

Tonight I Can Write . . . / Puedo Escribir Los Versos . . . (page 351)

Active Reading SkillBuilder

Interpreting Comparisons

Sometimes poets make use of **comparisons** to suggest the speaker's own emotions. In this poem, the speaker personifies the night, stating that "blue stars shiver in the distance." This statement reveals more about his own feelings than about the night. Paying attention to comparisons can help readers interpret the speaker's emotions and experience. As you read the poem, list on the chart below each image from nature that you find. Then describe the human emotions or experiences that are suggested by that image.

Image from nature	Suggested human emotions or experiences

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Literary Analysis SkillBuilder

Repetition

Repetition is a literary technique in which sounds, words, phrases, or lines are repeated for emphasis or unity. As you read this poem, list repeated words, phrases, or lines in the chart that appears below. Then explain what each instance of repetition helps you understand about the speaker's feelings. An example has been done for you.

Repeated Words/Phrases/Lines	Effect on Understanding of Speaker's Feelings
<i>"Tonight I can write the saddest lines" (lines 1, 5, 11)</i>	<i>The speaker is overcome with sorrow.</i>

Follow Up: Why do you think that Neruda sometimes repeats part of a line and then adds new information?

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Selection Open-Book Test

A. Think about the use of repetition and figurative language in this poem. For each excerpt below, identify whether it is an example of repetition, simile, metaphor, or personification. Then write notes describing what the line suggests about the speaker's feelings. (10 points each)

Excerpt	Identification	What It Suggests About the Speaker's Feelings
1. "The night wind revolves in the sky and sings."		
2. "And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture."		
3. "I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved her. . . . I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love her."		
4. "My heart looks for her, and she is not with me."		

B. Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise is continued on the next page. (10 points each)

- _____ 1. The speaker in this poem thinks of love **mainly** as
- a. joyful.
 - b. exciting.
 - c. painful.
 - d. foolish.

- _____ 2. Which statement made in the poem is probably untrue?
- "Tonight I can write the saddest lines."
 - "I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too."
 - "We, of that time, are no longer the same."
 - "I no longer love her, that's certain. . . ."

C. Answer **one** of the following questions based on your understanding of this poem. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (20 points)

1. What is the significance of "the night" in this poem? What does it mean to the speaker, and why is "tonight" different from other nights? Use details from the poem to support your ideas.
2. Choose **one** example of repetition in this poem. Describe the effects of this repetition and what it reveals about the speaker's thoughts or feelings. Be sure to note any variations in the line or lines in different parts of the poem.

D. Linking Literature to Life. Answer the following question based on your own experience and knowledge. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (20 points)

Have you ever taken someone for granted and later regretted it? What, if anything, did you learn from the experience?