

S. 2L, LITERATURE.

WEEK ONE.

THEME: VILLAGE LIFE

The magnificent bull

My bull is white like silver fish in the river
White like shimmering crane bird on the river bank
White like fresh milk
His roar is like thunder to the Turkish
Cannon on the steep shore
My bull is dark like raincloud in the storm
He is like a summer in the winter
Half of him is dark like the storm cloud
Half of him is light like sunshine
His back shines like morning star
His brow is red like the beak of hornbill
His forehead is like a flag, calling the people from the distance,
He resembles the rainbow.
I will water him at the river,
With my spear I shall drive my enemies.
Let them water their herds at the well;
The river belongs to me and my bull.
Drink, my bull, from the river; I am here
To guard you with my spear

Questions

- 1. What is the poem about?**
- 2. Identify the speaking voice in the poem.**
- 3. Identify at least five (5) similes the person compares his bull to in the poem.**
- 4. What belongs to the persona and his bull?**

An African thunderstorm

From the west
Cloud come hurrying with the wind
Turning
Sharply
Here and there
Like plague of locusts
Whirling
Tossing up things on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.
Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back
Gathering to the perch on hills
Like dark sinister wings;
The wind whistles by
And trees bend to let it pass.

In the village
Screams of delighted children
Toss and turn
In the din of the whirling wind.
Women-
Babies clinging on their back-
Dart about
In and out

Madly

The wind whirls by

Whilst trees bend to let it pass.

Clothes wave like tattered flags

Flying off

To expose dangling breasts

As jagged blinding flashes

Rumble, tremble, and crack

Amidst the smell of fired smoke

And the pelting march of the storm

Question

1. What is the subject matter of the poem?
2. Identify the similes used in the poem.
3. What do the trees do to let the wind pass?
4. Identify the different examples of personification the poet uses in the poem.

WEEK TWO. THEME: VILLAGE LIFE.

Grass will grow

If you should take my child lord

Give me strength to dig his grave

Cover him with earth

Lord send me a little rain

For grass will grow

If my house should burn down

So that the ashes sting the nostrils

Making the eyes weep
Then Lord send me a little rain
For grass will grow
But Lord do not send me
Madness
I ask for tears
Do not send me moon hard madness
To lodge snug in my skull
I would you send me hordes of horses
Gallop
But do not break
The yolk of the moon on me.

Jonathan Kariara [Kenya]

QUESTIONS

1. What is the poem about?
2. Identify the speaking voice in the above poem.
3. What does the poet mean by the phrase "for grass will grow"
4. The persona requests the Lord not to send him certain things. What are those?
5. What makes the poem interesting?

THE LAZY MAN.

When the cock crows,
The lazy man smacks his lips and says
So it is daylight again, is it?
And before he turns over heavily,
Before he even stretches himself,
Before he even yawns-
The farmer has the farm,
The water carriers arrive at the river,

The spinners are spinning their cotton,
The weaver works on his cloth,
And fire blazes in the blacksmith's hut.

The lazy one knows where the soup is sweet
He goes from house to house
If there is no sacrifice today,
His breastbone will stick out!

But when he sees the free yam,
He starts to unbutton his shirt
He moves close to the celebrant

Yet his troubles are not few.
When his wives reach puberty,
Rich men will help him to marry them.

Yoruba [Nigeria]

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject matter of the poem?
2. Identify the speaking voice in the poem.
3. Why do you think the lazy man's problems are not few?
4. Describe the lazy man's reaction when he sees the free yam.

WEEK 3. THEME: SEPARATION

Yet another song

Yet another song

I have to sing:

In the early wake of the colonial dusk

I sang a song of fire.

The church doors opened

To the clang

Of new anthems

And colourful banners.

Like the Beatles,

The evangelical hymns

Of conversion

Rocked the world and me.

I knelt before the new totems

I had helped to raise

Watered them

With tears of ecstasy.

They grew

Taller than life

Grimacing and breathing fire.

Today

I sing yet another song

A song of exile.

David Rubadiri [Malawi]

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject matter of the above poem?
2. Who is the poet?

3. **Identify the speaking voice in the poem.**
4. **What does the title of the poem "yet another song mean"?**
5. **According to you what song do you think the persona sang in the early wake of the colonial dusk?**
6. **What does the persona mean in the last stanza of the poem?**
7. **In your own words describe the persona before and after the two different songs.**

Letter from a contract Worker

I wanted to write you a letter

My love,

A letter that would tell

Of this desire

To see you

Of this fear

Of losing you

Of this more than benevolence that I feel

Of this indefinable ill that pursues me

Of this yearning to which I live in total surrender...

I wanted to write you a letter

My love

A letter of intimate secrets,

A letter of memories of you,

Of you

Of your lips red as henna

Of your hair black as mud

Of your eyes sweet as honey

Of your breasts hard as wild orange

Or your lynx gait.

And your caresses

Such that I can find no better here...

I wanted to write you a letter

My love

That would recall the days in the haunts

Our nights lost in the long grass

That would recall the shade falling on us from the plum

Trees

The moon filtering through the endless palm trees

That would recall the madness

Of our passion

And the bitterness

Of our separation...

I wanted to write you a letter

My love

That you would not read without sighing

That you would hide from papa Bombo

That you would withhold from mama Kieza

That you would reread without the coldness

Of forgetting

A letter to which in all kilombo

No other would stand comparison...

I wanted to write a letter

My love

A letter that would be brought to you by the passing

wind A letter that the cashews and coffee trees,

The hyena and buffaloes
The alligators and graying
Could understand
So that if the wind should lose it on the way
The beasts and plants
With pity for our sharp suffering
From song to song
Lament to lament
Gabble to gabble
Would bring you pure and hot
The burning words
The sorrowful words of the letter
I wanted to write to you my love...
I wanted to write you a letter. . .

But oh my love, I cannot understand
Why it is, why it is, why it is my dear,
That you cannot read
And I – Oh the hopelessness- cannot write

Antonio Jacinto [Angola]

Translated from Portuguese

QUESTIONS.

- 1. What is the subject matter of the poem?**
- 2. Identify the speaking voice in the poem**
- 3. Why do you think the persona would love to write a letter to the lover?**
- 4. What would take the letter to the lover?**
- 5. What feelings does the poem arouse in you?**
- 6. Did the persona write the letter? YES/ NO. Give reasons to support your answer.**

7. What makes the above poem interesting?

WEEEK FOUR. THEME POWER.

A baby is a European

A baby is a European

He does not eat our food:

He drinks from his own pot.

A baby is a European

He does not speak our tongue:

He is cross when the mother understands not

A baby is a European

He cares very little for others:

He forces his will upon his parents.

A baby is a European

He is always very sensitive:

The slightest scratch on his skin results in an ulcer.

Ewe [Togo]

QUESTIONS.

- 1. What is the poem about?**
- 2. Why does the baby go cross?**
- 3. What are characteristics that makes the baby a European?**

BUILDING THE NATION

Today I did my share

In building the nation

I drove a permanent Secretary

To an important urgent function
In fact to a luncheon at the Vic.

The menu reflected its importance
Cold Bell beer with small talk,
Then fried chicken with niceties
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs
Ice-cream to cover the stereotype jokes
Coffee to keep the P.S awake on return journey.

I drove the Permanent Secretary back.
He yawned many times in back of the car
Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked,
Did you have any lunch friend?
I replied looking straight ahead
And secretly smiling at his belated concern
That I had not, but was slimming!

Upon which he said with a seriousness
That amused more than annoyed me,
Mwanachi, I too had none!
I attended to matters of state
Highly delicate diplomatic duties you know,

And friend, it goes against my grain
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind.
Ah, he continued, yawning again
The pains we suffer in building the nation!

So the P.S had ulcers too!
My ulcers I think are equally painful
Only they are cause by hunger,
No sumptuous lunches!

So two nation builders
Arrived home this evening
With terrible pains
The result of building the nation –

- Different ways.

Henry Barlow [Uganda]

Questions.

- 1. What is the poem about?**
- 2. Did the PS do his part in building the nations? YES/ NO. Give reasons to support your answer.**
- 3. Explain the poetic device of irony as used in the poem above.**
- 4. Of the two characters the PS and his driver, who do you like? Explain.**
- 5. What feelings does the poem arouse in you?**