

Shabbir Banoobhai
you cannot know the fears i have
More challenging questions!

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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."
 - Although it would appear that the poet is speaking about his daughter, is it at all possible that this is not so? Of course, to answer this question, one needs to get into the mind of the poet. (4)
2. The poet himself says that these words are about the future, and that the future tense dominates this poem until he writes "i cannot live with the thought of having you, loving you any other way" for "a day without such care has no meaning".
 - In what way would this use of the future tense help us to understand what is in the poet's mind? (4)
3. "shadows of a sun-darkened land
flow over you
and the eclipse
closes your eyes"
 - Why is South Africa referred to as a "sun-darkened land"? (4)
4. "we shall find for you a name
your name shall bring light"
 - Why should the child's name "bring light"? (4)
5. How would you describe the tone of this poem? (4)
6. Why does the poet use the lower-case throughout, and also does not use full stops? (4)
7. Would you say that the father is being indulgent towards his child? (4)

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