

## **A Roadside Stand Notes**

### **Question 1.**

Why do the people who run the roadside stand wait for the squeal of brakes so eagerly?

#### **Answer:**

The “squealing of brakes” means that a car has stopped at their roadside stand. It raises their hopes that the city-folk have stopped there to buy something from their roadside stand and some city money will come into their hands.

### **Question 2.**

Explain: “soothe them out of their wits” with reference to the poem The Roadside Stand’.

#### **Answer:**

The powerful men approach the country folk with false promises of providing them with better living conditions and a better life. These innocent and simple rustics repose blind faith in their false claims and feel soothed and satisfied. They fail to see through their crookedness and selfishness.

### **Question 3.**

Why does Robert Frost sympathise with the rural poor?

**Answer:**

Robert Frost feels an unbearable agony at the plight of the rural poor who are ignored and neglected by the rich politicians. The Government and the party in power are indifferent to their welfare. They fool them by making false promises and then fully exploit them to suit their own selfish interests.

**Question 4.**

What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand?

**Answer:**

The folk who had put up the roadside stand pleaded to the city dwellers to stop and buy their wares so as to enable them to earn some extra money for a decent living. They wanted that the rich people who passed from there in their cars should stop there and buy some goods from them. The money that these folks would earn from the rich people would help them to lead a better life.

**Question 5.**

What is the 'childish longing' of the folk who had put up the roadside stand? Why is it 'in vain'?

**Answer:**

The 'childish longing', the poet refers to, is the dreams and desires of the rural folk who have a child-like longing for a better life that they hope to

live with the help from the city dwellers. Their longing is in vain because the city folk are not willing to help them and so their 'childish longings' are not likely to be fulfilled.

**Question 6.**

Why didn't the 'polished traffic' stop at the roadside stand?

**Answer:**

The 'polished traffic' conveniently overlook the roadside stand and do not stop there as their mind is focussed only on their destination. Moreover, they were critical of the poor decor of the stand, its artless interior and paint.

**Question 7.**

What news in the poem 'A Roadside Stand' is making its round in the village?

**Answer:**

The news making its round is about the resettlement of the poor, rural people who will be resettled in the villages, next to the theatre and the store. They would be close to the cities and will not have to worry about themselves any more.

**Question 8.**

Why do people at the roadside stand ask for city money?

**Answer:**

The rural people running the roadside stand are poor and deprived, unlike the people of the city. They thus ask for city money so that they too can lead a life of happiness and prosperity. This much-needed city money can give them the life that had been promised to them by the party in power.

**Question 9.**

What does Frost himself feel about the roadside stand?

**Answer:**

The poet is distressed to see the interminable wait on the part of the shed owners for their prospective buyers. He is agonised at the 'childish longing in vain' of the people who have put up the roadside stand.

**Read the extract and answer the Answer: that follow:**

**Question 10.**

The little old house was out with a little new shed  
In front at the edge of the road where the traffic  
sped,  
A roadside stand that too pathetically pled,  
It would not be fair to say for a dole of bread,  
But for some of the money, the cash, whose flow  
supports  
The flower of cities from sinking and withering faint.

1. Where was the new shed put up? What was its purpose?
2. Why does the poet use the word 'pathetic'?
3. Explain: 'too pathetically pled'
4. Who are referred to as 'the flower of cities'?

**Answer:**

1. A little house at one side of the road was extended and a shed was added to it to put up a road stand. It was set up to attract passersby to buy things from them so that they could earn some money.

2. By using the word 'pathetic' the poet emphasizes on the fact that the condition of the shed was most humble and that it presented a rather pitiable sight.

3. It was as if by putting up the shed the owner was desperately pleading to the rich city folks to stop by at his roadside stand and buy things from there so that they could earn some extra money.

4. 'The flower of the cities' here refers to the rich and wealthy city-dwellers who can afford the best things.

**Question 11.**

The polished traffic passed with a mind ahead,  
Or if ever aside a moment, then out of sorts  
At having the landscape marred with the artless  
paint

Of signs that with N turned wrong and S turned

wrong

Offered for sale wild berries in wooden quarts,

1. What does the poet mean by 'with a mind ahead'?
2. What are N and S signs?
3. Why have these signs turned wrong?

**Answer:**

1. The phrase 'with a mind ahead' suggests that the people who pass the roadside stand in their polished cars conveniently overlook the roadside stand as their mind is focussed only on their destination.
2. The N and S signs stand for the North and the South direction.
3. These signs have turned wrong because they have been painted in the wrong way and so these signboards are wrongly presented.

**Question 12.**

Or beauty rest in a beautiful mountain scene,  
You have the money, but if you want to be mean,  
Why keep your money (this crossly) and go along.  
The hurt to the scenery wouldn't be my complaint  
So much as the trusting sorrow of what is unsaid

1. What attraction does the place offer?
2. What should one do if one wants to be mean?
3. What does the poet not complain about?
4. What do you think is the real worry of the poet?

**Answer:**

1. The place offers a scenic view of the beautiful mountains.
2. If one wants to be mean he can keep his money and move on ahead.
3. The poet does not complain about the landscape which has been spoilt because of the artless painting done on the building.
4. The poet's real worry is the unexpressed sorrow of the people who have put up the roadside stand.

**Question 13.**

It is in the news that all these pitiful kin  
Are to be bought out and mercifully gathered in  
To live in villages, next to the theatre and the store,  
Where they won't have to think for themselves  
anymore,  
While greedy good-doers, beneficent beasts of prey,  
(2000; 2007, Delhi)

1. Name the poem and the poet.
2. Explain why merciful have been called 'greedy good-doers' and 'beneficent beasts of prey'?
3. Why won't these poor people have to think for themselves any more?

**Answer:**

1. The poem is 'A Roadside Stand' by Robert Frost.
2. The merciful are the crooked politicians, greedy

people pretending to be good, who only pose as beneficiaries. These powerful men are actually beasts of prey in the guise of beneficiaries who ruthlessly exploit the common people.

3. These poor people are now in the hands of the so-called 'merciful beneficiaries', who will actually do them more harm than any good, so they will not have to think about themselves any more.

### **Question 14.**

Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear  
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,  
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,  
That waits all day in almost open prayer  
For the squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping  
car,  
Of all the thousand selfish cars that pass.

1. What cannot be borne by the poet and why?
2. What is the 'childish longing'?
3. Why the longing has been termed as 'vain'?
4. Why do the people driving in the cars stop sometimes?

### **Answer:**

1. The poet cannot bear the thought of how these country folks are lured with false promises which are never going to be fulfilled because he feels genuinely sad about so much deprivation to these



innocent people.

2. Like children, these country folk have many unfulfilled wishes and desires. So they keep their windows open expecting some prospective customers to turn up so that some good fortune can fall into their share.

3. The longing has been termed as 'vain' because it will never be fulfilled.

4. The people driving in the car stop sometimes either to just enquire about the way to their destination or to ask for a gallon of gas if they ran short of it.

### **Question 15.**

Sometimes I feel myself I can hardly bear  
The thought of so much childish longing in vain,  
The sadness that lurks near the open window there,

1. Why is the longing called childish?
2. Where is the window?
3. Why does sadness lurk there?

### **Answer:**

1. Like children, these rural folk nurture many unfulfilled dreams and desires which might never be satisfied. They crave in vain like children waiting for their wishes to be fulfilled.

2. The window is a part of their roadside stand where they wait expectantly.

3. Sadness lurks there because no car halts there to buy anything from their roadside stand and the rural folk are unable to earn some extra money.

**Question 16.**

The sadness that lurks near the open window there,  
That waits all day in almost open prayer For the  
squeal of brakes, the sound of a stopping car, Of all  
the thousand selfish cars that pass,  
Just one to inquire a farmer's prices are.

1. Which open window is referred to? Why does sadness lurk there?
2. What does the farmer pray for?
3. Is the farmer's prayer ever granted? How do you know?

**Answer:**

1. The open window is that of the roadside stand where they wait expectantly for a car to stop by. Sadness lurks there because no city dweller halts there and thus the hopes of the country folk are belied as no customer stops there.
2. The farmer prays that the city folks apply the brakes of the car and halt at their roadside stand to buy something from there.
3. The farmers' prayers are not granted. The poet tells us that even if city folk do stop at the roadside

stand it is only to enquire about the prices of the goods.