

CLASS 12 ENGLISH CORE
POEM :AUNT JENNIFER'S TIGERS

Module 1/1

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AECS # 3 TARAPUR



AUNT JENNIFER'S TIGERS



POET: ADRIENNE CECILE RICH

Adrienne Cecile Rich

Born -16 May, 1929

Died - 27 March, 2012

In Baltimore, Maryland, U S A

Adrienne Cecile Rich was an American poet, essayist, feminist, socialist, theorist.

She was widely influential during the second half of the 20th Century.

Widely acclaimed for her erudite, lucid and plain writing style,

Views against racism and voice for feminism.

Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" is a 1951 poem , *from her poetic collection "A Change of World "*

The poem criticizes the traditional institution of marriage,

Theme of the Poem

- expresses the constraints of marital life from a woman's perspective.
- explores Women's experiences living under the dominance of men.
- exposes the desolating effects of patriarchy.

The poem is arranged in three quatrains
(4 lined stanza)

The First Stanza talks of
Aunt Jennifer's Dreams

The Second Stanza talks about
Aunt Jennifer's Real World

The Third Stanza talks about
The Narrative for the future for women

Aunt Jennifer

makes an embroidery of her dreams
shows how she should be in the world
wants to live in freedom and happiness
wishes to be like the tigers portrayed in
the painting

Tigers which Aunt Jennifer pictures
here are
-shiny topaz yellow denizens of the
green
-hold their head with pride and
assert themselves when they walk
carry a sort of confidence and an
untamed free spirit
-bold, heroic, energetic, chivalrous
uninhibited and unstoppable

Aunt Jennifer tries to work on. But even the tiny ivory needle feels so heavy to pull and not so smooth on the fabric. She is burdened by band / bond overpowered by the dominance of her husband .

-Weaving the tapestry finds hard to
pull even an ivory needle

-a victim of gender oppression at the
hand of her husband

-no liberty or even self expression

As the deer pants for still streams

Aunt Jennifer was desperately seeking
freedom which was lacking

She delineates the struggle for
freedom of expression

She undergoes bitter harsh sordid
realities of marital life
Male authority, loss of freedom
domestic responsibilities
restrictions on a woman
submission to suppression
trapped in the vicious cycle
oppressed mental state

She is in a grip of fear
absolutely terrorised
injustice unleashed upon her.
experiences crushed her
affected her matrimonial life.
Trembling and fluttering
scared of her husband
no way out even after death
grown old now... age has taken its toll

Her desire for freedom, fearlessness
and independence
will remain alive in the form of
prancing tigers which she
embroidered.

In this patriarchal society women are
under suppression
matrimonial life predominantly has a
plethora of woes.

No nerve or verve to fight with those
demons
with no respite Her hands quiver and
finds it hard to knit.

She undergoes the weals and woes of
life
got trapped in the vicious cycle
created by the norms of the society.

Third Stanza starts on a creepy note
about Aunt Jennifer's death.

Even her death wouldn't give her
salvation

from the ordeals she went through.

But her art work was an escape route.

Tigers on the handiwork will stay
proud and unafraid.

The poem addresses the Oppression, Terror, Captivity, overburdened duties, of the marginalised and beleaguered women.

The poem Deals with women's struggle against oppression and rebellion against patriarchal society. The Poem relates to the implications of the division between power and passivity.

THANK YOU