

Shabbir Banoobhai
you cannot know the fears i have
Easier questions to cut your teeth on!

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The poet thinks about his daughter -- not yet even conceived -- and how she will exist in an apartheid ravaged South Africa. He contemplates her joy when he reads poetry to her as she lies in his arms. He sees the delight in her eyes. And yet, he also sees her future life, where she will be a victim of the heinous system, where she will be discriminated against simply because of the colour of her skin and where her fragile spirit could be broken -- if not completely destroyed.

1. "you cannot know the fears i have
as i think about you."
 - About whom is the poet thinking? How do you know? (4)
 - What are these fears? (4)

2. "i fear that i shall live only at your laughter"
 - What does the father mean when he says this? (4)

3. "overwhelm your waking world with wonder
with the music of other worlds, your earlier home
read to you poems written the night before
while you smiled bewildered"
 - What is meant by "your earlier home"? (4)
 - Why should the child "smile bewildered"? (4)

4. "some insensitive thing
crushes your butterfly spirit"
 - What is this "insensitive thing"? (4)
 - Why is "butterfly spirit" a really good metaphor to describe the child? (4)

5. "shadows of a sun-darkened land
flow over you
and the eclipse
closes your eyes"
 - What are the "shadows" that the poet is referring to? (4)
 - Why should the "eclipse" close the child's eyes? (4)

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