

Unit-11 Lesson-2

Poem: “Two Mothers Remembered”**– Joann Snow Duncanson**

I had two Mothers – two Mothers I claim
Two different people, yet with the same name.
Two separate women, diverse by design,
But I loved them both because they were mine.

The first was the Mother who carried me here,
Gave birth and nurtured and launched my career.
She was the one whose features I bear,
Complete with the facial expressions I wear.

She gave me her love, which follows me yet,
Along with the examples in life she set.
As I got older, she somehow younger grew,
And we’d laugh as just Mothers and daughters do.

But then came the time that her mind clouded so,
And I sensed that the Mother I knew would soon go.
So quickly she changed and turned into the other,
A stranger who dressed in the clothes of my Mother.

Oh, she looked the same, at least at arm’s length,
But now she was the child and I was her strength.
We’d come full circle, we women three,

My mother the first, the second and me.

And if my own children should come to a day,
When a new Mother comes and the old goes away,
I'd ask of them nothing that I didn't do.
Love both of your Mothers as both have loved you.

Stanza 1

I had two Mothers – two Mothers I claim / Two different people, yet with the same name.

- ◆ The speaker refers to having two versions of her mother: one before illness, and one after.
- ◆ আমি দুইজন মাকে দাবি করি – একই নাম, কিন্তু দুটি আলাদা মানুষ।

Two separate women, diverse by design / But I loved them both because they were mine.

- ◆ Though different in behavior and state, she loved both because they were part of her life.
- ◆ তারা আলাদা হলেও আমি দুজনকেই ভালোবাসতাম, কারণ তারা আমার মা ছিলেন।

Stanza 2

The first was the Mother who carried me here / Gave birth and nurtured and launched my career.

- ◆ She speaks of her biological mother who raised her.
- ◆ প্রথম মা আমাকে জন্ম দেন, লালন করেন, জীবনের পথে এগিয়ে দেন।

She was the one whose features I bear / Complete with the facial expressions I wear.

- ◆ The poet inherited her looks and mannerisms from this mother.
- ◆ আমার চেহারা ও অভিব্যক্তিতে মায়ের ছাপ রয়েছে।

Stanza 3

She gave me her love, which follows me yet / Along with the examples in life she set.

- ◆ Her mother's love and values stayed with her throughout life.
- ◆ মায়ের ভালোবাসা ও জীবনের শিক্ষাগুলো এখনও আমাকে প্রভাবিত করে।

As I got older, she somehow younger grew / And we'd laugh as just Mothers and daughters do.

- ◆ As she matured, their bond grew stronger and more playful.
- ◆ আমি বড় হওয়ার সাথে সাথে মা যেন আরও প্রাণবন্ত হয়ে উঠেছিলেন।

Stanza 4

But then came the time that her mind clouded so / And I sensed that the Mother I knew would soon go.

◆ Her mother developed dementia or mental illness.

◆ তখন মায়ের মানসিক অবস্থা খারাপ হতে শুরু করল, আমি বুঝে গেলাম আগের মা আর থাকবেন না।

So quickly she changed and turned into the other / A stranger who dressed in the clothes of my Mother.

◆ Her personality faded, replaced by a different version of herself.

◆ তিনি যেন একজন অপরিচিত মানুষ হয়ে উঠলেন, যদিও বাহ্যিকভাবে একই রকম রইলেন।

Stanza 5

Oh, she looked the same, at least at arm's length / But now she was the child and I was her strength.

◆ Physically unchanged, but mentally fragile—roles reversed.

◆ চেহারায় কোনো পরিবর্তন হয়নি, কিন্তু এখন আমি মায়ের সেবা করতাম, তিনি আমার উপর নির্ভর করতেন।

We'd come full circle, we women three / My mother the first, the second and me.

◆ Life had come full circle—from mother to child, back again.

◆ আমরা তিন নারী—প্রথম মা, দ্বিতীয় মা (অসুস্থ অবস্থায়), এবং আমি—এক আবর্ত শেষ করেছি।

Stanza 6

And if my own children should come to a day / When a new Mother comes and the old goes away

◆ She speaks of future generations witnessing the same transformation in her.

◆ যদি আমার সন্তানদের এমন দিন আসে, যখন তারা আমাকেও বদলাতে দেখে...

I'd ask of them nothing that I didn't do / Love both of your Mothers as both have loved you.

◆ Her final advice: love both versions of your mother, just as she did.

◆ তাদের বলব, যেমন আমি করেছিলাম, তেমন ভালোবাসা তোমরাও দিও তোমাদের মায়াদের।

(2 Marks Each)

1. What does the poet mean by “two Mothers”?
2. How are the two Mothers different yet the same?
3. Why does the speaker love both versions of her mother equally?
4. What role did the “first mother” play in the speaker’s life?
5. How does the poet describe the inheritance of physical traits?
6. What do the poet’s memories of laughter signify?
7. What caused the transformation in the poet’s mother?
8. How is the phrase “mind clouded” symbolic?
9. What emotions are expressed in the line “a stranger who dressed in the clothes of my Mother”?
10. How does the poet show the reversal of roles between mother and daughter?
11. What is the significance of “we women three”?
12. Why does the poet call the journey a “full circle”?
13. What does the poet want her children to learn from her experience?
14. How does the poem explore aging and mental decline?
15. What values does the poet uphold about love and caregiving?
16. How does the poet use rhyme and rhythm to convey emotion?
17. In what way is the poem both personal and universal?
18. How does the poet’s tone shift from beginning to end?
19. What does the poem teach us about acceptance and compassion?
20. How is the theme of continuity between generations portrayed?

Here are the **answers** to the **20 analytical questions** (each for **2 marks**) based on the poem “**Two Mothers Remembered**” by Joann Snow Duncanson:

1. What does the poet mean by “two Mothers”?

The poet refers to two different stages of the same mother's life — her mother as she was before aging and mental decline, and her transformed self after dementia.

2. How are the two Mothers different yet the same?

They are different in behavior and mental state but are the same person by identity and love.

3. Why does the speaker love both versions of her mother equally?

Because both are part of who her mother is; her love remains unconditional despite the changes.

4. What role did the “first mother” play in the speaker's life?

She gave birth to the speaker, nurtured her, and shaped her early life through care and guidance.

5. How does the poet describe the inheritance of physical traits?

The poet says she bears her mother's facial features and expressions, symbolizing deep connection.

6. What do the poet's memories of laughter signify?

They reflect the warmth and bond shared during their happy times together as mother and daughter.

7. What caused the transformation in the poet's mother?

Mental decline, possibly due to dementia or Alzheimer's, caused her to become a different person.

8. How is the phrase “mind clouded” symbolic?

It symbolizes memory loss and confusion caused by aging or illness, like a fog over the mind.

9. What emotions are expressed in the line “a stranger who dressed in the clothes of my Mother”?

The speaker feels pain, loss, and confusion as her mother looks the same but is mentally different.

10. How does the poet show the reversal of roles between mother and daughter?

The daughter becomes the caretaker as the mother mentally regresses into a childlike state.

11. What is the significance of “we women three”?

It refers to the poet, her mother in her younger days, and her changed self — symbolizing three stages in their shared journey.

12. Why does the poet call the journey a “full circle”?

Because the roles reverse, and the daughter now cares for the mother as the mother once did for her.

13. What does the poet want her children to learn from her experience?

To show love and compassion to both versions of a parent, as she did with her mother.

14. How does the poem explore aging and mental decline?

Through the gradual change in the mother’s behavior, memory loss, and role reversal, it portrays aging with honesty and emotion.

15. What values does the poet uphold about love and caregiving?

She emphasizes unconditional love, empathy, respect, and the duty to care for aging parents.

16. How does the poet use rhyme and rhythm to convey emotion?

The gentle rhyme and steady rhythm reflect both the affection and sadness of the changing relationship.

17. In what way is the poem both personal and universal?

While it describes the poet's own mother, many people can relate to the experience of watching a loved one age and change.

18. How does the poet's tone shift from beginning to end?

It shifts from nostalgic and loving to sorrowful and reflective, ending with acceptance and wisdom.

19. What does the poem teach us about acceptance and compassion?

It teaches us to accept the changes in loved ones and continue to love and support them through all stages.

20. How is the theme of continuity between generations portrayed?

The speaker reflects on her role as a daughter and a mother, showing how love and caregiving pass from one generation to the next.
