

Read the poem "The Tuft of Flowers" before answering questions 8 through 15.

The Tuft of Flowers

by Robert Frost

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the leveled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone¹ on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, — alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe² had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred³ to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

1. whetstone: a stone for sharpening a blade
2. scythe: a curved bladed tool for cutting grass
3. kindred: related

Answer questions 8 through 15. Base your answers on the poem "The Tuft of Flowers."

8 What is the setting for this poem?

- F. a small yard
- G. a flower garden
- H. a hardware store with lots of tools
- I. a large field by a brook

9 Read the following line from the poem.

And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

This line contains an example of what kind of figurative language?

- A. simile
- B. symbolism
- C. personification
- D. hyperbole

10 Which word BEST describes the speaker of "The Tuft of Flowers"?

- F. observant
- G. carefree
- H. melancholy
- I. distrustful

- 11 What causes the speaker to notice the tuft of flowers standing by the brook?
- A. the sudden gust of wind at his back
 - B. the appearance of a shaft of sunlight
 - C. the movement of a butterfly he is watching
 - D. the words of the mower he is following

- 12 Read the following excerpt from the poem.

**The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish,**

Another way to express the idea of *flourish* is

- F. grow and thrive.
 - G. wither and die.
 - H. droop.
 - I. distract.
- 13 Which of the following does the author NOT use in organizing his material?
- A. rhyme
 - B. stanzas
 - C. repetition
 - D. meter
- 14 The theme of this poem is the contrast between
- F. working in the country and working in the city.
 - G. working alone and working together.
 - H. working for pay and working for fun.
 - I. working for oneself and working for someone else.
- 15 Why does the poet take the point of view of a field worker in this poem?
- A. to reinforce the worker's opinion that he needs help to do his job
 - B. to demonstrate how hard the worker's life is
 - C. to explore how the worker reacts when he sees the uncut flowers
 - D. to show that a worker's mind can wander while at work