

## **Aunt Jennifer's Tigers Previous Year Questions**

**(with model answers)**

**Q1. How does the use of vivid imagery by Adrienne Rich in "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" and by Kamala Das in "My Mother at Sixty-six" contribute to the overall themes of their respective poems? [CBSE 2024]**

**Ans.** Both the poems have visual imagery which contributes to the theme of the poem. In Aunt Jennifer's Tigers, the tigers prance... They do not fear the men; this shows the aunt's desire of freedom. They pace in sleek chivalry indicates her desire to live fearlessly. Aunt's finger flutter when she pulls the needle shows her fear of the husband who may question her hobby. The wedding ring on her hand sits heavily which indicates the pressure of marital obligations. Thus, the entire poem involves visual depictions.

In My mother at sixty-six, the mother's face is ashen, like a corpse which makes the reader visualize a dull, ash coloured face which resembles a dead body. Then, the poet sees young trees outside the car which seem to be running, young children running and playing in the garden. These scenes are lively and energetic and she puts them in opposition to the scene inside the car, the corpse like old mother sitting beside her. Later, the mother's face is dull, like the winter moon which can again be visualised by the reader. Thus, she has also used visual imagery to show her feelings of fear of losing her mother to death.

**Q2. Create a comprehensive comparison of the themes present in 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' and My Mother at Sixty-six'. Specifically discuss the different ways each poem addresses the concept of struggle and resilience. [CBSE 2024]**

**Ans.** The poem Aunt Jennifer's Tigers is based on the theme of a woman's desire of living a free life. It highlights the bindings of married life and fear of her husband which will accompany her even after death. The other poem 'My Mother at Sixty-six' conveys the message of fear and separation. It shows a woman's helplessness towards her old ailing mother when she has to leave her and go. The woman hides her feeling from the mother with a false smile.

In both the poems we see a married woman's struggles. Aunt Jennifer is subjected to agony at the hands of her husband and the marital obligations pressurize her so much that while doing her favourite hobby, her fingers flutter due to his fear. She depicts her inner feeling of fearlessness and boldness through the pattern that she is making. Thus, her desire is not dead and we see that she is resilient and has the desire to bounce back. The poet Kamala Das, in 'My mother at sixty-six' is also struggling with the fear of losing her old mother to death. Still, she overcomes the fear and smiles towards the mother. She hopes to see her mother again and on this positive note, she departs.

Thus, both the poems show the struggle and also, show their inner strength which supports them in overcoming the sadness and being happy.

**Q3. Why did Aunt Jennifer create tigers so different from her own character? [CBSE 2023]**

**Ans.** Aunt Jennifer created tigers so different from her own character because the tigers represented the freedom and strength she longed for but could not attain in her own oppressed and submissive life. The tigers symbolized her unfulfilled desires for power and independence.

**Q4. Explain the irony at the end of the poem, 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers'. [CBSE 2022]**

**Ans.** Ironically, while Aunt Jennifer will continue to be terrified even after she passes away, her creatures, the tigers, will continue to pace and dance around freely. Aunt Jennifer would not be freed from her oppression even after her death. The uncle's wedding band would continue to 'ring' her fingers. But the tigers she created will always be brave and courageous.

**Q5. Describe the tigers created by Aunt Jennifer. [CBSE 2020]**

**Ans.** The tigers created by Aunt Jennifer are bright in colour. They are jumping around in the forest. They are not afraid of the hunters who are standing under the tree.

**Q6. How do symbols in the poem, 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' help us understand her plight? [CBSE 2019]**

**Ans.** The poet uses various symbols to show Aunt Jennifer's plight. Firstly the tigers that she is embroidering are a symbol of fearlessness. The tigers show her desire to live freely. The wedding ring that sits heavily on her hand is a symbol of the marital obligations which are a constant pressure on her mind. Her activity of doing embroidery is a woman's hobby which indicates her desire to live away from her dominating husband.

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