

3.4 The Brook



I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorpes, a little town,
An half a hundred bridges.

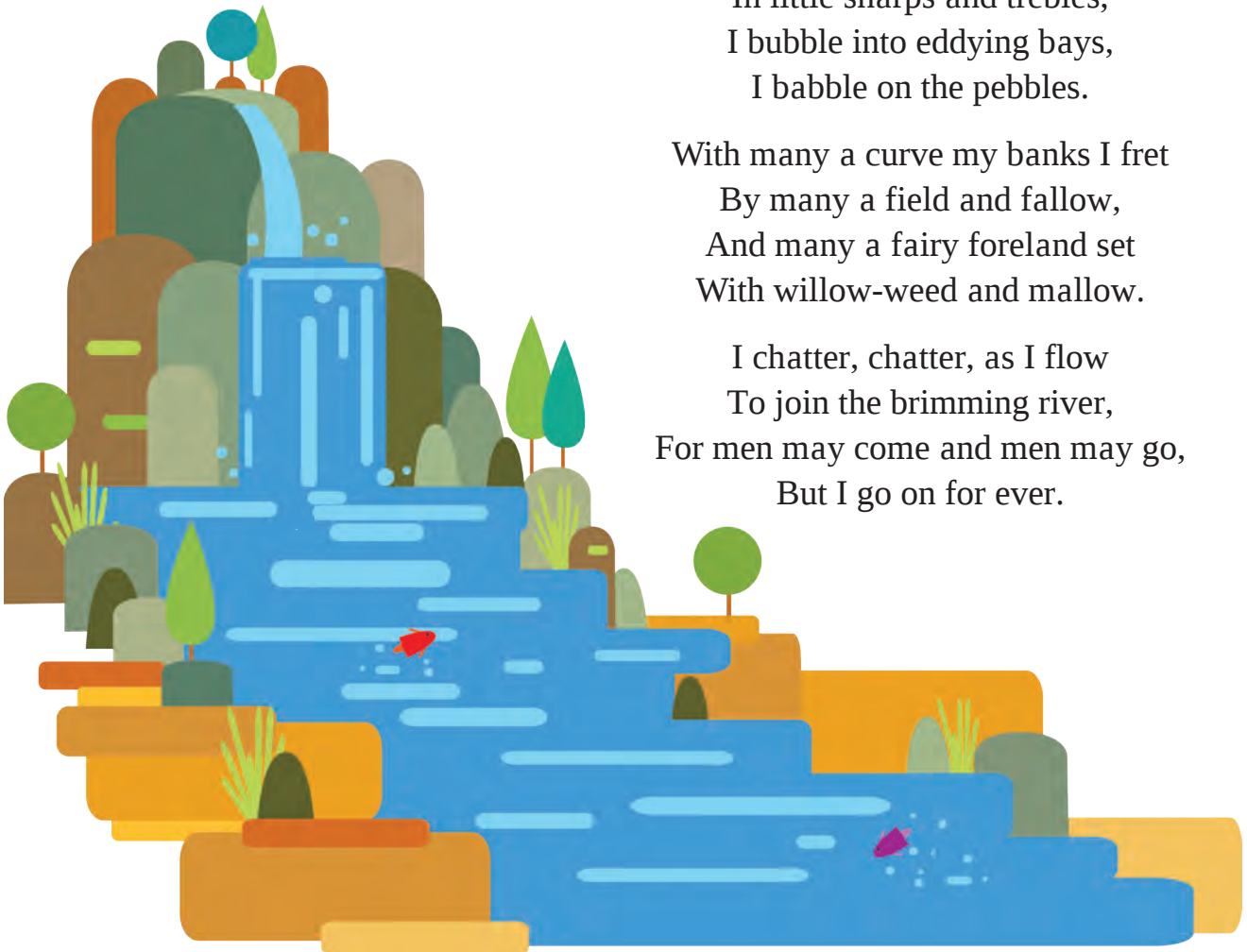
Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.



I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.



I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,
 And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel,
 And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.



I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows;
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses;
 I linger by my shingly bars;
 I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

– From 'The Brook'
 by Alfred Lord Tennyson

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- haunt : a place that one visits often, where one spends a lot of time.
 - coot and hern : Coot and hern are both water birds. Hern stands for the common European heron.
 - sally : a quick journey
 - bicker : run noisily
 - thorpe : old English word for a village
 - sharps and trebles : musical sounds
 - fret : wear out, gnaw
 - fairy foreland : Here, it refers to a scenic place that looks like an entrance to fairyland.
 - mallow : a plant with purple flowers
 - grayling : a freshwater fish with a long fin
 - skimming swallows : swallows that touch the brook lightly and quickly as they fly over it.

- shingly : full of shingles, that is, small rounded pebbles or stones

- bar : barrier, obstacle
- cress : small plant

ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. **Read the poem aloud** with proper pace and rhythm.
2. Find the meaning of the following words or phrases :
 - ridges • brimming • eddying • babble • fallow • trout • netted
3. Answer the following :
 - (1) Who is the speaker in this poem?
 - (2) Which lines are repeated in the poem? What do they mean?
 - (3) Where does the brook join the river?
 - (4) Mention the various places that the brook flows past.
 - (5) Often the brook speaks of itself as if it is human.
For example, 'I bicker down a valley.'
Find two other examples of the human activities of the brook.
4. Spot and write any three alliterative phrases or sentences from the poem.
(Alliterative phrases/sentences are those in which the same sound is repeated.)
5. List the prepositions you find in this poem.
6. List the phrases which have the expression 'many a'.
7. The poet uses words to create pictures or 'images' in the reader's mind.
For example, ' And sparkle out among the fern.'
Write down other lines that create images or pictures in your mind. (Any 3)
8. **Write a short autobiography** of a brook. (20 to 30 lines)
9. Which other things in nature can say –
 'For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.'
10. Use the internet, your school library or other sources for the following activities.
 - (1) Try to find other nature poems.
 - (2) Draw or collect landscapes that can be used as illustrations for this poem.

