

O where are you going? said reader to rider,
 That valley is **fatal** when **furnaces** burn,
Yonder's the **midden** whose **odours** will madden
 That gap is the grave where the fall return.
 O do you imagine, said fearer to **farer**,
 That **dusk** will delay on your path to the pass,
 Your **diligent** looking discover the lacking,
 Your footsteps feel from **granite** to grass?
 O what was that bird, said horror to hearer,
 Did you see that shape in the **twisted** trees?
 Behind you **swiftly** the figure comes softly,
 The spot on your skin is a **shocking** disease?
 Out of this house, said rider to reader,
 Yours never will, said farer to fearer,
 They're looking for you, said hearer to horror,
 As he left them there, as he left them there.

اے تم کہہ جاؤ، گھڑ سوار سے پوچھا،
 وہ وادی مہلک بن جاتی ہے جب وہاں بھٹیاں جل اٹھتی ہیں،
 ادھر دور غلاظت کے ڈھیر کی بو تمہیں پاگل کر دے گی،
 وہ گڑھا قبر ہے جہاں دراز قد لوٹ کر آتے ہیں۔
 خوفزدہ شخص نے مسافر سے کہا، ”کیا تم تصور کر سکتے ہو
 کہ منزل تک پہنچنے میں دیر ہو جائے گی اور اندھیرا ہو جائے گا،
 تمہاری تیز نظر بھی اس کی (غربت) کو محسوس کرے گی،
 تمہارے قدموں کو گھاس اور پتھروں پر چلنے میں فرق محسوس ہو گا؟
 خوفزدہ شخص نے سننے والے سے کہا، ”وہ کون سا پرندہ تھا،
 کیا تم نے وہ شکل ٹیڑھے درختوں میں دیکھی ہے؟
 جو تمہارے پیچھے چپکے سے اور تیزی سے آ رہی ہے،
 تمہارے چہرے پر نشان کسی خوفناک بیماری کو ظاہر کرتا ہے؟
 اس گھر سے نکل جاؤ، گھڑ سوار نے پڑھنے والے سے کہا،
 تمہارے (دوسے) کبھی کامیاب نہیں ہوں گے۔ مسافر نے خوفزدہ شخص سے
 کہا
 ”وہ سب تمہاری تلاش میں ہیں۔“ سننے والے نے خوفزدہ شخص سے کہا،
 جیسے ہی وہ وہاں سے چلا، وہ انہیں وہیں چھوڑ گیا۔

WORDS	URDU	SYNONYMS	WORDS	URDU	SYNONYMS
fatal	مہلک	disastrous, deadly, causing death	furnaces	آتش دان	fires, ovens, stoves
midden	کوڑے کا ڈھیر	filth, dunghill, bad smell	swiftly	تیزی سے	quickly, rapidly, speedily
odour	بو	bad smell, stink, stench	farer	مسافر	traveler, adventurer, voyager
diligent	محنتی، مستعد	careful, hardworking, meticulous	dusk	شام	evening, twilight, sunset
twisted	ٹیڑھا	knotty, curved, bending, winding	yonder	وہاں، سامنے	far, away, ahead
granite	پتھر	stone, rock	shocking	خوفناک	horrible, terrible, dreadful

EXPLANATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT**LINES 1-4**

“O where are you going?” said reader to rider, (3 Times)
“That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,
Yonder’s the midden whose odour will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.

REFERENCE:

These lines have been taken from the poem “O Where are You Going?” by W.H. Auden.

CONTEXT:

Two opposite forces are at work in the mind of a person heading towards his goal. Negative forces are fear and uncertainty while the positive are courage and determination. The poet says that the brave cannot be discouraged by destructive forces.

EXPLANATION:

The reader tries to frighten and restrain the rider from going ahead. The reader most probably refers to an individual who does not take action immediately, but sits down and does extensive research first. His excessive pondering over the possibilities that could occur makes him paranoid. In turn, he is frightened by every small event that could occur. He tells the rider that the valley through which he has decided to pass is a dangerous place. If he continues his journey, he will have to undergo severe trials and tests. He adds that the valley becomes deadly when the fire burns like furnaces. The reader stands for the escapist, and the skeptical intellectual visualizes the birth of the new world as a fatal valley. Moreover, the way is full of heaps of garbage and their stinking smell makes the travellers mad. The pass proves to be a grave from where no one can return.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The poet has used tactile image of ‘furnace’ and the olfactory image of ‘midden’ to add to the terror generated by the reader’s narrative. The metaphor of grave is used to highlight the deadly nature of the valley. Alliteration is used with fatal and furnaces, gap and grave. The rhyme scheme in these lines is ABCB.

LINES 5-8

“O do you imagine,” said fearer to farer, (1 Time)
“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?”

EXPLANATION:

The second stanza begins with the reader and rider now being addressed as fearer and farer. This change in names elaborates on their personalities and verifies that a reader does indeed refer to someone who thinks too much before performing an action, for now, he is being referred to as fearer. The rider is now being referred to as farer, once again fortifying that he is going on an actual journey. The reader, or the fearer now warns of how the fall of dusk will cause him delays in his journey as there will be no lighting in the wild. He also warns of how his comfortable lifestyle will change completely, and he will have to live with the bare minimum. 'Your footsteps change from granite to grass' is the line in the poem which makes the nature of the poem obvious. The fear of shifting from granite to grass clearly shows the fear of losing comfort and facing challenges.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The visual sense is made ineffective due to darkness while the tactile sense is evoked in the phrase 'feel from granite to grass.' Alliteration is used with dusk and dawn, path and pass. The rhyme scheme in these lines is ABCB.

LINES 9-12

*"O what was that bird," said horror to hearer,
"Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?"*

EXPLANATION:

The third stanza consists of the fearer who is now being addressed as the horror that the reader will encounter on his journey. This stanza is slightly comical as it exaggerates the fears of the horror. The horror is trying to create fear of strange things in the mind of the rider. It tells him about a bird and a ghostly form hidden in the trees. It also says that the phantom will approach him quickly and quietly. Moreover, lethal blows on the hearer's body are the indication of some fatal disease. It is natural that evil is always afraid of the success of goodness. The negative force uses all means to discourage virtue from taking any action. It makes all efforts to dissuade virtue from right path.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The words like 'bird', 'shape' and 'figure' evoke the visual sense and heighten the terror generated by the fearer. Sibilance is seen in this stanza with the words; swiftly, softly, spot, skin, shocking. The constant use of the letter 's' brings on a sense of dread for the person reading the poem and extends on the anxiety felt by the fearer. The rhyme scheme in these lines is ABCB.

LINES 13-16

“Out of this house” - said rider to reader, (3 Times)
 “Yours never will” - said farer to fearer,
 “They’re looking for you” – said hearer to horror,
 As he left them there, as he left them there.

EXPLANATION:

The last stanza is a shift from the questioning and worrying of the reader, to the reply of the rider. The rider clearly shrugs off all the worries of the reader and tells the reader to leave him alone, that the rider never will succeed in life. Right before setting off on his journey the rider states ‘they’re looking for you’, stating that these creatures he fears are looking for him. He could be trying to make the reader firmer in his anxiety as a punishment for over-thinking. ‘As he left them there’ is repeated twice, and it draws attention to its meaning and shows that this is the main lesson of the story. All the people who fear and question too much miss the chance to get ahead in life, while the rider progresses. In the last lines of the stanza, the positive psychological forces depart as the determined person does not pay any heed to their evil intentions and discouraging schemes.

CRITICAL APPRECIATION:

The poet reminds us that taking action immediately is the surest route to success. Auden condemns the ideology of sitting and worrying constantly about things we are unaware of. Auden uses the literary devices of hyperbole, sibilance, and alliteration to emphasize his points. The rhyme scheme in these lines is ABCB

TEXTBOOK EXERCISE

Q.1 What kind of feelings does the poet create in the minds of his readers? OR (1 Time)
 What types of feelings does the poet create in the minds of the reader in the poem “O Where are You Going?”? (1 Time)

Determination and Steadfastness

Ans. The poet creates feelings of fearlessness, determination and steadfastness. He breathes a spirit of courage into the minds of the readers. He creates feelings of manliness and hopefulness in the minds of his readers. The tone of the poem is dramatic and the thought has been expressed briefly.

Q.2 How do you feel after reading the poem? OR
 What do you feel after reading the poem “O Where are You Going?”? (1 Time)

Great Achievement is Possible

Ans. After reading the poem, we feel that courage, fortitude and determination lead us to our goal. A cowardly person dies every moment, while a fearless person paves his way through hardships. We learn that great achievement is possible only for those who can discard intellectualism and over-thinking, and set out with courage and determination.

Q.3 What does the title of the poem signify? OR

What does the title of the poem “O Where are You Going?” signify? OR (7 Times)
Signify the title ‘O Where are You Going?’ (1 Time)

A Feeling of Fear

Ans. The title of the poem signifies a feeling of fear, uncertainty and insecurity. The title seems to suggest that someone is calling a traveller to make him aware of the dangers on his way to his destination. The title seems to be an old way of warning someone against hazards.

Q.4 Write down the rhyming words in the poem.

Rhyming Words

Ans. The rhyming words in the poem are as follows:
 Burn, Return; Pass, Grass; Trees, Disease; Reader, Fearer. The function of rhyme in poetry is to establish structure while creating a beautiful symmetry among a poem's verses. In the ages before the written word, rhyme also assisted with memorization, a role it still performs today.

Q.5 Explain the third stanza of the poem in your own words.

Ans. See EXPLANATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONTEXT.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM PAST PAPERS

Q.1 How does the reader frighten the rider? OR (6 Times)

Describe any two dangers in the valley ‘O Where are You Going?’ OR (2 Times)

What did the reader tell the rider about the valley? OR (1 Time)

How does the reader try to frighten the rider? OR (1 Time)

What three dangers does the reader mention in the first stanza of the poem “O Where are You Going?”?

The Reader Frightens the Rider

Ans. The reader tries to frighten the rider but fails. He warns that a valley beyond is full of dangers that will burn him to death. He tells that heaps of dung and rubbish lie on his journey ahead, whose bad smell will sicken him. He says that there will come a huge gap that will prove to be the rider's grave.

Q.2 What kind of man the rider is? (3 Times)

A Determined Person

Ans. The rider is a determined person. He is brave, steadfast and resolute. He is not discouraged or demoralized by the warnings of the reader. He leaves the fearer along with his fears behind and moves on to his destination.

- Q.3** What sort of message do you get from the poem “O Where are You Going?” OR
(2 Times)
Which philosophy of life has been presented in the poem “O Where are You
Going?”? (1 Time)

Over-Thinking Causes Us to Lose

Ans. The poem predicts the fate humanity suffers due to indecisiveness and not taking action. Auden uses pondering questions to show us that over-thinking causes us to lose new opportunities and literally leave us behind. The poem presents a great philosophy of life that taking action immediately is the surest route to success.

- Q.4** How does the horror try to frighten the hearer in the poem, “O Where are You Going?”? (1 Time)

Horror Tries to Frighten Hearer

Ans. The horror tries to frighten the hearer by telling him how even birds can be deadly creatures. He tells the hearer that some weird shape in the twisted trees will frighten him to death. A ghostly figure will chase the hearer quietly and attack him unawares. He warns the hearer that a mark will appear on his skin which will be the indication of a shocking disease.

- Q.5** What sort of poem “O Where are You Going?” is? (1 Time)

Form of a Ballad

Ans. The poem is written in the form of a ballad which predicts the fate humanity suffers due to indecisiveness. It consists of four stanzas, all of which are quatrains alternating between two voices. We hear a conversation between a man of action and a man who fears going forward in life. The poem follows the ABCB rhyme scheme.

- Q.6** What does the horror say about the spot on the hearer’s skin? (1 Time)

A Horrible Disease

Ans. The horror says that the spot on the hearer’s skin will be the indication of a horrible disease. He tries to frighten the hearer in order to keep him from going to his destination. He employs different psychological tactics to scare the traveller from moving ahead.

- Q.7** What do the reader and the rider stand for? OR (1 Time)
Whom does the reader represent? (1 Time)
How will you differentiate the rider from the reader? (1 Time)

Entirely Different Characters

Ans. The reader stands for a passive and inactive person while the rider stands for an explorer and adventurer. The reader only sits and ponders imaginary hazards. He lacks courage and determination. The rider, on the other hand, wants to change the old patterns and create a new world. The two are entirely different characters.

Q.8 How does the rider shake off the superstitions and dangers? (1 Time)

On the Basis of Clarity

Ans. The rider shakes off the superstitions and dangers on the basis of his clarity of his mind. He leaves the imaginary hazards behind and moves on to his destination. The negative forces whisper into his heart about the possible dangers, but the rider discards them right away and moves ahead.

Q.9 Why does the horror remind the hearer of the shape in twisted trees? (1 Time)

To Scare the Traveller

Ans. The horror reminds the hearer of a ghostly shape in the twisted trees that will attack him. He warns the hearer that a weird shape will frighten him to death. He employs different psychological tactics to scare the traveller from moving ahead.

Q.10 How does the rider answer to the reader at the end? (1 Time)

Fears Look for the Fearer

Ans. The rider answers to the reader to get lost, saying that fears always look for the fearer. The last stanza is a shift from the questioning and worrying of the reader to the reply of the rider. The rider clearly shrugs off all the warnings of the reader and tells him to leave him alone.

Q.11 What is meant by the phrase “When furnaces burn”? (1 Time)

Scorching Heat of the Sun

Ans. The phrase “When furnaces burn” refers to the scorching heat of the sun in the valley. The reader warns the rider that the valley becomes deadly when the fire burns like furnaces. The reader stands for the escapist who visualizes the birth of the new world as a fatal valley.

MCQS FOR PRACTICE

- Who wrote the poem, “O Where are You Going?”?**
 - A.E. Housman
 - W.H. Auden
 - W.H. Davies
 - Robert Graves
- The rider is _____ by the words of the reader.**
 - discouraged
 - guided
 - unaffected
 - mised
- That valley is _____ when furnaces burn.**
 - beautiful
 - horvfu
 - deep
 - fatal
- What kind of odours are there in the valley?**
 - pleasant
 - intoxicating
 - fascinating
 - maddening
- What kind of trees are mentioned in the poem?**
 - tall
 - limbless
 - twisted
 - shady

6. The reader wants to _____ the rider.
 (a) inform (c) guide
 (b) reassure (d) discourage
7. The poem highlights the importance of _____.
 (a) riding (c) In decision
 (b) courage (d) traveling
8. That gap is the grave where _____ return.
 (a) the tall (c) riders
 (b) the cowardly (d) mountaineers
9. Where is the rider going?
 (a) to the valley (c) to a big city
 (b) to the woods (d) to an unknown destination
10. That valley is fatal when _____ burn.
 (a) trees (c) woods
 (b) furnaces (d) bushes

ANSWER KEY

1.	B	2.	C	3.	D	4.	D	5.	C	6.	D	7.	B	8.	A	9.	D	10.	B
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SYNONYMS FROM PAST PAPERS

1. That valley is fatal. (8 Times)
 (a) beautiful (b) green (c) vital (d) disastrous
 (a) deadly (b) charming (c) lush green (d) dirty
 (a) deep (b) dark (c) deadly (d) delightful
2. Your diligent looking discover the lacking. (7 Times)
 (a) lazy (b) intelligent (c) hardworking (d) quick
 (a) fast (b) careful (c) cruel (d) sad
 (a) timely (b) lazy (c) meticulous (d) easy
3. Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden. (7 Times)
 (a) filth (b) flower (c) plant (d) shrub
 (a) peak (b) dunghill (c) summit (d) ground
 (a) shrub (b) plant (c) flower (d) filth
 (a) pressure (b) effect (c) fragrance (d) bad smell

ANSWER KEY

1.	D/A/C	2.	C/B/C	3.	A/B/D/D
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MORE SYNONYMS FOR PRACTICE

1. **Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden.**
 (a) wonders (c) smells
 (b) tastes (d) scenes
2. **Oh do you imagine, said fever to farer,**
 (a) traveller (c) teacher
 (b) priest (d) shopkeeper
3. **What's that shape in the twisted trees?**
 (a) knotty (c) fair
 (b) thin (d) boughless
4. **The spot on your skin is a shocking disease.**
 (a) slight (c) minor
 (b) pleasing (d) horrible
5. **Your footsteps feel from granite to grass.**
 (a) bud (c) bloom
 (b) fruit (d) stone
6. **“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,**
 (a) mist (c) dust storm
 (b) frost (d) nightfall
7. **“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,**
 (a) linger (c) prompt
 (b) quicken (d) spoil
8. **Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden,**
 (a) near (c) here
 (b) beyond (d) across
9. **Your diligent looking discover the lacking.**
 (a) near (c) missing
 (b) difference (d) abundance
10. **The valley is fatal when furnaces burn.**
 (a) ovens (c) weeds
 (b) trunks (d) twigs

ANSWER KEY

1.	C	2.	A	3.	A	4.	D	5.	D	6.	D	7.	A	8.	B	9.	C	10.	A
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