

English-302

Lesson-6

My Grandmother's house

Summary

1. "My Grandmother's House," written by Kamala Das, is a sentimental poem. Despite the fact that it is a short poem, it has a large amount of significance. Kamala's childhood recollections with her grandma, where she felt more love and tranquility than she does today, runs throughout the poem. This poem focuses on love loss and emotional pain.
2. My Grandmother's House is a very short poem with only 16 lines. The first line of the poem tells readers about her grandmother's house, where she lived when she was a child.
3. The poem was written to honour her grandmother, with whom she spent her childhood.
4. The poet considers the times she spent with her grandma to be the greatest of her life and wishes she could relive them. She is saddened by their passing.

Important points from the text:

- Kamala Das wrote an autobiographical poem called My Grandmother's House. She recounts the terrible and pitiful state of her grandmother's house, as well as the state of her own life.
- Her grandma has passed away. She's all by herself. When she visits her old residence, she recalls her history. The house is currently in a vulnerable state.
- The poet recalls a period when she was a youngster and could enjoy love in a safe and secure environment. She contrasts this happy existence with her current position, which is devoid of affection. The speaker reflects on the past, describing a house that still exists but is distant in her mind. This was her grandmother's house, and she was adored there.
- Grandmother was the only source of happiness and warmth in that house, and when she died, the entire house fell silent. Nature entered in the shape of a snake, a symbol of danger and coldness, slithering through the books, a revealing scene, maybe significant to the speaker.
- The poet wonders if she could bring the memories of her grandmother's house to her bedroom door like a brooding dog. The poet is constantly comparing her childhood experiences with the present world of human nature. She says that earlier she lived in a house where she was honoured and loved but now she feels lost.
- Poet desires to bring these pleasant sentiments into her bedroom, where she is now residing. She wishes to have this darkness in her bedroom for the rest of her life in order to relive the memories of the past.

- Though the poet had experienced love in the past, she had lost it all in the present. She seeks affection and is willing to beg for it at the doors of strangers. She has a desire to rekindle the love.
- This contrast and comparison of then and now, past and present, generates tension inside this single-stanza poem and provides the reader with a clear image of how the speaker's circumstances have changed.
- **The message of the poem:** My grandmother's house is a poem about the poet's yearning for her grandmother's house, where she was happy and loved.
- The poem is about the poet's childhood memories.
- She shows her love towards her grandmother.
- The poem wraps within itself a sense of nostalgia and quest for love.
- Poet says that her grandmother's home was a place when she felt secure and loved but after her grandmother's death the house is frozen with silence.

Following are the main literary devices used in the poem My Grandmother's House.

1. **Simile**– It is a figure of speech that expresses a resemblance between things of similar kinds. i.e. My blood turned cold like the moon, lie behind my bedroom door like a brooding dog.
2. **Metaphor**– it is a figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not denote to suggest a similarity. i.e. to peer through blind eyes of windows

Important words from the text:

1. Despair: sad/ without hope
2. Frozen: cold
3. Brooding: to worry about something
4. Peer: to look carefully.
5. Armful: the quantity that can be contained in the arms

Evaluate yourself:

1. After the death of the poet's grandmother, what happened to the house?
2. Why is the air in grandmother's house described as frozen?
3. "The poet in the poem thinks of her past." Explain this line.
4. "The house is silent.No one lives here. Even the air doesn't seem to be moving." Explain this line in your own words
5. What do you think is the message of the poem? What is the poet conveying?

Do you know?

The poet Kamala Das was one of the most prominent feminist voices in the post-colonial era. She was born on 31st March 1934 and was a bilingual writer. She was popularly known as a poet and a short story writer. She has been labeled as the mother of modern Indian English poetry. Kamala Das

had written the poem to reminisce her childhood at her grandmother's place. She deemed those memories to be the best in her life and desired to relive them.

Extend your horizon:

“Grandparents make the world..... a little softer, a little kinder and a little warmer.”

Read the quote and write an essay describing your relationship with your grandparents.