

Page No. 112

**Understanding The Poem****1. What does the bird in the poem announce? How is this related to the title, 'Coming'?****Answer:**

The poem 'Coming' written by Philip Larkin is mainly a celebration of the advent of spring. To show his happiness, the poet explains about the house fronts which are clothed in light, chill and yellow light. In the midst of all this, a welcome song is sung by a thrush. It looks like nature here is dancing with happiness at the arrival of a new season. Sitting in the deep bare garden, the thrush, in its fresh peeled voice is humming repeatedly that it will be spring soon. This cheerful singing of the thrush depicts its astonishing effect on the brickwork of the houses. The poet is also happy to see the beauty encompassed by nature. Mainly, by conveying about the voice of the thrush, the poet has expressed how overwhelmed he is at the 'coming' of spring.

**2. Why is the speaker's childhood described as 'a forgotten boredom'?****Answer:**

The element of autobiography used in the poem makes a reader more eager to know about the childhood of the poet. He recollects his childhood as an unhappy one. He talks about himself in a depreciated manner. It is shown that the poet had a poor concept of himself. It is also clear that the poet had a slight stammer during childhood which endured for the rest of his life, even though it reduced. If attention is paid by the reader, it is not tough to understand the contradiction in the term "forgotten boredom". For instance, if Larkin says that he has forgotten his childhood, how is it possible for him to comment that it was a bored one? So, it can be concluded that the childhood of Larkin did not possess any memories which he was interested in. Once he had even remarked that his biography can begin with when he was 21, which shows that nothing happy occurred before that age. Hence, Philip Larkin recollects his childhood as 'a forgotten boredom'.

**3. What causes the element of surprise when the child comes on the scene of 'adult reconciling'?****Answer:**

As the poet is absorbed in the humming of the thrush, he transcends his present to the boring childhood which is best to be forgotten. The poet here is transformed to a child. He feels joyful like a child who is happy by looking at the grown ups restoring a friendly relationship between one and another. The child understands nothing but smiles by seeing the elders happy. This would look surprising, however, if one observes more deeply, the scene depicts the child's innocence. The poet has made a point clear that our happiness lies in the happiness of others. The entire thought makes the poet happy and he admires the mystery of human life and the universe.

**4. What two things are compared in the poem?****Answer:**

It is hard to understand whether the poet is trying to draw or compare a relationship. In the poem 'Coming', Philip Larkin, celebrates the arrival of spring, along with the 'fresh- peeled voice' of the thrush. The poet creates an imagery of the spring season being peeled out of winter, which is the birth of a new season from the old season. In the earlier days, nature seemed to be sleeping in the gloomy and cold winter and now the beauty of the new season has sparked a life in it. The garden, houses,

birds and the entire nature has joined together to welcome the new season. The poet is happy to see this change that he himself starts to transcend into his childhood.

The poet highlights the differences between experience and innocence. He explains about a child watching grown ups, reconciling and laughing, restoring their relationship. Though he is not able to understand anything he begins to feel happy. The happiness of an innocent child lies in the happiness of others, while in adults, they engage in issues which create trouble.

Larkin has brought out the difference between the two seasons and the stages in a human life. This mystery is beyond the poet's comprehension and he is left wondering about it.

#### 5. How do you respond to these lines?

**Light, chill and yellow,  
Bathes the serene  
Foreheads of houses**

**Answer:**

The poem is devoted to the attractiveness of the spring season, which carries with it a carnival of humanity. At the beginning of the poem, the poet creates a beautiful image of the season in the reader's mind. He explains about a colourful evening scenery. The spring has longer evenings which are jewelled by the forehead of calm houses' roof tops which are highlighted by the light, chill and yellow light of the sun set. The reader is imparted here with the scenic imagery of the entire environment sitting serenely and watching the sun moving down as spring beckons. Nature dances to the humming sound of the thrush in the bare deep garden. It looks like nature has come alive in the evening and joined the party in welcoming the spring season.

#### 6. Comment on the use of the phrase 'fresh-peeled voice'.

**Answer:**

The 'fresh-peeled voice' of the thrush is used by Larkin as an adjective in order to describe the evening setting of spring. It explains the sharpness and freshness of the humming of the thrush. This freshness symbolises the freshness which is present in the air due to the arrival of the spring season for which Larkin is happy. The thrush hums by sitting in a "laurel-surrounded in the deep bare garden". It sings continuously that "it will be spring soon". The humming of the thrush has an "astonishing" effect on the brickwork of the houses. The thrush's song transcends the poet to his childhood which flashes the "forgotten-boredom" before his eyes. The poet tries to bring a similarity between the innocence of the child and the freshness of the thrush's song. The "fresh-peeled voice" symbolizes the spring season peeling out from winter which is the main transformation. It is shown as the birth of spring from winter and on its arrival, humanity and the universe dance to the song of the thrush and join the celebration.