

4. Answer the following questions briefly

(a) What is the poetic device used when the mirror says 'I swallow'?

Answer

'I swallow' personifies the mirror. The mirror seems to say that the image on it is deep enough to swallow everything, passively. The objectivity of the mirror is significant.

(b) How does the mirror usually pass its time?

Answer

The mirror usually passes its time by constantly looking at the wall opposite to it.

(c) What disturbs the mirror's contemplation of the opposite wall?

Answer

People's faces and the darkness disturb the mirror's contemplation of the opposite wall.

(d) Why does the mirror appear to be a lake in the second stanza? What aspect of the mirror do you think is being referred to here?

Answer

The mirror appears to be lake in in the second stanza because it has also the quality of reflecting the image of what appears before it like a lake. As whatever falls on the surface of the lake is drowned into it, the mirror also swallows whatever it sees. A new dimension, depth, is being referred here.

(e) What is the woman searching for in the depths of the lake?

Answer

The woman is searching for her lost youth, charm and beauty in the depths of the lake.

(f) How does the narrator convey the fact that the woman looking at her reflection in the lake is deeply distressed?

Answer

The narrator conveys the fact that woman is deeply distressed because when she sees herself ageing in the mirror, she turns away to find her answers in the candles and the moon. She has tears in her eyes and her agitated hands express her distress.

(g) What makes the woman start crying?

Answer

The woman starts crying when she sees her own reflection in the mirror and realises that she has lost her charm, beauty and youth. She has grown old.

(h) What do you think the 'terrible fish' in the last line symbolizes? What is the poetic device used here?

Answer

The 'terrible fish' symbolises the bitter truth which puts human beings to a fatal end. The poetic device used here is a simile.

5. Read the poem silently and answer the following questions:

(a) List out the adjectives that have been used to describe the mirror. Add a few more adjectives to the list.

Answer

Adjectives used in the poem to describe the mirror:

silver, exact, honest, faithful, unmisted, unbiased, four cornered

A few more adjectives for the same are listed below:

Deep, significant, reality, bitter, fair, honest

(b) In the second stanza why has the narrator replaced the mirror with a lake? What is he/she trying to focus on?

Answer

In the second stanza, the poetess has replaced the mirror with a lake to add a new dimension to it which is depth. The lake has depth. Both the mirror and the lake have the quality of reflecting the image of what appears before them. Just as anything falls and drowns into the lake, the youth and beauty of the woman seems to have drowned in the mirror.

6. Find the various instances of personification used in this poem.

Answer

The various instances of personification used in the poem are:

I am silver and exact.

I have no preconceptions

Whatever I see, I swallow immediately;

I am not cruel, only truthful;

Now, I am a lake;

The eye of a little god;

I am important to her.

7. Read the given lines and answer the questions that follow by ticking the correct choice:

*A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.*

a. What is the woman bending over?

- i. the mirror
- ii. the lake
- iii. the opposite wall
- iv. the moon and the candles

Answer

i. the mirror

b. Why have the candles and the moon been called 'liars'?

- i. because they make people beautiful
- ii. they hide the blemishes of people with their soft light
- iii. they hide the blemishes and make people look beautiful in their soft glow
- iv. they can't talk

Answer

iii. they hide the blemishes and make people look beautiful in their soft glow

c. Why does she turn to them in spite of calling them 'liars'?

i. the reality is too harsh for her to bear

ii. she is desperately looking for someone to comfort her

iii. she wants to be told that she is still beautiful

iv. she can hide her signs of graying in their light

Answer

i. the reality is too harsh for her to bear

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8. Imagine you are the mirror. Write a speech that you would like to deliver to the humans who come to see their reflection in you. You could begin like this....

Good Morning dear humans.

I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to express my feelings and share my thoughts with you. As you know, all my life is spent in faithfully reflecting all that comes before my eyes.....

Answer

Good Morning dear humans,

I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to express my feelings and share my thoughts with you. As you know, all my life is spent in faithfully reflecting all that comes before my eyes faithfully. I have been a silent spectator of zillions of lives. My vision is very objective. I don't respond to people when they search for themselves, in

me. My passivity usually agitates them. However, I am glad to be loyal and honest to the onlookers, cruel it might seem. I don't have the power to manipulate or distort reality. That is why images on me are so significant to you.