**Answer NO-02**

The acceptance of death portrayed in the poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”.

“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” is a [long poem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_poem). It was written by the American poet Walt Whitman. It’s his one of the most famous poems. It’s one of Walt Whitman’s most beautifully written poems. It was published for the first time in Sequel to Drum-Taps and was republished in the fourth edition of Leaves of Grass. It was written in [free verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_verse) in 206 lines. It uses many of the literary techniques associated with the [pastoral elegy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastoral_elegy). It was written **in the summer of 1865. It’s the perfect example of an elegy. It explores images of the soul, the past and the future.** Despite being an expression to the fallen president, Whitman neither mentions Lincoln by name nor discusses the circumstances of his death in the poem. Instead, he uses a series of rural and natural imagery including the symbols of the [lilacs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilac), a drooping star in the western sky [Venus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venus) and the [hermit thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermit_thrush) and employs the traditional progression of the pastoral elegy in moving from grief toward an acceptance and knowledge of death. It is a long poem of two hundred and six lines with no fixed metrical pattern. The lines of the poem have unequal length and different number of syllables. It consists of sixteen strophes, each one of them having a different number of lines. It does not have an end rhyme but has an internal rhyme which gives it a musicality. It consists of three sub-poems progressing simultaneously.

One poem stays with the narrator, the drooping star and the sprig of Lilac, the other one progresses with the coffin of Abraham Lincoln, through North America, towards its grave and the third one moves with the song of the Hermit thrush. The poem is narrated in the first-person narrative with an unknown speaker. It laments the death of Abraham Lincoln in particular and the death of all the soldiers who died in the American Civil War in common. This elegy is a sorrowful expression of the poet’s emotions and his grief on the death of Abraham Lincoln. In the beginning, he is unable to understand death. He fears death and is unable to come out of the grief of Lincoln’s death but as the poem progresses, he accepts death and realizes its importance in the cyclic process of life. The poem begins with a rural setting having a bush of lilacs blooming in the dooryard of an old farm-house. The narrator mourns the death of the one he loves. He plucks a sprig of Lilac in order to place it on the Coffin of the dead one but then he remembers all the dead soldiers who died in the American Civil War and his personal and private grief becomes impersonal and public. The poem progresses beautifully, showing the journey of the Coffin across the country to its burial place. The poet also takes a journey from fear of death towards certainty after hearing the song of the bird. His attention swings between the drooping star and the singing bird throughout the poem. He does not want to listen to the bird singing the song of death because he is detained by the star but then he is attracted to the song of hermit thrush and he listens to it. It makes him understand the concept of death that gives him soothing feelings and comforts him.

**Walt Whitman portrayed “Death” in his poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”.**

**Walt Whitman writes this poem in remembrance of President Lincoln, discussing death, grief and recovering from such a tragedy. President Abraham Lincoln is one of the most beloved leaders in American history. Lincoln’s assassination in 1865 deeply affected Whitman, who was a passionate supporter of the president and his policies. His death produced a profound and lasting effect upon Whitman in both a personal and a creative sense. In the article “Walt Whitman and Lincoln”, “It would be impossible to read any of Whitman’s poems or prose pieces written about Lincoln after his death without being aware of the depth and sincerity of the personal emotion present as well as of the sound, even prophetic, evaluation of the significance of Lincoln to America and to the world”. Thus, Whitman wrote the poem “Lilacs” as a tribute to Lincoln’s life and legacy and as a lasting monument for him. In this poem, Whitman not only expresses his grief and sense of loss but also offers readers a reminder of the importance of accepting death by depicting his emotional changes. Abraham Lincoln’s assassination touched Walt Whitman and inspired him to create the superb elegy “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d.” While the poem mourns Lincoln’s death, Whitman also suggests that death is not something to be afraid of. Through close analysis of the poem’s imagery and language, it explores how the poet comes to recognize death as a natural process that leads to rebirth and brings hope. Despite the profound loss experienced by the American people, the poet remains optimistic that the country will flourish once again, just as spring follows winter. The poem also emphasizes the importance of welcoming death as a way to connect the soul and body and find relief from suffering. Ultimately, the whole poem conveys a powerful idea of accepting death. The poem moves in cycles as it unfolds, beginning with an overview of death and ending with Lincoln’s coffin finishing its journey. As Whitman writes, he puts focus on three main symbols that evolve throughout the poem: Lilacs, stars, and birds. Each of these symbols have purpose throughout the poem and grow to help readers understand what Whitman is going through. Lilacs, as suggested at the beginning of the poem and by the title of the poem, hold a special purpose throughout the poem. As the beginning lines of the poem say. Lilacs here are represented as something that withstands, and with continue to withstand with every passing spring. In this sense, lilacs are representing the remembrance that Whitman will always hold regarding President Lincoln. It is obvious that Whitman was affected by the death of President Lincoln, in fact it is detaining him. The star, or President Lincoln, is causing Whitman to try and figure out the power and influence of death. Throughout the poem, I read the bird as something that is helping Whitman come to terms with the idea of death and the passing of President Lincoln. The bird is signing and exploring the idea of death, helping Whitman, and readers, come to terms with it. Instead of portraying death as something merely scary, the bird portrays death as something almost joyous. Whitman joins these powerful forces lilacs, stars and singing birds together at the end to explain their purpose. He used these symbols as a way to eulogize his friend and offer a way to remember him forever. Whitman utilizes the use of things many readers know, like stars for instance, to emphasize what he wants to convey in his work. We know that stars are ever-lasting; we know that lilacs return in the spring; we don’t know that birds sing, but we know that death is a tricky thing to navigate. He utilizes our knowledge and expands on it, giving us a beautiful poem about death, remembrance and grief.** At the very obvious level, the poem shows that in the beginning the poet who felt grief and a sense of loss could not accept the death of Lincoln. Whitman’s reaction to the shocking death of Lincoln proves his extreme grief and desperation at that moment. Hearing the news of Lincoln’s death, Whitman was devastated and could not accept the fact that his beloved President was no more. Firstly, the poet used the image of the lilacs to highlight his painful feelings for the death of Lincoln. The poet began by saying that he grieved this poem, which means that he went through a period of mourning during springtime. The date of Lincoln’s death is 15 April and lilacs were actually blooming then in Brooklyn. Thus, Whitman’s use of lilacs in the poem is functional, which shows that each spring when lilacs bloomed, mourning was constant for the speaker so that he could not accept Lincoln’s death immediately. Secondly, the poet used the image of the fallen star to show his despair and helplessness for losing Lincoln. When Whitman is struck by the news of Lincoln’s death. It opens with a tragic cry. The western star that has fallen in the sky symbolizes Lincoln himself, who also fell too soon because of assassination. Lincoln is a star for the United States because he led the country through the civil war, preserved the Union, and ended slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation. He promoted democracy, equality and unity throughout his presidency, leaving a lasting impact on American politics and culture. The “shades of night” and “moody, tearful night” symbolically refer to the night Lincoln died. The poet showed his helpless feelings towards Lincoln’s assassination. He viewed Lincoln’s death as a tragic loss, and his feeling of grief and sense of loss would never free his soul. He could not easily accept the fact that President Lincoln had passed away. Despite feeling grief, the poet still possesses optimism to accept death. Such optimism not only comes from the lilacs finally making him realize that death means rebirth in the cycle of life and can bring hope, but also originates from his discovery that Lincoln’s death will not prevent the United States from flourishing again. Firstly, lilacs represent the springtime reemergence of life and hope after a period of winter and death. The lilac “blooming perennial” means its sustained ability to reproduce. The life cycle of lilacs is endless. The lilac revives from death in winter and its life will continue. For lilacs, death is only the rebirth within the natural life cycle. As Whitman wrote in the Preface to the 1876 edition of Leaves of Grass, he reaffirms this belief again. Whitman views death not as an end, but as a rebirth, a transition into a new form of existence. He sees death as a necessary and valuable part of the cycle of life, rather than something to be feared or avoided. Secondly, the poet realizes the existence of optimism because the United States will still flourish even after the death of Lincoln. The journey of the coffin through natural scenery and industrial cities represents the flourishing life in the United States after Lincoln’s assassination. Above all, the natural landscapes of the United States in the journey describe the thriving country. Even after his death, Lincoln’s spirit can make the United States flourish again. The poet highlight that the resilient American spirit unites people from coast to coast together. Thus, the country still flourishes after the death of Lincoln. The descriptions show the hard work and dedication of the American people, which again prove that the nation continues to grow powerfully after the experience of losing Lincoln. Thus, after seeing the natural landscapes and the industry of the United States still flourish, the poet accepts Lincoln’s death peacefully. The death will gradually fall upon every creature. Death is a natural and important part of life. The thought of death represents the grief experienced by death’s living survivors. In other words, it means the poet, as a survivor, holds great grief towards the death of Lincoln. He always conveys his incapacity of detaching himself from Lincoln’s death. Here, Whitman uses “tally” as a verb in the line preceding the bird’s specific song to mean that the poet’s spirit corresponds with the bird’s song. The poet agrees with the interpretation of death from the bird’ song. Regarding the content of the bird’ song, firstly, the song praises and welcomes death. The bird describes death as “lovely”, “soothing” and “delicate”. Death is not scary. The bird even sings that death is better than many good things in the universe like joys, knowledge and love. Love, knowledge and joys are things that normally gain praise. Compared with them, death is more worthy of praise in the bird’s song. Next, the bird’s song describes death as a dark mother that must be welcomed. Death frees people from pain in life and brings bliss to them. Thus, people must welcome death with joy. Besides, the bird’s song shows that death brings the connection between one’s soul and the body. Death is not fearful because death can unify the body and the soul. Finally, the poet corresponds with all the interpretations of death in the bird’s song. The poet uses “tally” as a noun to mean a reckoning or an instruction, which shows that the content about death in the bird’s song has served as an instruction to the poet. Thus, the poet can accept death’s coming as a necessary cycle of life. After listening to the carol of death sung by the bird, the poet believes that death offers relief from suffering. The song of the bird reminds the poet of the four long years of the civil war. The poet turns from a specific death of Lincoln to a more general one during the civil war. Through his understanding of death from the bird’s song, the poet discovers a piece of comfort: the dead are in peace; the survivors from the war are still suffering. In the end, the poet reaches the status of accepting death peacefully. In the final stanza of the poem, the poet expresses his success in detaching himself from Lincoln’s death mentally. The poet will cease excessively attaching to his memories of Lincoln and clinging to his grief at Lincoln’s death. His memories of Lincoln no longer evoke the same despair the poet felt as a mourner. However, the thrush’s song, the lilac, and the western star will always be a part of the poet’s soul, which means the poet combines memories of loss with the new vision of death and the hope of America’s rebirth. Throughout his poems, Whitman always embraces the idea of death as a natural and necessary part of life, encouraging his readers to view it not with fear, but with acceptance and understanding. As shown in the poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”, Whitman not only expresses mourning for the death of President Lincoln but also depicts how he changes emotions from sorrow to despair and thence to hope and towards the acceptance of President Lincoln’s death peacefully. The poet can embrace death as a crucial part of life because he understands that death means rebirth and brings hope. Death is praiseworthy and must be welcomed. It not only connects one’s soul and the body but also offers relief from suffering. Even if the death of Lincoln is a huge loss for the American people, the country will still flourish again as spring follows winter. Thus, the poet is willing to accept death at the end of the poem. In the poem, Whitman made out of death and sorrow and suffering one of the greatest works of literary art thus far produced in America, and by so doing he also made himself immortal.

This is how the acceptance of death portrayed in the poem “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”.