

“A Poison Tree” William Blake (1757-1827)

I was angry with my friend, 1
I told my wrath, my wrath did end;
I was angry with my foe, 3
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I water'd it in fears, 5
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles, 7
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night, 9
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld its shine, 11
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole, 13
When the night had veil'd the pole:
In the morning glad I see 15
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree.

1. What causes the speaker's anger to grow in stanza 2? What metaphor is being used? (Consider the title of the poem.)
2. In line 8, what do you believe “wiles” means? (Consider the adjectives that describe it.) Explain why you believe this.
3. What “grew” from the speaker's anger? (Consider the title of the poem.)
4. What happens to the “foe”? How did it happen?
5. How did the speaker feel about what happened to the “foe”?
6. How is conceit (extended metaphor) used throughout this poem? Give multiple examples of the comparison.
7. What is the theme of this poem? Use evidence from the poem to support your claim.