

**ISC EXAMINATION**  
**ENGLISH PAPER-II**  
**Solved Paper - 2023**  
**Class-12<sup>th</sup>**

Maximum Marks: 80

Time allowed: Three hours

Candidates are **allowed additional 15 minutes for only** reading the paper. They must NOT start writing during this time.

Answer all questions in Section A and Section B.

The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [ ]

**Section - A [20 Marks]**

**Question 1**

**Choose the correct options for the following questions:**

**[10]**

- (i) In the Masque in Act IV of the play *The Tempest*, how does Ceres know that, Juno is coming?  
(a) By Juno's gait (b) Through Prospero's words  
(c) By Venus' disappearance (d) By the nymphs
- (ii) What does Ceres say to bless the young couple?  
(a) That their barns will never be empty (b) That they will rule as king and queen  
(c) That they will overcome all obstacles (d) That they will travel around the world
- (iii) In Act V, Scene I of the play *The Tempest*, Alonso says, "Irreparable is the loss." What is the irreparable loss being referred to here?  
(a) Loss of his kingdom (b) Loss of his crew members  
(c) Loss of his ship (d) Loss of his son
- (iv) What does Prospero intend to do with his book before his interaction with Alonso in Act V of the play, *The Tempest*?  
(a) Burn it to ashes (b) Pass it to Caliban  
(c) Drown it deeper than plummet's sound (d) Gift it to Miranda
- (v) Where did B. Wordsworth live in the short story, B. *Wordsworth*?  
(a) Miguel Street (b) Alberto Street  
(c) St. Clair Avenue (d) Savanna
- \*(vi) In the short story, *To Build a Fire*, which "wild idea" came into the Man's head when all seemed lost?  
(a) To identify the hidden pool (b) Not to share his lunch with the dog  
(c) To set the dog free (d) To kill the dog and crawl into its carcass for warmth
- (vii) In the short story, *The Story of an Hour*, what according to the doctor did Mrs. Mallard die of?  
(a) Her ill health (b) The torture by her husband  
(c) Joy that kills (d) Falling down the stairs
- (viii) In the poem, *Dover Beach*, where is the "eternal note of sadness" heard?  
(a) The French coast where the light gleams and goes  
(b) The cliffs of England  
(c) The sound of the wind  
(d) The grating roar of the pebbles flung by the waves
- (ix) In the poem, *Birches*, how are the crystal shells shed?  
(a) By the sun's warmth (b) By the gentle breeze  
(c) By the footsteps of people (d) By the boy swinging on the birches

\* This Question is from the chapter which has been excluded from the 2023-24 syllabus. Hence, it is just for your ready reference.

- \* (x) In the poem, *We are the Music Makers*, what are the 'sea-breakers'?
- (a) Explorers (b) Sea-pirates  
(c) Large ships (d) Large waves

### Question 2

Complete the following sentences by providing a reason for each:

[10]

- (i) In Act III, Scene II of the play *The Tempest*, Stephano and Trinculo are angry with Caliban as they struggle out of the filthy pool because .....
- (ii) In Act V of the play *The Tempest*, Prospero greets Gonzalo first because .....
- (iii) At the end of Act III, Scene I of the play *The Tempest*, Gonzalo urges the other Lords to follow the "three men of sin" because .....
- (iv) In Act III, Scene II of the play, *The Tempest*, Stephano threatens to tie Trinculo to the next tree because .....
- \* (v) In the short story, *The Sound Machine*, Dr. Scott thought Klausner was ill when Klausner rang up the doctor because .....
- (vi) Towards the end of the story *B. Wordsworth*, the poet told the boy to never visit him because .....
- \* (vii) In the short story, *To build a Fire*, the fire built by the Man under the tree was extinguished because .....
- (viii) In the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, the poet thinks the bird has some awareness which the poet did not have because .....
- (ix) In the poem, *Dover Beach*, the poet wants his beloved to be "true" to him because .....
- (x) Towards the end of the poem *Birches*, the poet expresses a wish to return to Earth because .....

## Section - B [60 Marks]

### THE TEMPEST: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

#### Question 3

- (i) Referring closely to Act III Scene III, relate the stern warning of Ariel to the "three men of sin". What impact does his warning have on the three sinners? [5]
- (ii) With close reference to Act V describe how Prospero has used the spirits of "hills, brooks, groves" to give shape to his magical acts. What does he finally decide to do with his magical powers? [5]
- (iii) (a) With close reference to Act V, examine how Shakespeare presents the idea of forgiveness and reconciliation at the end of the play. [10]

OR

- (b) Magic is used to manipulate, intimidate and amaze the various characters in the play. Give your views on this statement by referring to any two examples from the acts studied. [10]

### ECHOES: PROSE

#### Question 4

- (i) Referring closely to the short story, *The Singing Lesson*, show how the Headmistress' summons to Miss Meadows eventually brings the latter out from cold despair to a realm of hope, love and joy. [5]
- \* (ii) Referring closely to the short story, *The Sound Machine*, give specific instances to show how Klausner was obsessed with sound. [5]
- (iii) \* (a) With close reference to the short story, *To Build a Fire*, discuss how the man's lack of imagination led to his paralysing death while the dog's primitive instincts helped him to survive. [10]

OR

- (b) Do you think that 'friendship is not a matter of age but of emotional connect? Give your views with close reference to V.S. Naipaul's short story *B. Wordsworth*

### REVERIE: POETRY

#### Question 5

- (i) Referring closely to the poem: *Dover Beach*, show how the poet correlates the gradual receding of the "Sea of Faith" with the gradual loss of human faith in religion. [5]
- (ii) Referring closely to the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, examine the poet's encounter with the aged thrush as a passage from amazement to introspection. [5]
- (iii) (a) Referring closely to the poem, *Birches*, discuss what differentiates the swinging of birches in the poet's adulthood from that in his childhood. [10]

OR

- \* (b) How does the poem, *Crossing the Bar*, portray the poet's deep affirmation and faith in God?



# ANSWERS

1. (i) (a)
- (ii) (a)
- (iii) (d)
- (iv) (c)
- (v) (a)

**Explanation:** In V.S. Naipaul's short story "*B. Wordsworth*," the titular character B. Wordsworth lives in a small, rundown apartment in London. The story depicts his lonely, isolated existence in the city, where he struggles to find meaning and purpose in his life.

- (vi) (d)

**Explanation:** In Jack London's short story "*To Build a Fire*," the Man has been traveling alone in the frigid Yukon, and is making his way to a mining camp. When he stops to build a fire, he makes a critical mistake by building it under a snow-covered tree branch, causing the snow to fall and extinguish the fire. The Man then realizes that he is in a life-or-death situation, and begins to consider desperate measures to survive. As the situation becomes increasingly dire, the Man has a "wild idea" that he might be able to kill his dog and use its body to keep himself warm.

- (vii) (c)

**Explanation:** In Kate Chopin's short story "*The Story of an Hour*," Mrs. Mallard is a woman who receives the news that her husband has been killed in a train accident. She is initially grief-stricken, but as she reflects on her newfound freedom, she becomes elated at the thought of living for herself rather than her husband. She revels in the sense of independence and looks forward to the possibilities of the future. However, when her husband appears unexpectedly alive and well, Mrs. Mallard dies of a heart attack.

- (viii) (d)

**Explanation:** In Matthew Arnold's poem "*Dover Beach*," the "eternal note of sadness" is heard in the "grating roar" of the sea as it moves back and forth on the shore. The speaker of the poem is standing on the cliffs of Dover, looking out at the English Channel and reflecting on the state of the world around him. He hears the sound of the waves and is struck by the sense of melancholy that seems to permeate the natural world.

- (ix) (a)

**Explanation:** In Robert Frost's poem "*Birches*," the crystal shells refer to the ice that forms on the branches of the birch trees during the winter. The speaker describes how the ice makes the branches bend and sway, and how the weight of the ice can cause the branches to break.

- (x) (a)

2. (i) ..... they accuse him for being responsible of getting into the filthy pool stinking of horse's urine and also for losing there bottle of drinks.
- (ii) ..... he is thankful to the noble old man , his ' true preserver' who placed his magic books and other essentials in the broken ship in which he and Miranda were banished.
- (iii) ..... they are in a desperate state after listening to Harpy's speech and they may do something dreadful to themselves in such a condition.
- (iv) ..... he is angry with Trinculo for troubling Caliban who seems to worship him like a God. He threatens to hang Trinculo.
- (v) In the short story "*The Sound Machine*" by Roald Dahl, Dr. Scott believed that Klausner was ill when Klausner rang up the doctor because he did sound very agitated and upset on the phone. Klausner told Dr. Scott that he had been listening to the sounds made by plants, and he had discovered that they were screaming when they were cut. Dr. Scott believed that Klausner was suffering from some sort of mental illness or nervous breakdown, as he found Klausner's claims to be highly unusual and irrational.
- (vi) In the short story "*B. Wordsworth*" by Roald Dahl, towards the end of the story, B. Wordsworth, the poet, tells the boy to never visit him again because he does not want the boy to learn the truth about his writing process.
- (vii) In the short story "*To Build a Fire*" by Jack London, the fire built by the man under the tree was extinguished because a pile of snow fell from the tree onto the fire.

- (viii) In the poem "*The Darkling Thrush*" by Thomas Hardy, the poet thinks the bird had some awareness which the poet did not have, because the bird continues to sing despite the bleak and desolate surroundings.
- (ix) In the poem "*Dover Beach*" by Matthew Arnold, the poet wants his beloved to be "true" to him because he sees their love as a source of stability and hope in a world that is in a state of decline.
- (x) In the poem "*Birches*" by Robert Frost, the poet expresses a wish to return to Earth because he wants to be reminded of the joys and pleasures of the physical world.

3. (i) Ariel in the form of Harpy, scolds 'the three men of sin' or evil doers because of their crime against Prospero. Destiny has made the sea belch them into this island because they are the most unfit to live. Alonso, has been punished by the loss of his son by the supernatural powers and the same powers have condemned them to slow torture worse than death. The only way out of this perdition is repentance. If they repent, Fate may relent; otherwise the elements of fury will descend upon them with vengeance making them miserable. These warnings affect Alonso the most because he hears the waves whisper Prospero's name, condemning him with the death of his only son. The words of Harpy put the sinners in a wild and reckless mood. Their guilt has started affecting them like slow poison and they may do some acts that will have terrible consequences.

(ii) Prospero, towards the end of the play, addresses "elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves" with whose help he has fulfilled his intentions and is now ready to throw away his magic powers. The wise old Duke of Milan given to occult has effectively taken his revenge against his enemies by showing them the right way to escape perdition is through repentance. For this, he uses the spirit of air, Ariel and other spirits of the island.

The scene of shipwreck is an illusion created with the help of Ariel. The giant waves that seemed to engulf the royal ship, the thunder, lightning and the flames that flitted across the ship have all been doings of Ariel under the command of his master. The Harpy is also a magical illusion to convey a message to the sinners. An impressive Masque that is staged to amuse Ferdinand is full of the fairies of forests, brooks and streams. Ceres the goddess of Earth, Iris the Goddess of rainbow, and Juno, the queen of goddesses are all depicted with help of the spirits. The dance of the farmers and woodland nymphs is also well orchestrated by Ariel.

(iii) Although Prospero, with his magic brings those who did him wrong by banishing him and his daughter from his rightful realm, he forgives them at the end. His intention was to make them realize their crime; not to murder them. As he grows older, Prospero becomes philosophical in outlook and believes, 'the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance'. Virtue gives greater credit to man than feelings of revenge. As they are repenting now in the lime grove, his anger diminishes, and he decides to take off the magic spell by which they were bound.

(a) Prospero did have strong feelings of revenge against Antonio, his brother and Alonso who instigated him to throw Prospero out of Milan. Antonio, being his brother, his actions hurt Prospero the most and he condemned him. But at the end, he is also forgiven, though he can never be clue to Prospero now. Alonso, has been submitted to much mental torture especially as he was under the impression his son was dead. He is also the most affected while the Harpy admonishes them. The true repentance transforms him to a better person, full of love and affection for his son and Miranda. Both Alonso and Prospero reconcile with each other. Prospero forgives from his heart and even encourages Miranda to marry, Ferdinand, the son of his erstwhile enemy.

Prospero forgives even Caliban, who has always been mouthing curses on him. The savage even tried to molest Miranda. However, Prospero leaves Caliban to live in the island which actually belonged to the brute. He also forgives him and the two rogues who planned to murder him.

Thus, Prospero's forgiveness of his enemies gives him God like quality. With his magical powers he could have tortured and eliminated his enemies in a ruthless manner, but he uses his powers just to show the right way to the sinners. Towards the end, he attains sage like qualities and decides to throw away his magic powers and return to Milan and live a peaceful life.

OR

(b) The Tempest is a play steeped in supernaturalism and the use of the Occult. Its Protagonist, Prospero, is a super magician who has mastered the occult and earns many skills that can manipulate, bemuse and intimidate.

The play opens with a spectacular, yet scary scene of ship wreck. It is manipulated by Prospero's skill. The travellers in the ship really believe what is happening. Ferdinand, the king's son jumps into the sea. The travellers with the help of Ariel are brought to the island separately. Alonso is under the illusion his son is dead and Ferdinand also believes his father is dead. Ferdinand is brought to meet Miranda only to fall magically in love with her. Prospero's use of Ariel, the spirit of the air is a master stroke in which he builds terror in the minds of the passengers with the terrible tempest, thunder and lightning and a fire that rages.

The second time magic is used to its full potential is in the harpy scene. A grand feast is spread before the ship wrecked sinners. They are ravished by hunger but when they are about to eat, the harpy flaps his wing to make the feast vanish into thin air. Then it starts admonishing the 'three sinners' in a harsh and intimidating manner. It says the sea has belched them into the island to be tortured worse than the state of

death. They have sinned by throwing out Prospero from the throne and thrown him and his daughter to the perilous sea. The powers of Fate have decided to punish them unless they repent. By repentance and deciding to live a pious life, they can lift sure perdition from their heads or they should submit before the fury of Fate. The sinners are thus, chastised and left to repent in the lime grove.

There are many instances of magic throughout the play. The Masque is yet another one where all supernatural elements lend their art to make it a fabulous one. The songs in the air sung mostly by Ariel give the island a magical aura, turning it into a perfect setting for the magical success of the play.

4. (i) In the short story "*The Singing Lesson*" by Katherine Mansfield, the Headmistress' summons to Miss Meadows eventually brings the latter out from cold despair to a realm of hope, love and joy.

The story is set in a girls' school, where Miss Meadows is a music teacher. Miss Meadows is described as a lonely, unhappy woman who is living a life of quiet desperation. She has no friends, no family, and no sense of purpose or meaning in her life. Her only solace is in her music, which she uses as a means of escape from the world. However, when the Headmistress summons Miss Meadows to her office, she is forced to confront her despair and face the reality of her situation. The Headmistress informs Miss Meadows that she has been requested to perform at a concert, which at first fills her with dread and anxiety. However, as the Headmistress encourages her and offers her support, Miss Meadows begins to feel a glimmer of hope. As the story progresses, Miss Meadows begins to rehearse for the concert and discovers a new sense of purpose and joy in her music. She becomes more confident and expressive, and begins to enjoy the process of making music with her students. Through the Headmistress' encouragement and support, Miss Meadows is able to move from a place of cold despair to a realm of hope, love, and joy. She discovers that there is still meaning and purpose to be found in her life, and that she can use her music to connect with others and make a positive impact on the world.

Overall, "*The Singing Lesson*" is a story about the transformative power of human connection and the potential for hope and joy in even the most despairing of situations. The Headmistress serves as a catalyst for Miss Meadows' transformation, providing the support and encouragement she needs to rediscover her passion for music and find a sense of purpose in her life.

- (ii) In the short story "*The Sound Machine*" by Roald Dahl, Klausner is obsessed with sound and uses his invention, the sound machine, to hear the sounds of plants and animals that are normally inaudible to the human ear. There are several instances in the story that demonstrate Klausner's obsession with sound. For example:

- Klausner spends all his time tinkering with his sound machine, even neglecting his job and family. When his wife complains that he is ignoring her, Klausner tells her that he is "busy with more important things."
- Klausner is excited when he hears the sound of a tree being cut down with his sound machine, exclaiming that it is "wonderful." He is so focused on the sounds that he is hearing that he doesn't seem to consider the implications of what he is doing.
- When Dr. Scott comes to visit him, Klausner is eager to show off his sound machine and plays the sounds of various plants and animals for him. He is dismissive of Dr. Scott's suggestion that his invention is dangerous, saying that he is "doing something important" and that the sounds he is hearing are "fascinating."
- Klausner becomes increasingly obsessed with the sounds he is hearing, and starts to imagine that the plants and animals are communicating with each other in a way that humans cannot understand. He becomes so obsessed that he even considers using his sound machine to listen in on human conversations.

Overall, the story portrays Klausner as a man who is so obsessed with sound that he is willing to sacrifice everything else in his life to pursue his invention. His obsession blinds him to the potential dangers of what he is doing, and ultimately leads to his downfall.

- (iii) (a) "*To Build a Fire*" is a short story by Jack London that tells the story of an unnamed man who is traveling through the Yukon wilderness with a dog as his companion. The man, who is a newcomer to the area, sets out on a journey to a mining camp despite the harsh winter conditions and warnings from others that it is too dangerous to travel alone. Throughout the story, the man's lack of imagination and preparedness becomes his downfall, while the dog's primitive instincts enable it to survive.

The man's lack of imagination is evident from the beginning of the story when he underestimates the severity of the weather conditions. Despite the fact that the temperature is fifty degrees below zero and the sun is not visible, the man believes that he can make it to the camp before dark. He ignores the advice of an old-timer at Sulphur Creek who warns him that "no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below." The man dismisses the old-timer's advice as "womanish" and continues on his journey. As the man travels, he becomes increasingly reckless and fails to anticipate the dangers that lie ahead. When he falls through the ice into a creek, he ignores the fact that his feet are wet and fails to build a fire to dry himself. He also fails to consider the possibility that his matches might become wet and that he may not be able to start a fire. When his hands become numb and he loses the dexterity to start a fire, he begins to panic and realizes that he is going to die.

In contrast, the dog in the story relies on its primitive instincts to survive. The dog is portrayed as a natural creature that is in tune with its surroundings. It is able to sense the danger posed by the harsh winter conditions and instinctively knows how to adapt. The dog is able to find shelter, conserve its energy, and avoid dangerous situations. For example, when the man falls through the ice into the creek, the dog knows that it is too dangerous to help him and stays away. When the man begins to panic and tries to kill the dog for its warmth, the dog instinctively knows that it is in danger and avoids the man.

In conclusion, the man's lack of imagination and preparedness is what ultimately leads to his paralyzing death. He fails to anticipate the dangers of the harsh winter conditions and underestimates the importance of being properly prepared. In contrast, the dog's primitive instincts and natural awareness of its surroundings enable it to survive. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of being properly prepared and the dangers of underestimating nature.

OR

- (b) V.S. Naipaul's short story "*B. Wordsworth*" explores the themes of friendship and the emotional connection that can exist between individuals regardless of their age. The story follows the friendship between the protagonist, an unnamed 11-year-old boy, and B. Wordsworth, a 55-year-old man who is a book keeper in a warehouse.

At the beginning of the story, the boy is initially hesitant to speak with Wordsworth due to his age and appearance. However, as they begin to converse, the boy is drawn to Wordsworth's knowledge and intellectual curiosity. Wordsworth, in turn, is impressed with the boy's intelligence and is moved by his youthful innocence and enthusiasm. Through their conversations, the two characters develop a close emotional bond that transcends their age difference. Wordsworth becomes a mentor to the boy, guiding him in his intellectual development and teaching him about the world around him. The boy, in turn, becomes a source of inspiration for Wordsworth, who finds joy in seeing the world through the boy's eyes. Their friendship is ultimately tested when the boy's mother becomes concerned about the nature of their relationship and forbids him from seeing Wordsworth. The boy is devastated by the loss of his friend, and Wordsworth is left feeling alone and isolated. The emotional connection that they had developed is strong enough, however, that they are able to reconnect years later when the boy, now a young man, visits Wordsworth in his old age.

The story of "*B. Wordsworth*" demonstrates that friendship is not solely based on age, but rather on the emotional connection that can exist between individuals. Despite their significant age difference, the boy and Wordsworth are able to form a deep connection through their shared interests and intellectual curiosity. Their relationship shows that friendships can form in unexpected ways and that age is not a barrier to emotional connection.

In conclusion, the story "*B. Wordsworth*" provides an example of how friendship can be based on emotional connection rather than age. The relationship between the boy and Wordsworth shows that friendships can develop based on shared interests, experiences, and intellectual curiosity, and that these connections can persist even when faced with obstacles such as societal expectations.

5. (i) In his poem "*Dover Beach*," Matthew Arnold explores the theme of the decline of religious faith and the impact that this decline has on society. The poem uses the metaphor of the "Sea of Faith" to describe the gradual receding of religious faith in modern society, and the poem's speaker expresses his concern about the consequences of this loss of faith.

The poem begins with a description of the Dover Beach at night time, where the "Sea of Faith" is "retreating" and the "grating roar" of the waves on the shore symbolizes the dwindling of religious faith. The speaker compares the receding sea to the loss of faith in the world, and suggests that this retreat is occurring throughout modern society.

The speaker then reflects on the past, describing how the "Sea of Faith" was once full and encompassing, and how people were once able to find solace and comfort in their religious beliefs. He mourns the loss of this faith, comparing it to the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the waves on the beach.

The speaker's concern about the loss of faith is revealed in his discussion of the present, where he observes that the world is a "darkling plain" without the guidance and comfort of religion. He suggests that the loss of faith has left people feeling lost and alone, and that the absence of religion has led to a general sense of despair and disillusionment.

Finally, the speaker ends the poem with a call to action, urging his beloved to "be true" to him and to remain steadfast in their love, despite the uncertainty and turmoil of the world around them. This call to action suggests that the only way to combat the loss of faith is through the steadfastness of personal relationships and a commitment to human connection.

In conclusion, "*Dover Beach*" uses the metaphor of the "Sea of Faith" to symbolize the gradual loss of religious faith in modern society. The speaker mourns this loss of faith, and suggests that it has led to a general sense of

despair and disillusionment. However, the poem ends with a call to action, urging readers to remain steadfast in their personal relationships and to find hope and solace in the connections they make with others.

- (ii) In "The Darkling Thrush," Thomas Hardy's encounter with the aged thrush serves as a catalyst for a shift in his emotions from amazement to introspection. The poem is set on a bleak winter day, and the speaker initially feels despondent and despairing as he surveys the dismal landscape. However, his encounter with the thrush, which seems to defy the harshness of winter, leads him to reflect on the power of nature and the human spirit. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker describes a "spectre-gray" winter landscape that fills him with a sense of "desolate" and "decaying" hopelessness. The desolation of the landscape seems to mirror the speaker's own feelings of despair and uncertainty. However, as the speaker listens to the song of the thrush, he is struck by the bird's ability to sing in the face of the bleakness around it. The song is a "full-hearted" burst of joy, and the speaker is moved by the thrush's ability to find hope and beauty in the midst of despair.

As the speaker reflects on the thrush's song, he begins to see his own situation in a new light. He realizes that the bird's song is a symbol of hope and resilience, and that the power of nature can help to lift the human spirit even in the darkest of times. The speaker becomes introspective, and he begins to contemplate the meaning of his own existence. He realizes that the world is a complex and mysterious place, and that the beauty of the natural world is a source of comfort and inspiration.

In the final stanza of the poem, the speaker reflects on the power of the thrush's song to inspire him to see the world in a new way. He realizes that the bird's song is a symbol of the resilience of the human spirit, and that it offers hope and comfort in the midst of despair. He ends the poem with a sense of renewed hope and wonder, suggesting that the encounter with the thrush has allowed him to see the world in a new light.

In conclusion, "The Darkling Thrush" traces the speaker's encounter with an aged thrush as a passage from amazement to introspection. The bird's song inspires the speaker to reflect on the power of nature and the resilience of the human spirit, and to see the world in a new light. The encounter with the thrush serves as a reminder that even in the darkest of times, there is beauty and hope to be found in the natural world.

- (iii) (a) In Robert Frost's poem "Birches," the poet reflects on the act of swinging on birch trees and the differences between the experience of swinging in childhood and in adulthood. The poem explores the idea of imagination and escapism, and how the act of swinging on birches can serve as a form of release from the pressures of the world. In the poem, the speaker describes how he once climbed to the top of a birch tree and bent it down to the ground, only to let it snap back up and "fill with snow" the branches around him. The speaker suggests that this act of swinging on the birch tree is a form of play and escapism, a way to momentarily escape from the responsibilities and pressures of the world.

However, the speaker goes on to reflect on how the experience of swinging on birch trees is different in adulthood than it is in childhood. He suggests that as an adult, he is more aware of the dangers and consequences of the world around him, and that he is no longer able to fully lose himself in the act of swinging on birches. He says:

*"So was I once myself a swinger of birches.  
And so I dream of going back to be,  
It's when I'm weary of considerations,  
And life is too much like a pathless wood"*

Here, the speaker suggests that as an adult, he is often weighed down by the stresses and difficulties of life, and that the act of swinging on birch tree offers a way to temporarily escape from those pressures. However, the speaker is also aware that he can never fully recapture the sense of freedom and innocence that he felt as a child. The act of swinging on birch trees is now tinged with a sense of nostalgia and longing for a simpler time.

In conclusion, in "Birches," the act of swinging on birch trees represents a form of escapism and release from the pressures of the world. The speaker reflects on the differences between the experience of swinging in childhood and in adulthood, suggesting that as an adult, he is more aware of the dangers and consequences of the world, and that the act of swinging on birches is now tinged with nostalgia and longing for a simpler time.

OR

- (b) In the poem "Crossing the Bar" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, the poet portrays a deep affirmation and faith in God, particularly in the context of death and the afterlife. The poem is divided into four stanzas, each of which explores the theme of the speaker's impending death and his faith in God. The first stanza describes the setting sun and the incoming tide, using imagery of nature to suggest that the end of life is approaching, just as the tide must inevitably cover the sand. The speaker is preparing to cross a sandbar, a metaphor for the threshold between life and death.

In the second stanza, the speaker expresses his faith in God as he crosses the bar, suggesting that he is putting his life in God's hands: "And may there be no sadness of farewell, / When I embark; / For though

from out our bourne of time and place / The flood may bear me far, / I hope to see my Pilot face to face / When I have crost the bar."

The third stanza continues this theme of faith, as the speaker expresses his belief that God will guide him through the darkness and unknown of death: "Twilight and evening bell, / And after that the dark! / And may there be no sadness of farewell, / When I embark."

Finally, in the fourth stanza, the speaker suggests that his crossing of the bar is not an end, but rather a continuation of his journey with God: "But such a tide as moving seems asleep, / Too full for sound and foam, / When that which drew from out the boundless deep / Turns again home. / Twilight and evening bell, / And after that the dark! / And may there be no sadness of farewell, / When I embark; / For tho' from out our bourne of time and place / The flood may bear me far, / I hope to see my pilot face to face / When I have cross the bar."

Overall, "*Crossing the Bar*" portrays the poet's deep affirmation and faith in God by using natural imagery to suggest the inevitability of death and the unknown beyond, and by expressing the speaker's belief that God will guide him through the darkness and into a new phase of his journey. The poem suggests a sense of peace and acceptance, rooted in a strong belief in the power and guidance of God.

■■

