" which was published in 1987. The poem expresses the poet's sentimental feelings for his motherland. It shows how moved he was when he received a photograph postcard from Kashmir in America. The poem establishes the volume's theme by demonstrating the poet's strong affection for and nostalgia for his homeland. The poems in this collection are about his longing for his homeland, his memories of it, and his exile. His homeland plagues his imagination, and he longs to experience and talk about it in his poetry. Although the poem includes 14 lines, it cannot be classified as a sonnet since it lacks the stanza form, metre and rhyme that are essential to sonnets.

The speaker in the poem expresses his sentiments after getting a postcard from Kashmir, an area of the Indian subcontinent. The postcard features a snapshot of Kashmir, which the speaker claims to be his home. The speaker who lives in a western country and is geographically remote from Kashmir, looks lovingly at this four-by-six inch photograph.

The speaker asserts that he has always admired neatness, a quality he associates with Kashmir in his childhood days. The irony of the situation is encapsulated in his claim that he now has the half-inch Himalayas in his hand. The vast and gigantic mountain range is reduced to a compact, clean picture, which the poet dislikes. The poet appears to be stating that he, who once prided himself on his clarity of thought, is now perplexed about what his home means to him. He is now looking at an image of the Himalayas on a half-inch stamp affixed to a postcard, but he is unable to describe properly what the mountains mean to him now, or what memories that picture evokes in him.

The postcard serves as a metaphor for his recollections of his homeland. He has a romanticised image of his homeland in his thoughts. His memories of Kashmir are more colourful than the real Kashmir. The speaker claims that his love would not be 'overexposed' in Kashmir. The term 'Overexposed' has been used herein the manner that it is used in photography. When more light than necessary is allowed to fall on a negative, it is said to be overexposed. When this happens, the positive that is printed from the negative plate becomes fuzzy. His passion for his motherland is overexposed in America because it is tinged with too much longing and nostalgia, making it impossible to comprehend.

The poet speaks the poem in a tone that suggests he is talking to himself. You'll see that the poet builds on ideas of light and darkness. The 'ultramarine' in line 9 contrasts with the 'black / and white' in lines 13 and 14. As a result, we might conclude that the poet uses visual images to describe his love for his birthplace. You'll also observe that when the poet describes the reallocation, he uses expressions like 'four by six inches', 'half-inch Himalayas', 'Jhelum', and 'waters' all of which have a specific meaning and can be visualised. But when he talks about his feelings, he uses terms like 'home' and 'love', which are difficult to visualise. He accomplishes this contrasting effect in the poem by balancing concrete and abstract words.

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