

BALIKA VIDYAPEETH LAKHISARAI

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CLASS – X SUBJECT – English (First Flight)

Lesson – The Ball poem

Study Materials

The Ball Poem

Introduction to the lesson

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.

The Ball Poem Summary

The poet is talking about a little boy who has lost his ball. He was playing with his ball. The ball skipped from his hand and went into the nearby water body. The poet says that this sight of the boy losing his favorite ball made him think about the boy and his reaction to this situation. He further says that the boy was helplessly looking into the water where his ball had gone. He was sad and was trembling with fear. He got so immersed in his sorrow that he kept standing near the harbour for a very long time and kept on looking for his ball. 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.

Read the following stanza and answer the questions that follow:

What is the boy now, who has lost his ball,
What, what is he to do? I saw it go
Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then
Merrily over — there it is in the water!

Questions :

- (a) What becomes peculiar of the boy who has lost his ball?
- (b) What did the poet see?
- (c) Where did the ball land finally?
- (d) What kind of a world is it?
- (e) Name the poem and the poet.