

Poem: August, 1965

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. Diction and Imagery. Stanza one and stanza five both describe the same person. What type of attitude does the person have in the first stanza and how does it change in the second stanza? What key words help to capture the attitude of the person in both stanzas?
2. Diction and conflict. Through diction, violence and conflict are either directly mentioned or alluded to in throughout the poem. Which stanzas use more subtle wording and which ones employ more confrontational wording? Is there a pattern? Explain the change in tone and mood created through diction.
3. How does the fourth stanza serve as a shift in tone in the poem?
4. The riots have an obvious impact on both mother and daughter. The riot serves as a monster. What does she learn about monsters and her mother that leads her to acknowledge a loss of innocence?

Poem: WE NEED VIDEO CAM EYES

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1. Point-of-View. Who is the speaker addressing in the poem? Omit the first word, “Rodney,” and change the pronouns throughout the poem from 2nd to 3rd person – “you” to him. What impact does it have on the focus, tone, and conflict?
2. There are two points of historical allusion. What are they and why are they used?
3. What does the word effigy mean and why is it used on line 14?
4. The first nine lines of the poem describe an unknown motorist in a car. From the description of the car, what might it symbolize?
5. What two functions does the video recording serve in the poem?

Poem: EXONERATED: A CRUCIFIXION

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1. Diction: The words brick, razors, slice, and orange are repeated throughout the poem. What is the impact of the repetition and the various ways in which the words are used? Be sure to consider when the word changes from an adjective to a pronoun.
2. Diction. Line 27 uses the word bones and line 46 uses the word deboned to highlight pivotal points of injustice; what are they? Why are those two words used? Explain the visual and what it is alluding to.
3. Format. There are six indented stanzas that highlight conflict, torture, and social injustice in present and historical context. Identify diction and images in the six indented stanzas.
4. Format. There are seven stanzas that highlight the injustice and suffering Kalief experienced. How do the description in these seven stanzas differ in tone and impact from the six indented stanzas?
5. Why is the title of the poem referred to as a crucifixion?

Poem: STRANGE FRUIT: A COMMUNION

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. Identify alliteration in the poem? How does it impact description, rhythm, and tone?
2. How is double entendre used in the poem?
3. The word unarmed is repeated in the poem. What are the various ways in which the people in the poem are unarmed?
4. What nouns provide context for each incident? What do the nouns reveal about the people being described? There is a common thread of being on, what should have been, an ordinary journey in each of the incidents. Identify the journeys and occasions.
5. Why is the second half of the title referred to as “A Communion”?