

# The scarecrow




Walter de la Mare wrote short stories, novels and poetry for both adults and children. He especially enjoyed writing for children. Here he writes about the dummy that is made to look like a man and then put up in a field to scare birds away from the crops.



All winter through I bow my head  
Beneath the driving rain;  
The North Wind powders me with snow  
And blows me black again;  
At midnight in a maze of stars  
I flame with glittering rime,  
And stand, above the stubble, stiff  
As mail at morning-prime.  
But when that child, called Spring, and all  
His host of children, come,  
Scattering their buds and dew upon  
These acres of my home,  
Some rapture in my rags awakes;  
I lift void eyes and scan  
The skies for crows, those ravening foes,  
Of my strange master, Man.  
I watch him striding lank behind  
His clashing team, and know  
Soon will the wheat swish body high  
Where once lay sterile snow;  
Soon shall I gaze across a sea  
Of sun-begotten grain,  
Which my unflinching watch hath sealed  
For harvest once again.

Walter de la Mare (1873–1956)

- 1 Whose head is bowing?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 2 The poem begins in which season?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 3 What sort of grain does the scarecrow say will grow when the snow has gone?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 4 What are 'those ravening foes'?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 5 The 'clashing team' is (ring **one**):  
horses pulling a plough      men fighting      crows screeching. 1 mark
- 6 What does 'sun-begotten' mean?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 7  Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the following words:
- a) rime: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- b) rapture: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- c) void: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark
- 8 Quote an example of alliteration from this poem.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 mark