**A Stone's Throw -**Literature Notes

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**Please note that the information given on this poem is not meant to replace any material given in the classroom setting. It is a very BASIC giude to enable a literal understanding of the poem. Metaphorical interpretations should be sought in the classroom.**

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| **The physical structure of this poem has been altered from the original layout in the text.**   5.We shouted out 'We've got her! Here she is! It's her all right '. We caught her. There she was -  1.A decent-looking woman, you'd have said, (6.They often are) Beautiful, but 7.dead scared, 8.Tousled - we roughed her up A little, 9.nothing much  And not the first time By any means She'd felt men's hands Greedy over her body -  10.But ours were virtuous, Of course.  And if our fingers bruised Her shuddering skin, These were love-bites, compared To the 2.hail of kisses of stone, The last assault And 11.battery, frigid rape, 3.To come 12.Of right For justice must be done Specially when It 13.tastes so good.  And then - 14.this guru, Preacher, God-merchant, God-knows-what - Spoilt the whole thing, Speaking to her 15.(Should never speak to them) Squatting on the ground - her level, Writing in the dust Something we couldn't read. 16.And saw in her Something we couldn't see At least until 17.He turned his eyes on us, Her eyes on us, Our eyes upon ourselves.  18.We walked away Still holding stones  That we may throw Another day Given the urge.  Mitchel, E. 'A Stone's Throw' in A World of Prose. Edited by Mark McWatt and Hazel Simmonds McDonald. Pearson Education Ltd, 2005. | **This is the OPINION of one individual, which might not coincide with the views of others.**   LITERAL MEANING A crowd, of which the persona forms a part, has caught a woman. The persona implies to the reader that the woman is not decent. She was beautiful, but scared because she had gotten 'roughed up' a little by the crowd. The persona states that she has experienced men's hands on her body before, but this crowd's hands were virtuous. He also makes a proviso that if this crowd bruises her, it cannot be compared to what she has experienced before. He also speaks about a last assault and battery to come. He justifies this last assault by calling it justice, and it is justice that feels not only right, but good. The crowd's 'justice' is placed on hold by the interruption of a preacher, who stops to talk to the lady. He squats on the ground and writes something that the crowd cannot see. Essentially, the preacher judges them, thereby allowing the lady to also judge the crowd, leading to the crowd inevitably judging itself. The crowd walks away from the lady, still holding stones [which can be seen as a metaphor for judgments] that can be thrown another day.  Picture  LITERARY DEVICES 1. SARCASM The persona is making the point that the lady was in fact NOT decent looking.   2. PERSONIFICATION This device is particularly effective because the word 'kisses' is used. Kiss implies something pleasant, but it is actually utilized to emphasize something painful that has happened to the lady; she was stoned.  3. PUN   * Title: The title of the poem is itself a pun. A stone's throw is used by many people in the Caribbean to describe a close distance. eg. "She lives a stone's throw away". The other use of the title is to highlight the content of the poem. It is a figurative stoning, or judging, of a woman. |

* Line 23: There is a play on the word 'come'. The persona is telling us that the crowd is planning to rape the lady, this act is to come, or occur, in the near future. Come, in this context, also means to ejaculate, the culmination of the act of sex. The rapists in the crowd also plan to 'come'.

4. ALLUSION (biblical)  
The content of the poem alludes to the story of Mary Magdalene in the Christian Bible. See [John 8 v 5-7.](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%208:5-7&version=NIV)   
  
IMPORTANT WORDS/ PHRASES  
5. 'we'  
This immediately tells the reader that the persona is in a crowd, which highlights to us that the mob mentality exists in this context. The crowd acts as one entity.  
6. 'they'  
The use of this word immediately alienates the lady and places her in the scornful realm of the 'other'.   
7. 'dead scared'  
The use of the term 'dead' to describe the lady's emotional state of fearfulness implies that she is extremely frightened, it is beyond regular fear.    
8. 'tousled'   
This words mean to be handled roughly and, as a result, to look disorderly and disheveled. It is the perfect word to use in this context because it adds to the sexual innuendo that exists throughout the poem.   
9. 'nothing much'  
The persona disregards the damage that they have done to the lady. He admits to the rough treatment, but tries to make himself, and the crowd, look good despite their wrong doing.  
10. 'But ours were virtuous, Of course'   
This is almost like a tongue in cheek admittance that their touch was actually the opposite of virtuous. The use of the term 'of course' highlights this interpretation.   
11. 'battery'  
In the Caribbean context, battery refers to the slang term for the rape of an individual, conducted by several people in succession. Therefore, the persona is pointing out the intent of the crowd, or some people in the crowd.   
12. 'Of right'  
This is a clear indication from the persona that he believes that he and the mob are in the right.  
13. 'tastes so good'  
'Taste', to a lot of individuals, is one of the higher senses. Therefore, when the persona uses this word, he is highlighting the intense pleasure that he anticipates from meting out this 'justice'.  
14. 'this guru, Preacher, God-merchant, God-knows-what'  
The persona's annoyance at this individual for disrupting his fun comes out in this statement. The persona is deliberately being disrespectful.   
15. '(Should never speak to them)'  
This particular line speaks to the alienation that the lady faces. She is grouped scornfully as 'them'.  
16. 'And saw in her something we couldn't see'  
The intruder saw value in the lady, something that the crowd did not see.  
17. 'He turned his eyes on us, Her eyes on us, Her eyes upon ourselves.'  
This speaks to the fact that the preacher and the lady judge the crowd, and, more importantly, the crowd judges itself. The preacher's act of kindness sheds light on the cruelty that is inflicted on the lady by the crowd.  
18. 'We walked away Still holding stones'  
This implies that the crowd still plans to keep judging, and acting on their judgments, as they see fit.  
  
TONE  
The [tone](http://www.bulbsoup.com/ln-comprehension.html) of the poem is mixed. At times it is almost braggadocious, then it becomes sarcastic, moving to scornful.