

Chapter Review

- "The Ball Poem" is by John Berryman. It describes a little boy who loses his ball into the harbour.
- The boy's ball bounces away and falls into the water. He stands staring at it, and the poet thinks about what he feels.
- The poet says that the ball is just a ball, but the boy's loss is real. He has lost a part of his childhood memories.
- The poet decides not to console him by offering money for a new ball. A new ball would not replace the memory.
- The boy is learning his first lesson in loss and responsibility in a world of possessions. He must understand that things can be lost, and life goes on.
- The poet says the boy must stand up and move ahead. Learning to bear loss is part of growing up.

Key Terms

Harbour – A place where ships stop and rest.

Intrude – To enter where one is not wanted.

Possessions – Things that one owns.

Responsibility – Duty to care for something.

Grief – Deep sorrow.

Consolation – Comfort in sorrow.

Loss – Not having something any more.

Maturity – Being grown-up in thinking.

Diagrams / Flowcharts

The Boy's Experience

Ball bounces into the harbour



Boy stares at the water in grief



Poet decides not to intrude



Boy realises loss is part of life



He learns responsibility and moves on

Boy vs Poet

The Boy

- Sad and helpless
- Grieves for memories
- Learns a first lesson

The Poet

- Observes with sympathy
- Does not offer money
- Wants him to learn on his own

About the Poet

- John Berryman (1914-1972) was an American poet who often wrote about loss and suffering.

Poetic Devices

- Imagery: the ball bouncing into the harbour and the boy staring at the water.
- Metaphor: 'in the world of possessions' means the world of material things.
- Repetition: 'money is external' and the idea of loss.
- Free flowing sentences show the thinking of the poet.

Theme

- Loss is part of life, and we must learn from it. True loss is that of memories, not things.
- Learning by experience is better than being rescued by others.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 Why does the poet say "I would not intrude on him"? Why not offer money for another ball?

Ans. He wants the boy to learn from the experience of loss, that loss is an important part of life. Money would make the lesson worthless and would not teach him responsibility.

Q.2 Has the boy had the ball for a long time? Is it linked with the memories of days when he played with it?

Ans. Yes. When the ball fell into the water, all his happy childhood memories flashed before him. He realised that those moments would never come back, though he can buy a new ball.

Q.3 What does "in the world of possessions" mean?

Ans. It means the world made of material things like land, property and money. The loss of the ball is small, but it gives the boy the sense of loss.

Q.4 Do you think the boy lost anything earlier?

Ans. No. The words 'he senses first responsibility in a world of possessions' show that this is his first experience of loss.

Q.5 What is the boy learning from the loss of the ball?

Ans. He is learning that some things are lost forever and cannot be brought back. He feels grief, learns responsibility and learns to stand up and move on.

Q.6 Have you ever lost something you liked very much? How did you get over it?

Ans. Sample: I lost my pet dog in an accident. I was heartbroken. With time and the love of my family, I recovered, but I still miss him and remember him with love.

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 Why does the poet not console the boy? (3-4 lines)

Ans. The poet knows that real consolation is not buying another ball. The boy must go through the grief and learn that loss is a part of life. This builds maturity.

Q.2 Reference to context: "He senses first responsibility in a world of possessions." Explain.

Ans. The boy realises for the first time that things we own can be lost, and that we must take care of them. It is his first lesson in responsibility.

Q.3 Value-based: What does the poem teach us about loss?

Ans. We should accept loss with courage, learn from it, and move ahead in life. Memories are more valuable than things.