

# ENGLISH



# CHILDHOOD

## ~Summary~

-by Markus Natten

### Stanza- 1

When did my childhood go?  
Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,  
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,  
Could not be found in Geography,  
And therefore could not be,  
Was that the day!

**Explanation:** The poet wonders when he lost his childhood. He reflects that perhaps it was the day when he crossed the age of eleven. Maybe it was the stage when he realised that the concepts of Hell and Heaven, about which he had been taught since his childhood, did not exist in reality. Geography textbooks did not give the location of any such places. The poet realises that he might have lost his childhood when he gained his rational outlook due to getting educated.

### Stanza- 2

When did my childhood go?  
Was it the time I realised that adults were not all they seemed to be,  
They talked of love and preached of love,  
But did not act so lovingly,  
Was that the day!

**Explanation:** In this stanza, the poet reflects that maybe the loss of childhood occurred when he was able to see through the hypocrisy of adults. These people followed double standards, actually following and preaching different standards of behaviour. They told the poet to be loving and caring; however they themselves were argumentative, violent and discourteous. Their behaviour was a far cry from the love they sermonised about and advocated so reverently to the child. Perhaps, says the poet, recognising broken trust was a major step towards adulthood.

**Stanza- 3**

When did my childhood go?  
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,  
To use whichever way I choose,  
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people,  
But my own, and mine alone  
Was that the day!

**Explanation:** The poet asks the same question again and again but with different options. He is trying to guess when he actually lost his childhood. Perhaps, it was the day when he realised that his mind could think independently, forming his own opinions and being able to take his own decisions. He gained a sense of individuality, which set him free from the preconceived opinions of others. His own individual opinions and experiences shape his thoughts now and he realised that this might have been the time when he lost his childhood innocence completely.

**Stanza- 4**

Where did my childhood go?  
It went to some forgotten place,  
That's hidden in an infant's face,  
That's all I know.

**Explanation:** In this stanza the poet changes his question. The poet now wonders where his childhood has gone. He reflects that maybe his childhood has gone to an unremembered place. The poet also says that childhood can be found in the innocent face of a child who does not have any pretensions and rationality and who trusts others unconditionally. In other words, a small child is full of innocence and there one can find one's own childhood.