

Question 1.

1. What are three things that cannot happen in a treeless forest according to the first stanza?
2. What image do you get from the phrase “...sun bury its feet in shadow...” and what might the poet mean by the sun’s ‘feet’?

Answer:

1. The three things that cannot happen in a treeless forest are a bird sitting on trees, insects hiding, and the sun burying its feet in the shadows.
2. The sun’s ‘feet’ symbolize its rays touching the earth. Without trees, no shadows fall, so the rays hit the ground directly. In a forest, shadows cast by trees seem to cover the sun’s feet, as if the sun is stepping into shade.

Question 2.

1. Where are the trees in the poem, and what do their roots, leaves, and twigs do?
2. What does the poet compare the branches to?

Answer:

1. The trees are trapped inside the poet’s house. Their roots work through the cracks in the veranda floor at night, leaves strain against the glass trying to break it, and twigs grow stiff from the effort.
2. The poet compares the branches to hospital patients recently discharged—cramped inside, then stumbling eagerly outside, looking half-shocked like recovered patients.

Question 3.

1. How does the poet describe the moon at the start and end of the third stanza? What causes the change?
2. What happens to the house when the trees leave?
3. Why might the poet not mention “the departure of the forest from the house” in her letters?

Answer:

1. The full moon shines bright at first, but as the trees move outside, their shadows break the moon's light like a shattered mirror, making it appear fragmented.
2. The house becomes silent as glass breaks and the tree whispers vanish.
3. The poet may not mention it because people don't care much about nature's plight. Only the poet notices the trees' struggle and beauty, while others ignore or harm nature.

Question 4.

Can you think of meanings behind the poem?

1. Does it show a conflict between humans and nature, similar to "A Tiger in the Zoo"? Are city trees used for decoration imprisoned like forest animals?
2. If trees symbolize humans (as in Adrienne Rich's poetry), what new meanings emerge?

Answer:

1. Yes, the poem highlights the conflict where humans harm nature by cutting forests and confining trees indoors, denying their freedom. Like animals in cages, trees want to break free.
2. If trees represent humans, the poem suggests people also feel trapped by modern life's limits. Despite comforts, life can cause moral decline, making us selfish and trapped. Like trees, humans yearn for freedom and connection with nature.