

Douglas Livingstone
Sunstrike
More challenging questions!

Worksheet by:
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1. In the opening stanza, the poet paints a picture of a prospector who is already in a most desperate situation?
 - Explain what techniques the poet uses to achieve this. (4)

2. "Waterless, he came to where
a river had run, now a band
flowing only in ripples
of white unquenchable sand."
 - Why does the poet begin this stanza with the word "waterless"? (4)
 - The river is presented almost as a sinister trick of nature? Explain how. (4)

3. "Cursing, he dug sporadically
here, here, as deep as his arm,
and sat quite still, eyes thirstily
incredulous on his palm."
 - What feelings are revealed in the description of the prospector's behaviour in the first two lines of this stanza? (4)
 - Why is he cursing? (4)
 - Why does the poet repeat the words "here, here"? (4)

4. "A handful of alluvial
diamonds leered back, and more: mixed
in the scar, glinted globules
of rubies, emeralds, onyx."
 - Give a good scientific reason why the handfuls of precious stones he has found must have been an illusion. (4)

5. "And then he was swimming in fire
and drinking, splashing hot halos
of glittering drops at the choir
of assembled carrion crows."
 - Why does the poet speak of a "choir" of crows? (4)
 - Is the poet trying to make us laugh at this conclusion, or is this too an illusion? (4)

6. Comment on the play on words in the title "Sunstrike". (4)

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