

CLASS 12 • ENGLISH • MP BOARD

Flamingo Poetry • Kamala Das

01. My Mother at Sixty-six

Question-Answer Notes & Solved Practice • 39 Questions

Short Answer Questions

Q1. What worries the poet during the drive?

Answer: The poet notices her mother's pale, ageing face and fears losing her. The sight brings back a familiar childhood anxiety about separation. An ordinary journey becomes an encounter with the reality of mortality.

Q2. Why does the poet compare her mother's face to a corpse?

Answer: The comparison conveys extreme paleness and physical weakness. It expresses the daughter's sudden awareness of approaching death. The mother is alive; the image describes the fear produced by her appearance.

Q3. What do the moving trees and children suggest?

Answer: They suggest energy, movement and the freshness of life. Their vitality contrasts with the mother's tired appearance. Looking outside briefly helps the poet turn away from her painful thoughts.

Q4. Why is the mother compared to a late winter moon?

Answer: A late winter moon appears pale and lacking warmth. The comparison emphasises the mother's faded strength and the quietness of old age. It also deepens the contrast with the lively outdoor scene.

Q5. What does the poet mean by her old familiar ache?

Answer: It is the recurring fear of being separated from her mother. The anxiety is associated with childhood but returns strongly when she recognises her mother's ageing. Love makes the possible loss especially painful.

Q6. Why does the poet smile at the end?

Answer: She smiles to reassure her mother and control her own distress. The outward gesture does not remove her fear. Instead, it reveals the effort to maintain warmth and hope during a difficult farewell.

Q7. Identify the central contrast in the poem.

Answer: The central contrast is between youthful vitality and ageing weakness. The lively scene outside the car makes the mother's fragility more noticeable. This contrast helps express the poet's anxiety about time and separation.

Q8. What is the poem's main theme?

Answer: The poem explores love for an ageing parent and fear of inevitable separation. It presents this universal feeling through a brief personal moment rather than a direct argument about death.

Long Answer Questions**Q1. How does Kamala Das convey her fear of losing her mother?**

Answer:

1. The poet begins with a close observation of her mother's pale face during a journey.
2. The death-like appearance makes the possibility of loss suddenly immediate.
3. She looks at energetic scenes outside, but the distraction cannot permanently remove the fear.
4. At the airport, the image of a pale winter moon renews her awareness of ageing.
5. Her final smile hides distress while offering reassurance, showing the tension between private anxiety and outward affection.

Q2. Explain the use of contrast and imagery in the poem.

Answer:

1. The mother's stillness and paleness suggest weakness and the passage of time.
2. Trees that seem to move rapidly and children at play represent energy and renewal.
3. The late winter moon provides another image of faded strength.
4. These images do not merely describe scenery; they reflect the daughter's emotional response.
5. By placing vitality beside decline, the poet makes the fear of separation vivid without giving a long explanation.

Q3. What does the final farewell reveal about the poet's feelings?

Answer:

1. The farewell brings the poet physically closer to leaving her mother and emotionally closer to the fear of permanent separation.
2. She does not openly express that fear to her mother.
3. Instead, she offers hopeful words and repeats a smile.
4. This response combines affection, restraint and an attempt at reassurance.
5. The ending remains emotionally unresolved because the love is certain, while the future reunion cannot be guaranteed.

Objective Questions

A. Multiple Choice Questions

1. Who is the poet?

- (A) John Keats
- (C) Kamala Das

- (B) Robert Frost
- (D) Adrienne Rich

2. What chiefly worries the speaker?

- (A) A football result
- (C) Her mother's ageing

- (B) A school examination
- (D) A lost suitcase

3. The children outside represent what?

- (A) Political power
- (C) Isolation

- (B) Old age
- (D) Youthful vitality

4. The winter moon suggests what?

- (A) Summer heat
- (C) Anger

- (B) Paleness and decline
- (D) Wealth

5. Which emotion returns from childhood?

- (A) Envy of friends
- (C) Pride in success

- (B) Fear of separation
- (D) Dislike of travel

6. What does the final smile mainly do?

- (A) Reject affection
- (C) Conceal distress and reassure

- (B) Express mockery
- (D) Celebrate a victory

7. Which device compares the mother with a winter moon?

- (A) Onomatopoeia
- (C) Simile

- (B) Pun
- (D) Rhyme alone

8. What relationship forms the poem's centre?

- (A) King and minister
- (C) Teacher and pupil

- (B) Employer and worker
- (D) Mother and daughter

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

B. Fill in the Blanks

1. The poet is Kamala _____.

2. The central figure is the poet's ageing _____.

3. The children suggest youthful _____.

4. The mother's face is compared with a winter _____.

5. The poet hides her anxiety behind a _____.

Answers: 1. Das 2. mother 3. vitality 4. moon 5. smile

C. True or False

1. The poet feels no concern about her mother's age.
2. The outdoor scene contrasts with the mother's frailty.
3. The mother is literally dead during the journey.
4. The final smile can hide painful feelings.
5. The poem explores fear of separation.

Answers: 1. False 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True

D. One Word / Short Phrase

1. Name the poet.
2. Which season appears in the moon comparison?
3. What device uses an explicit comparison with like or as?
4. What emotion underlies the farewell?
5. What relationship is central?

Answers: 1. Kamala Das 2. Winter 3. Simile 4. Anxiety 5. Mother-daughter

E. Match the Columns

Column A	Column B
1. Ageing face	A. Fear of separation
2. Children	B. Reassurance and restraint
3. Winter moon	C. Fear of mortality
4. Familiar ache	D. Faded strength
5. Final smile	E. Youthful energy

Answers: 1-C; 2-E; 3-D; 4-A; 5-B