

Here are old things:

Fraying edges,

Ravelling threads;

And here are scraps of new goods,

Needles and thread,

An expectant thimble,

A pair of silver-toothed scissors.

Q1: What items are described in this stanza?

A: The stanza describes old and worn materials like fraying edges and ravelling threads, as well as new sewing tools like needles, thread, a thimble, and scissors.

Q2: How does the poet contrast the old and new items?

A: The poet places old, damaged fabrics beside fresh tools, emphasizing a contrast between wear and renewal.

Q3: What is the significance of the "expectant thimble"?

A: The "expectant thimble" suggests anticipation and readiness, as if the tools are prepared for the task of mending and renewal.

Thimble on a finger,

New thread through an eye;

Needle, do not linger,

Hurry as you ply.

If you ever would be through

Hurry, scurry, fly!

Q1: What is the poet asking the needle to do?

A: The poet urges the needle to move quickly and efficiently through the task of mending.

Q2: What mood is conveyed through words like “hurry,” “scurry,” and “fly”?

A: These words create a sense of urgency, perhaps reflecting the speaker’s eagerness to complete the task or a deeper emotional impatience.

Q3: Why might the poet want to complete the mending quickly?

A: This urgency may reflect a desire to move past pain, fix emotional wounds, or restore order without delay.

Stanza 3

Here are patches,

Felled edges,

Darned threads,

Strengthening old utility,

Pending the coming of the new.

Q1: What is being repaired in this stanza?

A: Old garments or fabrics are being patched, stitched, and reinforced to make them usable again.

Q2: What does “strengthening old utility” suggest?

A: It suggests giving renewed strength and value to something worn or aged, preserving its usefulness.

Q3: What does “pending the coming of the new” imply?

A: It implies that mending is a temporary but meaningful act until something new arrives to replace the old.

Stanza 4

Yes, I have been mending ...

But also,

I have been enacting

A little travesty on life.

Q1: What shift occurs in this stanza?

A: The speaker shifts from describing physical mending to a reflective tone, suggesting a metaphorical or emotional interpretation.

Q2: What does “a little travesty on life” mean?

A: It implies that the act of mending is a symbolic performance—perhaps a way of coping with or mocking life’s imperfections.

Q3: How does this stanza change the tone of the poem?

A: It deepens the poem’s meaning, turning a practical act into a philosophical reflection on life, resilience, and perhaps futility.