

# THE PUMPKIN

Oh, greenly and fair in the lands of the sun  
The vines of the gourd and the rich melon run,  
And the rock and the tree and the cottage enfold,  
With broad leaves all greenness and blossoms all gold,  
Like that which o'er Nineveh's prophet once grew,  
While he waited to know that his warning was true,  
And longed for the storm-cloud, and listened in vain  
For the rush of the whirlwind and red fire-rain.

On the banks of the Xenil the dark Spanish maiden  
Comes up with the fruit of the tangled vine laden;  
And the Creole of Cuba laughs out to behold  
Through orange-leaves shining the broad spheres of gold;  
Yet with dearer delight from his home in the North,  
On the fields of his harvest the Yankee looks forth,  
Where crooknecks are coiling, and yellow fruit shines,  
And the sun of September melts down on his vines.

Ah! on Thanksgiving day, when from East and from West,  
From North and from South come the pilgrim and guest,  
When the gray-haired New Englander sees round his board  
The old broken links of affection restored,  
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,  
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before,  
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye,  
What calls back the past like the rich Pumpkin pie?

Oh—fruit loved of boyhood!—the old days recalling,  
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!  
When wild, ugly faces we carved in its skin,  
Glaring out through the dark with a candle within!  
When we laughed round the corn-heap, with hearts all in tune,  
Our chair a broad pumpkin—our lantern the moon,  
Telling tales of the fairy who traveled like steam,  
In a pumpkin-shell coach, with two rats for her team!

Then thanks for thy present!—none sweeter or better  
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!  
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine;  
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking, than thine!  
And the prayer, which my mouth is too full to express,  
Swells my heart that thy shadow may never be less;  
That the days of thy lot may be lengthened below;  
And the fame of thy worth like a pumpkin-vine grow;  
And thy life be as sweet, and its last sunset sky  
Golden-tinted and fair as thy own Pumpkin pie!

--John Greenleaf Whittier





1. Which line tells where the gourd and melon vines are found?

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2. Explain the reference to Jonah, "Nineveh's prophet" (See *Jonah* 4:4-11).

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3. Which line tells that the Yankee delights in his pumpkin crop?

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4. What "calls back the past" on Thanksgiving Day?

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5. Why does boyhood love the pumpkin?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

6. Find lines that you think refer to "Cinderella."

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7. To whom do you imagine the poet addresses the last stanza?

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8. Read the poet's prayer. What is compared to the pumpkin pie in this prayer?

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9. Memorize the third stanza.

10. Find in the dictionary the meaning of:

greenly - \_\_\_\_\_

gourd - \_\_\_\_\_

Creole - \_\_\_\_\_

crooknecks - \_\_\_\_\_

matron - \_\_\_\_\_

