

POETRY

Chapter - 1

MY MOTHER AT SIXTY SIX

-Kamla Das

QUESTIONS:-

1. Where is the poet going and who is with her?

Ans. The poet is driving from her parent's home to the Cochin airport. Her mother is sitting beside her and dozing with her mouth open. She has come to see her daughter off.

2. Why does Kamala Das describe the young trees as "sprinting"?

Ans. Kamala Das is driving from her parent's home to Cochin airport. When she looks outside, the young trees seem to be walking across them. They seem to be running fast or sprinting. The poet presents a contrast-her 'dozing' old mother and the 'sprinting' young trees.

3. How does the poet's mother look like? What kind of images has the poet used to signify her ageing decay?

Ans. The poet's mother is at sixty-six years old. She is sitting beside her. The mother is dozing as old people usually do during the journey. She keeps her mouth open. This is also a sign of old age. The poet has signified her ageing decay with the image of death. Her face looks pale and faded like ash. Her 'ashen' face looks like that of a corpse.

5. What is the kind of pain and ache that the poet feels?

Ans. The poet sees her mother beside her, dozing with her mouth open. She has grown old and weak. Her face is pale like that of a corpse. With ageing, separations and death become inevitable and this fear pains the poet. With ageing, comes death and this fear pains the poet. She is not prepared to think of losing her mother.

6. Why has the poet brought in the image of the merry children 'spilling out of their homes'?

Ans. The poet has brought in the image of merry children 'spilling out of their homes' to present a contrast. The poet's mother who is sitting beside her is dozing with her mouth open. Her ashen face looks lifeless and pale like a corpse. She is an image of ageing and passivity. On the other hand merry children come out of their homes in a gay and happy mood. It presents an image of happiness and spontaneous overflow of life. The contrast of the two image enhances the poetic effect.

7. Why has the mother been compared to the 'late winter's moon'?

Ans. The mother has been compared to late winter's moon

because the poet's mother who is sitting beside her is dozing. Her 'ashen' face looks lifeless and pale like of a corpse. She is an image of ageing decay and passivity. She has lost her shine and strength of her youth. Similarly, the late winter moon looks hazy, obscure, lacking shine and strength. Hence, the comparison is quite natural and appropriate. The simile used here is full of effective.

8. What does the poet see happening outside?

Ans. The thought of her aging mother pains the poet. Her mother pale and corpse looking face brings in her mind the picture of death. The poet needs distraction or a change. So, she looks outside and watches young trees. They appear as if they are sprinting. Then she sees the happy children running out of their homes and making merry.

9. Why does the poet put that thought away and looks outside?

Ans. The poet Kamla Das tries to put away the thought of an ageing mother as her mother gives an image of decay and death. She shifts her attention from the painful fact of an ageing and dying mother to the children's running out of their homes and the trees that appears to be sprinting, which gives the picture of life happiness and activity.

10. What do the parting words of the poet and her smile signify?

Ans. The parting words of the poet are 'see you soon Amma'.

These words signify the poet's expression of a feelings which she cannot express properly and the words give an assurance of life to an old and weak lady. Her continuous smile are an attempt to hide the fear inside her heart that her mother has grown old and perhaps she might not live long.

Multiple Choice Question

Read the given extract and answer the following questions from 01-09.

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

realised with pain.

Q1. The given extract is taken from the poem

- (A) Keeping Quiet
- (B) My Mother at Sixty Six
- (C) A Thing of Beauty
- (D) A Roadside Stand

Q2. Where was poet driving to?

- (A) parent's home
- (B) cochin airport
- (C) shopping mall
- (D) cochin market

Q3. Who is sitting beside the poet?

- (A) Her sister
- (B) Her mother
- (C) Her daughter
- (D) Her friend

... but soon

put that thought away, and

looked out at young trees

Sprinting, the merry children spilling

out of their homes.

Q4. Who looked out at young trees?

- (A) the mother
- (B) The poet
- (C) The children
- (D) Poet's friends

Q5. What does sprinting trees signify?

- (A) fast moving trees
- (B) Speed of moving car
- (C) young energetic action of youth
- (D) None

Q6. What does the poet notice in the outside world?

- (A) sprinting trees and merry childrens running out
- (B) schools and roads
- (C) other vehicles
- (D) market

I looked again at her, wan,

pale a slate winter's moon

and felt that old,

familiar ache my childhood fear

But all I said was see you soon Amma,

all I did was smile and smile and smile....

Q7. The narrator compared her mother to

- (A) summer's sun
- (B) rain clouds
- (C) late winter's moon
- (D) trees

Q8. What is the familiar ache which the poet felt?

- (A) her mother's weak health
- (B) her childhood fear of losing her mother
- (C) her duties
- (D) her helplessness

Q9. What are the parting words that the poet said?

- (A) Goodbye
- (B) au revoir
- (C) see you soon Amma
- (D) see you soon mamma

Q10. The mother's old age and lack of energy is a depiction of

- (a) the poet's helplessness in old age
- (b) joy and fun of old age
- (c) bonding of mother with family members
- (d) sickness and ill-health

Q11. The poem is made up of;

- (a) twenty lines
- (b) a single sentence
- (c) ten stanzas
- (d) five stanzas

Q12. The image of merry children has been brought out by the narrator in order to

- (a) show energy and exuberance of young children
- (b) to show the children playing
- (c) to show the children playing pranks
- (d) to compare with herself

Q13. The narrator is only using her smile to

- (a) cover up her pain
- (b) make herself happy
- (c) to make her mother happy
- (d) to make her father happy

Q14. Smile and smile and smile is

- (a) alliteration
- (b) personification
- (c) simile
- (d) metaphor

Q15. 'Children spilling out' is an

- (a) simile
- (b) metaphor
- (c) personification
- (d) repetition

Q16. Trees sprinting' is a poetic device. It is

- (a) personification
- (b) metaphor
- (c) repetition
- (d) transferred epithet

Q17. What do the running trees signify?

- (A) fast moving appearance
- (B) speed of the moving car
- (C) fast moving change in human life childhood to old age
- (D) none

Q18. What did the poet realize with pain?

- (A) her mother's appearance like a corpse
- (B) she is inconsiderate
- (C) old age is pleasant
- (D) she has duties

Q19. What do the parting words "See you soon Amma" signify?

- (A) her carelessness
- (B) her optimistic farewell full of cheerfulness
- (C) she bids goodbye like this
- (D) she is in a hurry

Q20. What does 'ashen face' signify?

- (A) colour of face
- (B) face is covered with ash
- (C) Pale and lifeless face of poet's mother
- (D) to show ugly face

Q21. Whose house the poet was leaving?

- (A) her friends house
- (B) her in-law's house
- (C) her husband's house
- (D) her parent's house

Q22. What does the expression smile, smile and smile signify?

- (A) poet was going home and was elated
- (B) poet was happy
- (C) poet was hopeless
- (D) poet's desperate efforts to hide her fears

Q23. Who is the poet of this poem?

- (A) John Keats (B) Rudyard Kipling
- (C) William Wordsworth (D) Kamala Das

Q24. How far was the poet standing away from her mother?

- (A) few miles (B) A few kilometres
- (C) A few yards (D) A few metres

Q25. What did the poet see outside the window?

- (A) Large buildings
- (B) Factories with smoke rising from chimneys
- (C) Young trees
- (D) None of the above

ANSWERS KEYS :-

1-(B), 2-(B), 3-(B), 4-(B), 5-(A), 6-(A), 7-(C), 8-(B), 9-(C), 10-(A),
11-(B), 12-(A), 13-(A), 14-(A), 15-(B), 16-(A), 17-(C), 18-(A),
19-(B), 20-(C), 21-(D), 22-(D), 23-(D), 24-(C), 25-(C)