

Francis Slater
Lament for a Dead Cow
More challenging questions!

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Wetu the black cow is dead. The people are saddened as they remember her and how she had enriched their lives. We also learn of a possible reason for her death.

1. "Beautiful was Wetu as a blue shadow
That nests on the grey rocks
About a sunbaked hilltop:
Her coat was black and shiny
Like an isipingo-berry."

- Is there any reason for the poet's choosing the words "Beautiful was Wetu" rather than "Wetu was beautiful"? (2)
- There are two similes in the above extract. What is the subject of each one? (2)
- What does the simile "as a blue shadow | That nests on the grey rocks | About a sunbaked hilltop" tell us: something about the cow itself? or something about the beauty of the cow? (2)

2. "Her round eyes were as clear and soft
As a mountain-pool,
Where shadows dive from the high rocks."

- What features of a mountain pool would the poet be seeing as a fitting comparison to the cow's eyes? (5)
- What is meant by personification? (2)
- In what way could the shadows "dive from the high rocks"? (4)

3. "No more will Wetu banish teasing flies
With her whistling tail."

- What part of speech are the words "teasing" and "whistling"? (2)
- Why would the poet have chosen the word "teasing" to describe the flies rather than, say, "irritating" or "annoying"? (4)

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