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.

**Still I rise**

**Maya Angelou (1928-)**

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. **Smile**

Does my *sassiness* upset you?

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 certainly of tides,

Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops, **Smile**

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

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. **Smile**
Does my sexiness upset you?

Does it come as a surprise

**Stanza 7**

Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds

At the meeting of my thighs?

**Stanza 8**

Out of the huts of history’s shame

I rise

Up from a past that’s rooted in pain

I rise

Metaphor: I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

Metaphor: I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

*ossipness - cheekiness

**Anaphora:** The repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.

**Enjambment:** The running on of the thought from one line, couplet, or stanza to the next without a syntactical break/punctuated pause.
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?


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

Personal response to the poem (how do I feel, what impact does the poem have on me):

YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSE!