

Main Points

- The poem 'Coming' is composed by Philip Larkin.
- Coming has been taken from the volume *The Less Deceived* which establishes a kinship with the environment.
- This is a nineteen-line poem that can be separated into one set of nine lines and another set of ten lines.
- It has no rhyme scheme.
- On longer evenings when the sun begins to set, cold, and yellow light washes over the tops of peaceful houses.
- A songbird, thrush sings from its perch in the shrubs of an empty garden, its youthful voice startling the brickwork of the nearby houses.
- The 'thrush' announces the arrival of spring.
- The poet says that though his childhood was forgotten boredom, he feels like a child who has walked in on two adults making up after a disagreement, and, unable to understand what's going on apart from the adults' strange laughter.
- He begins to feel better and is happy.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- 'Coming' is a poem of 19 lines written by-
 - Sujata Bhatt
 - John Keats
 - Philip Larkin
 - Ted Hughes
- The poem 'Coming' begins with the depiction of _____.
 - Sunset
 - Sunrise
 - Day
 - Night
- In the poem, 'A thrush' has been referred to:
 - A flower
 - A bird
 - A season
 - An insect
- The garden looks bare because it is _____.
 - Without birds
 - Without people
 - Without flowers
 - Without animals
- What does the bird in the poem announces?
 - The bird in the poem announces the arrival of spring.
 - The bird in the poem announces the arrival of rain.
 - The bird in the poem announces the arrival of storm.
 - The bird in the poem announces the arrival of peacock.
- Which season comes after winter?
 - Autumn
 - Rainy
 - Spring
 - Summer
- Whose childhood has been referred to in the poem?
 - Poet's childhood
 - Reader's childhood
 - Childhood of the poet's father
 - None of the above
- Who feels like a child?
 - Poet
 - Gardener
 - Reader
 - Sweeper
- _____ is being shown as being a merry moment for Nature, it is the period of blossoms and growth.
 - Spring season
 - Rainy season
 - Summer season
 - Winter season
- Whose childhood is a forgotten boredom?
 - Reader's childhood
 - Poet's childhood
 - Both (a) and (b)
 - Neither (a) nor (b)
- The poem 'Coming' ends with _____.
 - Hope, joy and optimism
 - Dislike and enmity
 - Sadness and hatred
 - Chaos and anger
- Which of the following poem is written by Philip Larkin?
 - The Peacock

- b. Sonnet 116
c. For Elkana
d. Coming
13. **What is the theme of the poem?**
a. Renewal
b. Joy
c. Peace
d. All of the above
14. **Which bird is mentioned in the poem?**
a. Peacock b. Thrush
c. Sparrow d. Flamingo
15. **“Bathes the serene Foreheads of houses”. Which poetic device is used in the above lines?**
a. Imagery b. Hyperbole
c. Personification d. Oxymoron
16. **How was the voice of the bird?**
a. Irritating voice b. Fresh-peeled voice
c. Boring voice d. Harsh voice
17. **How was the poet’s childhood?**
a. Exciting b. Gloomy
c. Happy d. Forgotten boredom
18. **What words are used in the poem to describe the summer evening?**
a. Light b. Chill
c. Yellow d. All of the above
19. **What is adult reconciling?**
a. When adults make up after a disagreement
b. When adults beat children
c. When adults do exercise
d. All of the above
20. **As per the poem, what is the meaning of the term ‘brickwork’?**
a. Work done by bricks
b. People who do brickwork
c. Walls
d. Great wall of China

ANSWER KEY

1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-c, 5-a, 6-c, 7-a, 8-a, 9-a, 10-b, 11-a, 12-d, 13-d, 14-b, 15-c, 16-b, 17-d, 18-d, 19-a, 20-c.

VERY SHORT QUESTIONS

1. **What is the theme of the poem ‘Coming’?**
Ans. The theme of the poem is renewal, joy and peace
2. **On what note does the poem end?**
Ans. The poem ends on a positive note in which the poet conveys a message to be happy and arrival of spring.
3. **Why did the poet forget about his childhood?**
Ans. The poet forgot about his childhood because it was full of boredom and nothing was interesting in his childhood to remember particularly.
4. **How was the voice of the bird?**
Ans. The voice of the bird was new and fresh.
5. **Which bird is mentioned in the poem?**
Ans. 'Thrush' is the singing bird in the poem who is singing about the arrival of spring in a fresh and peeled voice.
6. **What does the bird announce in the poem?**
Ans. The bird announces the arrival of the spring season.
7. **What is the meaning of the forehead of houses?**
Ans. The meaning of forehead of houses is the front part of the houses where anyone is welcomed.
8. **What does 'spring' refer to according to the poet?**
Ans. The term 'spring' refers to the rebirth of life following the severe winter impacts.
9. **What does the title of the poem suggest?**
Ans. The title of the poem 'Coming' suggests that the Spring is coming.
10. **How was the poet's childhood?**
Ans. The poet's childhood was spent in boredom. He had forgotten almost every memory from his childhood because there was nothing interesting or exceptional in his childhood and was full of boredom.

SHORT QUESTIONS

1. **How is evening described in the poem?**
Ans. The evenings were described as being longer than usual in the poem. It had light weather, a cool

climate, and a yellow-coloured sky. It also had a tranquil and calm mood.

2. What is the central theme of the poem?

Ans. The main theme of the poem is the arrival of spring. The poet looks forward to the new season and outlines all that is helping to usher it in. He is referring to the spring in nature as well as in the lives of people.

3. Describe the childhood of the poet.

Ans. The childhood of the poet was spent in boredom. He had forgotten his childhood memories; his recollections were not very clear with his belongings. His childhood was full of dullness. He had particularly nothing exceptional or interesting in his childhood.

4. What was indicated by the voice of the bird?

Ans. The voice of the bird was mentioned as a fresh-peeled voice. It was believed that the thrush sang a welcoming song for the spring season and it felt like it was never sung before. It made the poet feel happy and fresh.

5. “But the unusual laughter, and starts to be happy”. Explain this line.

Ans. This is the last line of the poem. The poet mentions laughter in the end and claims that whether we know it or not, we should always be joyful and happy in all the conditions and situations in life. There may be ups and downs, rise and fall but the happiness should remain constant. Happiness should be obvious by face and time.

LONG QUESTIONS

1. What is the main theme and atmosphere of Philip Larkin's 'Coming' and what does the poem symbolize?

Ans. 'Coming' by Philip Larkin is a poem about the arrival of spring and the feelings of excitement and joy that come with it. The poem's theme is based on the idea of renewal and joy that come with the birth of the spring. Spring, a metaphor for new life, is something that the poet looks forward after the harshness of winter. The theme of renewal and cycle of new life and joy comes through the mood and atmosphere the poet creates.

2. How does the poet feel when he hears the thrush sing?

Ans. When the thrush suddenly starts singing in its fresh-peeled voice and announces the coming of spring, an atmosphere of excitement and joy is

created. The memories of a cold, bleak winter give way to the hopes of a joyous, pleasant season. However, the poet feels child-like joy in the advent of a new season. Like a child, he reconciles himself to the feelings of joy that others have. He starts to be happy when he sees others laughing with joy.

3. What does the bird in the poem announce? How is this related to the title, Coming?

Ans. The poem 'Coming' by Philip Larkin is a celebration of the advent of the spring. To express the happiness, the poet sets the plot of houses' frontparts bathed in chilly and yellow light. Amidst all this, a thrush sings a welcoming song. It seems that the whole nature is dancing with joy at the arrival of the new season. The thrush, sitting in a garden shrub called laurel in the deep bare garden is humming repeatedly that it will be spring soon. This joyful singing of the bird imparts an astonishing effect on the houses. The poet feels happy. In fact the bird announces the coming of the spring and is aptly related to the title of the poem.

4. Why is the speaker's childhood described as 'a forgotten boredom'?

Ans. The description of childhood as 'a forgotten boredom' gives an autobiographical element of the poet. A reader becomes curious to know how Larkin's childhood was. His parents were full of affection for him. Yet he feels his childhood as a dejected one. It appears that the poet had unpleasant memories of his childhood, where nothing good or exciting things happened. Philip suffered a slight stammering in his childhood. We can note the contradiction in the term 'forgotten boredom'. If he has forgotten his childhood, then how he can remember that it was a boredom. However, we may come on a conclusion that Larkin's childhood did not have any memories that he was fond of. Thus, Philip Larkin recalls his childhood as a 'forgotten boredom'.

5. What causes the element of surprise when the child comes on the scene of 'adult reconciling'?

Ans. As Larkin is absorbed in the repeated humming of the thrush, he is reminded of his boring childhood, which he feels is forgotten. He feels happy like a child who is happy just by watching elders reconciling with each other. The child comprehends nothing yet smiles just because the adults are happy. This might have appeared to be surprising. The scene reflects the innocence of a child. Probably, the poet has tried to make a point that our happiness lies in the happiness of others.

6. What two things are compared in the poem?

Ans. It is difficult to judge whether the poet is trying to compare or is he drawing a relation. Philip Larkin in his poem 'Coming' celebrates the advent of the new season, spring. He creates the imagery of the spring peeled out of the winter. The old season is giving birth to new season. Nature had been sleeping in the cold and gloomy winter and now the freshness of the new season sparked a new life in it. The birds, the houses, the gardens and the whole nature have joined to welcome the spring. Seeing this transformation the poet is so happy that he himself transcends into childhood. Here Larkin highlights the difference between innocence and experience. He presents an innocent child watching the adults laughing and reconciling and he begins to feel happy though he understands nothing. This is the innocence of the child that his happiness lies in the happiness of others. The poet has tried to bring out the difference between two seasons and the two stages of human life.

freshness of the bird's song and the innocence of the child. The "fresh-peeled voice" is symbolic of arrival of spring after winter. It appears as if winter would be giving birth to spring.

7. How do you respond to these lines?

Light, chill and yellow,

Bathes the serene

Foreheads of houses.

Ans. The poem 'Coming' by Philip Larkin is dedicated to the beauty of the spring. Larkin creates a beautiful evening scenery. The longer evenings just before the spring are presented. Chilly and yellow light of the setting sun is falling on the front sides of the houses. The reader is imparted with beautiful imagery of the whole environment sitting serenely and enjoying the sun going down as the spring beckons. It feels like whole nature has come alive in the lovely evening and join the party to welcome the coming of the spring.

8. Comment on the use of the phrase "fresh-peeled voice".

Ans. Larkin uses the "fresh-peeled voice" of the thrush as an adjective to beautify the new season, the spring. The phrase describes the freshness and sharpness of the thrush's humming. This freshness is symbolic of the freshness that has dissolved in the air with the advent of the new season that the poet celebrates. The thrush sings sitting in a laurel surrounded in the deep bare garden. It hums repeatedly that it will be spring soon. This singing marks an astonishing effect on the brickwork of the houses. The poet is transformed to a child. He probably draws a parallelism between the