



Lesson 2: 'A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London'

Task 1

With your partner, look again at the title and Stanza 1. Then answer the following questions.

Stanza 1

Never until the mankind making
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling **darkness**
Tells with silence the last light breaking
And the still hour
Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

1. Is the word **Never** at the beginning of the poem effective? Why?/Why not? Complete either sentence i) or sentence ii)

i) The word **Never** at the beginning of the poem **is effective** because:

ii) The word **Never** at the beginning of the poem **is not effective** because:

2. Which adjectives are linked to **darkness**?

3. What or who **tells**?



4. What does Dylan Thomas say will happen **when the world comes to an end** in Stanza 1?

Task 2

With your partner, look again at the Stanza 2 and the first line of Stanza 3 to complete the first whole sentence. Remember that 'Never, until...' is the first part of the sentence:

Stanza 2

And I must **enter** again **the round**
Zion of the water bead
And the synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound
Or **sow my salt seed**
In the least **valley of sackcloth** to mourn

Stanza 3

The **majesty** and **burning** of the child's death.

Then answer the following questions:

1. When is **the child** first mentioned in the poem?

2. Who has **dominated** the poem up until now? Write down evidence of this.



3. Why does the poet use the words **majesty** and **burning** in connection with the child's death?

4. Explain the meaning of the following in concise terms:

a. 'enter.. the round Zion of the water bead'

b. 'sow my salt seed'

c. 'valley of sackcloth'

Task 3 – Think – Pair – Share

Consider the answers to following questions individually, then discuss with a partner before sharing your thoughts with the rest of the class.

1. What **must happen** before the poet is prepared to mourn the death of the child?



2. **Why** do you think he says this?