



## **“Scuola e Università: nuove tecnologie e web per una didattica interattiva e orientante delle discipline”**

Liceo Scientifico Statale “M. Grigoletti” – Università di Udine

### **SEZIONE INGLESE**

**Referente di sezione e relatrice:** prof. Cristiana Ziraldo

**Docenti referenti della partnership universitaria:** prof.ssa Antonella Riem e dott.ssa Maria Bortoluzzi

**Incontri specifici di sezione e contatti collaborativi via e-mail o telefono tenuti dal referente di sezione con la partnership universitaria:** vi sono stati incontri specifici nonché contatti via e-mail e telefonici per discutere l’organizzazione delle attività da svolgersi nell’ambito della collaborazione Scuola ed Università. La prof.ssa Riem e la dott.ssa Bortoluzzi hanno fornito importante input per gli interventi didattici nonché materiale didattico da mettere a disposizione delle allieve per una buona riuscita del progetto (libri, articoli, DVD, video). Le stesse hanno monitorato il dibattito svolto sul blog ed hanno dato feedback positivo sulle attività svolte dalle allieve in merito agli incontri/workshop tenutesi presso l’ateneo udinese e organizzati/co-ordinati dalla prof.ssa Riem:

7 novembre 2006, ore 14-16 (Cheyenne poet Lance Henson)

28 novembre 2006, ore 14-16 (Australian Aborigines)

### **RISULTATI RAGGIUNTI E MATERIALI PRODOTTI**

Fra le azioni indicate nella prima stesura del Progetto, sono state sviluppate principalmente le due seguenti, che intendono rappresentare un primo modello di lavoro possibile per stabilire un raccordo fra Scuola Superiore e Università:

- conduzione di un’indagine conoscitiva sulle competenze degli studenti in uscita dalla scuola superiore sulla lingua inglese utili per la frequenza di un qualsiasi corso di laurea;
- elaborazione e collocazione nel sito WEB della scuola di un blog di poesia post-coloniale finalizzato allo scambio anonimo in lingua inglese di osservazioni e considerazioni personali su poesie pubblicate sul blog e di feedback sul lavoro svolto in seguito alle lezioni/workshop tenute presso l’Università degli Studi di Udine.

### **INDAGINE CONOSCITIVA**

Alla fine dell’anno scolastico 2005-2006 è stato chiesto agli studenti di fine anno di rispondere brevemente ad un questionario anonimo, di cui si allega copia qui di seguito.

### Questionario attese apprendimento lingua inglese

*Ti sarei veramente grata se tu potessi dedicare un po' del tuo tempo per rispondere alle seguenti domande.*

*Si garantisce anonimato dato che basta che tu apponga le tue risposte in una scatola da me appositamente posta all'ingresso principale del nostro Liceo. Vedi "Bacheca English Department".*

*Ti ringrazio anticipatamente.*

*prof. Cristiana Ziraldo*

1. Pensi che il tuo livello di lingua inglese sia soddisfacente per accedere all'università?
2. Ti sei informato/a sui livelli minimi di conoscenza della lingua inglese previsti per accedere alla Facoltà di tuo interesse? Se sì, quali sono e per quale facoltà?
3. Prendendo in esame la tua esperienza di apprendimento della lingua inglese presso il Liceo Grigoletti, gli insegnamenti impartiti hanno soddisfatto le tue attese? Se "sì" in che modo. Se "no" perché.
4. Quali aspetti dell'insegnamento della lingua hai apprezzato di più?
5. Vi sono delle cose che avresti voluto imparare o fare con l'insegnante di lingua inglese che non sono state fatte?
6. Secondo te la scuola potrebbe offrire maggiori opportunità per l'apprendimento della lingua inglese? Se "sì", potresti proporre dei suggerimenti?

Come si può facilmente evincere dalle domande poste, lo scopo principale era quello di far sì che gli allievi dell'ultimo hanno facessero una auto-valutazione del proprio livello di lingua inglese e ponderassero se il livello raggiunto corrispondesse ai livelli minimi in entrata richiesti dalla Facoltà di loro interesse. Dall'analisi delle schede compilate, 50% degli allievi hanno dichiarato di avere un livello soddisfacente per accedere all'università. Fra questi allievi molti avevano conseguito le certificazioni PET (Preliminary English Test) o FCE (First Certificate of English) offerte dal Liceo "Grigoletti" e corrispondenti rispettivamente a livello B1 e B2 del Quadro Comune Europeo (Common European Framework). La percentuale degli allievi che hanno dichiarato di avere un livello soddisfacente corrisponde a coloro che si sono anticipatamente documentati sui livelli minimi di conoscenza della lingua inglese previsti per accedere alla Facoltà di loro interesse.

In seguito a questo intervento di auto-valutazione agli allievi dell'ultimo anno delle sezioni H ed F dell'indirizzo linguistico è stata somministrata una prova del nuovo esame di stato dell'anno scolastico precedente per riscontrare se i livelli di competenza linguistica e letteraria previsti in uscita fossero stati raggiunti o meno. A tale proposito si allega qui di seguito prova d'esame, griglia livelli di competenza letteraria e griglia di valutazione della seconda prova scritta (voto in quindicesimi).

### Literary competence

#### Reading Fiction

The student can

1. locate and gather information from fictional texts
2. read and analyse a complete short story
3. learn some of the basic conventions of fiction
4. express a simple personal response
5. express the difference between fictional and chronological time

### **Reading Poetry**

The student can

1. learn some aspects of layout, language and sound in poetry
2. follow guidelines to analyse a poetic text
3. learn to produce a simple comment on a poem
4. express the distinction between run-on lines and end-stopped lines and recognise the effects they create
5. see how layout reinforces the meaning of the content
6. understand what rhythm in poetry is and analyse it
7. detect how rhythm and meaning can reinforce each other
8. identify the meaning of a symbol
9. analyse the language of sense impressions

### **Reading Drama**

The student can

1. locate and gather information from a dramatic text
2. recognise some basic conventions of drama
3. make inferences based on dramatic conventions
4. write a paragraph of comparison and contrast

### **General**

The student can

1. distinguish between the denotation and connotation of a word
2. analyse the connotative aspects of words
3. express spontaneous reactions to a piece of literature
4. make inferences based on literary conventions
5. ability to identify interdisciplinary links
6. ability to identify theme
7. express personal responses to a work of art
8. identify the basic features of the language of art, film and music
9. use some technical terms to talk about a literary passage
10. identify clues within the text to identify theme
11. see the relationship between the author's life and works
12. locate a work within the biographical and social contexts, and within the literary network
13. identify the connections of a work to its social background
14. locate the work of literature within the literary network
15. examine the role of the reader
16. identify different ways of involving the reader in literary texts
17. analyse the role of the real reader in the making of meaning

## **ESAME DI STATO DI LICEO LINGUISTICO a.s. 2004-2005**

**Tema di:** LINGUA STRANIERA

TESTO LETTERARIO – LINGUA INGLESE

(Comprensione e produzione in lingua straniera)

### **I Dream of My Grandmother and Great Grandmother**

I imagine them walking down rocky paths  
toward me, strong, Italian women returning  
at dusk from fields where they worked all day

on farms built like steps up the sides  
of steep mountains, graceful women carrying water  
in terra cotta jugs on their heads.

What I know of these women, whom I never met,  
I know from my mother, a few pictures  
of my grandmother, standing at the doorway  
of the fieldstone house in San Mauro,<sup>1</sup>  
the stories my mother told of them,

but I know them most of all from watching  
my mother, her strong arms lifting sheets  
out of the cold water in the wringer washer,  
or from the way she stepped back,  
wiping her hands on her homemade flour sack apron,  
and admired her jars of canned peaches  
that glowed like amber in the dim cellar light.

I see those women in my mother  
as she worked, grinning and happy,  
in her garden that spilled its bounty into her arms.  
She gave away baskets of peppers,  
lettuce, eggplant, gave away bowls of pasta,  
meatballs, zeppoli, loaves of homemade bread.  
"It was a miracle," she said.  
"The more I gave away, the more I had to give."  
Now I see her in my daughter,  
that same unending energy,  
that quick mind,  
that hand, open and extended to the world.  
When I watch my daughter clean the kitchen counter,  
watch her turn, laughing,  
I remember my mother as she lay dying,  
how she said of my daughter, "That Jennifer,  
she's all the treasure you'll ever need."

I turn now, as my daughter turns,  
and see my mother walking toward us  
down crooked mountain paths,  
behind her, all those women  
dressed in black.

M. MAZZIOTTI GILLAN, 1993, in *Things My Mother Told Me*, Guernica, Buffalo, 1999

<sup>1</sup> A small village in the province of Salerno, where the poet's mother came from. The poet's father migrated to the States in 1922, her mother in 1936.

### ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. When the poet dreams of her grandmother and great grandmother, how does she envision them? What is the picture of them she has in her mind?
2. Why does she know them most of all from watching her own mother? What does she know about them from the way her mother behaves? From the things her mother says?
3. Explain the phrase "...that spilled its bounty into her arms." (line 21)
4. What does the mother mean in saying "the more I gave away, the more I had to give"? (line 26)
5. What is it about her, the poet's daughter, that makes the poet remember her mother?

6. What is the significance of the last strophe and of the words “all those women dressed in black.”? (lines 40-41)
7. What is the poets’ feeling about her Italian mother and all the Italian women who were her ancestors?
8. Read the poem again and find out the language and images the poet uses to depict rural life in South Italy in the early part of last century.

**SUMMARIZE** the content of the poem.

**COMPOSITION:**

Write an essay in which you use this poem to explore the theme of heritage and ancestry. How do the people who went before us influence what we become as people? Include in your essay your interpretation of the poet’s ideas about what constitutes an Italian. If you had to define what you believe makes you and your family Italian, what characteristics would you include?

Alternatively, write an essay based on this poem that explores the losses that people suffered when they left the homeland they loved (in this poet’s case, Italy) and settled in America. Try to imagine how your life would have been different if your family had immigrated to America. What is lost and what is gained by such a move? What does the poet say about the difficulties of understanding the past when you are physically separated from the people who created the past?

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

È consentito soltanto l’uso di dizionari monolingue e bilingue.

Non è consentito lasciare l’Istituto prima che siano trascorse 3 ore dalla dettatura del tema.

Alcune seconde prove scritte di lingua inglese possono essere scaricate direttamente dal sito [www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it) (Nuovo Esame di Stato, Prove Scritte).

Liceo Scientifico “M.Grigoletti” Pordenone  
Esami di Stato 2004-2005

**GRIGLIA DI VALUTAZIONE SECONDA PROVA SCRITTA in LINGUA STRANIERA**

	<i>COMPRESIONE</i>	<i>CONTENUTO</i>	<i>LINGUA</i>	<i>LESSICO</i>
<b>14/15</b>	<b>Ottima e dettagliata</b> anche nelle sfumature di senso e di testi complessi.	<b>Ottimo:</b> spunti creativi e originali; approfondito, personale e coerente.	<b>Molto fluente:</b> costruzione di periodi complessi, terminologia accurata, pochissimi “sbagli” di morfologia e sintassi, coesione.	<b>Avanzato:</b> scelta di un lessico appropriato e terminologia accurata. Uso corretto di idiomi e verbi fraseologici.
<b>13</b>	<b>Buona:</b> coglie tutte le informazioni richieste che vengono rielaborate sul piano linguistico.	<b>Più che adeguato:</b> approfondito, personale, coerente.	<b>Fluente:</b> terminologia accurata, pochi “sbagli”, coesione.	<b>Intermedio/avanzato:</b> terminologia precisa.
<b>12</b>	<b>Discreta:</b> coglie i dati fondamentali anche se non le sfumature di senso.	<b>Adeguato:</b> informazioni corrette, trattazione coerente, articolata ed organica.	<b>Appropriata:</b> connettori, strutture grammaticali, ortografia e punteggiatura corrette. Periodare semplice, ma efficace. Alcuni “sbagli” di morfologia e/o sintassi.	<b>Intermedio:</b> scelta di un lessico semplice, ma adeguato all’argomento. Registro appropriato.
	<b>Accettabile:</b> coglie	<b>Quasi adeguato:</b>	<b>Sufficiente:</b> periodare	<b>Elementare:</b> gamma

10 11	solo i dati fondamentali del testo e non rielabora sul piano linguistico.	informazioni corrette ma sviluppate in modo limitato. Mancano dettagli e rielaborazione.	semplice, presenza di qualche "errore", ma messaggio sempre chiaro.	limitata di vocaboli per lo più generici, ma comunque adeguati. Registro accettabile.
7 8 9	<b>Inadeguata:</b> non coglie tutti i dati essenziali del testo.	<b>Parzialmente adeguato:</b> informazioni non sempre corrette, trattazione poco coerente o contraddittoria, poco rielaborata.	<b>Carente:</b> struttura confusa, influenza della L1 evidente, testo poco coeso, errori frequenti che inficiano la comunicazione del messaggio.	<b>Limitato o improprio:</b> linguaggio elementare non adeguato al contesto, errori lessicali, vocaboli erroneamente tradotti dalla L1.
4 5 6	<b>Del tutto inadeguata:</b> non coglie nemmeno i dati essenziali del testo.	<b>Del tutto inadeguato:</b> soluzioni non pertinenti o incomprensibili, informazioni sbagliate o mancanti, comunicazione incomprensibile.	<b>Molto carente:</b> testo non comprensibile a causa di numerosi e gravi errori di sintassi, morfologia, punteggiatura.	<b>Totalmente inadeguato:</b> insufficiente conoscenza di lessico appropriato, scelte lessicali inadeguate, registro inappropriato.
1 2 3	<b>Inesistente</b>	<b>Confusa</b>	<b>Incomprensibile</b>	

Dall'analisi dei risultati risulta che la maggior parte degli allievi presentava le competenze linguistiche e letterarie previste in uscita di un liceo scientifico ad indirizzo linguistico.

1 allievo 9/15  
4 allievi 10/15  
6 allievi 11/15  
3 allievi 12/15  
3 allievi 13/15  
4 allievi 14/15  
8 allievi 15/15

All'inizio dell'anno scolastico 2006/2007 la prof. Ziraldo ha chiesto alle allieve della propria classe 5 H (liceo scientifico ad indirizzo linguistico) di sostenere delle prove di lingua atte a valutare il livello di lingua raggiunto. A tale scopo ha utilizzato il test di piazzamento (placement test) fornito dal Centro Linguistico Audiovisivi (CLAV) dell'Università degli Studi di Udine, (<http://web.uniud.it/clav>) ed ha successivamente somministrato una prova di ascolto livello FCE. Per quanto concerne la Listening Comprehension su 24 allieve solo 3 sono risultate insufficienti. Per quanto riguarda il Placement Test fornito dal CLAV, su un totale di 30 items i risultati sono stati i seguenti:

1 allieva 15/30  
1 allieva 17/30  
1 allieva 18/30  
1 allieva 20/30  
2 allieve 21/30  
4 allieve 22/30  
3 allieve 23/30  
6 allieve 24/30  
2 allieve 25/30  
1 allieva 26/30  
1 allieva 27/30  
1 allieva 28/30

Dopo aver sostenuto il testo di piazzamento in rete le allieve hanno espresso l'utilità dello stesso per comprendere le aspettative in entrata dell'ateneo udinese. Hanno trovato utile comprendere le loro difficoltà in certi ambiti linguistici per poi apportare in maniera consapevole possibili recuperi. Alcune allieve si sono trovate disorientate di fronte all'uso del computer per sostenere un test ed hanno dovuto essere supportate dall'insegnante. Ciò rivela la necessità dell'uso di strumenti multimediali per l'apprendimento di una lingua straniera. Le allieve hanno poi trovato utile il fatto che vi fosse l'orologio che indicasse loro quanto tempo rimaneva per concludere il test; vedere immediatamente gli errori fatti; poter rettificare la propria risposta; essere da sole senza la presenza della docente che in qualche modo può rendere un allievo più nervoso. Un elemento negativo riscontrato è stato che in alcuni casi la risposta data veniva letta come sbagliata anche se era corretta. Per molte allieve è risultato difficile leggere i brani di lettura (reading comprehension) al computer. Altre allieve hanno trovato fastidioso l'uso del colore blu piuttosto che nero.

In seguito ad un accertamento delle competenze linguistiche la docente di lingua inglese ha voluto attivare un programma di letteratura che potesse coinvolgere le proprie studentesse a dibattere su tematiche di letteratura post-coloniale. Tale scelta era stata dettata dalla necessità di preparare le allieve a possibili interventi esterni al liceo quali quelli offerti dalla prof. Antonella Riem presso la Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere dell'Università degli Studi di Udine. Le allieve hanno partecipato alle conferenze del poeta nativo d'America Lance Henson ed alla lezione introduttiva sugli Aborigeni Australiani tenuta dalla prof. Riem. In vista di questi interventi previsti per il mese di novembre, la docente di lingua inglese è partita dall'analisi della letteratura coloniale per poi passare alla letteratura post-coloniale. All'inizio dell'anno scolastico, parallelamente ai testi di letteratura coloniale ha attivato un blog di poesia post-coloniale (<http://poemcrazy.splinder.com>) per far comprendere alle proprie allieve come la letteratura post-coloniale abbia insita in sé "the colonial discourse" che stavano trattando. Ha scelto poesie che potessero destare l'interesse delle allieve e le ha invitate ad interagire con la docente in modo anonimo. Lo scopo era di far sì che le allieve si potessero esprimere liberamente su quanto trattato, potessero altresì migliorare la propria produzione scritta facendo riferimento al feedback dato personalmente dalla loro insegnante nonché alla lettura delle osservazioni fatte dalle ed alle proprie compagne di classe.

La frequentazione del sito è stata assidua, dato che partendo da fine settembre fino a metà dicembre, il numero delle visite ammonta a più di mille. Se da un lato il blog è stato un punto di riferimento per molte allieve, le quali hanno trovato facilitazione dalla possibilità di interagire con la loro insegnante in modo anonimo, alcune allieve non hanno potuto accedervi regolarmente in quanto il loro computer di casa non presenta connessione ad Internet.

Nel complesso si può asserire, in seguito ai commenti liberamente espressi dalle allieve, che il blog ha permesso di condividere pensieri e di crescere attraverso i pensieri degli altri. Ha permesso di vedere i propri progressi, non solo dal punto linguistico, ma anche dal punto di vista di capacità critica.

Il programma di letteratura svolto per questo progetto è stato il seguente:

Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature

Daniel Defoe's *Robison Crusoe* vs Coetzee's *Foe*

Rudyard Kipling *The Story of Muhammad Din*

The mission of the civilised people

Rudyard Kipling *The White Man's Burden*

Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness*

Chinua Achebe *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darnkness*

Edward Morgan Forster *A Passage to India*

David Malouf *Remembering Babylon*

Le attività svolte sul blog <http://poemcrazy.splinder.com> sono le seguenti:

### **Australian Aborigenes. An Introduction.**

Meeting with Prof. Antonella Riem, University of Udine, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006

Dear Girls,

(or shall I say dear survivors since there were just a bunch of you?) We were lucky enough to have a two-hour session with Prof. Riem, who infused us with profound respect for the original peoples living in Australia before the "invasion of the colonizers", the Aborigenes and with the desire to learn more about them. It was great listening to Antonella's lecture and some of her personal accounts of her visits to Australia. We watched a documentary on Ainslie Roberts, a painter born in England but brought up in Australia, who tried to bridge Aboriginal culture and mythology.

I would love to know from you

1. what you liked best about the documentary;
2. what you liked most about prof. Riem's lecture;
3. what would you like to investigate following the general overview of Aboriginal culture.

We were given some material to work on, but if you want to continue your research on the Aborigenes, I can lend you a fantastic book I bought: "I sentieri del sogno. Viaggi nella terra degli Aborigeni". Antonella's lecture was a sort of eye-opener for me. I know so little about Aboriginal culture and she instilled in me the interest of reading more about it. Thank you, Antonella.

I am quoting from the above-mentioned book: "Da 50.000 anni, gli aborigeni hanno un nome e una storia per ogni duna di sabbia, per ogni pianura erbosa, per ogni roccia, per ogni pozza d'acqua: quei siti sono le impronte del passaggio degli esseri ancestrali che hanno percorso e modellato la terra alla superficie e nel sottosuolo, dando vita agli uomini, alla fauna e alla flora che da allora popolano il paese. Hanno fatto nascere anche dei sogni (dreamings): sogno serpente arcobaleno, sogno uomini iniziati, sogno popoli nuvole o sogno ignami, sogno emù, sogno donne bastone da scavo... di generazione in generazione, gli aborigeni sono stati i custodi di quei siti sacri e dei sogni che vi sono associati: li onorano e li animano con i loro canti, con le loro danze, ma anche dipingendoli sulla sabbia, sui loro corpi, sulle cortecce e, da qualche anno, sulle tele."

[#1](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 16:01

I am really sorry that I was not at the meeting with prof. Antonella Reim. I missed the opportunity of listening what she had to say, but I wasn't even at school that day! I had some problems.

I will read all my schoolmates' comments though so I that I can have an idea of what you've done that day! well I was wondering if I could make any questions about what my schoolmates are going to write if it's not a problem! I hope so!  
thanks, izzy

[#2](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 22:42

Dear Izzy,

Of course you can ask your classmates questions about prof. Riem's lecture. Just ask them and you know you can share their notes, but also read the interesting material they were given. Two of your classmates are going to work on the Aborigenes, so just ask them for the material I gave them. There is also an interesting film "Rabbit Proof Fence" kindly lent to me by your former English teacher Ms Bortoluzzi. I have been said it is a wonderful film, but I haven't been able to watch it yet. It is about the issue of "stolen children". You can ask for clarifications in class.

[#3](#) 12 Dicembre 2006 - 22:46

I'm so sorry because I didn't had the possibility to give my feedback before. Now, here I am and I'll try to describe what kind of feelings the "precious" session with Prof. Riem has aroused in me.

The conference with Lance Henson ended with the classic: "to be continued..." and the second meeting with Prof. Riem represented the perfect "sequel" ..I can't imagine a better one!

Prof. Riem's lecture and Prof Riem her self has been able to capture my attention and made me travel through the boundaries of Aborigenes' world and culture. I can really say that I made a real spiritual travel: I've been transported by Prof. Riem's words and by her evocation of vivid pictures, memories and accounts taken from her visits to Australia.

I could percieve real love, passion and respect for Aborigenes coming from the deepdown of her heart.

During the conference I listened with great involvement everything that Prof. Riem said..and I was more involved especially when she spoke about Aborigenes' cults, religion, traditions and beliefs: I think that these aspects are really interesting also because they promote a comparison with our own culture and religion and because, thanks to their amazing simplicity, they offer us an occasion to discover values and ideals we do not know or that we never take in consideration.

So, following the general overview of Aboriginal culture, I would like to investigate more about Aborigines' beliefs and faith; I've always been bewitched by cults coming from civilizations of ancient story, for example Egyptian civilization, and consequently I was (and I am!) interested in learning more about Aborigines' mysterious cults.

We watched also an "illuminating" documentary based on Eisl Robert's life: through the painter's experience of life, the documentary dealt with the concept of "dreamtime", that is the keyword in Aborigines' culture. What I liked best about the documentary consists in different elements: the direct participation of Eisl Roberts himself; his accessibility, sensibility and great simplicity and his big respect for Aborigines and for Australia, the land that brought up him.

I also really liked the female voice that acted as narrator: she expressed her self in a very clear way so that I could understand every passage.

The documentary, with its music, tone of voice and information's wealth, created a magic atmosphere and I really felt part of it.

So, I can really say that the two conferences have been useful because I had the possibility to have a contact with a partially unknown culture and because they gave me the possibility to discover hidden sides of a world that has always excited my curiosity.

Smarty

[#4](#) 12 Dicembre 2006 - 23:02

Dear Smarty,

Your feedback will be very precious for the final report I need to write for this project. Professor Riem will be happy to read your observations. After having read your post I am more convinced than ever that what we did in these months (the hard work we were asked to carry out, the time we had to invest in writing the feedback and read each other's observations ) was really a great "investment". Thanks to you we will certainly try to promote this project to other classes, because we realized it is really worth doing all this!

Thanks for finding the time to write this useful feedback. Do remember that professor Riem lent me the documentary, so should you like to watch it again you just need to ask for it. Then I ordered a copy of Roberts's book on dreamtime. As soon as I get it I will lend it to you so that you can quench your thirst for more Aboriginal input!

Cheers. :)

7<sup>th</sup> November, 2006

### Meeting with Cheyenne/Tsistsistas poet Lance Henson

Dear Girls,

We have had the opportunity of meeting a great Native-Indian poet, Lance Henson. I would be very grateful if you could possibly share the poems we wrote during the workshop. I will share with you mine, just to show you the courage of trusting those who read the "words flowing out of our souls". It is difficult for a teacher to expose her deep feelings with her students, to share part of her life with somebody she teaches to, but as Lance pointed out, **writing poetry is an act of courage**. Along with your poems I want you to give me some feedback about the workshop.

1. How did you feel during the conference?
2. What did you like about it? Why? Mention an anecdote if possible.
3. What did you not like? Why? Mention an anecdote.
4. Is there anything that you expected from the meeting with Lance Henson that was not met?

Please, do find the time to answer these questions.

Herewith below, you will find some observations by Lance and my poems. Some teachers of English might find this part interesting, so for their own sake I am writing down Lance's instructions. Unfortunately I do not have the poems he read, I did not find it correct to record them. I will write to him, though, so should he be willing to share them with us, I will post them for our "collective" pleasure and "spiritual uplifting."

I quote from Lance:

"We are living in a time that questions our morality, ethics, a time when the good within the human beings is difficult to see. We have to find humanity within the human heart. Disciplines such poetry and arts in general can give solace and support you as a spiritual human being."

"Poetry is an ancient discipline, it derives from the very first speakers. Today the poet is ostracized, imprisoned. What is it that makes people afraid of poets? What compels someone who writes? What pushes deep inside the formative energy to funnel through the brain the message of the heart?"

It's a way of giving credence to the forces which say no to evil, greed. I experience the world and then I write what I've experienced."

"If the soul could speak it'd sing poetry. Truth has a hard edge today: millions of dollars are made from selling guns, there are thousands of children soldiers, human slavery still exists."

**"Poetry is the world as it is and the world as it should be."**

"Poetry is also a meditative place. It is the place I can go when nobody listens."

"Keep a journal and always questions authority."

**"You are gentle souls, you're spiritual beings on a human journey."**

na shi neh  
no tum  
num haisto  
ish i tsis iss i ni is  
ish i tsis a kit a es

maiyun asts

nah tsistsistas  
nah tsistsistas

mahago domiutz  
hetomitoneo  
tsistsistas

I am standing here  
where the cold wind comes from  
where the cold wind goes  
where the sun comes up  
where the sun goes down

spiritual powers listen to me

I am a human being  
I am a human being

Lance Henson  
Dog Soldier  
Cheyenne

*1. Collect any words you hear from the poems I'm going to read. (Lance read three poems)  
Each word represents a key, they come out of your human experience in a different way. They unlock memories, dreams. Use them in a simple poem. Start your first poem with "In this small wind".*

This is my first poem.

**In this small wind**

In this small wind  
at dawn  
a handful of                    hope

wings of a BUTTERFLY  
protruding  
strong  
loose  
past the ashes  
of a dead angel  
fatigue  
autumn memories within me

*Now you stand up and you swap poems.*

*2. Now you create two images per line to create an effective poem. An image is a picture in your mind. Each picture is an example, whether conscious or unconscious. That's how powerful you are!*

*Use your own imagery from your living and the collected words of the poems I read. In the morning you come from sleep, a strange world, and you look at yourself in the mirror. Mirror don't lie. What would the mirror show if we stepped inside it? Write 10 lines.*

This is my second poem.

## **MIRROR**

Stretched out arms  
embracing the whole world  
warmth oozes.

They turn into loose wings  
lifting towards a lit  
road.

Silence  
looking for you  
storming emotions  
waking within me.

*3. Think of somebody you love, feel close to in a tangible way. It has to be a relative, not a friend, somebody of your blood. Don't name the person, just write the relationship in the title. Write five metaphors. Sign and date this poem. Give it to the person you wrote it for on a special occasion. If the person is dead keep it with you.*

This is my third and most heartfelt poem.

## **My brother's poem**

My brother's poem is running through a dark haunted wood  
My brother's poem is wolves howling at the spirits of his ancestors  
My brother's poem is a well spilling out filthy water to renovate itself  
My brother's poem is the shuffling of heavy footsteps on a blanket of cracking leaves  
My brother's poem is the anguishing cry of a NEW rebirth.

Here we are with our third challenge. This time the poem is longer and a bit more difficult as far as the language is concerned. At this stage I do not want to spoil your pleasure of reading this poem so I am not giving you any "language support." If I did, I would jeopardize one of the aims Soyinka wants to achieve. So try to answer this question first: why do you think the language is so refined?

Next week I will pose some guiding questions, which will help you focus on certain key elements. I hope you will like this poem as much as I do. Enjoy it!

*The following poem is a realistic piece which the Nigerian poet Wole Soyinka wrote and performed in London in 1959, when citizens from the Commonwealth could freely move into and around Britain. It tells of a black person in London looking for an apartment to rent.*

[#1](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:14

I didn't like the meeting at all: he spoke about the same themes of the last meeting (that took place last year here in Pordenone). I find extremely offensive the fact that he repeated exactly the same words of that time! We could have buy a record of the last meeting and relisten to it instead of going to Udine by train!! Yes, he is a good poet, I see, but... Lance, please, come on!! let be a bit original!!

[#2](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:24

During the conference I felt really enjoyed and pleased to listen to the things that Lance said: they were very deep and important, and I noticed that he's a person who has really understood, what the sense of life is. I really liked the second part of the conference, when we had to write our own poems, because we had the opportunity to express ourselves, without prejudices and fear. I could investigate my soul and find things that I had never known. Sincerely, there aren't things that I didn't like, maybe only the fact that he spoke with a very loud tone of voice and too fast for me, so I could not understand exactly all the things he said; but two years ago I listened to him three times, so this helped me to try to understand what I could not hear.

A thing that I expected was to listen to more poems, specially those in his mother language, because they have a magic effect on me: I feel transported by the sweet melody of his voice when he speaks in his language..I enter another world, a magic place in which I can be what I really am; nowadays is very difficult to express our soul, you will agree with me.

Besitos..kiss..bisous..baci..kuss..smack..sepy

[#3](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:24

For me the conference was a little bit boring because two years ago we took part to another Lance Hanson's meeting and this year he said the same things that he told in the other conference. He proposed the same poems, I like so much "the mirror's poem" or "my..(for example, grandfather's)..poem" but I think he should change the themes of these. Even if I think Lance Hanson is a special person, he can transmit the spirituality of his culture but if sometimes he changed his meeting it would not be a bad thing.

[#4](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:27

He did and said the same things of the last meeting...I found him boring. And I think that's impossible that a person can write a poem in 5 minutes. Certainly I appreciated his words and his idea of life... but I expected something different and at all some different poems.

Tribalgirl

[#5](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:29

In the first part of the conference, when he spoke about the native americans and our society, I was a little bit bored, later I felt quite and then I was scared about the idea that somebody could read in public my poem. I like the way he guided us during the creative writing because he involed us and in a certain way protced us. I didn't like that the professor and Lance obliged some people to read their poems. I would have refused to read mine, because it is too personal reading something you write and you should read it only if you feel at ease doing it. I expected him to change a little bit the themes of the creative writing, it was the second time I did the same creative writing. \*ale\*

[#6](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:32

I found the conference in some parts very interesting but in others a little bit boring because I tought I had already listened to what he said. The poems were very interesting but they were repetetive because we had already wrote something identical two years ago in another meeting with him. It's fine to know the story of his population but he had to change some aspects of his conference, also because he knew that we took part to the last meeting. His poems are beautiful and full of meaning and I think that he's able to trasmit us his concentration. [Marghe]

[#7](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:36

the conference at the univesity was very interesting. I think Lance is a very great person; he expresses his feelings in a deeply and powerful way. He kept my attention for about two hours, this is not so easy and you know that because of your job.., even if I would have appreciate him more if he had spoken louder. indeed even if the topic was very interesting sometimes I could not follow him. during the conference I felt well, I mean, it was like he understood me without I spoke. I liked in particular when he spoke about the poetry like an aexpression of our heart, he used some words, wich I could not repeat because they would have no sense in this moment, that made me think aout my past, my present and what can I do in my future to better my life. another moment i really loved was when he created the right atmosphere to give us the possibility to write our poems. i thought the conference was diffent, because two years ago I took part in another Lance Henson's conference and it was similar to this one.wolly

[#8](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:37

The conference with Lance was very interessant above all for the themes that are presented in his poems. I was struck by his energy and courage to speak about his people's problems through poem. In my opinion it's very important to know cultures of

other people, because every "population"/ group, has his traditions. I was charm by the poem of our parents that we have written; write poems helps me to express my feelings: I have dedicated this poem to my sister and she has appreciated my present...The poem "Mirror" has given me the possibility to look my person, my feelings: that means that every people has an head to think and hearth to feel emotions... According to me this experience was very positive for my person and I hope that this would help me also in today's life. Ele

[#9](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:37

I find the conference interesting but not at all. We took part into an other conference and he had said the same things and also we have done the same things. I feel very embarrassed where a person ask me to exspress my feelings. that's why because I don't like very much even though I admit that the topic was interesting jolly

[#10](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:38

I liked the conference, because we had the oppurtunity to write a poem but I found the meeting a little bit boring probably because we took part to this conference two years ago...and we did and he said the same things of the last meeting and he proposed the same poems...although I didn't like the conference so much, I think Lance Hanson transmits with his words the spirituality....

[#11](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:38

During the conference i was a littel bit boring because he spoke about the same themes of the last meeting. I think you have to do something original if you want to catch the attention of the students. The only interesting part of the conference was when we wrote our poems, with them i feel in another world. Lance's tone of voice was too loud and i could not understan exactly all the things is said. Although I didn't enjoy myself at the conference I think Lance Hanson is a good poet and is poems are really deep.

[#12](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:38

I think that Lance Hanson can involve the readers in his poems. When this poet speaks I think that every person is fashinated by his thoughts. I like very much the way he speaks. He doesn't speak aloud or with strong tone and this is very important to understand his poem. Lance gives us the possibility to understend a world that doesn't belong to us and he makes us become a poet for a moment. In my opinion this is a very good way to express our feelings but I'm a shy person and I don't like expressing my feelings in front of people. Fortunatly the teacher didn't call me!! I already took part to one of his conferences and I expected something like that. Anyway I like the conference and I think that Lance works ia very innovative way. -fede-

[#13](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:39

I like the conference, in particular what Lance Henson said about the poetry. I appreciate the sentence: "Poetry is also a meditative place. It is the place I can go when nobody listens." because it evoches a private world where we can write our feelings.

I like the activity of writing poems, even if I wouldn't read the mines. I find interesting the advices he gave us. The negative aspect is that we participate at the same conference two years ago and we did the same activities: the poem entitled "Mirror", the poem with the words from his poems. He has also read the same poems. So it was a sort of repetition of what we did in the past. Five years ago we met Lance Henson and Apirana Taylor, but it was different because thy read thir poems. I appreciate most the first part, because he said new things. From the meeting I expected some new activities and new suggestions. Paola

[#14](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:39

The wordshop was interesting, but boring because a lot of things he said I had already listened to. We took part at another Lance Henson's conference, not everything he said was new for us. Also the poems were the same we had written last time. His poems are nice! but his conference, not to much! He is a very good poet, he can explain the spirituality and the inner power of his people. He should transmit these aspects everytimes in different way.

[#15](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:40

my comment won't be nice, i am sorry for it. i did not feel well during the conference, it made me feel ill-at-ease. i know, he said some important and nice things, about some of them i agree with him, but it seemed to me that they were imposed...i don't know how to express my feeling, it is not that simple... it is like...it was not an opinion, it was a Truth, and i felt as if i was to belive in what he said...i did not like the working shop,feelin as it was imposed to me too...i did not feel as writing, and most of all i was not disposed to share it with everybody in that room...yes, writing is an act of courage...i have not had that courage, i did not want to find it, beacuse i did not feel at ease...it was not my poem, it was something somebody else has told me i had to write. it is not sharing with other what you are, i can not see it as connected to what i would love to do in my future life as you told me...and i don't think it could be usefull for my future...the first thing i learned, about sharing things and sharing spaces and emotion with somebody, is that first of all you have to be very very carefull, as you want to communicate with the other, because s/he might have difficulties in coming in contact with you, you can not impose your self to him/her, you can't impose your thoughts, you can not impose your body...you must be patient and respectful towards who you have in front of you, towards the way s/he is, some time cuold be necessary. i can share, i have shared so many things with somebody i did not know, he was very respectfull, i did not -how do you say?? in italian it would sound something like "close in my self"-.

i am so sorry, but i don't have my poems with me any longer...

maybe it was just the wrong day for me, it is probable, but this is what i felt...sorry for my english, i wrote without stopping or re-reading it.

[#16](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:40

the topic Lance Henson spoke about was very interesting, but I found him very boring, in the way he spoke and in the activities he proposed. He spoke very slowly but at the same time with a low tone of voice, which didn't let me understand at all what he was saying. The little I understood was very important because it made me reflect about our world and our reality, which are not very idyllic today: he spoke about slavery that still exists. Even if the themes were interesting, I was bored and I didn't like at all the requirement of writing poems. If I want to write, I do it. I'm not a robot that writes when someone says me to do it... the part of the conference I liked at most was the first part, when he spoke about feelings and spirituality, and also when he read his poems... when someone reads for you, you enter in your own mind and heart and you can feel the whole universe speaking with and to you.

The only suggestion is to speak a little more about the topic of our world today because it is very important, most of all because Lance with his words creates a black hole in you and makes you reflect about how you live and how the majority of people live; how people of your age live today in a cruel reality and how much you are lucky.

Apart from writing poems, I've found the conference deep and meaningful, also in today's life because Lance made me think about the way I behave and the way I should behave. I'll try to follow his suggestions!!!!!! già

[#17](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:41

I think that it's really important for us and for our own culture to discover some aspects of different backgrounds and traditions. That's why I really liked the first part of the meeting because Lance, through his words, has been able to capture our souls and our minds and to make us feel like wanting to know more about the Cheyenne/Tsitsistas' world.

The only negative side is that I found a little bit difficult writing poems as Lance asked us, because I think that it should be an individual and extremely personal experience that I wouldn't like to share with anyone, so when he wanted us to read out our poem I felt really embarrassed because it would have meant to share a part of me with people I didn't know.

What I liked most, as I said, is the meeting's first part because Lance has transported us in his own world through the rich descriptions of Cheyenne/Tsitsistas' traditions, costumes and beliefs.

I also really liked his speech about society and most of all about poetry: he spoke in a very harmonical and respectful way. I think that his opinion: "Poetry is the world as it is and the world as it should be" is simply wonderful!

Smarty

[#18](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:00

I'm answering to the first observation, which is not signed, so I apologize, but I need to address it to DEAR UNKNOWN WRITER... I was present at Lance Henson's lecture last year and frankly speaking I do not agree with the fact it was the same as this year's. Just one poem was the same, the other poems have not been published yet (from what I know, of course I may be wrong!). He cannot possibly change his ideas over a year. He states what he believes in and this implies that there can be redundancy in what he says. But aren't we all redundant when we need to struggle to be listened to, to be understood, to be acknowledged? Another aspect that I would love you to take into consideration is that the meeting was not meant for us only, but also for some university students who had never been exposed to Lance Henson's poems before. So he had to repeat his ideas, but, again, he did not use the same words and the recording you are mentioning would have been different. I would love to raise one critic: I have taught you over and over again in class to substantiate your criticism with "quotations", with details, with examples. We are not fair in our critical attitude if we do not support our criticism. It can be read just like a superficial tirade, if you don't substantiate your ideas. So next time try to give what you demand: originality.

[#19](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:08

Dear Sepy,

You meant he spoke in a whisper, in a very low tone of voice. You are right and I had already warned you about that and explained to you why. In the western world we tend to assert our views by raising our pitch of voice. To sound more emphatic we tend to "shout" and shouting implies not listening to the others, does it? For most native Indians (though I do not like generalizations and unfortunately here I run the risk of contradicting myself) shouting is an attack. Lance, as you pointed out very well, mentioned issues, topics that flowed from "his soul" and he unlocked "private corners" of his soul, corners that need to be whispered not shouted! As to his mother tongue, well I loved the poem he read in his language and I think he limited the reading to one because he had little time and, perhaps, because he did not want to bore some of the listeners, who, unlike you, might not have appreciated his reading in an incomprehensible language! Then the objective of the meeting was making you write your poems, so he had to lead you to that outcome by speaking in a language you could understand.

[#20](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:14

Dear Tribal girl,

As I wrote to the unknown writer, I do not think Lance Henson said the exact same things he mentioned last year. Then as to writing a poem in five minutes, well I think you misunderstood the objective of that workshop. It was meant to unlock your feelings, to trust the others to the point of sharing your emotions with people you do not know, but who, being there, had something in common with you. The purpose was not to "write a poem to be published", but to attempt to do something we all think we are not capable of doing. It was a creative writing workshop, so we were guided in our first steps to poetry writing. Then, do bear in mind that Lance Henson teaches creative writing and he did with us something he usually does with his students over a week or two weeks. This might have given you the idea of rushing things, but I think he managed to give us (in just two hours!!!) so much.

[#21](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:24

Dear Ale,

I do not think that anybody would have imposed you do read the poem. They invited us to read it, but sometimes with students invitations have to be done with some emphasis, otherwise nobody would ever share what they do. It is difficult to share with people you do not know what you write, but what does a writer do? Sometimes, I think, we are afraid of reading out our poems not because there are other people, but because we are reading our poem to ourselves. We feel we are not protected by silence anymore, we feel that the words that speak to us (our own words) force us to come out to the front,

force us to expose ourselves. Perhaps this is not clear, but I hope you have grasped what I mean. If not, let me know and I will try to be clearer.

[#22](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:28

Dear Wolly,

I'm happy to read that you enjoyed writing the poems, even if you found the lecture a sort of replica of the lecture you attended two years ago. However, sometimes, it is worth being in a situation where some key concepts are revised and repeated, especially for us Europeans, caught in the web of consumerism and so detached from the "spiritual" sphere and dimension Lance Henson made us plunge into.

[#23](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:30

Dear Ele,

I am so glad to read your sister appreciated your precious "gift". Yes, you are right when you say that Lance Henson managed to involve us in something we very rarely happen to experience in our lives. I enjoyed writing my poems myself and I doubt I would have been able to overcome my writer's block without his help. Keep on writing, and keep on enjoying yourself and pleasing your beloved with your poems.

[#24](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 17:38

Dear Fede,

It was exciting playing the part of the role for an hour, but do remember that you can keep on writing poems by yourself. Lance Henson proved that by making us write three poems in an hour. Amazing attempt and breathtaking outcomes! As to it being boring, well I think I replied to this part in other comments I invite you to read. Thanks for writing.

[#25](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 20:59

Dear Paola,

Thanks for quoting directly from Lance Henson's words. You are also mentioning a problem that most classmates of yours have underlined, that is Lance Henson's use of the same activities and poems. Now it is clear to me what your "unknown" classmate meant. You have provided me with some clear examples and you have clarified where the redundancy of the lecture lay. I was not present at the lecture you are referring to, I was present last year, but not two years ago, so I did not notice the repetition of the same activities. One justification for this replica, is that some of the other participants (the university students) had not been exposed to those poems before and that Lance did not know you had already done those activities. I am sorry this might have caused some kind of disappointment or boredom. Yet, I think it was an involving experience nonetheless. Thanks for having clarified things for me.

[#26](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 21:10

Dear N.15 (How awful it is to write to a number, please do use your nickname next time, at least it gives me the idea of writing to a person, not to a number!), I am happy you expressed your feelings so openly. I think it is not always easy to work with different personalities at the same time. You speak/write of impositions, and I am sorry you felt things were imposed upon you, I am sorry to read you experience the workshop as a sort of "violence" to you. This reinforces the idea we all perceive things differently. I did not experience the kind of "abuse" you are expressing and I did not feel under pressure or not at ease at all. I can imagine it must have been terrible, because I experienced feeling out of place and it is not a pleasant feeling. What I cannot understand is what made you feel like that. I did not perceive Lance Henson's words as "dogmas", words imposed upon us or told as THE TRUTH. However, it goes without saying that what we state, support and fight for represents the truth for us. We claim what we believe in and I do not think that this is an imposition. It would be if I expressed a different opinion and this was not respected as such. I would love to understand what made you feel so badly, so perhaps we should try to raise this issue in class.

[#27](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 21:23

Dear giò,

you are the first one who mentioned something about the themes touched on by Lance. Thank you for this feedback. As to the poems, well, Lance had been asked to do a creative writing workshop. He had been asked to make you write some poems to make you see that we can all unlock our imagination and open our hearts in a poetic way. As I wrote before, in a lecture it is impossible to satisfy everybody's needs, expectations, desires. We are all different and consequently we all ask for different things. Do remember that we were at university and we were guests there, the lecture was not meant for us only. We were there to share something planned for the university students. As to Lance's tone of voice, you are among other students who mentioned the same thing. I am a little bit puzzled, since it was not the first time you had listened to him and I had already told you in class that he speaks in a whisper. Let's remember, as I have already written, that we cannot possibly "read the rest of the world" according to our parameters. We, Italians, tend to shout and speak in a loud pitch of voice. We tend to be aggressive and quite straightforward and Lance accepts this, but he cannot be what he is not (and I would love to add, thanks goodness!). We cannot impose upon the others what/who we are and expecting a different attitude, to me, is a sort of "violence". The truth, in my opinion, is that we are not used to soft sounds any longer and we find those who speak in a low tone of voice boring. Do we tend to pay attention more to the voice than to the contents "carried" by that voice? Your observation makes me think. Last year Anita Desai (Indian writer) came to Pordenone and my students met her. They loved her novels, her speech, but they didn't like her voice. She spoke in a whisper too!

[#28](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 21:30

Dear Smarty,

I love Lance's quote on what poetry is too. It is so effective and it is dense in meaning. As to the part concerning the production of poems, well, I need to discuss it in class with all of you. It seems that most of you do not feel like sharing your poems with people you do not know (which is fine), but nobody has managed to explain why (or at least I have not been able to understand "the way"). I cannot understand what scares students when they are asked to share what came from their

interiority with other people who underwent the same process. So I would really love to discuss about this in class. Thanks for your observations, they made me want to see into your skepticism. Your comments invite me to consider things that are part of generation, but not of mine.

[#38](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 10:38

During the conference, most of the time I felt interested, but I didn't like too much the second part, when we had to write poems; I didn't like this part because I think poems should be written when one feels like writing them, not when somebody else asks you to.

I liked the "theoretical part", because Lance did not say banal things, he shared his deep feelings and ideals, which I agreed most of the time. For example he spoke about the society we have nowadays, and in my opinion he said right things: we have to try to get to know the hearts of the people we meet, according to me even because our minds are influenced by society. In conclusion, I would have preferred if the conference had not included the writing part, and if Lance had added more to the first part. Anyway I have been very pleased to listen to him.

Jess

Dear Jess,

I had to cut and paste your comment because you wrote it in the wrong section (you wrote it under "Another London Day". It was just mere luck that I looked for other possible comments in the other sections. To reply to your comment, well I am happy to read you appreciated the first part of the conference, though you did not like the idea of writing poems. As to this problem, please read the other replies of mine, so that you can see what I wrote to the other classmates of yours who rose the same objection. Cheers.

[#39](#) 10 Dicembre 2006 - 16:27

Dear Tizzy,

Thanks for finding the time to upgrade your feedback. As to the mixed feelings you reveal to have as to the conference, I need to refer back to all the replies I wrote to your classmates, since, some of your perplexities are shared by some of your classmates. I sense that part of your generation does not like being asked to do things. Perhaps you are more used to doing the things you want to. So whenever somebody asks you to share things in a direct way, you perceive it as blunt and somehow abusive. You do not feel respected in your privacy, and in the case of the conference, this privacy was given by the magic creation of poems. Well, I DO understand your stance, but I also understand the position of a professor, who needs to make sure that you show the outcome of a "poetic experiment". If you had been asked to read your poems without feeling the pressure of an adult imposing it upon you, would you have read them? I doubt it. However, do not misunderstand this reply of mine. I think that things should always be looked from different sides in order to understand them. My reply is only meant to invite you to step out of your "centrality" and take into consideration other reasons, realities, in other words there is "your truth", but also "somebody else's truth" to be catered for! Hope I have been clear enough in what I wanted to say.

As to your poems, I like "Mirror", it is rich in short words, but of great effect. What cloth is your soul wearing today? (a beautiful image, indeed)

The poem dedicated to your grandmother is really so full of great affection. I like the effect you managed to create by using different senses.

[#40](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 15:31

I think is the burden of the people who surround us, the family, the society. They want that we see and do only what they deem correct. I think that they are like chains, and a butterfly can express the idea of freedom. Everybody is preoccupied about your school state or your career. I'm not a slave the only thing that I want is fly in the sky of life, because I don't want to become blind. Fedry

[#41](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 15:34

Dear prof,

thank you for your advice. I do appreciate that! I'm glad to hear that my thoughts come to your rescue lol...it's nice for me knowing that my teacher appreciates my work! And I like this blog because here I can express myself without worrying about a mark! :P

Anyways I know that giving feedback is extremely important (not easy though) but that's something I learned from you...so thanks!

ps. I know you would never dare to say that some of your students' comments are boring...I was addressing anyone who might read my comment! My bad I would have explained it better!

so yea see you in class

bye bye

izzy

[#42](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 22:48

Dear Fedry,

You won't ever become "blind" if you realize that there are external forces that oppress us somehow and that limit our free will. They want to mould us, make us become all the same. Standardization seems to be the key word in our consumeristic and global society. Clones can be controlled, they can be easily managed. So I do understand what you mean. Yet, when we claim for our freedom we need to understand that our freedom can limit somebody else's. So, this implies that, perhaps, sooner or later we all need to limit it somehow. Do you agree?

[#43](#) 11 Dicembre 2006 - 22:58

Dear Izzy,

I appreciate the fact that you find the blog useful. Indeed, it is a very powerful means of communication and it can really help

you overcome your writer's block. I am also happy to read that you have come to appreciate the relevance of writing a feedback. You see, you go back to the blog to read my comments (feedback) and you feel happy with me writing to you. This happens to a teacher as well. Teachers find it very useful (unless they are damn stupid!) to read their students' feedback. This way they can see whether an activity worked or not and they can improve their teaching techniques or strategies. Without you I would not be able to understand whether I am able to convey what I know, whether I am able to share the passion I have for literature, whether I am successful in "passing down" to you a language I adore and I am still learning. One thing I need you to clarify: what you you me by "My bad I would have explained it better"? Bye for now and see you in class. Cheers and take care sweetheart, whoever you are.

[#44](#) 12 Dicembre 2006 - 16:05

Hi, yes I'm agree with you, our freedom maybe can be the prison of somebody else. I don't know how to explain, is the same situation of Winston Smith he can only listen the voice that came from the telescreen. He tries to shut it off but that voice continues to speak.

I think poetry is a good way if you want to express your discomfiorts, because you can use a few words to tell a lot of things. Thanks for your reply is important for a young girl or a young boy that somebody listen them without any judgement or without knowing who they are. Bye see you soon in class

[#45](#) 12 Dicembre 2006 - 23:07

Dear Izzy,

You know that in class you can express your opinions freely. It seems that your nickname protects you from your classmates more than from me! Do not be afraid of judgements, try to express yourself in class as well. This blog is useful, you can practise your writing, take your time when you want to make a point, etc. Yet, I think, that "coming to the front" in class as well, will certainly help you overcome your blocks. Be proud of yourself, you did and are doing a wonderful job. I am happy to read enthusiasm in between your lines. Even after the project you can keep writing your considerations and I will keep replying to you!

Love,

Your teacher of English

[#46](#) 13 Dicembre 2006 - 15:30

Hi. I'm so sorry because i forgot to write my nickname last time. I'm not Izzy, she is my bestfriend, I'm Fedry. What you said in your reply is correct. Is evident that i'm at one's leasure in class. Everybody wants to prevail over the others. Everyday is a competition, there isn't solidarity. I'm not angry for this because i have a lot of friends in my life but you can understand that this situation is troublesome. I'm not pessimist, partly i'm happy because from

Wole Soyinka (1934-)

**Telephone Conversation** (1959)

The price seemed reasonable, location  
Indifferent. The landlady swore she lived  
Off premises. Nothing remained  
But self-confession. "Madam," I warned,  
"I hate a wasted journey – I am African."  
Silence. Silenced transmission of  
Pressurized good-breeding. Voice, when it came,  
Lipstick coated, long gold-rolled  
Cigarette-holder pipped. Caught I was, foully.  
"HOW DARK?..." I had not misheard, ... "ARE YOU LIGHT  
OR VERY DARK?" Button B. Button A. Stench  
Of rancid breath of public hide-and-speak.  
Red booth. Red pillar-box. Red double-tiered  
Omnibus squelching tar. It was real! Shamed  
By ill-mannered silence, surrender  
Pushed dumbfoundment to beg simplification.  
Considerate she was, varying the emphasis –  
"ARE YOU DARK? OR VERY LIGHT?" Revelation came.  
"You mean – like plain or milk chocolate?"  
Her assent was clinical, crushing in its light  
Impersonality. Rapidly, wave-length adjusted,

I chose. "West African sepia" – and as afterthought,  
 "Down in my passport." Silence for spectroscopic  
 Flight of fancy, till truthfulness changed her accent  
 Hard on the mouthpiece. "WHAT'S THAT?" conceding  
 "DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS." "Like brunette."  
 "THAT'S DARK, ISN'T IT?" "Not altogether.  
 Facially, I am brunette, but madam, you should see  
 The rest of me. Palm of my hand, soles of my feet  
 Are a peroxide blonde. Friction, caused –  
 Foolishly madam – by sitting down, has turned  
 My bottom raven black – One moment madam!" – sensing  
 Her receiver rearing on the thunderclap  
 About my ears – "Madam," I pleaded, "wouldn't you rather  
 See for yourself?"

[#1](#) 04 Novembre 2006 - 14:29

I think it is a beautiful poem, but I appreciate most the second poem you posted. In my opinion it is hard to understand and I had to look up a lot of words in the dictionary.

I think the language is so refined for various reasons: first of all the author wants to underline the differences between black and white people. I mean that he wants to highlight how the white English lady reacts when she understands that the man at the telephone is black. She seems to be incredulous and all her words are written in capital letters. When I read the poem I imagine, by seeing the capital letters, that maybe the lady speaks with a loud tone of voice, as if she were a bit hysteric and nervous, and she can't believe that the interlocutor is a black person.

Then I think that Soyinka used a refined language with an ironical purpose. He wants to show us how a foreign language is difficult to understand and learn for a person who comes from another country. I think it was the same thing when people from Italy emigrated in USA or Canada (I have relatives in Toronto) in the early twentieth-century.

The refined language and some technical words create a sense of uncertainty. Then I think also that the lady behaves in a racist way because when she realized that the man is black, she wants to know "how dark" he is, as if the nuance of his skin was really important. Paola

[#2](#) 06 Novembre 2006 - 15:18

Dear Paola,

The challenge of this poem lies not only in the subject matter but also in its language. I had already pointed out that the language would be difficult for you, so do not feel frustrated by it. If you looked up words in the dictionary it implies you were interested in knowing the meaning of certain key words unknown to you. In other words, you felt the urge to understand the poem better and this implies that you liked it, or at least you were intrigued by it. You point out some relevant elements of the language, but a key aspect is missing: why do you think the black man speaks such a refined language? He uses terms the white woman does not understand, and he is using her mother tongue!!! Think about this and try to see what the purpose of Soyinka is. What is the final ironical statement the black man makes that the white lady does not seem to understand?

[#3](#) 11 Novembre 2006 - 15:23

I can really say that this poem is very difficult to understand, maybe because I don't like poems that are "too realistic"..in my opinion a poem should help the reader to escape from reality and make him/ her dream..but, here I am, so I'll try to do my best to understand and analyze the composition!

First of all I think it's very important to observe, like the title clearly suggests, that the poem is written in the form of "telephone conversation" and I think that this is an element that gives reality to the poem itself. The main characters are the "landlady" who "lived off premises" and the "West African sepia" who is looking for an apartment to rent.

As we can see through the lines, the language is really refined, accurate and precise, as if Soyinka had all the words then used, hidden in her mind even before she wrote the poem.

In my opinion the language can also be defined a "climatic language" because it seems to me (but probably I'm wrong!) that the author uses different kind of words, which are increasingly outdated. I identified two parts in the poem (and probably this sort of division can be truthful for Italian people who read English poems and who tend to make continuous comparisons with their own language): the first part in which Soyinka uses "daily" terms like "price, location, indifferent, journey, transmission, voice, breath..." and a second part in which refined words (like "dumbfoundment, varying, afterthought, rearing.." and technical expressions (like "omnibus squelching tar" and "silence for spectroscopic flight of fancy") are used.

However, I think that the historical background in which the poem has been written has a big relevance if we really want to understand the reason why Soyinka has chosen this kind of language: as a matter of fact, the composition dates back to 1959, when citizens from the Commonwealth could freely move into and around Britain. So, I think that, through the language, the author wants to give evidence to the feeling of superiority that, without any reason, was perceived by "local people" towards strangers, especially if they were "West African sepia". This kind of behaviour characterizes the landlady who, to me, is a "ostentatiously pious", superficial and meddling woman who represents, in the best possible way, the epitome of the worst kind of racist; she keeps asking the black person how dark he/she is..but I don't think the information will change her life!

I also think that the landlady's reaction at the end (" [...] her receiver rearing on the thunderclap about my ears") is a precise stance against the black person, which shows us all her contempt towards the "West African sepia" she spoke with.

Another important aspect is that the lady addresses the man/woman only with questions, like a ruthless inquirer.

The language is rich in adjective and imagery: I can perfectly see the "lipstick coated" landlady with her "long gold rolled

cigarette-holder" and "the West African sepia" as it is written "down" in his/her "passport".

It's also important to remember that Soyinka is a Nigerian poet and maybe she identifies with the black person: this aspect can be deduced by the use of words like "brunette" and "peroxide blonde" which, in my opinion, Soyinka uses in order to give human connotations to the "West African"; the landlady makes exactly the opposite: she treats him like an infected person, who must be avoided.

The last aspect that I observed consists in the use of capital letters for the landlady's speech: I think that this is a technique which the author uses in order to represent the scarce inclination (that can be seen like a big wall), which is typical of white people, towards black, or in general stranger, people who came from different social and cultural backgrounds.

So, at the end "my experimental" has been successful: I liked reading the poem because it gives many ideas for possible reflection and discussions because, unfortunately, the one of racism is still a relevant problem in our society (and we are in the 21st century!!) and I think that this is one of the many reasons we should be ashamed of.

[#5](#) 21 Novembre 2006 - 09:59

"The title of poem is very original... I never read a "Telephone conversation". I like it because it's another way to "make" poem. I think that the language is refined, because the author would describe an ironical conversation: He chooses some words like "sepia" for example to distinguish black colour; or when the man says that soles of his feet are "a peroxide blonde".. The black person appears very quiet when madame tells him if he's black or white. Soyinka pays attention to describe the people's behaviour, above all madame. There are a lot of adverbs and adjectives like "ill-mannered silence, clinical assent, light impersonality, truthfulness".

I wish I would write next week if there is time....In the meantime I thank P.ssa Ziraldo because this activity helps me to use language and it's a good exercise for writing. Ele

[#6](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 21:43

Dear Smarty,

WOW, you said you did not like this "kind" of poems, but you seem to have appreciated it a lot. Mind you, before I start giving you feedback, that the poet is a man, not a woman! I'm sure he would grin if he read your comment! I am very happy to read your long comment, because this proves how contemporary this poem still is and how effective it is, since it causes great reactions upon most readers. You were mentioning the difficulty of the language. There is a reason in that: he is using the language of the "colonizer" better than the colonizer himself (in this case a woman, who shows him disrespect with her blatant racism). He possesses the language to the point he can play with it. He uses scathing irony and the lady becomes victim of it, she is ridiculed in the eyes of the reader, who pities this woman and understands her racism: it springs from ignorance. Now I will update the comments you wrote with further information for everybody to read and appreciate (if possible!)

[#7](#) 27 Novembre 2006 - 21:48

Dear Ele,

I am happy you appreciate what we are doing together, even though most of your classmates do not seem to be interested in this beautiful poem. Just a limited bunch of students read it and this worries me. This is a poem that protests, cries out a worrying behaviour that unfortunately still pertains and characterises our time. It is so relevant that when I first read it I thought it beautifully rendered the issue of racialism that is still a plague in our society. As to your need to write and express your ideas in English, you know I am happy to write to you and I am happy to read what you want to write! Keep on going, girl!

Off we go girls with a new poem. This time you are being given the author, the title and the nationality. SO just read it, enjoy it and the ONLY thing (used with a pinch of irony, of course) you are being asked to do is: let yourselves be carried away by these words and let me know where you end up. What do you think the poem is about? In two weeks' time you will find some extra information posted in *italics*, so that you will be able to appreciate the poem even more.

**India**  
**Kamala Das**

**A Request**

When I die  
Do not throw the meat and bones away  
But pile them up  
And  
Let them tell  
By their smell  
What life was worth  
On this earth  
What love was worth  
In the end.

The request in ll. 1-6 seems to comply with the Indian custom of burning corpses. However, those "meat and bones" have something to "tell": how are they supposed to do it and what does that imply?

*The smell of a corpse is certainly not a nice one. This implies that "meat and bones" have quite a "bad" story to tell.*

Is the general tone of the poem pessimistic or optimistic? How is this tone achieved? (in terms of images and rhythm)?

*Pessimism is achieved through the reference to "smell" and through the despairing rhythmical position of "in the end" which concludes the poem. The use of very short lines is also functional: every word becomes important and emphatic.*

*Kamala Das was born in 1934 into a literary Hindu family in India. At fifteen, she was compelled to marry a cousin and moved to Calcutta. At sixteen she had her first son. The forced marriage and her life away from her hometown (Malabar) were traumatic experiences which inspired some of her best poetry. After her divorce she returned to Malabar where she still lives. Her own forced loveless marriage has turned into an extended metaphor for the situation of all Indian women who are victims of a patriarchal culture. Her love poems express her femininity and her belonging to the Indian tradition and landscape. She has insisted on the need to rebel against tyrannical conventions and on woman's need to find her own identity, of which "true love" and passion are only a part. She has been considered a feminist writer, but she has always rejected that label, declaring that in her poetry she only wanted to be honest and that she was simply interested in what is right or wrong.*

[#1](#) 17 Ottobre 2006 - 15:16

According to me this poem includes meaning of life. When you die you think about a lot of things that you did in the past because they are in your body, in your bones, in your meat, they are a part of you. You can't cross out them also if you burn it. The poetry is Indian so you can refer to the bones' smell to the custom of burning corpses. I'm not racist I accept the other culture's traditions but I sometimes don't share them. I know the flames purify your body from sins but if you burn it you cancel a person you change him/her in ash. I can't think you remember something breathing the smell of burned bones, but it's better if you know that in this place there is someone who you loved.

This poem is optimistic because there is hope to live in the heart of the others. While I'm reading this poem I can see a lot of bones piled up and burning and in the smoke I see the life of the dead person.

[#2](#) 21 Ottobre 2006 - 18:28

In my opinion the theme of the poem is the fragility of life. I had the impression in reading this poem that it may be the work of a woman. I felt a sensitivity that can be feminine. I also had a sensation of spirituality that is typical of women. The poem starts with the image of death, the author says to people not to throw away her flesh and bones. She wants people to "pile them up". When she says: "let them tell" means that what is left of her body has to be hinted to everybody the reality of life. When a person is dead, his stiff stinks (also the most wonderful and perfumed body does). I think she wants to give us a personal demonstration: all things which have value in our life, when death comes, are useless and futile. When the author clarifies "on this earth", she wants to let understand that there is another life, not on earth but in another dimension where bodies have no importance anymore but other values are relevant. Only the good things we have done and received in life maintain a value. The tone of the poem is optimistic because following the author love is worth living and dying. \_francy\_

[#3](#) 21 Ottobre 2006 - 20:51

I will say on tiptoe what I think to think - I am not really sure about it - about this poem, being it the request of somebody whose culture I do not know anything of.

I read it once and I thought I couldn't possibly understand, so I let some time pass, and then I re-read it...this time many thoughts in my head; I do not know how could they come out of my mind...I'll try.

By my occidental vision, I think that the author wants the bones and meat to be there to let people understand that it is just...meat and bones, nothing else. Everything else, what the author is "made of", won't be found with that bones, it will be in another place. So I think Kamala Das is saying "do not worry about death, do not be afraid! it is only a passage! I know, you won't have your corporal body any longer, but it is not really important...look amid that bones and meat; I am not not down there!" I love the idea of appeal to the senses...most of all that "let them tell" in v.5, and the smell in l.6, because it struck you; I think that if you once smell the stench of meat in decomposition, you won't ever forget it.

Every line has just a few words; I think it is because the author wants the poem to be read slowly, and wants us to savour every single word.

I would love to have something to tell about the last two lines...but I can not understand them...maybe I'll read something through my made's comments that will be illuminating even to me! I think that's all, so on my tiptoe I'll go away.

I'el

[#4](#) 22 Ottobre 2006 - 21:51

Dear anonymous writer,

I can read that you were carried away by this short poem. You used your imagination a lot, since you visualized burning bones! As to your reference to the Indian culture, I do understand your puzzlement, because you read about a custom that is

so different from the European one, for example. But try not to be judgemental. If I see our custom of burying through the eyes of a person who burns the corpse of their beloved, I could get a sense of feeling smothered, being buried inside a damp, dark, deep place. The rays of the sun cannot warm my bones. Slabs of stone and concrete are heavily placed "on me". I feel locked inside a prison. I want to be free, I want to be part of nature, don't leave me alone..... This is somewhat dramatized, because talking about death and burial customs on the web is too much for me. These are private issues and as such I do not like writing about them (seriously) for everyone to read. That's why I brought my comment to the extreme and I added a tone of sarcasm. But I am sure, knowing me as a teacher, why I wrote this to you. We need to learn to see things through different eyes. If we train ourselves in this direction we can understand other cultures, or people who we consider different from us, much better.

Keep writing and I will keep reading you.

[#5](#) 22 Ottobre 2006 - 21:57

Dear Francy,

You are a poetess yourself. Well done, girl. I agree with you, even though I am not quite sure about your consideration about what characterises feminine writing. We haven't dealt with the Romantic poets yet, but believe me Francy, the kind of sensitivity you will read in a few months is so touching and so "feminine" as you define it, but most of the poems we will read were written by men. By this I do not mean that the reader cannot "perceive" whether the writer is a man or a woman. I just think that it is not so easy, it is not black and white. We will certainly discuss about this issue in class. So be prepared.

[#6](#) 22 Ottobre 2006 - 22:03

Dear El,

I do understand your "fear" of writing about something you do not know very well, or about something that is so different and distant from your own reality. Your tentative approach (your tip-toeing, I loved this expression of yours!) is understandable. We cannot have the exact same response to a poem. It would not be a poem that appeals to our "soul". SO this means that we cannot understand everything straight away. It takes time to savour things. The poem is short, but so dense in meaning. This is why I had chosen it. This way you realize how much can be said on so few lines! Try to reread it, I am sure you will find the meaning to the last two lines and you will explain them to me. Looking forward to hearing from you again, then. Take care. Love. Your teacher.

[#7](#) 23 Ottobre 2006 - 20:45

The poem is about death, better still about what the relatives should do with the author corpse after death. She says that the dead corpse speaks because, looking at it, we can understand better the worth and the real value of life. When the relatives are deprived from the love of the dead, they understand more the importance of it because they have a hole inside. In my opinion those "meat and bones" tell something thanks to their presence: if the people see them, they would probably think over the meaning of life and they could understand that life is short and we must live and appreciate every part of it. In this poem there are rhymes: tell - smell (lines 5,6) are a rhyming couplet, worth - worth (lines 7,9) are alternate rhyme. Lines 7 and 9 are also an anaphora, because it is repeated most part of the line. I think that line 4 is particular because it is a single word: "and". In my opinion it creates a sort of separation: in the first part the author gives the instructions of what the relatives are supposed to do with her corpse; in the second part she tells the importance of life and function of her corpse (underline the value of life and love). I think that the tone of the poem is optimistic. The Indians, if I don't mistake, believe in the reincarnation. I think that it is optimistic also because it tells positive things about the worth of life.

Paola

[#8](#) 24 Ottobre 2006 - 15:26

At last it's possible for me to write. Sorry if I didn't write any comment for the other poem.

So...I find this poem very rich of sentimental value. Reading these few lines I can savour all writer's life. I think the poem is about the fine borderline between life and death. But the tone is not pessimistic, the speaker knows that the life is only a passage but the memory will stay in the other's heart. Thanks to give us the opportunity to express ourselves without being judged and to choose these wonderful poems.

Tribalgirl

[#9](#) 27 Ottobre 2006 - 17:29

This is the most beautiful "testament" I have ever seen. It is short, simple both in words and lexis, and at the same time it says everything. What is our aim in this life? Many people (writers, philosophers, scientists...) are still trying to give an answer to this question, and also I have asked the same to myself. Why? Why are we here? In my opinion this poem gives us a possible answer. Our life is not only directed towards what we can do here, in the earth, but its most important aim is "to guide" who follows us. What we do in life is to give examples of what is wrong and what is right for who will live after us. Many people could think that all this has been made for centuries, and that's right, somehow, but what we have considered are texts, peace of paper that many times have been misinterpreted. But our "meat and bones" could not be, because they without speaking tell the truth to everybody in the same way. For example, when we are in front of a tomb there is silence (which is the sublime evoked by art) and in this moment we can see in our soul understanding the essence of life. It's really ironic that we can see it in what is no more alive. The rhythm of the poem is slow and makes the reader think about what is talking. The tone is pessimistic because the poet seems to think that the human being makes always the same errors without looking back through the story, and I agree with him. -wolly-

[#10](#) 28 Ottobre 2006 - 16:20

Dear Paola,

You are not mistaken at all. First of all, do not worry about your considerations. I had asked you to feel free to express your own ideas and to draw conclusions on the basis of your background knowledge. So do not worry about possible generalizations at this stage. I appreciate the fact that you make a stylistic analysis of the poem as well. You noticed the relevance of the isolated "And". It goes without saying that all these stylistic choices are meant to procure a certain effect upon the reader. Nothing comes by chance. Thank you for taking the time to write. I know you are packed with things to do so I really

appreciate your contribution to this blog.  
Love,  
Your teacher of English

[#11](#) 28 Ottobre 2006 - 16:28

Dear Tribal girl,  
Thanks for finding the time to write. I do not understand when you write "this poem is rich IN sentimental value". Can you clarify this point please? You are right in stating that there is a very "brittle", "fragile" line that separates life from death. Yet, the tone is not pessimistic. Life is transitory, but memory will survive life.  
I THANK YOU for thanking me. Sometimes I feel disempowered in your class, because I get the impression that whatever I suggest is not something that catches your attention. At least, now, your words disclose a different reality: you are appreciating these poems. As to the possibility of expressing yourselves freely, well, you are always invited to do this in class as well. Perhaps with these poems you feel more involved. Bye for now. Try to join the tribe :) more often if you can.

[#12](#) 28 Ottobre 2006 - 23:50

Dear Wolly,  
Sorry for not writing to you promptly, but splinter was "out of order for a few hours" so I couldn't post the message that I had written for you.  
As you clearly point out the power of literature is to make our minds more inquisitive. If it were not for it, we wouldn't questions ourselves about the meaning of life, of our existence, etc. When we read and wonder about what we read, we gain energy from the writer's experience of the world and we feel somehow "understood", less lonely. Has it ever happened to you to exclaim "that is what I feel myself" after reading a poem?  
I do not understand when you write that it is ironic to appreciate things when we do not have them any longer? Do you want to say that it is absurd that lots of human beings long for what they cannot have any longer?

[#13](#) 29 Ottobre 2006 - 14:16

According to me this poem show us life's immortality. the "Speaking I" tells about a person who wants to protect her memory. For me this poet wants to demonstrate to us that she has good values like love in general. Her bones have "the gift" of speaking. We are caught into the poem. The poet wants us to live this situation using the sense of smell and not only. Then, this poem helps me to meditate about deth. Here death means another life, the proceeding of our life is in another world. I like this poem because it doesn't describe death as something that puts on end to existance, but allows us to proceed through the memory of the living people. The author is a woman because she expresses her feelings in a sentimental way. As this is an Indian poet I think that she feels strongly the sense of another world, the idea of coming back on earth. so the death of body is not important because the soul survives. \_fede\_

[#14](#) 30 Ottobre 2006 - 14:56

Dear Fede,  
Thanks for your insightful comments. I can see you appreciated the poem and that it involved you deeply. Please read the comment in italics (under the poet). Then move on with the third poem and try to respond to it as profoundly as you did with Kamala Das's. :)

[#15](#) 07 Novembre 2006 - 09:57

Too many hard up years,  
I can't hold her, Have come my way  
Too many teardrops yeah  
I don't get it  
Life moves on  
If you want it to  
Too many times I've felt  
My heart was broken  
Wasting time on someone  
I don't get  
But I've found someone  
Who makes me better  
Yeah I've found someone  
Who makes me go  
.....  
poetry too

[#16](#) 12 Novembre 2006 - 23:36

I don't know who you are, but I love your poem. I like the rap rhythm, the simplicity and depth of it. I am happy that you have found someone "who makes you go." Good luck with your life. :)

Dear girls, off we go with this project. We will learn a lot from each other and we will get to appreciate poems from writers from all over the world. I tried to choose poetic productions that somehow can promote the free expression of your ideas, feelings, insight, etc. and this is what poetry is meant for, isn't it? It breathes inside our mind and body, it moves the "chords of our emotions", it inspires us and makes us see things through different lenses. It promotes a whole new experience of a particular event. Thanks in advance for all the things you are going to teach me. We will have fun together (hopefully) because we will be able to express our



doesn't share her man's feelings.  
Mav

[#2](#) 27 Settembre 2006 - 18:28

Mav, you might be right, but what can you tell me about the language used by the writer. Are there any aspects of the language that make you think the writer is a woman?

[#3](#) 29 Settembre 2006 - 15:14

Because of the inscription written before the poem I think that the writer is a woman that wrote it for her husband or somebody that she loves and from here I perceive an affective way to write. I think that the writer is English because from the description of London's streets and traffic I can infer that she knows very well this city. The title I would give to this poem is "Island man in London", because the protagonist of this poem is a Caribbean man who lives in London.  
\*Ale\*

[#4](#) 29 Settembre 2006 - 17:44

Dear Ale, you did a good job, but let's try to refine your thoughts. You find the language "feminine" in the sense that it reveals sensitive feelings towards a man who is obliged to live in a context he does not consider "home". Are there any other aspects in the use of the language that can support your theory? Try to make the title shorter. Poems are generally characterised by short, sometimes even cryptic titles. Reread the poem and let the words transport you. What else can you write about them? What is their effect on them? How do they speak to a "female reader"? Do you think there is a "female"/"male" way of writing poetry? This is food for thought. Bye for now.

[#5](#) 30 Settembre 2006 - 13:19

I think that the writer is a woman, because she describes a man who goes and returns from the work and also because of the dedication at the beginning of the poem. In my opinion the writer comes from an island of the Pacific ocean but now lives in London and feels nostalgia for his/her home. I would give to the poem the title "Dream" because the protagonist dreams his native land every time he awakes.  
Paola

[#6](#) 30 Settembre 2006 - 18:12

The poet is probably a person who has a close relationship with the "island man". I think he/she lives in that island, or at least he/she has lived for a long time there; long enough to be able to describe the sounds you can hear waking up. The "island man" maybe wrote a letter to the poet describing his different life in London, talking also about the North Circular (that is maybe why the poet knows it). The title could be "waking up still dreaming", because the "island man" wakes up every morning thinking about the sounds of his native land, so not hearing the sounds that surround him in reality, but just imagining them. The poet, in my opinion, is a man, a friend of the "island man". A woman, maybe, would have used different images, more romantic ones and wouldn't have said "grey metallic soar": I think it is a more masculine language.  
Jess

[#7](#) 01 Ottobre 2006 - 12:25

I know that the "speaking I" and the author of the poem not necessary are the same person but I think that only who comes from this Caribbean island or who had a long experience there, could describe feelings, sounds and imagines of this place. So, I think that the author could be the "island man"; a man and not a woman because when I read this poem and especially the onomatopoeic words I imagine this man at the North Circular which catches these sounds and he transforms them into words. I would give this title to the poem: "home, sweet and far, home"; the man now lives in London but every day, when he wakes up, he thinks and imagines his native island and he is homesick, he feels nostalgia for the sound of blue surf, for the wild seabirds, for the fishermen and for the sun.  
[Marghe]

[#8](#) 01 Ottobre 2006 - 15:39

I think that the way the writer describes how the protagonist of the poem wakes up, the waves on the pillow, his dreams is so detailed that she has to know him very well. The title could be "Man in London".  
I think that onomatopoeics makes the reader think to be the protagonist and so to see the same things he sees, to dream the same things he dreams and to hear the same things he hears. The writer makes me, as girl, thinking of love and how she loves somebody that has a different background from her own background and how she tries to understand his feeling. I think that when a woman writes about somebody she loves, she feels like a mother so she tries to enter in his or her psychology and she writes using a tender language but when a man writes about somebody he loves, first he describes what he loves about he or she, and does it in an impulsive way.  
\*Ale\*

[#9](#) 01 Ottobre 2006 - 20:47

Dear Paola,  
Thanks for your considerations. Yes, I do like your observation about the inscription at the very beginning of the poem.

[#10](#) 01 Ottobre 2006 - 20:51

Dar Jess,  
I loved reading your considerations, they reveal insight. Well, I am a bit skeptical as to your idea of what is "feminine" and "masculine" writing. But this is just a personal consideration of mine. Do you realize that by not giving you any reference to the author or by not providing you the title of the poem, you tend to ask yourself questions about the poem that you wouldn't

otherwise? I think this project will do all of us good. We will learn tons by this experience. See you and keep writing. I love reading your thoughts.

[#11](#) 01 Ottobre 2006 - 20:53

Dear Marghe,

I like the title of the poem. It is very effective. As to your comments on the poem, I think you understood what it is about. So keep on reading, so that you'll see whether your anticipations are right or wrong!

[#12](#) 02 Ottobre 2006 - 19:02

i think the author is a woman. not only for the way of saying things, but also because of the pint of view from which she sees fishermen going out to sea; traditionally women stay on the seashore looking at their men while leaving to sail.

i don't know where the author could be coming from, i just think she lives a situation that makes her feel not well..it could also be a disease, this could just be a way of saying that she's not ok, as if she was a caribbean man, used to live in a wonderful world, and now forced to live in a way he doesn't like, and didn't want, to.

for the title of the poem...i don't know, i am really not good in giving titles! i thought it could be "another london day", as the last verse of the poem, but it is quite a hopeless title, that is why i don't want to think this is the real one... i find the poem is not hopeless, because, even if it is only in his dreams, but the caribbean man every night goes in his caribbean island and feels well, even if life is not as beautiful as he was used to..

to me it is a wonderful poem.

ps: sorry for my late.

l'el

[#13](#) 02 Ottobre 2006 - 21:00

Sorry for not writing before I just got the chance to do it.

I think the writer of this poem has an incredible ability to draw the scenery of the poem by using very effective words.

I swear, every time I read this poem, I can see everything in my mind! And most important I can see it through the island man's eyes, because that is the purpose of the poem, to make us understand the hard displacement from a heavenly island to a grey city. And what better way to do it then showing us the protagonist's point of view??

I wasn't sure if the writer of the poem was a man or a women but I knew it was someone who was really close to the island man! The reason why I wasn't sure about the writer's gender is because I think when human beings express their inner feelings they all do it in the same way!

Obviously there are some people that express their feelings in a better way than others but I don't think it depends on the gender.

I noticed that there is no punctuation and this is pretty strange because we all know that a good writer should use punctuation correctly, but I think

Grace Nichols didn't use it on purpose. Maybe because she wanted to show us how the island man feels every time he wakes up in London. She is revealing us the man's feeling of lost for living in a country that does not belong to him!

And the missing of the punctuation emphasizes this...because without punctuation we are lost too; we don't know were we have to stop, were a sentence ends or if there is a question or a statement!

So I guess she wants us to identify with the protagonist.

Regarding to the unusual layout I think it was created like that on purpose; it seems like the writer wants to lead us from the emerald island to London. The passage though, is not sudden or abrupt instead harmonious and slow. The reason why I think that, it's because "groggily groggily" and "to surge of wheels" is written more distant than the other sentences. And if you take a pen and follow the poem's layout till the end you will see that you drawn a wave and I think, that wave is the same wave from the pillow and the man's Island.

This poem appeals to the five senses but most of all to the sight!

As I said at the beginning this seems more like picture than a poem because the language is very accurate. The main colours of the poem are without doubt the blue, emerald and grey. As a matter of fact those are the two colours that best express the opposition between the Caribbean Island and London.

But then there are other colours that came to my mind, most when the writer writes about the island, for example when I read "seabirds" I think of the white, when I read "sea" the light blue, when I read "sun" the yellow and so on.

On his Island, the man hears the sound of the blue surf, the steady breaking and wombing wild seabirds and fishermen pushing out to sea.

Instead in London he hears the noise of a surge of wheels.

In lines 11-19 the words that express the unpleasantness of waking up to another London day are: groggily groggily, grey metallic soar, dull, muffling muffling, Another.

The last line of the poem is presented as the harsh reality; the fact that she wrote "Another" with a capital letter means that the man perceives London as a big mountain that separates him from his dear sea.

izzy

[#14](#) 03 Ottobre 2006 - 23:10

Dear l'el, (what sort of nickname is this? Quite puzzling, because I don't know who you are!)

I like the final considerations you wrote. Yes, you are right, it is not a poem about hopelessness. I agree with you there. What I do not quite agree with is "claiming something about a poem without backing your assumptions up with something really mentioned in the poems". It is important that at this stage we pay careful attention to the text, and then we can make all the assumptions we want, but still, you need to substantiate them with "quotes" from the text.

You do not have to worry about deadlines. I do understand you do not all have internet access at home, so take your time.

What I am happy to read is that you really enjoyed the poem. This blog is just a nice, cosy, private corner of our literature classes I love sharing with you. You are the protagonists, I am just a sort of facilitator. I don't know who is writing, but you know when I am writing to you and you know that the one who poses the questions it's me! See you in class.

[#15](#) 03 Ottobre 2006 - 23:20

Dear Izzy,

I am really very happy with what you wrote. It is amazing the things you can see in a poem, isn't it? It is just something realizing that every single element (punctuation, capital letters, etc.) have meaning in a poem. That's why a poem is like an iceberg. The tip of it, what you can see on the surface is just part of the "whole" meaning. Underneath there are so many layers of meaning that the more you read the poem the more interpretations you can give to it. I certainly appreciate all your comments. I loved reading your comments and some are very insightful. So I am pleased your classmates can read you. Isn't this blog just AWESOME (American for great, brilliant, fantastic, terrific)

Keep reading this blog and keep writing. More interesting poems will come (hopefully you'll like and appreciate them). :)

[#16](#) 04 Ottobre 2006 - 17:29

hi I'm so sorry but I can't go on net every day but I promise I'll write as soon as possible. I really like this poem so I have many things to write. Sorry :)

[#17](#) 04 Ottobre 2006 - 21:50

I'm sorry for late but I can go on net only once a week..

however..for me the author is a woman, who is a little bit melancholy. The sound of words is sweet and so remember me the female sensibility. But I have no idea about the title of the poem, maybe could be "Another London Day" but..I don't know. The writer comes from a Caribbean island and she wants to dedicate the poem to a friend, a relative or someone else, who doesn't live no longer to the island.

Sorry again

Jolly

[#18](#) 05 Ottobre 2006 - 20:43

Dear Jolly,

You seemed very tentative in your answers, but as you can see from the extra information I added to the poem, you answered the questions correctly. It is interesting that the sweet words, which are certainly connected with the nice dream, REMIND you of female sensitivity. You do not need to apologize if you cannot reply to my questions promptly. I do understand that some of you do not have Internet access. Love reading your observations. Keep writing, you are on the right track!

[#19](#) 06 Ottobre 2006 - 19:58

In this poem the author doesn't use punctuation and the layout is unusual too. In my opinion the reason is that in the first 11 lines the man dreams, and when a man dreams (and he feels happy and free) his feelings and thoughts run fast in his mind: the first part of the poem focuses on this mental condition; language is simple, positive and easy, the layout is regular. But then, the man wakes up and he begins "climbing", "struggling", "trailing along" and the poem follows his steps; it goes to the right and to the left (for example on the line 14); he must also bear the burden of his race and he must stop because he is tired (and also the poem stops for a moment); and at the end we notice that his difficult life is compared to a mountain ("Another" is curiously written with the capital letter).

The contrast between London and the island is made also by colours: the island is blue, like the ocean (blue surf) and like the sky (seabirds fly), white, like the foam of the waves, yellow, like the sun and at the end, green like man's hope. Also the sounds are positive: there are the sound of the sea, the call of the birds, the voices of the fishermen: this is the soft sound of Nature.

London, instead, is ruled by grey and black like the asphalt cement and the wheels but it is also the colour of the man's sad feelings. London is "muffling": there are too many cars, too many people, too many unnatural sounds because London people has left behind the nature.

The great metaphor in the second part of the poem is "pillow waves": the pillow is wrinkled because the man has slept over but the use of word "waves" reminds the island's landscape, so the pillow is full of dreams like a painter's canvas.

The words that express the man's uneasiness are "groggily" (the man feels ill and tired), "circular" (it represents a life without an aim), "muffling" and "dull" (the man can't get used to London lifestyle).

Tizzy

[#20](#) 06 Ottobre 2006 - 20:04

In this poem the author doesn't use punctuation and the layout is unusual too. In my opinion the reason is that in the first 11 lines the man dreams, and when a man dreams (and he feels happy and free) his feelings and thoughts run fast in his mind: the first part of the poem focuses on this mental condition; language is simple, positive and easy, the layout is regular. But then, the man wakes up and he begins "climbing", "struggling", "trailing along" and the poem follows his steps; it goes to the right and to the left (for example on the line 14); he must also bear the burden of his race and he must stop because he is tired (and also the poem stops for a moment); and at the end we notice that his difficult life is compared to a mountain ("Another" is curiously written with the capital letter).

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Tizzy

[#21](#) 07 Ottobre 2006 - 19:28

In this poem there isn't punctuation, which could create confusion. I think I prefer the poem without it. There are divisions in the poem marked by the spaces between the strophes and also by some words, which are displaced on the right of the poem: for example "groggily groggily" (line 11) and "surge of wheels" (line 14). The absence of punctuation creates a sense of uncertainty and makes me think of the Caribbean man who doesn't feel at home and has no points of reference in the new country.

The "emerald island" and London are in contrast, this is emphasized by the language which appeals to the senses. For example the sight reveals different colours. The colours of the island are: the blue of the waves (line 3) and the emerald green of the island (line 10). The colour of London is the grey of the streets (line 13). Then the sense of hearing reveals different sounds. In the island the man hears the steady sound of slow breaking waves. In London he hears the steady noise and the sudden increase of wheels. The only sounds he can hear are dull and muffled sounds.

In the second part of the poem there is a word used metaphorically: "waves" (line 17). It can be interpreted in different ways, maybe the Caribbean man dreams the sound of the waves of his island. Maybe the waves are the folds of the crumpled pillow. In lines 11-19 there are some words which express the effort and unpleasantness of waking up to "another London day", for example: groggily groggily (line 11), muffling (lines 16), crumpled pillow (line 17), another (line 19).

[#22](#) 07 Ottobre 2006 - 19:32

Sorry! I forget to write the name! I sent the message at 19.28, a few minutes ago, and I am Paola.

[#23](#) 08 Ottobre 2006 - 11:55

Sorry for the delay of my answer, but I had some problems with my limited organization's ability!

So, I've really liked the poem! It emits a feeling of sadness and regretfulness that completely involves the reader.

When I read the poem I can draw every single picture in my mind and I can cherish the illusion of my real being on the beautiful "small emerald island": I think that only a good writer can have the power to make the reader feel the protagonist of his/her own work and that's why I think that the author, through the masterly choice of words, wants us to identify with the "island man", to whom the poem is dedicated.

When I first read the poem, I thought the writer was a woman...now I can see that I was right!

I like to think that the poem is a sort of love message dedicated to "a Caribbean Island man in London" by a woman, who probably is in love with him and who had to bear the suffering of a sudden separation from him.

So, in my opinion, the poem is the author's way to keep in her mind a clear memory of her beloved, who lives a new, repetitive and "grey" life in London; a man who she'll never embrace again.

I think that, through the poem, the writer gives voice to her heart's words.

I also noticed that the poem can be divided in two sections: the first (from line 1 to 10) is a recollection of the man's past; the writer appeals to the sense of sight through the use of incisive (breaking, wounding, defiantly...) and "sweet" (blue surf, small, emerald..) words; the "small emerald island" is like a little part of Heaven, in which the man used to live and to be happy: the writer describes it as if she is a mother who watches over her child.

In the second section (from line 19 to the end) we can see the man living his new life in London: the idea of repetitiveness is given by the use of onomatopoeic (groggily groggily; muffling muffling...) and "grey" (metallic roar, wheels, roar..) words.

It seems that the man lives without emotion: he has lost his hopes, he's like a robot, who lives without any expectation.

Since there is no punctuation, the passage from the past (symbolized by "the small emerald island") and the present (symbolized by London) is a little bit sudden because, as the man wakes up from his dream, the reader is suddenly transported from the beautiful and celestial island's landscape to the greyness of London's streets.

At the same time I think that the lack of punctuation is a writer's precise strategy: since she considers the reader as the protagonist of her own work, she wants him/her to find his/her own way through the poem; but she gives him/her a little hint: if we follow the poem's lines with a pen we draw a "snake" and I think that it symbolizes the sinuosity of the poem itself: the passage from past to present is sudden but the poem in its complex has a sweet and winding course, like an old lullaby.

The contrast between the "emerald island" and London is built in a very perfect way: as I said, the language appeals to the senses, especially to the one of sight, that's why the colours in the poem are very important: they give consistency to the man's feelings.

The main colours are blue and grey: both witness the opposition between past and present.

So, for example, when I think about the "small emerald island", I imagine a beautiful, celestial beach lighted by the sun; a crystalline sea and many "wild seabirds" that circle in the sky; but when I think about London (in this contest) I can only see a tangle of streets, myriad of cars, haste, frenzy, repetitiveness...a very sad picture!

The main feeling throughout the poem consists in the effort and unpleasantness of waking up to "another London day": the writer gives evidence to this kind of mood in line 11 to 19 in which she uses words that highlight the feeling of "not-belonging" that bounds the man to a city in which he is forced to live.

The man considers London as an impassable mountain which separates him from his dear island and which doesn't give him the possibility to be happy again.

At the end he will realize that his "small emerald island" will remain only a dream and that he has to bear "Another London day".

Smarty

[#24](#) 08 Ottobre 2006 - 18:36

Dear Tizzy,

Your analysis of the poem is just awesome. I love your subtle observations and your in depth analysis. The reference to the unnatural sounds the speaking eye is subjected to, the sense of an aimless morning approaching, the state of uneasiness we, as readers, may feel towards the burden this man has to carry every day: these observations of yours are really to the point. I find your consideration about "Londoners having no sense of nature". Be careful, you are reading beyond the lines here. The poem does not state that people in London have neglected nature. If you claim so, then, you need to substantiate your view with lines/words from the poem.

I loved reading your analysis, that for sure!

[#25](#) 08 Ottobre 2006 - 18:47

Dear Paola,

you are right in observing that the way words are displayed on the page (you refer to the lay out of the words on the right margin of the poem) adds meaning to the poem itself. The effect of stressing the anguish of the man is also reached through the absence of punctuation. His dreams cannot be "controlled" by any commas, or fullstops or any other punctuation mark. Keep writing, your ideas are really worth reading.

[#26](#) 08 Ottobre 2006 - 18:57

Dear Smarty,

You are really SMART, really bright and intelligent. I don't know who you are and this allows me to express my opinions more freely. I was really taken aback by the deep analysis you have been able to write. It seems that this poem has really triggered what I expected: it involved all of you so deeply that you felt the need to read it over and over again. And the more you read a poem the more you get to "see", "perceive", "hear" new things. Sometimes you tend to be too carried away in your analysis, for example when you say that the poetess is in love with this man and she will never embrace him again. Here you added something that is not stated in the text, that you imagined. With poetry "guts" reactions are fine, but then we really need to support our response with something really stated in the lines. However, if this poem made you phantasmise a lot about the poetess and her partner, then I am happy.

[#27](#) 09 Ottobre 2006 - 16:36

hi!!! I'm in late I know..I'm very sorry but last weeks my web connection was k.o..

Well, as far as this beautiful poem is concerned, I noticed that there's no punctuation in it; the divisions are marked by spaces and pauses, as we can see in line 10. This technique in my opinion gives more strength to the poem: the poem is less fluid and so it expresses the cruelty of the life of the Caribbean man in London.

There are in the poem a lot of contrasts between the colours of the island and that of London: the island is blue (the sea), yellow (the sun) and emerald, while London is represented by the grey, the colours of roads, cars, roars, wheels and pollution. As far as the sounds is concerned, in the island the man used to wake up with the sound of blue surf, with the singing of the seabirds and the songs of the fishermen; in London instead he wakes up with the metallic noise of cars, wheels and roads, a "grey metallic roar".

The examples of words used metaphorically are "surge of wheels" , that associates a word belonging to the semantic field of nature, "surge" with a word that evokes the world of the city and " crumpled pillow waves" .

The word that expresses the effort and unpleasantness of waking up to another London day for me is the verb "heaves", because in my opinion through it we can understand his sense of anguish for every single morning in which he wakes up.  
-Sepy-

[#28](#) 09 Ottobre 2006 - 16:57

At long last I've arrived..! I'm always busy...So I've read with great attention the poem "Island Man"; I like it because he/she expresses maybe the homesickness when he/she lived in this "perfect" island: yes, it arouses a sensation of perfection, nearly of paradise. In my opinion the author is a woman that describes the remote life of a man who now can be her husband or however a man who she loves.

This memory lives in the Island man's hearth; "the sound of blue surf" resounds still in his mind; the "sun that surfaces" every morning " from the east of his EMERALD island" appears still in his eyes.. These are memories that the man but an ordinary man brings in his heart.

At the end appear three words that emblemize the beginning of another day in London, a big and chaotic city, where maybe the protagonist lives his melancholy.

The onomatopoeia " groggily groggily" is a symbol of the man's condition and it's very original..

These poems from different cultures have enraptured my mind because they speak about conditions where many people live or can't survive. So I thank very much Prof.ssa Ziraldo for the opportunity that She gave us. Ele

[#29](#) 09 Ottobre 2006 - 16:59

the title could be: "The dream"

In my opinion this poem is a poet's dream. It is the wish of a man who wants to go away from the reality. The protagonist is suffocated by his everyday life. I understand this, through the use of sentences like: "the sound of blue surf in his head" or "muffling his crumpled pillow waves". He wants to let the readers know his wishes and his homesickness of his past life. The only way to do this is: the imagination and the dreams. The man needs to rely on dreams. There is a slight sadness in remembering old times in serenity and probably going back to the past.

[#30](#) 11 Ottobre 2006 - 17:15

I think that the blank verse between the 11th verse and the 12th verse divides in two parts the poem: in the first part the man dreams of his island, then in the second part he wakes up and finds himself in London. Within this verse there is an auditory and visual contrast: the emerald island and the blue sea are stifled by the grayness of the city; the sounds emphasise the differences between the relaxing atmosphere of the island and the stressing life of London: the "steady breaking wombing" produced by the waves contrasts with roars of wheels and deafening noises of machines. Besides, the poetess uses many words

metaphorically. For example "wild": she describes the wildness of nature, the wake of birds near the sea and the blue surf in opposite to the artificial "grey metallic soar", i.e. the adjective "wild", referred to the city, alludes to the traffic jams in the North Circular. Also the word "waves" is used as a metaphor: it refers to sea around the island, but also to his crumpled pillow in London. The annoyance of the man can be noticed in the verse 11-19, because in this part, describing the city life, the poetess uses words that have a strong sound and they contrast with the sweet words referred to the island.

cristy

[#31](#) 11 Ottobre 2006 - 21:42

The author doesn't use punctuation but she puts the words in a very strange place, some words are on the right (line 11 and 14), that suggest us the restlessness of the Island Man.  
There is a clear contrast between the sounds and the colours of the Emerald Island and those of London, for example the blue of sea is in conflict with the metallic grey of the wheels. To underline this contrast the writer uses a lot of images, that appeals to the five senses; these descriptions are in two different parts of the poem: in the first part, from line 1 to line 11, the author gives a description of the island and the feeling of the man, then she compares this to the vision of London.  
The Island Man, when he wakes up, instead of the sound of the sea he hears the noise from the street and he sees the dull "North Circle road" instead of the seabird and the fishermen.  
The turbulent feeling of the man are also re-proposed (I'm not sure that this word really exists, probably it is better use return..) in lines 11-19 where the speaking-I realise the monotony of the days in London.  
Jolly

[#32](#) 12 Ottobre 2006 - 18:37

Dear Sepy,

First of all I want to point out that it is not a problem if you do not manage to write promptly. It does happen that computers do not work or that you have plenty of homework to do, so you cannot update the blog. This "space" is meant for our own enjoyment of literature, so I do not want any of you to feel frustrated. I just want you to feel the pleasure of writing about something that involves you deep inside.  
The verb heaves, as you try to point out, strengthens the idea of how difficult it is for this man to get up in the morning. He has to lift (metaphorically speaking) all the weight of his dreams and along with it the weight of a weary existence in a city which is depriving him of his Caribbean liveliness.  
I would not use the term "cruelty", but hardship (perhaps) since cruelty implies that someone is doing something really bad to you. In this case there is no reference to somebody doing him harm.

[#33](#) 12 Ottobre 2006 - 18:46

Dear Ele,

Thank you for your positive feedback. It is important for a teacher to know that her students appreciate what she is doing. That way I know I am on the right track. These poems speak to us as human beings, they unveil realities otherwise unknown to us. We learn about peoples whose lives are hidden to us. What's more, we see things through the perspective of people who come from or live in the country of interest for our poem. So we see things from the "margins" (I do not like this work, but is unfortunately used in literature) and not through "mainstream" dominant categories.  
You are right in saying that certain words mark important elements inside the poem (emblemize does not exist as a verb!)

[#34](#) 12 Ottobre 2006 - 18:51

Dear Cristy,

You are certainly right in emphasising, or better pointing out the relevance of the blank space between certain lines (blank verse is something different! remember! Shakespeare's sonnets).  
I am happy to read that you noticed so many things about this poem. Keep writing when you can and keep reading (but just if it is pleasant to you)

[#35](#) 12 Ottobre 2006 - 18:55

Dear Jolly,

you can see from the poem that the layout of words plays an important role, it adds meaning to the poem itself. The contrasting images are another important aspect of the poem, you are right. You are also right when you question the existence of "re-proposed" (yet I like the sound, unfortunately we cannot coin new verbs. If only we were poets, we had such a power we could reinvent a language!)  
Keep going you are on the right track!

[#36](#) 16 Ottobre 2006 - 19:16

In my opinion the writer is a woman because the melancholy which is presented in the entire poem is typically feminine. I think the title of this poem could be: the Island. Reading the poem I underlined six principal words: "island, man, sound, blue, surf" and "his head". On these words I based my interpretation of the poem. The writer wants the reader to identify with the protagonist. We know that he is a Caribbean man but now he lives in London. The writer wants to dedicate him this poem. London is a big, chaotic city and when the man isn't sleeping he hears the noise of the cars, traffic, and people. But when he wakes up, at first, he doesn't hear this noise he thinks to hear "the sound of the blue surf" and of the seabird. Hearing this sounds he has the impression to see his "small emerald island". He imagines this landscape, the sea, the seabirds, the waves and his island because he is homesick, he would like to return home and he thinks at his childhood. But slowly he "comes back" from his island. London's noise brings him back to reality. Before waking up, the island man, with his head on the pillow thinks it's made of waves. This dream ends and the protagonist of this poem returns on his reality: this is "another London day". In the poem there are also the contrast between the colour of the island (emerald) and the colour of the city (grey). The writer uses words that take us back to the sound of the sea (like: breaking, wombing sun surfacing, muffling, muffling pillow, waves,..) but also words which guide the readers to the noise of the city (like: groggily, groggily, grey metallic soar, to surge,

...).  
\_francy\_

[#37](#) 22 Ottobre 2006 - 21:40

Dear Francy,

You wrote a wonderful analysis of the text. I am very happy to read that you appreciated the poem so much. It is interesting the way you proceeded in the analysis of "Island Man". Hopefully the new poem will involve you as much as this one did. Keep on reading and writing. I love reading your comments! Hope to read you again soon. Cheers.

[#38](#) 11 Novembre 2006 - 16:13

" The title of poem is very original... I never read a "Telephone conversation". I like it because it's another way to "make"poem. I think that the language is refined, because the author would describe an ironical conversation: He choses some words like "sepia" for example to distinguish black colour; or when the man says that soles of his feet are "a peroxide blonde".. The black person appears very quiet when madame tells him if he's black or white. Soyinca pays attention to describe the people's behaviour, above all madame. There are a lot of adverbs and adjectives like " ill-mannered silence, clinical assent, light impersonality, truthfulness".

I wish I would write next week if there is time.....In the meantime I thank P.ssa Ziraldo because this activity helps me to use language and it's a good exercise for writing. Ele

La responsabile della sezione inglese del Liceo "Grigoletti":  
*Cristiana Ziraldo*

Pordenone, 14 dicembre 2006