

# ENGLISH

## CHAPTER 2: THE LABURNUM TOP



## THE LABURNUM TOP

~Summary~

-by Ted Hughes

### Stanza- 1

The Laburnum top is silent, quite still  
In the afternoon yellow September sunlight,  
A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.

**Explanation:** The poet describes a beautiful sunny autumn. The Laburnum tree is silent and still. It is laden with yellow leaves and yellow flowers in September. Its leaves have turned yellow because of the autumn season and all its seeds have fallen.

### Stanza- 2

Till the goldfinch comes, with a twitching chirrup,  
A suddenness, a startlement, at a branch end.  
Then sleek as a lizard, and alert, and abrupt,  
She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up  
Of chitterings, and a tremor of wings, and trillings  
The whole tree trembles and thrills.  
It is the engine of her family.  
She stokes it full, then flirts out to a branch-end  
Showing her barred face  
identity mask.

**Explanation:** Just then a goldfinch alights on the Laburnum tree making short, high-pitched sounds. The goldfinch has her nest in the tree and her chicks are resting in the nest. On the mother's return, a sudden movement stirs the tree. Her little ones are excited on her arrival and start chirruping. The cautious mother enters the tree with great care so that no predator can come to know that her babies are housed in the nest. The poet has compared the alert, abrupt and sleek movement of the goldfinch with that of a lizard. The goldfinch has been called the engine of her family. Just as the engine starts up the machine, her arrival in the nest has suddenly started up the silent machine (nest) i.e. the young ones have started chittering and making noise. By feeding her young ones, she has added fuel to the machine and as a result the chicks now have the energy to be active and make noise. After feeding her chicks, the goldfinch flies up and rests on the end of a branch of the tree, her identity concealed behind the yellow flowers and yellowing leaves.

### Stanza- 3

Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup  
whisperings She launches away, towards the infinite  
And the Laburnum subsides to empty.

**Explanation:** After some time, the goldfinch makes a strange short, high-pitched sound. Then she flies away towards the infinite sky. The Laburnum tree becomes silent again after the departure of the goldfinch and everything seems to be the same as it was before the arrival of the goldfinch.

## NCERT SOLUTIONS

### Questions (Page No. 32) (Find out)

Question 1. What laburnum is called in your language.

Answer: Write your own answer.

Question 2. Which local bird is like the goldfinch.

Answer: The Lutino Indian Ringneck is the local bird which is like the goldfinch.

### Questions (Page No. 32) (Think it out)

Question 1. What do you notice about the beginning and the ending of the poem?

Answer: The poem begins on a depressing note. The laburnum is said to stand silently and still. There is no sign of life. The tree's leaves have begun to yellow, and the seeds have already fallen. It denotes the autumn season.

Question 2. To what is the bird's movement compared? What is the basis for the comparison?

Answer: The movement of the bird is compared to that of a lizard. They are both sleek, alert, and abrupt. As a result, the comparison is both accurate and convincing.

Question 3. Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet?

Answer: The image of the engine is evoked because the mother bird is the family's "engine." She works to provide food for her children in the same way that an engine powers a machine.

Question 4. What do you like most about the poem?

Answer: Write your own answer.

Question 5. What does the phrase "her barred face identity mask" mean?

Answer: This means that it is the mark of recognition that the mother bird uses to reveal her identity as the mother of her babies.

### Questions (Page No. 32) (Note down)

Question 1. the sound words

Answer: Chirrup, chitterlings, trillings, whistle-chirrup whisperings

Question 2. the movement words

Answer: twitching, tremor, trembles, stokes, flirts, launches, subsides

Question 3. the dominant colour in the poem.

Answer: Yellow

### Questions (Page No. 32) (List the following)

Question 1. Words which describe 'sleek', 'alert' and 'abrupt'.

Answer: Suddenness, startlement

Question 2. Words with the sound 'ch' as in 'chart' and 'tr' as in 'trembles' in the poem.

Answer: 'ch' sound-Chirrup, chitterlings

'tr' sound- trillings, tremor, tree

Question 3. Other sounds that occur frequently in the poem.

Answer: 'st', 'ill' and 'ing'