

Class- 11

Sub.-English.

Chapter - My Mother at Sixty -six (poem)

Write and learn the following Questions and answers .

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

Ans: When the poet sees the pale and corpse-like face of her mother, her old familiar pain or the ache returns. Perhaps she has entertained this fear since her childhood. Ageing is a natural process. Time and ageing spare none. Time and ageing have not spared the poet's mother and may not spare her as well. With this ageing, separation and death become inevitable.

Q2. Why are the young trees described as 'sprinting'?

Ans: The poet is driving to the Cochin airport. When she looks outside, the young trees seem to be walking past them. With the speed of the car they seem to be running fast or sprinting. The poet presents a contrast—her 'dozing' old mother and the 'sprinting' young trees.

Q3. 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 merry children coming out of their homes in large numbers present an image of happiness and spontaneous overflow of life. This image is in stark contrast to the 'dozing' old mother, whose 'ashen' face looks lifeless and pale like a corpse. She is an image of ageing, decay and passivity. The contrast of the two images enhances the poetic effect.

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

Ans: The poet's mother is sixty-six years old. Her shrunken 'ashen' face resembles a corpse. She has lost her shine and strength of youth. Similarly the late winter's moon looks hazy and obscure. It too lacks shine and strength. The comparison is quite natural and appropriate. The simile used here is apt as well as effective.



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

Ans: The poet's parting words of assurance and her smiles provide a stark contrast to the old familiar ache or fear of the childhood. Her words and smiles are a deliberate attempt to hide her real feelings. The parting words: "See you soon, Amma" give an assurance to the old lady whose 'ashen face' looks like a corpse. Similarly, her continuous smiles are an attempt to overcome the ache and fear inside her heart.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS (Word Limit: 30-40 words)

Q1. Where was the poet going and who was with her?

Ans: The poet was driving from her parent's home to the Cochin airport. The poet's mother had come to see her off. She was sitting beside her. She was dozing with her mouth open. The words 'driving' and 'doze' provide a contrast between images of dynamic activity and static passivity respectively.

Q2. What was the poet's childhood fear? [All India 2014]

Ans: The child is always in fear of being separated from his parents. In the same way, the poet's fear as a child was that of losing her mother or her company.



Q4. What does the poet realise with pain? Why does the poet 'put that thought away' and look outside?

Ans: The lifeless and faded face of the poet's mother pains her heart. She looks lifeless like a corpse. She provides an image of passivity, decay and death. The old lady seems to be lost in her thoughts. The poet needs a distraction, a change. She puts that thought away and looks outside. There she gets a picture of life, happiness and activity.

Q5. Describe the world inside the car and compare it to the activities taking place outside?

Ans: The pale and faded face of the poet's mother looks lifeless like a corpse. Her dozing with mouth wide open suggests passivity, decay and death. Outside the car, the poet watches young trees speeding past them. They seem to be running fast or sprinting. Happy children are moving out of their homes cheerfully. They present an image of life, dynamism and activity.



Q8. What does the poet do after the security check-up? What does she notice?

Ans: They have to pass through a security check-up at the airport. After it, the poet stands a few yards away. Before saying parting words to her mother, she looks at her mother again. Her face looks pale and colourless like the late winter's moon. She presents a picture of ageing and decay.

Q9. Why is the poet's mother compared to the late winter's moon?

Ans: The poet's mother has been compared to the late winter's moon to bring out the similarity of ageing and decay. The late winter moon looks hazy and obscure. It lacks shine and strength. The poet's mother has an 'ashen' face resembling a corpse. She has lost her shine and strength of youth. The comparison reinforces the impact.

