

WHATIF

Working with the Poem

- Question 1.** (i) Who is the speaker in the poem?
(ii) With your partner list out the happenings the speaker is worried about.
(iii) Why do you think she/he has these worries? Can you think of ways to get rid of such worries?

Answer: (i) The speaker in the poem is the poet, Shel Silverstein.

(ii) The speaker is worried about the following things:

- What if he is dumb in the school?
- What if the swimming pool is closed?
- What if he gets beaten up?
- What if there is poison in his cup?
- What if bolt of lightning strikes him?
- What if he gets sick and dies?
- What if he doesn't grow taller?
- What if his parents get divorced?
- What if his teeth don't grow straight?
- What if he never learns to dance?

(iii) Such worries arise because of the fears in our mind. Some of such fears arise when we have seen something similar happening around us.

Such fears and worries can be avoided by sheer will power and optimistic mindset.

Question 2. Read the following line.

Some Whatifs *crawled inside my ear*.

Can words crawl into your ear? This is an image. The poet is trying to make an image of what she/he experiences. Now with your partner try and list out some more images from the poem.

Answer: Some of more such images from the poem are:

“And pranced and partied all night long
And sang their same old Whatif song.”
“Everything seems swell, and then
The night-time Whatif strikes again!”

Question 3. In groups of four discuss some more ‘whatifs’ that you experience in your day to day life and list them out.

- (i) _____
(ii) _____
(iii) _____
(iv) _____
(v) _____
(vi) _____

And now write a poem of five or six lines with the ‘whatifs’ that you have listed.

Answer: Do it yourself.