

Ice Out

Name: _____

Read the passage all the way through before you start.

All winter it held,
a lid on the lake,
thick enough for trucks
in the middle of March.

Then a week of rain,
and it went grey,
then black at the edges
where the creek came in.

Nobody saw it go.
It was there on Tuesday.
On Thursday there were waves
and a loon, already back,
swimming as if it had never been away.

That is how the big things change here —
not with a crack you could point to,
but overnight, quietly,
while everyone is indoors.

Poem · 88 words

Before you turn over

1. Underline any word you are not sure of. Work out what you can from the sentence around it.

2. In one sentence, what is this passage about?

3. Write down one question you still have.

The questions are on the next page. →

Ice Out

Answer in complete sentences. Look back at the passage as often as you need to.

1. What is happening in this poem?

2. Find two details that show the ice weakening before it goes.

3. Why does the poet mention the loon?

4. What does the last verse say about change?

5. The poem never uses the word spring. Why might the poet have left it out?

Ice Out — Answer Key

1. The ice on a lake melts at the end of winter — the spring thaw, or 'ice out'. (*Main idea*)
2. It turns grey after a week of rain, and it goes black at the edges where the creek flows in. (*Recall*)
3. Answers will vary. The bird's return marks that the season has already turned, and its ease shows how completely winter is over. (*Author's craft*)
4. That the big changes happen quietly and unwitnessed, not as a single dramatic moment. (*Theme*)
5. Answers will vary. Showing the thaw is stronger than naming it, and the poem is about not noticing the moment things change. (*Author's craft*)