

## Chapter - 13 Blood

### Responding To The Poem

#### Question 1.

What makes the depiction of a crumbling village house so authentic in the poem? Is this a common feature of most village houses in the context of rapid urbanisation? Is the poet speaking from actual experience?

#### Answer:

The poet Kamala Das has beautifully designed the wordings and patterns of the poem which connects to the readers internally and externally. This poem gives a peek into a little girl's heart and how this fast-moving world moulds her into a butterfly from the naivety of the cocoon. Kamala Das in her writings share her own experience and undergo which connects to the readers and this in context with the poem shows authenticity of crumbling village house.

Urbanisation and modernization is requirement of today fast-moving world and dynamic environment. Yes, this is the common feature of most village houses. Old house shows the Heritage and rich culture of India which has sentimental connect to the people but to Match Rapid urbanization change is important and necessary.

#### Question 2.

What aspects of Indian society and history get highlighted in the poem?

#### Answer:

Kamala Das is a great literary figure who writes on status of women and sensitive issues of the society. This poem reflects various aspect of Indian society and history. I believe this poem has the degree of feminine, depicting various aspects of women of different ages.

It shows that one women can well understand an another woman and can connect with her on a personal level, maybe that is why Kamala Das, unlike her brother, could empathize with her grandmother so much.

The women (great grandmother of Kamala Das) who once bestowed with jewels - sandals (for perfume) - oils -elephant rides which are all symbolic of her extravagant youth and her marriage to a prince, and then the sudden loneliness after his death within a year of their marriage, plucked all those flower from her garland show the status of women in the society after loss of their better half.

People used to get attached to them inherit heritage. Like the 300-year-old house of poet which had eternal connect with her great grandmother.

**Question 3.**

Does the poem bring out the contrast between tradition and modernity? Illustrate your answer with examples from the poem.

**Answer:**

Poet beautifully drafts a contrast between tradition and modernity.

Tradition refers to the customs, beliefs and cultural practices that are past down from one generation to the next generation. And modernity refers to the contemporary behaviour or way of doing things. It is fresh, new and modern which refutes indigenous thinking.

In the poem, the poet tell how a woman (her great grandmother) is attached to her husband and dies with her husband, lines from the poem which shows are - "God is her only feast; worldly pleasures become mere condiments to her afterwards." This shows that traditional women were so inclined towards there better half - there world revolves around on them, which is in contrary of modernity as life need to move on and not hinge to a grief or sorrow.

The sense of belongingness toward materialistic thing such as a house is depicted in poem. The ancestral 300 years old house shared beautiful connect with the grandmother. The poem also illustrates how poet's great grandmother had pride over her blood, which she carries to her grave.

Like these, there are several examples which illustrate the disparity between the tradition and modernity.

**Question 4.**

While the poet respected her grandmother's sentiments of royal grandeur, we can also see that she revolts against it. Identify the lines which bring this out.

**Answer:**

Kamala Das, a woman of respect culture religion love peace. Her grandmother was her favourite person which can be seen through her literature as she was the one who taught her to love, forgive and devote oneself for the service of the less fortunate. She could empathize with the struggles of everyday women and it is blatantly seen in her work.

Poet could feel the defeat- pain- miseries of her grandmother, so she promises herself to save the royal ancestral 300-year-old house for her grandmother.

But reality strikes her. She learns bitter reality that making money is not easy. She could feel the old house breaking down, white ants climbing, rats running fearlessly and she asks for forgiveness as she is incapable of protecting- recovering- restoring the house.

She feels guilty of not completing her promise to her grandmother (the house) and flung it into death's pyre. But still, she too is proud of her royal old blood even though she is not powerful enough to renovate the old house, her great grandmother loved. Lines "I set forth again..... Mouth of Arabian Sea." shows despite respect to her grandmother and her promise she left to the other town.

**Question 5.**

Which lines reveal the poet's criticism of class distinctions?

**Answer:**

A blood thin and clear and fine

While in the veins of the always poor

And in the veins

Of the new-rich men

Flowed a blood thick as gruel

And muddy as a ditch.

The poet's criticism of class distinctions is revealed in the above lines as she states that the blood of the poor is thin, clear and fine which implies that there exist selfless and genuine love in the poor section of society but in the higher or the richer section of society the love is more inclined toward material aspect and the genuine love and affection is usually missing. The relationships are governed by profit and loss concepts.

**Question 6.**

Is it 'selfishness' and 'callousness' that makes the poet break her childhood promise to her grandmother of renovating the house? Why does she do nothing about rebuilding the house?

**Answer:**

Poet could feel the defeat- pain- miseries of her grandmother, so she promises herself to save the royal ancestral 300-year-old house for her grandmother.

But reality strikes her. She learns bitter reality that making money is not easy. She could feel the old house breaking down, white ants climbing, rats running fearlessly and she asks for forgiveness as she is incapable of protecting- recovering- restoring - renovating the house.

Inability should not be confused with selfishness or callousness.

**Question 7.**

What do you understand of the conflict in the poet's conscience?

**Answer:**

This poem gives a peek into a little girl's heart and how this fast-moving world moulds her into a butterfly from the naivety of the cocoon. Kamala Das in her writings share her own experience and undergo.

Poet observes the nature and tries to draw her fantasies in the sand as she plays with her brother. Along with these cherish moments, she also comes to experience the anxiety, fear and the agony of her 86-year-old great grandmother for their ancestral house which is in a horrendous image. The conflict between the gratifying fantasies of a child and the bitter realities that money making is not easy and this lead to the defeat of her promise made to her great grandmother that she will keep the house alive.

These and other conflicts show that things and situations should be dealt with pragmatism. Fantasies are good servant but bad master! The bitter reality should always be taken under consideration while moving forward in life.

## Language Study

**Question 1.**

Comment on the changes in poetic expression in English from the time of Donne to that of Kamala Das with reference to

- prosodic features (rhyme, rhythm, and metre)
- vocabulary
- language
- themes.

**Answer:**

• Prosodic features – During the time of Donne the poems had set pattern and were formal ones. The rhyming words were used following specified pattern.

The variation of line length and the meter allows Donne to achieve some special effects but Kamala Das haven't used any such poetic device.

- vocabulary- Donne usage of vocabulary was very formal with less of description and more of suggestions whereas Kamala Das used words which are elaborating and descriptive in nature.

- Language- Donne used the language in the poem which was full of passion and speaks of his mode and mind. The language usage underwent the modifications with passage of time and Kamala Das used language which is understood by layman easily. The words are those used in general language.

- Themes- Donne poems used to have idea and not the music or imaginations. The theme of the poem uses to be fantasy and how things should be. Kamala Das poems had theme depicting the social discriminations, the weariness of solitude and the grandeur prevailing in the society. Her poems portray the condition of women in society.