

Geography Lesson

Summary

Introduction

The poem *The Geography Lesson* is written by Zulfikar Ghose – a famous poet and novelist who was born in India before independence. After independence, he migrated to Pakistan and now he is settled in the USA.

The Geography Lesson is a 24-lined single stanza poem that does not have any rhyme scheme. In the poem, the poet talks about three important things – first how everything looks from the sky, second how civilization was established and the reason behind the unorganized settlement and third his question to himself why people hate each other.

Poem

Part 1

The poet says ***when the jet sprang into the sky, it was clear*** i.e. the poet understood ***why the city had developed the way it had***. because everything looked so small that a mile seemed to be like six inches. (Everything looks small from above).

It becomes inevitable that everything developed ***unplanned, without style*** and without any principle of an organization ***on the ground*** . The poet repeats the first line: ***When the jet sprang into the sky*** i.e. he saw all this when the jet was in the air.

Part 2

In the second part, the poet says that ***when the plane reached ten thousand feet*** in

the sky the poet came to know **why**
the cities of countries are located near
the **rivers** and also **the valleys** are
so **populated**.

Next, the poet provides **the logic of**
geography which is **clearly**
delineated the reason that made the
people settle in an unorganized way.
According to him, **land and water** which
are the lifeline and the reason for our
survival **attracted** the early humans. The
land here refers to the green land on which
we cultivate food and make the shelter.
Like the previous stanza, the poet repeats
the line **When the jet** (airplane) **reached**
ten thousand feet to tell that he came to
know about all this only when the jet was
ten thousand feet up in the sky and he
could see land and water.

Part 3

In the third part, the poet says that ***when the*** jet was at the height of around ***six miles, it*** became ***clear*** that ***the earth*** is ***round and that it*** has ***more sea*** (here it means water) ***than land.***

According to him, he could not understand why people ***hate each*** other ***on earth,*** why we ***build walls*** (here it means borders) ***across cities*** (here it means countries) ***and kill*** each other.

At such a height, the poet sees a single earth and wonders why people are divided. He could not understand.