

A POEM-is a written expression of emotion or ideas in arrangement of words/verse most often rhythmically.

POETIC DEVICES

A.Simile-comparing two unlike things using "like" or "as"

B.Alliteration-means repetition of consonant words at the beginning of words

C.Metaphor-a figure of speech that compares two unlike things directly without using "like" or "as"

D.Personification-this is assigning human qualities to non human things.

E.Onomatopoeia-means words that imitate sound "Boom,Hurgle,blink"

F.Hyperbole-means expression of exaggeration "I nearly die laughing"

G.Symbolism-using an object to represent an idea e.g lion symbolise loyalty

H.Puns-means words with a humorous double meaning

I.Idioms-means expressions that have a meaning apart from the meanings of the individual words

J.Mood-means the overall feeling poem creates.Mood or tone can be palyful ,sad,lonely,angry or joyful.

K.Oxymoron-means joining of two words that seem be contradictory (opposite),but offer a unique effect e.g "living death" "freezing fire" "pretty ugly"

L.prose-it is an ordinary or plain everyday language used in speach or writing with no parttens or rhymes.

FORMS OF POETRY

A.cross poetry-it is a poem where the first letter of each line spells a word;ussually using the same words as in the title.

B.Epic poetry-it is a long narrative poem cerebrating the adventures and achievements of a hero.It deals with traditions;mythical or historical of a nation.

C.Fable poetry-a poetic story composed in verse or prose whith a moral summed up at the end ussually using animals characters to teach a valuable lesson

D.free verse poetry-it is an irregular form of poetry in which the content is free of traditional rules of versification.

E.Monody poetry-a poem in which one person laments another's death

F.Ode poetry -a poem praising and glorifying a person,place or thing

TELL NO ONE

(For girls defiled by those they trust)

Aunt,

It has been months and months

I have endured the tribulation

I have carried a cross, mutely

But now frail and fragile I have become

No longer can I carry on

On this ruttet road to Golgotha

Let me unwrap it all

Aunt,
Uncle is a heartless swine!
Uncle is a brutal beast!
Yes , my uncle, your husband,
Throws himself on me time after time
And each time he does it
He sternly warns me:
Tell no one

Questions

- 1.What does "cross" symbolise in first stanza?
- 2.What does the persona effectively tell that her uncle is an evil person?
- 3.Why did the persona to relate to suffer in silence?
- 4.What subject/theme is being presented in this poem?
- 5.Describe the tone of the poem.

ZOMBA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Perched at the foot of a towering plateau
Beaming delightedly and full of life
With trees clad in cheerful evergreen leaves
As they stand on a manicured green carpets
Punctuated by a bed of flowers here
And a battalion of rocks standing guard there

Birds ceaselessly chanting lullabies
Softly piercing the cemetery silence
The serpent-like Mulunguzi snaking through
Its waters here splashing and there splattering
Surely, Adam and Eve must have walked and played here
Before falling from grace to grass

Questions

- 1.Mention the things that are found in Zomba botanical gardens as stated in the poem.
- 2.The poem employs the poetry device of personification. Identify two things that have been personified.
- 3.Explain the following expressions as used in the poem (i)cemetery (ii)silence (iii)falling from grace to grass.
- 4.What effect does the mention of Adam and Eve have on the state of the botanical gardens?
- 5.From the poem,give any reason why it is important to conserve the environment.

SONG OF A WOMAN

Mine is a song of lament
A song laden with grief and sorrow
Who will break these chains of oppression,
Entangling and choking me from time immemorial?
When will they cease this suppression of my expression,
And let my voice be heard?

Mine is a song of lament
A song studded with sad lyrics.
When shall my man regard me his equal,
And shun crowning me an underdog ?
Who decreed only men must decide,
And women nod their heads?

I chant a song of lament
A song with unmusical rhythm.
When shall they sound a death-kneell for property-grabbing,
For widows to get ultimate solace?
Where is it inscribed only husbands are breadwinners
And wives mere recipients?
I am weary of stretching vocal cords for this song
A song of lament.
When shall my daughters enter a class room,
To drink from the pots of wisdom lid there ?
Tell me people who declared it
That girls be hewers of wood or fetchers of water?

Listen to my song all ye that have ears
A song of lament.
When will they vilify violence against women
So that I dance the dance of liberty?
When shall the woman attain her dignity
For me to sing a song of joy?

Questions

- 1.The song of woman is a song of lament.From each stanza identify the reasons why the woman is singing a song of lament.
- 2.What do the following stand for as used in the poem: (i)chains in stanza1; (ii)Underdog in stanza 2; (iii)breadwinners in stanza 3 nd (iv) pots of wisdom in stanza 4?
- 3.To whom the message in the song is being addressed?Explain.
- 4.What two things in the last stanza will the persona do to express her happiness?

SUICIDE BOMB OF CHIKANDA

Downtown chikanda
At that brothel of a resthouse
He ferociously sorted them out
One after other
Wave after wave
Cutting like a sharp razor blade!
Now here he moans and groans
Inside WARD 2B
Frail and fragile
More bones than steak
Those were lethal suicide bombs
*chikanda is a famous slum township in Zomba city

Questions

1. "Suicide bombs" has been used as metaphor in the poem. Explain it.
2. What does expression "brothel of a resthouse" mean as used in the poem?
3. Which words alliterate in the poem?
4. Pick out a line which tells that the man is thin.
5. Identify the theme(s) of the poem.

ECHOES OF AGONY

(For a brother who took his life)
Not only rough and tough the road might be
But also lengthy and thorny
Yet, all the same, brother
The journey from womb to tomb
Ought to be travelled in full
Sprinting here, inching there

Not only hard and harsh the times might be
But also painful and perilous
Yet, still more, brother
One has to gallantly march on
Putting one foot in front of the other
Swift now, slow then

You should have boldly confronted the fiery weather
And valiantly pass through the seasons
You should have spiritedly trudged on
Even if life turned into day-to-day grim struggle
for every soul on this vile earth
Has its just share of woes and afflictions

Now here with aching bottoms we perch
In the devoid foothills of Mwazisi

Eternally hit by the echoes of agony
Our anguished heads drooped
Frail arms resting on feeble knees
Why, brother, why?

Questions

1. Read the poem loud and describe the mood and tone in it.
2. This is a poem on a brother who killed himself. Pick out lines that discourage the act of suicide.
3. Which lines from the first and second stanza mean the same as "All days are not Sundays"?
4. "In the devoid foothills of mwazisi". What effect does this line have on the last stanza?
5. Why do you think the poem is titled "Echoes of agony"?
6. Which line in the poem portrays that life is full of troubles?

TO MY JULIET

"What is in name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would (still) smell as sweet"
(**Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare**)
I have sojourned from far
Descending the hills of Nyika
Trudging into the valleys of shire
Till long at last,
Upon you, my sweetie have I stumbled

But fathom this, my Nanazi
I have trampled upon the sturdy walls of tribalism
For what's in a tribe one's fettered to?
I have leapt over the muscular territorial barricades
For what's in a territory one springs from?

Hence be certain my betrothed
Asunder naught shall lay us
Till doomsday trumpet shrieks
For I am Romeo
And you are my Juliet

Questions

1. This poem is inspired by English playwright William Shakespeare's play titled Romeo and Juliet. How is the story in the play similar to what is presented in the poem?
2. Which part of Malawi does the persona come from? Explain.
3. In the second stanza, what effect do expressions "sturdy walls of tribalism" and "muscular territorial barricades" have on the subject/theme of the poem?
4. Which line in the last stanza shows that the man will love this lady forever?

THE SONG

Season in,season out
This song we have chanted
A song pregnant with chunks of wisdom
A song studded with words of the sages
On how to elude the sharp tenacious jaws
On this marauding scourge

But sad and disheartening
That season in,season out
The retinue of victims soars.
When shall we,countrymen,
Cease stretching our vocal chords,
Chanting the song over and over again?

Questions

- 1.Suggest the scourge being referred to in the poem.
- 2.Why is it called "marauding scourge"?
- 3.The line "season in, season out" is used in both stanzas.What effect does this repetition have on the message being delivered in the poem?
- 4.The poem is titled The song. What type of song is being sang here? Who is singing it?
- 5.Which words or expressions in first stanza tell that there is enough warning about the scourge?
- 6.How is the poem similar to the other one titled Suicide bombs of chikanda written by the same poet?

SNAP

What kind of habit is this?
Wha manner of enjoyment is this?
If this is not self destruction,
Looking at death in the mouth
Playing deliberately on the grave's door
Then what is it?
On your finger,keys dangled
Towards your car you staggered
The door you opened
At the speedometer you never looked
Vroom then crash!
Blood flowed on the floor
Snap

You life you did end
And that of your friend

What did you leave with your wife?
Not a reed of hope to hold to, or a knife
Of strength to cut through walls of burdened life.
All because of dry Savannah?

Questions

1. Who is speaking in the poem?
2. Mention two things which show that the person spoken about in the poem is reckless.
3. In your opinion, what may make someone to be reckless as shown in the poem?
4. Drinking and driving is one of the causes of accidents in Malawi. What role can you play to reduce the habit of drinking and driving?

REBIRTH

At night we sowed the seeds of hard work
Near and far scattered the grains
Hope filled, eager to reap
The fruits of our labour.

And behold the trees that bare grounds dressed
see the beauty of green our sweat clothed and fresh air the world breathed
As rain gave life to a land long dead.

In the trees birds chirp
Under the shades the cows mow
Flora and fauna now we can show
As we dance to celebrate the rebirth of nature.

Questions

1. Identify the theme in the poem.
2. Explain how plants and animals benefited from the speaker's action in the poem?
3. Name the action which the speaker did in the poem.
4. In your own opinion, was it necessary for the speaker to do the action you have named in 4 above?
5. Pick any two rhyming words from stanza 3.

MOWED

Our eyes have seen many fall
Like mowed grass
And sky let falling stars.

Our ears have caught
The village crier's gong
Announcing yet another dead.

Day by day the hopes of cure fade
As society's fabric is mowed by AIDS
Strange no youth chooses to abstain.

Questions

1. Suggest what the speaker is saying
 - a. In stanza 2
 - b. In stanza 3
2. What is being compared as meteorites in stanza one?
3. In your opinion, What is the setting for stanza two? Give a reason for your answer.
4. Why are many youths dying of AIDS?
5. What can you do to stop the devastating effects of AIDS to the society? Mention any three points.

IT IS NOT CIGARRETES THEY SMOKE

In those big bellied cars
That awake my ancestors from sleep
It is not petrol it is not diesel
that power their speed
but the stinking sweat of tobacco tenants

Christ

Until when shall the tillers of soil
be chained In the Egypt of poverty?
Shall the labourer reach the promised land
the canan of economic independence?

It is not cigarettes they smoke
any puff of smoke sprouting
Out of their fatty lips
Is my life escaping to death
the sorrow of the underpaid farmer

Land of my birth
when shall the land be my land?
Shall I ever cease being a hole
that impregnates the soil with seeds
but never owns ownership of the blossoming fruit?

Questions

1. Identity the theme of the poem?
2. Whose rights is the person fighting for?
3. Give three problems that are highlighted in the poem?
4. What is the meaning of the phrase 'canan of economic independence?'
5. How does the poem show that the person is not happy with his or her job?

THE COTTON IS RED

If you say this cotton
I mean
If you say this cotton is white
then you are blind
It is black as charcoal
Charred with the pains of labour
on the fire of underpayment

This cotton is red
stained in crimson blood
of wounded dreams
bruised economic miracles
of mothers who burn their blood
come stinging rain
come burning sun
in cotton plantations

This cotton only turns white
Where the gods of our sweat
the harvesters of our labour
linen the cotton
value it beyond unimaginable percentages
beyond the pains of labourer.

Shall our cotton ever be white?
Shall it snow-white in my field
Vaseline my cracked hands
Sugar the song of the planet
Shall it?

Questions

1. Who is speaking in the poem?
2. Identify one element in stanza one that is making the cotton as black as charcoal?
3. Stanza two explains how women suffer because of cotton labour. Identify two problems which they face.
4. Who are referred to as 'the harvesters of our labour' in stanza three?
5. What is the subject/theme of the poem?

THE CROP

The sun rays and rain spears
Angrily pierced my unstraightening back
The clawed fingers sifting the barren soil

Paving highway to the auction floors.

You buy my sweat at peanut rates
Tell me what determines quality leaf?

Have you ever seen Urea and Ammonia
Have you ever seen insecticides falling
Like manna from manufacturing companies?
Then you talk of discussions on one paper
Hiding a litancy of below value rates in another hand

What is the cost of opening bowls of the soil?
How much is the value of each thorn
That pepperingly stung my hands and feet?
Tell me how I rate the intching moments
I had to scrub Chitedze on my back against rocks and sand?

You hover in on big birds
You laugh at the dust-milleage on our feet
Night catches you in poshy hotels and villas
All that but fruits of my sweat
Works of these cursed hands of mine

This is not our crop
This is not our dream
This is not our sweat
We are nothing but the pot that cooks
But partakes not in the delicious meal
Pity you fire that curses my back mercilessly

Questions

1. Who is speaking in the poem?
2. To whom is he addressing his/her concerns?
3. Why is the persona not happy?
4. What is the meaning of the phrase 'you buy my sweat at peanut rates?'
5. In stanza one, what word is showing that the poem is about tobacco production?
6. Identify two problems which the persona has faced in tobacco production.
7. What is the tone of the poem?

UNTIL WHEN

Mama Africa
until when
Shall we
Your mourning children

Weep?

We
Your children
whose heels
dry the ground
dry

We
Whose feet
mileage
meters
in millions

We
your children
that soup newspapers
lunch bawo
dessert jokes

Until when
Until when
mama Africa

Questions

1. Identify the personification in the poem.
2. Give two metaphors that are revealing poverty as the status of the children of Africa.
3. Suggest reasons which are making children of Africa complain.

WELCOME HOME

Son of the soil
Have the wheels bursted?
You flew by the market blaring the horn
Throwing dust in the eyes of your people
Welcome home.

Points of order don't drill boreholes
Can rejecting budgets buy drugs for clinics?

Welcome you home our beloved child
You danced the dance of honourables
You drunk the liquor of power
Through a paper we gave you a sit
Through a paper we have recalled you back

The ballot paper is the voice of the voiceless
Isn't that paper enough a gun and bullet to kill elephants?

Prince of the compound
If the thirst drougths your throat
Lick water with bleating goats in the dams.
And if diarrhea tears down your bowels
Pray that shoots of chitimbe remedy you

We mourned that you lost your identity
Should we not cerebrate that you see your mess with us now?

Constituency messiah
Rain never fears darkness
What kills a burning furnance
Is the ash that it shits
Once every five years we are kings and queens.

Questions

- 1.What does 'son of soil' stand for in the poem?
- 2.How does stanza one show that the boy was disrespectful to gis people?
- 3.What are possible reasons that have forced him to go back home?
- 4.How can we know that the poem is talking about duties of a parliamentarian?
- 5.Why are the people not satisfied with the son of the soil in the poem?
- 6.Do you support the point that a ballot paper is voice of the voiceless?
- 7.Explain the meaning of the phrase 'every five years we are kings and queens' as presented in the last stanza.

THE HOWLING WIND

The howling wind
No longer comes from west
It is no longer brewed
In the hearts of revolutionaries

The howling wind
No longer alters the political landscape
It is no longer
A treatment for racial segregation

The howling wind
Uproots houses
Leaving people homeless
places unreachable

The howling wind
No longer has a figurative meaning
It is now real
Just a pain destroyer

Questions

1. How does stanza one show that the pattern of the howling winds has changed?
2. Identify some of the functions that the howling wind used to perform before changing its pattern?
3. What are the current problems currently associated with the howling winds as presented in stanza three?
4. Suggest a reason that is causing the howling winds today?
5. How does stanza one and two show that 'the howling wind' has been used as a symbol of disaster in a society?

I WANT DEATH

So
This is my resolution
My plans towards
The fulfillment of my goals

I aim
To lay unprotected
With those of my age and not
To smoke
And drink like a fish
I plan
To abscond classes
Spend time not only in taverns
But in video showrooms
And video game centres

I want death
Physically, mentally and spiritually
That is why I will do all that

Questions

1. Give three actions which will likely destroy the persona?
2. How does the poem show that the persona is not concerned with his education?
3. Identify simile from the poem.
4. Explain how the persona will die physically, mentally and spiritually as presented in stanza one, two and three respectively?
5. How is the poem an irony of life and death?

OUR FAULT

The rains come no more
The clouds gather
But winds rush to disperse them

The heat is our companion
The sun bakes the soil
And roast our bodies

We hear of rivers bursting
Hear of nature getting mad and violent
And then lives get lost

We rush to the hills
To appease the ancestors
And plea for mercy and forgiveness

The old guards say to our shock
The ancestors did flee
They cannot live in bare mountains
Then again we go home
To wait for the heat to dissipate
Watch the clouds gather

And the routine continues
The winds disperse the clouds
No rains

Hunger again next year
From far away lands we hear
Thousands of lives have been washed away by rains

We wonder
And cry
Yet we cannot go to ancestors

They live not in bare mountains
They lodge not in destroyed nature
It is our fault

Questions

- 1.How does stanza one show why the rains fail to come?
- 2.The poem is the construct of the morden world and the past.How is the

contrast shown in stanza five?

3.What are some of the problems that people face when rains fail to come?

4.In your opinion,what is causing rain to come in little amount these days?

5.How can the problem identified in 4 above be solved?

6.The people speaking in this poem have accepted responsibility for the failure of rains.In your own opinion,how have they caused the problem?

7.Relate the effects of climate change to this poem.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Let not time rush

The sun ought to circle in its orbit

As it has always done

Take me back

This time to the future

Let me live my life then

Perhaps I might work hard in class

With the same zeal that boys had

Without considering my sex

Let me get back to the past

But I should take the future with me

So that I prove my parents wrong

Mine is not vengeance

It is a plea for a chance

To convince them all back then

That it possible

For ladies to achieve as men

As future beholds

Questions

1.Who is speaking in the poem?

2.What is the ambition of the persona?

3.How is the persona intending to balance the achievements of men and women in a society?

4.The persona would like to make a point that is possible for ladies to achieve as men.What does this tell about the attitude of her parents?

5.What is the tone of the poem?

THE GAP

Her eyes penetrate the mountains

She crosses valleys bare footed

Yes,she has a destination to reach

she wants to reach the peak of life
And fill the gap between men and women

Sadness engulfs her mind
Because no woman ever set her fit within perimeters of classroom
They all dived into the territory called early marriage
Hence her enthusiasm to reach the peak of good life
And be at par with men in her community

She sinks her head into books
She eyes a day people will smile at her
Not because of her beauty
Not because of her weighty brain
She is an amazing girl for this village

Questions

1. pick out imagery from stanza one?
2. How does the poem show that the persona has serious ambitious?
3. What means have been chosen by the persona to achieve her ambitions?
4. What has given her courage to work hard in class?
5. In your own opinion, why is she aspiring to fill the gap between men and women?

MONEY MULTIPLIER

I am a money maker
I turn coins into bank notes
Yes, I turn one kwacha into a million
And they call me a magician
But I am just an entrepreneur

From single coin to multiple coins
Indeed, I multiply like machine
It's a brain at work
The money you let sink and be washed away
I collect and let it multiply
Call me a modern and advanced magician

Jobless youths breathe a sigh of relief
Yes, they work in my yard
They feed their toddlers while I burry coins in my pocket
Onlookers get confused
Whether I am a magician or entrepreneur
I opt for the latter.

Questions

1. How does persona mistaken for magician?

- 2.How does the persona make his money?
- 3.What do you understand by the word, 'entrepreneur'?
- 4.How does the last stanza give confidence to jobless young boys and girls?
- 5.What advice is the poem putting forward?
- 6.What is the theme/subject of the poem?

THIS BEAST

The callous beast is here in the village
It's invisible like air
But harsh like strong wind
It claims our lives
No wonder orphans all over the village

This is a cruel beast
It takes away loving mother
Before baby is breast fed
It snatches us the breadwinner
So that we eat stones

This is unfriendly beast
It kills regardless of age
It eats infants,youths and adults
It must be rich in human blood
But human race never gives up on it
We will stand and fight
Until it oozes blood
It's a coldhearted beast
And it's called AIDS.

Questions

- 1.pick out two similes in stanza one.
- 2.Why are people of the village worried because of the beast?
- 3.According to the poem,what is causing increase in number of orphans?
- 4.Whith reference to stanza two,why is this beast cruel?
- 5.Identify two qualities of the beast from the poem.
- 6.Do you think the people of the village have hope of defeating the beast.Give reasons.

A SOLDIER OF THE GREAT WAR

Inness,
I have listened to your continual rhythms:
A drumbeat of striking refusals
That with time grows gradually louder
Pushing through the velvety walls of my lonely heart
A heart, whose future of being healed,

Has failed to be properly defined
By your lips so soft and inviting;
By your pleasant smiles I desire

I have tried a lot in life but succeeded in none
As life gets angry at me for wrong targets
But the road to recovery is that I see in your eyes
And never shall I give away to weakness
Though only armed with abandoned love,
I will fight this long and unsuccessful battle
To make it there with grievous wounds torturing my soul
Before this longing escalates to suicide
So that at the very last,
I may be called 'A soldier of the Great War'
And be remembered forever and forever more
For a man who won't die for something,
Is not fit to live

I therefore ask you Inness
To once more listen to my 'sweat nothings'
Ready to get off my bruised chest
So that you can fully understand then
How deeply I have fallen for you.

Questions

1. Identify one imagery from stanza one.
2. What does 'soldier' symbolise in the poem
3. Identify words that are showing that the person is asking for love?
4. Why is the persona calling himself 'a soldier of great war'?

LIFE THROUGH THE SHREDDER

Cries echo
Through walls of hooliganism
And fade gradually
In some unnamed place
Minds trace
The vast bowl of burnished gold
Lost beyond fatal flaws
Consigned into a far hinterland

The sky descends
A churning black cloud of new life
A life so surreal yet welcomed
With dragging and slothful movements

Senses strengthen
Hopes of only the radiant sky
To hum melancholy tunes
On a silent hump of eternity

Unanswered questions add stanzas
Of empty promises;
Of unsolved life equations;
Of loaded guns ready to kill;
Of compromising over right and wrong,
Over legality and illegality
To a prayer that seek truths
In crazes of secrecies yet the future is not properly defined
It's life through a shredder.

Questions

1. In your groups, read the poem aloud and discuss difficult words.
2. Discuss the meaning of the poem.
3. Find out whether the poet has used any poetic devices in the poem?
4. List down poetic devices that you know.
5. Suggest reasons why the poem is titled 'life through shredder'

GO AHEAD MY LOVE

Grab a tool of your choice,
Axe your shadow away,
Tone down,
Pick the right words,
Coin phrases skillfully,
Convince them to doubt
the existence of the sun,
Reject your reflection in the mirror,
Blow a trumpet in their ears,
To blur their reason.

For when you wrung my hand,
When you blew honey into my ears,
When your heart was a garden of roses,
When your smile weakened my judgement,
This chapter of life was unforeseen.

So go ahead,
Run into the wild,
After nine months,
This seed you have sown,
This shadow of yours,
This reflection in the mirror,

will be waiting for a reunion.

Questions

1. Who is speaking in the poem?
2. What is the mood of the poem?
3. "This seed you have sown", what seed is the persona referring to?
4. What is the theme/subject of the poem?
5. What words are showing that the persona is talking to a man who is denying pregnancy responsibility?

OURS

Ours is abused hymn,
Whose message languishes
beneath the feet of the powerful,
Ours is a cry of frustration,
For powerful lions raping defenseless kangaroos,
Ours is this outcry
Of shooting in the back a helpless man,
Ours is this tear,
Ours is the billowing smoke of change.

So it is you too,
So it has happened to you too,
So you have puffed too hard
From the cigarette of power,
You are paranoid.

Questions

1. What is said to be abused hymn?
2. Who is speaking in stanza one?
3. To whom is the message being addressed?
4. How has the persona used his poetic devices
5. To what extent is the poem political?

THE SACRED VOWS

His offensive fists
Rain competitively
Spitting his ruthlessness
Vomiting his cruelty
As he savagely hits
Killing me each day

Yet the vows
So sacred and binding
Lock up my lips
Makes me immune

To the constant abuses

To his chilling hate

Questions

1. What effect does the opening line have to the poem?
2. Identify two images from the first stanza.
3. Pick out words in the second stanza which show that the speaker is regretting.
4. What made the speaker immune to the constant abuses?
5. How is the poem qualifying to be a campaign against domestic violence?