

Honeycomb (Poem- 6): Mystery of the Talking Fan (VII)

– Maude Rubin (1891-1973)

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Introduction

The poem ‘Mystery of the Talking Fan’ is written by **Maude Rubin**. The poem is all about the poet’s observation of movement and functioning of a much familiar and common object around us i.e. a ceiling fan. The poet has personified ‘the fan’ in the poem and has called it ‘HE’. (*Refer to slide no.8 - personification*)

What is a mystery?

A mystery is something that is difficult or **impossible to understand or explain**, or something unexplainable or unsolvable, for examples, ‘Does God exist?’ ‘What is afterlife?’ etc. (*Refer to slide no. 2 - Mystery*)

The poet says that there is a mystery in the fan that talks. Have you ever heard that a fan talks? I don’t think anyone has ever heard that a fan talks. But the poet, in the poem says that the fan in the room talks.

Let us now understand what the mystery of the fan is, whom it talks to and why it talks.

Poem

*Once there was a talking fan–
Electrical his chatter.
I couldn’t quite hear what he said
And I hope it doesn’t matter
Because one day somebody oiled
His little whirling motor
And all the mystery was spoiled---
He ran as still as water.*

Explanation of the poem

The poet begins the poem by saying that there is an electric ceiling fan, which makes a lot of noise. **To that noise**, the poet says that the fan is talking; he says that it is trying to tell something to him. The poet calls that fan’s noise **an electrical chatter**.

Further, the poet says that he couldn’t understand why there was so much of noise coming from it or what the fan was trying to say to the poet by its chatter. To put it in simple words, he says that he couldn’t understand what exactly was wrong with it. And this was **a mystery for the poet**, as he failed to understand the problem of the talking fan.

Then, the poet says that before he could discover the mystery, an electrician came and **put oil in the noisy whirling motor** of the fan. After that, the movement of the fan became smooth and silent. And here the mystery of the talking fan was finally discovered. The mystery of why the fan was talking got resolved.

But what exactly was that mystery? The mystery was, that it was chattering because **it needed oiling in its rotating motor**; that it was **demanding the attention** of an electrician. And since the time it was oiled, it started functioning in a very smooth manner and there was no more noise to be heard. The ‘mysterious talking fan’ now ran **as smooth as (Refer to slide no. 9 - simile)** quiet water and became a silent fan.

Vocabulary

Electrical – related to electricity

Chatter - to speak or make noise rapidly and continuously

Whirling – rotating

Oil – (V) to apply oil on something rusty

Mystery – secret/something unexplainable or incomprehensible

Spoiled – ended/finished/discovered

Still – quite or motionless
