

Making Sense of Poetry

reading & responding to verse

PART ONE: Begin by reading the poem in the left column. Then, use the prompts and questions in the right column to direct your analysis.

“Silence Concerning an Ancient Stone”

by Rosario Castellanos

Here I am, seated, with all my words,
like a basket of green fruit, intact.
The fragments
of a thousand destroyed ancient gods
seek and draw near each other in my blood.

They long
to rebuild their statue.
From their shattered mouths
a song strives to rise to my mouth,
a scent of burned resins, some gesture
of mysterious wrought stone.
But I am oblivion, treason,
the shell that did not keep from the sea
even the echo of the smallest wave.

I look not at the submerged temples,
but only at the trees that above the ruins
move their vast shadow, with acid teeth bite
the wind as it passes.
And the seals close under my eyes like
the flower under the searching fingers of a blind
man.

But I know: behind
my body another body crouches,
and round about me many breaths
furtively cross
like nocturnal beasts in the jungle.
I know: somewhere,
like the cactus in the desert,
a constellated heart of spines,
it is waiting for a name, as the cactus the rain.

But I know only a few words
in the lapidary language,
under which they buried my ancestor alive.
(from the Spanish, English text by George D.
Schade)

POINT OF VIEW: THE SPEAKER

1. In this poem who is the speaker and who is the subject?

Complete the following sentences:

The speaker of the poem can be described as _____,
_____, and _____.

The attitude of the speaker toward the subject

_____, and
_____.

UNIVERSAL THEME: ANCESTRY & IDENTITY

3. In this poem, the speaker frequently mentions the power of ANCESTRY. **CIRCLE** any words in the poem that alludes to a **Mesoamerican ancestry**.

4. Complete the following sentence:

The poem titled, “_____” communicates the theme that_____.

POETIC DEVICE FOCUS: IMAGERY & MOOD

5. There are several **powerful images** in this poem. Copy three examples of imagery onto the lines below.

6. Complete the following sentences.

One of the images in the poem helps the reader picture

_____ is _____ (

MOOD: This image helps the reader understand/ feel/ learn

_____.

PART TWO: Write a summary of the poem, using the provided sentence frames and the sentences you created above.

The poem _____ by _____ illustrates the idea that _____.

The **mood** of the poem can be described as _____.

Some of the imagery that conveys the poems' mood include _____.

The poem uses imagery to emphasize _____. For example, the image about _____

_____ explains _____.