

'Aubade': A Poem by Philip Larkin

I work all day, and get half-drunk at night.
Waking at four to soundless dark, I (1) _____
In time the curtain-edges will grow light.
Till then I see what's really always there:
Unresting death, a whole day (2) _____ now,
Making all thought impossible but how
And where and when I shall myself die.
Arid interrogation: yet the (3) _____
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes (4) _____ to hold and horrify.

The mind blanks at the (5) _____ Not in remorse
-The good not done, the love not given, time
(6) _____ off unused- nor wretchedly because
An only life can take so long to climb
Clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never;
But at the total emptiness for ever,
The (7) _____ extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always. Not to be here,
Not to be anywhere,
And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more
true.

This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
That (8) _____ moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says *No rational* (9) _____
Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
That this is what we fear—no sight, no sound,
No (10) _____ or taste or (11) _____ ,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anaesthetic from which none come round.

And so it stays just on the edge of vision,
A small unfocused (12) _____ , a standing (13) _____
That slows each impulse down to indecision.
Most things may never happen: this one will,
And realisation of it (14) _____ out
In furnace-fear when we are caught without
People or drink. (15) _____ is no good:
It means not scaring others. Being brave
Lets no one off the (16) _____
Death is no different (17) _____ at than withstood.
Slowly light (18) _____ , and the room takes shape.
It stands (19) _____ as a wardrobe, what we know,
Have always known, know that we can't escape,
Yet can't accept. One side will have to go.
Meanwhile telephones crouch,
Getting ready to ring
In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring
Intricate rented world begins to rouse.
The sky is white as (20) _____ , with no sun.
Work has to be done.
Postmen like doctors go from house to house.

1) How many reasons are there for fearing death? Which is Larkin's?

2) What two ways are there to dispel this fear?

3) What is the best way to react to the inevitability of death?

4) What does 'moth-eaten' mean? What does it imply?

5) No. 16 is an adaption of a common expression in English. What is the original expression and what does it mean?