

St. Andrews Scots Sr. Sec. School

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Session: 2026-2027 Notes

Class : XI

Subject : English

Chapter- The Laburnum Top

Answer the following questions

Q1. How does the goldfinch change the atmosphere of the tree?

Ans: At the beginning of the poem the laburnum tree was quiet and motionless because it was an autumn afternoon. The arrival of the goldfinch transforms the silent tree into a lively and energetic place. The tree becomes full of movement, noise and excitement as she enters the branches to feed her younger ones. Her presence brings life to the tree, but when she flies away, it returns to its earlier stillness.

Q2. What is the central idea of the poem?

Ans: The poem celebrates the beauty and vitality of the nature. It shows how the arrival of a small goldfinch brings movement, joy and life to an otherwise silent laburnum tree. The poet compares the bird to an engine because she is the source of life activity for her family. Once she flies away, the tree becomes silent again. Through this simple incident, Ted Hughes beautifully shows how even a small bird can transform its surroundings. He has shown contrast between silence and activity in nature, and the life giving power of mother's love, her nurturing role.

Q3. The arrival of the goldfinch on the laburnum top brings about the change in the poem. How do you interpret this change? Is change good or bad in life?

Ans: At the start of the poem, the top of laburnum tree in the poem is silent and still. There is hardly any activity. As the sunlight falls on it on a September afternoon. However with the arrival of the goldfinch, it suddenly becomes a place of feverish activity. The silence of the place is broken by the twittering and chirping of the chicks.

Change can be good or bad in life, depending on the situation. However, an important fact is that change is the only constant in life. So, even if a change is bad we have to accept it and move on in life.