

# CHAPTER - 1

## A PHOTOGRAPH

**A. Infer the meanings of the following words from the context:**

**paddling**

**transient**

**Now look up the dictionary to see if your inference is right.**

**Answer:** 'Paddling' means 'wading' or 'rowing' a boat.

'Transient' means temporary.

Dictionary meanings:

'Paddling' means 'walking or standing with barefeet in shallow water'.

'Went paddling' means 'swam with short movements of hands or feet up and down'. 'Transient' means 'staying in a place for only short time'.

**B. Think It Out**

**Question 1. What does the word 'cardboard' denote in the poem? Why has this word been used?**

**Answer:** The word cardboard denotes the photograph pasted on a hard thick paper. This word has been used to refer to a practice in the past when photographs were pasted on cardboard and framed with glass front to preserve them.

**Question 2. What has the camera captured?**

**Answer:** The camera has captured the three girls—the poet's mother and her two cousins, Betty and Dolly, in their swimming dresses with the poet's mother in the middle and the two cousins on either side holding her hands and walking v feet in sea water.

**Question 3. What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?**

**Answer:** The sea has not changed over the years. Its waves are as fresh, shining and tireless as they were years ago. The changelessness of sea reminds us of the changes in human face with advancing age.

**Question 4. The poetess's mother laughed at the snapshot? What did this laugh indicate?**

**Answer:** This laugh' indicated her joy at remembering an incident connected with her past life, when she was quite young and free from the tensions and worries of life.

**Question 5. What is the meaning of the line "Both wry with the laboured ease of loss".**

**Answer:** The sea holiday and the laughter of the poet's mother are incidents of the past. There is a sense of loss associated with them. Both are amusing yet disappointing as the state of feeling comfortable or relaxed is unnatural or forced one. This sense of loss is quite painful to bear.

**Question 6. What does 'this circumstance' refer to?**

**Answer:** This circumstance refers to the death of the poet's mother.

**Question 7. The three stanzas depict three different phases. Name them.**

**Answer:**

1. The girlhood of the poet's mother—the period before the birth of the poet.
2. Her middle age—the period during the childhood of the poet
3. Period after the death of the poet's mother.

## MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

### A. Short Answer Type Questions

**Question 1. Which incident has been captured in the snapshot?**

**Answer:** The incident depicts three girls who had gone for a swim in the sea and were standing still for a short time smiling at the camera. This group photo captures their joy, buoyant spirits and freedom of girlhood.

**Question 2. What do you learn about the poetess's mother from the photograph?**

**Answer:** The poetess's mother was a big girl even at the age of twelve. She had a sweet face and enjoyed swimming as well as wading in sea-water with her cousins. Years later she laughed at the clothes they had put on for the sea holiday.

**Question 3. How did the three girls face the camera?**

**Answer:** They removed hair from their face and stood smiling in the shallow water near the beach. Betty and Dolly stood on either side of the poetess's mother, holding one of her hands.

**Question 4. What do you think, made the poetess's mother laugh?**

**Answer:** The dress and behaviour of her cousins Betty and Dolly made the poetess's mother laugh. It is evident that they had put on some quaint dress, which amused her.

**Question 5. The poetess's mother laughs at her past. How does the poet react to her past?**

**Answer:** The sea holiday was a past experience for the poetess's mother. A glimpse of the photograph perhaps revived some feelings of shared joy and she laughed. For the poet, her laughter is an incident of the past. It is amusing in ironic manner. The sense of loss overcomes the pleasure.

**Question 6. Why, do you think, does the poetess say nothing about her mother's death?**

**Answer:** The poet has no words to express her reaction to this solemn and painful incident. Death silences everyone. The extensive quietness and prevailing gloom silences her.

### B. Long Answer Type Questions

**Question 1. What impression do you form of the poetess and the poetess's mother after**

**reading the poem 'A Photograph'?**

**Answer:** The poem presents the poet as a sensitive person who is quite affectionate towards her mother and is deeply attached to her. She loves 'her 'sweet' face and notes the changes in it as she advances in age. She remembers all the incidents connected with her life including her laughter on looking at the photograph. She finds it hard to bear her death. The pangs of separation stun her to speechlessness.

The poetess's mother appears as a physically well formed person with sweet face and beautiful smile. She has a friendly temperament and free mixing nature. She has great affection for her two girl cousins and goes with them for a sea-holiday where they put on quaint dresses. She poses with them smilingly for a snap. Her laughter on seeing the dresses in the snap shows her fine temperament and good humour.