

THE BALL POEM

STUDY-NOTE

- The poet John Berryman through his poem, 'The ball poem' has described the reality of life which everyone has to face one day. He has touched the topic of how to stand up against the miseries and sorrows of life.
- It is about a little boy, who in his young life, for the first time, is learning what it is like to experience grief after the loss of a much-beloved possession which is his ball here.
- Maybe for us, the loss of a ball is of minor consequence. Our natural reaction may be that still there are many more balls. So, need not worry. But to a little boy, this is something different. The poet says that he could console him that he may get new balls or he could also give him some money to buy another ball.
- But he stops himself from doing so because he thinks that the money may bring a new ball but will not bring the memories and feelings attached to the lost ball.
- He further says that the time has come for the boy to learn his responsibilities. Here the poet wants to say that now the boy will learn the toughest lesson of life. The lesson of accepting the harsh realities of life that one day we will lose our loved ones and our loved things.

THEMES

Changing your Tomorrow ▲

- This poem can be interpreted both literally and metaphorically. If taken literally, it is a soulful picture of little boys growing up and learning to deal with the loss of the first thing he has ever held dear.
- If taken metaphorically, it is the story of mankind learning to deal with the loss of their loved ones. The ball is a metaphor for everything that we think is irreplaceable in our lives.
- It is obvious that anything that is irreplaceable is very valuable to us, and it is our responsibility to take care of those things. People taking away one's ball or one's ball getting lost is a metaphor for death.
- What is most precious to us is a person whom we love dearly. Hence, we always try to take care of them. But sooner or later, every man must die, for man is a mortal creature.

There is nothing we can do to stop this process, and hence it is something we must learn to deal with.

- Loss of a loved one can spell a period of intense grief and depression for some of us. However, just like the little boy is brought back to his senses by the sound of the whistle, we must overcome our grief and keep living. The poet's message is that life goes on despite the death of our loved ones.

