

Poem  
**05**

## In the Street of the Fruit Stalls

(Jan Stallworthy)

### Words and Expressions

wick	-	piece of cord or thread in an oil lamp	چراغ یا لائین کی بنی یافتہ
mandarin	-	citrus fruit resembling a small orange	نارنگی
pyramid piled	-	arranged in a cone-shaped order	مخروطی شکل میں رکھے ہوئے
orbit	-	range; path	دائرہ - حدود
compacted	-	squeezed; condensed	سکڑے ہوئے
rind	-	skin of a fruit; thick tough outer skin; peel	چھلکا
pitted	-	rough; uneven	کھردری - ناہموار
radiant	-	glowing; bright; luminous	تابندہ - دھلکتے ہوئے

### Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct synonym.

- Wicks **balance** flame; a dark dew falls.  
A) twinkle B) burn  
C) reduce D) stabilize
- Pyramid-piled** like cannon balls.  
A) arranged in a cone-shaped order  
B) heaped in an untidy fashion  
C) dumped in a disorderly pile  
D) glowing red hot
- Glow** red-hot, gold hot, from within.  
A) seem B) shine  
C) decorate D) polish
- Dark children with a coin to spend / Enter the lantern's **orbit**.  
A) place B) gloom  
C) lane D) range
- The moon **compacted** to a rind.  
(Board 2018)  
A) squeezed B) changed  
C) broken D) twinkled
- The moon compacted to a **rind**.  
A) seed B) core  
C) peel D) pulp
- The sun in a **pitted** skin.  
A) thick B) juicy  
C) rough D) smooth
- Radiant** as lanterns, they forget.  
A) dim B) burning  
C) glowing D) transparent

### Answers

1. D 2. A 3. B 4. D 5. A 6. C 7. C 8. C



## Questions and Answers

**Q.1** What are the feelings of the poet standing in the dark?

(Board 2007)

**Ans.** The poet's feelings are subdued as he watches children in a poverty-stricken and war-torn country. He is utterly depressed to see the world threatened by war, misery and poverty.

**Q.2** Why do the fruits look like bombs to the poet?

(Board 2008)

OR

**Why has the poet used "cannon balls" to describe the fruits?**

(Board 2015)

**Ans.** The poet has used the simile of cannon balls in order to convey the scene of a country which is overwhelmed by war. The horrors of war have clouded his vision so much that even the juicy gifts of nature seem like cannon balls to him.

**Q.3** Make a list of all the fruits mentioned in the poem?

OR

**What fruits does the writer mention in the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls"?** (Board 2015)

**Ans.** The poet has mentioned three fruits i.e. melon, guava and mandarin.

**Q.4** Which parts of the children's body are involved while eating fruit?

(Board 2008)

OR

**How do the children enjoy fruit?**

**Ans.** The poor children get different fruits from the fruit stalls. As they eat the fruit, its juice sticks to their mouth, fingers and cheeks. It makes their faces wet.

**Q.5** What is the significance of "the moon compacted to a rind" and "the sun in a pitted skin"?

**Ans.** The gloom and misery in this world and the horrors of war have darkened the poet's vision so much that even the luminous objects like the sun and the moon seem to him withered and twisted.

**Q.6** What is the significance of the repetition of the word "dark" in the poem?

**Ans.** The poet's heart is saddened by the gloom and misery surrounding his world. The repetition of the word "dark" highlights the distress and desolation in the world. It also brings out his deep frustration and concern for the world plagued by different problems.

**Q.7** What do the children stand for in the poem?

OR

**What kind of children have been mentioned in "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls"?**

**Ans.** The poem mentions dark and poor children who enjoy the juicy gifts of nature without inhibition. They stand for man's love of pleasure in spite of all the misery surrounding him.

**Q.8** What do the colours 'red-hot' and 'gold-hot' signify?

**Ans.** These colours refer to fire which can be associated with war. The poet has become so pessimistic and painfully depressed by the horrors of war that even fruits remind him of the weapons of destruction.

**Q.9** What is the central idea of the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls"?

OR

**What is the theme of the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls"?**

**Ans.** The world is threatened by war, misery and poverty. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice, forgetting all the misery they live in.



## Explanation with Reference to the Context

### Stanza 1:

Wicks balance flame, a dark dew falls  
In the street of the fruit stalls  
Melon, guava, mandarin,  
Pyramid piled like cannon balls,  
Glow red hot, gold hot, from within.

### Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls" written by Jan Stallworthy.

### Context:

This is a symbolic poem. The poet highlights the major threats of war, misery and poverty to the world. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice forgetting all the misery they live in. They are as glowing as the flames of light.

### Explanation:

The above lines depict a scene in a street of fruit stalls. The poet perhaps stands at a distance. The scene may be from some of the Third World countries where people are threatened by war, poverty and misery. There are oil-lamps illuminating the street where the fruit-stalls are stalled. The fruits like melons, guavas and mandarins are arranged in piles which look like pyramids. In the dark surroundings, things look ominous (*threatening; sinister*). They are round like cannon-balls. The fruits shine in the light of the lanterns; but it seems that the source of heat and light is within the fruit itself. Using the image of cannon balls, the poet highlights the threats of war whereas red-hot and gold-hot glow of the fruits creates the image of fire. Thus the lines create an atmosphere of fear and horror in the minds of the readers.

### Stanza 2:

Dark children with a coin to spend  
Enter the lantern's orbit; find  
Melon, guava, mandarin--  
The moon compacted to a rind,  
The sun in a pitted skin.

### Reference:

These lines have been taken from the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls" written by Jan Stallworthy.

### Context:

This is a symbolic poem. The poet highlights the major threats of war, misery and poverty to the world. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice forgetting all the misery they live in. They are as glowing as the flames of light.

### Explanation:

The above lines depict a scene from a street of fruit stalls. The poet perhaps stands at a distance. The scene may be from some of the Third World countries where people are threatened by war, poverty and misery. The children have come to the stalls, holding coins in their hands that they want to spend. They enter the circle of light formed by the flames of the lanterns. They find melon, guava and mandarin on the stalls. The sun has already set in and the moon is reduced to an arc. In the dark surroundings, things look ominous. Natural objects like sun and moon also reflect a gloomy environment.

**Stanza 3:**

They take it, break it open, let  
A gold or silver fountain wet  
Mouth, fingers, cheek, nose, chin:  
Radiant as lanterns, they forget  
The dark street I am standing in.

(Board 2014)

**Reference:**

These lines have been taken from the poem "In the Street of the Fruit Stalls" written by Jan Stallworthy.

**Context:**

This is a symbolic poem. The poet highlights the major threats of war, misery and poverty to the world. But all these have failed to crush man's love for pleasure. Children enjoy the sweet spray of the juice forgetting all the misery they live in. They are as glowing as the flames of light.

**Explanation:**

In spite of war, the dark, poor children have a world of their own. They come out into the dark street, buy some fruit and relish it. They are not worried about anything. The children take the fruit and break it open. At once the gold or silver juices gush out of it which spread over their mouths, fingers, cheeks, noses and chins. The children are very happy after getting the fruit. They look bright and glowing like the light of the lanterns. The poet feels mentally tormented because of the grim future of man whereas the innocent children forget and ignore all about the dangers and unpleasant circumstances around them. The humanity symbolized by poor children continues to enjoy life even in the darkest moments.



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