

IMPRESSIONS. by Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson

Answer the following questions about “Impressions.”

1. What type of poem is “Impressions”?

- a. narrative **b. free verse**
c. limerick d. sonnet

2. Describe the rhyme scheme in the poem, if any.

ABACC: The first and third lines rhyme, and the fourth and fifth lines rhyme with each other.

3. What primary literary device is used in every stanza?

- a. simile **b. extended metaphor**
c. anachronism d. foreshadowing

4. How does Dunbar-Nelson’s use of punctuation in the first stanza contribute to its meaning?

Many commas break up the text, emphasizing the disjointed nature of the thoughts that Dunbar-Nelson is describing.

5. Read the first two lines of the “Hope” stanza.

Wild seas of tossing, writhing waves,

A wreck half-sinking in the tortuous gloom;

What literary sound device does Dunbar-Nelson use in these lines?

- a. rhyme b. onomatopoeia **c. alliteration**

6. In the second stanza, Dunbar-Nelson includes an allusion to Boreas, a god from Greek mythology:

One man clings desperately, while Boreas raves,

And helps to blot the rays of moon and star.

Based on the context in the poem, Boreas was most likely a god of what?

- a. love b. music
c. medicine **d. wind**

7. How does the mood of “Hope” change in the last line of the stanza?

The mood in the first four lines is one of impending doom, but the last line suddenly switches to one of optimism.

8. Compare and contrast the structure of the “Hope” and “Love” stanzas of the poem.

The stanzas both switch mood in their last lines, but “Hope” transitions from gloom to optimism, and “Love” from delight to despair.

9. Name some words Dunbar-Nelson uses to help set the mood of the “Death” stanza. **Sample answers**

shudders

fatal

lonesome

dreary

10. Read these lines from the “Faith” stanza:

Blind clinging to a stern, stone cross,

Or it may be of frailer make.

What two kinds of faith does Dunbar-Nelson describe here? **Sample answer**

Faith can be strong and without thought.

It can also be something weaker or less defined.

11. Based on your analysis, what is the central idea of of the last stanza? **Sample answer**

Faith can be a respite or escape from our ever-churning thoughts.