

FLAMINGO
(POETRY)

Poem: *One*

My Mother at Sixty-Six



Competency Based Questions



COMPETENCY BASED

◆ Questions on the Extracts from the Poem

Q.1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Driving from my parent's
home to Cochin last Friday
morning, I saw my mother,
beside me,
doze, open mouthed, her face
ashen like that
of a corpse and realized with pain
that she was as old as she
looked but soon
put that thought away....

(a) Choose the option that best applies to the given extract

1. a conversation 2. an argument 3. a piece of advice 4. a strategy
5. a recollection 6. a suggestion

(i) 1, 3 & 6 (ii) 2, 4 & 5 (iii) Only 5 (iv) Only 1 [Ans. (iii)]

(b) Choose the book title that perfectly describes the condition of the poet's mother.

Title 1	Title 2	Title 3	Title 4
You're only old once!	The Gift of Years	Somewhere Towards the end	The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read
—By Dr. Seuss	—By Joan Chittister	—By Diana Athill	—By Philippa Perry

(i) Title 1 (ii) Title 2 (iii) Title 3 (iv) Title 4 [Ans. (iii)]

(c) Choose the option that applies correctly to the two statements given below.

Assertion: The poet wards off the thought of her mother getting old quickly.

Reason: The poet didn't want to confront the inevitability of fate that was to dawn upon her mother.

- (i) Assertion can be inferred but the Reason cannot be inferred.
(ii) Assertion cannot be inferred but the Reason can be inferred.
(iii) Both Assertion and Reason can be inferred.
(iv) Both Assertion and Reason cannot be inferred.

[Ans. (iii)]

(d) Choose the option that displays the same literary device as in the given lines of the extract.

her face
ashen like that
of a corpse...

- (i) Just as I had this thought, she appeared and...
- (ii) My thoughts were as heavy as lead that evening when ...
- (iii) I think like everyone else who...
- (iv) I like to think aloud when ...

[Ans. (ii)]

Q.2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

I saw my mother, beside me,
doze, open mouthed, her face ashen like that
of a corpse and realised with pain
that she was as old as she looked but soon
put that thought away,

(a) Where was the poet going?

- (i) To her parents' home
- (ii) To Cochin
- (iii) To drop her mother
- (iv) None of the above

[Ans. (ii)]

(b) The poetic device used in 'ashen like that of a corpse' is:

- (i) simile
- (ii) personification
- (iii) metaphor
- (iv) imagery

[Ans. (i)]

(c) Why was the realisation painful?

- (i) The poet was going away from her mother.
- (ii) Her mother was looking sad.
- (iii) It had a fear of separation.
- (iv) Her mother's face had turned pale.

[Ans. (iii)]

(d) The thought that the poet put away was one of:

- (i) love
- (ii) sympathy
- (iii) compassion
- (iv) concern

[Ans. (iv)]

Q.3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

And looked out at Young
Trees sprinting, the merry children spilling
out of their homes, but after the airport's
security check, standing a few yards
away, I looked again at her, wan, pale
as a late winter's moon and felt that old
familiar ache...

(a) What is the most likely reason the poet capitalised 'Young Trees'? This was to

- (i) convey a clearer meaning
- (ii) highlight the adjective-noun combination
- (iii) enhance the contrast
- (iv) draw a connection with the title

[Ans. (iii)]

(b) Choose the option that appropriately describes the relationship between the two statements given below.

Statement 1: The poet knows her mother has aged.

Statement 2: The poet feels the pain of separation.

- (i) Beginning - Ending
- (ii) Cause - Effect
- (iii) Question - Answer
- (iv) Introduction - Conclusion

[Ans. (ii)]

(c) Choose the option that completes the sentence given below.

Just as the brightness of the winter's moon is veiled behind the haze and mist, similarly, _____.

- (i) the pain of separation has shaded mother's expression.
- (ii) age has fogged mother's youthful appearance.
- (iii) growing up has developed a seasoned maturity in the poet.
- (iv) memories warm the heart like the pale moon in winter.

[Ans. (ii)]

(d) Choose the correct option out of the ones given below

Simile	Metaphor
the merry children spilling	Old familiar ache

(1)

Metaphor	Imagery
Pale as a late winter's moon	Young Trees sprinting

(2)

Imagery	Personification
All I did was smile	the merry children spilling

(3)

Personification	Simile
Young Trees Sprinting	Pale as a late winter's moon

(4)

Option 2

(iii) Option 3

(iv)

Q.4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

and looked out at Young
Trees sprinting, the merry children spilling
out of their homes, but after the airport's
security check, standing a few yards
away, I looked again at her, wan, pale
as a late winter's moon and felt that old
familiar ache, my childhood's fear

(a) What thought did the poet put away?

- (i) of her mother's declining health
- (ii) to wake up her mother
- (iii) of leaving her parent's house
- (iv) that she would not be able to bid adieu to her mother

[Ans. (i)]

(b) The sprinting trees are a symbol of

- (i) playfulness
- (ii) joy
- (iii) energy
- (iv) contentment

[Ans. (ii)]

(c) The example of a Metaphor in the above extract is:

- (i) Merry children spilling out of their homes
- (ii) Trees sprinting
- (iii) late winter's moon
- (iv) Both (i) and (ii)

[Ans. (iv)]

(d) The joyful scene of trees and children did not drive away the poet's painful thought because:

- (i) she was feeling emotional
- (ii) her mother was looking old and pale
- (iii) of her mother's poor health
- (iv) all of the above

[Ans. (iv)]

Q.5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

I looked again at her, wan, pale
as a late winter's moon and felt that old
familiar ache, my childhood's fear,
but all I said was, see you soon, Amma,
all I did was smile and smile and smile.....

(a) The poet compares her mother's face to the 'late winter's moon' because:

- (i) it is pale and dull
- (ii) her mother looks like corpse
- (iii) her mother's face is calm and serene
- (iv) she does not like the winter moon

[Ans. (i)]

(b) What does the phrase 'familiar ache' mean?

- (i) the poet's restlessness and helplessness
- (ii) the pain the poet experiences on seeing her mother's old age
- (iii) a pain that has been experienced by the poet
- (iv) the pain of seeing her mother's ashen face.

[Ans. (iv)]

(c) Why does the poet say, 'see you soon, Amma'?

- (i) to bid farewell to her mother
- (ii) in an attempt to get rid of her fear
- (iii) she is being separated from her mother
- (iv) as a reassurance to herself

[Ans. (iv)]

(d) The poetic device used in the last line is:

- (i) alliteration
- (ii) paradox
- (iii) repetition
- (iv) assonance

[Ans. (iii)]

◆ Stand-Alone Multiple Choice Questions

1. In the poem, My Mother at Sixty-six, all that the poet did was smile and smile and smile..., Her smile is

- (i) sudden, in response to her mother's.
- (ii) meaningful and loaded with love.
- (iii) accompanied with tears of farewell.
- (iv) put on to cheer her mother.

[Ans. (iv)]

2. What do 'the merry children' symbolise?

- (i) vigour and happiness
- (ii) confidence and energy
- (iii) anxiety and despair
- (iv) excitement and eagerness

[Ans. (i)]

3. Kamala Das uses the simile 'as a late winter's moon' to signify:

- (i) Shine and strength
- (ii) Dull and decay
- (iv) Dark and cloudy

[Ans. (ii)]

4. Kamala Das' elongated smile signifies a sense of:

- (i) Grief (ii) Fear (iii) Pain (iv) Reassurance [Ans. (iv)]

5. The poet in 'My Mother at Sixty Six' has a feeling of towards her mother.

- (i) anxiety (ii) fear (iii) pain (iv) sadness [Ans. (i)]

6. Why did Kamala Das look at her mother again?

- (i) She was going away. (ii) She was fearful and insecure.
(iii) To see if her mother was awake. (iv) She wanted to wake up her either. [Ans. (ii)]

7. The poet, Kamala Das, looks out of the window:

- (i) to all the trees sprinting (ii) as she was feeling bored
(iii) to see the merry children (iv) in an attempt to distract herself [Ans. (iv)]

8. The poet, Kamala Das uses her elongated smile to:

- (i) make herself happy. (ii) make her mother feel happy.
(iii) to hide her pain. (iv) to comfort her mother. [Ans. (iii)]

9. On seeing her mother's ashen face Kamala Das feels:

- (i) Fear (ii) Pain (iii) Panic (iv) Aversion [Ans. (ii)]

10. The main idea of the poem, 'My Mother at Sixty Six' is:

- (i) fear of loss and separation (ii) loss of youth
(iii) declining health (iv) loss of beauty [Ans. (i)]

11. The phrase 'old familiar ache' has been used to refer to a fear, in this extract. This phrase can also be used to

- (i) compare physical pain with mental agony. (ii) elicit someone's unanswered queries.
(iii) substantiate reasons for aches and pains. (iv) describe a longing one has been aware of. [Ans. (iv)]

12. The tone of the poet in the poem is primarily a combination of _____ and _____.

1. dauntlessness 2. apprehension 3. dejection 4. disappointment
(i) 1, 2 (ii) 2, 3 (iii) 3, 4 (iv) 1, 4 [Ans. (ii)]

