

Poem 2. The Laburnum Top

(1)

Introduction of the poem

The poem 'The Laburnum Top' has been written by Ted Hughes. It is about a re-creating relationship between the laburnum tree and the goldfinch bird. The tree is yellow, silent and death like and is made alive by the bird and her young ones. The yellow bird has her shelter on the tree where she feeds her young ones. But as soon as the bird leaves to fly in the sky, the tree becomes silent and death like again.

Summary of the poem

The poem begins with the description of the laburnum tree whose top was still and silent. Its leaves have turned yellow and seeds have fallen down. It is a daytime in the month of September when the tree is standing still and death like.

The lifeless tree becomes alive by the arrival of the goldfinch bird. She comes to feed

her younger ones who are on the thickness of the branch. The tree is her shelter. She arrives at the end of the branch with the chirping sound. She further moves to the other side of the branch with rapid and careful movement like a lizard. As soon as she arrives, her younger ones start chirping like a machine and vibrating and flapping their wings. The death like tree becomes alive and it trembles and shakes.

After feeding them, she flies to the other side of the branch. Her dark coloured face with the yellow body is barely visible as she vanishes behind the yellow leaves. She flies away in the sky, leaving the tree death-like again.

Question and Answers

- 1. What is laburnum called in your language?
 Ans In Hindi, the laburnum tree is called 'Amalbas'.

2. Which local bird is like the goldfinch? (3)
Ans Indian Lutino Ringneck is like the goldfinch.

3. What do you notice about the beginning and ending of the poem?

Ans At the beginning and the ending of the poem, the aburnum tree is standing still and silent.

4. To what is the bird's movement compared? What is the basis for the comparison?

Ans The goldfinch's movement is compared to that of the lizard because she is abrupt, sleek and alert. The same movements are observed when she arrives at the tree and moves to the thickness of the branch to feed her young ones.

5. Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet?

Ans As the engine is the source of running the machine. The bird is compared to the engine as she is the feeder of her family. As a machine cannot function without an engine, her family cannot survive without her.

6. What do you like most about the 4 poem?

~~Ans~~ I like the comparison of the state of the tree before and after the goldfinch bird arrives and it makes the death-like tree alive.

7. What does the phrase "her barred face identity mask" mean?

~~Ans~~ The phrase "her barred face identity mask" means that the bird's face becomes her identity mask and symbol of recognition.