Answer Key

Discussion Questions for “There Will Come Soft Rains”

In what ways are the technologies portrayed in the ‘house of the future’ similar to technologies we have today, or logical extensions of what we have today?

Answers will vary

What can we infer from the silhouettes in the burned wall on the west side of the house? (1-2)

There was a nuclear war.

How do you feel when the dog dies? (2)

Answers will vary

What do you think is the significance of the poem that the house’s automated voice recites? (3)

The poem is about a war that destroys humankind, and how Nature reclaims the Earth after humankind is gone, which is exactly what has happened.

- When a tree’s branch comes crashing through the kitchen window and spills a flammable cleaning solvent over the still-hot stove and starts a fire, is the house trying to save itself, or the people who no longer live in it (which the house does not seem to realize), or both? (4)

Answers will vary.

Does it seem odd to you that such a technologically advanced house would be unable to detect that there were no human beings living in it anymore?

Answers will vary.

Do you feel sorry for the house when it burns down and dies? (4-5)

Answers will vary.

What are some current technologies that automatically do things for us, or cater to our specific needs and wants?

Answers will vary.

What do you think Earth will be like after humans have gone extinct or all left Earth?
Early Morning (from 7:00 A.M. to 8:30 A.M.)
The house gave the weather and made breakfast.

Mid-Morning (from 9:15 A.M. to noon)
Cleaned up, mice cleaned the floor, sprinkles worked.

Early Afternoon (from noon to 4:30 P.M.)
The dog died, the house burned the dog’s body, and the house got ready for a bridge party.

Late Afternoon (from 2:35 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.)
The children’s hour, the bath filled up, the kitchen cleaned up, a cigar lit up.

Night (from 9:00 P.M. to dawn)
The beds warmed up, and the house read a poem. The house died, the house began to burn, there was an explosion, the house shattered, the voices died, everything in the house went haywire as the house crashed.

Why do you think Bradbury decided to follow strict chronological order in this story?
It presents a clear and logical way to tell the story. He did not use flashbacks because it may have distracted from the story of the house that continued to live after all the people had died.