

CHAPTER 8 The Unseen Poems

In most literature examinations, there are sections on unseen poems. These are poems one may not have previously studied, the students or candidates will be expected to answer questions on these poems.

For one to make a good attempt on these questions on unseen poems, one must have a good knowledge of poetry and poetic devices. This section will expose us to unseen poems and how to answer the questions on them.

Read the following poems and answer the questions that follow.

Poem 1

Who does the chicken think
It is deceiving?
It eats pebbles
and swallows sands
Ye complains of toothlessness
the goat which has teeth
the dog which fortifies its mouth
with the strongest of ivory
dare they eat pebbles in the morning
and still walk about at noon?
Let the ear sift
what the mouth says
the mills inside all men
do not grind with equal force (*"Chicken story"*)

Objective Questions

1. What is the subject matter of this poem?
A. Deceit B. Complaint C. Mills in inside
D. Equal grinding force
2. What kind of poem is this?
A. A moral poem B. A dirge C. A sonnet
D. A narrative poem
3. The poet's mood is that of _____.
A. excitement B. sadness C. frustration D. complain
4. What poetic device is used in line one of the poem?
A. Metaphor B. Rhetorical question C. Personification
D. Irony
5. What is the dominant device in the poem?
A. Images B. Metaphor C. Rhetorical question
D. Paradox

Poem 2

Answer questions 6-19 from the poem.

"AID"

AIDS! What a brutal friend!!
Grabbing, engulfing,
Snuffing the life out of his victims
Vicious, callous, disregarding
Age, sex and status

Your victim, once radiant
Now sunken eyed
Gawky spectre,
Dried to the bones like stockfish,
A fading, withered flower,
In the prime of youth.
The now crumbled body
Much like a dilapidated house
On which clothing is hung
Is nothing but a caricature
Of the real
A perfect specimen for the morgue

Thank you, mighty AIDS
For coming to put “PAID”
To man’s venerable purchase
The precious price
Of indiscipline.

Objective Questions

6. What is the poetic device used in the expression “AIDS! What a brutal friend!”?
 - A. Euphemism B. Personification C. Oxymoron
 - D. Paradox
7. The following is an example of grabbing, engulfing, snuffing
 - A. enjambment B. allusion C. synecdoche D. alliteration
8. What is the poetic device used in line four of stanza two?
 - A. Simile B. Metaphor C. Personification D. Paradox
9. The expression “A perfect specimen for the morgue” is an example of _____.
 - A. personification B. metaphor C. allusion D. irony
10. Why is the body of an AIDS victim like a dilapidated house?
 - A. Because nobody lives in it.
 - B. It will soon collapse.
 - C. The blood is not flowing.
 - D. The victim’s body is an image.

Poem 3

Come Nigerians, build a Nation
Harness to the coarse all passion
Let the raging sea come tranquil
Peace, with you we make a deal
Come and stay and never part;
The times are hard when you depart

Things are never what they seem
When you show your exit beam
The trumpets, sirens summon all
For the task ahead this call
It's time to fill the yawning gap
In the cracking walls avoid mishap

Come, come all, in one band

Raise the flag of unity, hand in hand
Sing the song of amity round the land
Come, come all hands on deck
Come, save the ship of state from wreck
From the jaws of sharks, save our neck.

"Prologue – The Bugle"

Objective Questions

11. Come, come all in one band, is an example of _____.
A. repetition B. oxymoron C. metaphor D. irony
12. What does the poet mean by the expression “The times are hard when you depart”. It shows that:
A. peace ran away.
B. without peace the people will be in pieces.
C. peace brings prosperity.
D. peace is an enemy of progress.
13. Come, come all hands on deck is an example of _____.
A. metonymy B. oxymoron C. images D. synecdoche
14. The image “ship” represents _____.
A. the leaders B. the state C. economy D. power
15. The expression “save the ship of state ...” is an example of _____.
A. synecdoche B. oxymoron C. paradox D. alliteration