

1. What was the poet's childhood fear?

Ans. In her childhood, the poet was insecure about losing her mother, just as all young children often are.

2. What were the poet's parting words?

Ans. The poet's parting words were, "See you soon, Amma", which are suggestive of the hope that they will meet again.

3. What is the poetic device used in these lines?

Ans. The poetic device used in these lines is simile, where the mother's dull and lifeless face is compared to a late winter's moon.

4. Why did the poet smile and smile?

Ans. The poet smiled and smiled (meaning that she smiled continuously) because she was trying to hide her real feelings. She feared the fact that she might not see her mother again, which left her almost in tears.

5. What thought did the poet drive away from her mind?

Ans. The poet drove away the painful thought of the distressing reality that her mother was getting old and she might die anytime.

6. What did she see when she looked out of the car?

Ans. When she looked out of the car, she saw young trees on the roadside, which appeared to be moving. She also saw a group of children, merrily rushing out of their homes to play.

7. How do you know that the joyful scene didn't help her drive away the painful thought from her mind?

Ans. As the poet passed through a security check at the airport and happened to look at her mother, she was again haunted by the same fear of losing her to death. This shows that the joyful scene earlier didn't help drive away the painful thought from her mind.

8. What are the merry children symbolic of?

Ans. The merry children are symbolic of the exuberance of youth. The energetic and lively children present a contrast to the poet's mother who has grown old and pale.

9. What was the childhood fear that now troubled the poet?

Ans. As a child the poet was insecure about losing her mother and the same fear has come again now when her mother has grown old.

10. What do the poet's parting words suggest?

Ans. The poet, while parting, smiled and said to her mother that she would see her soon. This expression of her suggests that though she was aware that her mother was quite old and weak, yet she hoped that she would live and that they would meet again.

11. Why did the poet smile and smile?

Ans. The poet smiled and smiled only because she wanted to hide her fears from her mother. She was reassuring herself and also her mother that they would meet again.

12. Explain, "that old familiar ache."

Ans. "That old familiar ache" refers to the agony and pain of separation from her mother that the poet felt in her childhood, as she feared that she might lose her mother.

13. Where was the poet driving to?

Ans. The poet was driving to Cochin airport from her parent's home.

14. Why was her mother's face looking like that of a corpse?

Ans. Her mother's face had lost all its glow and color. It was nearly lifeless. That is why it was looking like a corpse's face.

15. What did the poet notice about her mother?

Ans. The poet noticed that her mother was sleeping with her mouth open. Her face looked like that of a corpse. She suddenly realized that her mother had become very old.

16. Why was the realization painful?

Ans. The realization that her mother had grown very old was painful because it brought with it the distressing thought that she was also nearing her death, whose cruel hands would separate the poet from her mother.

17. Name the poem and the poet.

Ans. The name of the poem is 'My Mother at Sixty-Six' and the poet is Kamala Das.

18. What did the poet realize? How did she feel?

Ans. The poet realized that her mother was getting old and was nearing her impending death. She felt afraid of losing her mother, the same fear which she used to face in her childhood.

19. What did she do then?

Ans. The poet at once turned her face away from the harsh reality and looked out of the window to divert her mind.

20. What did she notice in the world outside?

Ans. The poet saw green trees sprinting by. She also saw a group of children who were exuberant, enthusiastic and were merrily coming out of their houses.

21. What is the kind of pain and ache that the narrator feels?

Ans. The emotional pain and anguish the narrator feels is the realization that her mother is old, frail and pale as a corpse.

22. Why are the young trees described as 'sprinting'? (Delhi 2012,2010)

Ans. While driving to the airport, the poet looks at the young trees sprinting to distract herself from thoughts of her aging mother. The trees sprinting represents the rapidly passing years of human life from childhood to old age. This image of activity and strength contrasts with that of her elderly and frail mother. In contrast to her mother's impending death, the 'young' trees represent life.

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

Ans. The poet has depicted contrasting images of life and death in the poem. She has used the image of the happy children running out of their houses to play to represent life, vigor, health, beauty, and happiness. This image contrasts sharply with that of her mother, who is nearing the end of her life and has become old, inactive, weak, and withered. The poet has juxtaposed the two images to emphasize the differences between them. Childhood is the beginning of life, while old age is the end.

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

Ans. The poet's mother's vitality and radiance have begun to fade as she ages. The poet compares her mother to a "late winter's moon" to indicate her impending death. Winter, as the year's final season, is associated with lifelessness and dormancy. A winter's moon is also pale-white in color, resembling her mother, who, having lost all her strength, appears 'wan' and 'pale' to the poet.

25. What do the parting words of the narrator and her smile signify?(All India 2010)

Ans. The parting words "goodbye Amma" are used by the narrator to reassure the mother and to increase the narrator's own optimism. She accepts the reality of her mother's imminent death, but continues to keep smiling and happy. It requires a lot of effort and that is why the

poet uses poetic repetition to emphasize it. She tries to hide her fear with a smile on her face.

26. What childhood fears do you think the narrator is referring to in the poem 'My Mother at Sixty-Six'?

Ans. The poet's childhood fear was that she would lose her mother to death and thus be separated from her for all time. As a result, she was terrified of being separated from her mother.

27. What does the narrator mean by 'all I did was smile and smile and smile...'?

OR

A smile does not always indicate happiness.' Does My Mother at Sixty-Six reflect this statement? Justify your response with an example from the poem.(CBSE Sample Paper 2022)

Ans. Throughout the stanza, 'all I did was smile and smile and smile...' the poet tries to conceal her concern about her mother's failing health. The poet smiled and smiled, hoping to reassure herself that she would be able to see her mother again.

28. What does the narrator's mother look like? What kind of images has been used to signify her aging?

Ans. The narrator's mother is sixty-six years old, looking as pale as a corpse. The image of death arises with this comparison. The color of her face is of ash which shows pale and weak. She is like the late winter's moon which lacks energy.

29. What were the activities that the narrator saw outside the car window?

Ans. The narrator noticed young trees speeding by, as if they were sprinting or running fast. Children running out of their homes were seen to be happy, enthusiastic, and energetic. They present an image

of youth and energy in contrast to the narrator's mother's lack of energy.

30. Why does the narrator look outside? What does she perceive?

Ans. Even the thought of being separated from her mother shocks and depresses the narrator. She experiences the fear that she may never see her mother again. To ward off such negative thoughts, she looks out the window and her mind changes when she sees the trees appear to be moving fast and children playing happily.

31. State the common issue faced by most of the aged in the current times, with reference to the poem My Mother at Sixty-six.(CBSE Sample Paper 2022)

Ans. The most common issue faced by most of the aged in the current times, with reference to the poem My Mother at Sixty-six is the absence of a supporting presence or loneliness or they feel alone when children move away. This issue was faced by the aged mom of the poet as she lived away from her mother.

32. Kamala Das speaks of 'an old familiar ache...' What do you think is the reason for this feeling? (CBSE Sample Paper 2020)

Ans. Kamla Das' mother is elderly and pale, and her health appears to be failing. As a result, the poet experiences a familiar pain, which is one of her constant fears of losing her mother. She recollects her childhood fear of being separated from her mother.

33. Aging is a natural process; have you ever thought about what our elderly parents expect from us ?

Ans. Aging is a natural process. A person becomes weaker as he ages, he needs support both mentally and physically. So, it is our duty to give our elderly parents the love, emotional support and respect they deserve. Our parents usually give us the best time of their lives to bring us up. Therefore, it is our moral duty to respond in kind as they age.

Loneliness is common in the elderly, and they require companionship. The pessimistic attitude they develop towards life can be avoided only if we lavish them with love, importance, and empathy. They expect their children to sit quietly and talk to them about what is going on in their lives, and to consider their advice when making important decisions. Their depleted vitality can thus be easily restored. This joy will inspire them to live life to the fullest. Thus, ensuring that we give them the best time of their lives just as they once did for us when we were younger.

34. Write a brief summary of the poem, 'My Mother at Sixty Six' by Kamala Das.

Ans. The poem begins with Kamala Das, the poet, is on her way to the airport in Cochin, accompanied by her elderly mother. She suddenly realizes her mother has grown old. Her face is ashen, as if she were a corpse. This thought disturbs her because it reminds her of her mother's impending death. As a daughter, the thought of losing her mother disturbs her, and in order to distract herself, she begins looking out the window at the trees that appear to be sprinting as she drives a car. She also notices small children rushing out of their homes to play outside. This brings back memories of her youth and beauty. Her mother, on the other hand, is getting older. She has grown old and is nearing the end of her life. This gives her a sense of insecurity. In contrast to the young children and green trees, the mother has aged and become as pale as the winter moon.

As she waves goodbye to her mother at the airport, the poet experiences the same pain and fear she did as a child, but she masks her feelings with a smile that assures her mother that she will return soon. So, even when the poet is terrified of old age, her smile gives her mother hope of survival.

35. Imagine you are the poet's friend. Write a dialogue exchange between yourself and the poet where the latter confides in you about

her fears and asks for your advice. What would your advice be to face her fears, to ignore them or something else? (CBSE QB, 2021)

Ans.

Poet: Hi, how are you doing?

Friend: I am good, but you are not your usual self. What happened? You seem lost somewhere else

Poet: I met my mother over the weekend. She is just sixty-six but was looking older than her age.

Friend: Oh, they all look like that. My father is only fifty-nine but he already looks like seventy. Poet: Not only that, but her health was also looking deteriorated. I had to shift over here due to professional work. It was a pain leaving her alone at home. I have not spent enough time with her lately. There is so much I want to discuss with her, but don't have time

Friend: Don't worry, she will be well. We all seem afraid of the impending truth. But, come on, face your fears boldly. Take a week's off and spend time with her. At least, you will not regret later in life.

Poet: But, my boss will not allow me to take off. You know the work pressure we have right now at the office

Friend: Don't worry, I will take care of that. I will work overtime for a couple of days and cover up for you.

Poet: Thanks dear, you are truly a friend indeed. I will talk to boss in the morning. Thanks and good night

Friend: So, cheer up now! All will be well. Good night.

36. Analyze the concept of losing our dear ones on account of old age in the context of the poem.

Ans. The poem 'My Mother at Sixty-Six' captures the natural complexities of the human mind, as well as the universal fear of losing



our parents. Aging is an unavoidable part of human life that we must accept regardless of the pain it causes in our hearts. The poet discusses her mother, who is getting older and has a pale and weak face. Her mother, who is sixty-six years old, is depicted as an elderly woman in need of rest. The poet recalls how, even as a child, she was terrified of losing her mother. Her fear has evolved over time into a fear of losing her mother to death. Her attention is diverted by her mother's failing health, but she smiles, expressing her desire to see her soon.

37. In the last line of the poem, 'My Mother at Sixty-six', the word 'smile' is repeated three times. What is its significance ?

Ans. Even after attempting to distract her from the fact that her mother was aging, the poet couldn't help but notice her mother's fading face. She is afraid that this is the last time she will see her mother. However, the poet chose to conceal her fear from her mother. The poet uses the word "smile" three times in the final line to emphasize that, while she is afraid of losing her mother and is distressed by their separation, she does not let it show on her face. She smiles to persuade herself and her mother that they will meet soon.

38. What are the main ideas combined in the poem 'My Mother at Sixty-six'?

Ans. In this poem, the poet details what her mother looks like at the age of 66. She also shares her pain at seeing her deteriorate so much. It was her last Friday morning at home when she looked up at her mother as she drove to the airport. The poet was not only injured but also shocked to see her sleeping with her mouth open. She became all the more worried as she looked pale, shriveled and withered like a corpse. To distract himself from this pain and suffering, she looked outside and saw young trees and children. She understood in them life, vigor and vitality. Then to airport security. A similar old age was reflected in her pale body. She compared her to a late winter month and realized that it was due to old age. The poet smiled at her to see

her again and left. The poem was an example of the pain caused by old age and separation.

39. In the poem “My Mother at Sixty-six,” how does the poet convey the nuance of human relationships?

Ans. In the poem ‘My Mother at Sixty-six,’ the poet Kamala Das depicts a close relationship between a mother and a daughter with such sensitivity that the reader is moved by similar emotions. The poem is written in one continuous sentence and depicts a single thread of thought interspersed with real-world sights and sounds that connect to the main idea of old age and death. The poet is about to leave the airport with her elderly mother. Her heart is gripped by the agony of losing her mother to death, but she suppresses it. The fear in her heart is hidden by a smile on her face, and she leaves knowing she will see her mother again.

40. Bring out the poetic devices used in the poem.

Ans. The poem “My Mother at Sixty Six” is structured into a one-sentence frame with commas. This shows one chain of thought that runs through.

In her poem, My Mother’s Sixty-six, Kamla Das employs imagery to convey her main point: aging is natural, and we all have to go through it at some point in our lives. We should not be concerned about aging because it is a natural process. The poet employs imagery to convey the concepts of death and youth. “Trees sprinting, happy kids spilling.” This is explained by the poet by comparing her mother’s old age to trees and young children. Similes like “ashen as a corpse’s face,” “as a late winter’s moon.” are used. The poet compares her mother’s old age to a corpse and the moon in winter. They are symbols of hopelessness and darkness. It refers to the symptoms of death caused by old age. The body and ashes have arrived at the cremation facility. The poem reflects the poet’s fear of losing her mother, which no one wants. She uses words and phrases like “doze, open-mouthed,” “wan,

pale as a late winter's moon," and "wan, pale as a late winter's moon" to describe these as signs of aging.

Young trees and children are personified by the poet. The young trees grow quickly because children are active and represent youth, whereas their mother's face is pale, ashy, and corpse-like. Her youth is fleeting, and she will soon be old like her mother. In *My Mother at Sixty-six*, the metaphor "children spilling" is used. A child's action represents youth, while her mother represents old age. Youth and children are similar in that they are both active and not in the state of dormancy like her mother.