



## **Stylistic Elements in Sita Ram Adhikari's "*Night Queen*"**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Sita Ram Adhikari's poem "*Night Queen*" is essentially a lyric poem, which, though superficially a light ode to a night-blooming flower, works upon a very complex plane of spiritual and moral inquiry. The poem exists at an interesting juncture between nature poetry and devotional literature, inviting critical scrutiny of its stylistic craftsmanship to reveal its deeper thematic engagement.

**Objective:** This analysis tries to deconstruct the stylistic and structural elements of the poem and show how Adhikari transforms a floral subject into a profound symbol of moral idealism. An attempt is made to articulate how the poem's form-diction, tone, and imagery-functions in steering the reader from aesthetic admiration to a yearning for ethical self-improvement.

**Methods:** This study adopts a close reading methodology, drawing from practical criticism and stylistic analysis. The poem is read as an autonomous aesthetic unit, strictly in light of its inner-literary elements such as apostrophe, personification, symbolism, and rhetorical structure; this is supplemented by interpretive lenses from devotional and lyric poetry traditions.



**Analysis:** The power of the poem results from its unremitting apostrophe, which makes it intimate and prayer-like. The Night Queen, as a figure of discipline and justice, becomes an icon through the mixture of romantic and devotional language. Crucial stylistic decisions-in particular, the juxtaposition of "bright" presence with "never cloudy" vision, and rhetorical questions deployed iteratively-are pointed to as pivotal in tracking the progress of the speaker from lover to supplicant, in search of moral guidance.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that "*Night Queen*" is essentially a poem of emulation, not merely appreciation. Its stylistic architecture is carefully designed to move from external observation to an internal plea for virtue, framing the act of worship as a pursuit of moral betterment.

**Implication:** Such a poem suggests that a proper engagement with beauty is an ethical act, one that compels introspection and aspiration. It suggests that literature, even in its most condensed forms, can form a crucial medium for philosophical reflection and a guide for personal conduct.

**Keywords:** Sita Ram Adhikari, Night Queen, Stylistic Analysis, Devotional Poetry, Personification, Symbolism, Moral Philosophy, Close Reading

## **Introduction**

Literature, from the time of its very inception, has functioned both as a mirror and mold of human society, reflecting the cumulative joy, sorrows, conflicts, and aspirations, preserving the ethos of a time and place in the amber of language (Bump, 2022). More than mere record, literature actively shapes the individual and collective mindset, offering frameworks through which we interpret the world (Fenuku, 2024). It challenges prejudices, fosters empathy, and provides language for emotions that may remain hitherto inarticulate. Being a basic tool of consciousness, literature allows societies to talk with themselves across generations, constantly questioning and defining what it means to be human.

Within this grand literary landscape, poetry is uniquely positioned and powerful. As the most concentrated form of verbal art, poetry embodies experience in its most essential patterns of sound, image, and rhythm (Perloff & Dworkin, 2009). It functions not just on the level of narrative or logic but on a deeper, all-but-subliminal plane, engaging with the reader's emotional and intuitive faculties. A poem can capture that passing beauty, that surge of doubt, or profound moral query with intensity often beyond that of prose. It is within this hallowed space of condensed expression that a poem can subtly shift a reader's perception, offering new prisms of comprehension and, in this case of Sita Ram Adhikari's "*Night Queen*," softly guiding the moral and spiritual mindset.

In the great expanse of poetic expression in which the human soul seeks to express itself most deeply, it is often the simple and profound lyric that speaks with the most resonant voice (Bartlett, 2024; Neupane & Lourdasamy, 2024; Sulianta, 2024; Welsh, 2019). This manuscript presents one such work: "*Night Queen*" by the Nepali poet Sita Ram Adhikari. When first approached, a poem written to any flower could seem a conventional exercise in natural description. However, from its opening exclamation, "How beautiful you are!", Adhikari's



work immediately establishes in us a deeper, more intimate dialogue-one in which botany becomes a catalyst for spiritual and philosophical inquiry.

The most central stylistic device that animates the poem is its sustained use of apostrophe, the direct address to the non-human "*Night Queen*." This is not a description but a conversation, a prayer, spoken to a silent, blooming listener. By such personification, the nocturnal flower is turned from the passive subject of observation into an active, sentient being, invested with consciousness, discipline, and moral clarity. It is this basic choice that raises the poem beyond floral appreciation to a devotional encounter between a fallible seeker and a perceived paragon of virtue.

Adhikari masterfully interlaces two powerful linguistic registers: the romantic and the devotional (Neupane, 2019). The language of stolen hearts and intimate welcome cohabitates in perfect ease with the lexicon of worship and reverence. In this stylistic fusion, a tone is born-a reverent intimacy that suggests the highest forms of love are inextricable from respect and awe. The poem thereby challenges the boundaries between eros and agape, proposing that genuine admiration for beauty naturally evolves into a corresponding urge for moral emulation. The poem structurally conveys a rhythmic, incantatory effect through its repetitions and rhetorical questions (Khadka, 2025). The stanzas unfold not in a linear fashion but rather like waves of contemplation, each cresting with a question that expresses more and more awe from the speaker: "How could you learn this?" These questions are not in search of literal answers but are stylistic manifestations of the speaker's humble bafflement and deep yearning. They pull the reader into the internal struggle of the speaker, making us participants in that very quest for understanding.

The "*Night Queen*" itself-a flower that blooms in darkness, releasing its fragrance into the stillness of the night-is a potent metaphor pervasive throughout the whole work. It represents an ideal of beauty that is not flashy or fleeting but rather serene, resilient, and self-possessed. Its "always bright" presence in the dark and its "never cloudy" vision establish it as a symbol of unwavering clarity and impartial kindness, a quiet beacon in a world so often clouded over with confusion and partiality. It ultimately concludes with the poignant plea for guidance: "Teach me a lesson; / How can I be fair and kind like you?" This final turn is what makes the poem go from a portrait of admiration to a how-to of aspiration. The gaze of the speaker, fixed upon the flower's external beauty, finally turns inward in search of a way to better the self. In this light, Adhikari's composition is more than a poem; it is a humble petition, inviting every reader to reflect on the qualities we venerate and our own capacity to cultivate them within ourselves.

## **Methodology**

The methodological approach in analyzing "*Night Queen*" by Sita Ram Adhikari is a close reading based on the principles of practical criticism and stylistic analysis. This entails a line-by-line scrutiny of the text itself, crucially bound up with the internal relationships among its literary components and not basically drawing from outside biographical or historical data. The



poem is considered a self-sufficient aesthetic object, and the analysis systematically dissects its formal elements-diction, syntax, tone, imagery, and structure-to understand how they collectively create the work's thematic resonance and emotional impact. This foundational technique allows for deep immersion in the nuances of the poet's craft.

Proceeding with this close reading, the identified stylistic devices are interpreted through certain literary lenses within the methodology. Set against the dual backcloth of devotional poetry and romantic lyricism, the analysis will investigate how the poem's language operates within and bridges these two traditions. Further, symbolic criticism will be done to uncover what the central motif of the "*Night Queen*" is, not merely a flower, but an elaborate symbol of moral lucidity and serene beauty. These are interpretive frameworks that are not imposed from without but serve to light up patterns and meanings which have emerged organically from the text in that initial close reading.

This methodology, in essence, synthesizes these observations to build a coherent argument about the overarching purpose of the poem. The movement from description-describing what poetic devices are-to interpretation-describing what they mean-finally yields an explanation of the poem's function as a moral appeal. Such a process traces the trajectory that the poem follows: from admiration to emulation, in which its stylistic choices-from its intimate apostrophe to its concluding plea-are strategically deployed to guide the reader from appreciating external beauty to contemplating internal, ethical transformation. In effect, what this methodology is oriented toward is a broad and incisive exegesis, one that reveals both intricate mechanics and profound philosophical undertones of the poem.

### **Night Queen**

How beautiful you are!  
Has anyone ever tried to see you?  
You have stolen my heart;  
How can I stand afar?

I ever welcome you,  
And offer you my room,  
None will get angry,  
I worship you.

You have discipline,  
You never suffer distress;  
How fair you are to all;  
How could you learn this?

Your presence is always bright,  
Your vision is never cloudy;  
Teach me a lesson;



How can I be fair and kind like you?

By: Sita Ram Adhikari (2080 BS)

## **Analysis**

### **1. Apostrophe and Personification as Foundational Devices**

The entire poem is written in the form of an apostrophe, a direct address to something either absent or inanimate—in this case, a flower called the "*Night Queen*." Immediately, this creates an intimate, devotional tone. He personifies the flower throughout, with human qualities such as beauty, the ability to steal a heart, discipline, and being fair. This is the main stylistic decision through which a botanical subject is transformed into a sentient, almost divine figure, driving the poem thematically toward admiration and moral aspiration.

### **2. Lyrical Simplicity and Repetitive Structure**

The poem is written in a lyrical simplicity, eschewing unusual words or packed metaphors for straightforward, heartfelt utterance. This is reinforced by a repetitive structure: the first four stanzas each begin with an exclamatory or interrogative line ("How beautiful you are!", "How could you learn this?") which sets the stanza's theme. This creates a rhythmic, incantatory effect—so much so that the cycles of prayer or meditation are almost replicated as the speaker returns and returns to the state of wonder.

### **3. Thematic Duality: Romantic and Devotional**

A central element of the poem's style is the way it combines romantic and devotional language. Lines such as "You have stolen my heart" and "I ever welcome you, / And offer you my room" carry the charge of romantic infatuation. This is seamlessly interwoven, though, with the language of worship: "I worship you." The stylistic marrying here raises the subject from an object of desire to a sacred icon and suggests that true love is a form of reverencing and that the divine is to be found within nature.

### **4. Rhetorical Questions to Express Wonder and Searching**

He uses rhetorical questions, such as "Has anyone ever tried to see you?" and "How could you learn this?". Of course, he does not want these questions answered; rather, they denote an everlasting degree of amazement and intellectual curiosity on the part of the speaker. They stylistically reveal the inner state of the speaker—one of humble bafflement—and invite the reader to similarly contemplate the ineffable qualities of the Night Queen. The last question, "How can I be fair and kind like you?", turns from wonder to a plea for guidance, marking the climax of the poem.

### **5. The "Night Queen" symbolizes**

The "Night Queen" is a potent stylistic symbol, better known as the Night-Blooming Jasmine. Its nocturnal nature is symbolic of mystery, serenity, and a beauty which does well away from the garish light of day. This is in perfect alignment with the quiet discipline and inner brightness expressed within the poem. The flower becomes symbolic—not merely of beauty—but of a particular sort of moral and spiritual elegance which is consistent, gentle, resilient, and operating on its own terms.

### **6. Light vs. Cloudiness: Contrast and Imagery**



The poet achieves perfection for the Night Queen by using a sharp, binary contrast. Thus, the speaker says, "Your presence is always bright, / Your vision is never cloudy." This use of light imagery ("bright") against its opposite ("cloudy") is a simple, yet effective stylistic device. It constructs the flower as a paradigm of clarity, truth, and unwavering virtue which starkly juxtaposes with the implied confusion and moral ambiguity of human life from which the speaker seeks liberation.

### **7. Economy of Language and Concise Imagery**

The poem is stylistically lean; it achieves its effects through an economy of language. There are no sprawling descriptions or elaborate similes. Rather, Adhikari uses brief, potent images: a stolen heart, an offered room, a bright presence, an unclouded vision. That makes it feel more like a series of concentrated utterances that are heartfelt rather than a formal treatise, which increases its emotional authenticity and accessibility.

### **8. The Tone of Reverent Intimacy**

The tone is a balance of intimate affection and deep reverence. The confession "You have stolen my heart" feels personal, even close, while the declaration "I worship you" puts up a formal distance of respect. This stylistic balancing act allows the speaker to be both a devoted lover and a humble suppliant. The tone never gets overfamiliar or coldly ceremonial but sustains a warm, respectful awe.

### **9. Universalizing the Personal**

A subtle but important stylistic move is the shift from the personal to the universal. The poem begins with the speaker's individual experience ("You have stolen my heart") but quickly expands the Night Queen's virtues to a broader context: "How fair you are to all." This transition elevates the poem from a simple love lyric to a meditation on a universal ideal. The flower is not just fair to the speaker, but embodies a principle of impartial kindness which the speaker wishes to learn and embody.

### **10. Conclusive Plea: The Poem as a Moral Appeal**

The final stanza builds to the direct plea that is the climax of the poem's stylistic expression of its purpose. The lines "Teach me a lesson; / How can I be fair and kind like you?" make the poem become one of not just a description of admiration, but an active quest for moral improvement. The style here is deliberately didactic in the best sense-it is a plea for instruction. This establishes the Night Queen firmly as a spiritual guide and frames the entire poem as a humble petition for wisdom, leaving the reader with the sense of the speaker's ardent wish for transformation.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Sita Ram Adhikari's "*Night Queen*" stands as a deceptively simple yet profound meditation on the relationship between beauty, virtue, and spiritual aspiration. Through its masterful blending of the romantic and the devotional, the poem demonstrates that genuine admiration for the external world is a powerful catalyst for internal reflection. The sustained apostrophe to the flower transforms a solitary observation into a dynamic dialogue, which





raises the Night Queen from a mere botanical specimen to that of a silent mentor and moral exemplar.

The stylistic elements of the poem work together in harmony to create that effect. The incantatory structure of rhetorical questions traces the progress of the speaker from wonder to a desire to learn, while the powerful symbol of the night-blooming flower creates an ideal of quiet, steady, and dispassionate beauty. The language is compact and resonant with feeling, ensuring that the philosophical investigation never strays from sincere and accessible emotions, which makes the speaker's longing our own.

Ultimately, "*Night Queen*" transcends its subject matter to offer a timeless lesson. The power of the poem does not lie in providing answers but in framing the most important question: "How can I be fair and kind like you?" By closing with this plea for guidance, Adhikari shows that the true purpose of venerating beauty-be it in nature, art, or another being-is to inspire our own moral growth. The poem thus becomes an enduring testimony to the proposition that the highest form of worship is the ardent desire to embody the virtues one admires.

**Transparency Statement:** We confirm that this study has been conducted with honesty and in full adherence to ethical guidelines.

**Data Availability Statement:** Authors can provide data.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare there is no conflicts of interest.

**Authors' Contributions:** The authors conducted all research activities i.e., concept, data collecting, drafting and final review of manuscript.



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