

Class 12 English Core ENA Flamingo

Poem: My Mother at Sixty Six: Kamala Das



My Mother at Sixty Six : Kamala Das

Driving from my parent's home in Cochin last Friday morning, I saw

My mother beside me, doze open mouthed,

her face ashen like that of a corpse and realised with pain that
she was as old as she looked, but soon put that thought away,
and looked out at Young Trees sprinting, the merry children spilling
out of their homes, but after the airport's security check,
standing a few yards away, I looked again at her wan pale face as a late winter's moon,
and felt that old familiar ache, my childhood fear,
but all I said was, see you soon,
Amma,
and all I did was smile and smile and smile....

Word- meaning

doze- ऊँघना/snooze ashen- राख के रंग का होना/, बेजान सा दिखना / sickly corpse: dead body,
लाश/ मृत शरीर sprinting- भागते या दौड़ते हुए/ running. spilling: उड़ला जाना / बाहर की ओर
निकलना। security: सुरक्षा check: जांच। wan- hazy मुरझाया हुआ/ बेरंग
pale: फीका/ कांतिहीन। familiar: known, परिचित/जाना- पहचाना. ache: pain पीड़ा/ दर्द

Summary

The narrator was visiting her parent's house and was returning back. She had to catch a flight ✈️ from Cochin airport. Her mother was traveling with her to drop her off at the airport. On the way the mother fell asleep in the car 🚗. The narrator looked at her dozing mother beside her and realized sadly that her mother had become old. The thought of her mother's old age pained her. She tried to push this painful thought to the back of her mind and looked out of the window. Outside the trees seemed to run backwards with great energy. She saw young children rushing out of their homes to play. A contrasting picture has been painted with the pale and weak dozing mother on one side and the young trees and energetic children on the other. The mother looked wan and pale. The narrator again feels her fear of separation from her mother which she had felt as a child, but this time the separation could be final if the mother died; and forever. Quickly she dismisses the painful thought and on reaching at the security check, bids farewell to her mother by promising to see her soon. In this way the poet ends the poem on a positive note of hope and re-assurance.

सारांश

यह कविता वक्ता के हृदय से तब निकलती है जब उसे इस बात का एहसास होता है कि उसकी मां अब बूढ़ी हो चली है और शायद कुछ ही दिनों की मेहमान है। बचपन में जो डर उसके मन में हमेशा से था कि मां से कहीं बिछड़ ना जाए, बचपन का वह डर उसे फिर से सताने लगता है।

कवयित्री अपनी मां से मिलने उनके घर आई हुई हैं और अब जाने के समय जब उन्हें कोचीन से अपनी फ्लाइट पकड़नी है तो मां उन्हें एयरपोर्ट तक छोड़ने जा रही हैं। एयरपोर्ट जाने के सफर में मां गाड़ी में उंघने लगती हैं। उनके खुले हुए मुंह और फीके पड़े चेहरे को देखकर कवयित्री को यह एहसास होता है कि मां की उम्र हो चुकी है और अब वह बूढ़ी हो चुकी है। उसे फिर से वही पुराना बचपन वाला चिर- परिचित, मां से बिछड़ने का भय सताने लगता है। अनायास ही उसे एहसास होता है कि शायद अगली बार मां से मुलाकात ना हो इस दुखद खयाल को वह अपने मस्तिष्क से निकाल देती है और गाड़ी की खिड़की से बाहर देखने लगती है। उसे पीछे भागते हुए पेड़ दिखते हैं और घरों से बच्चे खुशी-खुशी खेलने के लिए निकलते दिख रहे थे। इन सभी में ऊर्जा का अतिशय प्रवाह था परंतु मां निष्क्रिय और निर्जीव सी लग रहीं थीं। कुछ समय बाद एयरपोर्ट पर सुरक्षा जांच के उपरांत, फिर से कवयित्री को मां का चेहरा जाड़ेके मौसम के फीके पड़े हुए चांद की तरह नजर आया और याद आया फिर से मां से बिछड़ने का वही बचपन का डर किंतु उन्होंने मुस्कराते हुए मां से सिर्फ यही कहा कि जल्दी ही भेंट होगी।

Textual questions and answers:

1. What is the kind of pain and ache that the poet feels?

Ans. The poet feels the pain of of separation from her mother who is now old at the age of sixty six. The thought of not being able to see her mother next time when she comes on a visit; or ever again pains her excessively.

2. Why are the young trees described as 'sprinting' ?

Ans. The poet and her mother are travelling in a car and when she looks out of the car's window, she sees the trees rushing backwards. They seem to be full of youthful energy in contrast to her weak and aged mother.

3. Why has the poet brought in the image of the 'merry children spilling out of their homes' ?

Ans. The happy children coming out of their homes to play, are full of energy and vigor, symbolizing the spontaneous flow of life. Whereas poet's mother is frail and old. Her face looks ashen as she dozes beside the poet in the car.

4. Why has the mother being compared to the 'late winter's moon'?

Ans. The late winter's moon is wan and pale, it is not as bright and shiny as the summer's moon, mother's face looks hazy and dull like the late winter's moon.

5. What do the parting words of the poet and her smile signify?

Ans. The parting words and the smile of the poet signify hope and re-assurance of their next meeting. She is on the verge of departure from her parent's place and the mother is almost on the verge of departure from life; yet the poet ends the poem on a positive note of meeting her mother again in future on her next visit.

EXTRA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Where is the poet going and who is with her?

Ans. The poet is going to the Cochin airport from her mother's place, to catch a flight. Her mother is with her in the car, to drop her till the airport.

2. How does the poet's mother look like? What kind of images has the poet used to signify ageing decay?

Ans. The poet's mother's face looks ashen, like that of a corpse. The twin images of ash and corpse, evoke death and the final end.

3. Why does the poet put that thought away and looked outside?

Ans. The thought of her mother's death and their final separation is too painful for the poet to bear with. Therefore, she tries to distract herself by looking outside.

4. What does the poet see happening outside?

Ans. When the poet looks out of the car's window, she sees young trees sprinting and merry children spilling out of their homes.

5. What was the age of the mother?

Ans. The mother's age is sixty six years.