

What are the authorial choices and how are they used to convey meaning in the poem? What insights do these choices shed on global issues?

The five questions for poetry can also guide your annotations:

1. Who is the speaker?
2. What is the situation?
3. What is the speaker's tone/attitude?
4. What is the meaning/central purpose of the poem?
5. How does the poet convey ideas in 1-4 (techniques)?

Lot's Wife

They say I looked back out of curiosity.

People telling the story of Lot's wife dying,
putting words in her mouth

But I could have had other reasons.

I looked back mourning my silver bowl.

mourning her lovers
death

Carelessly, while tying my sandal strap.

So I wouldn't have to keep staring at the righteous nape

5

of my husband Lot's neck.

She was nervous that if she got turned to salt
her husband wouldn't care

From the sudden conviction that if I dropped dead

he wouldn't so much as hesitate.

God punishing the people
who had sinned in the land

From the disobedience of the meek.

Checking for pursuers.

10

Struck by the silence, hoping God had changed his mind.

Our two daughters were already vanishing over the hilltop.

her daughters are
all grown up and away from
home. Time passes

I felt age within me. Distance.

The sudden dread
of aging and death

The futility of wandering. Torpor.

and the futility of trying
to wander off to get out of it

I looked back setting my bundle down.

15

I looked back not knowing where to set my foot.

Serpents appeared on my path,

Animal symbols of
death and corpses

spiders, field mice, baby vultures.

They were neither good nor evil now--every living thing

symbols of death no
longer evil, fleeing gods wrath,

was simply creeping or hopping along in the mass panic.

20

I looked back in desolation.

Feelings of hopelessness, sadness, desperation
as she is forced to flee her home

In shame because we had stolen away.

Wanting to cry out, to go home.

she lost her home

Or only when a sudden gust of wind

unbound my hair and lifted up my robe.

25

It seemed to me that they were watching from the walls of Sodom

A reference to the city of Sodom which was destroyed by God for the people's wickedness.

and bursting into thunderous laughter again and again.

I looked back in anger.

People from outside Sodom mocking

To savor their terrible fate.

All people within Sodom's walls would be killed

I looked back for all the reasons given above.

30

I looked back involuntarily.

It was only a rock that turned underfoot, growling at me.

It was a sudden crack that stopped me in my tracks.

They can't bear to not look while their city was being destroyed

A hamster on its hind paws tottered on the edge.

It was then we both glanced back.

35

No, no. I ran on.

trying to avoid her father even though she already looked back

I crept, I flew upward

until darkness fell from the heavens

and with it scorching gravel and dead birds.

I couldn't breathe and spun around and around.

40

Anyone who saw me must have thought I was dancing.

It's not inconceivable that my eyes were open. She turned into salt because

It's possible I fell facing the city.

She fell back

The repetition of "I looked back" creates significance in the story for the consequences of doing so

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