

# THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Under a spreading chestnut-tree  
The village smithy stands;  
The smith, a mighty man is he,  
With large and **sinewy** hands;  
5 And the muscles of his **brawny** arms  
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,  
His face is like the tan;  
His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
10 He earns whate'er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man. **B**

Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
You can hear his bellows<sup>1</sup> blow;  
15 You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
With measured beat and slow,  
Like a sexton<sup>2</sup> ringing the village bell,  
When the evening sun is low.

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1. **bellows**: a device for providing air to feed a fire.
  2. **sexton**: an employee of a church, responsible for maintaining the building and ringing the church bells.



*The Blacksmith*, (1909), James Carroll Beckwith. Oil on canvas, 52¼" × 32¼". Photo © Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C./Art Resource, New York.

**sinewy** (sīn'yōō-ē) *adj.*  
lean and tough

**brawny** (brō'nē) *adj.*  
strong and muscular

**B RHYME**  
Reread the first two stanzas, or groups of lines. What pattern of rhyming words do you see?

And children coming home from school  
20 Look in at the open door;  
They love to see the flaming forge,  
And hear the bellows roar,  
And catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.<sup>3</sup>

25 He goes on Sunday to the church,  
And sits among his boys;  
He hears the parson pray and preach,  
He hears his daughter's voice,  
Singing in the village choir,  
30 And it makes his heart rejoice. **C**

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
Singing in Paradise!  
He needs must think of her once more,  
How in the grave she lies;  
35 And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, —rejoicing, —sorrowing,  
Onward through life he goes;  
Each morning sees some task begin,  
40 Each evening sees it close;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's **repose**. **D**

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
For the lesson thou hast taught!  
45 Thus at the flaming forge of life  
Our fortunes must be wrought;  
Thus on its sounding anvil<sup>4</sup> shaped  
Each burning deed and thought.

**C RECOGNIZE RHYTHM**

Write out lines 25–28 and label each syllable with a stressed or unstressed mark. What do you notice about the pattern of the rhythm?

**repose** (rĭ-pōz') *n.*  
freedom from work or worry; rest

**D PARAPHRASE**

Reread lines 37–42. Then rewrite the stanza line by line, using your own words.

3. **chaff from a threshing-floor:** Chaff is the dry coating on grains of wheat. It is discarded during threshing, when the wheat and straw are separated.

4. **sounding anvil:** An anvil is a heavy block of iron on which metals are hammered into shape. *Sounding* refers to the ringing noise the hammering makes.