

Chapter 1

A Photograph

Question:

Infer the meaning of the following words from the context.

Paddling transient

Now look up the dictionary to see if your inference is right.

Answer :

Paddling- The act of dabbling in water. To move a boat by means of paddles. Transient: Transitory. Something that stays at a place for a short time-period.

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Question:

**What does the word „cardboard“ denote in the poem?
Why has this word been used?**

Answer :

‘Cardboard’ in the poem refers to the photograph. This word has been used because photograph is now just a piece of paper with the memory as the poet's mother is

dead now. It shows that human life is transitory and the cardboard which remains is memorable piece of paper.

Question:

What has the camera captured?

Answer :

The camera has captured some happy moments from the childhood of the poet's mother. It was a scene taken from a beach where she had gone with her two cousins, Betty and Dolly and her uncle for a sea holiday. The girls were paddling in the water and holding the hand of poet's mother, when the uncle had clicked the photograph.

Question:

What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?

Answer :

The sea has not changed over the years. It is still the same. The sea symbolizes eternity. On the contrary human life is transitory and this transience is compared to the nature which is permanent and eternal.

Question:

The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot. What did this laugh indicate?

Answer :

The poet's mother laughed at the happy memories of the moments that had passed long back. She looked back to her childhood with nostalgia and remembered the innocent joys of her childhood days.

Question:

What is the meaning of the line “Both wry with the laboured ease of loss”.

Answer :

The line refers to the sea holiday as remembered by her mother and the poet remembering her mother's laughing face. Both these now belong to the past. Her mother is no more now. The memories in both the cases, were beautiful yet painful to recall as time has paced away fast.

Question:

What does “this circumstance” refer to?

Answer :

‘This circumstance’ refers to the present situation of the poet wherein the poet is absorbed in the painful memory of her dead mother. Looking at the photograph and thinking of her mother's laughter, the poet also realises that it has been the same number of years since her

mother died as her mother's age in the photograph i.e..
twelve years.