

## Class 12 - English (Flamingo)

### Poem 1 - My Mother at Sixty Six

#### Question and Answers:

**(All the answers given are for your idea. Develop your own answers)**

#### **Q1. What is the kind of pain and ache that the poet feels?**

A1 When the poet sees her ageing mother who is about to die, she felt the pain of losing her. This is similar to the pain which she use to feel if her mother was not near her. She feels that as her mother is growing old and pale, she will die soon and they will get separated. Time and death never spare anyone. Not even the poet's mother and so, she has to lose her.

#### **Q2. Why are the young trees described as sprinting?**

A2. While the poet was on her way to the airport. She saw the trees beside the road which seemed to be running fast as she was travelling in a car. It seemed as if they were sprinting. Here the poet tries to show the difference between her pale and weak mother who looked like a corpse and the trees that were running and were full of life.

#### **Q3. Why has the poet brought in the image of the merry children 'spilling out of their homes'?**

A3. The poet brings in the image of the merry children to show the deep contrast between the joy and happiness of the life which can be seen in the merry children and the passivity of life which can be felt by looking at the ashen face of the old mother who is old and decaying.

#### **Q4. Why has the mother been compared to the 'late winter's moon'?**

A4. The mother has been compared to the 'late winter's moon' because the moon in the winter season is dim and appears lifeless, it doesn't look shiny. Similarly, the poet's mother, due to ageing, has become dull, her colour is similar to that of ash. It looks dull and has lost its youth. She looks like a corpse.

#### **Q5. What do the parting words of the poet and her smile signify?**

A5. The poet's parting words "see you soon, Amma" show the pain and fear of losing her mother. But she smiles and looks at her mother to give her ailing mother assurance that she will meet her soon. Here one can easily see that she is trying to hide her real feelings of pain and fear from her mother and tries to console herself and her mother that they both will be able to see each other again.

## EXTRA QUESTIONS

Question 6.

Having looked at her mother the poet looked at her mother, why does Kamala Das look at the children ?

Answer:

The poet is full of pain and ache when she looks at her ageing mother. She has grown so old that she might not grow older. This means her days on this earth are numbered. The poet looks at the children outside to divert her attention from the sad thoughts she has about her old mother.

Question 7.

What was Kamala Das's childhood fear ?

Answer:

In her childhood, the poet's heart was filled with fear whenever her mother was not with her. The poet now feels similar kind of fear since she senses that her mother has grown very old and perhaps she might not live long.

Question 8.

In the last line of the poem, 'My Mother at Sixty-Six', why does the poet use the word 'smile' repeatedly ?

Answer:

The repetition of the smile indicates that the poet does feel for her mother, but she is unable to express her feelings openly. She tries to hide her true feelings under the garb of repeated smile.

Question 9.

How does Kamala Das try to put away the thoughts of her ageing mother ?

Answer:

When the poet sees her ageing mother, she becomes full of pain and agony. She thinks that her mother might not live long. To put away the thoughts of her ageing mother, the poet starts looking out of the car. She starts looking at the children rushing out of their homes and the trees that appear to sprinting.

Question 10.

What were the poet's feelings at the airport ? How did she hide them ?

Answer:

The poet would become afraid when she did not find her mother with her. Her childhood's fear now again, came to surface when she reached the airport. But she only said, 'See you soon, Amma.' And the poet could do nothing but smile and smile. The poet wants to convey the idea that the young ones do feel for their elders but they couldn't express their feelings.

Question 11.

What were Kamala Das's fears as a child ? Why do they surface when she is going to the airport ?

Answer:

In her childhood, the poet would become afraid when she could not find her mother with her. During her drive to the airport, the poet looked at her mother. The mother looked quite old and her face was white as a corpse. She felt that her mother was going to leave her for ever. In this way, the poet's childhood fear surfaced when she was going to the airport.

Question 12.

Ageing is a natural process; have you ever thought what our elderly parents expect from us ?

Answer:

Ageing is a natural process. When the person becomes old he becomes weak, he needs support .both emotional and physical. Thus, it becomes our duty to provide our old parents the love-, emotional support and respect they deserve. Our parents usually give us their best period of life to bring us up. Therefore it becomes our moral duty to reciprocate the same when they become old.

But unfortunately, due to rank materialism and nuclear family system the old people are treated as an unnecessary commodity. They are harassed and sometimes even beaten up. Many a time the old people are sent to old age homes, where they lack emotional support which the family can provide. It is very shameful for the younger generation. Our parents do not deserve such shabby treatment in their old age.

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