

In the Shadow of Signal Hill (Essop Patel)

in the howling wind

by the murky waters

of the sea

children of colour

gather shells 5

and hold them to their ears

and listen to the lamentations of slaves

in the dungeon of death

in the howling wind

by the murky waters 10

of the sea

sons of langa

gather at the ruins of district six

and sharpen the spears of the night

and the heroes from the island urge 15

go towards the fiery dawn ...

In the Shadow of Signal Hill

Lexical polysemy: The coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase.

“langa”:

- Black township on the outskirts of suburban Cape Town established in 1927.
- It was the place where police brutality ended in a blood bath (21 March 1960).
- It was also a place associated with great resistance to Apartheid.
- Langa literally means “sun” in Xhosa.
- The word Langa is a tribute to a man called Langalibalele - a chief and renowned rainmaker - who in 1873 was imprisoned on Robben Island for rebelling against the Natal government.

“district six”:

- Name of a former racially mixed inner-city residential area in Cape Town where over 60 000 of its inhabitants were forced to move during the 1960's by the apartheid regime.

What is the poem about? /What is the subject of the poem? / Theme + message of the poem:

The short, yet powerful poem, implies a plea (a serious or urgent request) for violent revolution/turn against Apartheid laws.

Who is speaking?

3rd person narrative.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

Both stanza 1 and 2 open with the image of the sea with its “murky waters” and the “howling wind”.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: /Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

In the first stanza the speaker is melancholic, pleading and sympathetic.

In the second stanza the speaker is determined and strong-willed/minded.

Tone of the poem:

Pleading, melancholic and sympathetic (stanza 1), determined and strong-willed/minded (stanza 2).

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

- Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).
- The poem consists of two stanzas, 8 lines each (octave).

Stanza 1: The atmosphere in prison is horrible, dark and lonely.

Stanza 2: The prisoners are rising as “heroes” because they are fighting for their freedom and the end of Apartheid. They are longing for change.

- Lacks punctuation and capitalisation that suggests a feeling of freedom from being oppressed by his country and government.

Type of poem:

Lyrical poem – expresses the poets emotions.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in poem.

1. The explanatory note below the poem gives you a clue as to the title's significance. Imagine that you are standing below Signal Hill. Write a paragraph in which you explain what you see.

When looking up you will see the "white authority" or "white government" of the apartheid area looking down upon the different races living in district 6. You will look out onto a "murky" (dark and gloomy) sea. "Gather shells" might be a reference to the slaves that crossed the sea to imprisonment on the other side of the globe. The seashells represent the children covering their ears from the cries and weeping of the slaves. Since the children listen to the cries of the slaves in the dungeon of death while holding shells to their ears, it is possible that the shells can be a metaphor for the dungeon of death, which, in turn, is a metaphor for the situation the slaves or coloured and black people are in. This symbolises the helplessness of black people. Sons of langa – almost biblical in emphasis – and it implies that these people have a common ancestry. Who is the township named after and it is named after someone. This person fought the government and was imprisoned on Robben island. To reclaim places like the ruins of district 6 – to make these ruins the cause of rebellion – the foundations of a wave of rebellion." fiery dawn" also suggest that an "angry break of day", meaning that the coloured people wake up angry in the mornings. They are angry and frustrated with their circumstances. – it destroys and it cleanses. It implies movement, but it is the one word of colour in the poem – the red of Marxism perhaps. It also means to burn brightly and strongly – a maintaining of the moral force that will overcome.

2. Explain the denotation and connotations of the word 'Shadow' in the title of this poem.

Denotation- "a dark area or shape produced by a body coming between rays of light and a surface" District 6 is the direct shadow of Signal Hill.

Connotation- The part "in the shadow" of Signal Hill represents the black people who suffered under the Apartheid regime. They were the people who had to live in the shadows of the white government. The government overshadowed their whole lives and basically made their choices for them. The word "shadow" also bears a connotation of fear in general. When one looks at children's books, one will notice that the antagonist in the stories would be a "shadowy figure". Therefore the "Shadow of Signal Hill" suggests the white government is the antagonist in terms of them being wrong in what they are doing – which is initiating Apartheid in South Africa.

3. Look up the word 'lamentations' (line 7) in a dictionary. When the speaker instructs the reader to listen to 'the lamentations of slaves' (line 7), does he or she expect the reader to hear real slaves in the present time of the poem? Why or why not? Write a paragraph in which you describe what it is that the 'children of colour' (line 4) hear.

"lamentations" connects with "howling wind" which emphasises the suffering of the black and coloured people. Yes, the speaker wants us to hear and know the pain that they're suffering at the exact moment. Since the children listen to the cries of the slaves in the dungeon of death while holding shells to their ears, it is possible that the shells can be a metaphor for the dungeon of death, which, in turn, is a metaphor for the situation the slaves or coloured and black people are in. This symbolises the helplessness of black people. When I read the poem, I almost feel sorry for the slaves and children. Maybe this is also what the poet wants - to create an emotional atmosphere so the reader can empathise with the black people.

4. The first three lines of each stanza are the same. What does this tell you about the setting of the poem? Why is this important?

A cold, unpleasant atmosphere is created. Metaphor: howling wind might refer to the cries of the black people, then pleads for freedom and equality. Furthermore, I think the tone is a sad, depressed tone when I read words like "murky" "shadow" "howling wind" "dungeon of death" "lamentation". This is to represent them pleads for freedom. May also represent the never ending plead of the people who are suffering from the apartheid area.

5. What image is created in line 14? Write a paragraph in which you describe what this line means.

The spears of the night are a metaphor for the black people fighting back. "night" and "spears" usually have negative, dark connotations, but in this instance, it is the opposite: the black people represent freedom and light because they want to fight for what is fair and right. Although one reads it as "night", it can represent the homophone "knight". this will make absolute sense in the context of the poem and the explanation just given. (it is like "Bustle in the House" where "morning" can be heard as "mourning".) "Knight" also has a positive connotation. In medieval times the knight represented the good. A princess was saved by a knight in shining armour. Therefore, the sentence "sharpen the spears of the night" can be reread as "sharpen the spears of the knight", meaning that the people will fight for justice and that which is right.

In Exile (Arthur Nortje)

Open skies flare wide enough
to make me vaguely anxious.
Nimbus wisps
trace patterns of the past.

Wind sweeps between the towers 5
through runnels, old and new.
My heart is
hollowed with the boots passing through.

Garments gather and play about
my limbs: they tremble to a return 10
gust. Leaves and transient
streetscape conjure up that southern

blue sky and wind-beautiful
day, creating paradise.
Otherwise: 15
the soul decays in exile.

But wrong pigment has no scope,
so clot the blue channel of memory.
On a sand slope
I build a picture of the sea. 20

The grains that slide away
are wind-breathed, are stirred by finger.
Benign, a cloud
obscures the sun, this hunger.

In Exile

What is the poem about?/ What is the subject of the poem?

Time is the 1960's, during Apartheid. The title accurately reflects that the poem is about being "in exile". The speaker has fled his birth land (on his own accord on an Oxford University Scholarship in the UK) & now lives abroad, in a foreign land. He feels as if he is in exile. He is also in two minds.

Theme + message of the poem:

The poem revolves around the speaker's desire to go back home, and we learn his feelings through his attempts to remember his homeland. Memory is central to the poem.

Who is speaking?

A man that fled his home land (South Africa) to go live in the UK.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

Time is the 1960's, during Apartheid.

Images of nature throughout the poem (these are the things he remembers of his homeland). Words such as "skies", "nimbus", "wind", "leaves", "blue-sky", "wind-beautiful", "sand". "sea", "cloud" and "sun".

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: /Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

The speaker is longing to go back home and tries to remember his homeland.

Tone of the poem:

Nostalgic and longing in stanzas 1-4; tone of recognition in stanzas 5-6.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

No rhyme scheme - free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure)..

Made up of six stanzas of 4 lines each.

The lack of rhyme scheme and enjambments let the speaker's thoughts, in this case his memories, flow freely. The short stanzas emphasise the fact that his memories are not worth thinking of and that he should no longer long for his homecoming, because it is not a reality any more.

Type of poem:

Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem.

1. What does the word 'exile' suggest?

The literal meaning of this word 'exile' would mean to be separated from one's home and or country, for a reason, often political. The title of this poem uses the proposition "In" before the word exile which would mean that it is referring to a situation where somebody or something is part of this exile.

2. What sort of feelings would you expect someone in exile to experience?

A person living in exile would be removed from all that is familiar to them and separated from familiar people, places and most likely their country. If one considers this in context to the poem "In Exile" which was written by Arthur Nortje we can assume that he was referring to his own experiences. In line 7 he uses the pronoun 'My' and in line 20 'I' so he is most certainly speaking of personal experiences. The footnote to this poem from Seasons come to pass informs us that Nortje did in fact leave South Africa to study overseas and his poetry reflects a sense of personal and cultural dislocation. It appears that his exile was self-imposed and that he would have been able to return to South Africa if he had chosen to do so. He did not know his father and he was a 'coloured' person which could also have been a reason for him not only being in exile from his home but in feeling exiled from his roots. Line 7 and 8 'My heart is hollowed with the boots passing through' as well as line 16 'the soul decays in exile' give one some idea of what it must feel like to be in exile. The speaker could be referring to the constant change and meeting and leaving of people in his life and how there is no growth for a person separated from all that he was.

3. Provide the literal and figurative meaning of the phrase 'a cloud obscures the sun'.

This poem has used diction to create imagery, evident in this phrase 'a cloud obscures the sun' which literal meaning would be to see the sun covered by a passing cloud creating a dark day. Figuratively, one could consider that the meaning is that the sun is the warmth, the hope and the light and when it is obscured by fuzziness (the unknown) what hope is there of reaching the desired. Considering how these lines are used in the poem it could suggest that the speaker is admitting there is no chance of him coming home, of feeding this hunger, these dreams he has of coming out of exile.

4. Explain what the speaker could mean by lines 19 and 20.

LINES 19 AND 20, 'On a sand slope I build a picture of the sea.' suggests that the speaker is standing on the beach looking out to sea and building pictures in his head. The lines that precede these (17 and 18) tell the reader that being the 'wrong pigment' which means the wrong colour, has no hope. The speaker is saying that he will not be recognized in his homeland due to the political situation and there is no chance that he will be able to return. The dreams he is creating are falling away 'on a sand slope'. A sandy slope would be unstable and as the grains of sand slip away beneath his feet he has to 'clot the blue channel of memory', (line18) and face reality – there is no chance of returning to the places he remembers and dreams about.

5. Why would you say the speaker is ambivalent (in two minds) towards home and being in exile?

One could say the speaker is ambivalent in his thinking as the first four stanzas present a clear picture of all his memories of home which are interspersed with images of nature – this memory of paradise. It is interesting to note that the speaker has made mention of the wind throughout these four stanzas, binding together these memories in this motion and then in the final stanza 'the grains that slide away' being his memories and dreams, are 'wind-breathed' (lines 21, 22) blown away. It is in the fifth stanza when reference is made to his colour and how it would affect his dreams where the tone of the poem changes and the speaker realizes he will not be going home, ending with the 'the hunger' which has gone, it is now 'Benign'. (Lines23,24) The speaker knows there is no hope of fulfilling all the dreams he has created, possibly because he knows these dreams are purely in the mind and if he had to return home they would never be able to come to fruition under the circumstances that caused his exile.

Still I rise (Maya Angelou)

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you? 5
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides, 10
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops, 15
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard. 20

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you? 25

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise 30

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear 35

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave. 40

I rise

I rise

I rise.

Still I Rise

What is the poem about? / What is the subject of the poem?

The writer's angry protest against racial discrimination. The speaker speaks out against the racial prejudice and intolerance that she sees around her before making an appeal for black pride and dignity.

Who is speaking?

1st person narrative: "I". A black woman.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

This poem is written against the backdrop of invasive racism, racial separation/isolation and prejudice in America during the 1950's and 1960's.

Themes and messages of the poem:

Black people should rise and defeat all forms of discrimination based on race.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: / Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

The speaker is angry and bold, courageous, daring and determined.

Tone of the poem:

Anger and open defiance.

Speaker's tone of boldness, courage & daring is evident in lines 5, 17, 25.

Speaker expresses her determination in lines 13-14.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

Mostly abcb rhyme scheme (lines 1-28).

Rhyme scheme changes from line 29: ababcc; dedeffeee.

Consists of eight stanzas: with 4 lines each in stanzas 1-7 and 15 lines in stanza 8.

Type of poem:

English sestet.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem.

The effectiveness of the simile's, metaphors and personifications contribute to the overall meaning of the poem.

Alexandra (Wally Mongane Serote)

Were it possible to say,

Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,

A most loving mother,

And tell her there I will go,

Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.

5

But we have only one mother, none can replace,

Just as we have no choice to be born,

We can't choose mothers;

We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.

And Alexandra,

10

My beginning was knotted to you,

Just like you knot my destiny.

You throb in my inside silences

You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.

Alexandra often I've cried.

15

When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,

Dust burdening your nipples.

I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.

Your breasts ooze the dirty waters of your dongas ,

Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your children,

20

Who once chose dongas for death-beds.

Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?

You frighten me, Mama,

You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me,

You frighten me, Mama,

25

When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me,

You are bloody cruel.

Alexandra, hell

What have you done to me?

I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one,

30

Alexandra what are you doing to me?

I feel like I have sunk to such meekness!

I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.

I have gone from you, many times,

I come back.

35

Alexandra, I love you;

I know

When all these words become funny to me,

I silently waded back to you

And amid the rubble I lay,

40

Simple and black.

Alexandra

What is the poem about? / What is the subject of the poem?

Autobiography about the speaker's experience of growing up in the township of Alexandra, SA, at the height of apartheid.

Who is speaking?

1st person narrative "I". The speaker's inner-child addresses his "mother".

What is the location/setting of the poem?

In Alexandra, during apartheid.

Themes and messages of the poem:

Deals with the problems of squalor, violence, death, destitution, exploitation and the Black People's quest for identity and a sense of community.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: / Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

Warm feelings in stanza 1. The speaker is negative and hurt-filled, and sad and frustrated in line 22. He is scared in stanza 4.

Tone of the poem:

Warm tone created by the words "beautiful" & "loving".

Line 22: Negative and hurt-filled emotions, including sadness and frustration.

Stanza 4: fear.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

The effect of free verse is to make the poem sound like normal, natural conversation.

Written in 5 stanzas.

Type of poem:

Free verse.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem.

The speaker uses personification by likening Alexandra township to a mother. This allows the speaker to emphasise the bond he has with this place (Alexandra); wherever he goes he carries the "throb" of Alexandra deep within him – it has made him who he is.

The Road Not Taken (Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveller, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

5

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that, the passing there

Had worn them really just about the same,

10

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

15

I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –

I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

20

The Road Not Taken

What is the poem about? / What is the subject of the poem?

By using this title the poet draws the reader's attention to the poem's focus on the choice that was not made, rather than the choice that was made.

The path that was not chosen, ironically, becomes the more attractive one, and occupies the speaker's thoughts much more than the path that he did choose.

Literal level:

The poem deals with a choice on the literal level of coming to a fork in the road.

Figurative level:

The "path" is much more than a specific route through a particular wood – it is a metaphor for a life choice made by the speaker.

Who is speaking?

1st person narrative: the use of "I".

What is the location/setting of the poem?

The person is standing in front of two roads diverged in a wood/forest.

Themes and messages of the poem:

The poem celebrates personal choice, individualism and independence. It implies that once one has decided on a road, there is no turning back.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: /Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

The speaker feels nostalgic and reflective in stanza 1.

He feels regret, remorse and nostalgia in line 13.

He still feels regret, but is happy, satisfied and positive in line 20.

Tone of the poem:

Stanza 1: nostalgic and reflective.

Line 13: regret, remorse & nostalgia.

Line 20: happy, satisfied and positive.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

The poem is divided into 4 stanzas of 5 lines each.

Rhyming scheme:

Stanza 1: Lines 1, 3 & 4: wood, stood, could

Lines 2 & 5: both, undergrowth

Stanza 2: Lines 1, 3 & 4: fair, wear, there

Lines 2 & 5: claim, same

Stanza 3: Lines 1, 3 & 4: lay, day, way

Lines 2 & 5: black, back

Stanza 4: Lines 1, 3 & 4: sigh, I, by

Lines 2 & 5: hence, difference

abaab; cdccd; efeef; ghggh.

Rhymes in stanza 1:

All these rhyming words contain long vowel sounds, which are drawn out and have the effect of drawing out the reader's attention, making the action of the poem appear longer.

Characteristics of Robert Frost's poetry:

The rhyming words are simple and short (most of them are only one syllable long).

Frost has placed certain rhyming words in relationships with each other, so each of the rhyming groups is somehow connected.

For example: Stanza 3: lay, day & way

These words are connected because, on that particular day, the speaker found himself in a place where two ways (paths) lay before him. (The word "day" also suggests light and brightness or clarity).

When we compare the words "day" and "way" we can see how the speaker is suggesting that the clearest route (or "way" ahead) is to go forward by one of the two paths, while going "back" (to take another path) would be unlikely, as implied by the rhyme with "black" or darkness.

Type of poem:

Closed form: poetic form subject to a fixed structure and pattern.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem.

The central image of the poem:

Image of a person standing at a fork in path and deciding to take one path rather than another.

Broader meaning of this image: The choice between two options in life.

By using this image, the poem explores the way humans make decisions like this and then wonder what might have happened if they had chosen differently.

Dover Beach (Matthew Arnold)

The sea is calm tonight.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; - on the French coast the light

Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,

Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.

5

Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!

Only from the long line of spray

Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,

Listen! You hear the grating roar

Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,

10

At their return, up the high strand,

Begin, and cease, and then again begin,

With tremulous cadence slow, and bring

The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago

15

Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought

Into his mind the turbid* ebb and flow

Of human misery; we

Find also in the sound a thought,

Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

20

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore

Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

But now I only hear

Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,

25

Retreating, to the breath

Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear

And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which seems

30

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

35

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Dover Beach

Land of dreams – Denotation, Wishes/ dreams fulfilled. Connotation, Contains many different things that are not worn out (still “beautiful and “new”).

A darkling plain – Denotation, Becoming darker. Connotation, Creates a picture of an empty, flat, dark, uninhabited space. Retreat of faith and rise of secularism.

Confused alarms of struggle and flight – Denotation, Confused about the war.

Ignorant armies- Refers to war.

Clash by night – Refers to war.

What is the poem about? /What is the subject of the poem?

Poem written in Victorian Era. During this era there was a loss of people’s faith in God and Christianity.

Who is speaking?

A man talking to his female partner.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

The poem begins with a beautiful image of tranquillity, where the sea is calm and peaceful, and the moonlight bay spread out before him.

Themes and messages of the poem:

The speaker sees religion as a positive light, as a force for good in the world. On the other hand, he is witnessing the slow retreat of religion as secularism gains the upper hand and people move away from faith. The poet is clearly saddened by this, and calls for a return to love and the other virtues of religion.

Stanza 1: Description of the beautiful night/beautiful sound of the sea. Stanza 2: Sadness and misery of life.

Stanza 3: Retreat of faith and religion. Stanza 4: Confusion of the modern world.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: / Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

The speaker is very sad and confused.

Tone of the poem:

This poem is not a cheerful poem. Tone of sadness, melancholy, disillusionment and despair.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

No rhyme scheme – free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

The effect of free verse is to make the poem sound like normal, natural conversation between two people. We are “eavesdropping” on a moment between two lovers.

Made up of 4 stanzas. The speaker evokes a scene of order in the first 3 stanzas, but this is overthrown by an idea of chaos and disorder in the final stanza when he begins to speak about war and the destruction it brings in its wake.

By rejecting the conventional patterns of regular rhyme, equal line lengths and uniform stanzas, Arnold is emphasising the doubt and uncertainty he feels at this time.

Arnold creates a wonderful sense of movement and rhythm using words such as “draw back” (line 10), “return” (line 11), “begin, and cease, then begin again” (line 12), “tremulous cadence” (line 13) in the first stanza and “turbid ebb and flow” (line 17) in the second stanza to emulate the backwards and forwards motion of the waves.

Type of poem:

Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

The poem is held together by the use of enjambments, alliterations, metaphors and images. These poetic devices give the sonnet great power, contributing to a greater understanding of its theme.

Image of the sea:

In the first few lines the speaker draws a picture/image of himself and his loved one standing at a window looking out over the Dover sea – that lies between England and France.

In the first stanza, the sea is “calm” and peaceful, and the speaker creates the image of tranquillity with the moonlit bay spread out before him.

When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be (John Keats)

When I have fears that I may cease to be

Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,

Before high piled books, in charactry,

Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain;

When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,

5

Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,

And think that I may never live to trace

Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;

And when I feel, fair, creature of an hour,

That I shall never look upon thee more,

10

Never have relish in the faery power

Of unreflecting love; - then on the shore

Of the wide world I stand alone, and think

Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be

What is the poem about? / What is the subject of the poem?

The title accurately reflects that the thought of dying young terrifies the speaker. This fear is caused by the fact that he hasn't accomplished his dreams, desires and aspirations.

Keats reflects on, identifies with & tackles the emotion of fear.

Who is speaking?

1st person narrator.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

The landscape that is created by the speaker will follow according imagination and takes place within the speaker's mind.

Themes and messages of the poem:

Unfulfilled desires. He fears not being able to accomplish his dreams, desires and aspirations.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem / Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

The speaker is scared at first, but then accepting.

Tone of the poem:

Loneliness, despair, nihilism (sense that life is meaningless) and acceptance in the rhyming couplet.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

Rhyming scheme: Cross rhyme: abab; cdcd; efef; gg.

The sonnet has 10 syllables per line, broken into 5 pentameters consisting of an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable, called 'iambic'.

Type of poem: Shakespearean/Elizabethan sonnet.

Characteristics of the Shakespearean/Elizabethan sonnet:

The poem is divided into **three quatrains**, each comprising **four lines**:

Quatrain 1 (lines 1-4) Quatrain 2 (lines 5-8) Quatrain 3 (lines 9-12) Rhyming couplet (lines 13-14)

The theme of the poem develop progressively through each of the quatrains, until the highest or contrasting point is reached in the rhyming couplet.

Rhyming couplet:

The use of the dash in line 12 indicates a change, highlighting what is to follow.

The rhyming couplet is a far cry from the previous quatrains which provided the speaker with high ideals about things, such as the meaning of life.

The poet comes to an awareness that he is "alone" in this world & that fame is a short-lived thing for him to bother about.

Line 14: His long quest for the meaning of life (he thought he would find in knowledge, fame & love) seems a forlorn hope, since "love & fame to nothingness do sink".

He comes to terms with the idea of dying, and sees it as a natural thing.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem above.

Poetic devices:

The poem is held together by the use of alliteration, assonance, personification, metaphor and simile.

These poetic devices give the sonnet great power, contributing to a greater understanding of its theme.

The concept of "teeming" (crowded) is continued with the words "high-piled", "rich" and "full ripened". These words imply plenty and crowded.

The Child Who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyanga (Ingrid Jonker)

The child is not dead

the child lifts his fists against his mother

who shouts Afrika! shouts the breath

of freedom and the veld

in the locations of the cordoned heart

5

The child lifts his fists against his father

in the march of the generations

who shout Afrika! shout the breath

of righteousness and blood

in the streets of his embattled pride

10

The child is not dead

not at Langa nor at Nyanga

nor at Orlando nor at Sharpeville

nor at the police station at Philippi

where he lies with a bullet through his brain

15

The child is the dark shadow of the soldiers

on guard with rifles saracens and batons

the child is present at all assemblies and law-givings

the child peers through the windows of houses and into the hearts of mothers

this child who just wanted to play in the sun at Nyanga is everywhere

20

the child grown to a man treks through all Africa

the child grown into a giant journeys through the whole world

Without a pass

The Child Who Was Shot Dead by Soldiers at Nyganga

What is the poem about? /What is the subject of the poem?

"The child" is a symbol of all the innocent children who were killed by soldiers under Apartheid in SA because he only "wanted to play in the sun".

Who is speaking?

3rd person narrative.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

1960's during the Apartheid Era.

Themes and messages of the poem:

Draws a common idea that violence within a country destroys innocent members of society, woman & children, & damages the country & its future severely.

This child's death has inspired others to take up the cause of freedom and given new energy to the struggle against Apartheid.

Protest poem against Apartheid.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: /Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

Tone of the poem:

Bold & determined.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.):

Open form (free from regularity and consistency in elements such as rhyme, line length and metrical form).

Free verse (lines with no prescribed pattern or structure).

Type of poem:

Protest poem.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem above.

The effect of the repetition of the phrases "the child", "is not dead", "lifts his fists against his..." and "who shouts Afrika! Shouts the breath" is to drive the poem home into the memories of its audience.

To His Coy Mistress (Andrew Marvell)

Had we but world enough, and time,

This coyness, Lady, were no crime.

We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side

5

Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide

Of Humber would complain. I would

Love you ten years before the Flood;

And you should, if you please, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

10

My vegetable love should grow

Vaster than empires, and more slow;

An hundred years should go to praise

Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

Two hundred to adore each breast,

15

But thirty thousand to the rest.

An age at least to every part,

And the last age should show your heart.

For, Lady, you deserve this state,

Nor would I love at lower rate.

20

But at my back I always hear

Time's winged chariot hurrying near;

And yonder all before us lie

Deserts of vast eternity.

Thy beauty shall no more be found; 25

Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

My echoing song: then worms shall try

That long preserved virginity:

And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust: 30

The grave's a fine and private place,

But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now , therefore , while the youthful hue

Sits on thy skin like morning glew,

And while thy willing soul transpires 35

At every pore with instant fires,

Now let us sport us while we may;

And now, like amorous birds of prey,

Rather at once our time devour,

Than languish in his slow-chapped power. 40

Let us roll all our strength, and all

Our sweetness, up into one ball:

And tear our pleasures with rough strife

Thorough the iron gates of life:

Thus, though we cannot make our sun 45

Stand still, yet we will make him run.

To Coy his Mistress

What is the poem about?/ What is the subject of the poem?

The poem is an elaborate act to persuade a woman to sleep with a man. She does not wish to do so, and the speaker has to persuade her.

Who is speaking?

1st person narrator "I" – a man.

What is the location/setting of the poem?

We imagine our own setting and the speaker imagines his setting.

Themes and messages of the poem:

Time: the speaker deals with huge tracks of time – centuries, ages, epochs. He sees time as a super-villain out to get him. It's not surprising that Marvell was concerned with time. It was a hot topic in the 1600's.

Sex: If time is the super-villain, then having sex is the super-power he needs to gain control over his enemy. With wit and daring, the speaker discusses sex in frank, beautiful, and disturbing language.

Mortality: Mortality, otherwise known as "death," gets a whole stanza. The speaker presents his vision of the afterlife. He thinks that dying is the ultimate lack of control.

Freedom and Confinement: "To His Coy Mistress" is constantly on the move between images of freedom and images of imprisonment. As we read why the speaker feels trapped, and how he thinks he can get out, we feel the need to examine the freedoms and confinements of our own lives. The poem can feel claustrophobic at some moments, but, at other moments, we feel all our confines crumble.

Carpe diem: seize the day; as time is passing rapidly, and will never return, we should take every opportunity that presents itself to us.

Attitudes and feelings in the poem: /Emotions and feelings of the speaker:

In the 1st stanza the speaker is being romantic, intimate, seductive and passionate towards his Love. He is desiring her. In the 2nd stanza he is witty, urgent, contemplating and morbid. In the 3rd stanza he is passionate, almost violent.

Tone of the poem:

The tone goes through transitions throughout the poem. It begins romantic, intimate, passionate, seductive and tranquil in the 1st stanza. The tone shifts to witty, urgency, contemplating (thinking about) and morbid feelings in the 2nd stanza. The tone in the 3rd stanza is passionate, almost violent, and lacking the romantic tone the speaker began with in stanza 1.

Form and structure of the poem (rhyme, rhythm, line length, stanza length, etc.): Rhyming scheme:

Heroic couplets: aabbccddeeffgghhijj; etc.

Each line rhymes with the one that follows it. Where the lines rhyme in pairs, is called *heroic couplet*.

Effect of each line rhyming with the next one: The rhymes emphasise or strengthen certain words.

Words that rhyme are brought closer to each other in order to bring their connection to the reader's attention.

Language of the poem:

The poem does not use modern English because of words such as “shouldn't”, “thine”, “yonder” and “thy”. A modern lover would not call his beloved “Lady”, as the speaker does in this poem (line 2). “An hundred years”, this expression is longer used. “Thorough” which means “through” in line 44. We use it today to mean “careful” or “extensive”.

Layout of the poem:

The words of the sentence do not go all the way to the right-hand margin of the page as they do when writing prose (prose: words that extend from the left to the right margin and then continue on the next line). The poem is divided into three sections: lines 1-20; lines 21-32; and lines 33-46:

1st section: Describe a certain way for the speaker to love his mistress (or girlfriend). He is imagining how things “would” be if he had his way.

Characteristics of the kind of love in the 1st section: Detailed, respectful, slow, adoring & gradual (progressing slowly).

2nd section: The speaker immediately turns to his mistress's body (her eyes, her forehead and her breasts). He says he wants to appreciate & enjoy each of them for a long period of time – a hundred years, two hundred years, or thirty thousand years (lines 13-16). The speaker introduces a contrasting point of view. The word “but” tells us this.

Three things about the speaker & his poem:

- (1) The poet is concerned about bodily, corporeal & sexual matters.
- (2) The poet is not writing about reality or anything that would take place.
- (3) The theme of time is important & the speaker is dealing with huge tracts of time – centuries, ages, epochs.

3rd section: The speaker is asking his beloved to make love with him. The whole poem is an elaborate act of persuading a woman to sleep with a man. She does not wish to do so and the speaker has to persuade her.

Presentation of a logical argument, or syllogism:

- (1) We could spend decades or even centuries in courtship if time stood still and we remained young.
- (2) But time passes swiftly and relentlessly.
- (3) Therefore, we must enjoy the pleasure of each other now, without further ado.

The conclusion of the argument begins at line 33 with "Now therefore."

The three sections of the poem are carefully designed to persuade the woman to give in to the man's suit, and make love with him.

Type of poem:

Fixed heroic form.

Poetic devices (e.g. metaphors, similes, enjambment, alliteration, personification, etc.):

Explained in the poem.

*Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime*

Supply ONE word for “Had we but world enough, and time”.

- Eternity

What does the poet mean by “coyness”?

- The poet is referring to a certain shyness, reserve or unwillingness on the part of the woman to start participating in sexual intercourse.

Why does the poet refer to the “coyness” as “no crime”? When will it be a crime?

- The poet refers to the crime of wasting so much beauty – beautiful face, wonderful breasts, delightful body – by not using it for its essential purpose which is passionate sexual intercourse.
- If one had all eternity, he says, it would not be a crime but, because time is short and the beauty of the body will quickly fade, then it is indeed a crime not to have sexual intercourse right now.

*We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Huber would complain.*

Comment on the poet's reference to the Ganges and the Humber.

- These are two rivers, one in India (Ganges) and the other in England (the Humber).
- In Marvell's day, these rivers would have been regarded at opposite ends of the world.

What does the poet mean by “Shouldst rubies find”.

- England in the mid-17th century was in the middle of a massive expansion into the world, looking for new colonies and in search of new wealth.

Comment on the poet's choice of words when he writes, “We would sit down, and think which way/To walk, and pass our long love's day.”

- The poet uses words which indicate a slow, leisurely love-making – words like “sit down” and “think” and “walk”. These words are contrasting what he really wants, and that is not leisurely love-making at all, but a frantic and very heated sexual intercourse with his lady.

*I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.*

Explain the expressions “ten years before the Flood” and “Till the conversion of the Jews”.

- The story of Noah's Flood is found towards the beginning of the Book of Genesis (Gen. 5:8-10; 32) which is the very first book of The Bible.
- The conversion of the Jews, on the other hand, occurs in the Book of Revelations which is the very last Book of the Christian New Testament – and according to the book, the conversion would occur at the Battle of the Armageddon at the end of time.
- The poet is referring to an idyllic love that would last forever – from the beginning of time till the very end.

- With so much time on hand, the poet and his lady would have all eternity in which to be shy or coy. But, he argues, they just don't have that sort of time available to them, so they should be getting on with it.

*My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow;*

What does the poet mean by “vegetable love”?

- Image: Vegetables (like love) are nourishing.
- Both his love & the vegetable would grow slowly and spread over centuries until they become enormous and cover huge areas.
- Remember that, in Marvell's time Great Britain was busy carving herself an empire in the world.

*For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.*

Show how these words pay due honour to the lady's social environment and to the accepted etiquette to which she is supposed to adhere.

- The poet doesn't begin his discourse by informing his lady that her coyness is wrong. On the contrary, he tells her that he understands it, that she deserves to be treated with total respect.
- If all else were equal, he would allow her to play coy for as long as she desires and he would not reject her or even attempt to force her to move any faster. He is willing to be a gentlemen.

*But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.*

Show how, as the poet moves into his “seize the moment” argument, his choice of words has dramatically changed from those of the previous stanza/section.

- In stanza/section 1 the poet has stressed a leisurely romance – with words like “sit”, “think” and “walk”. In the 2nd stanza/section he speaks of urgency and refers to “Time's winged chariot” speeding along behind them, forever catching them.
- In the 1st stanza/section he spoke of rivers and forests. In the 2nd stanza/section he refers to “Deserts of vast eternity”. The lush, productive age of her female beauty is with her for just a very short time and therefore follows an eternal desert where there will be no beauty to admire or use.

Why is “Time” personified?

- The poet refers to the common perception of Time being an old man – the Grim Reaper (Death) – who comes along with his scythe to bring in the harvest of the dead.

A Woman's Hands (Eva Bezwoda)

A woman's hands always hold something:

A handbag, a vase, a child, a ring, an idea.

My hands are tired of holding

They simply want to fold themselves.

On a crowded bus, I watched a nun's empty hands

5

Till I reminded myself that she clutched God.

My hands are tired of holding.

I'd gladly let them go, and watch a pair of hands

Run ownerless through the world,

Scattering cooking pots and flowers and rings.

10

A Woman's Hands

1. In the first two lines the poet makes a generalisation about women's hands. She provides a list of things that women's hands often hold. Consider each of the items on the list provided in line 2. Do these items have a symbolic meaning? Does the list suggest something about the poet's or about society's attitudes towards the role of a woman?

A handbag, most of the time you will see a woman with a handbag, you will rarely find women without a handbag. This can suggest that the speaker is carrying a burden. You will only expect a woman to carry a handbag. A vase, can be symbolised as carrying her, the speaker's, burdens and can represent that a woman is only seen as a decoration and with inability to do anything that is expected. A child, normally a child is symbolic connected to something new or a new beginning and women have the most responsibility when it comes to raising a child and are mostly seen as their only function. A ring, can suggest that she is property to her husband and that she is married. Marriage is normally expected from some women. An idea, can represent an aim that the women have for their life but are dismissed by society or by their husbands.

2. In lines three and four the poet moves from a generalisation to something specific. What is the effect of the contrast?

It represents that she distances herself from the "mould" of accepted female behaviour according to society and their beliefs of the requirements of women. The speaker communicates her objecting attitude towards societies' norms for women and her unwillingness to fit into the norm that is created. She does not fit in by the "general" doing of women. The speaker does not only distance herself from society she also distances herself from other women.

3. Lines 5-7 provide another juxtaposition (or contrast). This time there is a contrast between the nun's hands and the speaker's hands. What could be implied in the contrast between lines 6 and 7?

As the nun's hands are not holding something physical, but figuratively "clutched God." she emphasises that she does not even want to hold on to anything figuratively. This can also be an indication that she is not a believer in any religion, as it is expected from society to believe in some other God or creator of the universe. She's opposed to do anything that is required by the norm of society.

4. The poet uses repetition in lines 3 and 7. How does the repetition affect the tone of the poem?

The tone of the poem is dreadful and tired. The speaker is expressing her unhappiness towards societies expectation in doing things that should be done by women. Repeating that she will not do what is required in being the "perfect" woman. She is tired of living up to the expectation of societies norms. She is tired of trying to fit in and being in the system that is created for sheep and not standing up for themselves.

5. The last three lines make use of strange imagery. Discuss the image. What insight does this provide into the feelings of the speaker?

"I'd gladly let them go," this can be an indication that she lets her burden of being a "societies'" women go or leaving the societies' norm. "and watch a pair of hands Run ownerless through the world" She wants to be free and not be classified in what she should do and should not do as a woman. She is her own person without the responsibility of fitting in the norm of what people have created. "Scattering cooking pots and flowers and rings" to stray from the road that society created for her as women, leaving the "cooking pots" being a provider for children and her husband "and flowers" only being a pretty face without functions "and rings" being forced to marry and be a wife, behind.

6. Consider the items listed in line 10. How do these items relate to the items listed in line 2? What insight does this provide into the feelings of the speaker?

This is another list that is required by society to "fulfil" a women's duties that she will not be obliged to. She is opposed in what is required by societies norm and what they want her to do and what they do not want her to do. She is feeling frustrated and not free. She is bound to her burden in being a woman and to fit in the societies norm in being a woman and all the "duties" that she has to do to fit in.

Men in Chains (Mbyiseni Oswald Mtshali)

The train stopped
at a country station.

Through sleep curtained eyes
I peered through the frosty window,
and saw six men: 5
men shorn
of all human honour
like sheep after shearing,
bleating at the blistering wind,
'Go away! Cold wind! Go away! 10
Can't you see we are naked?'

They hobbled into the train
on bare feet,
wrists handcuffed,
ankles manacled 15
with steel rings like cattle at the abattoirs
shying away from the trapdoor.

One man with a head
shaven clean as a potato
whispered to the rising sun, 20
a red eye wiped by a tattered
handkerchief of clouds,
'Oh! Dear Sun!
Won't you warm my heart
with hope?' 25

The train went on its way to nowhere.

Men In Chains

1. What is the poem about? You should be able to describe this in simple terms (that is, what happens) and you should be able to explain if there are any broader themes that the poet might be exploring or social commentaries that he may be advancing.

The speaker is observing six men (line 5) that are prisoners through his sleepy eyes. They are being transported and they were not treated as humans. He is trying to show sympathy for these men who have lost their freedom (naked and exposed) and to the harsh weather. Comparing them to cattle that has no freedom of choice. The prisoners will be transported to “nowhere”. This may implement that these prisoners may not have a future.

2. Identify the punctuation in line 5 and explain its purpose.

The use of the colon is to summarize their implication that these men have. Describing the six prisoners through the “frosty windows” and through the speaker’s “sleepy curtained eyes”. (what they looked like to the poet)

3. A simile is used in lines 6-9 to describe the men. Write a paragraph in which you explain which two things are being compared. Your paragraph should focus on specific words and phrases in the poem, and you should explain the effect of the simile and how it contributes to the broader point being made in the poem.

“men shorn of all human honour like sheep after shearing, bleating at the blistering wind”

The prisoners/six men are deprived from their own humane dignity and respect. They are seen as animals (sheep) that has been shaven clean. Contributing to the one prisoner asking that if the “wind” can’t see their “naked”. Literal - The prisoners may be naked or have little clothing on. Figuratively – They are shear to someone of power. (apartheid regime) “Bleating at the blistering wind” – They are crying/pealing against the “blistering wind” that may be the apartheid regime that abused (“blistering”) the people for no logical reason. Giving a sad and “cold wintery” tone to the poem to feel sympathy to the men/prisoners in their environment. The “-ing” alliteration can suggest the continues abuse that these men endure everyday by people who have power over them.

4. What is significant about lines 10-11? You should take note of the quotation marks at the beginning of line 10 and the end of line 11: What does this punctuation convey? What is the effect of these two lines and how do they contribute to our understanding of the men? How do they support the main idea being advanced in the poem?

One of the six men/prisoners are pleading out the apartheid regime to stop the abuse and their misuse of their power. The poet is quoting what the prisoner/man is saying and asking. The “cold wind” is personified to the apartheid regime. Asking if the regime can’t see that they have been stripped away from their rights already. May give a personal insight of the men/prisoners who are showing their emotion and resistance. They maybe be heading towards death. The men/prisoners are resisting against or pleading against the possibility of death.

5. Identify and explain the figure of speech in line 16. You should be able to name the particular literary device and then explain what two things are being compared. What does this figure of speech tell us about the speaker's fears for what might happen to these men? How does this comparison advance the main idea in poem?

“with steel rings like cattle at the abattoirs”

The poet used a simile in line 16. The men that were chained that got on to the train are compared to cattle that are being moved into a slaughter house to be slaughtered. The poet's concerns are focused on the men that maybe traveling towards death. The men/prisoners are compared to animals that have no freedom, they are in their own “camps” and they are going to be killed/murdered. Showing their life has no meaning in the perspective of the apartheid regime.

6. Identify two instances in the poem where the natural environment is described in order to imagine the feelings of the men in chains. You should be able to discuss each instance separately and then link them to the main ideas in the poem.

Line 9 – “bleating at the blistering wind”

The men/prisoners are crying/pealing against the “blistering wind” that may be the apartheid regime that abused (“blistering”) the people for no logical reason. This contributes to the theme of abuse. Where people were abused for no logical reason.

Line 20 – “whispered to the rising sun”

The men/prisoners are whispering in the morning “rising sun”. Traveling towards the end to their journey. They want hope and love in their hearts as their end is not promising. This contribute to the theme of death.

7. While the speaker appears to be describing a particular event, there is very little specific information about the spatial and temporal contexts, the identity of the speaker, or the men. What is the effect of this? Remember that this poem formed part of a growing body of anti-apartheid poetry. How does the lack of specificity support the point that the poet is trying to make?

The speaker creates the feeling of being restrained by current realities at that time, which obscure one's vision, creating a struggle to see the future. Thus, the speaker sees life as a train journey, and as the train continues so does the struggle continues to be free from restrain. The poet makes use of a mixture of short and long meters, to highlight the importance of the struggle of being restrained. Also, the couplet is used to indicate that the struggle is not just about one person but of all those affected by the abuse, and restraint of the current regime. The ‘I’ in line 4 indicates that the voice of the speaker is that of the poet narrating his story to the (listener) reader of what he observed whilst the train stopped at ‘a country station’. By using very explicit imagery, the speaker takes me through the outer journey of reality and inner journey of the soul. The poem portrays an image of a real event taking place, at that moment in time. Also, how people try to cope with their realty. The speaker doesn't reveal the exact location, as to where the train stopped, so here he is generalizing for it could be anywhere in a country more so South Africa, as the name of the poet is South African.

Stop All the Clocks (W.H. Auden)

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
5
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
10
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
15
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Stop All the Clocks

1. The first two stanzas of this poem present as images of mourning. How does this set the tone of the poem?

The tone of the poem is that of a melancholy sadness enforced by the internal rhyme scheme (aabb) and the melodic iambic pentameter used. The title and first line of the poem demonstrate the author's inconsolable grief by commanding the audience to do something which is not possible, "Stop all the clocks." This reference to time could also be an allusion to the death and brevity of life which cause the author such agony. The verbs of the first three lines of the first stanza represent how the author wants to eliminate the distractions; clocks ticking, telephones ringing, dogs barking, pianos playing, of the day in order that everyone may mourn this death. These imperative verbs are all forbidding something and not until the mention of the coffin in line 4 do the verbs begin to be more allowing; "Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come." The next stanza continues to develop the idea of public mourning. The author has been so deeply touched by such a personal loss that he feels the entire world should share in his grief. The subjects of this stanza; the aeroplane, the sky, the white necks of the public doves, and the traffic policemen, are not typically associated with death. However, by incorporating these things into an elaborate funeral procession, the author emphasizes the need for public mourning. Lines 5 and 6 illustrate the importance of the death to the author, for he wants news of it spread across the sky where everyone on Earth can see it. Also, emphasizing the relationship between the two is the capitalization of the phrase "He Is Dead" from line 6, in which the author tries to deify the deceased. The funeral procession described in lines 7 and 8 serves to further represent both the importance of the deceased and the grief caused by this death.

2. Analyse the rhyme scheme of the poem. What effect does this have on how we read the poem? (For the second part of this question, you might want to look specifically at the third stanza, and how the rhythm and rhyme achieve a particular effect in line 12).

The third stanza, particularly lines 9, 10, and 11, again conveys the intimacy of the relationship between the author and the deceased. The author shows reverence for this man by using exaggerated metaphors to imply his importance to the author. Line 9, "He was my North, my South, my East and West," demonstrates the relationship between the two men and combined with the next line, "My working week and my Sunday rest," implies this relationship to be of a very intimate nature. This is echoed in line 12, "I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong." This can be interpreted to represent the speaker's ignorance toward an inevitable death. The author's love for this man is so all encompassing he describes him as the points of the globe. This love is so strong that the speaker believes it will last forever, not until the death of his companion was the realization made that love, like everything else, will come to an end.

3. The poem explores the intensity and immensity of love, but it seems to be about the very absence of love. In a brief analysis of the images that appear in the final stanza, explain how the use of hyperbole develops and emphasises this absence. (Another word for hyperbole is exaggeration.)

The last stanza and in particular line 16 affirms the hopelessness of the poem. The motif of commanding verbs concludes in this stanza where the author serves to convey a purposeless life without the deceased. The readers are instructed to again perform extraordinary tasks in order that the author may mourn. Lines 13 and 14, "The stars are not wanted now: Put out every one: Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;" express the despair of the author. A world without the sun and moon would be void of everything, including life. This sentiment is echoed in the following line, "Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;" Both these hyperbolic metaphors are again intended to symbolize the aimless feelings of the author and the void left by the death of this man. By commanding the audience to dispel of the oceans and remove the forests of the world, the speaker shows both how meaningless life is without his lover and how the world would be able to equate with such a loss. The pessimism of the poem is captured best in line 16, "For nothing now can ever come to any good." The death of this man has devastated the speaker in such a way that he feels both without purpose and unable to see any good in the world. This line concludes the poem and emphasizes the melancholy tone evident throughout. Like the death of his lover, the last line emphasizes the finality of life and an end void of purpose.

4. Consult a dictionary to find the meaning of the word 'elegy'. Then, utilise your answers to questions 1 -3 to write a short essay about why 'Stop All the Clocks' can be considered an example of an elegiac poem.

The Loneliness Beyond (Sipho Sepamla)

Like raindrops pattering
They come singly an in pairs
Then as a torrent the rush of feet
Shuffles onto platforms
Dragging the last strains of energy. 5

I've seen hearts palpitating
Behind a single maskless face
Tired from the hurrying of the city
Spirits maimed by commands.

I've heard the clicks of tongues 10
Laughter rising above the grouse of mouths
That never rest
From grinding complaints.

Like sheep herded in to a kraal
They crowd numbered coaches 15
Hopeful of a safe landing.

I've watched the multitudes rub shoulders
And I've wondered what they do
With the loneliness beyond;

I've seen throngs of people 20
Disappear into little holes of resting
And I've pondered what might be happening
With the loneliness beyond.

The Loneliness Beyond

1. Who or what is being compared to raindrops in the first stanza? What figure of speech is used? What is the effect of the comparison?

The speaker compares the raindrops to class working people, or cattle. He observes the commuters/cattle/humans arriving. The working class are just like cattle. Slowly at first but then, much like raindrops that begin to intensify before a heavy downpour, "as a torrent". The speaker uses a simile to create the effect of rushing of people on a train station (like herding cattle into their post) and being forced to do work (let the cattle eat to produce food.).

2. In the second line of the second stanza, the speaker talks about a 'single maskless face'. What is he referring to? Why do you think the poet chose this image (what idea does the image convey)?

The speaker is referring to a communal loss of identity under the exhausting demands of the white system and reinforces the dissonance between black subjectivity and urban landscapes. The images here seem to evoke a homogenous, undifferentiated mass, a "single maskless face"; the black body is mechanized by the white state as a labouring object. Sepamla's stress on the workings of the black body (palpitating hearts, clicking tongues, laughter, and grousing mouths) asserts its humanity.

3. Who do you think issues the 'commands' that the speaker refers to in the last line of the second stanza?

The white state as a labouring object.

4. In stanza three, the speaker talks about 'grinding complaints' (line 13). This is a rather odd choice of diction (or odd choice of words). What tone (mood or atmosphere) is evoked by this choice of diction?

The tone changes to desire to escape and anger. It is never ending although the poet wants it to end. The poem works against the reduction of black selfhood by gesturing towards its multiple meanings. The train's trajectory may be limited and circumscribed within the linear movement between point A and point B, but its existence also implies change, flux, and shifting interactions between groups of people who might not otherwise encounter one another. The train is not simply a weapon of control over black selfhood but is also *embodied* by it; that is, made representative of and defined by the individual and collective functions of the black body.

5. There is another comparison in the fourth stanza of the poem. Identify the figure of speech, and discuss why the comparison is effective.

When the train arrives and they start climbing into the coaches, he is reminded of "sheep herded into a kraal". The train's comparison to an animal carrier is counter-balanced by the poem's awareness of the possible reorientation of black identities.

6. In stanza 6, the speaker refers to 'little holes of resting'. What figure of speech is being used, and what is the speaker comparing to a hole?

He stands there observing this moment and wonders at the lives these people live beyond this train station when they "disappear into little holes of resting". The speaker uses a metaphor to compare the train tunnels to the oppressed black people going to their very small hovel or shacks.

7. Consider the denotation and connotations of the word 'hole'. What is the effect of this choice of diction?

The hole can literally mean that their traveling home after work. Through the tunnel. The poet can also compare the "hole" to depression. The poem subtly implies that black bodies are defined above and "beyond" their physical oppression. For there to be a "beyond", the poet implicitly suggests the black community's potential to transcend the fear instilled by the white state. This suggestion relies on an inward movement that recognizes individual alienation and its communal nature, the singular and the "multitude". What prevents the members of the multitude from becoming anonymous symbols of black suffering is Sepamla's attentiveness to their everyday interiorities — their laughter, clicking tongues, and disgruntled chat.

8. The poet makes use of repetition in the last two stanzas of the poem. How does the repetition affect the tone of the poem?

The tone is fearful, that the way black people are being treated and how their being oppressed may never end. He wonders at "the loneliness beyond". The imagery and the dehumanisation of these people, their lack of individuality. The constant use of the word "I've" serves to separate the speaker from the crowd he is observing - think about the possible significance of the fact that while thinking about "the loneliness beyond", he too stands alone. The loneliness evoked by Sepamla may be figured as a catalyst for self-recognition and change. The movement from an exterior to an interior contemplation of apartheid's effects on black subjectivity and Serote's depictions of the everyday articulate notions of blackness which counter white definitions.

Stolen Rivers (Phillipa Yaa de Villiers)

We Africans came to Berlin to sing
and recite poetry. We had an agenda:
remembering our anthems of loss,
galloping, consuming,
the pillage, the cries 5
like forest fires, like haunted children,
how can we, how can we even
begin to redress?
Enraged, we wanted revenge
And then, Chiwoniso, you stepped on stage and 10
you opened your mouth and
every stolen river of platinum and gold
poured out of your mouth in song;
your voice etched us out of the night
and doubled the light in each of us. 15
You restored all the treasure-houses
From Benin to Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe to Cairo;
Africa moved its golden bones,
shook off its heavy chains
and danced again. 20
That night I thought
if only
love could purchase bread,
Africans would not be hungry.

Stolen Rivers

The poem, *Stolen Rivers*, by Phillippa Yaa De Villiers, is a eulogy, dedicated to Chiwoniso Maraire, who was well-known as a Zimbabwean singer, songwriter, and an exponent of Zimbabwean mbira music. De Villiers was immensely inspired by Chiwoniso whose songs too like Phillippa Yaa De Villiers's poetry revolved around **politics, colonialism, and racism**, and among other heavy topics. Chiwoniso died at 37 on 24 July 2013, in South Medical Hospital in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, but De Villiers is still alive and lives with an assortment of animals and a son. However, the one similarity between these two great personalities is that they both are black and live in abroad.

Where Phillippa grew up black in white South Africa as a poet, Chiwoniso was a singer. But the sole purpose of both was to achieve great things for themselves. De Villiers tells us that they both wanted to be the greatest at what they were doing, be it singing or poetry. Their singing and poetry not only brought great joy to them, but also brought hope and happiness to them. Both the personalities of African-origin were very happy in what they had chosen to do, but they still had to face racism. While they both were abroad, their hearts and minds still belonged to Africa and wherever they were in the world, they always represented Africa. In all their main agenda was to sing songs and recite poetry and inspire as well as revolutionize the Africans wherever they were in the world. Thus, the poem under is written in memory of Chiwoniso, and it tells how they both including Phillippa Yaa De Villiers struggled to get what they wished for. Both of them though have different professions, their aim was to achieve the greatest and satisfactory.

The very first line of the poem, "We Africans came to Berlin to sing", and the use of first person "We" themselves suggest that the poet and to whom (Chiwoniso) this poem is dedicated both came to Berlin from Africa to do their jobs like singing songs and reciting poetry. The "We" also represents the whole Africans community, who shift to different parts of the world to earn their livelihood. Since, with "We" she is representing the whole community of Africans; this first person pronoun can be understood as a representative of all those Africans who live in different parts of the world.

The poet further says that they both had the same agenda, that is; singing and reciting poems. But how can they both forget their anthems of loss, like galloping, consuming, the pillage, the cries, like forest fires, like haunted children that they had to face due to racism, how can they forget the loss they had to bear due to racism, and how can they redress the loss caused by this apartheid—a system of segregation or discrimination on the grounds of race in South Africa.

In further lines, when the poet says: "Enraged, we wanted revenge", it means that not only they both (Chiwoniso and Phillippa Yaa De Villiers) were enraged at what they had to face for being black in colour, but they too experienced a great loss of their properties and personal belongings. However, when, the poet says, Chiwoniso stepped on the stage and opened her mouth that is; started singing beautiful songs with great and revolutionary lyrics, the people of Africa were highly impressed and inspired. Every stolen river of platinum and gold poured out of your mouth in song was like an inspiring and revolutionary message for all Africans living in different parts of the world.

The poet says that your voice (Chiwoniso's voice) not only brought them out of the night or the darkness of discrimination and racism, but it also doubled the light in each of them, that is, all the Africans became more enlightened, and aware of their rights. The poet says that from Benin to Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe to Cairo all got mesmerized, enthralled and impressed by Chiwoniso's singing, they were restored with all the treasure-houses.

With the presence of Chiwoniso, Africa not only moved its golden bones, but it also broke free from its heavy chains or shackles of racism. As Chiwoniso came into their lives with her singing, Africa also started dancing again. The last lines of the poem are very poignant, and they really touch hearts when the poet says: "love could purchase bread, Africans would not be hungry," which shows that on the night when the poet was writing this poem, she was very sad, and feeling dejected to the rampant racism, remembering the past loss she had to bear.

Through the last two lines, the poet also gives message, by saying if the whites had love, respect in their hearts, and had not discriminated them on the basis of their colours, neither the Africans had to stay hungry, nor they had to experience the loss, caused by racial discrimination. That night could either be the night when the poet wrote this poem, or this night could also be the night when the great soul of Africa, Chiwoniso Maraire died. Thus, the poem, *Stolen River*, is a masterpiece by Phillippa Yaa De Villiers, who was a well-known writer at her own age.

On His Blindness (John Milton)

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,

And that one talent which is death to hide

Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

5

My true account, lest He returning chide;

'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best

10

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;

They also serve who only stand and wait.

On His Blindness

Poem is autobiographical that represents the poet's life experiences.

What is the poem about? / What is the subject of the poem?

Milton losing his eyesight and questioning how he can serve God by writing poetry if he is blind.

Themes and message of the poem:

In the first 8 lines (octave) Milton questions how he can serve God by writing poetry if he is blind. The tone is questioning and annoyed.

In the last 6 lines (sestet) the tone is acceptance and resignation through personified virtue, Patience, who answers his question.

The poem ends on a positive and optimistic note, Milton realises he can serve God too in his own way.

Type of poem:

Petrarchan sonnet. The poem consists of 14 lines with typical Petrarchan rhyme scheme of abba abba cde cde. Petrarchan divisions based on the octave and sestet.

Images in poem:

Milton's reference to talents refers to Christ's parable. The word "talent" is the name of a coin. Modern meaning: gifts or special abilities we are blessed with.

Milton's gift is a talent for writing poetry, just like the servants were given coins. If Milton "hides" or buries his gift, like 3rd servant, it would be tantamount to Milton's death, a spiritual death in that he would be unable to serve God.

Milton compares himself with this servant, his talent is "lodged" with him, "useless" as he is blind and cannot write. Even he is "more bent" more determined to serve God than ever.

He wishes to present a good "account" to God, to show, as the 2 servants, that he has used his gifts wisely to avoid being chided.

Literary Devices:

- Personification
- Pun
- Oxymoron
- Enjambment

Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds (William Shakespeare)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove.

O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark

5

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wand'ring bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks

Within his bending sickle's* compass come;

10

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

 If this be error and upon me proved,

 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds

Type of poem:

Shakespearean /Elizabethan sonnet written in 14 lines. Broken down into 3 sections called quatrains, rhyming couplet. The final division has 2 lines, which rhyme. the rhyming couplet has a special function of wrapping up the argument

Rhyme scheme:

abab cdcd efef gg –

Poem is held together by the cohesive devices of alliteration and assonance just as it is by the rhyme scheme.

Theme and message of the poem:

The overall meaning or theme of the poem is the speaker's strong resolve to love in the face of difficulties. The speaker uses a tone of confidence, certainty and self-belief throughout the poem to put across his message. As seen in the following expressions "Let me not...", "Love is not...", "Or bends with the remover...", "O, no! it is...", "Love alters not...", "If this be error.../...no man ever loved". This passionate and self-assured tone permeates the whole sonnet. The tone helps us realize that the speaker completely believes that love is the only eternal and indomitable force that overcomes and overwhelms all barriers. And that good and wholesome love is the key to overcoming morality- the inevitability of death.

The poet's use of personification (writing about Love and Time as though they had human qualities) gives the sonnet great power, thereby contributing to a greater understanding of its theme.

Difficulties or obstacles are found in terms such as "remove", "impediments", "tempests", and "doom". The speaker expresses his firm resolve or determination to love.

Images:

Images of sea journeys, storms, navigation by stars, the effective use of the word "compass". Metaphor is used when the poet likens the constancy of love to "an ever fix'd mark" and "a star to every wand'ring bark", both suggesting the idea of the compass and its significance in showing directions during navigation.

The speaker goes on to demonstrate the relationship between love and time, insisting that "Love's not Time's fool", that love never bends with time (line 4); though the bending of Time's sickle destroys youth it cannot alter love (line 10). In other words, the greatest impediment for love is time, but the speaker maintains that love is not inferior to Time. In short, the poem seeks to resist or fight love's enemy — time — which is ultimately the enemy of life itself as the force of ageing, of falling off (out!) of love and the bringer (ultimately) of death. The speaker makes it clear that he is aware of such "impediments" that could stand in the way of love, that could cause love to "alter", but that he himself cannot allow such a thought to cross his mind because of his total conviction and understanding that love is unconditional, pure and complete and transcends time and, perhaps, even death. This conviction is expressed in his use of the first person singular pronouns – "me" (line 1) and "I" (line 14).

Line of reasoning/ last 2 lines:

In this case, the speaker's declaration, "Love is not love ... the edge of doom" is further confirmed in the rhyming couplet (the last two lines of the poem). Here, the idea of genuine love is placed in context – the relation of the poet himself to true love. He says: "If this be error and upon me proved / I never writ nor no man ever loved".

We can rewrite these two lines informally as follows: If my claims or utterances can be "tested" and it can be demonstrated that I'm mistaken, then, **either** I haven't written any work (presumably this poem and other works) **and** neither I nor any other man has ever fallen in love. In this context, the writer seems to suggest that he must be right since he has written and has loved someone before.

Considering what the speaker says in the three quatrains, the rhyming couplet might be seen as ironical or paradoxical, especially given the speaker's keen awareness that time is, in fact, the enemy of love. A highly critical reader will read irony into the couplet – the kind of reader who is perhaps prepared to embrace the contrasting views of the poet or speaker, particularly considering the views and arguments about love expressed in the three quatrains.

The Brown-veined White (Rethabile Masilo)

Many butterflies in Ladybrand today,
as many as snowflakes in a blizzard,
they bend the grass under them
with gasps from their wings: nature
just showing us how a storm might start. 5

They dance upon red colonial roofs
along the way. Trees, born in the years
of blood-letting, have their arms bent up
in defeat. We slip onto a black road
toward Bloemfontein, grocery on the back-seat – 10

this road, this thin strip of road, is the tape
that measures distress. I push the car harder
up the hillside into our mountains and head
toward Maseru, the other side of the river, where surely
the same butterflies had earlier begun their flight 15

that morning: and a few filter still among willows
that border the river, like the last falling fluffs
of a pillow fight, the smell of summer in the air.
Cicadas come out from their trenches: December!
We watch those last white butterflies disappear 20

north-east toward Ladybrand, fluttering,
and then continue home to be with our own family.

The Brown-veined White

1: What do you think the 'brown-veined white' of the title refers to? Remember to quote from the poem to support your answer.

The title refers to the Brown-veined white butterfly which is a medium sized butterfly and white in colour that is common over most of South Africa.

2: Read the first five lines of the poem carefully. In what ways do you think butterflies can be like 'snowflakes in a blizzard' (line 2)?

The annual migration of the Brown-veined White Butterfly in South Africa takes place during summer. Every year in summer (December) the Brown-veined White butterflies gather in their millions (like snowflakes in a blizzard), when they migrate in a north-easterly direction.

3: Give two possible reasons why the word 'nature' appears alone after the colon in line 4, despite the fact that the sentence continues in the next line (hint: one reason is a specific literary device, another relates to meaning).

The colon functions as an introductory punctuation mark, notifying the reader that the forthcoming information supports, explains, or elaborates upon what has been said prior to the colon. The first four lines is a description of 'nature'. It also emphasises the word 'nature'. The literary device is enjambment. It can be defined as a thought or sense, phrase or clause, in a line of poetry that does not come to an end at the line break, but moves over to the next line. In simple words, it is the running on of a sense from one couplet or line to the next without a major pause or syntactical break.

4: In lines 7-9 we learn that '[t]rees, born in the years/ of blood-letting, have their arms bent up/ in defeat'. What literary device does the poet use here? Explain.

Personification. It means giving inanimate (lifeless) objects human qualities.

5: Why do you think the speaker says that the 'black road' (line 9) is 'the tape/ that measures distress' (lines 11-12)?

The butterflies migrate in a north-easterly direction which is a long road and it takes a long time to reach their destination.

6: What are '[c]icadas, and why do they make the speaker say 'December' (line 19)?

Cicadas are insects with long transparent wings, found chiefly in warm countries. December is the start of summer in South Africa and very hot. The cicadas most commonly emerge in summer time when the Brown-veined white butterflies gather in their millions

7: Does this poem have a specific rhyme scheme? What type of poem is this? Explain.

Rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyme that comes at the end of each verse or line in poetry. This poem does not have a specific rhyme scheme. It is written in free verse style. Free verse poems do not follow the rules, and have no rhyme or rhythm; but they are still an artistic expression. They are sometimes thought to be a modern form of poetry; but, the free verse types of poem have been around for hundreds of years.