

THE MOTHER BIRD

Understanding the Poem

1. What does twilight mean?

Ans. Twilight means a soft light--not too bright--especially at the hours between afternoon and evening.

2. Why does the speaker mention 'green twilight' in the poem?

Ans Since the speaker saw the bird through a hedge, he must have seen her through light and shadows, which would look like twilight. Green twilight refers to this soft light, which might have looked almost green because of the green leaves of the hedge.

3. Which other words has the speaker used to describe the bird's eyes in the poem?

Ans The speaker's eyes also 'spied' (the bird). The bird's eyes seemed to be "beseeching" to the speaker.

4. Why has the speaker used the above words to describe what his and the bird's eyes were doing?

Ans The speaker says that he spied the bird because he saw the bird through hedges and leaves, as if the bird had been hidden. He says that the bird's eyes were "beseeching" him because he felt that the bird, guarding her nest, was requesting him with her eyes to not disturb or harm her in any way.

5. Why did the speaker think that the bird to be both meek and brave?

Ans The speaker thought that the bird was meek because it was so small compared to him, a human being, and because she was looking after her nest alone. At the same time, he thought that the bird was brave because she was guarding her nest all by herself, and she did not fly away even when she saw the human being.

6. What was the call of the bird like? What was it not like?

Ans. The call of the bird was a sharp note- like a desperate, fierce and vivid cry that seemed to express both tears and happiness, courage and hopelessness. It was like a passionate note of victory. It was not like the chirp of sparrows at dawn or the musical trill of birds heard in the evening.

7. Why did the speaker feel 'like a fool afraid'?

Ans. The speaker felt like a fool afraid because he felt foolish in front of the brave and beautiful little mother bird. He did not know what to do, how to act. And when he saw her looking at him with pleading eyes and heard her sharp cry, he moved away, as if he was afraid of that small and lonely bird.

8. Why does he describe his movement as 'sneaking off'?

Ans. The speaker moved away quietly because he did not want to scare the bird. He was afraid of disturbing her, so in a way it seemed like he was afraid of her- as if he had come into what was the bird's territory and had to leave quickly and quietly because he was not supposed to be there. That is why he describes his movement as sneaking