

Mongane Wally Serote
City Johannesburg
Even more challenging questions

Worksheet by:
Keith Tankard
Knowledge4Africa.com

This is a somewhat out-of-date social comment about life in Johannesburg at the heart of the apartheid era. The narrator is a black South African who is discriminated against and whose purpose in the city is purely to supply the labour market. Life is one of hardship where working hours are long and happiness is non-existent.

1. "That is the time when I come to you,
When your neon flowers flaunt from your electrical wind,
That is the time when I leave you,
When your neon flowers flaunt their way through the falling darkness
On your cement trees."
 - What point is the poet making when he speaks of the neon lights when he arrives in the city in the morning and again when he leaves the city at night? (2)
 - Comment on the imagery in: "your neon flowers flaunt their way through the falling darkness". (4)
 - What are the "cement trees"? (2)

2. "I can feel your roots, anchoring your might, my feebleness
In my flesh, in my mind, in my blood,
And everything about you says it,
That, that is all you need of me."
 - Explain what it is that Johannesburg needs of the poet. (4)
 - What are "the roots" of which the poet speaks? (4)
 - What is an "oxymoron". Explain the oxymoron "your might, my feebleness". (4)

3. "When you leave the women and men with such frozen expressions,
Expressions that have tears like furrows of soil erosion."
 - What is the cause of the women and men wearing "such frozen expressions"? (4)
 - Provide ONE word used in this poem which means "furrows of soil erosion". (1)
 - In what way are the tears of the women and the men "like furrows of soil erosion"? (4)

<www.knowledge4africa.com>

This worksheet is copyrighted. No part of it may be copied or printed in any form whatever without the express permission in writing of the author. The sole exception is for non-profit educational purposes.