

A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINKING ABOUT THE POEM

1. “A slumber did my spirit seal, says the poet. That is, a deep sleep ‘closed off’ his soul (or mind). How does the poet react to his loved one’s death? Does he feel bitter grief? Or does he feel a great peace?”

Ans: The poet is totally shattered with the death of his loved one. He says that all along he believed that no harm would come to her. He was a very strong person, but when tragedy struck he could probably not handle the grief, and is not at peace with himself.

2. The passing of time will no longer affect her, says the poet. Which lines of the poem says this?

Ans: He is referring to his belief that she would not age, or be affected by time. The lines of the poem that mentions this thought of the poet with regard to his loved one is, “she seemed a thing that could not feel the touch of earthly years. Here the death is only implied, and is not ascertained.

3. How does the poet imagine her to be, after death? Does he think of her as a person living in a very happy state (a ‘heaven;)? Or does he see her now as a part of nature? In which lines of the poem do you find your answer?

Ans: The poet says that she is in a state where she cannot feel, hear or sense anything. He does not say anything of her being in a happy state in heaven after her death. It is with the nature that he feels she has blend with, “Rolled round in the earth’s diurnal course, with rocks and stones and trees.

Additional Questions

Extract Based Questions (4 Marks each)

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

1. A slumber did my spirit seal—

I had no human fears.

(a) Name the poem and the poet.

(b) What is the meaning of ‘slumber’?

(c) What sealed the spirit of the poet?

(d) What are 'human fears'?

Ans: (a) The poem is "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" and the poet is "William Wordsworth."

(b) Slumber here refers to the state of permanent sleep.

(c) The slumber of his beloved sealed the poet's spirit.

(d) The human fears refer to the fears that pass through the human minds, especially related to the fear of losing a loved one.

2. Rolled round in earth's diurnal course

With rocks and stones and trees.

(a) What does 'rolled round' mean?

(b) Who has rolled round?

(c) What is 'diurnal course'?

(d) What is the significance of rocks, stones and trees?

Ans: (a) 'Rolled round' means that she has rolled down to blend with the earth.

(b) The poet's beloved has rolled round.

(c) 'Diurnal course' refers to the rotation of the earth.

(d) "The rocks, stones and trees imply that though inanimate, they have life and his beloved continues her journey with nature, along with them."

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

1. Why has the poet referred to death as "slumber? Why has it sealed his spirit?

Ans: "Slumber is a synonym of the word sleep. It is a state of unconsciousness, when we are not aware of things going around us. And here, the slumber has sealed his spirit because this time, the slumber was not temporary, but permanent."

2. Write an analysis of the poem in a paragraph.

Ans: This is a poem that is a part of the Lucy series. In this poem, the poet speaks about being introduced to the realities of life only when his beloved slips into eternal slumber. He had no fears with regard to her life, but unfortunately, she fell prey to the laws of nature. However, the poet is perhaps taking a positive view of the situation, by saying that she has blend with nature, and perhaps, continues to live with the rocks, stones and trees. She has gone back to the place she came from. He has accepted the fact that she is no more, but chooses to believe that perhaps she has been immortalised

by nature.

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

1. Why does the poet repeat “no motion has she now, no force—she neither hears nor sees?”

Ans: The poet, Wordsworth offers an eerie description of the woman’s current situation. She is blind and deaf—wholly incapable of taking in the world around her. This is a particularly painful idea in a Wordsworth poem because he is generally focused on experiencing the senses. He also mentions that she is now without motion or force. This, of course, is true of all dead people, but by stating the obvious, the speaker helps the reader to imagine the way the young woman once was: full of life and vigour.

2. Why does it appear that the poet is not ascertaining death in the first stanza?

Ans: The choice to hide the death between the stanzas is interesting. It could possibly be because of the inability of the poet to express in words, his pain and sudden loss.

It can also be inferred that the poem may be less about the poet’s lack of having any human fears, than about his belief in the young woman’s power. Indeed, he seems to have built her up in his mind into a Goddess, untouched by age and mortality. This desire to keep her perpetually young is a testament to the poet’s feelings for the young woman.

3. Bring out the irony in the poem.

Ans: The poet’s description of his beloved as having ‘no motion or force’ and she is ‘revolving with the earth around the sun’ actually implies that she is dead and the poet cannot be

with her. This is also because the poet, unlike his beloved, was always alienated from nature.

This mismatch between what is said and what is meant is an example of irony. The poet’s opinion that it was because of ‘the slumber’ which ‘sealed’ his spirit that he felt that his beloved was ‘untouched’ by earthly things like mortality is ironic because it is not really the slumber, but his desire that his beloved should not be touched by death as he loves her deeply, that has made him blind to the fact that she is dead.

Self- Assessment Test

Extract Based Questions

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

1. “She seemed a thing that could not feel,

the touch o the earthly years.

- (a) Name the poem from which this extract has been taken.
- (b) Who is she?
- (c) Why could she not feel?
- (d) Explain “earthly years.

2. No motion has she now, no force—

She neither hears nor sees,

- (a) Name the poet who has written the above extract.
- (b) Why does she have no motion?
- (c) Who is she to the poet?
- (d) How would the lady have been when she was alive?

Short Answer Questions

- 1. ‘No motion has she now’. What does the poet mean by this?
- 2. How does the poet’s beloved become an inseparable part of nature?
- 3. Time will not affect the poet’s beloved. How?
- 4. Explain, ‘she neither hears nor sees’.
- 5. What happened to the poet’s beloved?

Long Answer Questions

- 1. Mitali was very fond of her little pet parrot. One day, when she Complete the story, taking ideas from the poem, ‘A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal’.
- 2. Write an article on “Man is Mortal, be Humane as Long as You Live to be published in your school magazine. You are Anjali/Arpit.
- 3. As the beloved of the poet, write a paragraph to express your gratitude to the poet for loving you so dearly.