

Worksheet 4. Model Poetry Analysis: “In the Cornfield at 5:30 a.m.” (teacher version)

Ramson Lomatewama is a contemporary Hopi poet and artist who writes about places and things that are important to him.

Directions. Carefully read Lomatewama’s poem, “In the Cornfield at 5:30 a.m.” Complete the following:

1. Describe the details in the poem. What is happening? What is in the corn field? Circle or underline specific characters in the poem, writing directly on the page.

Suggested answers: Characters include the sunflower, the swallow, the daylight, the bullfrogs, cattails, the crow, the rabbit and the author. The author is describing what all the characters are doing in the early morning.

2. What are each of the characters doing in the poem? What is happening?

Suggested answers: The sunflower is blowing in the breeze. The swallow is singing. The sun is rising. The bullfrogs are moving into the cattails. The crow is singing and flying in circles in the air. The rabbit is quiet and looking around. The sun is heating the sand. The author is greeting the dawn.

3. What time of the year is it in the poem? What is the weather like there?

Suggested answer: It is early summer, the weather is breezy and sunny. The sun is warm.

4. Below are examples of figurative language found in the poem. Explain the meaning of the language in the right-hand column.

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| “the daylight slowly climbs” | The sun is rising in the sky and lighting up the day. |
| “the crow...greet the morning” | The crow is making cawing sounds first thing in the morning. |
| the crow’s body “‘tis a black mirror that circles above” | The crow’s body is so shiny that it reflects light as the bird flies through the sky. |

Language of Place: Hopi Place Names, Poetry, Traditional Dance and Song

5. How does Lomatewama use figurative language to shape the poem?

Suggested answers: He uses it to add vivid description, create a feeling of calm, express a sense of beauty, and invest richness into the poem.

6. Why do you think Lomatewama is in the cornfield at 5:30 a.m.?

Suggested answers: He has to work in the cornfields—one has to rise early and go to the field to care for the plants. He wants to work outside in a beautiful place.

7. What does the cornfield look like based on Lomatewama’s description? What is it like there in the morning? What might it feel like to be there?

Suggested answers: It is bright and eventually growing warmer. It has cattails and grass. A lot of animals live there. It is a little windy and sunny. It might feel alive, warm, and beautiful.

8. How does this poem relate to the Hopi metaphors “corn is life” or “corn is our children?”

Suggested answers: The cornfield is alive and a beautiful place for a plant crop to grow. The corn is not alone, it has lots of company (animals, plants, and the author who is tending it.) The cornfield is a place the author (and maybe other Hopi people) go to visit and/or work in early in the morning.