



Coming



Philip Larkin



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On longer evenings,
Light, chill and yellow,
Bathes the serene
Foreheads of houses.
A thrush sings,
Laurel-surrounded
In the deep bare garden,
Its fresh-peeled voice
Astonishing the brickwork.
It will be spring soon,
It will be spring soon—
And I, whose childhood
Is a forgotten boredom,
Feel like a child
Who comes on a scene
Of adult reconciling,
And can understand nothing
But the unusual laughter,
And starts to be happy.

ABOUT THE POET

Philip Larkin (1922–1985) was born in Coventry, England. He is well-known as a leader of ‘Movement’ in English Poetry in the fifties. The principal works of Philip Larkin are *The North Ship*, *The Less Deceived*, *The Whitsun Weddings* and *High Windows*. His themes—love, change, disenchantment, the mystery, the inexplicableness of the poet’s survival and death’s inevitability—are universally liked by the readers. The above poem has been taken from the volume, *The Less Deceived*, which establishes a kinship with the environment.



UNDERSTANDING THE POEM

1. What does the bird in the poem announce? How is this related to the title, ‘Coming’?
2. Why is the speaker’s childhood described as ‘a forgotten boredom’?
3. What causes the element of surprise when the child comes on the scene of ‘adult reconciling’?
4. What two things are compared in the poem?
5. How do you respond to these lines?
Light, chill and yellow,
Bathes the serene
Foreheads of houses
6. Comment on the use of the phrase ‘fresh-peeled voice’.

TRY THIS OUT

1. The song of a bird is often the first sign of spring. Do you know the bird that signals the advent of *vasant* or spring in our country?
2. Do you know of other spring poems? How is this poem different from them?

SUGGESTED READING

1. ‘Ambulances’ by Philip Larkin.





Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese three-line poem, usually having 17 syllables, and expresses a single thought. English imitations of the haiku are also very popular.

COBRA

His jewelled crown
and hypnotic sway enthrall;
beware the lethal fangs.

NIGHT

Clouds appear
and bring to men a chance to rest
looking at the moon.

ALONE

Won't you come and see
loneliness? Just one leaf
from the Kiri tree.

