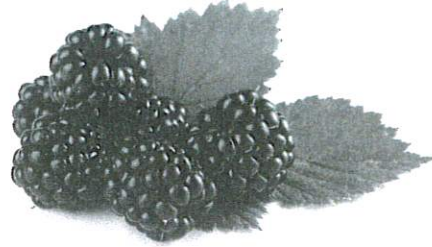


# The harvest

These questions will help you practise:

- ★ summarising main ideas
- ★ identifying and explaining how language choices enhance meaning
- ★ identifying how narrative content contributes to meaning as a whole
- ★ giving the meaning of words in context
- ★ making comparisons.

Late August, given heavy rain and sun  
 For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.  
 At first, just one, a glossy purple **clot**  
 Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.  
 You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet  
 Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it  
 Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for  
 Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger  
 Sent us out with milk-cans, pea-tins, jam-pots  
 Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.  
 Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills  
 We trekked and picked until the cans were full,  
 Until the tinkling bottom had been covered  
 With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned  
 Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered  
 With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.



We hoarded the fresh berries in the **byre**.  
 But when the bath was filled we found a fur,  
 A rat-grey fungus, **glutting** on our cache.  
 The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush  
 The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.  
 I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair  
 That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.  
 Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Seamus Heaney



## Glossary

- **clot** mass or lump
- **byre** cowshed
- **glutting** eating up greedily

1 Write a suitable alternative title for this poem.

\_\_\_\_\_

1

(1 mark)

2 a) In the first verse, what does the writer compare the flesh of the blackberries to?

\_\_\_\_\_

2a

(1 mark)

b) Explain how this is effective.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2b

(1 mark)

3 This poem is about a memory from the writer's childhood.

Give **two** features to support this.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3

(2 marks)

4 *A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.*

What does the word *cache* mean in this sentence?

\_\_\_\_\_

4

(1 mark)

5 Explain how the writer builds a picture of the setting.

Refer fully to the text in your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5

(3 marks)

6 How is the quality of the blackberries different at the start of the poem compared to the end of the poem?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6

(2 marks)

/ 11

Total for  
this text