



A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London

Lesson 2

Overview

- Review Lesson 1
- Look in detail at first full sentence of poem (from beginning to first line of Stanza 3)

Resources

- Word document: KS4 ARTM Teacher Notes
- Word document: KS4 ARTM Learner Resource sheets
- PowerPoint presentation: KS4 ARTM L1 Presentation

Suggested procedure

1. Review Lesson 1.
2. Read through the first sentence of the poem a few times and tell learners that this sentence will be focus of the lesson. Throughout the poem, there are many possible interpretations and learners should be aware that they can all contribute to their understanding of the poem and its effect.
3. Divide the first sentence up into units of meaning, i.e. Never / until..... and I must ... shall I let pray to mourn the majesty and burning of the child's death.
4. Using the Teacher Notes as a guide, work through the first stanza of poem to elucidate its meaning. (It may be useful to add punctuation to the first three lines of the poem, i.e. mankind-making / Bird-beast-and-flower-fathering and all-humbling darkness).

Here are some questions which may be used in pair work to help learners to extricate the meaning (Resource sheet/PowerPoint presentation, Lesson 2 Task 1):

1. Is the word **Never** at the beginning of the poem effective? Why?/Why not?
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 this stanza?

Go over these questions as a class.



5. Move on to the second, stanza and the first line of the third stanza to complete the first sentence and use the Teacher Notes if required to explain its meaning. The following questions may prove useful to confirm understanding (Resource sheet/PowerPoint presentation, Lesson 2 Task 2):
 1. When is **the child** first mentioned in the poem?
 2. Who has dominated the poem up until now? Show 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: 'the round Zion of the water bead'; 'sow my salt seed', 'valley of sackcloth'.

6. Conclude the lesson and consolidate understanding of the first full sentence by using the following: Think – Pair – Share activity (Resource sheet/Powerpoint presentation, Lesson 2 Task 3):
 1. What must happen before Dylan Thomas is prepared to mourn the death of the child?
 2. Why do you think he says this?