

18 May 2020

Unseen Poetry: Activity two

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS POEM, THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WERE TAKEN FROM A NCS EXAMINATION PAPER (2017).

Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow.

**NIGHTSONG: CITY – Dennis Brutus**

Sleep well, my love, sleep well:  
the harbour lights glaze over restless docks,  
police cars cockroach through the tunnel streets;  
from the shanties' creaking iron-sheets  
violence like a bug-infested rag is tossed  
and fear is immanent<sup>1</sup> as sound in the wind-swung bell;  
the long day's anger pants from sand and rocks;  
but for this breathing night at least,  
my land, my love, sleep well.

Glossary: immanent – ingrained; inevitable

- 1.1 What impression does the word, 'restless' (line 2) suggest about life on the docks? (2)
- 1.2 Account for the speaker's use of the word, 'cockroach' (line 3) to describe the police cars. (2)
- 1.3 Refer to line 5: 'violence like a bug-infested rag'. Comment on the effectiveness of this image in the context of the poem. (3)
- 1.4 The title of the poem is ironic. To what extent do you agree with the above statement? Justify your response with reference to the poem as a whole. (3)

[10]