

IT WAS A LONG AGO

- ELEONOR FARJEON

- Value: "Even the smallest act of kindness can be remembered and cherished for a lifetime."

1. What is the poet's 'oldest' memory?

ANS: The poet's oldest memory was of an old woman, wrapped in a red shawl, sitting behind a house with a gray cat on her lap. She offered the poet some bilberries and cream.

2. What are the words of the old woman that the poet remembers? What do they show about her?

ANS: The old woman asked the poet if she would like some bilberries and cream. These are the words that the poet remembers. It shows that the old woman was a really kind and compassionate woman who loved children.

3. How does the poet remember the road? Metaphor is a device where an object in a poem, or its subject, is described as being the same as another, otherwise unrelated, object. Do you think that the road is being compared to something else? (Hint: It is long and dusty.)

ANS: The poet remembers the road as long and dusty. I think the road is being compared to the life left in front of the child. Long and dusty refers to the arduous task of growing up and living in the world with all its struggles and problems.

4. Why do you think the poet uses a simple conversational style of writing in the poem?

Ans: The poet uses a simple conversational style of writing in the poem because the memory being shared here is of a three-year-old girl. Since children have a very simple outlook towards life, the poet uses this style of writing.

5. Then I grew up, you see.

What is the poet's tone here? Why do you think so?

Ans: I think the poet has a melancholic tone here. I think so because growing up is a difficult journey. As we grow up, the difficulties in our lives increase.

6. Pick out the words/phrases that are repeated. Why does the poet use this literary device?

Ans: The words/phrases that are repeated are – i) 'It was long ago...' ii) 'So long ago' I think the poet repeats these phrases to emphasize that the memory is very old. The literary device of repetition adds a poetic touch to the retelling of the memory.

7. Rhetorical questions are questions that are asked to make a point rather than to get an answer. Pick out the rhetorical question in the poem. Why do you think the speaker asks this question?

Ans: The rhetorical question the poet asks is – "I'll tell you, shall I, something I remember?" The poet wants to share her childhood memory with the readers, and children tend to do what they want. So, the poet's use of a rhetorical question is a great opening for a poem that is narrating a childhood experience. She is not seeking permission here, she just wants to share her thoughts.

8. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem, "It was Long Ago"?

Ans: The rhyme scheme of the poem, "It was Long Ago" is abc.

9. Name the poetic devices used in the line,
'Humming under a tree'

'While she hummed, and the cat purred'.

Ans: The device used in the above lines of the poem, 'It was Long Ago' is Onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeia is a **figure of speech** that uses words to describe the sounds made by all living things including people, animals, birds and all inanimate objects.