Elsewhere

Poem by Derek Walcott

1. **READ** As you read lines 1–12, begin to collect and cite text evidence.
   - Circle each use of the word somewhere.
   - Underline the example of personification in lines 5–8.
   - In the margin, analyze how the image it creates contributes to the tone of the poem.

(For Stephen Spender)

Somewhere a white horse gallops with its mane
plunging round a field whose sticks
are ringed with barbed wire, and men
break stones or bind straw into ricks.

Somewhere women tire of the shawled sea's
weeping, for the fishermen’s dories
still go out. It is blue as peace.
Somewhere they’re tired of torture stories.
That somewhere there was an arrest.

Somewhere there was a small harvest
of bodies in the truck. Soldiers rest
somewhere by a road, or smoke in a forest.

Somewhere there is the conference rage
at an outrage. Somewhere a page
is torn out, and somehow the foliage
no longer looks like leaves but camouflage.

Somewhere there is a comrade,
a writer lying with his eyes wide open
on a mattress ticking, who will not read
this, or write. How to make a pen?

2. **REREAD** Reread lines 1–12. What is the speaker emphasizing by repeating the word *somewhere*? How does the repetition of this word choice affect the meaning and tone of the poem? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

3. **READ** As you read lines 13–20, continue to cite textual evidence.
   - Circle the simile in lines 13–16.
   - In the margin, explain the image that this simile creates.
   - Underline the subject of lines 17–20. In the margin, state the point the poet is making about this person.
And here we are free for a while, but elsewhere, in one-third, or one-seventh of this planet, a summary rifle butt breaks a skull into the idea of a heaven where nothing is free, where blue air is paper-frail, and whatever we write will be stamped twice, a blue letter, its throat slit by the paper knife of the state.

Through these black bars hollowed faces stare. Fingers grip the cross bars of these stanzas and it is here, because somewhere else

4. **REREAD AND DISCUSS** With a small group, discuss the tone of the poem so far. What is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject?

5. **READ** As you read lines 21–40, continue to cite textual evidence.
   - Circle what is happening “here,” in line 21.
   - Underline what is happening “elsewhere.”
   - In the margin, compare what is happening “here” with what is happening “elsewhere.” What does this comparison say about freedom?
their stares fog into oblivion
thinly, like the faceless numbers
that bewilder you in your telephone
diary. Like last year’s massacres.

The world is blameless. The darker crime
is to make a career of conscience,
to feel through our own nerves the silent scream
of winter branches, wonders read as signs.

6. 🎧 REREAD As you reread lines 33–40,
   • in the margin, explain the two images in lines 33–36.
   • underline the personification in the last stanza.

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence Analyze the impact of specific word choices, including
figurative and connotative meanings of words, on the meaning and tone of
the poem. Cite text evidence in your response.