

11th Standard –English

Hornbill-A Photograph Summary

The photograph pasted on the cardboard shows two girl cousins Betty and Dolly who went paddling in the sea with the poetess mother. Each of them was holding one of the hands of the poet's mother, who was a big girl of some twelve year or so at that time. Her uncle had a camera. All three stood still facing the camera. They pushed their hair aside to smile. Thus the photograph presents three smiling faces. The face of the poet's mother is a sweet one. It was of a time before she was born. Their feet, which were being washed by sea water for a very short time, have been photographed along with the sea, which appears to have changed less. The poet thus indirectly hints that her mother's face has changed over the years.

After a lapse of time, say some twenty or thirty years later, the poet's mother would laugh at the snapshot. She would refer to the photograph and recollect how her cousins Betty and Dolly had dressed themselves for the beach when they went on a sea holiday. She laughs as she sees the scanty dress. This sea holiday was an event of her past. Her laughter is real and pleasant for the poet. It is a precious memory for her. Both—her holiday and her laughter are amusing in an ironic way as they are linked with her loss which requires a forced state of freedom from pain.

Now the poet's mother is dead for nearly as many years as that girl in the picture lived. The poet feels at a loss of words to comment on this event—her death. It is a solemn moment and its silence makes her silent.