

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_.