

## ***The Catcher in the Rye – The Ducks***

The question of where the ducks go in winter, when the lagoon in Central Park freezes, may have occurred to Holden in his childhood when, he tells us, he knew the park like the back of his hand. However, it begins to bother him this weekend, since he feels restless and unstable. He starts thinking about the ducks while Mr Spencer is questioning him about his failure in school subjects. He goes on to ask two separate taxi drivers if they can explain the ducks' whereabouts. Because it seems like the question of a child, but is coming from a young man travelling to adult locations, they suspect he is having fun at their expense.

The absence of the ducks bothers Holden, because he does not like change or sudden disappearance. Allie was suddenly no longer there, but the ducks come back in spring, showing an affirmation of new life. Thinking about the man who may come to rescue the ducks possibly contributes to Holden's idea about becoming the catcher in the rye, the rescuer of children.

In a drunken state, Holden tries to find the lagoon at night, to check on the ducks. when he eventually locates the pond, there are no ducks and it is partly frozen. It is in a kind of limbo, between flowing water and ice, as is Holden, who is poised between the worlds of childhood and adulthood. Holden almost falls into the water while searching for the ducks, which links with Mr Antolini's idea that he is in danger of heading for a great fall in life.

Crane, Claire and Juliet Walker. *The Catcher in the Rye*. London: Letts Educational, 2004, p. 27.