

## **Chapter 6**

### **Childhood**

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**Question:**

**Identify the stanzas that talks of each of the following.  
Individuality, rationalism, hypocrisy**

**Answer :**

Individuality- Third stanza Rationalism- First stanza  
Hypocrisy- Second stanza

**Question:**

**What according to the poem is involved in the process  
of growing up?**

**Answer :**

According to the poem, the process of growing up involves the attainment of mental maturity and loss of innocence and simplicity. A person is said to be grown up when he has become logical, rational and is able to build his own thoughts. A grown up has the power to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

A grown up individual understands the actions of others just as the poet recognises the hiatus between the

preaching and the practice of the adults. He realises the hypocrisy and the double standards maintained by the adults. A mature individual also asserts his thoughts and opinions.

**Question:**

**What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?**

**Answer :**

The poet feels that childhood is a period of innocence and simplicity, a time when one trusts other without asking for logic. He does not appear to feel sad or upset at the loss of his childhood. He only seems to be puzzled at the disappearance of childhood and the arrival of adulthood. He expresses his confusion when he asks the questions 'When' and 'Where did my childhood go'?

**Question:**

**Which do you think are the most poetic lines? Why?**

**Answer :**

The last stanza of the poem seems to be the most poetic, which is: 'It went to some forgotten place, That's hidden in an infant's face; That's all I know.' These lines sum up beautifully the process of growth and the disappearance of a particular stage of life. These lines express metaphorically that an infant's innocent face hides many

things behind its smiles. He seeks solace in the fact that the virtues of childhood are not permanently gone but perhaps it lies hidden somewhere in the child's consciousness.