

PARISHRAM



2026

My Mother At Sixty Six

ENGLISH

Lecture-3

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Topics *to be covered*

My Mother At Sixty Six





Game Time



Guess the genres!

Fairy
Tale

1. Cinderella lived with her stepmother and her two stepsisters. They were very mean to Cinderella, making her work all day cleaning, sewing, and cooking.

Sci-fi

2. Karan couldn't believe that he created the world's first time machine. He couldn't wait to use it to visit his mother in the past.

Mystery
Thriller

3. The detective struggled to explain Naina's disappearance. That was when he received a shocking phone call about Naina.

Horror

4. Aryan jumped with fear when the door closed on its own. He looked at the mirror and saw a scary figure behind him.





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fairy tale

2. Karan couldn't believe that he created the world's first time machine. He couldn't wait to use it to visit his mother in the past.

science fiction

3. The detective struggled to explain Naina's disappearance. That was when he received a shocking phone call about Naina.

mystery

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horror

MY MOTHER AT SIXTY-SIX

By – Kamala Das



Introduction

- The poet observes her **mother's aging while traveling**. She compares her mother's pale face to a corpse, reflecting on the fear of losing her. To escape sadness, she looks at children playing outside, symbolizing life. Despite her fears, she bids farewell with a smile.

THEME

Aging, mortality

MESSAGE

- Cherish loved ones as time is fleeting.



TONE:

Nostalgic, melancholic



Topic : About the Poet – “Kamala Das”



- Kamala Surayya (born Kamala; 31 March 1934 – 31 May 2009), popularly known by her pen name ‘Madhavi Kutty’ and married name ‘Kamala Das’.
- Notable literary works include:
 - “The Descendants” (1967)
 - “The Old Playhouse and Other Poems” (1973)



- “My Story” (1976), a controversial and acclaimed autobiography that explored her personal experiences and struggles.
- Das’s writing explores the entire gamut of human relationships from the perspective of a woman.



Driving from my parent's

home to Cochin last Friday

morning, I saw my mother,

next to
beside me,

sleeping
doze, open mouthed, her face

colourless; pale
ashen like that

dead body
of a corpse



and realized with pain

that she was as old as she

looked but soon

diverted her attention
put that thought away, and

looked out at Young

running *happy* *Coming out quickly*
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,
colourless *dull*
pale
 as a late winter's moon



and felt that

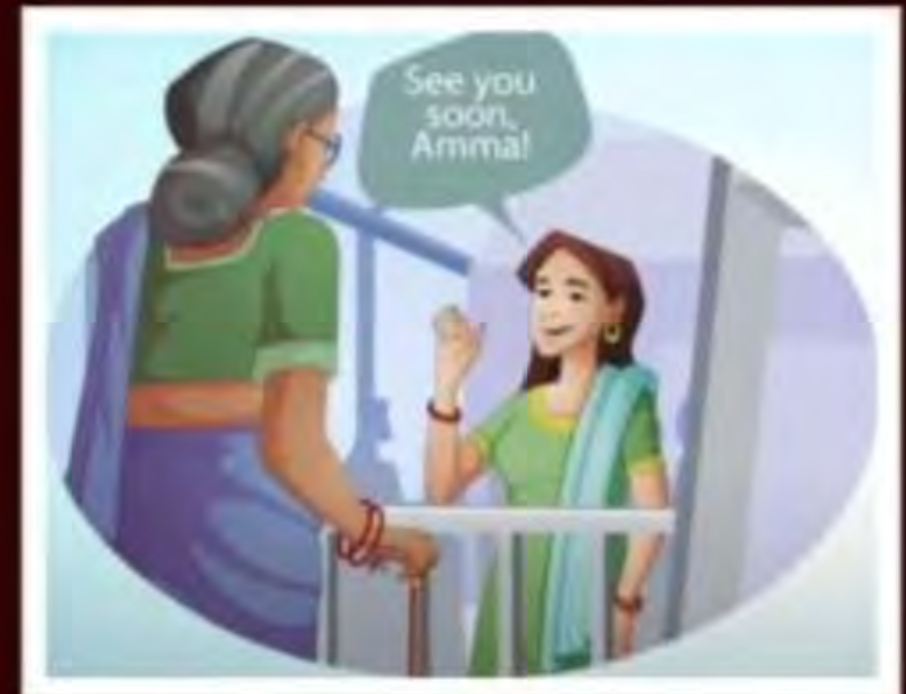
old
 परिचित pain
familiar ache, my childhood's fear,
 → fear of separation from parents

but all I said was, see you soon,

Amma,

all I did was smile and smile and

smile..





Topic : Message



Do not be so busy in the fulfillment of your desires that you forget to take care of your parents when they need you the most.

Topic : Question

#Q. Choose the option that completes the sentence given below.

Just as the brightness of the winter's moon is veiled behind the haze and mist, similarly, _____.

- ☐ A the pain of separation has shaded mother's expression.
- ☒ B age has fogged mother's youthful appearance.
- ☐ C growing up has developed a seasoned maturity in the poet.
- ☐ D memories warm the heart like the pale moon in winter.

- Doze : sleep lightly for a short time
- Ashen : very pale; without colour because of illness or fear
- Corpse : dead body
- Sprinting : running very fast
- Spilling : (here) rushing out; coming out quickly
- Wan : colourless
- Ache : a continuous feeling of pain



Poetic Devices



Imagery

Driving from my parent's
home to Cochin last Friday morning,
I saw my mother, beside me,
doze, open mouthed, **her face**
ashen like that → *Simile*
of a corpse and realized with pain
that she was as old as she looked but soon
put that thought away, and
looked out at Young

Trees sprinting. *Personification*

Metaphor

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**
as a late winter's moon and felt that old
familiar ache, my childhood's fear,
but all I said was, see you soon, Amma,
all I did was **smile** and **smile** and
smile....

Simile

Repetition



Topic : Poetic Devices

1. Simile

her face ashen like that

wan, pale as a late winter's moon

2. Metaphor

merry children spilling

3. Personification

Trees sprinting

4. Repetition

all I did was smile and smile and smile.....

5. Contrast

Inside the car

outside the car

Internal feelings of the poet at the end

Her facial expression (smile)



6. Imagery

Young trees sprinting
merry children spilling

Topic : Extract Based Question

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

- A** Physical pain due to a long journey
- B** Disappointment in her mother's behavior
- C** Anxiety about the approaching flight
- D** Fear of losing her aging mother

Topic : Extract Based Question

#Q. Why are the young trees described as 'sprinting'?



ache
↓
pain

- A** The trees were being cut down rapidly
- B** The poet imagines them running for fun
- ☒ **C** The motion of the car makes the trees appear to move
- D** A storm was making the trees sway wildly

Topic : Extract Based Question

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

- ☐ **A** To show the chaos in the neighborhood
- ☒ **B** To depict a contrast to her mother's aging and frailty
- ☐ **C** To indicate school time in the morning
- ☐ **D** To suggest that the children were chasing the poet's car

Topic : Extract Based Question

#Q. Why has the mother been compared to the 'late winter's moon'?



- A** Because the moon is full and glowing like her face
- B** To show the serenity and calmness in her expression
- ☒ **C** To indicate her old age, paleness, and fading vitality
- D** Because her face looked round and bright like the moon

Topic : Extract Based Question

#Q. What do the parting words of the poet and her smile signify? ✨

- ☒ **A** She is trying to comfort her mother and hide her sorrow
- ☐ **B** She is angry but doesn't express it
- ☐ **C** She is excited to be travelling alone
- ☐ **D** She has nothing else to say at that moment

Topic : MCQs

#Q. Quote an example of a simile used in the poem.

- A** Familiar ache
- B** Like that of a corpse
- C** Wan and pale
- D** The merry children

#Q. Which poetic device is used in 'Trees sprinting'?

- A** Metaphor
- B** Simile
- C** Personification
- D** Alliteration



Topic : Summary



LINE 15-25:

- When the speaker looks at her mother standing a few yards from her at the airport security check, the mother's face is described by the simile "wan, pale as late winter's moon". A brilliant imagery of the winter moon is used in this part of the poem. "Winter" is used to evoke a sense of an ending (like the ageing mother), a certain frigid, inert state (like that of a corpse) and the inevitable darkness (death) that is to follow.



Also, moon has stereotypically received a feminine treatment and the simile “as a pale moon” is quite apt to describe the round, pale face of the aged mother. On seeing her mother, the poet persona experiences “that familiar old ache, my childhood fear”. Though she doesn’t specifically state what it actually is, we can safely infer that it is the fear of losing her mother.



LINE 26-28:

- Despite being deeply thoughtful of her mother's present and future, the speaker can neither stop herself from going away from her mother nor can she stop her mother from going away from her forever. All she can do is part with the hope of seeing her mother again. The parting is made all the more poignant by the fact that though she hopes to see her mother, she fears that she might not. This intermingling of emotions of love, hope, longing, nostalgia, fear and a sense of helplessness at the face of the inevitable seems to find its way in the repetition of the final words of the poem: all I did was smile and smile and smile...



IMPORTANT POINTS:

- The sprinting of the trees symbolizes the fast-passing years of human life from childhood to old age. This image, which shows movement and power, is in contrast to that of her old and frail mother.
- Children spilling out represent liveliness, vigor, fitness, beauty, and joy. This image contrasts dramatically with that of her mother, who is nearing her death and has grown frail, withdrawn, poor, and withered.



- The poet uses her mother's resemblance to 'the late winter moon' to suggest her imminent death. Winter, being the last season of the year, is synonymous with dormancy and life lessness. With old age, the mother of the poet has started to lose all its strength and radiance.
- The parting words of the poet, "see you soon, Amma," signify her farewell to her mother and an attempt to leave her optimistically and cheerfully.



- The face of poet's mother was pale coloured, ashen – weak, painful, extremely aged. Her mother was too much fragile due to age – factor. Being too old, her signs of agedness could be seen over her wrinkled face. Poetess compared her mother's face with a corpse (dead body) as no signs of action can be seen over the face of a corpse similarly poet's mother face was pale coloured, still and weak.



Topic : Extract Based Question

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.

CBSE 2023, CBSE Term 1 2021 Modified

Topic : Extract Based Question

#Q. The sight of the trees and the children helped the poet _____.

Ans. divert her mind from the sad and melancholic thoughts her mind had started thinking.

#Q. Why does Kamala Das compare to her mother to 'a late winter's moon'? Delhi 2017

Or

Why has the poet's mother been compared to the 'late winter's moon'? Delhi 2013

Or

Why has Kamala Das compared her mother to a 'late winter's moon'? Foreign 2011

#Q. What was Kamala Das's childhood fear?

All India 2017

Or

What childhood fear did Kamala Das refer to in her poem? How did she hide it?

Delhi 2015

Or

What was the poet's childhood fear?

All India 2014

Or

What were Kamala Das, fears as a child? Why do they surface when she is going to the airport?

All India 2011

#Q. Why does the poetess look at 'young trees' and 'merry children'?

CBSE 2018 SQP

Or

Having looked at her mother, why does Kamala Das look at the young children?

All India 2017

#Q. Why does the poetess look at 'young trees' and 'merry children'?

CBSE 2018 SQP

Or

Having looked at her mother, why does Kamala Das look at the young children?

All India 2017

Ans. Kamala Das looked at the young children as they represented youth, which is full of life and energy. She wanted to drive away the fearful and disturbing thought that her mother was getting old and weak and might die soon.

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Ans. The poet's mother has been compared to the 'late winter's moon' as the late winter's moon is dull, shrouded symbolising the end of life. Similarly, the poet's mother is pale and old indicating that she is nearing the end of her life.

#Q. What was Kamala Das's childhood fear?

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Topic : Answer

Ans. As a child, Kamala Das was insecure about losing her mother just as all young children usually are. The same feelings are evoked in her while she is on the way to the airport as she sees her mother's pale face, which is a sign of her old age and impending death. She attempts to hide this fear through her long and superficial smile.



Thank
You