**The Lesson: Questions**

1. What connotations are there for the word “bald” in the first line?
2. Explain the phrase “Splintered at once in tears” and also the effect of the word choice “splintered”?
3. If grief did not cause the speaker to cry, what did?
4. a) Why was the speaker ashamed for not grieving?
5. Could there be a reason for not grieving if you put yourself in the speaker’s environment/situation?
6. When the speaker says “I was a month past ten when I learnt this” (line 9), what do you suppose he learned and how does this link to growing up?
7. What tone(s) of voice can be suggested by the phrase “when my grief came in” (line 11)?
8. a) What is the speaker really craving for when he enters the school assembly?

b) Why do you think he craves this?

c) What evidence from the text suggests that he might crave this?

1. a) What comparisons can you make between the goldfish and the speaker in the lines “Some goldfish in a bowl quietly sculled/ Around their shining prison on its shelf.” (lines 12-13)?

b) Are the goldfish symbolic? If they are, what are they symbolic of do you think?

1. Who are the “They” in line 14 and what are they “indifferent” towards?
2. Explain the connection of the speaker’s pride to the goldfish that “flashed a sudden fin” (line 16)?
3. The word “grief” is personified in the poem. Explain the effects.