

Unit

4

Poem

Ulysses

Alfred Tennyson



Warm Up

Introduction

The poem 'Ulysses' is a dramatic monologue that contains 70 lines of blank verse. Ulysses, the King of Ithaca, gathers his men together to prepare for the journey and exhorts them not to waste their time left on earth. Ulysses has grown old, having experienced many adventures at the battle of Troy and in the seas. After returning to Ithaca, he desires to embark upon his next voyage. His inquisitive spirit is always looking forward to more and more of such adventures.



The poem can be divided into three parts -- (i) the thirst for adventure, which does not allow Ulysses to remain in his kingdom as a mere ruler; (ii) Ulysses handing over the responsibility to his son Telemachus, with total confidence in his abilities; (iii) Ulysses' clarion call to his sailors, urging them to venture into unknown lands.

Read the poem Ulysses by Alfred Lord Tennyson, which speaks of the unquenchable thirst of the Greek hero Ulysses for travel and exploration of new vistas, until death would overpower him.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race, 4

That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will **drink**
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those 8

That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' **scudding** drifts the rainy **Hyades**
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart 12