

Francis Slater
Lament for a Dead Cow
Even more challenging questions!

Worksheet by:
Keith Tankard
Knowledge4Africa.com

1. "No more will she face yapping curs
With lowered horns and bewildered eyes;
No more will her slow shadow
Comfort the sunburnt veld, and her sweet lowing
Delight the hills in the evening."
 - What is onomatopoeia? Find TWO examples of onomatopoeia in these lines. (2)
 - What is a "cur"? Why is this word more suitable in the context of this poem than, say, "dog"? (4)
 - In what way could the cow's shadow "comfort" the "sunburnt veld"? (2)

2. "The fountain that filled our calabashes
Has been drained by a thirsty sun;
The black cloud that brought us white rain
Has vanished -- the sky is empty;
Our kraal is desolate;
Our calabashes are dry:
And we weep."
 - One source explains that these lines reveal "the cause of Wetu's death". Is this true? What else could be the purpose of these lines? (4)
 - Comment on the rhythm of these lines. What is the purpose of the noticeable shortening of the last four lines? (2)

3. Contrast the poet's use of rich similes throughout this poem with the short stabbing statements at the conclusion. (4)

4. If you were to write a short essay on this poem to explain its most important features, what points would you explain? (10)

5. Carey's poetry has been described as having "real inventiveness" and "a sensual awareness of his subjects that lead to the coining of fresh images".
 - Would you agree with this statement? Explain your answer carefully. (10)

6. It is said that the poet evokes "a uniquely South African experience by image and rhythm".
 - How does one justify such a statement? (10)

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