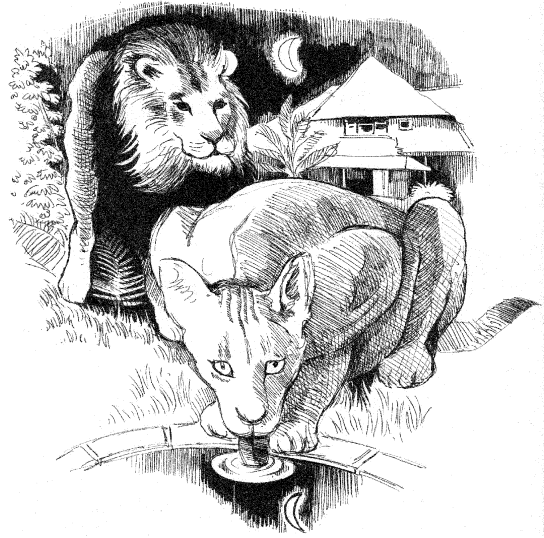


Lions in the Garden

We had lions in our garden last night.
We watched them pad through the open gates
And lap the water from the pool.
Amber bodies covered the grass,
Some at rest, some at play.
Billy and I watched awestruck
As the might of the African plain
Graced our backyard.



The park rangers kept watch all night.
We could not sleep.
We could not move.
Only thin glass and brick walls protected us
From giant paws and savage jaws,
Fierce in hunt, gentle in play.

The big male roars.
The pride rises.
Something crashes past in the undergrowth.
A lioness pads forwards. Her sisters follow.
Bodies tense, ears alert. Then suddenly,
The darkness explodes with a golden flood.
Paws flash past, gravel flies
And, like the wind they are gone.

The pool is still, the garden bare.
But there are paw prints beside my garden chair.
We had lions in our garden last night.



Questions

1. At what time of day did the lions arrive? Tick **one**.
A. at dawn C. at dusk
B. at midnight D. at night

2. Where were the lions found? Tick **one**.
A. in the yard C. in the garden
B. in the pool D. by the gate

3. What colour are the lions? Tick **one**.
A. They are gold. C. They are brown.
B. They are amber. D. They are reddish brown.

4. What are the watchers not able to do? Tick **one**.
A. They cannot drink or eat.
B. They are not able to move or blink.
C. They are not able to sleep or eat.
D. They are not able to sleep or move.

5. What protects the watchers from the lions? Tick **one**.
A. Thin glass and brick walls protect the watchers.
B. Thick glass and strong walls protect the watchers.
C. Glass and wood protect the watchers.
D. Delicate glass and thick walls protect the watchers.

6. Why do you think the lions 'rise up' in verse 3?

7. Which action is not given for the lions? Tick **one**.

- A. lapping water C. playing
B. leaping D. roaring

8. 'The darkness explodes with a golden flood'. What do you think the golden flood might be? Tick **one**.

- A. the bright sunlight pouring into the garden
B. the light reflecting off the water in the pool
C. the dried grass in the garden
D. the lions as they all rush out of the garden

9. Which pair of words best describes the lions? Tick **one**.

- A. fierce and dangerous C. fierce and gentle
B. graceful and kind D. huge and fast

10. How did the lions enter the garden?

11. Find and copy **one line** that you think best describes the strength of the lions.

12. What evidence remains to show that lions have been in the garden?

13. The final lines may be considered 'dreamlike'. Why do you think this might be?

14 Look at verse 1. What is the poet's tone in the line, 'we watched them pad through the open gates ...' best described as? Tick **one**.

- A. busy and determined C. soft and dreamy
B. calm and purposeful D. menacing and dark

15 Number the events 1–5 in the order in which they happen in the poem. The first **one** has been done for you.

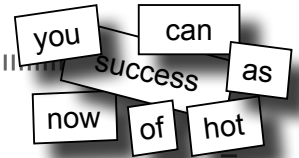
A. There are paw prints beside the chair.	
B. The park rangers keep watch.	
C. The lions lap water.	1
D. Something crashes past in the undergrowth.	
E. Amber bodies cover the grass.	

16. Look at these lines from the poem.

'Paws flash past, gravel flies
And, like the wind they are gone.'

Predict **two things** you think might happen next to the lions.

- A. _____
B. _____



Word work

1. Write a short definition for each word.

A. pride (of lions)	
B. awestruck	
C. amber	
D. savage	

2. Look at this line from Verse 3:

'The darkness explodes with a golden flood.'

What does the use of the word 'explodes' tell you about the lions?

3. What does 'Billy and I watched awestruck ...' tell you about how everyone felt about the lions' arrival?



Extension work

Class Discussion

1. What was the first thing the lions did when they arrived? Why do you suppose they did that?
2. What or who protected the watchers from the lions?
3. There are park rangers mentioned in the poem. What sort of things do you think they might do?
4. Which part of the poem appeals to you the most and why?
5. How would you feel if you saw lions in your local street?

Pair or Small Group Discussion

6. What other animal might you be excited to see in your back yard? Come up with some ideas in your group or pair and then share them with the class.
7. What other creatures might be hiding in the undergrowth?
8. In your own words, comment on the language of the poem. Which words or phrases make it evocative?

Create/Design

9. Brainstorm some ideas together for how you can stop the lions from getting into your garden. Create a mind map of ideas.
10. Draw a picture of the lions hunting on the African plain.

Write

11. If you could write a story about the hunt what would you say? Do the lions get their prey?
12. Imagine that the lions can talk. Draw speech bubbles to show their conversation with one another as they lounge by the pool.