

**English Notes for Class XI**  
**Literature**  
**Topic:- A Photograph**

★ Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow :

"The cardboard shows me how it was  
When the two girl cousins went paddling  
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,  
And she the big girl—some twelve years or so. "

**(a) What do the lines describe about ?**

Ans:- The lines describe about a photograph which was pasted on a cardboard sheet due to long span of time.

**(b) What does the word 'cardboard' denote?**

Ans:- The 'cardboard' here denotes to the old photograph of the poet's mother and her two cousins.

**(c) Who was the 'big girl' mentioned in the line ?**

Ans:- The 'big girl' here referred to the poet's mother who was standing in the middle of her two cousins in the sea beach on the photograph.

**(d) What was the position of poet's mother here ?**

Ans:- The poet's mother was the eldest among the three of them. She was twelve years old on the photograph. The two little girl cousins were holding on the hand of the poet's mother.

**(e) What feeling are aroused in these lines?**

Ans:- These lines have feelings of love, togetherness and innocent pleasure of the childhood.

"All three stood still to smile through their hair  
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,  
My mother's, that was before I was born.  
And the sea, which which appears to have changed less,  
Washed their terribly transient feet."

**(a) Who were the three mentioned in the line?**

Ans:- The three were poet's mother and her two cousins named Betty and Dolly who were standing in the sea beach with smiling face.

**(b) Mention the poetic device used in the first line.**

Ans:- The poet has used alliteration in the first line of the extract. Here, poet used the letter 's' repeatedly in the words "stood still to smile". So, it is the example of alliteration.

**(c) Whose sweet face is referred to here?**

Ans:- Poet's mother is referred to here as 'sweet face'.

**(d) Identify the figure of speech used in the last line?**

Ans:- The figure of speech which was used in the last line is ' Transfer Epithet' . Here, life is transfer to feet to highlight the mortality of human being.



**"Now she's been dead nearly as many years  
As that girl lived. And of this circumstance  
There is nothing to say at all.  
Its silence silences."**

**(a) How long has the poet's mother been dead ?**

Ans:-The poet's mother has been dead for about twelve years.

**(b) Which circumstance is referred to here?**

Ans:-The circumstance referred to here is the incident of the death of poet's mother.

**(c) What does the last line convey?**

Ans:- The last line conveys that death is final and irrevocable.

**(d) What silences the silence?**

Ans:- The silence of the death silences the silence.

**(e) What poetical devices used in the last line?**

Ans:- The poet has used 'alliteration' and 'personification' in the last line of the poem.

★ **Short answer questions:-**

**1. Why would the poet's mother laugh at the snapshot ?**

Ans:- The poet's mother would laugh at the snapshot because it would revive her memories of the past happy days on the sea beach and the strange way in which they were dressed for the beach.

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

Ans:- The camera has captured the scene on the sea beach with three girls who were paddling in the water and holding the hands of each other.

**3. Why does the poet say nothing about her mother's death ?**

Ans:- The poet has no words to express her reaction to this solemn and painful incident as she has lost her mother and her beautiful smile forever. Death keeps silences to everyone. The extensive quietness silences poet's mother either.

**4. What impression do you form about the poet's mother?**

Ans:- The poet's mother was very pretty at the age of twelve. She enjoyed her sea holiday with her two cousins in the sea beach. This is indicated by the happiness that she gets in middle age after looking at her childhood photograph.

**5. Why does the poet feel nostalgic?**

Ans:- The poet sees an old photograph of her mother in which her mother and her two cousins standing with smiling face on the sea beach. They were enjoying themselves. The poet remembers how her mother used to laugh whenever she looked at that old photograph. Now the poet has been left only with the memories of her mother. Thus, she feels nostalgic.

**6. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are they ?**

Ans:- The three stanzas depict three different phases. They are as follows-

**1st stanza**, the entire stanza talks about how the three girls spending their holiday at the sea



beach. It also describes their uncle and how he shot their photo and their happy faces.

**2nd stanza**, this stanza talks about how poet's mother spoke to Betty and Dolly about their holiday. They have grown up and discussing their childhood.

**3rd stanza**, this stanza talks about the poet's morning about the death of her mother. Poet remembers her mother with a heavy heart.

