

The Witch

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

I have walked a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

The cutting wind is a cruel foe.
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still,
My little white feet are sore.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came—she came—and the quivering flame
Sunk and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at the door.

Comprehension

1. How is the witch's journey described? Tick the boxes that apply.

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steep | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow | <input type="checkbox"/> Long |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny | <input type="checkbox"/> Windy | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat |

2. What does 'fruitful earth' mean?

3. Where does the witch want to go and why?

4. What does 'cutting wind' mean?

5. Why might her hands be stone?

6. How does the witch describe herself?

7. How many speakers do you think there are in the poem and which verse do they speak?

8. Why do you think the fire died?

9. What do you think it meant when the fire 'never was lit again on my hearth'?

10. Do you think the poem is a modern or old poem? What makes you think this?
