

English

Today, I'd like you to complete this reading comprehension in your home learning book (remember to read it twice and, if you are able to print it out, underline or circle key points that might help you). Once you have completed it as fully as you can the answers are at the bottom so you can see how you did - good luck!

My Longest Journey

Winter's greeting, cheeks slapped red by the first morning's chill,
Throats on fire, plumes erupting with every breath,
Faces hidden, friends like highwaymen in hoods and scarves,
Desperate dances; feet stamp and hands clap their reluctant beats.

Colour retreats, once happy gardens wither in silent submission,
Shivering trees, branches stripped bare by leaf-greedy storms,
Gatling-gun clouds, raindrops shower like bouncing bullets,
Vampire skies, draining daylight into shadows and darkness.

Sledges poised, dreams of hilltops brushed cotton-wool white,
Crunching footsteps, forging giddy pathways through fresh snow,
Carrot-nosed sentries, standing proud in every garden,
Streets at war, glove-tightened grenades explode with laughter.

Wasted weekends, reluctant dog walks and slow soggy Sundays,
Countdown calendar, striking days like a gloomy prisoner,
Reluctant traveller, wishing the long journey would finally end,
Please give me a year of spring and summer. Winter is not my friend!

Questions

1. In verse 1, how are the **plumes** made?

2. Explain what has happened to the colourful gardens in verse 2.

3. In verse 3, are the sledges still or moving? Explain how you know.

4. In verse 4, which word shows that the poet does not want to go on walks?

5. Does the poet like or dislike winter? Find three pieces of evidence to back up your opinion.

Answers

1. In verse 1, how are the **plumes** made?
The plumes (like smoke) are the warm breath of the person being exhaled in the cold air.
2. Explain what has happened to the colourful gardens in verse 2.
The flowers and leaves have disappeared for the winter (as they do every year). The days are getting shorter meaning there is less daylight and so the garden appears to be darker.
3. In verse 3, are the sledges still or moving? Explain how you know.
The word 'poised' means ready to go so the sledges are not moving.
4. In verse 4, which word shows that the poet does not want to go on walks?
reluctant
5. Does the poet like or dislike winter? Find three pieces of evidence to back up your opinion.
The poet dislikes winter. Accept any three of the following as evidence: cheeks slapped, throats on fire, desperate dances, once happy gardens, mention of guns, vampire skies, wasted weekends, reluctant walks, soggy Sundays, gloomy prisoner, wishing the journey would finally end, winter is not my friend!