

Here are some questions and answers of the poem "A Photograph" from NCERT Class 11 English Hornbill:

1. What does the word 'cardboard' denote in the poem ? Why has this word been used?
Answer: The word 'cardboard' denotes that it is an instant snapshot which has a cardboard base. This word has been used to refer to the times when photography was in its early stages.
2. What has the camera captured ?
Answer: The camera has captured three persons—two girls and the poet's mother. They were here enjoying a holiday on the sea side.
3. What has not changed over the years ? Does this suggest something to you ?
Answer: The sea hasn't changed over the years. The sea waves keep rolling to the coast and then back. This suggests by contrast that human beings change rapidly.
4. The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot. What did this laugh indicate?
Answer: The poet's mother laughed to see her photograph. She was then young and charming. But she was wearing a funny mod dress, suitable for a sea holiday.
5. What is the meaning of the line 'Both why with the laboured ease of loss' ?
Answer: Mother's photograph belonged to twenty-thirty years past. She was then young and sweet. But now she bore the marks of advancing age. She was out of shape. Now the mother herself is dead and gone. Her laughter is a thing of the past. It does not have a musical ring.
6. What does 'this circumstance' refer to ?
Answer: 'This circumstance' refers to the time since his mother expired. This has been a dull period with no memorable experiences. So the poet has nothing to say about it.
7. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are they?
Answer: The three stanzas of the poem depict three stages. In the first stage, the mother was young and sweet. The second stanza refers to a period, twenty to thirty years later when she was middle-aged. The third stanza refers to the long gap of time after the mother's death. This has been devoid of any exciting event.
8. What is the central theme of the poem "A Photograph"?
Answer: The central theme of the poem "A Photograph" is the passage of time and its impact on human life and memory. The poem reflects on how a photograph can capture a moment in the past and evoke strong emotions and memories.

9. How does the poet use imagery in the poem?

Answer: The poet uses vivid imagery to describe the photograph, such as "frozen waterfall" and "the beach of the past." These images help create a clear picture of the scene and add depth to the emotions conveyed.

10. What emotions are associated with the photograph in the poem?

Answer: The photograph in the poem evokes emotions of nostalgia, longing, and sadness. It reminds the poet of the past and her mother's life, which is no longer present.

11. What is the significance of the title "A Photograph"?

Answer: The title highlights the central object of the poem—the photograph itself. It suggests that the photograph is the focal point, and the poem revolves around the memories and emotions it encapsulates.

12. How does the poem convey the idea of impermanence?

Answer: The poem conveys the idea of impermanence through the description of the frozen moment in the photograph. It emphasizes that the past is gone and can only be captured and remembered through such images.

13. What literary devices are used in the poem "A Photograph"?

Answer: The poem employs various literary devices, including metaphors and similes. For example, "time's waterfall" is a metaphor that suggests the relentless passage of time. The use of similes, such as "like the bubbles in a glass of champagne," enhances the imagery.

14. How does the poet use the photograph as a metaphor?

Answer: The photograph serves as a metaphor for the past itself. It captures a moment that can never return, symbolizing the irretrievable nature of time and memories.

15. What is the poet's attitude towards the past in the poem?

Answer: The poet's attitude towards the past is one of nostalgia and longing. She looks at the photograph with a sense of sadness and yearning for the days gone by.