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“The Lotus” is a Petrarchan sonnet that deals with the issue of crowning a flower as the queen. When Love looks for it, the choice cannot be made easily. Poets over the years have highlighted different aspects of the rose and lily, two contenders for the high honour, and in each case it seems that one has a better claim over the other. Two arguments - one each in favour of the rose and lily are presented in the first eight lines (octave) of the poem. As Love's search for the perfect flower continues, the sestet sees the resolution of the argument. Love wants to have the best possible feature in "the queenliest flower that blooms". In such situation, it is the lotus which is given to Love which was not only "rose-red dyed" but also "lily-white" and is the most suitable candidate for the position of the queen of flowers.

At a deeper and symbolic level, the poem deals with the operations of psyche, love and flora. Love asks flora for the best solution to have a happy and peaceful life. At first, flora points to what is going on in psyche, the rising and falling of the conflicting thoughts and feelings – pride (lily) and sobriety (rose), purity-love, stateliness-deliciousness, life-death etc. Love then asks for a solution in which contraries merge and transform into a harmonious whole. And flora offers 'the Lotus' – the symbol of the unified vision as talked of in Indian Philosophy.

Dutt shows her superb mythopoetic imagination. Love and Flora both are related to Greek and Roman myths. In Latin mythology love is Cupid. He loved the beautiful maiden Psyche. Flora in Roman mythology is Goddess of Flowers and springtime.

The poem perfectly embodies the structure of Petrarchan sonnet. The first eight lines of the poem project the tension generated by the debate between the rival flower factions forwarding the positive and negative points about rose and lily, the ultimate claimants of superiority. The next six lines diffuse this tension as the goddess Flora sets both the rose and the lily aside and selects Lotus which has deliciousness and redness of rose, and stateliness and whiteness of lily. The poem follows a rhyme scheme of 'abba abba cd cd dc'. The figures of speech used include personification (Love, Flora, rose, lily); simile ("Rose can never tower like pale lily", "a flower delicious as the rose", "stately as the lily"); metaphor (Lotus is considered "queenliest" of flower. The flowers are "rivals". They think of 'high honour'. One can not tower' the other). The poet has used both dialogues and descriptions. Short dialogues of love show his curiosity and impatient mind. He fumbles in the choice of beautiful shown through affirmation and negation. The used of hyphen tells this all.