### **Walter De La Mare:**

Walter De La Mare was born in 1873 and died in 1956. He worked in a London Office until 1906, when a book of his poems won a governmental award of £100 a year and this enabled him to devote his time to writing. He wrote a good deal of prose in addition to poetry.

### **Idea of Poem:**

The poem is a journey into the realm of the imagination. The poet imagines himself as the lord of Tartary - a far-off place given the lineaments of a romantic land - a beautiful rich, fertile, and replete with unheard of and unseen delights. There is a rich variety of exotic colours --the Western mind normally associates this kind of richness with the Orient. The ivory bed, the peacocks, the lifting music carry the reader to this land of charmed delights. Even though the rational mind knows that such a place does not exist, we allow ourselves to be allured. It reminds us of Coleridge's Xanadu- [The poem referred to is "Kubla Khan"] the palace, the domes of ice, and the maid playing on the dulcimer.

**Word                                     Meaning**

Mandoline                             A round-backed musical instrument like a lute

Scimitar                                 A short, curved sword

Citron trees                            Fruit of a citron tree resembles a lemon

Dale                                       Valley through which a river flows.

[**Tartary**](https://allpoetry.com/Tartary)

**If I were Lord of Tartary,  
Myself, and me alone,  
My bed should be of ivory,  
Of beaten gold my throne;  
And in my court should peacocks flaunt,  
And in my forests tigers haunt,  
And in my pools great fishes slant  
Their fins athwart the sun.**

***Stanza 1***

**Explanation:**

In these lines the poet presents the picture of an imaginary kingdom “Tartary”. He considers himself the king of this empire. He says if he were the king of Tartary, he would be its sole king. There should be no one else to share this kingdom. His bed would be made of ivory, a precious material. His throne would be made of pure gold. There would not be any mixture of base metal in it. He would have a spacious court in which peacocks would move here and there very proudly. His forests would be full of wild animals like tigers and lions. They would freely stroll in the forests as its real owners. His kingdom would have pools full of different

kinds of fish. They would swim aslant. They would be very happy and freer than any other object. The tiny fins of these fish would be sloppy towards the sunlight and would shine proudly and happily.

**If I were Lord of Tartary,  
Trumpeters every day  
To all my meals should summon me,  
And in my courtyards bray;  
And in the evening lamps should shine,  
Yellow as honey, red as wine,  
While harp, and flute, and mandoline  
Made music sweet and gay.**

***Stanza 2***

In this stanza the poet further imagines himself as the king of Tartary and mentions his mealtime. He says that if he were the king of Tartary, bugles would call him to meals every

day. This would become a ceremonial event. There would be great trumpeters that would produce heavy and noisy sounds. In the evening there would be lamps of different kinds. The light emitted by these lamps would be as yellow as pure honey. Some of the lights would be as red as pure and bitter wine. And during his meal and even in the evening, the players would play upon harp, pipe and many other musical devices. All these musical instruments would create sweet and beautiful music.

**If I were Lord of Tartary,  
I'd wear a robe of beads,  
White, and gold, and green they'd be —  
And small and thick as seeds;  
And ere should wane the morning star,  
I'd don my robe and scimitar.  
And zebras seven should draw my car  
Through Tartary's dark gleades.**

***Stanza 3***

In this stanza the poet says something about himself. He says that if he were the king of Tartary, he would wear dress of pure pearls. The pearls would be of white and gold colour. There would also be green beads among them. All these pearls would be mixed and would be a thick as grains of seeds. Further the poet wishes that he would wear his dress, his small sword before the waning of the morning star. This would mean that he would prepare himself very early in the morning. His carriage would be drawn by seven specific horses known as zebras. And these horses would draw his carriage through the deep and dark shades and clearings of Tartary.

**Lord of the fruits of Tartary.  
Her rivers silver-pale!  
Lord of the hills of Tartary.  
Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!  
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,  
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,  
Her bird-delighting citron-trees,  
In every purple vale!**

***Stanza 4***

In these lines the poet says if he were the king of the imaginary kingdom, Tartary, he would be the sole owner of its silvery pale rivers. Water of these rivers would be very clear and tasty. He would be king of its fruits of all types. Hills of the land of Tartary would be his. The gorges bushes, tall trees and all the valley would be under his command and control. He would enjoy all the natural objects. The bright stars shining in the sky and the perfumed morning air would also please him. The shivering lakes of Tartary would be like the quiet and motionless oceans. There would be beautiful juicy trees of different kinds of fruits. These would attract birds and would delight him as well as the birds in the beautiful red valleys, red because of fruits and colorful flowers. This imaginary kingdom would please the poet all the time. All the beautiful natural objects mentioned by the poet shows his deep love for nature.

### **Context:**

This poem is a descriptive picture of an imaginary kingdom of Tartary. The poet considers himself the king of that state and wants to enjoy all the delights of life. He would have a throne of pure gold. Beautiful pets would roam about to please him. Musicians would play on instruments at the time of his meals. His rich land would be full of honey, fruits, beautiful gardens and attractive valleys. In fact, this poem is a journey into the realm of imagination.