

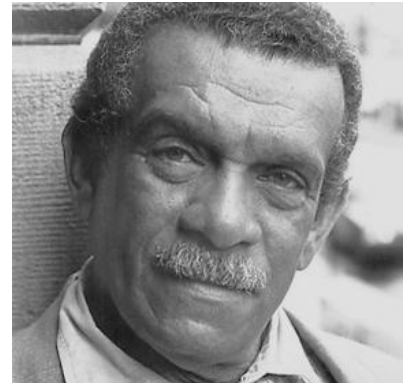
Grade 11
Poetry Pack
2017

English Home
Language

A Far Cry from Africa: Derek Walcott

A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt
Of Africa. Kikuyu, quick as flies
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt.
Corpses are scattered through a paradise.
Only the worm, colonel of carrion, cries: 5
'Waste no compassion on these separate dead!'
Statistics justify and scholars seize
The salients of colonial policy,
What is that to the white child hacked in bed?
To savages, expendable as Jews? 10
Threshed out by beaters, the long rushes break
In a white dust of ibises whose cries
Have wheeled since civilization's dawn
From the parched river or beast-teeming plain.
The violence of beast on beast is read 15
As natural law, but upright man
Seeks his divinity by inflicting pain.
Delirious as these worried beasts, his wars
Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum,
While he calls courage still that native dread 20
Of the white peace contracted by the dead.

Again brutish necessity wipes its hands
Upon the napkins of a dirty cause, again
A waste of our compassion, as with Spain,
The gorilla wrestles with the superman. 25
I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?
I who have cursed
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love? 30
Betray them both, or give back what they give?
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?
How can I turn from Africa and live?



A Far Cry from Africa by Derek Walcott deals with the theme of split identity and anxiety caused by it in the face of the struggle in which the poet could side with neither party. It is, in short, about the poet's ambivalent feelings towards the Kenyan terrorists and the counter-terrorist white colonial government, both of which were 'inhuman', during the independence struggle of the country in the 1950s. The persona, probably the poet himself, can take favour of none of them since both bloods circulate along his veins.

Questions:

1. Discuss the theme of the poem.
2. What does the idiom 'a far cry' mean?
3. Discuss how imagery is used in the poem.
4. Discuss how violence and cruelty is brought out in the poem.
5. Explain in detail what the subject of the poem is.

Eating Poetry

By Mark Strand

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth. 1
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees. 5
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll, 10
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams. 15

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.



“Eating Poetry” is a short poem in free verse, its eighteen lines divided into six stanzas. The title suggests either comedy or surrealism, and the poem contains elements of both. Mark Strand uses the first person to create a persona whose voice is Strand’s but whose experience is imaginary; indeed, the fact that the poem is a work of imagination is the main

Questions:

1. Explain the metaphor in the title. (2)
2. Refer to stanzas 1 and 2. What has happened to the speaker? Quote in support of your answer. (2)
3. In terms of the extended metaphor, what happened to the poems that they ‘are gone’ in line 7? (1)
4. Account for the change in the librarian’s behaviour. (2)
5. The first and last stanzas support the same idea. Explain fully. (2)
5. Identify the tone of the poem. (1)

[10]

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

John Donne, 1572 – 1631

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
“The breath goes now,” and some say, “No,”

So let us melt, and make no noise, 5
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
‘Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of the earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant; 10
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers’ love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove 15
Those things which elemented it.

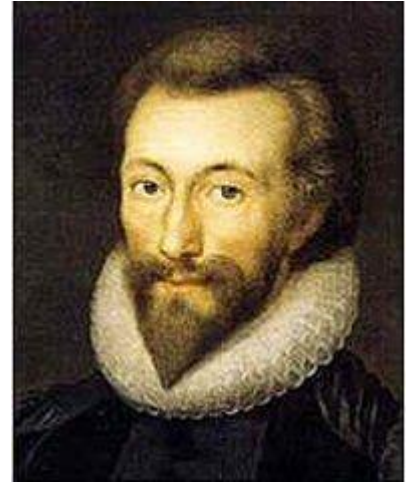
But we, by a love so much refined
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss. 20

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion.
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so 25
As stiff twin compasses are two:
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do;

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam, 30
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like the other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just, 35
And makes me end where I begun.



John Donne (22 January 1573– 31 March 1631) was an English poet and cleric in the Church of England.

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"

The poet begins by comparing the love between his beloved and himself with the passing away of virtuous men. Such men expire so peacefully that their friends cannot determine when they are truly dead. Likewise, his beloved should let the two of them depart in peace, not revealing their love to "the laity."

Earthquakes bring harm and fear about the meaning of the rupture, but such fears should not affect his beloved because of the firm nature of their love. Other lovers become fearful when distance separates them—a much greater distance than the cracks in the earth after a quake—since for them, love is based on the physical presence or attractiveness of each other. Yet for the poet and his beloved, such a split is "innocent," like the movements of the heavenly spheres, because their love transcends mere physicality.

Indeed, the separation merely adds to the distance covered by their love, like a sheet of gold, hammered so thin that it covers a huge area and gilds so much more than a love concentrated in one place ever could.

He finishes the poem with a longer comparison of himself and his wife to the two legs of a compass. They are joined at the top, and she is perfectly grounded at the centre point. As he travels farther from the centre, she leans toward him, and as he travels in his circles, she remains firm in the centre, making his circles perfect.

Metaphysical poetry, a term coined by Samuel Johnson, has its roots in 17th-century England. This type of **poetry** is witty, ingenious, and highly philosophical. Its topics included love, life and existence. It used literary elements of similes, metaphors, imagery, paradoxes, conceit, and far-fetched views of reality.

Questions:

1. What is a valediction?
2. Identify and discuss the theme of the poem.
3. The first two stanzas contain a simile beginning with "as" in line 1 and continuing to "so" in line 5.
4. What kind of scene or situation is he describing in the first stanza?
5. Explain what the difference is between "Dull sublunary lovers' love" and the love of the speaker and his woman as described in stanzas 4 and 5.
6. What is he comparing their united souls to in the sixth stanza?
7. Discuss the metaphor used in the last three stanzas.
8. What is "metaphysical" about this poem? What parts of the poem lead you to your answer?
9. The poem makes a lot of arguments—list all the reasons Donne gives why he and his wife should not mourn. Do they seem believable to you? Why or why not?
10. In a paragraph, briefly explain what the point of this poem is.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells; 5
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.



What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys but in their eyes 10
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk¹¹ a drawing-down of blinds.

1. **Anthem:** perhaps best known in the expression "The National Anthem;" also, an important religious song (often expressing joy); here, perhaps, a solemn song of celebration
2. **passing-bells:** a bell tolled after someone's death to announce the death to the world
3. **patter out:** rapidly speak.
4. **orisons:** prayers, here funeral prayers
5. **mockeries:** ceremonies which are insults. Here Owen seems to be suggesting that the Christian religion, with its loving God, can have nothing to do with the deaths of so many thousands of men.
6. **demented:** raving mad
7. **bugles:** a bugle is played at military funerals (sounding the last post)
8. **shires:** English counties and countryside from which so many of the soldiers came
9. **candles:** church candles, or the candles lit in the room where a body lies in a coffin
10. **pallor:** paleness
11. **dusk:** a symbolic significance
12. **drawing-down of blinds:** normally a preparation for night, but also, here, the tradition of drawing the blinds in a room where a dead person lies, as a sign to the world and as a mark of respect. The coming of night is like the drawing down of blinds.

Questions:

1. Discuss why the poem is called an "anthem"?
2. Explain why the youth are "doomed"?
3. What are "passing bells"? Why do we not hear traditional "passing bells" for those who "die as cattle"?
4. What is heard as a replacement for "passing bells"?
5. Why is the anger of the guns "monstrous"?
6. Explain why the rifles "stutter"? What is their speed?
7. What are "hasty orisons"? Who is "pattering" out "hasty orisons" and why?
8. Discuss what "mockeries" could there be for the soldiers? Why are there no "mockeries", no "prayers" or "bells"?
9. What "choirs" are there? Why are they "shrill" and "demented"? What do these adjectives mean?
10. Why will the "pallor girls' brows be their pall"? What is a pall?

DA SAME DA SAME

By Sipho Sepamla

I doesn't care of you black
I doesn't care of you white
I doesn't care of you India
I doesn't care of you clearlink
if sometimes you Saus Afrika
you gotta big terrible, terrible
somewheres in yourselves 5

I mean for sure now
all da peoples is make like God
an' da God I knows for sure
He make avarybudy wit' one heart 10

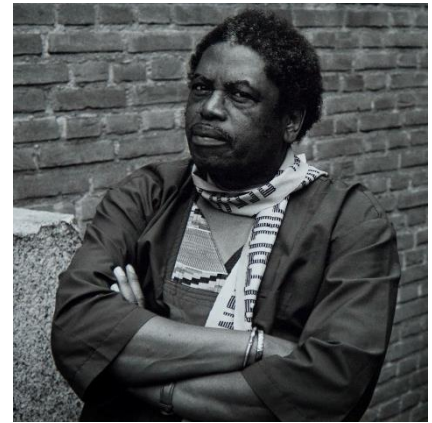
for sure now dis heart go-go da same
dats for meaning to say
one man no diflent to anader

so now 15
you see a big terrible terrible stand here
how one man make anader man feel
da pain he doesn't feel hissself
for sure no dats da whole point

sometime you wanna know how I meaning for 20
is simple
when da nail of say da t'orn tree
scratch little bit little bit of da skin

I doesn't care of you black
I doesn't care of you white 25
I doesn't care of you India
I doesn't care of you clearlink
I mean for sure da skin
only one t'ing come for sure
an' da one t'ing for sure is red blood 30
dats for sure da same, da same for avarybudy

so for sure now
you doesn't look anader man in de eye



Questions:

1. What effect is the poet trying to achieve by writing the poem the way he has?
2. What message is he trying to convey through the poem?
3. Do you think his use of language is effective or offensive? Why?
4. On what basis does he say that all people are equal?
5. The last two lines seem to contradict the message of the poem. How do you interpret them?

London, 1802

By William Wordsworth

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea: 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

5



This is a typical example of an Italian Sonnet. The poet describes the English people as stagnant and selfish in this poem.

Addressing Milton directly – as if in conversation with him

1 Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour: } Metaphor
2 England hath need of thee: she is a Fen. }
3 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen, }
4 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower, } **Octave (8 lines)**
5 Have forfeited their ancient English dower }
6 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men; }
7 Oh! raise us up, return to us again; } Comparison
8 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power. }
9 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart: }
10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea: }
11 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free, } **Sestet (6 lines)**
12 So didst thou travel on life's common way, }
13 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart }
14 The lowliest duties on herself did lay. }

Questions:

1. Who is Milton?
2. Why does Wordsworth feel that England needs Milton? Refer specifically to the problems mentioned in the poem.
3. Would it be accurate to label this poem a sonnet? Motivate fully.
4. How does the interjection 'Oh!' add to the mood of the sonnet?
5. Describe Wordsworth's tone and quote to support your answer.
6. What evidence is there in the poem that Wordsworth's sentiments are uniquely Romantic?
7. Why is 'cheerful godliness' an admirable quality to Wordsworth?
8. Wordsworth mourns certain qualities in society during 1802. Does modern day society have any of these same qualities? Answer thoroughly and justify your views.

Summary

The speaker addresses the soul of the dead poet John Milton, saying that he should be alive at this moment in history, for England needs him. England, the speaker says, is stagnant and selfish, and Milton could raise her up again. The speaker says that Milton could give England "manners, virtue, freedom, power," for his soul was like a star, his voice had a sound as pure as the sea, and he moved through the world with "cheerful godliness," laying upon himself the "lowest duties."

This poem is one of the many excellent sonnets Wordsworth wrote in the early 1800s. Sonnets are fourteen-line poetic inventions written in iambic pentameter. There are several varieties of sonnets; "The world is too much with us" takes the form of a Petrarchan sonnet, modelled after the work of Petrarch, an Italian poet of the early Renaissance. A Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two parts, an octave (the first eight lines of the poem) and a sestet (the final six lines). The Petrarchan sonnet can take a number of variable rhyme schemes; in this case, the octave (which typically proposes a question or an idea), follows a rhyme scheme of ABBAABBA, and the sestet (which typically answers the question or comments upon the idea) follows a rhyme scheme of BCCDBD.



Random Notes to my Son

Keorapetse Kgositsile

Beware, my son, words
that carry the loudnesses
of blind desire also carry
the slime of illusion
dripping like pus from the slave's battered back 5
e.g. they speak of black power whose eyes
will not threaten the quick whitening of their own intent
what days will you inherit?
what shadows inhabit your silences?

I have aspired to expression, all these years, 10
elegant past the most eloquent word. But here now
our tongue dries into maggots as we continue our slimy
death and grin. Except today it is fashionable to scream
of pride and beauty as though it were not known that
'slaves and dead people have no beauty' 15

Confusion
in me and around me
confusion. This pain was
not from the past. This pain was
not because we had failed 20
to understand:
this land is mine
confusion and borrowed fears
it was. We stood like shrubs
shrivelled on this piece of earth
the ground parched and cracked
through the cracks my cry: 25

And what shapes
in assent and ascent
must people the eye of newborn 30
determined desire know
no frightened tear ever rolls on
to the elegance of fire. I have
fallen with all the names I am
but the newborn eye, old as 35
childbirth, must touch the day
that, speaking my language, will
say, today we move, we move ?



Keorapetse William Kgositsile, also known as "**Bra Willie**" (born 19 September 1938), is a South African poet and political activist. He was inaugurated as South Africa's National Poet Laureate in 2006 . Keorapetse was one of the first to bridge the gap between African poetry and Black poetry in the United States. He is the father of hip-hop recording artist Earl Sweatshirt.

Questions

1. From reading the title of the poem, how can the reader assume that the poem is meant to be a personal one?
2. Discuss what is meant in line 4.
3. Refer to line 15, discuss what is meant by 'slaves and dead people have no beauty'.
4. Refer to stanza 3. Explain what the confusion is that the poet refers to.
5. Discuss the theme of the poem.
6. Summarise the subject matter of the poem in a short paragraph.

Those Winter Sundays

Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with his cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him. 5
I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking,
When the rooms were warm, he'd call
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,
Speaking indifferently to him 10
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?



Robert Hayden's poetry, which explored his concerns about race and African-American history, gained international recognition in the 1960s, and Hayden eventually became the first black American to be appointed as consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress.

Questions

1. What does the first stanza reveal about the speaker's father's dedication to his family?
2. What does the speaker mean when he says that he could "hear the cold splintering, breaking"?
3. What does the speaker mean by the "chronic angers" of his house?
4. How does the speaker eventually learn about "love's austere and lonely offices"?
5. Why are some young people unable to appreciate the sacrifices their parents make for them?
6. Why do young people sometimes have a difficult time communicating with their parents?
7. How has the speaker's attitude toward his father changed since his childhood?
8. How does he make it clear that he now regrets the way he reacted to his father?
9. What is his message to readers?
10. Discuss the theme of the poem.

In Detention

Chris van Wyk

He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing 5
He fell from the ninth floor
He hanged himself while washing
He slipped from the ninth floor
He hung from the ninth floor
He slipped on the ninth floor while washing 10
He fell from a piece of soap while slipping
He hung from the ninth floor
He washed from the ninth floor while slipping
He hung from a piece of soap while washing.



The title immediately places the poem in apartheid South Africa, and comments indirectly on the number of deaths in detention of political activists during these years (at least 67 people died in detention).

In order to expose and attack a horrifying practice, Van Wyk uses the kind of explanations typically offered by the security police for deaths in detention in South Africa. During the apartheid era, laws were passed which allowed the security police to detain people indefinitely without having to give any reason. Many people were tortured, some committed suicide, and some (like Steve Biko) died at the hands of their interrogators (those who were questioning them).

Questions

1. The poem has a satirical element.
 - a) In what way is it satirical? (1) b)
 - Why do you think humour was used, rather than direct criticism (2)
2. The first line is clearly a lie. How do we know this? (2)
3. a) Was the prisoner's death a suicide, an accident or neither? (1) b)
Why do you think this? (2)
4. What do you think this poem is saying other than recounting possible statements from a prison? (2)

Mid-Term Break

Seamus Heaney

I sat all morning in the college sick bay
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.
At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.

In the porch I met my father crying—
He had always taken funerals in his stride— 5
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.

The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram
When I came in, and I was embarrassed
By old men standing up to shake my hand

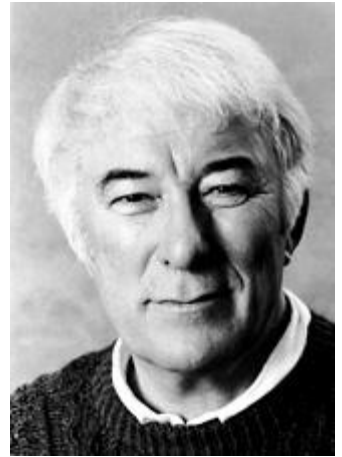
And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'. 10
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
Away at school, as my mother held my hand

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived
With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses. 15

Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,

Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,
He lay in the four-foot box as in his cot. 20
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

A four-foot box, a foot for every year.



The subject of this poem is the death of Seamus Heaney's younger brother, Christopher who was killed by a car at the age of four. It is a tremendously poignant poem and its emotional power derives in large measure from the fact that Heaney is very muted and understated with respect to his own emotional response. He chooses to focus more upon the reaction of his parents in order to convey the shocking impact of the death of their little boy. Usually, we must be careful not to assume the "I" in a poem is, in fact, the poet. In this case, though, we may be sure that Mid-Term Break is purely and intensely

Questions

1. Discuss what the reader's first impressions may be of the poem when reading the title of the poem.
2. What time did the neighbours pick the boy up?
3. When he arrived home what was the boy's father doing?
4. When was the last time the boy had seen his little brother?
5. What two items were beside the bed?
6. What age was his little brother when he died?
7. Discuss the theme of the poem.
8. In a short paragraph, discuss the subject of the poem.

My Name

Magoleng Wa Selepe

Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa

Look what they have done to my name. . .
the wonderful name of my great-great-grandmothers
Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa

The burly bureaucrat was surprised.
What he heard was music to his ears 5
'Wat is daai, sé nou weer?'
'I am from Chief Daluxolo Velayigodle of emaMpodweni
And my name is Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.'
Messiah, help me!
My name is so simple 10
and yet so meaningful,
but to this man it is trash. . .

He gives me a name
Convenient enough to answer his whim:
I end up being 15
Maria. . .
I. . .
Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.

During apartheid, many black South Africans had two names. One was the name that they were given by their parents and was in their own language. The other was a European name that their employers would refer to them by. In the poem, *My Name*, Magoleng wa Selepe writes about the effects of this.

Questions

1. State TWO reasons why the speaker is very proud of her name.
2. Refer to line 2 ('Look what they have done to my name ...'). What feeling does the speaker express in this line?
3. What does the word 'burly' (line 5) suggest about the bureaucrat?
4. Refer to line 6 ('What he heard was music to his ears'). Does the reference to music suggest that the bureaucrat appreciates the speaker's name? Give a reason for your answer.
5. Where does the speaker come from?
6. Refer to line 10 ('Messiah, help me'). What does the use of the word 'Messiah' suggest about the speaker?
7. Identify the figure of speech used in line 13, ('but to this man it is trash ...').
8. Explain why the bureaucrat changes the speaker's name to Maria.
9. Choose ONE word that emphasises how the speaker feels about her name.
10. What does this poem suggest about the bureaucrat's political beliefs?
11. Refer to lines 16 – 18 (I end up being Maria ... I ...). Discuss the effect created by the use of very short lines at this point in the poem.

Song of Hope

Cecil Rajendra

At that hour
when the sun
slinks off
behind hills
and night 5

- a panther -
crouches
ready to spring
upon our un-
suspecting city. 10

i want to sing
the coiled desires
of this land
the caged dreams
of forgotten men. 15

i want to sing
of all that was
but no longer is
of all that never was
but 20
could have been.

i want to sing
the obsidian
unspelled hopes
of our children 25

i want to sing
to remind us
never to despair
that every hour
every minute 30
somewhere on the face
of this earth
it is glorious morning



Cecil Rajendra (born 1941) is a Malaysian poet and lawyer. His poems have been published in more than 50 countries and translated into several languages.

Rajendra, nicknamed 'The Lawyer-Poet', writes controversial poems that address human rights and environmental problems. As an attorney, his work has focused on helping poorer people who are in need of legal aid. He is a co-founder of Penang Legal Aid Centre (PLAC).

Questions

1. Discuss what the reader may assume what the tone is after reading the title. Explain fully.
2. Comment on the short sentences used and explain its effectiveness.
3. Refer to lines 9 and 10. Discuss why the poet uses the word 'unsuspecting'.
4. Quote a line from stanza two that deals with regret.
5. Discuss the theme of the poem.