

A Roadside Stand

Que. The city folk who drove through the countryside hardly paid any heed to the roadside stand or to the people who ran it. If at all they did, it was to complain. Which lines bring this out? What was their complaint about?

Ans: Such good traffic passed on, or if they stopped for a moment, they looked out of place at the scenery that the artless painting had marred. Residents of the city claim that these booths' uncreative signboards take away from the area's aesthetic appeal.

Que. What was the plea of the folk who had put up the roadside stand?

Ans: The residents of the rural areas begged pitifully for some clients to stop by and purchase their items. The rural residents put up roadside stalls to attract the attention of and sell their goods to the city dwellers who used to pass by on this road.

Que. The government and other social service agencies appear to help the poor rural people but do them no good. Pick out the words and phrases that the poet uses to show their double standards.

Ans: The poet attacks the government's and other social service agencies' double standards in promising to enhance the poor farmers' standard of living and show them the bright side of life. When it comes time to deliver on their promises, however, they either forget about them or keep them in mind for their gain. They are described as "greedy good-doers" and "benevolent monsters of prey" who swarm over their lives," the poet says. These selfish folks, according to the poet, make premeditated and well-thought-out smart actions, to which the innocent, unwitting farmers fall prey. These smart people have taken away the peace of mind of these humble and basic farmers. ".....enforcing benefits," writes the poet. Those are meant to lull them out of their minds, and by teaching them how to sleep, they sleep all day, destroying their sleeping at night the old way."

Que. What is the 'childish longing' that the poet refers to? Why is it 'vain'?

Ans: The poet believes that the people who manage the roadside stand have a juvenile yearning. They are always on the lookout for new consumers and eagerly await their arrival. To attract them, they keep their windows open. When no one shows up, they grow depressed. They're always listening for the scream of brakes, the sound of a car coming to a halt. All of their efforts, however, are futile.

Que. Which lines tell us about the insufferable pain that the poet feels at the thought of the plight of the rural poor?

Ans: The poet, filled with empathy, is unable to bear the fate of the simple and innocent people of the countryside.

"Sometimes I feel myself I can not stand The thought of so much infantile longing in vain, The melancholy that lurks beside the open window there, That waits all day in practically open prayer," he writes later.