

The last light in the workshop

Poetry | 6 questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read once for the main idea. Look back at the passage while answering. Find words that support each answer.

The workshop windows darken into glass;
They hold the room instead of showing trees.
A strip of shavings curls beside the brass
Of tools laid out in quiet ranks of threes.

My uncle turns a half-made bowl around,
Then sets it on the shelf above the vice.
He taps the rim; it gives a hollow sound.
“Tomorrow,” he says softly. “Once or twice.”

He means the work: another cut, a check,
A patient touch before the shape is done.
I brush the dust that gathered at my neck
And watch him cover wood away from sun.

The lamp clicks off. The room folds into night.
The bowl waits where his hands have let it be.
Not every task is finished with the light;
Some wait for morning, quite contentedly.

Questions

Choose one answer for each question. You can refer to the passage. The answer notes start on a separate page.

1. Where does the uncle put the bowl?

- A. Beside the trees outside
- B. Under the lamp on the floor
- C. On a shelf above the vice
- D. Among the tools in groups of three

2. What is the bowl like at this point?

- A. Half-made
- B. Finished and sold
- C. Broken into three pieces
- D. Full of shavings

3. What does “ranks” mean when describing the tools?

- A. Marks in a competition
- B. Loud ringing sounds
- C. Different prices
- D. Ordered rows or groups

4. Why do the windows hold the room instead of showing trees?

- A. Someone has painted trees over the glass
- B. The uncle has moved the workshop into a forest
- C. The windows have been removed for the evening
- D. As it darkens outside, they reflect the lit interior

5. What does the uncle’s plan suggest about the work?

- A. He has decided never to touch the bowl again
- B. He expects the speaker to finish it secretly
- C. He values checking and patience over rushing to finish
- D. He believes a hollow sound proves every task is complete

6. What idea does the final stanza express?

- A. Leaving work unfinished can be part of a thoughtful process
- B. Turning off a lamp always completes a task
- C. Morning light changes wood into glass
- D. Every unfinished object has been abandoned

Answers and explanations

Try the questions before reading these notes. A practice score is not an exam grade.

1. C. On a shelf above the vice

The second stanza places the half-made bowl on the shelf above the vice.

2. A. Half-made

The poem explicitly describes a half-made bowl.

3. D. Ordered rows or groups

The tools are laid out in an orderly arrangement, described as quiet ranks of threes.

4. D. As it darkens outside, they reflect the lit interior

The opening describes darkening windows that reflect the room, rather than showing the view beyond.

5. C. He values checking and patience over rushing to finish

The next stanza explains another cut, a check and a patient touch before completion.

6. A. Leaving work unfinished can be part of a thoughtful process

The bowl waits for more careful work, and the final lines present waiting as acceptable rather than failure.

Original passage written for Trace Learn. Authored 2026-09-30. These teaching questions are not a school entrance paper.