

Stephen Spender
My parents kept me from children . . .
Easier questions to cut your teeth on!

Worksheet by:
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1. "My parents kept me from children who were rough
and who threw words like stones and who wore torn clothes."
 - What is the meaning of the word "rough" within the context of this poem? (2)
 - What does the poet mean when he says that his parents "kept" him from children who were rough? (4)
 - Explain the reference to the children throwing words "like stones". (4)
 - What figure of speech or language device is the expression "like stones". In what way can words be "like stones"? (3)

2. "They ran in the street
And climbed cliffs and stripped by the country streams."
 - Does the poet admire or despise these children? How do you know? (4)
 - The poet's parents clearly despise these children for their actions. Why would they do so? (4)
 - What figure of speech or language device is "climbed cliffs"? What is the purpose of using this language device? (3)

3. "I feared more than tigers their muscles like iron
And their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms."
 - What language device is used in the words, "I feared more than tigers their muscles"? What is being compared to what? (3)
 - What difference is shown between the boy and the children when he speaks of "their muscles like iron"? (2)
 - What are the children doing that the poet should speak of "their jerking hands and their knees tight on my arms"? (4)

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