

Comprehension Passages

Lines 1-2

I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Read the lines given above and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

Explain with reference to context.

Answer:

These lines are taken from the poem 'Daffodils' written by William Wordsworth. The poem expresses Word worth's love for nature and how he sought solace in it from the woes and worries of this world.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker is feeling lonely and sad. As he walks along, he sees a large area of daffodils along the side of a lake, blowing in the breeze with bright yellow flowers reflected in the water in spite of the waves due to the wind. The sight of the flowers on the shore and their reflection cheers him greatly.

Question 2.

Who wandered like a lonely cloud and where ?

Answer:

The poet William Wood sworth wanders like a lonely cloud over the valleys and hills .

Question 3.

Who does he come across while wandering ?

Answer:

While wandering among the valleys and hills the poet comes across the host of the golden daffodils flowers .

Question 4.

Where were the daffodils and what where they doing ?

Answer:

The daffodils were by the side of the lake under the trees. They were fluttering under in the breeze as if they were dancing like human beings expressing their joy and energy.

Lines 7- 12

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Read the lines given above and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

Explain with reference to context.

Answer:

These lines are taken from the poem 'Daffodils' written by William Wordsworth. The poem expresses Wordsworth's love for nature and how he sought solace in it from the woes and worries of this world.

There are as many daffodils as there are stars in the sky—so many they can't be counted. He says in one glance he saw "ten thousand," which is a large number used to express how large the bed of flowers was. They seem to be dancing in the breeze.

Question 2.

What is being compared to the stars and why?

Answer:

The host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake under the tree are being compared to the stars. A milky way is a cluster of stars which shine brightly across a huge stretch of space. Similarly like the stars in the milky way the poet feels that the daffodils are not only uncountable but also they are dancing with full energy and joy in never ending line along the margin of the lake.

Question 3.

How many did the poet see at a glance?

Answer:

The poet saw maybe ten thousand at a glance.

Question 4.

What were the daffodils doing? Which literary device is used here?

Answer:

The daffodils were dancing merrily in the breeze. The poet is using personification here when he compares the movement of the daffodils in the breeze to dancing humans.

Lines 13-18

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling leaves in glee;
A poet could not be but gay,
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

Read the lines given above and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

Explain with reference to context.

Answer:

These lines are taken from the poem 'Daffodils' written by William Wordsworth. The poem expresses Wordsworth's love for nature and how he sought solace in it from the woes and worries of this world.

The waves of the lake lap at the shore, but the sound the daffodils make as they dance in the wind outdoes the sound of the water. The poet can't help being happy when he is in such joyful (jocund) company. He looks at them for a long time, but he doesn't yet appreciate what experiencing these flowers has done for him.

Question 2.

Which wealth is referred to by the poet?

Answer:

The wealth which is referred to here by the poet means wealth of joy and happiness; which actually

comes from happy and fond memories when the poet saw a host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake beneath the trees.

Question 3.

Whom did the daffodils out do and how ?

Answer:

The daffodils outdid the waves in the lake. The daffodils seemed to be dancing like human beings expressing their joy and energy when the breeze blew over them. Both the flowers and waves seem to be in competition to show their feelings and expressions.

Question 4.

Which jocund company is the poet referring to ?

Answer:

The poet is referring to the jocund company of the host of golden daffodils dancing in joy by the side of the lake under the trees. Along with them the waves in the lake too were dancing by the side of the daffodils . A poet was bound to be happy in such a joyful company of the daffodils and the waves.

Question 5.

Which wealth is referred to by the poet?

Answer:

The wealth which is referred to here by the poet means wealth of joy and happiness; which actually comes from happy and fond memories when the poet saw a host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake beneath the trees.

Lines 19-24

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Read the lines given above and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.

Explain with reference to context.

Answer:

These lines are taken from the poem 'Daffodils' written by William Wordsworth. The poem expresses Word worth's love for nature and how he sought solace in it from the woes and worries of this world.

In the final stanza, the poet knows how much the flowers have affected him. Often, when he is lying on his couch or when he is in a thoughtful (pensive) mood, an image of the daffodils comes to him, and then his heart fills with pleasure and "dances with the daffodils."

Question 2.

What happens to the poet when he is sometime in a pensive mood?

Answer:

Whenever the poet lived on his couch in a unoccupied and sad mood the fond and happy memory of the daffodil flowers flushed upon his eye of imagination which is a source of joy and inspiration to the poet in such his lonely mood.

Question 3.

What is the bliss of solitude referred to here?

Answer:

By the term 'bliss of solitude' the poet wants to express that he felt really happy in the joyful company of the daffodil flowers and the waves. They seemed to compete with each other in such a mood. The poet caught the joyful mood and thus became a part of nature itself. He only kept on watching the scene, unable to decide what wealth of joy, he had received from it. The greatest benefit of this experience was that whenever the poet lay on his couch in an unoccupied and sad mood, the fond and the sweet memory of the daffodils crashed upon his eye of imagination; which a source of joy and inspiration to the poet in his lonely and pensive mood.

Question 4.

What does he mean by the 'inward eye'?

Answer:

The inward eye refers to the eye of his imagination, his soul which can provide him the sight of the daffodils in his memory and he can once again experience the same joy which he had experienced when he had seen the daffodils.

Project

Question 1.

Describe in your own words the poet's feelings when he sees the host of golden daffodils?

Answer:

The poet was thrilled to see a host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake under the trees moving their head in a joyful dance. They seemed to be dancing like a human being expressing their energy and joy. When the poet saw the flowers, his imagination traveled to another world to find a comparison. He was reminded of the stars twinkling in the milky way at night. The long line of the daffodils flowers bore comparison with the bright stars seen across the night sky.

Question 2.

Why does the poet say I gazed and gazed but a little thought / what wealth that show to me had brought?

Answer:

The poet was alone. He was moving about aimlessly over the high valleys and hills watching the beautiful scenes of nature. Suddenly he saw a great number of golden coloured flowers by the side of the lake under the trees moving their heads in joyful dance. The waves in the lake, by the side of the flowers, were also dancing but the daffodils had outdone the waves in their expression of joy. A poet felt happy in such a joyful company of the dancing flowers and the waves. In sheer delight and surprise he could not decide what joy this sight had brought for him. He could perhaps gaze at the pleasure of the present moment but he could not imagine how again and again in the future he would recall and re-live this experience and what ecstasy that memory would bring for him.

Question 3.

Mention the two moods of the poet?

Answer:

The two moods of the poet are:

1. Happy mood when he is free from worries.
2. A pensive mood when he is serious and thoughtful.

Question 4.

How can the heart dance?

Answer:

The heart can dance when a man feels happy. His heart is filled with great pleasure and he feels great thrill. Then it is said that his heart dances.

Question 5.

How is the last verse different from the other verse? Is the poet deriving a different mood than that expressed in the previous verse?

Answer:

The last verse of the poem 'Daffodils' explores the poet's feelings when he reminisces the scene of daffodils he witnessed much earlier. The first three verses describe the host of golden, happy and beautiful daffodils he saw one day. The last verse discusses what an enriching experience that had been. That sight still plays on in the mind of the poet and gives him inner peace and inspires him.

Question 6.

What does Wordsworth compare himself to? Why?

Answer:

Wordsworth is comparing himself to a cloud in the sky, wandering without a destination, as can be seen in Line 1 of the poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud". Since he is in the sky like a floating cloud the poet is able to see all the things and events in the world. He has a comprehensive view but he can only observe the world at a distance. There is the suggestion of perfect detachment. In addition the poet compares himself with the wandering cloud in the beginning of the poem because he perceives himself as aimless and as passive as a cloud, which depends completely on the weather and nature for its direction and speed. Being lonely like a floating cloud in the sky, the poet experiences freedom and loneliness at the same time. The freedom allows the poet to appreciate the beauty of the world whole-heartedly, such as the daffodils. As a powerless and aimless cloud, the poet could only watch and appreciate, but he could not join the daffodils in dancing and fluttering in the breeze. The reader might conclude that the poet recognizes himself as an outcast in his society; that he feels he can only watch silently from afar. The continuing use of the image may further suggest to us that the poet may not be satisfied with what he observes of social affairs and is away from the social trend as he is looking at things from a distance. There is always a distance, psychologically and physically, between the daffodils and the poet. At the end the poet remains living in solitude, but the moment of the daffodils is in his heart, treasured and appreciated. This comparison is quite effective in a sense that it captures the helplessness and a sense of loss of the poet, it also captures the infinite distance between the passive pensive aimlessly cloud (the poet's solitude) and the active cheerful daffodils (happiness).

Question 7.

How is he affected by the experience of seeing the daffodils?

Answer:

He is delighted by the wonderful sight. This is explicitly revealed in the use of diction of 'bliss' and 'pleasure', and he is so happy that his heart seems to dance with the daffodils. He also feels the bliss of solitude, because it is peaceful and comfortable to be alone sometimes in such a huge open area, and seeing the flowers, he wants to become a part of them. In the beginning, he's aloof and prefers to stay in his comfort zone, "Which is the bliss of solitude". But when he witnesses the "gay" daffodils, he has a desire to be part of the world he has been observing, to join the "crowd" and to belong to the happiness. "And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils." The fact that only his heart "dances with the daffodils" suggests that spiritually, he feels like he belongs to the group; physically, he still doesn't dare to step out from his little world. Though it may seem that he has stepped out of his comfort zone, still it is only a desire in his heart. Again this may suggest that he enjoys living in a better little world on his own rather than the harsh reality of existing in society degraded by humans although he can still feel the beauty of nature.

Question 8.

How does the poem make use of contrast? Consider the contrast between the poet and the daffodils, and between his feeling before, while and after seeing the daffodils.

Answer:

The poet was wandering lonely and aimlessly as a cloud while the daffodils were together as a crowd and lively. He was a bit lost. He floats with the wind as a cloud purposelessly. Everything he saw and felt, eg. the breeze, the daffodils, effect his thoughts. He 'wandered', 'floats', 'gazed', he took a more passive and quiet way to observe the world. In contrast, the daffodils, took a more

active part, they 'fluttering and dancing', 'stretched...along the margin of a bay', 'tossing their heads'. They are enjoying in the breeze and the nice weather by energetically joining and responding to it. 'They out-did the sparkling waves in glee', this may suggest that the daffodils even make the world a more wonderful place to live in. The sparkling waves represent the mother nature while the daffodils symbolize human beings. The poet thinks that the dance of the daffodils is more attractive than the waves. Somehow, deep down in the poet's heart, he desires to join the daffodils and be as happy and joyful as they are. Further more, the daffodils have roots deep down in the earth. They are already tightly bound with each other. In contrast, the loneliness of the poet is then enhanced because everyone is enjoying being together, while he has no company at all. Before he sees the daffodils, he is lonely and detached and uses the word "wandering" to describe his aimless floating. As soon as he sees the crowd of "sprightly" daffodils, he is brought to think about the meaning of his life. After seeing the daffodils, he finds out that his heart is filled with pleasure. He feels a lot more relieved. However, he still has not joined the daffodils and the nature completely. The experience he had of the nature and daffodils is good memory to him and his heart 'opened' a bit, but overall he is more or less the same with his 'vacant or in pensive mood'.

Extra Questions

Question 1.

What does Wordsworth compare the daffodils to? Is the comparison appropriate?

Answer:

The writer is amazed by the daffodils' number and beauty, thus he compares the daffodils with the stars that shine and twinkle on the milky way continuously, and also refers them as personified characters, a crowd that dances and flutters in the breeze, and tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Question 2.

Identify examples of the following devices in the poem: alliteration, personification, rhyme, rhythm. How do these devices contribute to the overall effect of the poem?

Answer:

The use of Alliteration is evident in: "Beside" and "Beneath" (stanza 1), "Ten" and "Thousand" (stanza 2). "Tossing their heads in sprightly dance", are the uses assonance, of "s" sound which sounds soft and comfortable. Simile is used when daffodils and stars are compared. Emphasis is evident in the lively pace of the flowers' "continuously". The poet uses personification: daffodils dancing, tossing their heads in sprightly dance. The flowers share the same happiness as the poet has. Repetition is used with the word gazed to emphasize that he wanted to join in the hilarious dance of the flowers.

The literary device of inversion:

1. "Continuous as the stars that shine... the margin of a bay"
2. "Ten thousand saw I at a glance"

Question 3.

What do you think is the poet's attitude towards the following 3 things: nature, memory, loneliness?

Answer:

The poet clearly shows appreciation and love for nature and it is very influential. However his strong feeling of loneliness never fades away even when he sees the beautiful, absorbing and cheerful sceneries of the daffodils. He is deeply impressed by the beauty of nature, and it remains a very good memory to him. Whenever he is in his 'pensive mood' and feeling 'vacant', perhaps emotionally and physically, the good memory of the daffodils flash back to him as a 'bliss' and 'pleasure', which release him for a while from the loneliness and 'solitude' that he is experiencing.

Question 4.

Which line(s)/stanza(s) do you enjoy most? Why?

Answer:

The lines I enjoy the most are:

1. A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
2. Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

These lines impress because they create a colourful, lively and beautiful word picture which uplifts the mood and spirit of the reader.

Question 5.

Who are 'they' referred to in the third line of the last stanza? When had the poet come across them?

Answer:

The 'they' referred to in the third line of the last stanza are the lively and beautiful dancing daffodils. The poet had earlier seen them when he was wandering in solitude over hills and valleys and he had suddenly come across a multitude of daffodils beside a lake dancing in the breeze.

Question 6.

Explain the phrase 'bliss of solitude' in the context in which it has been used.

Answer:

The phrase 'bliss of solitude' implies that solitude is pleasant as it gives the poet the opportunity to dwell on the memory of the daffodils dancing in the breeze. It is only when he is free and alone that the sight of the daffodils flashes upon his imagination and he can once again experience the happiness he had earlier felt. But this happens only in solitude.

Question 7.

What do you think is the message of the poem?

Answer:

The message of the poem is that the little moments in life could be the most profound. He felt that nature gives man peace and joy and is a constant source of happiness. He believed that man and nature are one.

Question 8.

Why does the poet use the word 'wandered'?

Answer:

"Wandered" means roaming around without a purpose, like when you explore something. So it's not necessarily a bad thing. But in its metaphorical use, "wandered" can mean feeling purposeless and directionless in general.

Question 9.

The poet uses the word lonely in reference to a cloud. Explain.

Answer:

The first concept that we want to take a look at is that the cloud is "lonely." Are clouds lonely? Well, maybe the ones that float about valleys ("vales") and hills are lonely. It's more likely, the speaker is projecting his own loneliness on the clouds. But that still doesn't explain the strange image, because clouds usually travel in groups. Maybe a cloud is lonely because it is so far above the rest of the world. Its thoughts are just so "lofty," and maybe the speaker's thoughts are, too. Also, the cloud could be lonely because it floats over a natural landscape with no people in it. Maybe the speaker has thought of hills and valleys because he happens to be "wandering" through such a landscape.

Question 10.

Explain the use of words like 'fluttering' and 'dancing' as used by the poet.

Answer:

"Fluttering" suggests, flight, which could bring us to angels or even birds or butterflies."Dancing" is something that usually only humans do. The daffodils are given the qualities of humans and also of some kind of otherworldly creatures, perhaps.

Question 11.

The poet compares the flowers to the milky way. Is the comparison apt?

Answer:

Like the Milky Way, the flowers are roughly concentrated in a line that seem to stretch as far as the eye can see ("never-ending"). The flowers line the shore ("margin") of a bay of the lake, which must be a relatively large lake. The Milky Way appears to be a band that has more stars and a brighter appearance than the night sky around it. It's not a perfectly clear line, but more like a fuzzy approximation of a line. We imagine the same effect with the flowers. It's not as if there are no flowers outside the shore of the lake, but most of them are concentrated on the shore. So to a large extent the comparison is apt.

Question 12.

How does the poet describe the flowers by using personification?

Answer:

The speaker takes in "ten thousand" dancing flowers at once. The flowers "toss their heads" while dancing to the wind. By "heads" we think he means the part of the flower with the petals, the weight of which causes the rest of the flower to bob. "Sprightly" means happily or merrily. The word derives from "sprite," which refers to the playful little spirits that people once thought inhabited nature. "Sprites" are supernatural beings, almost like fairies. The day that inspired this poem was a stormy one, so the waves on this medium-to-large sized lake must have been larger than usual. Maybe they were even cresting into whitecaps. The point is that the entire scene has suddenly been invested with a joyful human-like presence. Since waves do not bring as much joy as the yellow flowers, the flowers "out-did" the water with their happiness. The waves "sparkle," which creates yet another association with the stars. Everything seems to be gleaming and twinkling and shining-and sparkling. Despite his earlier loneliness, the speaker now can't help but feel happy, or "gay," with such a beautiful vision to look at. Or, as he puts it, with such joyful and carefree ("jocund") "company" to hang out with. The flowers and waves feel like companions to him.

Question 13.

Explain the following:

They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude;

Answer:

Whenever the poet gets in a pensive mood, the image of the daffodils "flashes" through his mind. The "inward eye" or his imagination expresses what Wordsworth felt to be a deeper, truer spiritual vision. A person cannot share his or her own spiritual vision completely with others, and so it is a form of "solitude." But its truth and beauty make it "blissful." When the memory of the flowers and the lake flashes into his head, he feels happy again. It's almost like the same experience he had while "wandering" through nature at the beginning of the poem, when the real daffodils pushed the loneliness out of his head. The memory of the daffodils is as good as the real thing. His heart is set to dancing, just like the flowers. He dances along "with" them – they are his cheerful companions once again.

Question 14.

Analyse the symbol of Clouds, Sky, and Heavens.

Answer:

"I wandered lonely as a Cloud" has the remote, otherworldly atmosphere that is suggested by the title. The speaker feels like a cloud, distant and separated from the world below. But this distance becomes a good thing when he comes upon the daffodils, which are like little stars. It's as if the problem at the beginning is that he hasn't ascended high enough. The beginning of the poem

makes a simile between the speaker's wandering and the "lonely" distant movements of a single cloud. Clouds can't be lonely, so we have another example of personification. The second stanza begins with a simile comparing the shape and number of the daffodils to the band of stars that we call the Milky Way galaxy.

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