

Rain on the Roof - Coates Kinney

Answers to NCERT Questions

II. THINKING ABOUT THE POEM

1. When you were a young child, did your mother tuck you in, as the poet's did?

Ans: Yes, my mother used to tuck me in when I was a young child, just like the poet's mother did [responses may vary].

2. Do you like rain? What do you do when it rains steadily or heavily as described in the poem?

Ans: Yes, I simply enjoy the rain. For me, rain means coolness after a spell of heat. I love to dance and get wet in the rain. Some however, may immediately run to seek shelter. I love to curl up in my bed with a crime thriller, sipping a hot beverage, and munching on fryums. [responses may vary]

3. Does everybody have a cosy bed to lie in when it rains? Look around you and describe how different kinds of people or animals spend time, seek shelter, etc. during rain.

Ans: No, everybody is not fortunate enough to have a cosy bed to lie in, when it rains. Not everybody is blessed with a comfortable and warm home. I have seen stray animals trying to shield themselves from the torrential rain under trees and canopies of shops and houses. It is the same with human beings who often share space with the animals who are in the same state as they are in. It is pitiable to see little children shivering in their clothes that have been drenched by the tears that drop down from the 'leaden' clouds. They pine for the luxuries the fortunate few enjoy, and are distressed that they are not able to break through their misery.

I. THINKING ABOUT THE POEM

1. What do the following phrases mean to you? Discuss in class.

(i) Humid shadows

(ii) Starry spheres

(iii) What a bliss

(iv) A thousand dreamy fancies into busy being start

(v) A thousand recollections weave their air-threads into woof

Ans: (i) Humid shadows: It refers to the dark clouds that produce rain, characterised by a great deal of water vapour; “humid air; “humid weather.

(ii) Starry spheres: Since it was believed that the fixed stars did not change their positions relative to one another, they must be on the surface of a single starry sphere.

(iii) What a bliss: It refers to the immense happiness that the poet feels of getting into his cottage and enjoying the pitter patter of raindrops falling on the roof.

(iv) A thousand dreamy fancies into busy being start: This refers to the imaginary thoughts and fantasies that are aroused in the poet’s mind.

(v) A thousand recollections weave their air-threads into woof: The poet is stringing together all his memories into one single unit by entwining it with a single thread.

2. What does the poet like to do when it rains?

Ans: The poet feels delighted to lie with his head pressed against the pillow of his bed in the cottage and listens to the patter of the soft rain on the rectangular tiles of the cottage roof.

3. What is the single major memory that comes to the poet? Who are the “darling dreamers he refers to?

Ans: The single major memory that comes to the poet is that of his mother and her fond look.

The ‘darling dreamers’ are the poet and his brothers and sisters, when they were lovingly put to sleep by their mother in their childhood.

4. Is the poet now a child? Is his mother still alive?

Ans: At this point, the poet is not a child. He is a grown man. As he sees the clouds gather up in the sky, he is taken back in time, and he is reflecting about the wonderful memories associated with “rain. He is recalling his past in which his mother is alive. But perhaps, he misses his mother too, as she seems to be a vital part of his memory.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow: (4 Marks each)

1. When the humid shadows hover

Over all the starry spheres

And the melancholy darkness

Gently weeps in rainy tears,
What a bliss to press the pillow
Of a cottage-chamber bed
And lie listening to the patter
Of the soft rain overhead!

- (a) What does 'humid shadow' mean here?
- (b) How does the poet describe the falling of rain?
- (c) Explain 'melancholy darkness'.
- (d) How is the melancholy eased?

Ans: (a) Humid shadow means clouds full of moisture.

- (b) The patter of the soft rain overhead.
- (c) The feeling of sorrow as the darkness of the clouds envelope the atmosphere.
- (d) It is eased by the rainy tears that flow gently from the sky.

2. Every tinkle on the shingles

Has an echo in the heart;
And a thousand dreamy fancies
Into busy being start,
And a thousand recollections
Weave their air-threads into woof,
As I listen to the patter
Of the rain upon the roof.

- (a) What do the words 'dreamy fancies' refer to?
- (b) What echoes in the poet's heart?
- (c) What are 'shingles'?
- (d) When does the mind become busy?

Ans: (a) Dreamy fancies refer to the fond memories of his mother telling him and his siblings bed time stories, cuddling them to sleep with love and affection.

- (b) The tinkling of rain drops on the roof echoes in the poet's heart.
- (c) Shingles are the rectangular tiles used on the sloping roofs.

(d) The mind becomes busy while recalling and entwining all the memories of his childhood.

3. Now in memory comes my mother,

As she used in years ago,

To regard the darling dreamers

Ere she left them till the dawn:

(a) Who comes alive in his memory?

(b) What did he remember about his mother?

(c) Who are the 'darling dreamers' in the above lines?

(d) What does the expression 'till the dawn' mean here?

Ans: (a) The poet's mother comes live in his memory.

(b) He remembered how his mother would come and check on her children when they were small.

(c) 'Darling dreamers' refers to the poet and his siblings who were in deep sleep.

(d) 'Till the dawn' means a point of time till early morning.

4. O! I feel her fond look on me

As I list to this refrain

Which is played upon the shingles

By the patter of the rain.

(a) What is the 'refrain' the poet refers to?

(b) Who is 'her' referred to in the extract?

(c) What is a 'refrain'? Give an example from the extract.

(d) What is conveyed through the above lines?

Ans: (a) The 'refrain' the poet talks of is the sound of the rain drops falling on the rooftop.

(b) 'Her' refers to the poet's mother.

(c) A refrain is a verse or phrase that is repeated at intervals through a song or a poem, usually after or between stanzas. In the poem, the refrain is — 'By the patter of the rain'.

(d) The poet is saying that he experiences his mother's fond look even today as he listens to the nostalgic sound of the patter of the rains.

Short Answer Questions (30–40 words: 2 Marks each)

1. What does 'melancholy darkness' signify in the poem, 'Rain on the Roof'?

Ans: Darkness is synonymous with sadness. Melancholy darkness is due to the rain clouds that have hidden the starry sky. The falling of rains from the laden clouds is being compared to the tears that fall out our eyes. In both the situations, heaviness is being released.

2. Why does the poet feel it 'a bliss to press the pillow'?

Ans: When it rains, the poet experiences a lot of happiness as he lies in the comfort of his bed in the cottage, listening to the rhythmic beat of the raindrops as they tinkle on the roof top. The warmth of the bed, the softness of his pillow and the lullaby sung by the rains, takes him to a world of bliss.

3. When do the 'thousand dreamy fancies' begin in the poet's heart?

Ans: The thousand dreamy fancies begin in the heart of the poet when the raindrops patter on the shingles of the roof. The echo touches a chord in his heart and he starts to reminisce about his childhood days and his loving mother.

4. What does the poet convey when he says, 'the humid shadows hover all the starry spheres'?

Ans: The poet beautifully explains how the night sky full of twinkling stars get covered by the dark moisture laden clouds that are hovering around the atmosphere. He may be trying to convey that behind every sorrow or darkness, there is light that makes its appearance as soon as the facade (a deceptive outward appearance) makes way for it.

5. How does the poet express his sorrow and happiness when he speaks about rain?

Ans: The humidity of the atmosphere is relatively high as it lingers below the dark skies and the twinkling shimmering light of the stars, forms into roundness of visible sources of light. Though the darkness mourns the melancholic spirit of indescribable sadness, the soft rain sets in to compensate it with the spirit of peace for the lonely night. The poet suddenly realises how much joy and pleasure he can attain, when he presses his head against his pillow, as he tucks himself into the warmth of his bed. He can sleep soundly like a little child in his cottage bedroom and listen to the patter of the soft summer showers overhead on the roof.

Long Answer Questions (100–150 words: 8 Marks each)

1. Write a short paragraph on your analysis of the poem, “Rain on the Roof.”

Ans: The poem, ‘Rain on the Roof’ written by Coates Kinney, is very different from the popular genre of poems that speak about rain. In this poem, the poet is referring to the joys and happiness that this natural phenomenon unfolds as it makes an appearance upon the earth. It is with a lot of apprehension that one welcomes the rain, afraid of the havoc, it may cause. People react differently to the arrival of rain. The farmer is happy, while the homeless tramp (a person who travels from place to place) does not welcome it with joy. He therefore, enumerates both joy and sorrow in his poem. Rain is universally loved by little children, who are unmindful of the miseries of life. That is why, even as he ages, rain quite naturally brings with it sweet memories of his childhood in which his mother played a prominent role. All sorrows are forgotten as soon as his mother appears in his thoughts and dreams. Reminiscing about his past, he listens to the pitter patter of the rain, and transports himself into a world of bliss.

2. There is an acute shortage of water in your village. Farmers are facing severe financial problems. Write an article for the student edition of the local newspaper, suggesting solutions for nipping the problem. You are Sachin/Soumya.

Ans: ‘Adams ale’

by Soumya

I am a student from the rural village of Karnataka. I have been reading about the pathetic conditions that man is facing because of the paucity of water supply. “Adams ale or water, is becoming the commodity that is high in demand and low in supply. How can we change this alarming situation?

I made a random survey and the results were alarming. How can we have water when we do not use it carefully? First I saw a lady, leaving the tap open as she washed her vessels. Yet again, a little boy was running around his garden brushing his teeth, as the water for his use began flowing out of the bucket. Leaking taps, overflowing tanks, and brazen misuse of this natural resource, has to be stopped or corrected by every citizen of the country. Use water judiciously (sensibly), so that it continues to be available for the next generation too.

A few suggestions to solve the problem:

1. Equal and rationed supply to every household.
2. Re-use and re-cycle water.
3. Secure all water outlets.
4. Avoid misuse of water.
5. Be socially conscious because the world belongs to every one.

6. Rainwater harvesting.

I hope, as a country, we would work towards rescuing “adams ale.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. What a bliss to press the pillow

Of a cottage – chamber bed

And lie listen to the patter

Of the soft rain overhead!

- (a)** Why was it a bliss to press the pillow?
- (b)** Why was rain soft to listen?
- (c)** Find a word from the extract which is the opposite of ‘underground’.
- (d)** Name the poem and the poet.

2. Every tinkle on the shingle

Has an echo in the heart,

And a thousand dreamy fancies

Into busy being start.

- (a)** What is ‘tinkle on the shingle’?
 - (b)** How does ‘on the shingle’ affect the poet?
 - (c)** Which word in the extract is the synonym of ‘reverberate’?
 - (d)** What is the role of rain in the extract?
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Short Answer Questions

- 1. What is the mood of the poet when the clouds envelope the starry night sky?
- 2. What music does the poet hear when it rains?
- 3. What thoughts appear in the mind of the poet, when it rains?
- 4. In ‘As I listen to this refrain’, what is the poet referring to?

5. What does the poet mean when he say, 'What a bliss to press the pillow/ of a cottage – chamber bed'?

Long Answer Questions

1. Little Rahul, a slum-dweller, was alone at his home in Kanyakumari, when the..... Complete the story and give it a suitable title.
2. You were a survivor of the floods that ravaged Bombay. Make a diary entry of your experience, and the misfortunes that followed. Also account for the plans you propose to take in your journey towards revival.
3. Rain is a bliss for the poet. How? Describe.